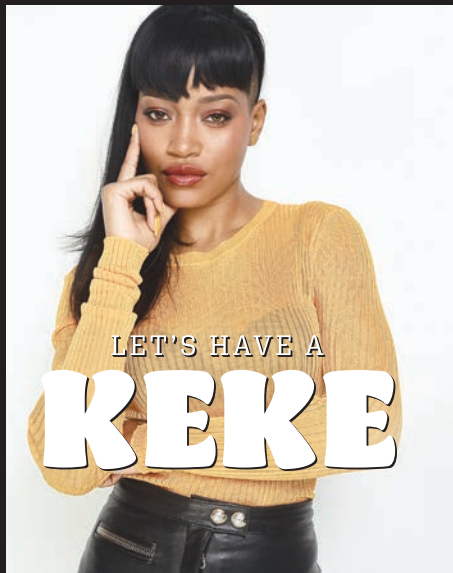


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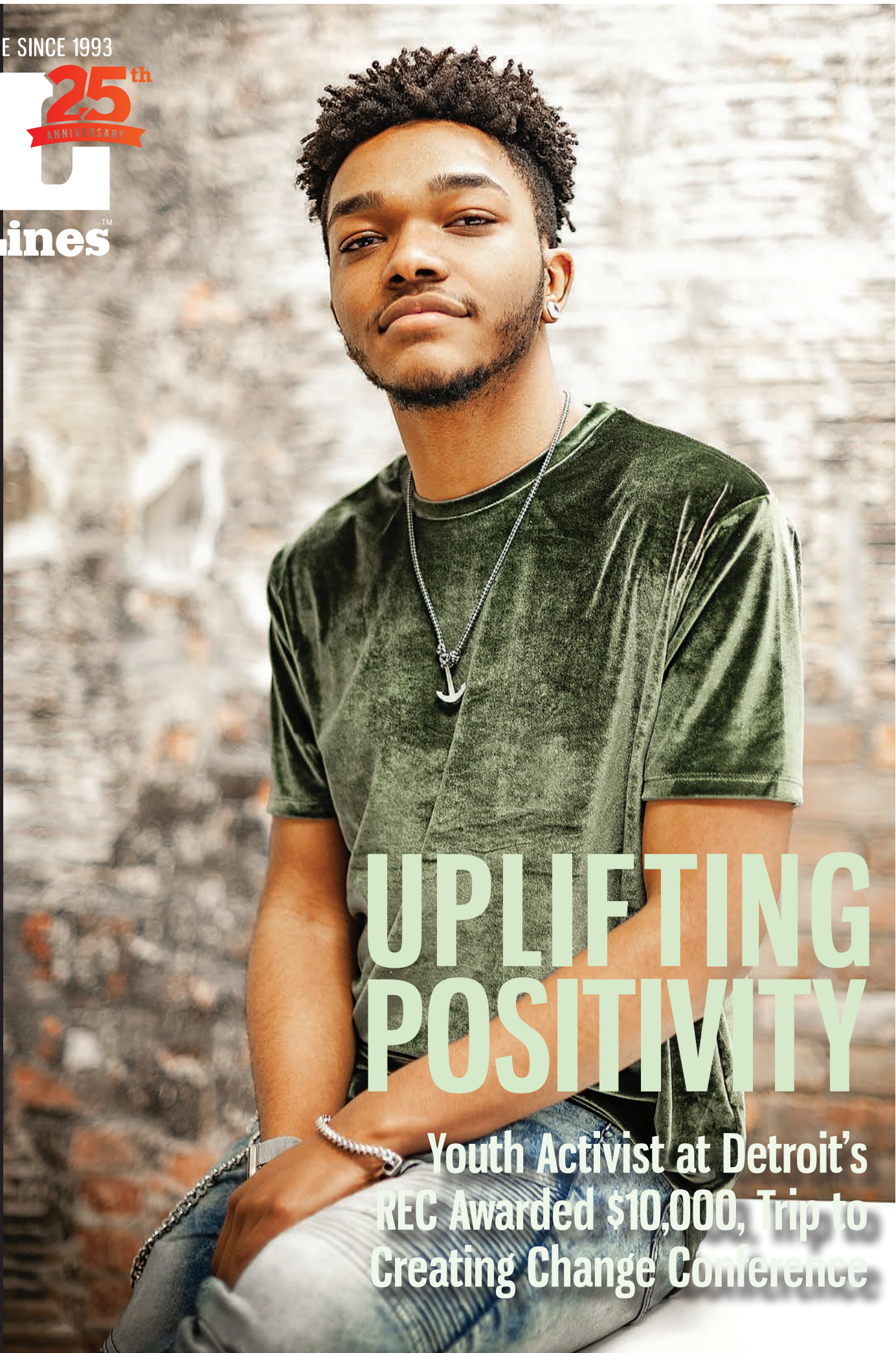
**Protests Planned for
Drag Queen Story Time
in Huntington Woods**

**Supreme Court
Greenlights Trump's
Transgender Military
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Youth Activist at Detroit's REC Awarded \$10,000, Trip to Creating Change Conference

COVER STORY

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

For Ruth Ellis Center Development Associate Dwayne Cole Jr., it was just a normal day at work when two supervisors asked to speak with him one-on-one.

"They asked me these questions about volunteer work that I've been a part of and different programs in the community and I just answered," Cole said. "I didn't really think much of it and then from there I got an email that said, 'Hey, you've made it past the first round for the Colin Higgins Foundation [Youth Courage Award]. It's a national award so I didn't think I was going to win anyway, but I was flattered to be thought of and then nominated. Then [I realized], 'Oh my God, this is what [they] were applying me for.'"

After receiving news that he made it past the first round, Cole participated in a phone interview and, after a suspenseful wait, got the news that he was one of four winners from across the country. Not only would he be awarded \$10,000 but receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the 2019 Creating Change Conference sponsored by the National LGBTQ Task Force, lasting from Jan. 23 through 27.

"I'm just excited about the experience because I hear a lot about Creating Change. I hear that people can get a lot of information from the sessions there and a lot of my colleagues at the Ruth Ellis Center are working some of the suites," he said. "I'm excited to see what they have put together and to experience Creating Change for the first time."

A Long Journey

The Colin Higgins Foundation was founded in 1986 to commemorate the life of the screenwriter, director and producer of the same name. The Foundation supports LGBTQ organizations like the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, The Trevor Project and HIV/AIDS prevention programs and, since 2000, has been presenting LGBTQ people across the nation with the Youth Courage Award. Winners of the award are LGBTQ youths who have "endured overwhelming hardships, yet handled themselves with the utmost grace and dignity." For Cole, that hardship was homelessness. And, by the time he moved in with his grandmother at 16, he had to deal with another issue: she wasn't fully accepting of his sexuality.

"When I moved in with her I told her that, 'Yeah, I'm gay.' That's when it all started," he said. "We didn't have the best relationship at the time and I kind of needed to get away from that."

Soon after coming out to her, when Cole



Dwayne Cole Jr.
BTL photo: Kate Gowman

was around 17 years old, his friend suggested that he explore some of the services offered at the Ruth Ellis Center. REC is an organization whose goal it is to provide both short- and long-term residential safe spaces and support services for homeless, runaway and at-risk LGBTQ youths. It wasn't long before things clicked for Cole at the Center.

"When I first started going to the Ruth Ellis Center, I was a part of the out in the system program. That was a program that was looking into policies for LGBTQ men using foster care at the time," he said. "And then, from there, I became a member of their Youth Advisory Board and then after being a part of their Youth Advisory Board they asked that I become a Peer Staff. I was a Peer Staff for two years and then I received the position that I have now which is a full-time Development Associate."

Today, Cole is 21 and his responsibilities include aiding with Center fundraising, sharing the organization's goal, aiding with its graphic design needs and monitoring communications, among other duties. Beyond those earned career skills, Cole said that REC helped him become a better communicator, too.

"Over time I developed the skills to even be able to talk to [my grandmother] ... and then understand where she was coming from. When we had that conversation, she told me it was only because she was worried about the lifestyle ... but that was all stereotypical ideation

pretty much," Cole said. "So, it wasn't ever really anything exclusive to me as a person, it was only what was portrayed in the media of how a gay person looks, which is sex work, which is drugs, which is all of these bad connotations of being LGBTQ. And I told her that that wasn't me ... and did not define me."

Though his grandmother's shift in perspective didn't happen overnight, Cole said that her perception of him now is a very positive one.

"Now she understands, and she sees the growth that I have had since graduating high school," he said. "When I was in high school, I was depressed, and it seemed like maybe that would have been the path that I went down, but I never let anything stop me from doing what I felt was right for everyone around me and for myself, too. So then, once she was able to see that, it was like our relationship got better and she sees that I'm improving on myself."

Uplifting Positivity

Cole's outlook today is seemingly one of boundless positivity. When asked how he manages to keep his cheerful attitude despite the challenges he's overcome, Cole said that it's a mindset he's had all his life that's helped him surpass even his greatest obstacles.

"It was kind of hard, actually, having that mindset. Ever since I was younger, I was always

this kind of vibrant, optimistic person. Like, I think of everything as the glass half full, sometimes to the point where people would get annoyed by it," he said with a laugh. "But I felt like if you are in a bad time, just thinking about the negatives and not being hopeful and faithful, you're only going to see negatives if that's what you're looking for. But, if you're always looking for the positive, that's all you're going to find: positivity."

Now that he's combatted his own issues with coming out and homelessness, Cole's focus is on aiding REC in its mission to help others in the Detroit area with similar problems. When asked what those who are unfamiliar with REC should expect before using its services, Cole was clear, "It's like a family there."

"Based off of my own personal experiences, just talking to people and experiencing the different programs has really helped me to find myself a little bit more. The staff there is really supportive," he said. "I was able to have these long-lasting relationships with people, and then they say they'll still be able to support me when I go to school for psychology — because that's my passion — that they'll still help me. ... My background was pretty hard, and I have a supportive family at home, but I know I still have that supporting family at Ruth Ellis in addition to that."



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Affirmations Continues Regrouping Efforts, Asks for Community Help at Monthly Community Chat

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

There were two obvious takeaways from last week's installment of Affirmations' ongoing monthly community chats. First, Affirmations Board President Mike Flores, who conducted the chat, wants the community to know that the center is continuing to take steps on the path toward financial recovery. Second, he also put out a request for the community's help but not just financially. Flores said volunteering is a great way to help the center.

"We're encouraged," Flores said as he started the meeting. "We're hopeful. And, most importantly, we've come to identify and solidify that Affirmations continues to be relevant in peoples' lives and in the community."

Flores, who was joined by five additional members of the center's 11-member board, including newly elected board vice president Cheryl Czach, gave a report on the center's financial condition early on in the night.

"Since December, our reserves are still the same, about \$58,380," Flores said.

In addition, there is nearly \$137,000 in the Building for the Future Fund. All but \$20,000 that was set aside for general operating expenses, will be used for building and infrastructure issues going forward. And in the last six weeks or so, Flores said the center had received almost \$89,000 in donations.

"Really, what this signals, to us, is that the community and the donor base are still

encouraged, still enthusiastic and still believe in Affirmations," Flores said. "They still know that Affirmations is required, is needed and is relevant in our community. ... And what this also allows us to do is be able to go to endowments and foundations and corporate partners and say, 'Yes, there is still a relevance to Affirmations and we can show you this because over the last six weeks we received almost \$89,000.'"

Flores also reported that the board had transitioned from a governance board to a management board and stressed that board members are more active at the center than ever and a regular on-site presence.

A Call to Action

But the biggest block of time throughout the meeting was undoubtedly spent talking about the center's current needs and the board's plea for assistance in the form of volunteers.

"We've identified several areas where we need people with this particular expertise to help us," Flores said. "We're calling out to the community to say, 'Where can you help us?'"

Flores listed specific areas where the center needs help: grant writing, technology, staff development, group development, organizational development, communications, programs and building management.

An additional call for help was put out for what Flores called founders and legacy leaders.

"If you are a founder or legacy person from 10



"We're hopeful. And, most importantly, we've come to identify and solidify that Affirmations continues to be relevant in peoples' lives and in the community."

— Affirmations Board President Mike Flores

"If you're not a subject matter expert in one of these key areas that have been identified and you want to volunteer, we can use you," he said. "We can find something for you to do. Everyone who wants to volunteer has value to bring to the organization and can benefit us here at Affirmations."

"We thought we were alone," Flores continued. "When we had to decide to restructure in November, we didn't realize that we have a whole community that's still fully engaged, that wants to have a dialogue with us and wants to help us."

To volunteer time and services to Affirmations, contact Mike Flores at mflores@goaffirmations.org or Cheryl Czach at cczach@goaffirmations.org.

years ago when this building was built, or even from 30 years ago from in the basement with Jan [Stevenson, founding executive director of Affirmations and co-publisher of BTL], we want to tap into that institutional knowledge. We don't want to lose that institutional knowledge. We want to honor that institutional knowledge. We want to use that particular committee as a sounding board as we move forward."

Finally, Flores said the center also needed volunteers to help with the planning of the center's annual Spring Bash which takes place in March, along with general volunteers as well.

Protests Planned for Drag Queen Story Time in Huntington Woods Saturday

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The debate over Drag Queen Story Time at the Huntington Woods Library continues to rage on as both a demonstration and a counter-demonstration have been planned for this Saturday's session.

The response was immediate when news of the demonstration, organized by fringe groups going by the names of Mass Resistance and Warriors for Christ, was released. A counter-demonstration was quickly organized by the Metro-Detroit Political Action Network and the Motor City Sisters.

