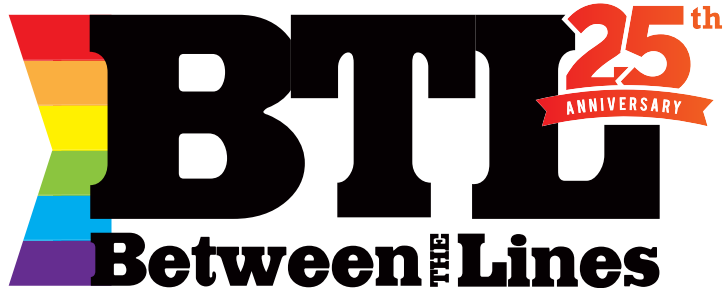


MICHIGAN'S LGBTQ NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993



Ellen Page Talks Queering 'Casablanca' for LGBTQ Fundraiser

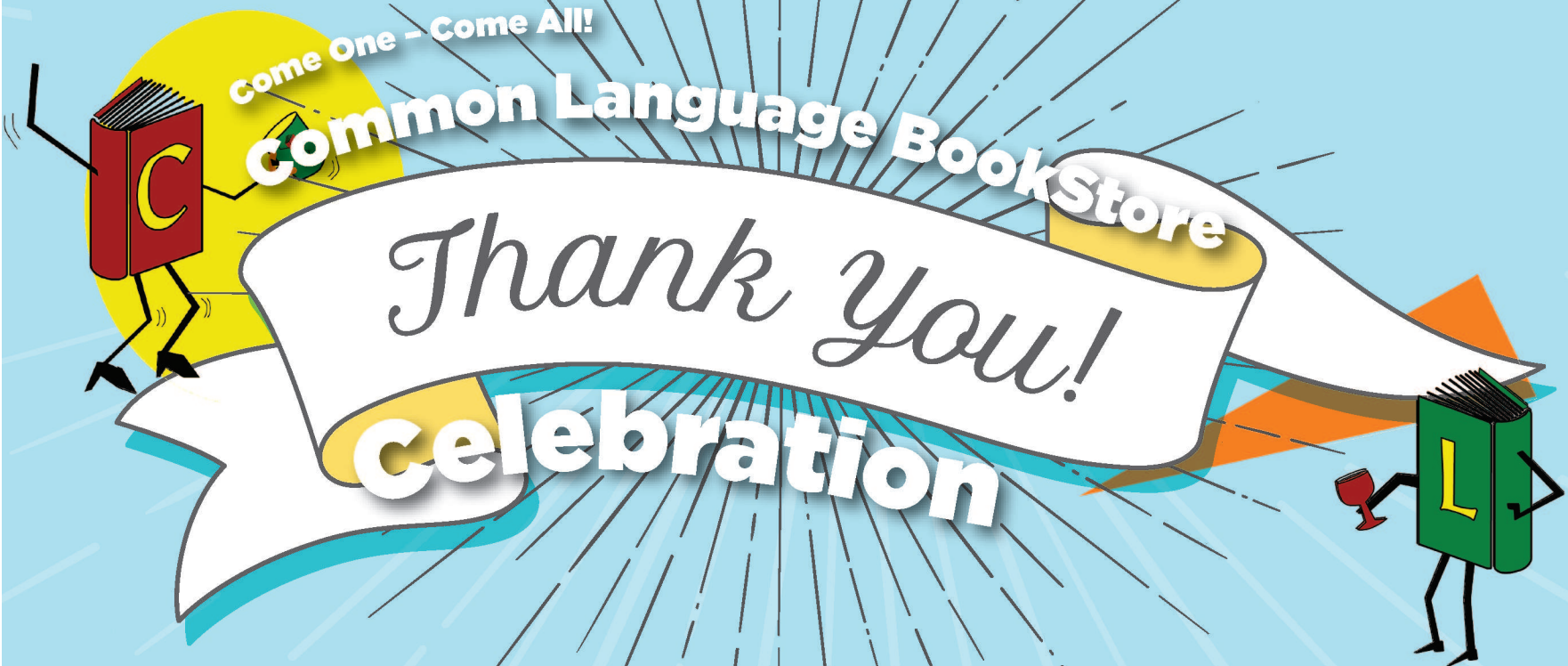


Affirmations to Community:
'We Apologize'



Together We Can

Affirmations Exhibits Artist
Michael Gute's Work to
Fight Substance Abuse



Saturday Dec. 15 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Hosted by Between The Lines publishers Jan Stevenson & Susan Horowitz, Sandi Smith and Linda Lombardini of Trillium Real Estate, Unified - HIV and Beyond, MI State Sen. Elect Jeff Irwin, MI State Sen. Elect Jeremy Moss, MI State Rep. Jon Hoadley and MI State Rep. Adam Zemke - and others to be announced.

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PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP

20222 Farmington Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48152
Phone 734.293.7200

PUBLISHERS

Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

MEMBER OF

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



EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief

Susan Horowitz, 734.293.7200 x 102
susanhorowitz@pridesource.com

Entertainment Editor

Chris Azzopardi, 734.293.7200 x 106
chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

Feature News Editor

Kate Opalewski, 734.293.7200 x 108
kate@pridesource.com

Editorial Assistant

Eve Kucharski, 734.293.7200 x 105
eve@pridesource.com

News & Feature Writers

Emell Derra Adolphus, Michelle Brown,
Ellen Knoppow, Jason Michael, Drew Howard,
Jonathan Thurston

CREATIVE

Webmaster & MIS Director

Kevin Bryant, kevinbryant@pridesource.com

Columnists

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

Cartoonists

Paul Berg, Dave Brousseau

Contributing Photographers

Andrew Potter, Alexander Godin, Andrew Cohen

ADVERTISING & SALES

Director of Sales

Jan Stevenson, 734.293.7200 x 101
jan@pridesource.com

Sales Representatives

Ann Cox, 734.293.7200 x 103
anncox@pridesource.com

Donelle Kremke, 734.293.7200 x 104
donelle@pridesource.com

National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media, 212.242.6863

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Affirmations to Community: 'We Apologize'

Center Pledges to Continue Operations Amid Financial Crisis

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Searching for answers and concerned about its future, a crowd of 56 came out to Affirmations Monday night for a community chat. Less than a month after the center announced it had suspended its search for a new executive director and was laying off three employees, members of Affirmations' board of directors – the majority of whom joined the board earlier this year – spoke candidly about the center's financial condition and its future.

"I'm sad tonight," said Board Vice President Paula Kirsch when she opened the meeting. "I know a lot of you in this room are concerned and may be sad, too. I thank you for being here and I thank you for caring."

Kirsch was one of five current board members in attendance. She was joined by Cheryl Czach, Tim Lantzy, Anthony Sherman and John Staneszek. Board president Mike Flores, fresh from a business commitment, joined the meeting while in progress and quickly took control.

"I want to start by saying that we apologize," Flores said. "We apologize that we find ourselves in this situation. We apologize that the actions that have been taken over the past five years have put us in this particular predicament. We apologize that we only have \$60,000 in reserves and we apologize that we had to make a decision of restructuring to make sure that we are able to keep our doors open."

Flores, who said in a May community chat that the center was operating in the black and predicted it would end the year that way, blamed the center's financial crisis on overly enthusiastic projections.

"The projections were very optimistic from the people that were in leadership," said Flores. "However, when we started to question those numbers and the leadership started to ask for monies from the reserves, we started to do a much deeper dive to understand, why, if the cash flows are [on track], why are we being asked for money from the reserves?"

Minutes from the July 25 board meeting of Affirmations' records that as of July the center was still operating in the black. On three separate occasions over the past eight months, Flores said requests were made to pull from the center's financial reserves. A total of \$70,000 – an additional \$10,000 was taken to conduct an executive director search but not used and returned untouched – was removed from the reserves. After the third request, for \$30,000 in October to meet payroll, Flores said the board knew it was time to act.

"When that happened we said that's it," he



Affirmations Board President Mike Flores addresses questions during a community chat Monday night where 56 people showed up. Community chats will now be monthly. BTL Jason Michael

said. "We can no longer do this. If we let this continue [to keep pulling] from the reserves we'd be bankrupt in two months. So we decided to restructure."

Board members said it was a hard decision but the only solution they saw to keeping the doors open. Not hiring a new executive director and laying off three employees allowed the board to cut the center's monthly payroll commitment from \$30,000 to \$10,000, and bought the board roughly six months to turn the center's financial condition around.

Currently, the center is operating on reduced hours with a full-time staff of four. That staff includes Heather Aymer, community resource coordinator; Kyle Taylor, development

coordinator; Angela Sawyers, finance director; and Ian Unger, youth program coordinator. The center's youth programs are continuing to run as before and most support groups are still meeting at the center. However, several groups that were

previously scheduled for 7 to 9 p.m. have been affected by the center's new 8 p.m. closing time.

Short on specific answers about a plan to restore the center to financial health, Flores did outline the board's current priorities.

"Number one is to stop the bleeding, number two is to only keep the essential services, number three is to reach out to our major donors and number four is take a breather," he said. "What we don't want is to burn out the board that we currently have."

Affirmations, Flores said, is not alone in its financial struggle.

"This is not the only center that's going through a challenging moment," he said. "You

can google LGBT centers across the nation and you'll see that there are lots of them that are struggling to identify how do they fit in this new modern world. And that's what we're trying to do.

"We need to make sure that we align the services with the revenue that's being brought in and of course those are difficult discussions, but they are necessary discussions," Flores continued. "We're trying to correct the errors, or the challenges or the opportunities that have happened in the past five years. So this board is trying to solve those problems and we ask for patience from the community."

Dozens of attendees asked questions and voiced their opinions during the community chat, including on how to share their skills to fill areas of need in the center. Affirmations will be holding regular monthly chats to allow for more transparency between the center and community members. The next one is scheduled for January.

More information can be found about the center's schedule and upcoming events and services by going online to goaffirmations.org.

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MWC Calls on Law Enforcement to Review Rape Kit Policies

LANSING — Last month CNN released an investigative report regarding the destruction of rape kits before law enforcement investigations or judicial proceedings had been completed. They reported that 25 police agencies in 14 states, including Michigan, had destroyed rape kits in 400 cases since 2010.

Michigan Women's Commission Executive Director Mary Engelman issued the following statement regarding CNN's findings and Lapeer's actions to remedy the identified concerns.

"It is disheartening to read, once again, that justice is being denied to women who have been victimized by sexual assault after having the courage to stand up and report this violation to law enforcement," Engelman said. "The early destruction of evidence kits is for all practical purposes the elimination of hope for survivors. Without this valuable evidence, our justice system cannot hold those who commit these crimes accountable, nor can survivors receive the justice so necessary to the healing process."

"We are supportive of the Lapeer Police Department's efforts to address insufficiencies identified by the CNN investigation," she added. "And call on every law enforcement agency in the state to review all relevant policies and procedures to assure survivors maintain the opportunity to pursue justice in our courts."

The 15-member Michigan Women's Commission continuously evaluates complex issues for Michigan women and addresses them. Members have taken an active role in improving the lives of Michiganders and have recommended ways to overcome discrimination, provide support for female veterans, help fight human trafficking and sexual assault, promote equitable leadership and girls in STEM.

New York Man Found Guilty of 2013 Murder, Burning of Gay Detroit Man

DETROIT — Last week a New York man was found guilty of a 2013 murder and body burning of a gay Detroit man. A jury found the accused, Andrew Czarnecki, guilty of first-degree murder, felony murder, armed robbery and mutilation of a dead body. This conviction carries a life sentence.

In a report by WDIV ClickOnDetroit, Attorney General-elect and Fair Michigan President Dana Nessel said that her organization's "resolve" was reaffirmed to "investigate and vigorously prosecute serious crimes against the LGBTQ community."

"We used our dedicated resources to find witnesses, gather evidence, extradite Czarnecki from New York, and mount a successful prosecution," Nessel said. "With this conviction, the FMJP maintains its 100 percent conviction rate for the cases we have charged. We are proud to provide the community with an opportunity to come forward, speak up, and win justice whenever these crimes occur."

Currently, there is a Dec. 19 sentencing hearing scheduled and a Dec. 14 pretrial hearing for co-defendant Hameer Alkotait.

Lame Duck Power Struggle

Republican Bills Seek to Limit Incoming Democrats' Power

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Called the lame-duck session, it's the period in politics post an election but before newly elected officials can take office, and in the Michigan Legislature it's scheduled to last through Dec. 20. Currently, the Republican legislature still has a majority in both the House and Senate, but since the midterms it has decreased. Beyond that, Republicans must also contend not only with incoming Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, but a Democratic Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson and an openly lesbian Democratic Attorney General Dana Nessel. This will be the first time in almost three decades that Democrats have held all three of these seats in Michigan state government.

