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Fair Michigan's Alanna Maguire Looks Ahead

BTL photo: Andrew Cohen





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# Alanna Maguire Announces Goals as Fair Michigan's President

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

**A**lanna Maguire unveiled her priorities as president of Fair Michigan recently.

"I am honored and eager to continue the extraordinary work of Fair Michigan, and I look forward to expanding our services and programs to communities across the state," said Maguire, a Fair Michigan trustee who was appointed as president by the board in January, succeeding her wife, Dana Nessel, who is now the state's attorney general.

For the last four years, prior to accepting this position, Maguire has worked in the renewable energy sector as the finance and human resources manager for an international engineering consultancy. In her early 30s, she manages all administrative, financial and human resources issues for her offices located in Plymouth, Washington, D.C. and Mexico City.

Maguire is a graduate of the University of Michigan. She also holds a Master of Public Policy degree from Michigan State University and graduate certificates in Homeland Security and Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysis. After graduate school, Maguire served as the project manager for the National Marriage Challenge, a non-profit established to support Michigan's marriage equality case, *DeBoer v. Snyder*. She assisted the lead attorneys in their successful challenge to Michigan's ban on same-sex marriage in federal court, culminating in a victory at the U.S. Supreme Court in *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

The longtime advocate and activist for the LGBTQ community said she brings a wealth of fundraising and organizational experience to the non-profit organization.

"It's an exciting opportunity. I had worked with Fair Michigan as a volunteer since its inception. I know the mechanics of the operation," Maguire said.

The operation Fair Michigan is best known for is the Fair Michigan Justice Project, a collaboration with the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office which began in July 2016. The project focuses on homicides and other capital offenses committed against members of the LGBTQ community.

"We identified a problem where LGBTQ crime victims were not getting the attention they deserved from local law enforcement. This has allowed us to get justice for people who are otherwise forgotten or ignored by the system," Maguire said. "These are some of the worst of the worst crimes against anyone. This is our signature program that we can point to and say we're really making a difference. It's something we are the most proud of."

The success of the project is indicated by the number of convictions they have secured, 26,



Alanna Maguire, a Fair Michigan trustee who was appointed as president by the board in January is succeeding her wife, Dana Nessel, who is now the state's attorney general. BTL photo: Andrew Cohen

in just under three years.

This statistic is significant because in Michigan there are no protections for sexual orientation or gender identity in the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act or even in Michigan's Ethnic Intimidation Act. While marital rights are secure, the employment, housing and safety needs of the LGBTQ community are not.

## Primary Objectives

To continue operating and to help fund the expansion of the project, Maguire said she hopes to do some "serious fundraising," beyond a few grants the organization has received. This is one of a few primary objectives Maguire outlined that she would like to accomplish during her tenure.

"We can't operate if we don't have money. Michigan ranks near the bottom for LGBTQ protections so there's a lot of work to do," she said. "It's impressive what we've done so far, but in order to grow our programs, we need funding."

For this, Maguire will look to her board for support, which has been criticized by some for not having enough diversity — of the nine board members listed on the organization's website, all of them are white.

"I have heard this critique and I acknowledge the importance of diversity," Maguire said.

"Our board has discussed the utility of having an advisory board to serve in tandem with our current board and we have agreed to move forward with this plan."

The purpose of the advisory board, she said, would be to provide advice and opinions on the direction of Fair Michigan and how the organization can best serve and represent the community. Maguire said they are currently identifying potential members to serve on the advisory board.

"That said, I want to highlight the dedication, passion and commitment of the members of the Fair Michigan Foundation," she said. "My board members give their time, talents, energy and ideas freely — that is to say without receiving any compensation of any kind — simply because they are committed to advancing social justice and equality in our state. I am proud to serve with them and continue to be inspired by their service."

In an effort to educate business leaders about the importance of inclusion, Maguire said she would like to establish more corporate partnerships.

"I want to work with the business community, help them understand the value of having pro-LGBTQ policies in place, why it's important to have workplaces that value LGBTQ employees, that promote non-discrimination laws and to talk about the economic benefits of that.

When people feel respected you can retain and recruit top talent," she said.

Maguire also said she wants to have "good working relationships" with other LGBTQ organizations like Equality Michigan and the ACLU of Michigan.

"The community is stronger when we are unified and have one voice, when we're aligned on issues that are important to all of us. There's strength in numbers," Maguire said. "That's really important to me, to see how we can partner together."