"When Warriors for Christ first levied their threat against the library, MDPAN was one of the initial groups contacted for organizing the defense of Drag Queen Story Time, and we're honored to take up the task," said MDPAN Media Director Robert Jay. "We strongly support the acceptance of all genders and the promotion of literacy, especially when the two are tied together in a fun event for young

children. It is a testament to the courage of the Huntington Woods community, and the queens hosting, that this style of event is becoming a staple not just in Michigan, but across the country."

TG Detroit is another group calling on its members to come out and be a part of the counter-demonstration.

"TG Detroit, as always, stands with those who support transgender rights alongside all human rights, and in opposition to knee-jerk reactionary dogma that sets up the archaic religious beliefs of some members of society as a standard to which all of us must conform," said TG Detroit President Samantha Rogers. "Specifically, no one is forced to bring their children to this function. No one is forced to participate. Those who do not wish to view the story telling have the choice not to attend. Those who do attend do so because they choose to. But, typically, this is not enough for the paternalistic and puritanical religious right, who feel it is their right to curtail the freedoms of

others and seek to enforce their narrow views on all."

How We Got Here

Drag Queen Story Time started in Huntington Woods just a little over a year ago. It has been a success and both kids and parents alike have praised the program repeatedly. There were no concerns until Nov. 17, when Huntington Woods City Commissioner Allison Iverson wrote a letter to Library Youth Services Coordinator Joyce Krom.

"I know there is a desperate need for people to understand and accept people that are different," Iverson wrote in part. "I believe using 'drag queens' as a means to aid in this process is a mistake. Children are innocent little beings and we, as a society, should be banding together to preserve that innocence for as long as possible."

Between The Lines revealed in a story last month that Iverson had corresponded with

members of an LGBT hate group using her official Huntington Woods email account. The group, called Mass Resistance, features an article on its website about its efforts to end drag queen story time in not only Michigan but also Alaska and New York.

Shortly after creating the ruckus, Iverson resigned her commission seat and moved to Lake Orion.

"I am concerned that City Commissioner Allison Iverson hasn't had to face the consequence of her actions," said Julia Music, chair of Ferndale Pride. "Bringing a group to Huntington Woods that endangers trans people and children was not the reason the people of Huntington Woods voted for her. We will come out to guard our lovely drag queens, but these actions would not be necessary if Iverson had been representing Huntington Wood's citizens with integrity."

At the center of the controversy is Raven

See **Huntington Woods**, continued on p. 8



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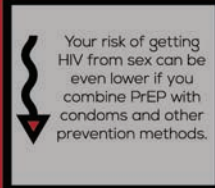
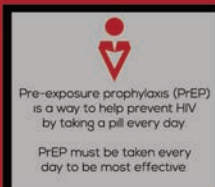
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Alcona County Board of Commissioners Opposes Whitmer's Order to Protect LGBTQ Community

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

The Alcona County Board of Commissioners is asking Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to rescind her recent executive directive signed on Monday, Jan. 7, to strengthen protections for the LGBTQ community.

According to The Alpena News, the board unanimously passed a resolution on Wednesday, Jan. 16, asserting that, in signing the executive order, the governor "circumvented the legislative process" and that her actions undermined legislators in the state House of Representatives and state Senate, who work to represent the people.

Whitmer's directive outlines that it will help instill policies to "promote public confidence in the fairness and integrity of state government" by ensuring all Michigan residents receive fair treatment in "employment, state contracting and when accessing services from state government." It does not include an exemption for religious organizations that receive state money.

The board's resolution also reportedly states that the legislature has not expanded Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include the "re-definition of sex." However, a new interpretation of the law issued by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission last year, states the word "sex" in the law means not only gender but also sexual orientation and gender identity.

Copies of the resolution will be sent to state Rep. Sue Allor (R-Wolverine), state Sen. Jim Stamas (R-Midland), Whitmer and the other 82 counties in the state.

In response to the board's decision, Erin Knott, interim executive director at Equality Michigan said, "I agree that the legislature should act without further delay to expand the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation and gender identity. There is no doubt that both Gov. Whitmer and the Michigan Civil Rights Commission acted within their lawful authority. I would encourage the board to follow Gov. Whitmer's lead and act to protect Alcona County employees from discrimination."

American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan Staff Attorney Jay Kaplan said that the "flaw" in the Alcona Commissioners' argument is that this decision was not a "whim."

"Federal courts, including the Sixth Circuit which covers Michigan, have almost uniformly held that discrimination against LGBT people is a form of sex discrimination, because it is based on societal gender stereotypes for which LGBT people are not able to conform," Kaplan wrote in an email

to BTL. "I didn't hear any statement from the Commissioners regarding a religious exemption, but I imagine

we will hear from some opponents of the order arguing that there should be religious exemptions. The bottom line, however, is that the Governor absolutely has authority under the State Constitution to issue the Executive Directive and that

her interpretation of our state civil rights laws is backed up by federal case law precedent."

There is an online petition circulating in opposition to the board's decision.

"As families, business owners, and stakeholders in NE Michigan, we oppose this action of the Alcona County Commission Board which will have a negative impact on our community as a whole," the petition states. "In order for this northeastern Michigan region to grow and prosper, we must protect the rights and dignity of all residents in our region. We urge the Commission to reconsider this detrimental decision. Please sign our petition to be delivered to the Alcona County Commission Board on February 6th, 2019."



► Huntington Woods

Continued from p. 6

Divine Cassadine, the drag queen who reads to the children. Cassadine said she wishes the demonstrators would "just stop."

"Love is going to conquer all," she said. "And in this day and age we have to have acceptance; that's the only way our culture will survive."

Despite the prediction of a temperature reaching a high of 17 degrees by weather.com, MDPAN is hoping for an enthusiastic turnout for their counter-demonstration. Drag Queen Story Time begins at the library at 3 p.m. Counter-demonstrators hope to be in position starting at 2 p.m. and to last until about 4:30.

"We're here to defend the children, their families and the queen," Jay said. "To



that end, we will not allow the virulent bigotry spewed by Warriors for Christ and Michigan Mass Resistance to poison their ears and eyes. We will drown out their hateful words with messages of love, affirmation and probably some Raffi songs. We will cover their hateful banners

with rainbow flags and signs letting the kids know, 'You're perfect exactly the way you are.'"

The Huntington Woods Public Library is located at 26415 Scotia Road.

First African-American Women to Serve on Oakland County Parks Board

BY BTL STAFF

Last week the Oakland County Parks & Recreation Commission held its first meeting of the year and introduced its newest members, Oakland County Commissioner Nancy Quarles (D-Southfield) and Ebony Bagley. Quarles and Bagley are the first African-American women ever to serve on the OCPR Commission.

"It's a new day in Oakland County. Together, we celebrate the diversity that Ms. Bagley and my colleague, Commissioner Quarles, bring to the commission," said Oakland County Board Chairman David T. Woodward (D-Royal Oak), who is the first Democratic chairman in more than 40 years. "Their fresh and valuable perspective will result in better decisions that help us to create better parks for everyone."

"Democrats have long advocated the need to improve county park investments in the more populated areas of this county," Quarles said. "We all pay into the parks funds, and I will work for equitable use of those resources to make parks and recreation programs accessible for all the citizens in Oakland County."

"It is truly an honor to be one of the first African-American women to serve on this commission for Oakland County," Bagley

said. "Serving my community has long been a passion of mine. I am excited to get to work on behalf of my county alongside a wonderful group of leaders. We can all do something and I choose to do this."

Quarles was first elected to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners in 1994 before she became a member of the Michigan House of Representatives. After her tenure in the state legislature, she was later re-elected to the BOC, representing the City of Lathrup Village and portions of the cities of Oak Park and Southfield. She currently serves as chair of the BOC Legislative Affairs and Government Operations Committee.

Currently a web producer for CBS Detroit, Bagley has worked as a teacher and is a former program director for Birmingham Public Schools. She is a staunch anti-cyberbullying advocate and an Oakland County native who grew up in Southfield, Michigan.

The OCPR Commission was established by Public Act 261 of 1965. It is the policymaking board that oversees the system's 6,700 acres. OCPR commissioners determine how to allocate resources throughout 13 parks and are tasked with making decisions. OCPR is available at oakgov.com/parks or by calling 1-888-OCPARKS.

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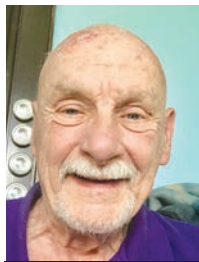
Corinne Sakyi, MSN, CNM, WHNP-BC

(Not pictured: Hina Javaid, MD)

partridgecreekobgyn.com

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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

You May Say I'm a Dreamer

About a dozen days ago tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow – at my age how can I be sure? – I was gifted with a pair of John Lennon enchantment glasses. Gold-rimmed. Sunset orange. Autumn-tinted. Pre-Donald Trump, to be sure.

Reflected in my hand-held vanity, two-way mirror, these magic spectacles make me look and feel younger. (To be honest, not an easy thing to do at my gravity-compromised, sag-along-with-me age.)

The two-circle Lennon spectacles came rainbow wrapped. Gay tasteful in a box filled with “magic sequins and let’s pretend glitter.”

Oh, yes! With a note. And, surprise of surprises! A note written in cursive writing – thanks to the Republicans, rapidly becoming a lost art form – one word: “Imagine!”

Underneath the sequins and glitter is a folded patchouli-scented parchment. A map. Headline: “Things Once Happened at Downtown Detroit’s gay intersection. Midnight’s the bewitching moment. Follow! In or out of high heels or leather.”

And, in small lavender hand lettering, “Count the years backward. Say, the magic word. Put on these glasses. For a minute or two, be glad you were gay way back then ...”

Let me be honest. I’m a born skeptic. I arrive 15 minutes early – promptness is the courtesy of kings (or queens, in my case) as the old saying goes – and I discover, to my chagrin, two empty, dimly lighted downtown city blocks. Farmer & Bates. Come on, MoTowners, you’ve got to be kidding!

I stop counting backwards at 60, which it turns out, is just a few seconds before midnight. Looking about for safety’s sake, seeing I’m not in harm’s way, I – with just a touch of coming out nervousness – put on my Lennon specs, and ... Oh, my stars. Mary, I can’t believe it!

Farmer & Bates is suddenly alive with hundreds of tourists eagerly watching from behind street-lined wooden barricades. There are shouts of approval. Loud applause, as one by one, gaudy costume by glorious costume, drag queens by drama queens arrive, turn, bow, pause regally for yet another take of in-your-face grandeur.

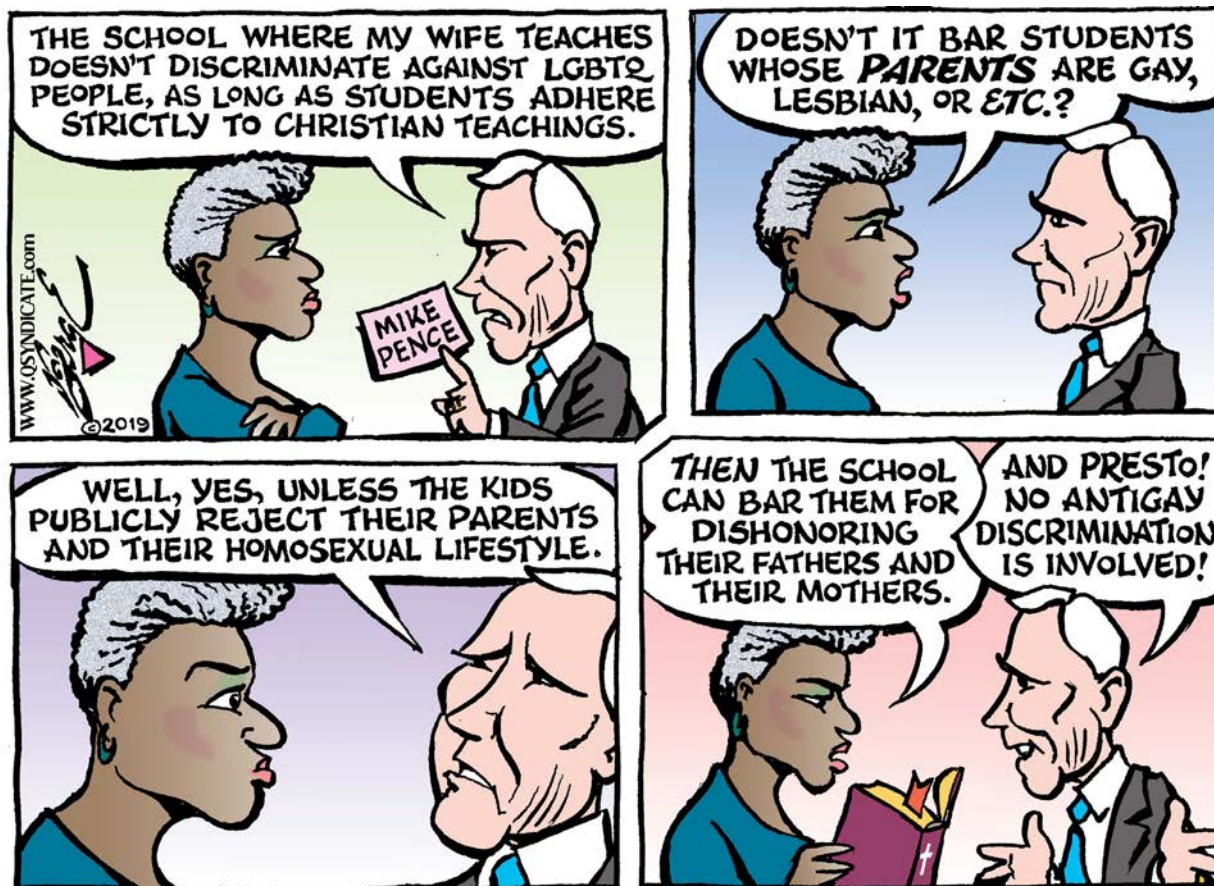
“You like what you see folks? You bet your sweet straight bippies you do!” chants Lola Lola, pausing grandly before the entrance of one of the intersecting streets of several gay clubs. “This year’s trade, next year’s competition!”