Though only partially through the period now, Republicans have already passed a series of bills that will impact the authority of all three of the incoming officials. In particular, Nessel is impacted by House Bill 6553 that passed Dec. 5. Originally introduced Nov. 29 by State Rep. Robert VerHeulen, R-Walker.

"The legislature and each house of the legislature is hereby authorized and empowered to intervene in any action commenced in any court of this state whenever the legislature or a house of the legislature deems such intervention necessary in order to protect any right or interest of this state, or of that body," reads the bill.

Not only will the legislature be able to intervene at any stage of proceedings by prosecuting appeals and applying for re-

hearings, but it can "take any other action or step whatsoever that is had or possessed by any of the parties to such litigation." This includes all matters pending before the state. As Michigan's chief law enforcement



Dana Nessel on election night Nov. 6. Nessel is the incoming attorney general. BTL file photo

officer, this would directly undermine Nessel's ability to prosecute violations of state law without fear of involvement from the legislature.

In a Detroit Free Press Report, Nessel's transition team spokeswoman Kelly Rossman commented on the bill.

"(Nessel) is deeply concerned and troubled by the hasty legislative efforts to push through a proposal that has not been properly vetted and appears to be an intentional effort on the part of some legislators to undermine the role of the

state's attorney general," Rossman said. "Those legislators pushing this law should be reminded that the people elect their attorneys general and their governors and such a proposal — should it pass — would have a dramatic and disastrous impact on the state of Michigan and its residents for years to come."

In a MLive report, State Rep. Robert Wittenberg, D-Oak Park, called this legislation a "short, but very far-reaching" bill and an "unconstitutional power grab."

"The Constitution says the powers of government are divided into three branches ... this bill will erode that foundation," he said. "To me it's troubling that I have to stand before you today and lecture you on civics."

Rep. Tim Greimel, D-Auburn Hills, concurred, adding that the bill "tramples on the rule of law" and would impose "undue governmental burden on private parties."

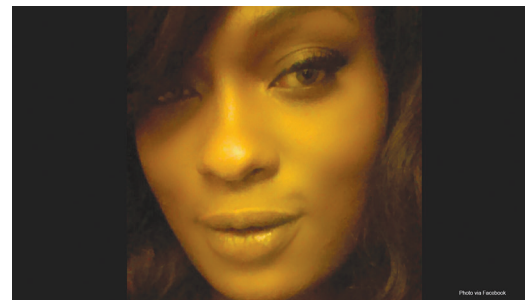
To fully pass, this bill would have to be approved by the Senate and signed by Gov. Rick Snyder.

This bill is not the only controversial move by Republicans to undermine Democratic control. Currently there have been bills passed by both the House and Senate to extend the number of years before the minimum wage in Michigan rises from \$9.05 to \$12.05, reduce the hours of paid sick leave, impede the Gov.-elect from shutting down the Enbridge Line 5 tunnel, extend the ban on doctors providing abortion-inducing drugs to patients, impede voter registration access and more.

Sterling Heights Man Charged With Murder of Transgender Woman

DETROIT - This week the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office charged Sterling Heights native Albert Weathers, 46, in connection with death of 36-year-old Kelly Stough of Detroit. According to a Human Rights Campaign report, Stough was referred to by friends as Keanna Mattel.

"On Dec. 7, 2018, a Detroit Police officer found the lifeless body of Stough, a transgender woman, on East McNichols Street at Brush Street," read the prosecutor's press release. "After a police investigation, prosecutors arraigned Weathers on charges of open murder and use of a firearm in commission of a felony."



The late Keanna Mattel. Photo via Facebook.

Weathers was arraigned in Detroit's 36th District Court. His probable cause conference is scheduled for Dec. 20 and a preliminary examination for Dec. 27. His bond is \$1 million.

"The Prosecutor's Office assigned the

case to Special Prosecutor Jaimie Powell Horowitz of the Fair Michigan Justice Project, which is collaboration between the Prosecutor's Office and Fair Michigan Foundation, Inc," the release said. "FMJP is a program that assists Michigan law enforcement officers and prosecutors in solving serious crimes against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons. Fair Michigan President Dana Nessel said, "This case reflects the excessive brutality that members of Detroit's transgender community constantly face. We thank the Detroit Police Department for their efforts to investigate the facts of this tragic crime."

Gay Friend Defends Trump's Pick for AG Amid Concerns From LGBT Groups

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

A longtime gay friend of William Barr, President Trump's pick as the next U.S. attorney general, has come to the defense of the nominee amid concerns from LGBT groups he'd continue the anti-LGBT legal positions of the Trump Justice Department.

Paul Cappuccio, a former general counsel for Time Warner who's raising children in a same-sex marriage, told the Washington Blade during an interview Friday he worked for Barr when Barr served as attorney general during the George H.W. Bush administration and said "there's been no one who has been more supportive of my same-sex family than Bill Barr has, not only with my partner, with my children, for whom he's 'Uncle Bill.' I know several people who are openly gay — who he has mentored — front and center," Cappuccio said. "I was not open the entire time I knew him, but I was open a lot of the time I knew him."

Cappuccio, who said he's "thrilled" Barr may come back as attorney general, said the Trump nominee "feels extremely passionate" that "justice is about fairness for an individual, and people are entitled to be treated as individuals no matter what their political views, their race, their religion, their sexual orientation."

"About that, he's always been passionate, and I've seen it with a first-hand seat, including sitting next to him in the attorney general's office for a couple years, so I feel quite comfortable and happy that Bill could be attorney general again," Cappuccio said.

Cappuccio said Barr is "a person who is about enforcing the laws, not undermining them, not trying to remake them" and that he "accepts precedent," which Cappuccio said bodes well for preserving the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision in favor of marriage equality nationwide.

"Do I think Bill Barr would have, if he was on the Supreme Court, would have voted to make same-sex marriage a constitutional right?" Cappuccio said. "I don't know, but I know he would do nothing to undermine the decision, right? And that's what matters because he's going to be our nation's chief law enforcement officer."

Cappuccio added Barr is a "devout Catholic," but is "a person who has never been one to judge anyone, and for whom — and this is how he measures himself — the equal fair treatment of an individual is the ultimate requirement and test and goal."

"For what it's worth, I have direct experience with him as a person and seen how he has not only treated LGBT people fairly, but mentored them," Cappuccio said. "He's been a huge force in my life. For example, I got to tell you, I wasn't always open, and when he found out, he looked at me and said, 'You feel like you couldn't tell me? You couldn't tell me you want to marry someone? I can't believe that.' And that was one of the sweetest things. 'I want to meet this guy' is what he said."

Despite Cappuccio's praise for Barr, who most recently served as a counsel for Kirkland & Ellis LLP, the Trump nominee once made anti-gay comments expressing concerns about greater tolerance for the "homosexual movement" in the United States than the



William Barr in the early '90s as Attorney General under George H.W. Bush. (Photo public domain)

religious community.

"It is no accident that the homosexual movement, at one or two percent of the population, gets treated with such solicitude while the Catholic population, which is over a quarter of the country, is given the back of the hand," Barr once wrote. "How has that come to be?"

Barr expressed those views in a 1995 article for "The Catholic Lawyer," a conservative Catholic publication for St. John's University School of Law, in an article titled, "Legal Issues in a New Political Order."

"We live in an increasingly militant, secular age," Barr wrote. "We see an emerging philosophy that government is expected to play an ever greater role in addressing social problems in our society. It is also expected to override various private interests as it goes about this work. As part of this philosophy, we see a growing hostility toward religion, particularly Catholicism. This form of bigotry has always been fashionable in the United States."

As evidence of the subordination of religious

See **Attorney General**, continued on p. 8



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► Attorney General

Continued from p. 7

attitudes to the will of the government, Barr pointed to a D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in 1987 requiring Georgetown University to give an LGBT student group equal rights to the organizations on campus despite the school's Catholic views. (Georgetown University has since embraced the school's LGBT student body.)

"Another example was the effort to apply District of Columbia law to compel Georgetown University to treat homosexual activist groups like any other student group," Barr wrote. "This kind of law dissolves any form of moral consensus in society. There can be no consensus based on moral views in the country, only enforced neutrality."

(Other media outlets have reported the article is dated October 2017, but that publication is a reprint. The website for St. John's University's Law School indicates the article was first published in 1995.)

Barr's views in that 23-year-old article suggest his tenure as attorney general will continue to uphold the precedence of "religious freedom" over LGBT rights. Prior to his termination, former U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions issued guidance outlining those views in a "religious freedom" memo as directed by Trump in an executive order last year. The Justice Department also participated in the Masterpiece Cakeshop case before the U.S. Supreme Court on the side of Jack Phillips, the Colorado baker who refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple over religious objections.

Jon Davidson, chief counsel for the LGBT group Freedom for All Americans, said he was concerned that Barr's comments in the 1995 article demonstrate he'll continue the Justice Department on the same path as Sessions.

"While I am not aware of anything William Barr has done recently that explicitly indicates where he stands on discrimination against LGBT people, he made a number of disparaging comments in the 1990s about 'homosexual activist groups' and the

'homosexual movement' that are troubling," Davidson said. "Those comments suggest that the Department of Justice under his stewardship is unlikely to alter course in any significantly positive way for LGBTQ people, as compared to the anti-LGBTQ positions advanced by the DOJ under Jeff Sessions."

But Cappuccio dismissed concerns over views Barr expressed in the 1995 article, saying the underlying issue is "in truth a little more complicated than it gets portrayed, which is the right for religious people to hold their views versus the requirement that you can't let them discriminate against people."

"He's not going to ever let people be discriminated against, OK?" Cappuccio said. "I think he was making in that article a broader point about that there's a school of thought — and he identified like three schools of thought in that article — that taking a moral view, even by a religious institution, is kind of like illegitimate in a secular society, and he was raising that. I don't think you can read that article and think he's focusing on — I think he gave 100 examples of that issue."

Cappuccio added he doesn't "sweat" the views expressed in the article because of his long, first-hand friendship with Barr, which includes a close relationship with his family.

"When I heard he was thinking of going back to attorney general, my first reaction was 'Does this mean he can't babysit my daughter Mia anymore?' Cappuccio said. "But I'm telling you ... and this is important to me, he's a good guy on this issue and ... this is not in any way, shape or form anyone you need to be worried about."

Cappuccio said "frankly, my constitutional views would probably be there's not a right" to same-sex marriage under the U.S. Constitution as decided in the Obergefell decision, even though he thinks it's good policy, but added in terms of enforcing the law, including that ruling, Barr will be "nothing but a good thing for every individual, including gay individuals."

Subordination of LGBT rights to religious freedom is just one component of the anti-LGBT policy that has come from the Justice Department during the Trump administration. Just two days after Sessions came into the job as attorney general, the Justice Department

withdrew its appeal of a court order barring enforcement of Obama-era guidance requiring schools to allow transgender kids to use the restroom consistent with their gender identity. Weeks afterward, Sessions along with Education Secretary Betsy DeVos revoked the guidance altogether.

Under Sessions, the Justice Department similarly withdrew a lawsuit against North Carolina's House Bill 2 when it was replaced with a compromise law signed by North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper and let stand a court order against protections for transgender patients under Obamacare.

Sessions also issued a memo reversing former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder's position that anti-transgender discrimination in the workforce is unlawful under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bars sex discrimination in employment. The Justice Department under Sessions also argued before the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals that Title VII doesn't cover anti-gay discrimination in employment and continues to defend Trump's transgender military ban in court.

Cappuccio said he has "no idea" whether Barr will continue the Justice Department's position against LGBT inclusion under federal laws barring sex discrimination and defense of the transgender military ban.

Sarah Kate Ellis, CEO of GLAAD, was out of the gate early with a statement objecting to Trump's choice of attorney general, predicting the Trump administration's efforts at "erasing" LGBT people will continue under Barr's watch.

"William Barr, who has wrongfully suggested that LGBTQ people — not Trump and his destructive policies — have harmed the United States, is the latest in a long line of replacements who President Trump has appointed to his Cabinet who are just as anti-LGBTQ as their predecessors," Ellis said. "If confirmed, there's little doubt that William Barr would continue the Trump administration's objective of erasing LGBTQ Americans from the fabric of this nation."

During his tenure at the Justice Department under Bush, Barr also acted to keep in place an administrative ban on people with HIV from entering the United States. When the

Department of Health & Human Services sought to change the rule, Barr led the Justice Department in blocking the change. According to a 1991 article in the *The New York Times*, Barr argued "it was completely impractical for an immigration examiner to make a sophisticated analysis of an alien's infection and health insurance coverage to determine whether that person might become a public charge in 5 or 10 years." (The HIV travel ban would later be codified in 1993 and not lifted until a bipartisan process spanning the George W. Bush and Obama administrations.)