Fair Michigan already has a partnership with Health Emergency Lifeline Programs at Corktown Health Center — an LGBTQ-specific clinic in Detroit — and they are looking to formalize their partnership with All Well-Being Services in Detroit.

Moving forward, Maguire would like to expand their services to women further, making sure they are addressing the full scope of their mission statement.

"We must make sure we're promoting gender equality in the state as well," Maguire said. "Women make up half the population in the state. Fair Michigan seeks to

launch a pilot project where we assist victims of domestic and/or intimate partner violence in seeking personal protection orders against their abusers."

## Taking Care of the LGBTQ Community

These efforts involve having relationships on the ground, and Maguire said she takes pride in that. And while Fair Michigan doesn't have a physical meeting space yet, this hasn't stopped them from connecting with members of the community.

"Julisa [Abad] is of the community and is in the community every day. In terms of reaching the community, you have to go where they are," Maguire said. "She understands the area, she understands the needs of certainly the trans community, but really sort of the LGBTQ Detroit area at large."

Abad, Fair Michigan's director of transgender outreach and advocacy, works in collaboration with the organization's special prosecutor Jaimie Powell Horowitz, who has been assigned with assistance from special investigator Vicki Yost to litigate Fair Michigan's cases. Abad helps ensure that transgender persons are supported throughout the process of seeking justice.



In addition, Abad and Powell Horowitz host community forums and cultural competency trainings to help facilitate better relationships between crime victims and witnesses who are LGBTQ and law enforcement officers. Trainings can include information on using proper pronouns, for example.

"It makes such a difference and I think if we can go forward and bring these trainings to more parts of the state, particularly up north, that would be great," said Maguire, adding that talks are underway with Powell Horowitz to expand the project into another county this year.

"One of the bigger challenges for transgender individuals in their daily lives involves not having their legal names match their chosen name and gender identity," Maguire said.

"Taking inspiration from some of the other area LGBTQ organizations, Fair Michigan will launch a project to identify and assist members of the trans community who seek to change their legal names. Julisa will lead this program."

Prosecutor Kym Worthy in association with Fair Michigan has already implemented the Transgender Interaction Policy in November 2016. This policy requires employees in the Wayne County prosecutor's office to treat transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming individuals in a manner appropriate to the individual's gender identity, which may be different from the sex the individual was assigned at birth or listed on official identification documents.

## On a Personal Note

When asked how her relationship with Nessel impacts the work Fair Michigan does, Maguire said it helps that Nessel is the state's top law enforcement official and that she is openly lesbian.

"I think it shows visibility, which is important for our community," Maguire said. "And I think in terms of getting law enforcement buy-in for the kinds of trainings and projects that Fair Michigan does, I think that gives it an added impact to have your state attorney general be a member of the community."

Maguire added that, "Dana and I have always had an incredible partnership, beyond that of just being married. We support each other in our professional ambitions and aspirations. For as long as we've known each other, we have worked together on issues that matter the most to us. Fair Michigan is an outgrowth of this partnership."

Maguire lives with Nessel in southeast Michigan with their twin sons, Alex and Zach. In her free time, Maguire loves to read, travel, cook and spend time with her friends in the Plymouth Democratic Club, an organization she co-founded in 2009.

*For more information about Fair Michigan, visit [fairmichigan.org](http://fairmichigan.org) or visit the organization on Facebook @fairmichigan2016 or follow them on Twitter @FairMichigan.*

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# Black Bear Brotherhood Forum Examines Intersections of Sex Work and Increased Usage of Crystal Meth Among Black Gay Men

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The Black Bear Brotherhood is a Detroit social collective aimed at connecting black LGBTQ men of size and their allies. Part of the group's mission is furthering the wellbeing of its members and on Feb. 7 presented a community forum at the Ruth Ellis Center in Highland Park called *Are You Generous: BGM, Sex Work, and Crystal Meth*. The forum, which was co-sponsored by the Counter Narrative Project and presented in collaboration with Adodi Detroit, LGBT Detroit and Onyx Great Lakes, was a part of concurrent events scheduled in other cities in support of both National Black AIDS Awareness Day and the #Justice4Gemmel movement that honors the death of Gemmel Moore who died of a crystal meth overdose in the home of wealthy Democratic donor Ed Buck.

The evening, which featured a conversation with two former sex workers and the Detroit premiere of "Party Boi," a documentary by director Michael Rice that examines the intersections of race, crystal meth and sex work, also included a community Q&A and a networking reception.