She blows a kiss to the crowd as imaginary light bulbs flash. And out of nowhere, blue side of the moon perhaps, a recorded band lip-syncs “Hello, Dolly!”

Even in this imaginary, make believe world of once-a-year royalty on parade, there’s got to be a star. Just to be sure it’s all for real, I push my Lennon glasses back on my nose. Oh, my. Yes! Of course, it’s Hazel Hobbs arriving by top-down, 1960-something red convertible.

Her gown, a year in sewing. Sequin by sequin. She radiates class! And chic. Her muscular Prince Charming companion holds up a sign: QUEEN OF FARMER & BATES! The crowd

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



BY JONATHAN W. THURSTON

Viewpoint

I'm Positive

Every HIV story is a sad story. And, generally, it's always a surprise story for people, something they weren't expecting.

In January 2014, I was dating a guy in Memphis, Tennessee, named Andre. We fell fast and hard. That spring, we took a cruise ship to the Bahamas. But I quickly became very sick, mostly flu-like symptoms. I couldn't keep any food down, and I felt weak all over. The ship's doctor put me on a lot of drugs, but nothing helped. When we got back to land, the doctors were just as confounded. A week later, it went away.

The onset of HIV goes like that for a lot of people. A week or two long flu and then nothing. Andre and I moved apart when school started back in the fall – him in Memphis, me in Nashville – and we broke up around the holidays when I realized three things: 1) when I had moved out, his ex had moved in; 2) the two of them had been in a relationship again

ever since; 3) he and his partner had been HIV-positive since around 2005.

I was diagnosed Jan. 7, 2015, as HIV positive.

Unclean. Filthy. Slut. These were the words I would use to describe myself for most of the year that followed, and, perhaps worse, these were the words that guys would use to describe me to this day on dating apps and websites. Unclean. Filthy. Slut.

When I “came out” online as positive, friends flocked to offer support. Many gave condolences. Many said they were there for me. Some of the older guys would tell me “at least it’s not as bad as it used to be.” I knew they were trying to be helpful. For me in the moment, it just stung, like I was being told it didn’t matter if I had already thought about killing myself almost daily since my diagnosis. “It could have been worse,” they said.

See **Viewpoint**, continued on next page

The rate of suicide, according to AIDSMap, has doubled for people living with HIV. It's not hard to imagine why. At least once a week, guys on dating – and yes, hookup – apps and sites tell me to kill myself.

► Viewpoint

Continued from p. 10

Within a couple of months I became undetectable, and I've learned a lot since then. I've presented on "cultural HIV" at the Out in Front Conference at Vanderbilt University, a few scene conferences, a few guest lectures, and a health forum in Michigan in front of a hundred medical practitioners. I call it cultural HIV because, while medicine has decreased the death rate dramatically of HIV, the other more sociological factors have only expanded.

The rate of suicide, according to AIDSMap, has doubled for people living with HIV. It's not hard to imagine why. At least once a week, guys on dating – and yes, hookup – apps and sites tell me to kill myself. People come out of the blue and ask why I'm endangering society. Sometimes, they actually try to use humor. One guy last week said to me, "Y u likin my profile? I dont want your disease LOL." And, on the complete other hand, there are people who will go so far as to fetishize people like me, asking how I "got pozzed" and wondering if I could poz them.

The language and mythos around HIV itself are often what are the most cringey aspects. We live in a society where people are "clean" or "unclean," where people envision people living with HIV to be covered in lesions and cannot be possibly be attractive, and where the only people who get HIV are those "who deserve it:" sluts. It does not matter to society how a person actually contracted HIV. Society

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 11

– straight and gay – roars its once-a-year awe-struck approval.

I look at my self-winding watch. How quickly time runs down when you're having last-minute fun. Or so it seems tonight. Just as I reluctantly turn to go, an old familiar parade passes by.

Somehow gathered for my imagined benefit. I'm gently touched. Perhaps one final farewell with feeling for me. They wave in gaily passing ... I nod nostalgically ...

... Big Red, Jean, Eve, Rusty, The Empress, Miss Bruce, Tall Dick, Virgil, Tabu, Rita

believes that person must be a slut if they got HIV. They couldn't possibly have gotten it from a romantic partner, right? In my case, that could not be further from the truth.

I still hear from and talk to Andre every once in a while. He is eligible for funding for medication off and on, so his health fluctuates. Every few months, I'll hear of him getting another AIDS-related illness. And I worry about him. The older gays are right: I'm very privileged to live in a time when we do have medication that stops the spread of HIV, and I'm even more privileged to have the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program so that I can afford that medication (for reference, one time my funding didn't go through, and RiteAid said the medication for a month's supply was \$3,000).

But it's definitely a cultural phenomenon now. Being HIV-positive isn't who I am, but it is a part of my identity. And it is for thousands of other people across the country, too. It warrants a lot more exposure than it's currently being given.

Every HIV story is a sad story, but I'm trying to remain optimistic. I'm positive.

Jonathan W. Thurston is a Ph.D. student at Michigan State University and the editor-in-chief of Thurston Howl Publications. While he specializes in early modern animal studies in academia, he is currently working on a cultural exposé of HIV in 21st century America. He loves reading, ballroom dancing and frequenting Lansing's cafes.

Hayworth, Fran, Flo, Uncle Jimmy, Little Mama, Mack, Drano, Sky, Eve Taylor, Che Che, Fran & Wally, Bookie, Fat Jack, Bessie, Billie Hill. Rosie Bonham, Andy, Sam, Chunga, Bobby Johns, Billy & Maurice, Ruthie Ellis ... Hugs! Godspeed! Gay today. Gone tomorrow ...

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

Creep Of The Week

Karen Pence

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Imagine walking into art class one day in grade school and finding that none other than Karen Pence, wife of Vice President Mike Pence, is your teacher.



For a lot of kids, such a thing would be pretty exciting, regardless of how said kid's parents voted in 2016. I mean, hey, how many kids can claim that they have a B-level celebrity as a

teacher? Also, her watercolor paintings are actually really good.

What isn't good is the school at which Pence is teaching. Because that school, the K-8 Immanuel Christian School in Virginia, bans LGBTQ people. No gay teachers. No queer students. No lesbian lunch ladies. They don't even want LGBTQ allies working for, attending or sending their kids to the school.

And people are a little, well, grossed out that the Vice President's wife would take a job at such an unwelcoming school. It's worth pointing out that Pence worked at this same school for a dozen or so years back when her husband was a U.S. Representative. So why is it a big deal that she's going back?

Because her spotlight is brighter now. Her platform is elevated. When she was a Congressman's wife teaching there was, while still gross, pretty low-key. But no more. Now she's doubling down on a school that very explicitly discriminates against LGBTQ people. And from the very highest reaches of government that's being condoned and encouraged, and it's wrong.

This is just piling on to the harm this administration has done to LGBTQ people, whether it's reminding guidelines that aimed to protect LGBTQ students or banning transgender troops.

Not surprisingly, Pence has received criticism from the Human Rights Campaign, the ACLU and GLAAD.

"Why not teach at a school that welcomes everyone, instead of choosing one that won't serve LGBTQ kids, kids of LGBTQ parents?" JoDee Winterhof, senior vice president for policy and political affairs at the HRC told HuffPost. "The Pences never seem to miss an opportunity to show their public service only extends to some."

"This sends a terrible message to students," the ACLU tweeted, while GLAAD encouraged people to sign a petition telling Pence and Immanuel Christian School "to

This is just piling on to the harm this administration has done to LGBTQ people, whether it's reminding guidelines that aimed to protect LGBTQ students or banning transgender troops.

stop discriminating against LGBTQ students."

But the Pences also pissed off Lady Gaga. "To Mike Pence, who thinks it's acceptable that his wife work at a school that bans LGBTQ, you are wrong," Gaga said during a recent performance. "You are the worst representation of what it means to be a Christian. I am a Christian woman and what I do know about Christianity is that we bear no prejudice and everybody is welcome."

That is, of course, not the Pence brand of Christianity where being a Christian and discriminating against LGBTQ people go hand in hand and cannot be separated.

There is some confusion about what this means when it comes to freedom of religion and freedom of speech. Does Karen Pence have those rights? Yep. Can the school legally ban LGBTQ people? Yep. Does reporting on this story and/or criticizing Pence constitute an "attack?" Nope.

It's not an attack to call someone out for being awful and hateful. And it's still not an attack when you call someone out for being awful and hateful when they're doing it in the name of religion. The funny thing about freedom of religion and speech is that they work both ways. In other words, not everyone believes the same shit you do or hates the same people you do and when you're a public figure you're going to be called out no matter what you do.

So why not teach at a school that welcomes everyone? Unless, of course, Pence doesn't welcome everyone. And, yeah, she has every right to believe that LGBTQ people aren't deserving of equality, but that's a view held by a smaller and smaller group of increasingly hateful and reactionary people. Cling to that view if you choose, but don't be surprised to get shit for it.

Mike Pence rejects the idea of even questioning a school's wholesale rejection of LGBTQ people.

"To see major news organizations attacking Christian education is deeply offensive to us," he said in a statement, adding that "this criticism of Christian education in America should stop."

There's that pesky freedom of speech thing again. Criticism must absolutely continue. It's the bare minimum we can do in the face of injustice.



Creating Change Visitors: Detroit's Activism Hot Spots

BY BTL STAFF

Andy Garcia, the director of Creating Change, said he wants members of the community to leave the National LGBTQ Task Force's Creating Change conference "feeling like they understand what makes Detroit special." And part of what makes Detroit special is the ecosystem of organizations that work and support the LGBTQ community in the Motor City. A few of which are listed below.



Corktown Health Center

Corktown Health Center is Michigan's first and only health center to focus on the LGBTQ community. Not only does the health center provide comprehensive, culturally competent care, it helps train the next generation of physicians with its partnership with Wayne State University School of Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine. Corktown Health Center is located at 1726 Howard St. in Detroit.

Call 313-832-3300 or visit corktownhealth.org.

Equality Michigan

Equality Michigan is the state's leading

advocacy organization dedicated to advancing equality for LGBTQ Michiganders and their families.

"Our goal is to ensure that all LGBTQ Michiganders are afforded comprehensive protections from discrimination," said organizers. "In 2019, EQMI will work toward ending discrimination in housing, champion transgender equality, reach 25,000 voters and ban conversion therapy."

The organization works simultaneously to educate the public and secure victories by lobbying the executive branch, the Michigan Legislature and local governments on issues like amending the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as policies that promote safe schools, equitable parenting and LGBTQ health and human services.

A workshop titled Around the State in 30 Days will be held on Friday, Jan. 25, from 10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in the Greco room on the 4th floor of the Renaissance Center. The workshop will be facilitated by Serena Johnson, director of victim services, and Genny Maze, lead victim advocate. It will give an in-depth view of what it looks like to provide monthly victim services statewide in 30 days.

Equality Michigan is located at 19641 West 7 Mile Road in Detroit. For more information, call 313-537-7000 or visit equalitymi.org.

FtM Detroit

FtM Detroit is a community-based group made by and for transmasculine identified people in the greater Detroit and Southeast Michigan area. The group seeks to strengthen ties among transmasculine identified people in the area through social gatherings, discussion

and support groups, and activism projects. The group's aim is to promote positive visibility and presence of the transmasculine community, both within the queer community and in the greater Detroit area.

Learn more on Facebook at [facebook.com/FtMDetroit/](https://www.facebook.com/FtMDetroit/).



LGBT Detroit

Founded over 20 years ago, this African-American-led LGBT campus has 6,000 square feet of space for administrative programming and events. It has become the "largest property of a black-owned LGBT center in North America," said Curtis Lipscomb, LGBT Detroit's executive director. LGBT Detroit collaborates with the University of Michigan

and the University of Wisconsin schools of medicine to tackle issues like HIV, cancer and tobacco cessation. The organization operates the world's second oldest black pride, Hotter Than July, celebrating its 24th anniversary this year. Inside LGBT Detroit's #SafeBraveSpace is where social support is available and members of the community who are impacted by violence have access to free counseling.

"In many black and brown spaces, being an out LGBT person can be extremely harmful to those that disclose to family. Most African-Americans are social conservatives and still have little direct contact with people who identify as queer," Lipscomb said. "In most of urban America, there isn't an institution like ours that helps people who identify as queer. We are in a city with a high concentration of black and brown people. LGBT Detroit is another resource for people, particularly those interested in cultural competency."

LGBT Detroit is located at 20025 Greenfield Road in Detroit. Call 313-397-2127 or visit lgbtdetroit.org for more information.

Ruth Ellis Center

According to the Center's leadership, it's hard to put into context the significance of a space like the Ruth Ellis Center unless members of the community see it for themselves. That's why the agency, which provides trauma-informed services for homeless, runaway and at-risk LGBTQ youth and young adults of color has formalized a tour in collaboration with Creating Change organizers on Friday, Jan. 25, from 7:15 to 9 p.m. at the administrative offices of the Center located at 77 Victor St. in Highland Park.

REC has established itself in the Detroit community as a place that supports young

people by allowing themselves to be who they are in an authentic way.