Additionally, Barr is on record saying he supported the use of Guantanamo Bay to detain people with HIV from entering the United States, including Haitians seeking asylum in the country.

David Stacy, government affairs director of the Human Rights Campaign, referenced Barr's anti-gay views and actions against people with HIV in a statement expressing concerns about the designated nominee.

"The Trump-Pence White House and the Justice Department have been pursuing a policy agenda to undermine the legal rights of LGBTQ people since day one," Stacy said. "From his views around HIV/AIDS during his tenure as attorney general to his more recent writing promoting extreme views around religious exemptions, William Barr looks ill suited to be our country's top law enforcement officer. The Senate has a solemn responsibility to advise and consent on this important nomination and his troubling views on LGBTQ equality and the law must be thoroughly vetted."

The Blade reached out to Barr for comment for this article on whether his views on LGBT rights have changed since the 1990s, but he referred Cappuccio to the Blade to speak on his behalf as a member of the LGBT community.

Jerri Ann Henry, executive director of Log Cabin Republicans, was vague in response to a request to comment on Barr.

"We are pleased to see President Trump take action to ensure the Justice Department has an experienced leader at the helm and we look forward to working with Attorney General nominee Barr in the future," Henry said

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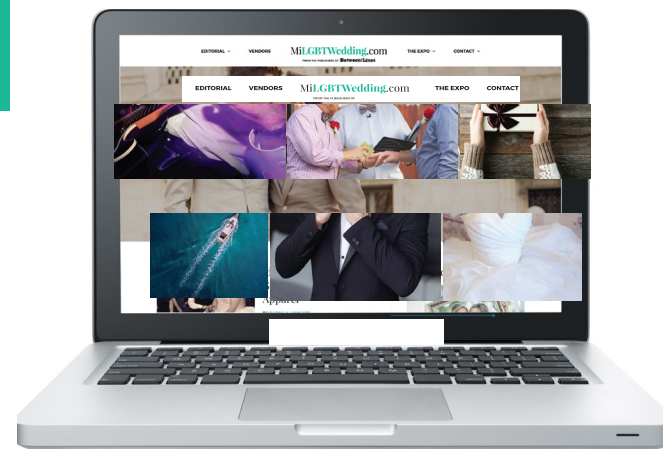
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Meet Creating Change Co-Chair Davis Nelson Jr.

BY JASON MICHAEL

Detroit's dynamic LGBT culture.

Creating Change is an annual LGBTQ conference put on by the National LGBTQ Task Force. Hosting hundreds of workshops, caucus sessions, keynote speakers and more, the more than 30-year-old event tours across the U.S., every year choosing a city in which to showcase the LGBTQ community's local and national community. This year, Creating Change 2019 is coming to Detroit in January. In advance of the event, BTL has reached out to interview four local co-chairs who are involved in putting on this Detroit-specific event. This interview is part of that series.

David Nelson Jr. currently serves as the Linkage to Care Specialist for Unified – HIV Health and Beyond. Nelson is also a member of the Southeastern Michigan HIV/AIDS Council and worked for several years on the planning committee of Hotter Than July – Detroit Black Gay Pride and served as co-chair of the Palmer Park Picnic and Annual Gathering on LGBT issues subcommittees. Nelson first starting working in the LGBT community when he worked with AIDS Partnership Michigan's REC Boyz program, a youth empowerment and HIV prevention organization. Nelson is also a former employee of LGBT Detroit and was a part of a visibility campaign called LGBT in the D and used to promote awareness and diversity in the

What does Creating Change mean to you?

Creating Change means exactly what the National LGBTQ Task Force has done with selecting the four of us as host committee co-chairs; though we do not hit all aspects, the subcommittees are arranged where you can find your space to help create change. It's diversity coming together through all of the intersectionalities for the common goal of equitable and equal change.

What are you doing to create change in your own life?

At the current moment, I believe my daily work as a Linkage to Care Specialist for Unified HIV Health and Beyond is a space where I am creating change in my life. It might sound a little cliché, but I work where I live and live where I work. Every chance I get, I want to help someone create change in their life — whether its viral suppression or just simply finding food. Its hard work at times but I like to beat the word “NO” and give people relief. It may not be a political change, but it's a change in a person's mind and life.

What made you feel you had to be a co-chair?

I originally just wanted to be part of the Creating Change 2019 host committee in general. I missed the introduction meeting

where people signed up to show their interest in being a part of the committee. A friend of mine was there and he put our names down. Not knowing he didn't put the names on the subcommittee section, he put it under the co-chair section. So, once I got the phone call from Sue, former organizer, we talked and she explained everything that comes with being a co-chair and I was even more excited. I was just expecting to come to meetings and hopefully make a presence but now I'm actually able to have a big hand in Creating Change 2019. So the fact that I was not expecting to be even considered as a co-chair made me feel as if I couldn't say no and I couldn't mess it up if I got it.

What are you most looking forward to about Creating Change 2019?

I am mostly looking forward to all the talented Michiganders we will have doing workshops. I am excited about downtown after the holidays and seeing a rainbow on the GM building and not just in the summer for Pride. I'm looking forward to seeing some great new synergy around Detroit after this conference. Not just Detroit, through all of Michigan. This conference has the ability



to not only get you informed on the whole state of Michigan but it's going to allow us to see how we can help neighboring counties and cities and actually drive an agenda to create change.

What is your take on gay rights in the Era of No. 45? Where are we as a community and where do we need to be?

In this dark, dark time of the No. 45, the word “rights” alone doesn't really mean anything. You put gay in front of it and its really just a term that's used to get attention like “respect.” What we need to do as a community is get out and vote. Your vote is your voice and it is crucial that we get more involved. There is a lot happening and even after the No. 45 there is going to be a No. 46, so even if we can't change things with Trump in office we can be prepared for the next.

Creating Change will be held at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center from Jan. 23 through 27 in 2019. Visit online at creatingchange.org.

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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Two Times A Mary Christmas!

There are paths that by strange chances on Christmas Eve mix up in time, space, thought, crazy activation. Some fact. Some fantasy. Who knows?

So it happened once upon a near but distant whimsical time in a universe that was hoodwinked into crisscrossing paths. Five companions on one. Three, on the other. Switching both respective destinations.

Our first group of travelers, names familiar to young and old alike – Dorothy and Toto, Tin Man, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion – were following the fabled Yellow Brick Road to Oz when the unexpected celestial switcheroo occurred.

Quite suddenly, they were sideswiped by a brilliant klieg light that seemed to whisk them through December's winter gloom. Giddy. Very, very young. Exuberantly naive at heart. They forgot all about Oz, which isn't an easy thing to do – ask any LGBT grown-up or drag queen.

(Our second regal sojourners: Caspar, Balthasa, Melchoir – bearing gifts for someone deemed eventually of high political estate – were baffled to find themselves in a poppy-infested countryside, traveling only heaven knows to where. A neon sign pointed MGM: "Much Grander Make Believe!")

Along the way, Dorothy and her rerouted friends found themselves waved at by shepherds tending flocks by night.

"It seems we're celebrities," giggled Scarecrow as Tin Man, Cowardly Lion and little barking Toto busied themselves (bravely to be sure) in chasing off wolves in sheep's clothing howling too close for comfort.

Yea, verily, readers, the night was radiantly clear. And the starry light got even brighter.

"No doubt!" ventured Scarecrow, with newfound mental acumen, "This star is of -1.44 magnitude. A biggie."

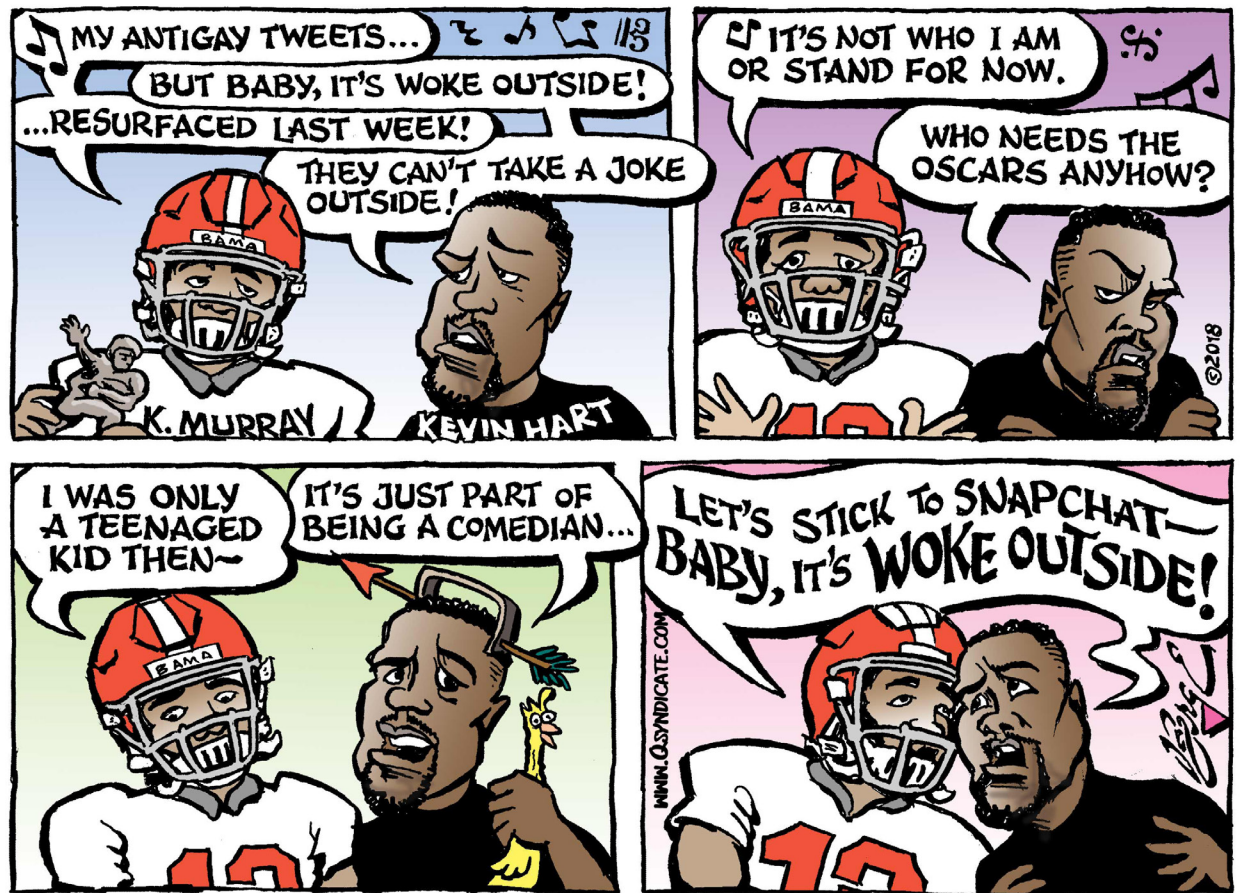
Inspired by their dreamlike mood, Dorothy, who had palatial lyric gifts – she hoped someday to perform in Off-Broadway musicals – started to sing. And, belting out of the celestial blue, she sang lyrics she had never heard before but somehow knew by heart, with Tin Man, Cowardly Lion and Scarecrow crooning in. Surprise of surprise, a heavily choir of non-union angels actually hummed along.

How quickly the miles rolled and reeled by. And before they could finish their 12th joyful rendition of "Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis," they unexpectedly found themselves among a small crowd gathered in front of a tiny, makeshift manger. It's bubble lights twinkled merrily.

There were shepherds, seven celebrity hi-ho! dwarfs, a newly awakened princess, her adoring prince and, in the center of it all, a smiling mom, a proud carpenter dad and a small baby wrapped in hand-me-down swaddling clothes.

And so, most probably because this was an awe-inspired, opening-night crowd applauding gaily, the little guy began to cry. Not too loudly. But authoritatively audible nonetheless. And in a

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



BY MICHAEL ODOM

Digital Footprints Last

A recent FOX2 news story appeared on my Facebook feed this week, "Michigan mother and son share their transgender transformation," that delivered an honest and straightforward reporting of a New Baltimore, Michigan, family – and possibly the first ever reported parent and child who are both making their transitions.

It was an uplifting story to watch of this beautiful family who owned their truths and courageously opened their lives to the public to help educate others about what it means to be transgender. And then the moment was over. Like that it was gone. I made the choice to click on

the hundreds of comments to the story where I was quickly reintroduced to some of the vilest, vicious and ignorant people in this world.