"It is critical that we as a Detroit community stop ignoring the fact that crystal meth dependency is in the black gay male community and is no longer primarily a white, gay issue," said L. Michael Gipson, founder of the BBB. "We also have many Detroit area young people who are turning to survival sex work out of economic necessity and who sometimes find themselves caught up in situations like Gemmel Moore's that are dangerously out of their control and even cost them their lives."

Gemmel Moore was a 26-year-old black gay man from Texas involved in commercial sex work who was found dead in West Hollywood, California. In Buck's home there was a tremendous amount of drug paraphernalia found on the scene and multiple reports said that Buck enjoyed bringing young men to his apartment and injecting them with crystal meth to heighten his sexual enjoyment. Despite this, no charges were filed. Soon after a second black gay man, Timothy Dean, was found dead in Buck's home from an overdose of crystal meth just last month. And still, as of now, no formal charges have been brought against Buck.

Moore's death is heavily depicted in "Party Boi," which includes a candid interview with Moore's mother.

"What happened to Gemmel Moore and



Black Bear Brotherhood founder L. Michael Gipson and community activist KaJuan Hill talked candidly about having both engaged in sex work. BTL photo: Jason A. Michael

Timothy Dean were preventable tragedies that deserve a real investigation and ultimately justice so no more die at the hands of this potential serial predator," Gipson said. "We also wanted to ensure we don't experience this level of tragedy in Detroit. So, not only did we make sure we discussed the unique ways these concerns play out at home with those who have lived this life, but we also brought in All Well Being Services, where chemical dependency services are available for meth users, to further engage the community on harm reduction practices and pathways to drug abstinence for users. Lastly, we also made sure to highlight the services and resources available for those looking to leave commercial sex work and its inherent dangers."

Two former sex workers who shared their stories, Gipson and community activist and social media personality KaJuan Hill, spoke of their contradicting experiences in the area. In Gipson's case, he'd fallen into sex work after being kicked out of his family's home in 1991 as a 16-year-old in Chicago. It took him three years to initially leave, though it took a relapse into sex work at 20 for him to walk away once and for all.

"As someone who struggled financially on my own at too early an age, undereducated and unable to make ends meet even with a respectable full-time, just above minimum-wage job, walking away from \$75 to \$100 an hour in the 1990s was a Herculean feat, one I couldn't have done without older mentors carefully leading me down a different life path," said Gipson, who has since gone on to earn both a bachelor's and master's degree and launch various businesses and community based projects.

"It was not a joyous experience for me and there have been mental health and relationship ramifications from that time that I still live with to this day," he said. "But it was what I felt I needed to do at the time to survive and I have no regrets about surviving the best way I knew how at that time."

The generational divide explored at the event was stark, with 20-plus years separating Hill's and Gipson's experiences. Though neither reported suffering from any chemical dependencies while engaging in sex work, Gipson's story was a traditional one depicting how family estranged or drug dependent young people became caught up in sex work. Hill's

story was one of a highly romanticized and more socially acceptable view of sex work, one that included escort tours, high fashion and considerably more lucrative client rates than what was available in Gipson's time.

"It wasn't a bad experience," Hill said. "I used the money I made to invest my brand so I could get out. I don't encourage it, but I don't regret it. It was an interesting chapter of my life."

Hill did describe acquiring gonorrhea and how that experience was something of a wake up call for him. He said it was then he became aware of the short shelf life of a sex worker who hasn't prepared for any other lifestyle. Gipson, who has had 24 years to reflect on his past lifestyle, left the crowd of roughly 60 in attendance with a final thought.

"When you're in it or still in close proximity to it, you think no one is getting hurt, that it's a victimless crime," he said. "The thing you later come to realize that you're the victim in a crime where you'll be the one to most likely pay the higher price, especially if you don't get out of it before it consumes you. Everything that glitters is most certainly not gold."

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# Polestar: Michigan's Newest LGBTQ Community Center Opens Its Doors

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

## A Bold Move

When John Young came out in his late 50s, he never imagined that just four years later he would have been instrumental in launching Traverse City's first LGBTQ community center.

"I really came out. I did not hold back. And, frankly, I didn't know what to do," said Young, now vice-chair of Polestar, a new LGBTQ community center serving Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Benzie, Kalkaska and Antrim counties in northern lower Michigan.

Young said at the time he knew so few gay people that he thought he'd have to relocate, but met friends in a support group who were as forward-thinking as him.

"And it's been a wild ride," said Young, who said his brother remarked, "Jesus, John, you can't just come out, you have to open a LGBT community center!"