“Be open-minded and do not hesitate to ask questions of the staff who will be present,” said Mark Erwin-McCormick, director of development and advancement at REC. “Use this as an opportunity to learn from the experiences of staff members and what it means to create a safe space for LGBTQ young people.”

Beyond the tour, the REC staff has volunteered their time to ensure that there are safe spaces available in the form of hospitality suites during the Creating Change conference.

Spiritual Hospitality Suite: Hosted by Ryan Fielder, a manager in the REC Second Stories Drop-In Center and Emani Love, community activist and organizer.

Transgender and Gender Queer Hospitality Suite: Hosted by Brandi Smith, TransJustUs coordinator, and Jeynce Mizrahi Poindexter, trans victims advocate at Equality Michigan

Youth Hospitality Suite: Hosted by Sterling Clemmons, youth service manager at the REC Second Stories Drop-In Center.

A workshop titled Ruth Ellis Center: Embedded Activism will be held on Saturday, Jan. 26, from 4:45 to 6:15 p.m. in the Ambassador Salon on the third floor of the Renaissance Center. The workshop will be facilitated by Jessie Fullenkamp, director of evaluation and education, and Angelika Lewis, evaluation and education coordinator.

More information is provided for guests in the Creating Change registration packets. REC will provide free shuttle service from the Marriott at the Renaissance Center in Detroit to the Center for the first 30 people interested.

The Center recommends using Lyft otherwise. TD Auto Finance, longtime supporters of REC, will provide volunteers and refreshments during the tour.

Contact the Ruth Ellis Center at 313-252-1950 or via email at info@ruthelliscenter.org.

Trans Sistas of Color Project

The Trans Sistas of Color Project aims to uplift, influence and impact the lives and well-being of trans women of color in Metro Detroit. What separates this group from other local organizations is that it was founded in 2015 by and for the people it serves - trans women of color.

“The programming, the events, the work we do, the emergency assistance we provide, it’s all done by trans women of color,” said Jeynce Mizrahi Poindexter of TSOCP. “All of these things are intentional because trans women of color are the ones being killed in the streets, shunned from families and forced into sex work, and are continuously victimized by entities and agencies and members of the community. We are one of the most vulnerable populations that exists. It can be really difficult for trans women of color. It’s a constant fight and we know this as trans women of color helping to uplift and empower other trans women of color.”

As larger organizations locally and nationally deal with the political issues and the legal barriers, TSOCP handles day-to-day issues such as helping trans women of color pay bills, find housing, get medication and afford transportation in the Metro Detroit area.

Learn more on Facebook at [facebook.com/TSCOPD](https://www.facebook.com/TSCOPD).



REC is offering a tour in collaboration with Creating Change organizers on Friday, Jan. 25, from 7:15 to 9 p.m. at the administrative offices of the Center located at 77 Victor St. in Highland Park.

Things to Do While in Detroit

As the National LGBTQ Task Force’s annual Creating Change conference moves into Detroit this week, more than 3,500 participants will have the opportunity to explore the Motor City.

Detroit is booming with activity and change, including tried-and-true hot spots for every gender identity, age and interest. And like many other big cities that have grown to embrace a more advanced and open attitude towards LGBTQ people, most of the establishments in and around downtown Detroit welcome all customers – including LGBTQ revelers.

There is so much to enjoy and be inspired by in the largest city in the midwestern state of Michigan. Here is a list of some of the cool things to do in Detroit right now.

Art Galleries and Museums

Carr Center, 311 E. Grand River Ave.

313-681-5554

thecarrcenter.org

Mon, Wed, Fri- 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Tue, Thur- 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, 315 E. Warren Ave.

313-494-5800

thewright.org

Tue-Sat, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sun, 1-5 p.m.

Detroit Institute of Art, 5200 Woodward Ave.

313-833-7900

dia.org

Tue-Thur, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Fri, 9 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Sat-Sun, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Detroit Artists Market, 4719 Woodward Ave.

313-832-8540

detroitartistsmarket.org

Tue-Sat, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Heidelberg Project, 3600 Heidelberg St.

313-974-6894

heidelberg.org

The outdoor art environment is free and open to the public daily, rain or shine.

MOCAD (Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit), 4454 Woodward Ave.

313-832-6622

mocadetroit.org

Wed, Sat, Sun- 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Thur, Fri- 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Motown Museum, 2648 W Grand Blvd.

313-875-2264

motownmuseum.org

Tue-Sat- 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Casinos

MotorCity Casino Hotel, 2901 Grand River Ave.

866-782-9622

motorcitycasino.com

MGM Grand Casino, 1777 3rd Ave.

877-888-2121

mgmgrandetroit.com

Greektown Casino, 555 E. Lafayette St.

313-223-2999

greektowncasino.com

LGBTQ Bars

Briggs Detroit, 519 E. Jefferson Ave.

313-656-4820

briggsdetroit.com

Mon- 6 p.m. - 12 a.m., Tue, Sun- 11 a.m. - 12 a.m.

Wed, Thur, Fri, Sat- 11 a.m. - 2 a.m.

Gigi's, 16920 W. Warren Ave.

313-584-6525

[facebook.com/gigisgaybar](https://www.facebook.com/gigisgaybar)

Mon, Wed-Sun, 8 p.m. - 2 a.m.

Menjo's Gay Entertainment Complex, 928/950 W. McNichols Road

313-863-3934

newmenjoscomplex.com

Mon-Sun, 2 p.m. - 2 a.m.

Woodward Bar & Grill, 6426 Woodward Ave.

313-872-0166

gaybe.am/Cu, Mon-Sun- 5 p.m. - 2 a.m.

Other

Eastern Market, 2934 Russell Street

Sat- 6 a.m. - 4 p.m.

313-833-9300

easternmarket.org

Pewabic Pottery, 10125 E. Jefferson Ave.

Mon-Sat- 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Sun, 12-4 p.m.

pewabic.org



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Supreme Court Greenlights Trump's Transgender Military Ban

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

The U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday issued stays on lower court orders against President Trump's transgender military ban, apparently allowing the policy to go into effect.

In orders from the court, the Supreme Court granted stays the U.S. Justice Department requested in two separate cases challenging the ban before the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, *Karnoski v. Trump* and *Stockman v. Trump*. The stays means the Trump's policy against transgender service will be allowed to go into effect as litigation moves forward.

The orders note U.S. Associate Justice Ruth Bader



were in place barring the Trump administration from enforcing the transgender military ban. All that has changed with the Supreme Court orders.

The Supreme Court grants the stay weeks after the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals issued its own order lifting a lower court stay against the transgender military ban, which reduced the number of orders to three.

Technically, another order against the transgender military ban issued by a federal court in Maryland still stands, but it's hard to see how that will be the case for long given the Supreme Court orders lifting orders in two other cases.

Sharon McGowan, legal director for Lambda Legal, pointed out the Maryland court order against the ban is in a

precarious position. Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan would have denied the application for a stay. (Since at least five justices are required for the Supreme Court to grant a stay, the order suggests Chief Justice John Roberts as well as U.S. Associate Justices Samuel Alito, Brett Kavanaugh, Neil Gorsuch and Clarence Thomas agree to grant the stay.)

Shanon Minter, legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights, said the interpretation of the orders to mean Trump's policy can go into effect is "unfortunately" correct.

"The court declined to hear the cases now, which permits our challenges to proceed in the lower courts, but it also is allowing the Trump administration to enforce the ban in the meantime," Minter said.

But Minter added the Supreme Court's stay order is "only temporary and is in place only until the Ninth Circuit issues its decision and the Court decides whether to accept review of that case."

Also pending before the court were petitions for certiorari calling for the Supreme Court to review in these cases even before the Ninth Circuit had rendered a decision. It would be a rare move for the Supreme Court to grant the cases at this stage without decisions yet from the appellate courts.

The orders note the court has yet to take action on those petitions, but if the court eventually agrees to grant a writ of certiorari and hear the cases, the stays will "terminate when the court enters its judgment."

At the start of the year, four court orders

precarious position.

"As a technical matter, there is still one remaining nationwide injunction in place – the ACLU's injunction in the Maryland case (Stone)," McGowan said. "But we suspect that DOJ will likely be back in federal court in Maryland renewing their motion for a stay in light of what SCOTUS issued this morning."

The Justice Department didn't immediately respond to the Washington Blade's request to comment on what the Supreme Court orders mean for implementation of the transgender military ban.

Laura Durso, vice president of the LGBT Research and Communications Project at the Center for American Progress, condemned the Supreme Court for allowing the transgender military ban to go into effect.

"Allowing this dehumanizing policy to remain intact for even one more day gives credence to a bogus rationale about the fitness of transgender people to serve their country," Durso said. "This is the cruel centerpiece of the Trump administration's agenda to prevent the full inclusion of transgender people in public life. It undermines military readiness and perpetuates the fear across the transgender and allied communities that this government will not protect them, not even those who would sacrifice everything to protect our nation."

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

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Reports: Russians Targeted LGBTQ Community With Disinformation

BY LISA KEEN

A Russian social media operation aimed at helping Republican nominee Donald Trump win the 2016 presidential election included efforts to polarize voters around LGBTQ issues and, in some cases, pushed LGBTQ voters to support Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders. The operation also posted a message aimed at lonely LGBTQ teenagers, an effort that is believed was intended to blackmail vulnerable youth.

“It is evident that the campaigns sought to demobilize African-Americans, LGBT and liberal voters,” states one of two reports made public Monday by the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

“This was attempted through organic posts that attacked [eventual Democratic nominee] Hillary Clinton. Content referred to President Clinton’s 2016 signing into law of the Defense of Marriage Act as an attack on the gay community, and in another, argued that Hillary supports Muslims, who the post insinuates are anti-gay.”

“Organic post” refers to posts on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, that are made without using paid services to boost distribution.

Both reports investigated the attempts by Russian operatives to use social media to spread disinformation about political issues and to create divisiveness within the American public. Both reports refer to the operatives as Russia’s Internet Research Agency. One report, “The Tactics & Tropes of the Internet Research Agency,” was produced by a firm called New Knowledge, which deals with national security

and digital media. The second report, The IRA, “Social Media and Political Polarization in the United States, 2012-2018,” was produced by experts at the University of Oxford and the social media data company Graphika.

The Oxford report noted that, of the 20 most liked Facebook pages managed by the Russian IRA, one called LGBT United ranked eighth in terms of the number of likes it received — almost 2 million. The LGBT United posts were shared almost 1 million times, prompting almost 400,000 reactions and drawing 87,500 comments.

A chart in the Oxford report indicates the investigation found the Russian IRA spent about \$5,500 on at least 70 ads targeted to LGBTQ people through websites and mobile apps. More than 80,000 people who saw the ads clicked through to reach the IRA’s Facebook page.

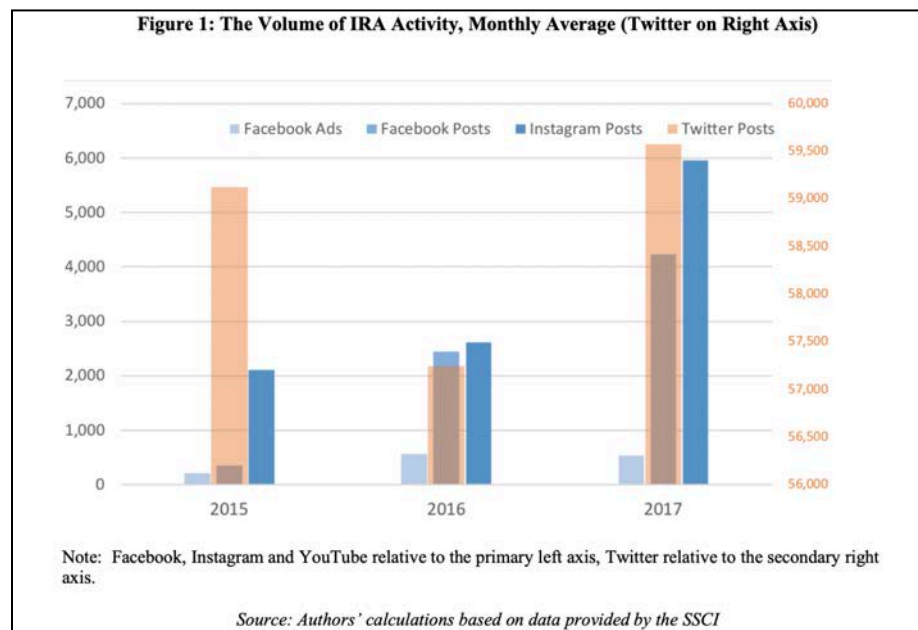
The largest targets of the IRA political messaging were African-Americans and conservative voters. Campaigns targeting the LGBTQ community were most abundant and successful during pride month, June, of 2015.

“In mid-to-late 2015,” said the report, ads about being patriotic and LGBT United “produced the majority of organic posts.”

“In 2015, there were a total of 4,108 organic posts from a few of these campaigns. In total, more than half (2,139) targeted right-wing users. ‘LGBT United’ accounted for almost all of the rest (1,814 posts).”

According to the report, the IRA messages were “framed with antagonism toward groups that are perceived as anti-gay,” including certain religious groups and right-wing conservatives.

“While there was a limited amount of



discussion that sought to drive some of these voters toward Bernie Sanders or third parties, patterns of trying to reduce trust in the political system were more apparent,” said the Oxford report. “Claims meant to demerit Hillary Clinton are occasionally peppered into this content, but are relatively infrequent. We interpret messaging to this group as an attempt to increase polarization between liberals and conservatives around LGBTQ rights, a well-known wedge issue between these groups.”

The New Knowledge report quotes an IRA Facebook account posting about the controversy surrounding a gay Breitbart contributor, Milo Yiannopoulos, and efforts to ban a speech by him on the campus of the

University of California, Berkeley.