As an educated and openly gay man, I understand that people have a very strong stance on the topics of all things LGBTQ. I can respect that we have varying cultural backgrounds, values and norms, and, importantly, that our viewpoints may be at odds. But, with nearly 20 years in professional communications experience, it's perplexing and yet not surprising to me how nonchalantly people toss vile words and hate speech into the public realm and act like it's no big deal.

"Keyboard warriors," as they are often called, feel empowered to call out people and spread repugnant and vicious judgments without having to look anyone in the eye or have a real discussion about the issue at hand. And while they feel comfortable in their perceived anonymity and lack a fear of retaliation, what many don't realize is that words can come back to haunt them. Especially in this digital day and age.

A digital footprint should be fiercely protected, carefully maintained and consistently monitored. A person's

See **Viewpoint**, continued on next page

Creep Of The Week

Michigan Republicans

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

You know, even though our country seems more divided than ever before, at least we can count on our elected leaders to respect the system of government that we've created and have been trying to get right for 240 some years. Key word is "trying" here. The United States actually has a super ambitious system of governance that is based on admirable ideals. Unfortunately, we have yet to really live up to those ideals. There's a lot of work to do! Thankfully, elected leaders, regardless of party, care deeply about democracy.

LOL. Just kidding Republicans DGAF and they are the worst. Oh, was that hyper-partisan? TFB.

While there are examples of Republicans trashing the will of the people across the country, a good example of their disregard for what voters want is happening in Michigan where Democrats, all women, won all three top races for the first time in 28 years and will be replacing the Republicans currently in office.

Gretchen Whitmer will be Michigan's next governor. Dana Nessel will be Michigan's next attorney general. Jocelyn Benson will be the next secretary of state.

And Republicans, who will retain control of both the state House and Senate, are losing their minds, acting like Michigan's psychotic ex-boyfriend complete with a dangerous "if we can't have her, no one will" mindset.

And so Michigan Republicans are rushing through bills that would weaken the powers of Whitmer, Nessel and Benson before they ever take office. The GOP is also gutting the minimum wage and paid sick leave bills they passed (and they only passed them to keep those issues off of the November ballot) and attempting to gut the anti-gerrymandering and pro-voting ballot measures that passed with wide margins.

According to The Atlantic, "These fights capture the virtual collapse, especially in the Republican Party, of the informal constraints that established boundaries in political combat."

In other words, Republicans are on a rampage to get what they want at any cost, even at the expense of governance itself.

"It's a slap in the face to the voters," Rep. Christine Greig, a Democrat, told The Daily Beast. "We had record turnout in the election. People were taking their government back, and they were so proud of it."

But Republicans apparently forgot that the government belongs to the people of Michigan, not to them.

And speaking of proud, Dana Nessel is the first out and proud lesbian to hold statewide office in Michigan. Republicans are seeking

We are in the midst of what is known as the "lame duck" period, where the folks who were elected wait to take office while those about to leave office have a small window of time to get last-minute things done, and Republicans are choosing to trash the place on their way out the door.

to override the Attorney General's office should Nessel decide not to defend some of the GOP's most shameful policies, including a law that allows religious adoption agencies to discriminate against same-sex couples.

It was, in fact, Nessel who took on the anti-gay marriage and adoption ban in Michigan, a ban that the current Attorney General Bill Schuette (who ran for governor and lost to Whitmer) spent thousands and thousands of dollars defending. The case was eventually combined with other similar cases across the country and ended up at the Supreme Court where same-sex couples finally won the right to marry.

Nessel is also against things that Republicans love, like pollution, and for things Republicans hate, like civil rights.

We are in the midst of what is known as the "lame duck" period, where the folks who were elected wait to take office while those about to leave office have a small window of time to get last-minute things done, and Republicans are choosing to trash the place on their way out the door.

As Michael Tomasky writes for the Daily Beast, "Lame-duck legislatures ... do not exist to invalidate choices the voters just made. That isn't democracy. That's anti-democracy."

Of course, one need only look at the pathological liar and Tweeting man-baby currently in the White House to see how much Republicans respect democratic norms.

Will Gov. Rick Snyder sign these bills when they come across his desk? I don't know, but we're talking about a man who oversaw the poisoning of an entire predominantly Black city and suffered no real consequences, so he's not exactly someone I trust to do the right thing.

Have Democrats ever done unseemly things during lame duck? Yes. But the dismantling of norms and disregard for democracy is being accelerated by Republicans at all levels of government. America needs to leave the Republicans for good and get a restraining order while we're at it.

"While honest exchanges with opposing viewpoints are encouraged, it's crucial to avoid situations where you come across as spiteful, obnoxious or, even worse, ignorant."

- Michael Odom

blasted on the front page of a newspaper or broadcasted as the top story on the evening news. And after perusing the Facebook profiles of those who posted hateful comments to the FOX2 story, I found many, who from first-glance, have "skin in the game" and could potentially lose for their efforts, including owners of small businesses or those who work for large employer groups.

While honest exchanges with opposing viewpoints are encouraged, it's crucial to avoid situations where you come across as spiteful, obnoxious or, even worse, ignorant. This doesn't mean you have to sit back and remain silent on issues about which you are passionate. By all means, share your opinions, but frame them in an informed, educated manner that puts your best "communications" foot forward.

Michael Odom is Vice President of Marx Layne & Company, a Farmington Hills-based, a full-service, marketing, public relations and digital media agency that provides results-focused counseling to a broad spectrum of clients in Michigan and nationwide. Odom has nearly 20 years of professional communications experience and works with a variety of clients and industry sectors.

"Well, I wonder what Auntie Em would say?" sighed Dorothy, shaking her newly halod head from side to side.

"And why in heaven's name would a shepherd be wearing Ruby Red slippers and clicking his heels? Is he funny that way?" camped the Cowardly Lion, with a roaring, "AH-men!" Plus an I-just-got-lucky wink. (And one presumes those ecumenical, lucky Wise Men got high and enlightened on the poppies.)

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.

► Viewpoint

Continued from p. 10

choice of words can speak volumes about the individual and how they present themselves online and, importantly, could greatly impact future goals and aspirations. Many potential employers, colleges and universities are among groups and organizations that actively search candidates online as part of the interview and review process. That off-the-cuff comment posted to social media five years ago as a college sophomore or yesterday as a grown adult could more than likely be a detriment to one's success.

Just ask celebrities like Roseanne Barr, Kathy Griffin and Charlie Sheen if they thought they would damage their careers with a few keyboard clicks and a social media post. In a digital world, anonymity doesn't exist. You may delete a comment that you have second thoughts about within a few minutes after posting, but even then someone could have made a screenshot. Your words never fade away into digital obscurity.

A good rule of thumb is to never share a comment that you wouldn't want to be

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 10

moment of exquisite improv, Scarecrow pulled straw from his thump-thump-thumping, make-believe heart and blushing gave it to gently cradle the small kid's head.

Dorothy, with perfect on-stage presence, sang another lullaby that again popped magically into her head. "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" she sang. The baby hushed. Smiled. Gave the tinniest of – so a Macy's movie Santa years later claimed – technicolored laughs. (The baby's own over-the-rainbow-time would come another day.)

Alas! Alas! In the twinkling of an eye, Dorothy, Tin Man, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion and tail wagging Toto were suddenly whisked away, back to timeline 1939!

Mama Dragons Provides Monster Support for LGBTQ Children Across US

Mama Dragons goal is simple: to provide support, resources and knowledge for the moms of LGBTQ kids.



BY EVE KUCHARSKI

As stressful as coming out to one's family can be, it's an important step in the lives of all LGBTQ people who want to live open lives. In ideal circumstances, the change in the family dynamic is positive – and serves to bring family together. But, even with positive results, it's not guaranteed that everyone will arrive at full acceptance at the same time. In the case of Utah mom Lisa Dame, she had years to come to terms with the fact that her daughter is a lesbian.

"Not everyone can be there, boom, day one," Dame said. "And I've told gay kids, too, 'Allow people to evolve and to grow and to change.' (With) my daughter it was different because I thought she was probably a lesbian when she was young."

So by the time she came out to her in her late 20s, Dame could immediately be supportive. That was roughly five years ago. It was also around that time that Dame met other women whose children had come out to them and who were struggling in various ways with the news.

"It started with Mormon Moms and they found each other through some different Facebook groups and they realized that each of them had an LGBTQ kid. There were nine of them, and they started just messaging each other late at night talking about being Mormon, having an LGBTQ kid and then the Facebook group formed from there," Dame said.

One of those moms reached out to Dame

after seeing a status she had posted. Dame was invited to a group they had formed called Mama Dragons. That group still exists today and is no longer strictly Mormon Mother-specific. Its goal is simple: to provide support, resources and knowledge for the moms of LGBTQ kids.

"The name came from one of the moms," Dame said. "She said that she always felt like a mama bear, but when her child came out to her as gay that she felt like she needed to be much more than a bear; she needed to be a dragon with claws and fire breath and hard scales to protect her kid."

Before Dame knew it, the group had 150 people and today registers at over 2,000 across the nation. Today, it's a 501(c)(3) organization and Dame works on its board and public relations team. As much as it has grown over the years, Mama Dragons is still a closed Facebook group. Any mother with an LGBTQ child is welcomed to ask for admittance into the group but they must go through a lengthy vetting process before being given access.

"You search on Facebook for 'Mama Dragons Closed Group,' request to join, (applicants are) given some questions just to vet a little bit before and then they are contacted by a member of our vetting team and asked more specific things. That's just so we can keep the group safe and on point," Dame said. "We are keeping this to mothers. There's other online groups you can join, but it's very important to keep this to mothers because it's just a different dynamic. It just is."

When asked why she feels the mother-specific group appealed to so many people, Dame recalled a time when she met a few of the group's mothers in person. She said that, for her, it was the overwhelming sense of camaraderie

that appealed to her the most.

"I just remember the feeling. I was so excited to go and walk into this room with these women I just knew we were going to be my friends and they understood my journey and they understood what I was going through," Dame said. "We just sat down and right away they said, 'Tell me about your child. Tell me about coming out.' It was the first time I had the opportunity to talk to other women about my child coming out, about how ever since she was a little girl I thought she was a lesbian and what did I do with that. I'd been so silent for her whole life and never had anyone to talk to about it (before)."

That was the case for a Michigan mom, too. Rhaea Miller of Tecumseh said she happened upon the group while reading a newspaper. She said that before she heard about Mama Dragons, she wasn't sure where to turn for support.

"Personally, I had been struggling a little bit in finding a group of people to talk to, because my son had come out to us when he was 15/16 years old and I was having a hard time finding a support group," Miller said. "Because I didn't necessarily want to be an activist, I don't necessarily want to be working for rights, I'm just trying to figure out how to raise my kid."

Miller said that part of the reason she found herself looking for support was that unlike Dame, she was completely surprised by her son when he came out.

"He dated girls and had great taste in girls, but I just learned that he was struggling with trying to come to terms with things he was feeling. Initially, he did come out as bi rather than gay. He pulled out (the Kinsey Scale) chart and said, 'I'm thinking that I'm somewhere in the middle here.' I think what may have happened is that he met a boy at school who was also struggling the way he was and they also bonded and then ultimately they started

communicating. He said that he just felt more comfortable."

Miller said that even though she was always supportive of her son, after more than a year involved with Mama Dragons she's had help to re-evaluate her initial reaction to his coming out and has been able to restructure her approach to introducing her family to LGBTQ issues. For instance, she's still grappling to a degree with how to talk to her younger children about her son's sexuality should they ask.

"These are the things that as a parent, I don't know what to do, but the Mama Dragons group has been a place to go to ask questions to others who have had similar experiences. If you don't know what you're doing it's good to ask other people," Miller said, adding that the last thing she wants is for her son is for him to be ashamed of his identity. "I'm more proud of my son now for being who he is than I ever thought possible and he's a good kid. There's so many things he could be doing as a 17-year-old that would be much harder to miss, so if this is it, we're OK with it. And at least now he knows who he is and he can be happy with being himself."

Miller said that it's perhaps because group's vetting process to include only those who want to support their children that she's been able to be so open about her personal struggles and the struggles of her family. She said she hasn't seen any of the internet-based hate or judgment that commonly shows up on social media platforms either.

"In other communities, there are a lot of people that get on there and hide behind their screens and just go crazy on each other and there just isn't that in this group," Miller said. "I have not seen people argue, I have not seen people insult. ... We're all just trying to help them make it through to be healthy adults with good relationships and ultimately the LGBT we just want to make sure that our kids are happy."



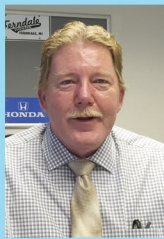
To find out more about Mama Dragons visit their Facebook page at gaybe.am/ld or go online to mamadragons.org.