“The fucking lefty scumbags seeded destruction around at UC Berkeley overnight in response to the planned speech by a right-wing firebrand Milo Yiannopoulos who’s an actual gay! Who’s intolerant now?” stated the post.

New Knowledge also noted that some IRA personas, such as @MRNyc2015, used statements like: “pretended to be a liberal gay man,” to deliver “active voter suppression messages,” including suggestions that “everyone needs to vote online.”

One New Knowledge report chart indicates that one of the top-performing Instagram accounts created by the IRA was rainbow_nation_us.

Pence Calls Criticism of Wife’s Anti-LGBT School ‘Deeply Offensive’

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

Vice President Mike Pence, who’s notorious for his anti-LGBT record, responded Thursday to criticism over his wife Second Lady Karen Pence teaching at a school that excludes LGBT teachers and students, calling criticism of the Christian institution “deeply offensive.”

Pence made the remarks during an interview with EWTN Global Catholic Network in response to reporter Lauren Ashurn’s inquiry over the criticism.

“My wife and I have been in the public eye for quite a while but I have to tell you, to see major news organizations attacking Christian education is deeply offensive,” Pence said. “We have a rich tradition in America of Christian education and, frankly, religious education broadly defined. We celebrate it. The freedom of religion is enshrined in the Constitution of the United States.”

Pence’s own anti-LGBT history includes as signing as Indiana governor a “religious freedom” law seen to enable anti-LGBT discrimination and a U.S. House campaign statement in 2000 indicating HIV/AIDS funds should be contingent upon funding to encourage people to change their “sexual behavior,” which many have interpreted to be an endorsement of widely discredited conversion therapy. (Pence has since denied that is what the campaign statement meant.)

Criticism of Karen Pence and her decision to teach at the Immanuel Christian School in Springfield, Va., which does not allow LGBT students or families to enroll and won’t employ LGBT applicants, emerged this week after media outlets reported on the school’s policy and Karen Pence’s decision to return there after 12 years to teach art.

The parent agreement for Immanuel Christian School states the institution can refuse admission and discontinue if the atmosphere of



Vice President Mike Pence called criticism of Karen Pence’s anti-LGBT “deeply offensive.” Washington Blade photo by Michael Key

a student’s home is contrary to biblical teaching, which includes “condoning sexual immorality, homosexual activity or bisexual activity,”

In the employment application, teachers and other staffers must agree to not engage in “moral misconduct,” such as “heterosexual

activity outside of marriage (e.g., premarital sex, cohabitation, extramarital sex), homosexual or lesbian sexual activity, polygamy, transgender identity.”

“Homosexual acts and lifestyles are clearly perversion and reprehensible in the sight of God,” the employment application says. “Persons so involved cannot be employees of Immanuel Christian School.”

Sarah Kate Ellis, CEO of the LGBT media watchdog group GLAAD, rebuked Pence on Twitter for defending the anti-LGBT policy of Immanuel Christian School.

“I’m a Christian and a lesbian who sends my children to Sunday school, so to act like all ‘Christian education’ is anti-LGBTQ is disingenuous and dangerous,” Ellis said.

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

Pocan Introduces 21st Century President Act to Clarify Women, LGBTQ Americans Can Be President

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan introduced the 21st Century President Act last week, which would change outdated legal definitions in the U.S. code to clarify that Presidents do not have to be men and their spouses do not have to be wives.

“In 2016, one of the two major party candidates for President was a woman with a husband and in 2020, for the first time in history, we may have more presidential candidates who are women than men, as well as a potential LGBTQ candidate who is married,” Pocan said. “The U.S. Code should not assume that Presidents will be men or that they will only marry women, especially when describing which people will or will not be protected by federal law. While this language may have been accepted when the original law was enacted, it does not reflect the America of today and I look forward to ensuring that federal law recognizes this reality.”

Currently, 18 U.S.C. 879 makes it a criminal act to threaten to kill, kidnap or inflict bodily harm upon the President, a former President, a candidate for President or a member of their families, while referring to Presidents as men and to their spouses as wives. In recognition of the fact that it is now the 21st Century, the “21st Century President Act” seeks to amend 18 U.S.C. 879(b)(1)(A) in the following manner:

“(1) the term ‘immediate family’ means—

with respect to subsection (a)(1) of this section, the wife spouse of a former President during his a former President’s lifetime, the widow surviving spouse of a former President until her the surviving spouse’s death or remarriage, and minor children of a former President until they reach sixteen years of age”



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David's Bridal Says 'I Do' to Same-Sex Couples in New Ad

For the first time ever, David's Bridal has featured a same-sex couple in a new ad. The Pennsylvania-based company is taking a more diverse marketing approach after filing bankruptcy late last year, according to Ad Age.

"We wanted to make sure this spot represented what we see from brides today," David's Bridal's chief marketing officer Liz Crystal told Ad Age. "We value every type of bride."

The ad, titled "Rewrite the Rules," emphasizes non-traditional brides, such as female couples, or brides who are already mothers. The idea of "rewriting the rules" will help the brand communicate its offerings to all types of brides, according to Crystal.

The current 30-second spot that features queer brides dancing will air in TV spots and will appear on social media.



Inclusive Bridal Shop Puts Disability on Display

The White Collection Bridal Boutique in Portishead, England, has taken some much-needed steps toward inclusivity.

The boutique put up a window display featuring a mannequin in a wheelchair wearing a wedding gown, which isn't seen every day, and supporters are sharing their excitement on social media.

"The new wedding shop in town has a wheelchair using mannequin and it shouldn't be exciting but it's the first time I've ever seen disability portrayed in a shop window," Beth

Wilson wrote on Twitter.

Laura Allen, the boutique owner, told Today Style in an email that she's pleased with all the attention the current display has gotten.

"We love the fact that it's so simple compared to our window display before, yet it portrays such a powerful message of inclusion," Allen said. "We certainly didn't expect (it) to get the attention that it has, but we have loved the positive comments from passersby and hope it means that one day things like this are just the norm."

For a comprehensive list of LGBTQ friendly vendors that are looking to help you with your event, visit MiLGBTWedding.com – a project of Between The Lines. The 2019 LGBT Wedding Expo is planned for October 2019. Watch this space for details.

Lovepop Cards for LGBTQ People

As much as everyone loves Valentine's Day, let's face it - trying to find the perfect gift for your loved one after the holidays can be tough. Whether it's for a new partner, a long-term Valentine, or even a friend, Lovepop's Valentine's Day cards are intricate 3D paper sculptures that your loved ones won't want to throw away. And there are a number of great LGBTQ-friendly cards. They can be used as an addition to another gift, or as a gift in itself. Think of it as a bouquet of flowers that never dies.

For more information, visit lovepopcards.com/collections/valentines-day-greeting-cards.



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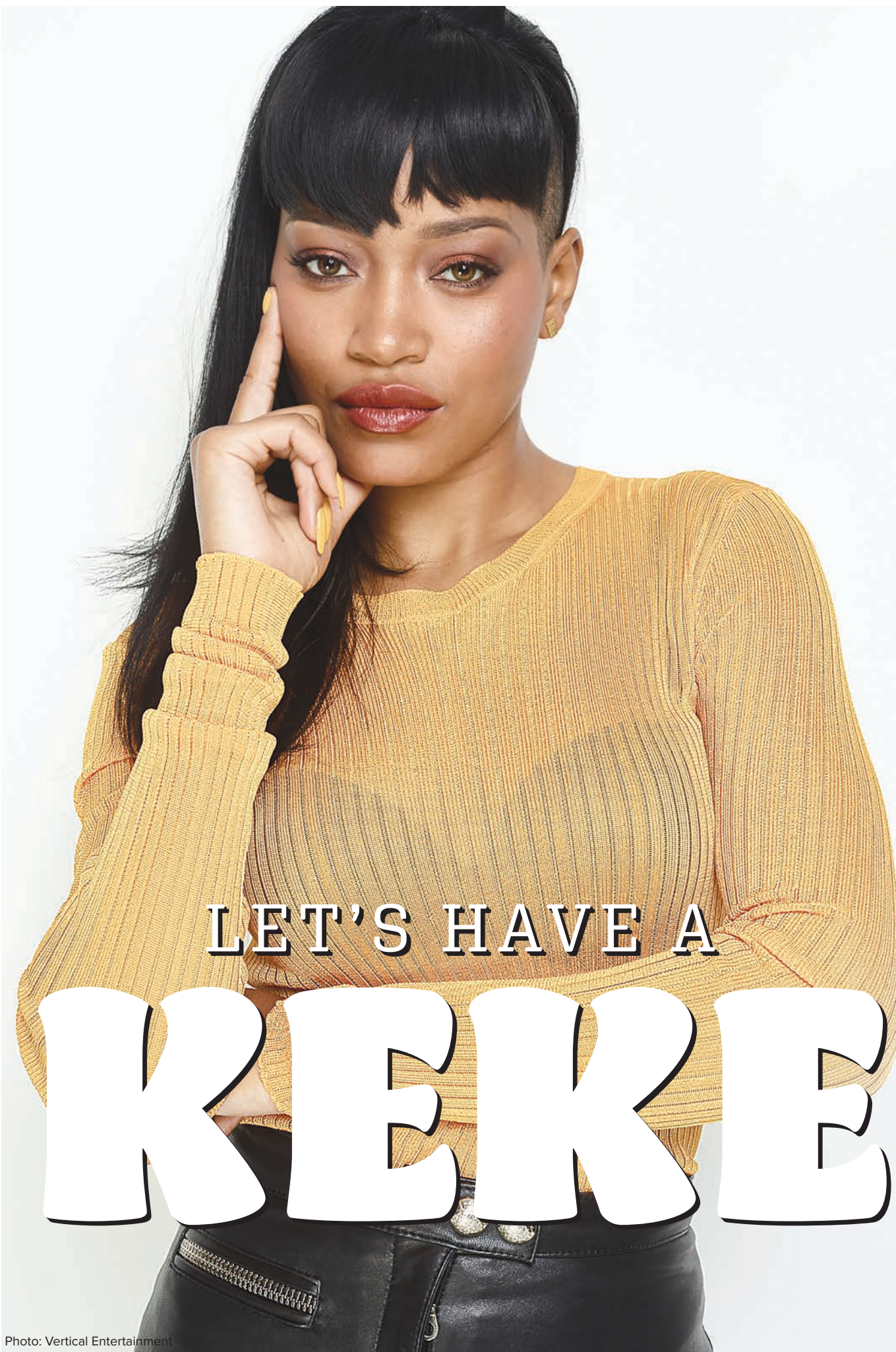


Photo: Vertical Entertainment

Disney-Turned-'Pimp' Star Reflects on Coming Out, Talks Blurring Gender Lines and What James Dean Taught Her

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Keke Palmer is not a girl, not yet – oh wait, she *is* a woman. It happened so fast, but here we are: With her squeaky-clean Nickelodeon and Disney Channel days behind her, Palmer disappears into her latest rough-and-buff turn as the eponymous lesbian street hustler anchoring the Lee Daniels-produced drama “Pimp,” now streaming on most digital platforms. Hair pulled back into a mohawk-shaped waterfall of braids and buzzed on both sides whilst presenting a chiseled physique and altogether hard aesthetic, there’s nary a trace of Palmer, Child Star.

Palmer’s work after her breakout role as 11-year-old Akeelah Anderson in the 2006 drama “Akeelah and the Bee” has epitomized the makings of a precocious multi-hyphenate: beyond her film career, which also includes 2012’s “Joyful Noise,” the 25-year-old Illinois native starred on TV’s “Scream Queens,” a Ryan Murphy production, and can currently be seen on the Epix spy drama “Berlin Station”; her theater roles include the televised “Grease: Live” and Broadway’s “Rodgers + Hammerstein’s Cinderella” as Cinderella herself (she was the first actor of color to play the role in this particular production of the princess classic); she has one proper studio album, her 2007 debut “So Cool,” and another on the way; and in 2017, she wrote a book, “I Don’t Belong to You: Quiet the Noise and Find Your Voice,” documenting her journey thus far.

In 2015, Palmer came out as sexually fluid in the video for her song “I Don’t Belong to You.” In the clip, she’s seen in bed with a man but ends up at the house of a woman, played by fellow singer Cassie. Here, Palmer reflects on the LGBTQ community’s reaction to her coming out and discusses embracing her masc energy, what James Dean taught her about sexuality, normalizing queer black characters and an irksome double standard in the bisexual community.

Keke, one thing is for sure: “Pimp” is not an episode of Nickelodeon’s “True Jackson.”

(Laughs) Oh my gosh, it’s definitely a total different project and different tone. I just felt like I was really stepping outside myself, that’s for sure.

Was that intentional? Were you craving something

grittier?

Step outside myself, for sure. I started developing this project right after "True Jackson," like a year after kind of doing the same thing. I think TV naturally can be a little bit repetitive, and when you're doing a children's network, it can really only go so far (with) subjects and content matter and what you can talk about. So, for me, I was really just looking for something that would allow me a challenge as an actor.

What was the biggest challenge working on this film?

The biggest challenge was letting go – letting go without fear of doing a character that's so different from yourself. And it's an intense role; you really kind of have to let go. And it's not a positive (role): Wednesday has a lot of negative dynamics around her that she's been dealing with throughout her life. Doing it was not necessarily hard but actually being in that kind of headspace for so long was difficult.

There are a lot of unfortunate things going on around her, but the least of her worries is her sexuality. That's refreshing.

Exactly.

Was playing someone who's a lesbian a draw?