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Together We Can

Affirmations Exhibits Artist Michael Gute's Work to Fight Substance Abuse

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

"It's a self-portrait," said artist Michael Gute, describing "Detroit Figure," one of his paintings featured in the Together We Can Exhibition, whose purpose is to bring awareness to the struggle of addiction and recovery. It's on display now through Jan. 10 in the Affirmations LGBTQ community center's Pittmann-Puckett Gallery. The oil painting depicts the Detroit skyline behind its subject; there is turbulence in the water.

"And it's a self-portrait of a guy who has no idea what he's doing, and he's about a year sober," Gute continued, explaining that the facial figures in the space that occupies where the brain would be represent the different voices and perspectives that can lead one astray.

"I always say the best voice to listen to is not the one above your shoulders. It's in your gut, it's in your heart. Some call it intuition, others call it their inner voice," Gute said. "But there's no inner voice in this painting. When you're a year sober, you're really trying to figure out, 'Who am I and what do I want? What am I doing with my life, and where's my truth?' That's really where the painting's coming from. It's one of confusion on the brink of discovery and truth."

The exhibit was the brainchild of Affirmations' lead gallery volunteer and this exhibit's curator, Chris Chapman, who himself is both an artist and in recovery. As a result, a portion of the proceeds from sales will benefit the scholarship fund for Together We Can — an annual LGBTQ substance abuse recovery conference to be held March 15 to

17, 2019, in Troy.

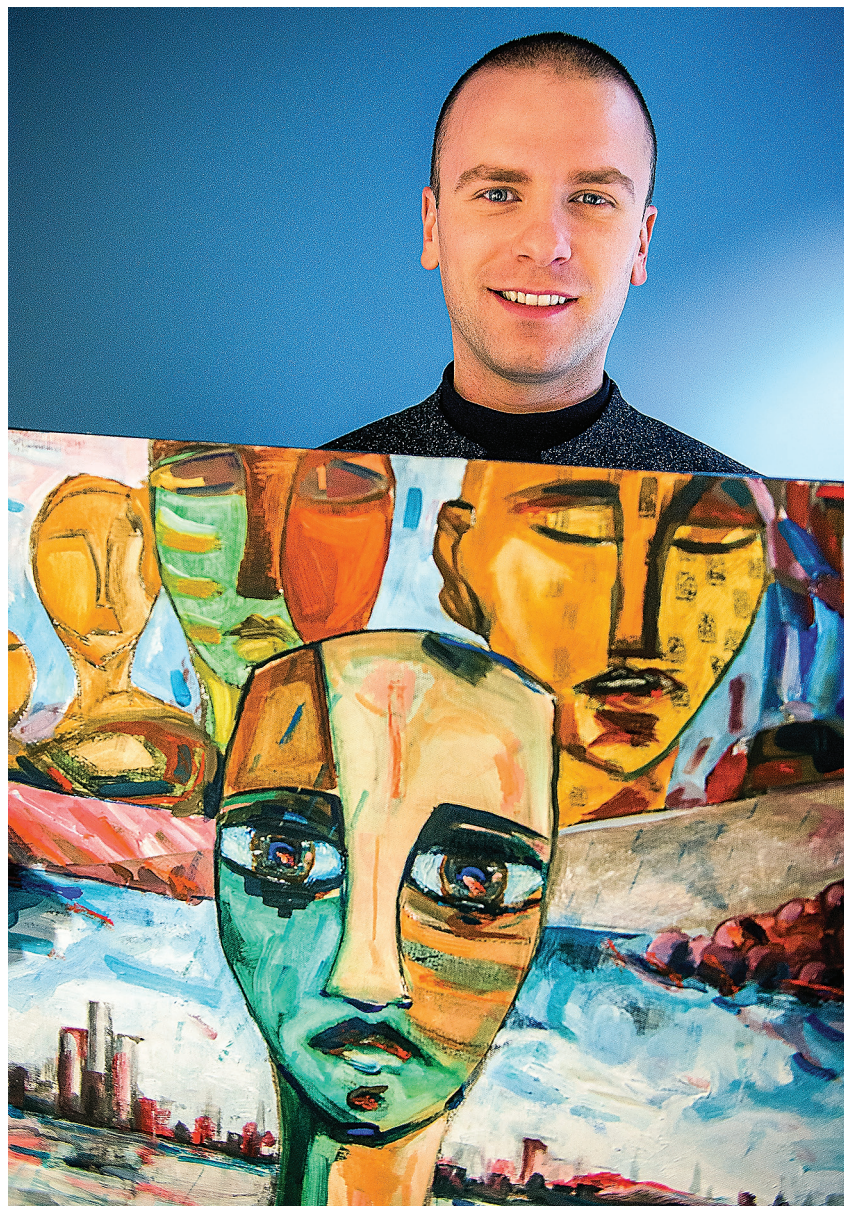
"The scholarship program was there for me when I couldn't afford to go to the program," said Chapman, adding that he was inspired by a Painting With a Twist exercise at a previous TWC conference. He said he found great interest among area artists — some in recovery, and others who simply wanted to support a positive cause.

That's where Gute came in. Before this exhibit, Gute had not publicly shared his struggle with alcohol. Though he has been sober for more than five years now, he said the exhibit presented an unexpected opportunity to bring elements of his world together in one space. He said he had never before considered the relationships between his experience as an artist, a professional, a gay man and as someone who overcame an addiction.

Currently a philanthropy officer at Wayne State University for the Honors College and the College of Education, Gute's career as a professional artist began at the age of 16 when he sold his first serious painting at auction. He credits fiber artist Marti Liddle-Lameti, one of his high school teachers, for being an advocate and motivating his artistic and academic career.

"She solidified for me that art absolutely belongs in education; art is completely imperative to becoming a person," Gute said, later adding how pivotal higher education was for him as a gay child, in that it enabled him to leave home and find his way in the broader world.

After studying fine arts painting and graduating with a degree in art history from Kendall College of Art and Design in Grand Rapids on a full scholarship, Gute went on to attain a master's degree in historic preservation and museum administration at Eastern Michigan University, where he painted "Detroit Figure." Now Gute is also a student at WSU's Mike Ilitch School of Business to prepare him for a leadership role at a creative nonprofit.



Michael Gute. BTL photos: Andrew Cohen

Long Road to Sobriety

However, Gute's artistic, academic and professional success, belies the fact that his struggles with alcohol were more than a mere bump in the road. He said that his years-long journey was marked by both homelessness and heartbreak.

Until the age of 12, Gute lived with his family on a horse farm in Owosso. When his parents divorced, he moved with his mother to a trailer park, but said that the transition from a country to an urban setting made it difficult for him to adapt. That change paired with an unhealthy living environment led Gute to leave home at 16.

While still attending high school, he attempted to support himself by selling his artwork. He was forced to sleep at friends' houses and occasionally a local donut shop. That's when he said he started drinking. He said that only later did he realize that

the "couch surfing" he was doing was a form of homelessness.

"As a gay person I felt so lonely, and I didn't know any other gay people," Gute said. "Alcohol really relieved me of the sadness I was feeling and the loneliness. I was sleeping at Benny's Donuts. Trust me, there weren't gay people there. I really did get called faggot, and I did get called queer."

When Gute began college, his high school "partying" spiraled into a consistent drinking habit. Soon, he entered a relationship with a man several years older, whom he said he loved wholeheartedly — not aware that his boyfriend, too, was an alcoholic. Gute added that he also didn't recognize that the relationship was abusive.

It was when Gute's boyfriend died of liver failure at 26 — a direct consequence of his addiction — that Gute was forced to make a critical decision about his own life. He said that at first, he decided to self-destruct. It wasn't long before

COVER STORY

his studies, art, health and job prospects deteriorated, until one day, at 24, he experienced an unfamiliar pain. Certain he had a choice to either quit drinking or die in a matter of months, Gute chose life. That's when he entered rehab.

Drawing Inspiration and Providing It

Now living a far healthier lifestyle, Gute is also quick to dispel the notion that his creativity was fueled through his addiction. In fact, for him, it was the opposite.

"I can't paint if I drink," he said. "If I'm drinking, I'm not myself. So I didn't paint for a lot of years. I even forgot that it was the greatest joy of my life. And I'm so grateful to have learned all those lessons so quickly and to now have my joy back."

Since that realization, Gute discovered Affirmations and its regular Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. He said that's where he found a network of support, highlighting that he is also grateful for the center's other functions in the larger LGBTQ community.

"I can't imagine my life without Affirmations," Gute said. "It is incredibly important for me in my journey through sobriety — which is a life-long journey — but it's also incredibly important for me for my journey as a spiritual being, as a social being and as a gay person trying to navigate the world that we live in."

Gute emphasized that as a gay person who has overcome addiction, he feels that being open about his struggles in a place like Affirmations — where others find support — is an "incredible responsibility" for him.

"Part of that is being open and talking about it, being an example to younger gay people, and older gay people; that's how I view that," he said. "Being an artist is the gift, the opportunity that God gave me, to be able to do that on a platform that is public and can communicate with people."

To find out more about Together We Can visit twcdetroit.com. More information about Affirmations can be found at goaffirmations.org.



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Photo: Sam Jones

Ellen Page Talks Queering 'Casablanca' for LGBTQ Fundraiser

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Actress and social activist Ellen Page recently witnessed history repeating itself while revisiting acclaimed classic "Casablanca." Page noted the 1942 film's eerie modern-day relevance, "the Nazi presence, but the sort of neutrality of people," while watching the fraught and tense events – as well as "the romanticism of sacrifice" – unfold as Humphrey Bogart's Rick Blaine, former freedom fighter and nightclub owner in Casablanca, protects his old flame, Ingrid Bergman's Ilsa, and her husband Victor Laszlo (Paul Henreid) from Nazis. What stood out after taking another look at director Michael Curtiz's WWII-set romantic drama: "You have these scenes in this cafe where they're being shown respect because there's these officials, even though, needless to say, they're completely disagreeing."

Page and writer-filmmaker Jason Reitman, who directed the actress in her Oscar-nominated breakout role in 2007's "Juno," set out to reimagine "Casablanca" for our Trump-led times, which are similarly fraught and tense for those desperately seeking life in America – and for disenfranchised groups already there. Simply titled "Live Read of Casablanca," and part of the "Live Read Series," this is what "Casablanca" looks like in 2018 thanks to the diversified scope of Page and Reitman's Dec. 13 live-read of the classic film at Los Angeles's Ace Theater: female-led and very queer, with Page playing Bogart's part. Before the event, a benefit for Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, a philanthropic organization working exclusively to advance LGBTQ human rights around the globe, Page

“You’re meeting people who, every day, are risking their lives, are activists spending their lives doing that, and sacrifice so much to do that. That’s a level of bravery and courage that I’d like to think I’m capable of, but I’m probably not.”

was eager to perform with an “inclusive” cast who are “fucking awesome.”

“It’s one of the most iconic love stories with some of the most memorable lines of any film ever,” says the 31-year-old actress by phone. “It just seems perfect to sort of recreate it in the way that we are.”

Live-streaming future reads to reach a larger audience is a “good suggestion,” she acknowledged, but for now, “I really encourage people to go to (Astraea’s) website and learn more about their work and what they do, and if they’re able to support in any way at all that would obviously be really amazing.”

Page’s queering and feminizing of “Casablanca” marches in line with a Hollywood movement bending to minorities as they occupy the narratives of famed and noteworthy but classically cisgender, straight, white works, from the all-black cast remake of Lifetime’s “Steel Magnolias” to the Latinx-led “One Day at a Time,” on Netflix, and women taking on roles first depicted by men in “Ocean’s 8” and “Ghostbusters.” “In some ways, people are almost just realizing it,” Page remarks on efforts to portray underrepresented minorities on screen. She says, until recently, the “privileged” American public (see: white people) “haven’t been cognizant” of giving every kind a seat at the table.

Page, who came out in 2014 and married professional dancer and fellow Canadian Emma Portner in 2018, is forthright about the lack of diversity in some of her own films.

“A movie like ‘Whip It,’ you know, should be more queer,” she says, blatantly. “It’s just that simple.”

Drew Barrymore’s directorial debut, “Whip It” featured Page as Bliss Cavendar, a Texan teenager living in a fictional town called Bodeen and joining a roller derby team, which includes derby girls played by Barrymore, Kristen Wiig, Eve and Juliette Lewis. “It wasn’t a realistic reflection of the derby world, and I wish that was different,” the actress says. “I love that film, just wanna be clear. Love that film, had a fucking blast, met two of my best friends in the universe on the film. But yeah, of course looking back on that, that’s a bummer.”

Released in 2009 by Fox Searchlight Pictures,

Page adds, “It’s a reflection of the time. I’d like to think that it would be different now, and I think it actually does show not much has changed, but some things have.”

As demonstrated in recent years, it’s not too late for past works on the wrong side of diversity, so perhaps the unrealistically heterosexual-laden “Whip It” could be remedied: “If you made a sequel, I would love it,” Page enthuses. “I wish there was a ‘Whip It 2,’” and she was lesbian.” She giggles, delighted by the thought. “And living in Austin.”

Cut on roles in 2005’s “Hard Candy” and “Juno,” Page’s career has dipped into multiple genres: high-budget thrill rides (two “X-Men” films, “Inception”), zombie dramas heavy on queer subtext (“The Cured”), and gay-themed true stories. In the 2015 lesbian biopic “Freeheld,” Page portrayed Stacie Andree, the partner of Laurel Hester (Julianne Moore), a gay police officer who fought to have her pension benefits transferred to Andree after being diagnosed with terminal cancer. Early the following year, the actress’ collaboration with gay friend and co-host Ian Daniel, Viceland’s “Gaycation,” aired. The show had the activists traveling to countries like Japan, Brazil and Jamaica to investigate the horrific challenges and distinct cultural characteristics of being LGBTQ abroad.

After two seasons, the show returned in April 2017 for a special presentation that examined LGBTQ life in America post Trump. No more episodes are planned, Page apologetically reveals, but she and Daniel are in the early development stages of “a different project that’s similar,” but “less in terms of a travel show, more focused stories.” She adds, “Not that they’ll be in America, by any means.”

Looking back on “Gaycation,” Page was humbled by the experience, which she says “changed me.” “I mean, you’re meeting people who, every day, are risking their lives, are activists spending their lives doing that, and sacrifice so much to do that. That’s a level of bravery and courage that I’d like to think I’m capable of, but I’m probably not.”

Meeting transgender activist and famed

See **Ellen Page**, continued on p. 18




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"Gaycation" hosts Ian Daniel and Ellen Page. Photo: Viceland

► Ellen Page

Continued from p. 17

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Stonewall rioter Miss Major for the first season's finale was an unforgettable moment for the actress when thinking of "a force and a person who is someone who's ultimately been responsible for so much change for the community."

After "Gaycation," Page has continued to tackle projects that are extensions of her own lesbian identity, such as this year's "The Cured," an allegorically queer zombie film from out filmmaker David Freyne. Recent LGBTQ films evade her simply because "I've, like, literally barely watched movies. It's been a problem." She immediately retracts: "Not a problem – but the last year or two, quite frankly, I don't know, but just for some reason I haven't really watched movies." Apologizing for missing this year's impressive slate of LGBTQ films (she did ask for recommendations), Page says she thoroughly enjoyed the "stunning" "Tomboy," a 2011 French drama she says is still fresh on her mind.

Seemingly more queer-content creator than consumer, she just wrapped shooting the revival of Armistead Maupin's 1993 TV adaptation of his "Tales of the City" books, where she joins original cast members Laura Linney and Olympia Dukakis in the 10-part Netflix series, due in 2019. Page refrained from sharing specific details as requested by showrunners, but Netflix's contemporary "Tales" is set 20

years later, as Mary Ann (Linney) returns to San Francisco to her ex-husband Brian (Paul Gross) and daughter Shawna (Page), as well as Anna Madrigal (Dukakis) and a motley crew of other 28 Barbary Lane residents.

"I have a love interest, played by Zosia Mamet," Page says of her co-star, best known for her role on HBO's "Girls." "Zosia's amazing. She absolutely blew me away. I had such a wonderful time working with her. She is such a phenomenal actor, so yeah, that was awesome."

And acting alongside Dukakis and Linney: "It's crazy, right? Yeah, walking in and working with someone like Laura Linney, who is absolutely one of my favorites of all time – and, of course, Olympia – I felt so welcomed," she says. "You couldn't be working with more lovely, sincere, they-do-this-job-because-they-just-fucking-love-it (people)."

Says Page, "It's about connecting with another actor, not to sound all actor-y and cheesy, but that is such a joy, to be in an environment like that. So to have the opportunity to be able to work with someone like Laura, and to be a part of this in terms of the stories and the narratives and the representation, yeah, I feel very lucky that I was included."

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

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Review: David, Amy Sedaris Say Monster Box Theatre's 'Book of Liz' Is Gospel

BY PATRICE NOLAN

Before the musical “The Book of Mormon” debuted there was “The Book of Liz,” a play by humorist and author David Sedaris and his sister Amy, who is an actress, comedian and writer. It’s a sendup of extremist faith-based communities that are in denial about everything secular, sexy or “sciencey.” It’s not for those easily offended or immune to the charms of irony, parody and wanton silliness. But, for those who are fans of the sardonic and slightly naughty style that the Sedaris siblings own, they’ll have a good idea of what to expect.

The “Squeamish” faith community invented for the “Book of Liz” relies on an Amish-rooted tendency toward Jamestown-esque puritanism and paired with an outrageous canon of superstitions, racism, misogyny and homophobia. The cult is made even more ridiculous with the invention of a variety of elaborate hand gestures meant to ward off evil and bless the chosen. Best of all is that the only source of income for this community is their sale of cheeseballs — allegedly the tastiest balls around. It’s delightfully silly.

The unlikely heroine of the play is mild-mannered Sister Elizabeth Donderstock (Angela Dill) who has a profound perspiration disorder that requires her to continuously dab herself with a

sweat-soaked tea towel. Born and raised in the cloistered Squeamish religious community, she has been conditioned to embrace her own unworthiness. In the lifelong habit of submitting to the orders and disciplines imposed on her by the menfolk and bitchier women (Mike Olsem, Al Bartlett and Betty DeWulf).

Elizabeth tries to be content with her humble lot, but she is disappointed to be overlooked as leader of the Chastity Parade — its intention to highlight the dangers of casual glancing. She is a bit miffed when her suggestions are snubbed by the smug brethren and it’s not long before she’s pushed too far. In particular because the cult’s cheeseball success is a result of Elizabeth’s recipe and handmade manufacture. It’s at that point that the Rev. Tollhouse plans to send her out to the chive patch and install the charismatic Brother Brightbee (Daniel DeRey) in her kitchen. What’s a mature virgin who’s never set foot in the real world to do but run away?

The laughs in this “The Book of Liz” are largely situational; the Squeamish cast members assume a wide-eyed melodramatic response to everything they don’t understand, which is, well, everything. But kindness prevails, and after running away she is given refuge by Ukrainian immigrants (Allison Mergroet and Chris Peterson) who have learned

to speak English with a perfect cockney accent. They help her land a job as a waitress in a pilgrim-themed restaurant (Plymouth Crock) owned and operated by a band of recovering alcoholics (Jeremiah Pauling, Nik Khator and Malina Lyons).

Naturally, Liz’s puritanical dress and her ingrained humility help her blend right in and she is soon offered a management position. There’s just the little matter of the sweating problem ... and her refusal to kick the Squeamish habit.

Meanwhile, back at the Squeamish community, everything is in an uproar. No one can quite replicate the signature cheeseball zest and financial ruin is imminent. How will it all work out? In the silliest way possible, of course.

The Book of Liz is co-directed by Monster Box Artistic Director Paul Stark and Managing Director Tahra Gribbin. In addition to those mentioned, the ensemble includes Rita Chester, Patty Salter and Kim VoVillia. This comedy is intended for mature audiences — it’s “The Handmaid’s Tale” meets “The Book of Mormon” — and works as social satire that is not without a message. Cheesy? To be sure. But for fans of the Sedaris siblings, it’s no sweat.

Online at monsterboxtheatre.com.

LezRead Book Club Fosters Friendship Through Queer Lit

BY DREW HOWARD

The Jim Toy Community Center's Lesbian Book Club LezRead provides more than just an opportunity to read and discuss queer literature. Over the past 16 years, the club has offered queer women of all life stages an alternative gathering space to the dance clubs, pride parades and local bars to find connection within their community. For people like Kerene Moore — the current leader of LezRead — she said the club played an important part in her coming out story. After divorcing from her husband in 2008, Moore joined the book club in an effort to learn more about her community. “For me that was kind of how I learned about LGBT culture,” Moore said. “I didn't know anything about it — I knew that it was something that was calling to me, that I wanted to learn more about. I'm not a person who goes to bars. LezRead was niche as far as something I'd be comfortable going to, and that's the way I went out and I got to know people.”

Held on the fourth Saturday of every month at the Jim Toy Community Center, LezRead invites all queer women — lesbian or not — for a lively discussion on the chosen book of the month.

“A lot of queer women ask me if they're welcome, and the answer is yes,” Moore said. “I realized people felt they were excluded. When I first joined, I wasn't big on classification, as I was just coming out of a hetero relationship.”

Every meeting is capped off with a casual group visit to Aut Bar, a local gay bar located just steps away from the center.

Former club leader Max Biwer held the position from 2007 to 2014. While the goal of the group was to discuss books, Biwer said the visits to the Aut Bar were also a crucial component.

“I always found that was an important part of our meetings,” Biwer said. “It was fun to simply hang out after the often very serious discussions. And I know that for some women it was their first time going to a gay bar, or not something they could easily do by themselves. It's so much easier to do things like that with a group of people you know.”

She added that the club drew both “bookworms” like herself and women like Moore who needed a safe space to feel comfortable after coming out.

And though LezRead strictly promotes work with LGBT themes, members are given room to stretch the rules. The group has discussed novels with subversive queer

themes the average reader may not even notice, she said, while other meetings ventured into poetry and even graphic novels.

The group most recently sat down to discuss “Black Panther: World of Wakanda #1,” which tells a queer love story not featured in the 2018 “Black Panther” film adaptation.

“World of Wakanda’ is about two lesbian soldiers — that was crazy to me,” Moore said. “I was shocked I hadn't heard of it. I didn't know what box I'd been living in!”

Other queer work discussed at past LezRead meetings include Cheryl A. Head's “Wake Me When It's Over,” Nicole Dennis-Benn's “Here Comes the Sun,” as well as the coming-of-age novel “Girl Mans Up” by M-E Girard. The last LezRead meeting focused on “The Spanish Pearl” by Catherine Friend, “an epic adventure” spiced with humor, lust, danger and lesbian romance.”

Moore added, too, that casual readers are just as welcome as avid ones.

“Sometimes a book is not as good as we thought it'd be, and it's OK not to finish,” Moore said. “We totally tell people to come even if they haven't finished the book, or they just want to hear what the book is about. We aren't going to criticize you ... it's just intended to be leisurely fun and a great place to find new reading material.”

LezRead will continue to meet on the fourth Saturday of every month from 4 to 6 p.m. Future meetings may be relocated, however, as the future of the Jim Toy Community Center's location is still up in the air.

The owners of Jim Toy Community Center building, husbands Keith Orr and Martin Contreras, who also own the Common Language Bookstore and Aut Bar located on Braun Court, confirmed they intend to sell the buildings. Jim Toy Community Center President Travis Radina told MLive the center is now evaluating its options.

“We aren't sure how much longer we'll be able to be in the court, which has its own history of being LGBT,” Moore said. “All these small groups that have persisted for a long time may temporarily be without a home unless we can make sure how to transition seamlessly into a new space.”

Current and prospective members should still expect a meeting in January. Those interested in joining LezRead can email kerenem@jimtoycenter.org or visit the group's public Facebook page.



For people like Kerene Moore — the current leader of LezRead — she said the club played an important part in her coming out story. After divorcing from her husband in 2008, Moore joined the book club in an effort to learn more about her community.