I can't say her sexuality itself was a draw, but what you're saying (was). I like the character as a whole. I liked everything about her. I think what attracted me to her the most was her strength. This kind of character being a lead character and being female is not what we see often, so that's what attracted me the most. Just that she was tough, and she was cool, and I didn't really think too much about who she slept with, although I was delighted by the love story between her and her girlfriend. But I just saw it simply as a love story as opposed to a gay love story and a dynamic between women that we haven't seen in that kind of way. It wasn't oversexualized, and I really loved the way that her sexuality was displayed in the film. It wasn't exploited.

And by depicting her sexuality in a matter-of-fact way, it helps to normalize it.

Somebody might say she's a quote-unquote "stud" or she's not a femme – there's a lot of language that's used in the community. Having said that, Wednesday has both. That's what I love about Wednesday, and I really tried to make that apparent. Wednesday is masculine and feminine. She has elements of both, and she and her girlfriend share those positions with each other, so I feel like it's the same way in all relationships whether you're same sex or not. And again, that's what I loved about the film: We weren't just doing something that's stereotypical; we weren't just giving you this hard-up, one-note (character) and she's just flat – no, she's a human.

Was her gender fluidity written in the script?

I think her being tough was a part of the script, but the nuances brought to it, that

was definitely me. Just because myself, I have elements of high masculinity just as much as I have elements of high femininity, and in Wednesday, I really got to explore those elements in myself a lot more. I enjoyed that because I think women are strong, and though Wednesday is a lesbian, I don't think masculinity defines your sexuality. I think that's you as person.

Can you give me an example of how you feel you've embraced your masculinity?

I can't say I can think of one where it's glaringly obvious, but I think in general I don't ever choose what people would expect me to say or how people would expect me to respond to anything as a woman or as a black person or as anybody in general. As a person I don't feel like I fit into many boxes of identity.

You played TLC's Chilli in the Lifetime biopic "CrazySexyCool: The TLC Story." She doesn't strike me as someone who is straight-up feminine.

Yeah, not at all. And that's the thing, it doesn't have to be as obvious as, oh, this person's wearing their pants low and they got a big top on. Masculinity can be as small as you sitting with your legs open.

It can be an attitude.

It can be an attitude. Masculinity is different. It can be just how you approach a situation, or energy you're putting off in this particular moment. I think I've had that many times; especially when I'm creating boundary lines, I've definitely had it. When I'm trying to pursue something platonic with another male, sometimes I will be masculine to let them know, "Hey, you my homeboy; what's good?"

How do you hope this movie speaks to queer black women?

Man, I just think it allows opportunity to get more knowledge in accepting one another. I don't think the black community has been as hard on lesbian women as much as they've been on homosexual men. But one of my cousins is just like Wednesday, and so I think for us it really just more so maybe can take the light off the fact that this is a gay person, and more so this is a person and really wrap ourselves into this specific person's world, not a gay person but this person that's not just defined solely by these aspects of her life. Really just give this character a human opportunity to stand on her own. Because like I said, a lot of times with these characters, they're just supporting roles, they're not the lead, they're not someone you would feel for; they're most likely someone you get to judge and they're kind of a spectacle. So that's what I love about this movie: We're normalizing something that has been around and has been normal for years, but now we're just giving it the opportunity to breathe and the light to shine.

See Keke, continued on p. 22

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When you first came to terms with your own sexuality, did you have role models? Anyone in the business from the LGBTQ community you looked to for inspiration?

Maybe when I was like 18, 19, I was kind of like, “What does this mean?” But I think growing up in L.A., you kind of feel OK to be yourself. I think the kind of energy of the culture of L.A., or Hollywood, is that it’s OK to be yourself and that it’s OK to experience things and find who you are.

So, I didn’t feel like I needed someone to look to in order to be comfortable with that, but at the same time I think it was more so being comfortable with myself as opposed to me looking outwardly for comfort. It was just kind of me saying, “OK, it’s not a big deal; this is who I am and I can be who I wanna be and date who I wanna date,” and it was just being more relaxed about all of that.

But like I said before, I don’t think there is much fear maybe for a woman when it comes to being bisexual or being fluid or being queer or whatever anybody calls it. I think in that regard, maybe I had an easier time. And then my family is not typical in terms of that: My mom has always said when I was young, before I even thought of any of that stuff, that if her kids were (LGBTQ) she would just want the person to be cute! (Laughs) But that’s not everybody’s story.

But you were also a young star who was on shows for kids on Nickelodeon where I imagine the expectations were high to be –

Perfect. Yeah, I felt it more there in that regard than in terms of my sexuality.

Did being a child star ever stifle your sexuality?

Mmm... I don’t think that it stifled my sexuality. I think other things stifled my sexuality, like my idea of who I had to be or what type of young woman I was, how people viewed me. Honestly, I never felt stifled by – I think I felt maybe confused by it at a certain time, but just as confused as I would’ve been in general with understanding my feelings with dating and all that kind of stuff.

But I allowed my journey to be my own and, like I said, I grew up in a community of people where many of my friends were also gay or they were fluid and we didn’t really put different things on ourselves in terms of our sexual identity. We was just kind of like, “You know, I’m going on a date with so-and-so, I’m doing this.” It wasn’t seen as anything more than just us being ourselves. And maybe that’s the millennial way. Maybe I got born in the perfect generation.

Yeah, I got on the wrong boat. I got on the one before you.

(Laughs) I’m telling you: These millennials are accepting. I read something as a teen that was telling me how James Dean was sexually



Keke Palmer stars in “Pimp.” Photo: Vertical Entertainment

fluid and that was the first time I had ever seen or heard that term. I thought it was really cool that it was a male who was open and being honest about something like that in that era. I remember when I saw that I really loved it because I think often I feel like it’s much harder for males to have that idea than it is for women.

People assume when a man dates another man he can’t date another woman, and I’ve had many friends and many relationships with people who I felt like that was a really big crutch for them in being OK with their own identity because the reality was they weren’t in the closet, they weren’t hiding. They did like men, but they did like women. And the unfortunate thing about it was that a lot of women couldn’t accept that (he was with men), so when I saw that I remember seeing that thing with James Dean and I really loved it because I’m like, “What’s the problem if a guy likes both?”

There’s a double standard there.

I hate it.

What kind of attention did “I Don’t Belong to You” get you from queer women? Were more slipping into your DMs?

(Laughs) Yeah, sure! I think a lot of people were kind of like, “Oh, I knew it,” or something like this. And that’s always funny. I think if anything would be quote-unquote “obvious” it would just be my openness as a human being. I truly believe sexuality is a spectrum. I believe you’re meant to find love wherever it finds you, so if it happens to find you (with) the same sex, what a travesty it would be that you denied it because you’ve been walking around your life the whole 10 years being a heterosexual.

I worked with a director once, and in just

regular conversation it happened to slip out that she was married to a woman. What I loved about her is that she said, “But I dated men for many years; I just happened to find true love with this woman.” And I loved that because that’s what life is. We put so many labels on stuff to be gay, straight, dah dah dah, when in reality, in the ancient times, it was seen as very special when you could find love with the same sex. And in the Native American community it was called “two spirit” and I think in our Western culture we work so hard to define everybody and everything that we lose the soul.

I think that’s what I also loved about “Pimp.” It isn’t about the label. She found love in this little girl and they found protection in each other as children, so I mean, that’s where they found love. It’s not about what their label is, it’s about the fact that they found love. And I feel like people should stop trying to make everybody fit into a box and just let people live their life. Define themselves the way they choose.

You have new music and visuals on the way this year. And it’s been exciting to see more out LGBTQ artists like Troye Sivan and Hayley Kiyoko express their queerness without reservation...

Oh yeah, I love Hayley!

Will your sexual fluidity influence the narrative and visuals of your upcoming project?

I haven’t thought about it just yet. With the visuals that I have, a lot of them are just kind of dancing or little bitty things here and there. But if I feel like there is the opportunity to say something, then I always will. Just like when I did “I Don’t Belong to You,” it was a statement piece. If I’m trying to specifically say something, then yes, because again I feel like my sexuality is who I find love with, so

my music will mirror that.

I don’t even really have a question, but I just need to acknowledge that, with “Joyful Noise,” you worked with Dolly Parton and Queen Latifah in the same movie.

Man, I was so happy that I got to do that, OK?! Because it was just so cool. I love Queen Latifah – that was my third acting project with her. And working with Dolly Parton was just so, so special and awesome because she’s such a sweet, sweet woman and she would bring us fudge bars on set.

Homemade fudge bars?

Homemade fudge bars. And I would be so scared on set when I had to do my kissing scene and she would just be there to comfort me. I’ve always been a quote-unquote “tomboy” and also into girly stuff, but I’ve always felt more comfortable in more comfortable clothes – in sportswear, I always felt more comfortable, chill like that – and I remember asking her, “How are you beautiful like this every day? How can you do this?” She said, “I just made a choice when I was younger, and I wanted to be that way, so I get up every day and I make sure that it’s the way that I’m presented.”

I remember just thinking that was so amazing, and that was kind of my first lesson in “we are what we repeatedly do.” That was something she wanted to be a part of who she was – we know Dolly Parton as being fabulous 24/7, and it’s not an easy thing to do, so I really just loved that about her. I loved learning about her during that production. I would love to be like that.

But then you think of all the time and energy it takes...

Oh, child!

Do you see yourself as a role model for queer black girls?

That’s such a hard one. I can’t tell someone what to see me as, but there are certain things that I feel could be communicated better in the world and so I use my platform for that. When I did my song “I Don’t Belong to You” I talked about that a lot. I talked also about gender fluidity, that you as a woman aren’t defined by A, B, C and D, that you as a man aren’t defined by A, B, C and D.

I speak a lot on being a black female, being a female, being a millennial; if any of those things attract somebody to say, “I like what she says, she’s a role model to me,” then of course that’s cool. But I don’t try to think too much about being a role model as much as I think about being myself and speaking on the issues that are important to me.

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



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Michigan's Food Safety Efforts Continue During Federal Shutdown

BY BTL STAFF

LANSING – Since Dec. 22, the federal government has been partially shut down, affecting some services and duties of federal agencies, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. During this time, food inspectors from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development as well as food sanitarians from Michigan's 45 local health departments continue to conduct food safety inspections to protect public health and the safety of the state's food supply.

"Ensuring the safety of the state's food supply is paramount to protecting public health and helping to grow Michigan's \$104.7 billion food and agriculture economy," said Gary McDowell, MDARD director. "Although food safety programs are not at full capacity on the federal level, MDARD food inspectors and food sanitarians from Michigan's local health departments are on the front lines across Michigan every day to maintain the high-

level of confidence in the safety of the state's food supply."

MDARD and local health departments respond to all complaints and conduct routine, risk-based inspections every day to help ensure our food supply is safe. They also partner with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and public health officials at the local level to identify and respond to foodborne illness outbreaks, and conduct recalls when food products are identified as a potential source of foodborne illness.

MDARD inspects grocery stores and other food establishments, processing facilities and wholesale food operations; while local health departments inspect restaurants, cafeterias and other food service operations at schools and hospitals throughout Michigan. These inspections work to ensure food safety rules and regulations are enforced, and to identify and correct any problems found, thereby protecting public health and food supply.


"Local health departments, along with MDARD, are the boots on the ground

every day to make sure the food served at Michigan restaurants, school lunch rooms and hospitals is safe and wholesome," said Meghan Swain, executive director of the Michigan Association for Local Public Health. "We are proud of the role we play as an integral part of Michigan's food safety assurance system."

As part of MDARD's regular inspection process, inspectors may take random samples of various food products to test for foodborne pathogens at the department's Geagley Laboratory. If a foodborne pathogen — like listeria, E. coli or salmonella — is found, then MDARD will ensure the product is removed from commerce and work to address the source of the problem.

"A seamless food safety regulatory system that involves many regulatory layers on the federal, state and local levels is key to preventing foodborne illness and protecting public health," McDowell said. "We hope our federal partners are back to business as usual soon, which will bring all food safety efforts up to full capacity."

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Happenings



Kelly Clarkson at Little Caesars Arena Feb. 21

As part of her “Meaning of Life Tour,” Grammy Award-winner Kelly Clarkson will make her way to Detroit for the midwestern leg of her show. Also, she’ll be joined by performers Kelsea Ballerini and Brynn Cartelli who were Grammy-nominated and season winners of NBC’s “The Voice” respectively. Find out more about the performance by going online to ticketmaster.com. Tickets start at \$29.

OUTINGS

Friday, January 25

31st Creating Change Conference 2019 6:30 a.m. The National LGBTQ Task Force’s 2019 Creating Change Conference convenes in Detroit. We are excited to host our annual national movement gathering in the Motor City. Detroit Marriott at Renaissance Center, 400 Renaissance Drive West, Detroit. 313-568-8000. marriott.com. creatingchange.org.

Saturday, January 26

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. Every Saturday at 11 a.m. Java Hut Ferndale Michigan, 165 W. 9 mile, Ferndale. 248-632-8274. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

Monday, January 28

‘Phantom’ Cast to Perform Benefit Concert for Affirmations, Broadway Cares 6 p.m. Cast members of the national touring production of ‘The Phantom of the Opera’ will perform a special concert ‘Next to Normal’ to benefit Affirmations and Broadway Cares/Equity Fights Aids. The Loving Touch, 22634 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 248-820-5596. thelovingtoughferndale.com.

LGBT Game Night 7 p.m. LGBT Game

Night is an opportunity for all LGBT people and allies to come play a board game, drink coffee and socialize with other LGBT individuals. Java Hut, 165 W Nine Mile, Ferndale. 248-632-8274. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

Wednesday, January 30

Affirmations Senior Koffee Clatch! 1 p.m. A discussion and networking group for people 45 and older. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org.