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Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Dec. 13

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

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Farmington Hills – Oakland County 7 p.m. All youth are welcome to attend this FREE group. This group meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at Orchard United Methodist Church, Oakland United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road, Farmington. 248-626-3620 www.oaklandumc.org http://www.standwithtrans.org

Toastmasters International SpeakOUT! LGBTQ Meeting 7 p.m. Professional & personal communication skills development. With better communications skills, you'll better your leadership style as well as your relationships. Warm & welcoming members. Find out what Toastmasters can do for you. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867 lawrencemoebis@gmail.com lawrencemoebis@gmail.com https://speakout.toastmastersclubs.org/

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Friday, December 14

Home for the Holiday 16: Songwriter Showcase and Charity Drive 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 Avenue, Detroit. 313-961-4668 https://www.facebook.com/events/320661188515377/

Sunday, December 16

Stand with Trans Wyandotte Support Group for Trans Youth and Parents of Trans Individuals 4 p.m. There is no fee to attend the groups. This group meets the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month @ St. Stephens Episcopal Church. For Parent Support Group information, contact facilitator Kim Tooley, 734-747-4363. St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 2803 1st Street, Wyandotte. 734-747-4363 http://www.standwithtrans.org

Wednesday, December 19

Stand with Trans Support Groups – Livonia – Wayne County 6:30 p.m. Free to all, group meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month @ Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Parent Support Group Facilitators Karen Sessler, kssessle@yahoo.com or 734-673-3590 and Scott Sessler, pastorscott@emmanuel-livonia.org or 734-673-2485 2020 Emmanuel Lutheran

Church, 34567 7 Mile Road, Livonia. http://www.standwithtrans.org

Saturday, December 22

MCC Detroit – Christmas Elves Celebration! 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. There will be MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main Street, Clawson. 248-399-7741 http://www.mccdetroit.org/ http://www.mccdetroit.org

Monday, December 24

MCC Detroit – Candlelight Christmas Eve Service 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 Street, Clawson. 248-399-7741 http://www.mccdetroit.org/ http://www.mccdetroit.org

Tuesday, December 25

Stand with Trans Support Groups – Ann Arbor – Washtenaw 6:30 p.m. Trans Support Group meeting the 4th Tuesday of each month @ Journey of Faith Christian Church. Journey of Faith Christian Church, 1900 Manchester Road, Ann Arbor. http://www.standwithtrans.org

Wednesday, December 26

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

Monday, December 31

MCC Detroit – New

Year's Eve Party! 7 p.m. Come ring in 2019 with MCC Detroit! Join us for a night on the town that includes dinner, dancing, cash bar, midnight celebration and snack. Party held at Vassel's Banquet Hall. Vassel's Banquet Hall, 26750 Eight Mile Road, Southfield. 248-354-0121 www.vasselscatering.com/ http://www.mccdetroit.org

Tuesday, January 1

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Lake Orion / Oakland County 7 p.m. FREE and OPEN to the community. For parents of transgender kids, this group meets the 1st Tuesday of each month @ St. Mary's In-the-Hills Episcopal Church. St. Mary's In The Hills Episcopal Church, 2512 Joslyn Court, Lake Orion. 248-391-0663 www.stmarysinthehills.org http://www.standwithtrans.org

Thursday, January 3

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 www.thunderbowl.org/ http://www.thunderbowl.org/

Sunday, January 6

MCC Detroit Testimony Sunday 11:30 a.m. Join us as we reflect on God's goodness over the past year. Share your testimony in word or in song. MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main Street, Clawson. 248-399-7741 http://www.mccdetroit.org/ http://www.mccdetroit.org

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Adrian-Lenawee County 6:30 p.m. FREE and OPEN to the community. Hilltop Counseling, 115 W. Maumee Street, Adrian. 313-909-5408 www.standwithtrans.org http://www.hilltopcounseling.org

Thursday, January 10

The House on Poe Street at The Detroit Repertory Theatre 8:30 p.m. Gothic ghosts encounter modern monstrosities when twin sisters inherit the house where Poe is reputed to have composed The Raven. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. 313-868-1347 DetRepTh@aol.com DetRepTh@aol.com http://www.detroitreptheatre.com/dauphin-island/

Saturday, January 12

Ferndale Pride Euchre Tournament Sponsored by Tito's 6 p.m. Come show off your Euchre skills and help the Ferndale Elks raise money for Ferndale Pride. Sign in begins at 6:00 p.m. with Tournament at 7. Details: \$20 buy in.

Editor's Pick

Pride Noel at Necto Nightclub in Ann Arbor

On Friday, Dec. 21, Necto opens its doors for a special holiday-themed Noel Pride Night. Guests will be able to get pictures with Sandy Klawns and her elves, with hosts Chanel Hunter and Jadein Black. DJs Jace and DigiMark will be playing music also. There is a \$5 cover for those 21+ and a \$10 cover for those 18 through 20.



Editor's Pick

Transgender Michigan Holiday Party

Affirmations LGBTQ community center will host a holiday celebration potluck in honor of this year's work done by Transgender Michigan on Saturday, Dec. 15. "The holidays is often a time when family pressures force transgender people to hide their true selves. Now is the time to celebrate with your new family," wrote event organizers. More information can be found on TGMI's Facebook page.



\$0.50 Euchre 6 games, 8 hands Ferndale Elks Club #1588, 22856 Woodward Avenue, Ferndale. 248) 542-2626 julia@ferndalepride.com julia@ferndalepride.com http://www.facebook.com/events/368678797219952/

MUSIC & MORE

New 'Holiday Belles' House Tour at Ford House Thru Jan. 6, With replica holiday décor and new stories, this new tour gives you a glimpse into the society scene of the 1960s during the grand holiday receptions Eleanor Ford hosted for her granddaughters and features stories. Edsel & Eleanor Ford House, 1100 Lake Shore Rd, Grosse Pointe Shores. 3138844222 info@fordhouse.org info@fordhouse.org https://www.fordhouse.org/ https://www.holidaybelles.fordhouse.org/

LGBT Community Chat 11 a.m. Saturday LGBT Chat is an on going social discussion group meets every week to discuss issues LGBT people face. Coming out, dating, and much more. Come join us every Saturday at 11 am. Java Hut Ferndale Michigan, 165 w 9 mile, Ferndale. 2486328274 redbellysenegal90@gmail.com redbellysenegal90@gmail.com

New 'Holiday Belles' House Tour at Ford House Thru Jan. 5, 12 p.m. Edsel & Eleanor Ford House, 1100 Lake Shore Rd, Grosse Pointe Shores. 3138844222 info@fordhouse.org info@fordhouse.org https://www.fordhouse.org/ https://www.holidaybelles.fordhouse.org/

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 www.michiganphil.org

Jazz & Soul Singer Sky Covington & Club Crescendo Live Every Thursday Night at Northern Lights Lounge 9 p.m. - 1 a.m. I No Cover 660 W. Baltimore Detroit, MI. Phone: (313) 873-1739 northernlightslounge.com Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore, Detroit. 2484451277 northernlightslounge.com http://northernlightslounge.com

Home for the Holiday 16: Songwriter Showcase and Charity Drive December 14, 8 p.m. The 16th annual showcase raises donations for goods for the homeless population in Detroit. PJs Lagerhouse, 1254 Michigan Avenue, Detroit. 313-961-4668 https://www.facebook.com/events/320661188515377/

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. The presentation

will include inspiring personal remembrances. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725 http://www.dawnfarm.org/programs/education-series

AEG Presents 'Straight No Chaser' at the Fox Theatre December 19, 7 p.m. If the phrase "male a cappella group" conjures up an image of students in blue blazers, ties, and khakis singing traditional college songs ... think again. Straight No Chaser (SNC) are neither strait-laced nor straight-faced, Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 3134716611 http://www.aegpresents.com/artist/straight-no-chaser

Home Alone with the DSO! December 19, 7:30 p.m. Enjoy one of the most beloved holiday films of all time projected on a giant screen in stunning High Definition accompanied by the Detroit Symphony live in the splendor of Orchestra Hall. John Hughes' charming Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 313-576-5111 www.dso.org http://www.dso.org/ShowEventsView.aspx?id=5064&prod=5063

Home for the Holidays! December 21, 10:45 a.m. Share Detroit's favorite holiday musical tradition with family and friends and thrill to the spectacle of the season. Lawrence Loh leads a sparkling celebration with carols and classics that sells out year after year. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 313-576-5111 www.dso.org http://www.dso.org/ShowEventsView.aspx?id=4825&prod=4822

Sound Board Presents Bret Michaels December 26, 8 p.m. Poison was at the forefront of the Glam metal scene in the 80s and 90s, their leading man Bret Michaels was launched into superstardom and hasn't come down since. Motor City Casino Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 313-309-4700 www.motorcitycasino.com/soundboard.aspx

Sound Board Presents Nelly December 27, 8 p.m. Cornell Haynes Jr., known professionally as Nelly, is an American rapper, singer, songwriter, entrepreneur, investor, and occasional actor from St. Louis, Missouri. Motor City Casino Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 313-309-4700 www.motorcitycasino.com

Sound Board Presents Cedric, The Entertainer December 28, 8 p.m. Cedric Antonio Kyles, better known by his stage name Cedric the Entertainer. Motor City Casino Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 313-309-4700 www.motorcitycasino.com

MCC Detroit Testimony Sunday January 6, 11:30 a.m. Join us as we reflect on God's goodness over the past year. Share your testimony in word or in song. MCC Detroit, 205 N. Main Street, Clawson. 248-399-7741 www.mccdetroit.org

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups - Adrian-Lenawee County 6:30 p.m. FREE and OPEN to the community. For parents of transgender kids, this group

meets the 1st Sunday of each month @ Hilltop Counseling For Trans Youth Support Group information, contact facilitator Socorro Sevilla, MSW: socorro@hilltopcounseling.org Hilltop Counseling, 115 W. Maumee Street, Adrian. 313-909-5408 www.standwithtrans.org http://www.hilltopcounseling.org

The House on Poe Street at The Detroit Repertory Theatre January 10, 8:30 p.m. Gothic ghosts encounter modern monstrosities when twin sisters inherit the house where Poe is reputed to have composed The Raven. What ensues is a feminist sci-fi fantasy that explores presumptions of wealth, gender parity. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. 313-868-1347 DetRepTh@aol.com DetRepTh@aol.com http://www.detroitreptheatre.com/dauphin-island/

Ferndale Pride Euchre Tournament Sponsored by Tito's January 12, 6 p.m. Come show off your Euchre skills and help the Ferndale Elks raise money for Ferndale Pride. Sign in begins at 6:00p.m. with Tournament at 7. Details: \$20 buy in. \$0.50 Euchre 6 games, 8 hands Ferndale Elks Club #1588, 22856 Woodward Avenue, Ferndale. 248) 542-2626 julia@ferndalepride.com julia@ferndalepride.com http://www.facebook.com/events/368678797219952/

ART 'N' AROUND

Holiday Art Shop at Ann Arbor Art Center Opens November 16! 10 a.m. Support local artists this holiday season by shopping for one-of-a-kind gifts from the Art Center's gallery shop! Ann Arbor Art Center, 117 W. Liberty Street, Ann Arbor. 734-994-8004 www.annarborartcenter.org

Yourist Studio Gallery 2018 Holiday Show and Sale 10 a.m. If you like ceramic art, beautiful tableware, and original and lovingly handmade objects, then this is the perfect holiday event for you. 1133 Broadway, Ann Arbor. 734-662-4914 www.youristpottery.com

Christmas Market at the Anton Art Center 10 a.m. Shop with us for unique gifts and holiday decor by Michigan artists! 125 Macomb Place, Mount Clemens. 586-469-8666 www.theartcenter.org.

MCC Detroit - Open Art Studio at The Art Experience, Inc. Dec. 15, 12:30 p.m. Join others as they go to the Art Experience on Woodward Avenue in Pontiac to spend some time to explore your creative side! The studio is open with people to assist as needed. The Art Experience, 175 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. 248 706 3304 http://theartexperience.org/http://www.mccdetroit.org

Theater

Theatre and Dance at Wayne Presents 'A Christmas Carol' Thru Dec. 15, 2 p.m. Join Ebenezer Scrooge on a ghostly



'The Elves and the Schumachers' at Theatre NOVA

BY BTL STAFF

ANN ARBOR - Theatre NOVA's holiday tradition continues in 2018 with "The Elves and the Schumachers," a brand-new play from the team that brought fans "The Year Without a Panto Claus" and "Sugar Plum Panto."

"Bring the whole family to laugh, boo, hiss and sing in this over-the-top evening of heroes and villains, funny songs and extreme merriment," said event organizers. "This year Hanukkah gets in on the act, when two toy-making elves on the lam wind up in a dreidel store, and hilarity ensues in this multi-cultural holiday celebration featuring musical comedy, slapstick, vaudeville and fun."

Theatre NOVA is a professional theatre with an exclusive focus on new plays and playwrights, written by Carla Milarch and R. MacKenzie Lewis. Lewis is the composer and music director for Eastern Michigan University's School of Theatre arts and lecturer

and accompanist with the School of Music and Dance.

Milarch is a former artistic director of the award-winning Performance Network Theatre. "(Her) passion for new plays led her to found Theatre NOVA," organizers said. "She has brought over 25 brand-new plays to world premieres, as well as hundreds to staged readings."

The performance will also feature actors Elizabeth Jaffe, Dan Morrison, William Powers and Sarah B. Stevens. The production and design team includes Lewis, Forrest Hejkal (scenic design), Haley Cook (costume design), Jeff Alder (lighting design), Becky Fox (props), and Alona Shewach (stage manager).

Running now through Dec. 30, tickets for the performance start at \$22 for adults and \$10 for kids. Theatre NOVA is located at 410 W. Huron, Ann Arbor. Visit TheatreNOVA.org or call 734-635-8450 for more information.

adventure in Dickens' classic story. Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-577-2960 http://www.wsushows.com

Theatre and Dance at Wayne Presents 'Vanja & Sonia & Masha & Spike' Thru Dec. 15, 2 p.m. Winner of the 2013 Tony Award for Best Play. Middle-aged siblings Vanja 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. www.theatreanddanceatwayne.com

The Purple Rose Theatre Presents 'Diva Royale' Thru Dec. 29, 2 p.m. The play follows the exploits of three midwestern stay-at-home moms who plan a last minute trip to NYC to see their favorite star Celine Dion perform and maybe experience a bit of the romance lacking. The Purple Rose of Chelsea, 137 Park Street, Chelsea. 734-433-7673 www.purplerosetheatre.org www.purplerosetheatre.org/diva-royale

THE ELVES AND THE SCHUMACHERS by Carla Milarch and R. MacKenzie Lewis World Premiere Thru Dec. 30, 3 p.m. Bring the whole family to laugh, boo, hiss, and sing in this over-the-top evening of heroes and villains, funny songs and extreme merriment. A mixed-up mash-up of musical comedy, slapstick, vaudeville, and fun. Theatre NOVA, 410 w Huron, Ann

Arbor. 7346358450 A2TheatreNOVA@gmail.com A2TheatreNOVA@gmail.com http://www.theatrenova.org

Evidence of Things Unseen at The Detroit Repertory Theatre Thru Dec. 23, 3 p.m. Two sisters, Abigail, an investigative journalist and atheist, and Jane, a stay-at-home mom and born again Christian, are in an intimate family story about differing responses to grief - revenge, sorrow, solace, faith - feeding Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. 313-868-1347 www.detroitreptheatre.com

Williamston Theatre Presents 'A Hunting Shack Christmas' Thru Dec. 23, 3 p.m. Charlie heads up to the hunting shack that's been in his family for generations, hoping for the peace he needs to sort out his life. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road, Williamston. 517-655-SHOW info@williamstontheatre.org info@williamstontheatre.org https://app.arts-people.com

Monster Box Theatre Presents 'The Book of Liz', A Comedy Thru Dec. 15, 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 info@monsterboxtheatre.

www info@monsterboxtheatre.com www.monsterboxtheatre.com http://www.monsterboxtheatre.com/

Stagecrafters Presents Peter and the Starcatcher Thru Dec. 16, 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 www.stagecrafters.org

Disney's Aladdin at the Detroit Opera House! Thru Jan. 13, 7:30 p.m. From the producer of The Lion King comes the timeless story of ALADDIN, a thrilling new production. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 313-237-SING http://www.broadwayindetroit.com/shows/disneys-aladdin

A2CT Presents 'Oliver' Thru Jan. 13, 7:30 p.m. In a musical adaptation of the Dickens novel, young Oliver runs away to London. 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228 http://www.a2ct.org

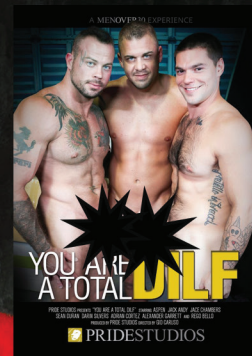
The House on Poe Street at The Detroit Repertory Theatre Thru March 17, 8:30 p.m. Gothic ghosts encounter modern monstrosities when twin sisters inherit the house where Poe is reputed to have composed The Raven. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. 313-868-1347 DetRepTh@aol.com DetRepTh@aol.com http://www.detroitreptheatre.com/dauphin-island/

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The Frivolist: 5 Ways to Help a Friend Financially Without Giving Them Money

BY MIKEY ROX

When a friend or family member comes knocking for cash, pause before opening your wallet – because rarely does this situation go off without a hitch. That's not to say you can't lend a helping hand – you can – but your goodwill doesn't have to put a dent in your own financial sitch. Steer the conversation away from handouts with these alternatives to providing support without it costing you a dime.

1. Offer personal advice

Your friend or family member isn't the first person to fall upon hard times financially; we've all been there. Discuss your personal hurdles, as well as how you overcame those issues. When somebody knows they're not alone in their struggles, it often gives them the necessary confidence to get back on the right track. Offer your assistance, but not easy money. If you do, you might be opening a Pandora's Box of coming back for more.

2. Help them set up a budget

Do you have a budget that works for you? If you've been successful in this area of your finances, there's nothing wrong with offering this "service." As easy as budgeting may be for you, others find it extremely challenging. Sit down with your friend, show them what a solid budget entails, and illustrate how they can use this to their advantage moving forward. Talk to them about how they can cut the fat from their expenses, show them how to use apps to get cash back, and teach them a few of your tricks on saving on everyday items, like gas and groceries. Laziness is no excuse to spend more than necessary, but it's the root problem of many people's financial crises.

3. Let them know that you're available in other ways

Everybody faces rough financial patches from time to time. When you have somebody to lean on it's much easier to make your way through these periods and come out a better person in the long run. Don't turn your back if your friend needs an ear. Instead, let them



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know you're available – to talk, listen, and offer advice. You may be surprised at how much assistance you can lend by being their sounding board.

4. Review their income and expenses

There's a fine line between helping a friend and going beyond your duty. If the person is open to you reviewing their financial situation, including income and expenses, sit down at a convenient time to see what is going on.

Many people need another set of eyes for them to truly realize where they're running into trouble.

Note: If you are not comfortable with this, there's nothing wrong with telling your friend that you'd rather not see their personal information. It may be easiest to simply give your friend money and hope it helps them financially. While it may get the person out of a jam for the time being, they are likely to face

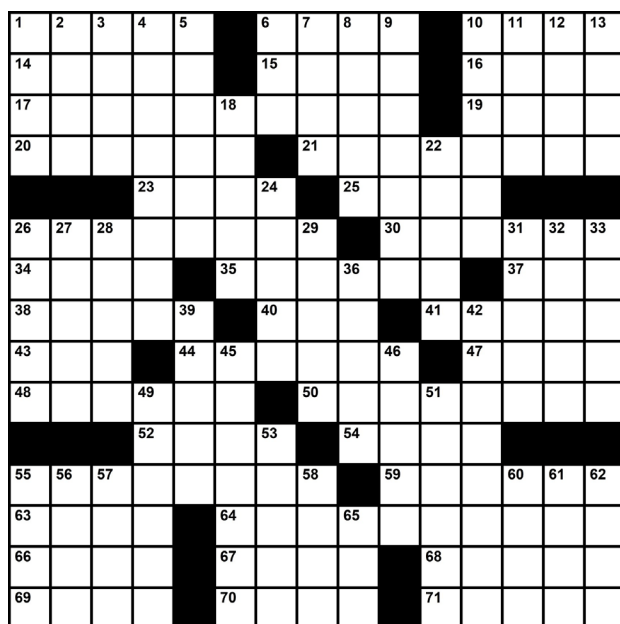
the same problems again in the future.

5. Show them how to make new money

There's no shortage of fast ways to make cash if you work the gig economy to your advantage. Resources like Instacart, Airbnb, Lyft, Uber, Roadie, DoorDash and Rover.com provide opportunities to anyone with a home or car to make extra income with little effort. Any one of these resources can help bring in hundreds of dollars per week when you're dedicated, and

that may be the ticket to getting your friend or family back on track without digging into your own pockets. They'll be better for it, too. Teach a man to fish and all...

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



- 40 Mountain top
- 41 River of Cocteau's country
- 43 Understand, to Ginsberg
- 44 Began to share, with "up"
- 47 Infamous Idi
- 48 Obedient slave's words
- 50 Amanda who plays Sophie in "MMHWGA"
- 52 Foursome after a desertion
- 54 Skidded on ice
- 55 Carol portrayer on "The Brady Bunch"
- 59 Etta James classic
- 63 Rob of "Brothers & Sisters"
- 64 He plays Harry in "MMHWGA"
- 66 Fanning of "3 Generations"
- 67 Do a nocturnal activity
- 68 Release from bondage
- 69 Ethnic acronym
- 70 Salty bodies
- 71 On one's guard

- 10 Brosnan who plays Sam in "MMHWGA"
- 11 Petty of "Orange Is the New Black"
- 12 Hospital division
- 13 Rowlands of "An Early Frost"
- 18 End of a Stein quote
- 22 Landau's "Ed Wood" award
- 24 Imitate Brian Orser
- 26 Like suspicious eyes
- 27 Bill T. Jones' partner Zane
- 28 King's foe in "Battle of the Sexes"
- 29 "The Borgias" actor Jeremy
- 31 Watts in King Kong's hand
- 32 Bert's roomie
- 33 Shoot your wad
- 36 Where fruits hang
- 39 French department
- 42 Queue by a glory hole?
- 45 Diana's sons
- 46 McDermott of "Steel Magnolias"
- 49 Meryl, who plays Donna in "MMHWGA"
- 51 Like a restless sleep
- 53 Carol's opening
- 55 Followed Earhart's example
- 56 Cross-dresser in a Kinks song
- 57 Mail carriers at Hogwarts
- 58 "East of Eden" director Kazan
- 60 Painting and such, to da Vinci
- 61 Direction from The Naked Chef
- 62 She and she or he and he
- 65 "___ De-Lovely"

Here We Go Again

QPuzzle

Across

- 1 Bit of Byron's work
- 6 REM gear
- 10 It is butt a sex toy
- 14 Song from Sondheim's "Passion"
- 15 O.K. Corral gunfighter
- 16 Skye on screens
- 17 He plays Fernando Cienfuegos in "Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again"
- 19 Wilde country

- 20 Heath of "Brokeback Mountain"
- 21 Frida, before she married Diego
- 23 Rivera's rivers
- 25 Frisbee, for one
- 26 Christine who plays Tanya in "MMHWGA"
- 30 Act parts at the Globe Theatre
- 34 McCormack of a recent reboot
- 35 "C'est si bon" singer
- 37 Klee contemporary
- 38 Broadway backer

Down

- 1 Apothecary item
- 2 Sea eagle
- 3 Comedian Foxx
- 4 Invoke Adler at mealtime?
- 5 Barely enter the Adonis Lounge, e.g.
- 6 Atmospheric prefix
- 7 PC alternatives
- 8 Got up in someone's business
- 9 Lorca's tongue

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

AIDS/HIV

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

AIDS Walk Detroit

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

Macomb County STD Clinic

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

Matrix Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program

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

UNIFIED - HIV Health and Beyond

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

Advocacy

Equality Michigan

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

Campus

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

U-M Ann Arbor

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

Oakland University Gender & Sexuality Center

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

Eastern Michigan University

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

The Lawrence Tech LGBT Resource Center

ltu.edu/student_affairs/lgbt.asp

Wayne State JIGSAW

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

Community Centers

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

Jim Toy Community Center

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

LGBT Detroit

Detroit
www.lgbtdetroit.org
[@LGBTDetroit](https://www.facebook.com/lgbtdetroit).
20025 Greenfield Road
Detroit, MI
Phone: 313-397-2127

Affirmations

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

Legal

American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan

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

Fair Michigan

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

Know Your Rights Project

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

Older Adults

SAGE Metro Detroit

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

Political

The LGBT and Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party

[Facebook.com/TheLGBTAllyCaucusoftheMDP](https://www.facebook.com/TheLGBTAllyCaucusoftheMDP)
Stonewall for Revolution
www.facebook.com/stonewall4reolution

Professional Groups

Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce

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

Ties Like Me

Professional networking events
third Weds. 5:30 - 8 p.m.
TiesLikeMe.org
Suits And The City
Lansing, MI
suitsandthecity@gmail.com
www.suitsandthecity.org

Transgender

FtM Detroit

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

FtM A2 Ypsi

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

Transgender Michigan

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

Get Listed, Promote Your Events

You can add or update any listing by going to www.PrideSource.com and clicking on Yellow Pages. Once you submit your listing, our staff will contact you to confirm your information. You can add your event to the Pride Source Calendar online and in print by going to www.PrideSource.com and clicking on Calendar, then "Add Event." Send any press releases and announcements to editor@pridesource.com



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

Find these resources online

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



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Dr. Paul Benson's



We are committed to provide quality health care and to serve our patients without regard to race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, political preferences, or sexual orientation.

It is our intention not to discriminate, be judgmental, or have bias towards anyone. These are not simply published words, but are practices we strive and train for to do our best each and every day. We must all be respectful and put our commonalities first. Our priority is your good health.

We are here to help you and want each and every one of our patrons to feel comfortable in our patient-centered medical home. It is this essence of equality that defines who we are. Please join us in this endeavor.

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