Rainbow League Bowling! 7 p.m. This is a fun bowling league and provides a great opportunity for anybody to become acquainted with bowling. The 2018-2019 season celebrates our 26th season. Lodge Lanes, 46255 S. I-94 Service Drive, Belleville. 734-697-9178. info@a2bowling.com. lodgeLANES.com. rainbowbowlingleague.com.

Sunday, February 3

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

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Adrian-Lenawee County 6:30 p.m. Free. For parents of transgender kids. Contact facilitator Socorro Sevilla, MSW:

socorro@hilltopcounseling.org. Hilltop Counseling, 115 W. Maumee St., Adrian. 313-909-5408. standwithtrans.org. hilltopcounseling.org.

Tuesday, February 5

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

Thursday, February 7

Juliana Huxtable 5 p.m. She is an American artist, writer, performer, and musician. Exploring the intersections of race, gender, queerness, technology and identity. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. stamps.umich.edu.

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. Thunderbowl Arena, 4200 Allen Road, Allen Park. 313-928-4688. thunderbowl.org.

Friday, February 8

Wanda Sykes at the Detroit Music Hall 8 p.m. Wanda Sykes is an American actress, comedian and writer. She was first recognized for her work as a writer on “The Chris Rock Show,” for which she won a Primetime Emmy Award in 1999. Detroit Music Hall, 350 Madison St., Detroit. 313-887-8501. musicHall.org.

Saturday, February 9

Cougar Hunt Presented by Tito’s Handmade Vodka 8 p.m. All you sexy cougars come out for a fun night to crown Ferndale’s Queen Cougar for 2019. Any ladies interested in strutting their stuff for Ferndale Pride, come on out! Winner receives prizes and becomes queen. Soho, 205 W. 9 Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-542-7646. ferndalesoho.com. titosvodka.com/events.

Monday, February 11

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

Tuesday, February 12

Serving Up Knowledge: Queering Black History Month 12 p.m. Bring a lunch and join us for our session on Queering Black History Month. Open to all OU students! OC Rooms 128-129, gsc@oakland.edu.

MUSIC & MORE

Jazz & Soul Singer Sky Covington & Club Crescendo Live Every Thursday Night at Northern Lights Lounge January 24, 9 p.m. Jimi Blues on Keys,

Alex Brooks on Drums, Greg Cook on Bass and Special Guest. Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore, Detroit. 248-445-1277. northernlightslounge.com.

The Novi Home Show is Back!

January 25, 2 p.m. Suburban Collection Showplace, 46100 Grand River Ave., Novi. 586-752-6381. gmonette@allseasonscommunications.com.

42nd Ann Arbor Folk Festival @ Hill Auditorium

January 25, 6:30 p.m. Get Ready to Find Your Folk! The annual Ann Arbor Folk Festival returns for two dynamic and different nights of folk and roots music. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 734-763-TKTS. theark.org.

Detroit Zoo Kicks Off Wild Winter Weekends

February 2, 10 a.m. Wild Winter is a fun way to experience the magic of the Zoo in winter. The Detroit Zoo, 8450 W. 10 Mile Road, Royal Oak. detroitzoo.org.

53rd Annual Detroit RV and Camping Show

February 6, 2 p.m. The Michigan Association of Recreation Vehicles and Campgrounds is sponsoring the 53rd Annual Detroit RV & Camping Show. All types of recreation vehicles, nearly 400 RVs, will be displayed. Suburban Collection Showplace, 46100 Grand River Ave., Novi. 586-752-6381. novihomeshow.com. marvac.org.

A John Williams Celebration! February 10, 3 p.m. For five decades, Leonard Slatkin has championed the diverse music of America. This three-week festival begins with a cross-country musical travelogue of sorts from Morton Gould, Joan Tower, Leonard Bernstein and Virgil Thompson, plus Ferde Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. dso.org.

Carrie Mae Weems February 14, 5 p.m. For over 30 years Carrie Mae Weems, through the use of image, text, film and video, has created a complex body of work that centers on her overarching commitment to helping us better understand our Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. stamps.umich.edu.

Appalachian Spring February 14, 7:30 p.m. In the second week of programs highlighting American music, Leonard Slatkin leads Adagios for Strings by Samuel Barber and Cindy McTee, Copland’s Appalachian Spring and Leonard Bernstein “Age of Anxiety” Symphony. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. dso.org.

‘Southern Comfort’ Auditions at Stagecrafters Second Stage Theatre

Royal Oak’s Stagecrafters Second Stage Theatre will be holding auditions for the musical, “Southern Comfort” on Sunday, Jan. 27, and Monday, Jan. 28, at 7 p.m. at the Baldwin Theatre, located at 415 S. Lafayette in downtown Royal Oak.

“Southern Comfort” tells the story of Robert Eads, a transgender man and his chosen family of friends, most of whom are transgender during the last year of his life. Featuring a folk and bluegrass score, the musical is was first produced at the New York Public Theatre in 2016 and is the first musical to focus on the lives of transgender and gender non-conforming people.

Director Jay Kaplan, who by day is the Project Staff Attorney for the ACLU of Michigan’s LGBT Project states that he’s hoping “to cast actors and singers of diverse gender identities, expressions and ethnicities.”

Performance dates are April 26 through May 12, Thursdays through Sunday. For more information about the musical and auditioning, contact Jay at Kaplan@aclumich.org.

ART ‘N’ AROUND

Flint Institute of Arts 12th Annual Community Gala January 26, 6 p.m. Community Gala is a diversity initiative presented in conjunction with the exhibition openings of Vanessa German: Miracles and Glory Abound and Engaging African Art: Works from the Dr. Horn Collection, and the celebration of Black History Month. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 810-234-1695. flintarts.org.

Amanda Williams and Andres L. Hernandez January 31, 5 p.m. A visual artist who trained as an architect, Amanda Williams’ practice blurs disciplinary distinctions. She employs color as a way to draw attention to the political complexities of race, place and value in cities. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. stamps.umich.edu.

Erotic Poetry and Music Festival at Tangent Gallery February 23, 8 p.m. Come join us for an eclectic celebration

of the erotic arts all in one evening! Featuring poetry, art, music, burlesque and more! Tangent Gallery, 715 East Milwaukee Ave., Detroit. 248-445-1277. facebook.com.

THEATER

Stagecrafters Presents If/Then January 25, 8 p.m. What if? At the heart of every choice we’ve ever made lies this question. What if we had chosen differently? How would our lives be changed? Baldwin Theatre, 415 South Lafayette, Royal Oak. 248-541-8027. stagecrafters.org.

Williamston Theatre Presents ‘To Quiet the Quiet’ January 25, 8 p.m. Having suffered great loss and heartbreak in her life, Kathy, now middle-aged and alone, is a woman on the edge. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road, Williamston. 517-655-SHOW. info@williamstontheatre.org.

The Phantom of the Opera Returns!

Editor’s Pick

Ann Arbor Pride Happy Hour

Hosted by the Jim Toy Community Center, those interested in donating to Ann Arbor Pride are invited to stop by at the event, mix and mingle and get to know local Ann Arbor LGBTQ leaders Katie Scott and Jason Morgan. Tickets are \$35 and include two drink vouchers, appetizers and entry into the event. The center is located at 319 Braun Court in Ann Arbor. Find out more at the community center’s Facebook page.



Editor's Pick

Meet Artist Vanessa German

Vanessa German is a sculptor, painter, writer, poet and activist based out of the Homewood neighborhood in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her varied works — which explore the U.S.' history of violence, hate and materialism and how it relates to current societal issues — will be on display in an exhibition called “Miracles and Glory Abound” at the Flint Institute of Arts. Lasting from Jan. 27 through April 20 of this year, German will attend the opening of her exhibit on Sunday, Jan. 27, from 1 to 2 p.m. Find out more information about the event at flintarts.org.



January 25, 8 p.m. Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera" makes its triumphant return to Detroit as part of its North American Tour. Critics are raving that this breathtaking production is "bigger and better than ever before." Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 313-237-SING. broadwayindetroit.com.

The House on Poe Street at The Detroit Repertory Theatre January 25, 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. detroitreptheatre.com.

Cabaret 313 Presents University of Michigan Musical Theatre Seniors January 26, 7 p.m. As the University of Michigan Musical Theatre seniors prepare for their annual Theatrical Industry Showcase in New York City, they discover songs that they fall in love with but do

not quite make the final cut. N'Namdi Center for Contemporary Art, 52 E. Forest Ave., Detroit. 313-831-8700. nnamdicer.org. cabaret313.org.

A2CT Auditions for Now.Hear.This. January 27, 7 p.m. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre announces auditions for its Second Stage production of Now. Here. This., with book by Hunter Bell and Susan Blackwell, and music and lyrics by Jeff Bowen. Children's Creative Center, 1600 Pauline Blvd, Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228. a2ct.org/audition.

American Privilege February 1, 7:30 p.m.

This unique theatrical event will use live experiences of our Detroit community to gain insight into how privilege has both oppressed and unified beautiful and complex identities in 21st Century America. The Marlene Boll Theatre, 1401 Broadway, Detroit. tasiopeg@udmercy.edu. detroitmercyarts.com.

THE HOW AND THE WHY by Sarah 'Treem' Michigan Premiere February 1, 8 p.m. Two female evolutionary biologists share a bold, contrarian approach to their male-dominated field, but the younger scholar challenges the older woman's work with a radical new theory. Theatre NOVA, 410 W. Huron, Ann Arbor. 734-635-8450. A2TheatreNOVA@gmail.com.

'Reap the Grove' by Caity-Shea Violette February 1, 8 p.m. An estranged family reunites for their mother's final days. "Reap The Grove" is a poignant and darkly funny exploration of partnership, transgenerational trauma, and the anticipated grief of death with dignity. Matrix Theatre Company, 2730 Bagley St., Detroit. 313-967-0599. info@matrixtheatre.org.

'Angels in America' – Parts I and II February 8, In this two-part epic, Prior Walter, a young man living in NYC in 1985, is diagnosed with AIDS. His boyfriend, Louis, struggling to cope with the disease and his own fears, abandons him. Hillberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. 313-577-2972. theatreanddance.wayne.edu.

Wanted Dead or Alive February 15, 7 p.m. The Experts in Mystery Entertainment are now performing live public and private interactive murder mystery dinner shows in Livonia and surrounding areas throughout Michigan. Burton Manor, 27777 Schoolcraft Road. shows@themurdermysterycompany.com. grimprov.com.

A2CT Junior Theatre Workshop: Youth Choreography and Movement February 16, 1 p.m. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre will hold a workshop on choreography and movement for young actors, as a part of Civic's theater education series. A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228. a2ct.org.

Editor's Pick

Ferndale Cougar Hunt

Presented by Tito's Handmade Vodka, cougars 35 years and older are encouraged to swing by to SOHO Ferndale on Saturday, Feb. 9, for a night to crown Ferndale's Queen Cougar.

"Any ladies interested in strutting their stuff for Ferndale Pride, come on out," write event organizers. "Winner receives prizes and the distinct honor of dethroning Kristine Vidojevski and becoming Ferndale Pride's official cougar."

The event lasts from 8 to 11:30 p.m. Find out more information on the SOHO Ferndale Facebook page.



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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Fossil hunting with Kate Winslet and Saoirse Ronan

You already know Kate Winslet and you're finally figuring out who the staggeringly talented Saoirse Ronan ("Mary Queen of Scots") is, even if you still can't quite pronounce her name. But soon you'll get a fresh chance to learn the name Francis Lee, the director whose beautifully queer independent drama, "God's Own Country," won the World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award for Directing at Sundance 2017, as well as Best Film at the British Independent Film Awards. He's got a new movie in the works called "Ammonite" starring the aforementioned A-listers, and we think it's poised to be the next contender in the lesbian fave sweepstakes. Winslet will star as 19th-century paleontologist Mary Anning (credited with making important scientific discoveries in the Jurassic marine fossil beds along the English Channel), with Ronan as the young woman Anning develops a relationship with during a seaside convalescence. With credits like this in the mix, we're guessing awards and stuff, and a lot of windswept English natural beauty. It shoots in March, even though we're sort of ready for it right now. We'll just make do with watching "Carol" for the 13th or 23rd time until this one's ready.

Gregg Araki presents "Apocalypse" soon

Veteran indie filmmaker Gregg Araki ("Mysterious Skin"), pioneer of the New Queer Cinema, has a new series coming to Starz in March. It's called "Now Apocalypse"; he co-wrote it with Vogue.com sex columnist Karley Sciortino (Viceland's "Sluterver" series) and he's got heavy-hitter co-producers Steven Soderbergh ("Logan Lucky") and Gregory Jacobs ("Magic Mike XXL") on board. As usual it's populated by a sexy young cast - Avan Jogia ("Twisted"), Kelli Berglund ("Lab Rats"), Beau Mirchoff ("The Fosters"), and Roxane Mesquida ("Kaboom") - and set in a fractured version of Los Angeles where everyone is chasing love, sex, money and fame, until people start having prophetic dreams about dark conspiracies and, well, the apocalypse. Whatever, it'll be hazily glamorous and there'll be old Cocteau Twins songs on the soundtrack, right? We're ready.

Nico Tortorella is coming soon with "Fluidity"

It's not every day that a niche cable hottie comes out the way Nico Tortorella did. The snackish co-star of "Younger" and co-host of MTV's bizarrely addictive "How Far is Tattoo Far?" (the show where frenemies blindfold each other and commit heinous acts of tattooing as revenge) didn't just casually shrug into gayness. No, Tortorella did it up in grand style, by coming out as non-binary (pronoun usually "they" but seems fairly chill about it), polyamorous, married in complementary wedding gowns to their non-binary bisexual partner Bethany Meyers, and then going on "The Wendy Williams Show" to joyfully explain it everybody. Obviously, we're fans now. Which means we



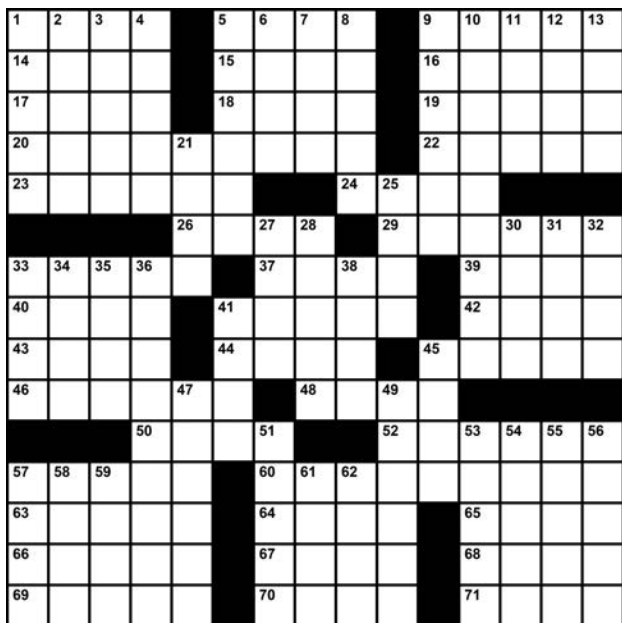
Kate Winslet. Photo: KathClick

will be hunting down a little film called "Fluidity" from director Linda Yellen when it gets itself out of post-production and onto the queer film festival circuit. It would appear to be about a bunch of Millennials looking for love and intimacy in New York, and finding out that they're all... fluid? Look, we don't really know. But we're extremely ready for Nico's red carpet look.

"Queer as Folk" getting the Bravo reboot?

It appears that it's time to inflict "Queer as Folk" on a whole new generation. The 1999 UK series, created by Russell T. Davies, the one that launched Charlie Hunnam's career, and spawned an extremely popular and hilariously hate-watchable Showtime series set in the wildest, sparkliest Pittsburgh you've (n)ever seen, might be returning to American television thanks to Bravo. Davies is already on board as an executive producer, though there's no cast set up yet and no word on any other details either. Listen, make it happen, Bravo, because we're going to watch; in fact, we're into it all the way, but when it shows up we do hope everyone on the creative team understands that we have "Pose" now and the "L Word" reboot in the works, and "Drag Race" and queer characters and queer narratives on other programs and the entire queer internet to keep us entertained, so a little trio of gay white twinkles is, frankly, from the olden times. What we're saying is... y'all better werk.

Romeo San Vicente is hard at work erasing binaries.



- 40 Director Kazan
 41 Type of hole
 42 Worker on Broadway
 43 Ghostbusters role
 44 Apollo's plaything
 45 Susan's role on "Fued"
 46 Johansson kisser Bullock
 48 Slight advantage
 50 Verdi work adapted by John
 52 Like "Beauty and the Beast"
 57 Shaped like balls
 60 Broadcasting company that airs 20-Across
 63 Bert's longtime companion
 64 Stadium namesake Arthur
 65 Isn't getting any younger
 66 Ceremony at Beth Simchat Torah
 67 Laurel of laughs
 68 Wise guy
 69 They hang from utility belts and under them
 70 Mall bag
 71 Love of Lesbos
- 10 "Whip It" star who cohosts 20-Across
 11 Singer Dobkin
 12 Pussy ___ of punk rock
 13 Becomes Jell-o
 21 Wheels, so to speak
 25 Remembering the S&M, perhaps
 27 War partner
 28 Julianne of "The Hours"
 30 "Kiss of the Spider Woman"'s William
 31 Polish up the copy
 32 Like a fruit ready to eat
 33 Lawyers' charges
 34 Russian saint
 35 Pride member
 36 Sri Lankan cricketer who cohosts 20-Across
 38 Rep on the street
 41 Gay, even to heteros
 45 Gymnast's perch
 47 Dykes on Bikes, e.g.
 49 "What the Dead Remember" writer Harlan
 51 "Cease!" on the seas
 53 Style some hair, in "Hairspray"
 54 Second name in cross-dressing
 55 Frida's husband
 56 Oxygen and nitrogen
 57 Silence for Tchaikovsky
 58 Chocolate sandwich
 59 Disengage, as a bra hook
 61 Words in an analogy
 62 Converse at OurTime, e.g.

"What's Up?" Documentary QPuzzle

Across

- 1 Samurai's libation
 5 Sites for three women in a tub
 9 Benjamin Britten's Peter
 14 Wasn't straight
 15 Sushi ingredient
 16 Stan's sidekick
 17 Potent opening
 18 Paintings and such, to da Vinci
 19 "Cats" was based on his kitty lit

- 20 Documentary series that explores LGBTQ cultures around the world
 22 Sends a nude selfie, maybe
 23 Edmonia Lewis work
 24 "Nuts!"
 26 Cable car
 29 Ex of Etheridge
 33 Shakespearean manuscript
 37 Barrie's lake
 39 Autobahn car

Down

- 1 Plods along
 2 Target before shooting off
 3 Obama birthplace, in a Trump lie
 4 Decree from the queen
 5 Rippon or Mattis
 6 Roz portrayer on "Frasier"
 7 Voice in a loft
 8 Shoot your wand
 9 What Emily Dickinson put out

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MATRIX MAC HEALTH IS A PROGRAM OF MATRIX HUMAN SERVICES. LEARN MORE. GIVE. VOLUNTEER. DISCOVER MATRIX AT MatrixHumanServices.org

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 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
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
matrixhumanservices.org/programs/ryanwhite/

UNIFIED - HIV Health and Beyond

3011 W. Grand Blvd. Suite 230
Detroit, MI 48202
313-446-9800
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 pridesource.com/yellowpages. The following are some in the southeast Michigan area:

U-M Ann Arbor

Spectrum Center
Spectrumcenter@umich.edu
spectrumcenter.umich.edu
734-763-4186

Oakland University Gender & Sexuality Center

gsc@oakland.edu
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
jimtoycenter.org
[facebook.com/jimtoycenter](https://www.facebook.com/jimtoycenter)
or follow them on Twitter @JimToyCenter.
319 Braun Court
Ann Arbor, MI
734-995-9867

LGBT Detroit

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

Affirmations

Ferndale
goaffirmations.org
[facebook.com/Affirmations/](https://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](http://2966WoodwardAve.com)
aclumich.org
313-578-6800

Fair Michigan

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

Know Your Rights Project

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

Older Adults

SAGE Metro Detroit

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

Political

The LGBT and Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party

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

Transgender

FtM Detroit

[facebook.com/FtMDetroit/](https://www.facebook.com/FtMDetroit/)
ftmdetroit@gmail.com

FtM A2 Ypsi

ftmannarborypsilanti@gmail.com
[facebook.com/ftma2ypsi/](https://www.facebook.com/ftma2ypsi/)

Transgender Michigan

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

Trans Sistas of Color Project

Get Listed, Promote Your Events

You can add or update any listing by going to 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 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

19641 W. 7 Mile Rd. in Detroit
313-537-7000 Ext 107
info@tscopdetroit.org
[facebook.com/TSCOPD/](https://www.facebook.com/TSCOPD/)

Youth

Ruth Ellis Center

77 Victor Street, Highland Park, MI
48203
info@ruthelliscenter.org
Facebook: Ruth Ellis Center
313-252-1950

Ozone House

102 N. Hamilton Street
Ypsilanti, MI
734-662-2265
734-662-2222

Stand With Trans

Farmington, MI
standwithtrans.org
248-739-9254

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
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Senior Living
Seniors
Social/Community Organizations
Sports
Substance Abuse
Transgender Groups/Services
Women's Health
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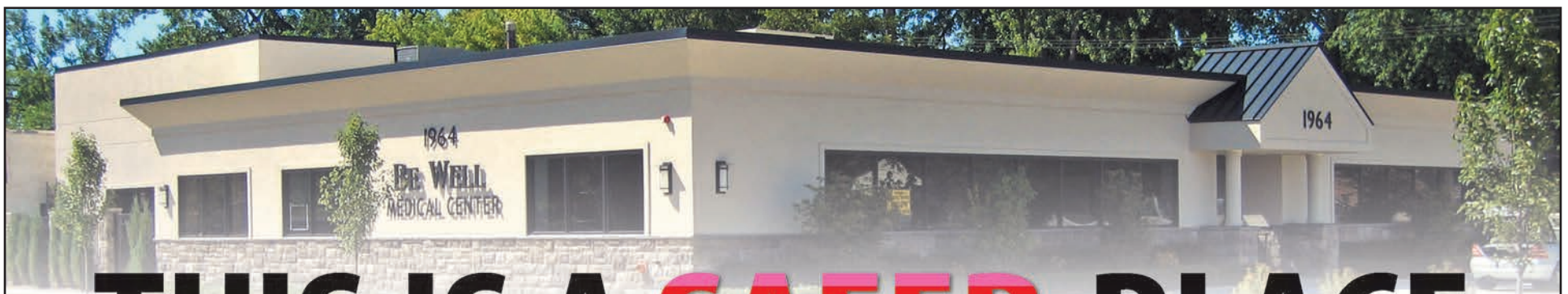
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GREGORY ALAN ISAKOV
HALEY HEYNDERICKX
PARSONSFIELD
SAM LEWIS
MICHIGAN RATTLERS
PETER MULVEY, MC

★ JANUARY 26
SATURDAY 6:30 PM ★
RUFUS WAINWRIGHT
I'M WITH HER
JOAN OSBORNE'S DYLANOLOGY
FEATURING JACKIE GREENE
POKEY LAFARGE
AHI ★ THE RFD BOYS
PETER MULVEY, MC
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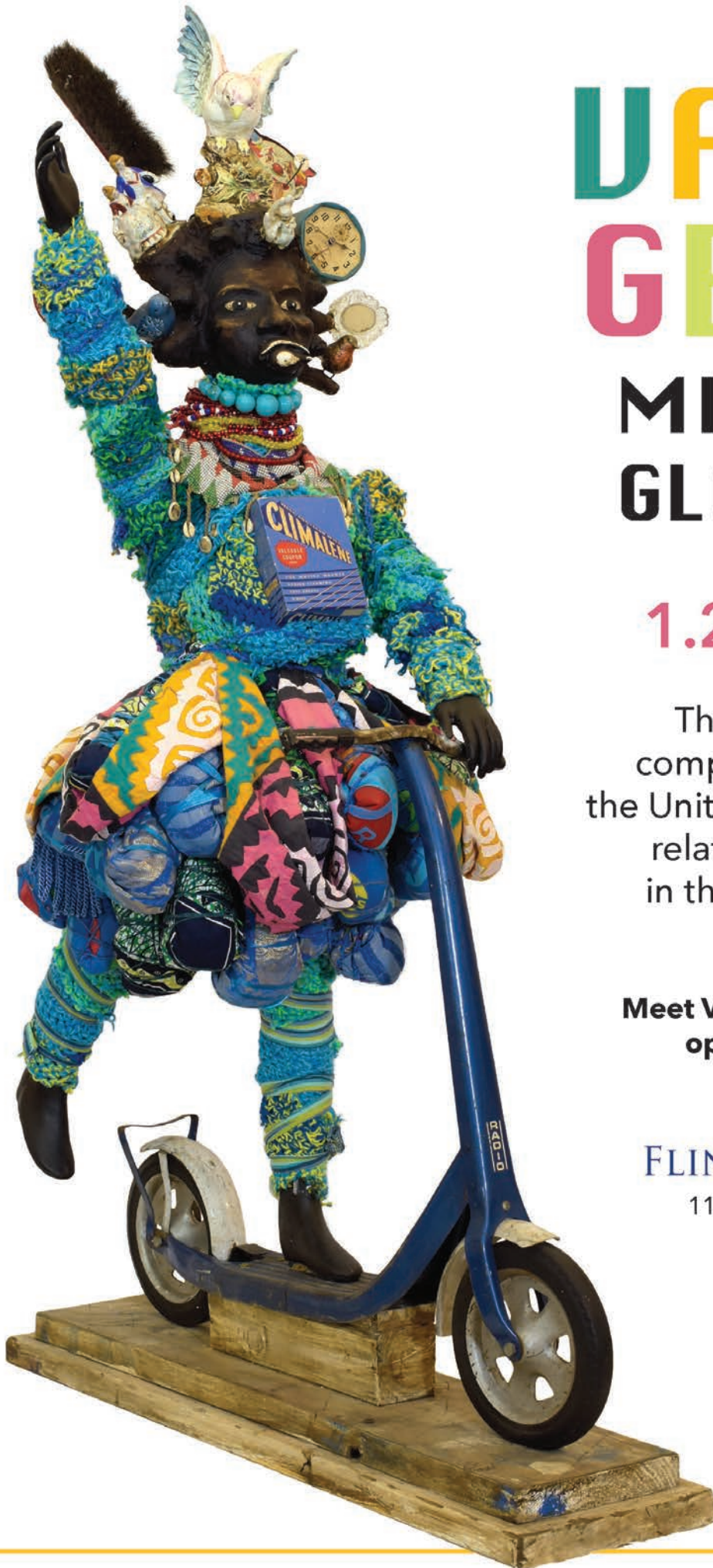
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Vanessa German
American, born 1977
oh for the healing of the blues, 2016
Mixed-media assemblage
73 x 26 x 44 inches

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Courtesy of the artist and Pavel Zoubok, Fine Art, NY