Located at 717 Woodmere Ave., Polestar achieved 501(c)(3) nonprofit status two years ago and has been open since the summer. At just under 1,800 square feet, the space is divided into three areas. There is a desk and restroom near the entrance, which opens up to a living room-like space that has two couches facing each other and a flat screen TV. To the left is a larger room which can accommodate seating for 30, such as the LGBTQ-friendly church that rents the space to hold its services each Sunday. The third area, an office large enough for meetings, will also be utilized by Equality Michigan when the organization moves its existing Traverse City location to the center in the near future.

The center is entirely volunteer-run, and Young says Polestar is already meeting the needs of the LGBTQ community. In addition to drop-in hours, the center has events like movie and discussion nights. A transgender and GNC support group just formed, which drew 15 people at its first meeting and has plans for a shopping night and a workshop with a cosmetics consultant. And, just recently, Polestar's Chosen Family Holiday Potluck was well attended, according to Young.

## "It's Awesome to See Those Kids"

But probably what Young is most proud of is the prom. That was instituted on the advice of the director of Benton Harbor's LGBTQ center, who became Young's friend when Young toured centers around Michigan as Polestar was in the planning stages. And while two queer proms were held even before the center itself was opened, it has become Polestar's signature event.

"The first prom that we had, we had 100 kids,"



John Young came out in his 50s and soon opened an LGBTQ community center in Traverse City. Photos courtesy of Polestar.

Young said. "This is northern Michigan. Rural northern Michigan. That's way above average nationally. There's probably a handful of centers that have anything close to 100 kids. And it's awesome. It's awesome to see those kids. So that was the very first thing we did; we're doing it every year now."

A local teen group, LGBTeens Up North, now helps plan the prom. Polestar has become the meeting place for the teen group, and when the youth are dropped off at the center, parents can gather elsewhere for their own peer support group.

Living up north, it's not easy to be an LGBTQ young person, Young pointed out. Frankly, many LGBTQ people feel isolated in the areas surrounding Traverse City, a city which has a reputation for being progressive: Not only does Traverse City have an openly gay mayor, it has an LGBT police liaison — one of just a few in the state.

Describing the situation for youth in the region, Young said, "These kids are hurting really bad. It's terrible. There are a few high schools I've got to figure out how to approach because we get crisis calls from those students. If you're a student in one of the smaller high schools, in the outlying area, you might be the only out person in the LGBT community."

## Educating the Community

In addition to offering programs for youth and adults, Young is excited about the opportunities for Polestar beyond being a meeting place for members of the LGBTQ community. He also receives requests for speakers. Because of the positive response to those engagements, inquiries are coming in with greater regularity. From multiple departments heads of hospitals affiliated with Munson Healthcare to school districts who "want to get it right," Young said, the requests have focused primarily on understanding the needs of the transgender community.

One presentation stands out in particular. "The director of nursing at Northwest Michigan College contacted us, and said, 'You know, I really want my students to learn about the trans community,'" Young said. "And we put a panel together, one of them a 12-year-old trans girl, and her very supportive mother. That went so well. They were in tears, by the way, halfway through it, hearing her story. And the director of nursing was so impressed, he said, 'We have to have this at the beginning of every semester for my nursing students.' That's very gratifying."

However, Young's outreach on behalf of Polestar can only do so much, and he decried the lack of basic information on LGBTQ medical care by local health care providers. Young said he's taken men who have been raped to the ER, and no one knew the correct



protocol.

"Anything we can do to benefit the community, those are the people we want to reach out to ... because it's pathetic how little they know," Young said.

He added later that Polestar partners with a local suicide hotline, and is now able to connect individuals in crisis to one of the hotline's trained counselors directly, without having to hang up the phone.

Young has big plans for Polestar and sees a lot of potential. At 62 years old, he semi-retired to take on this endeavor, and says he'd love to be able to hire an executive director a year from now, who could be there full time. From finding experts and coordinating their speaking engagements to handling a huge volume of correspondence, it's a lot of work. Fundraising and grant writing are two areas that he said need help, which are critical to keeping Polestar's doors open. To that end, they are recruiting additional board members; the organization has six, currently.

## What About the Name?

When BTL asked about the origin of the name "Polestar," Young replied that it was a long story. They settled on Polestar, he said, because "it means a center of attraction," which seems fitting. However, he added, "At some point, I'm pretty sure we're going to have to change the name."

Why?

"It confuses people," Young said. "A lot of people are baffled by having that name. And several people have said, 'We really don't like it. It sounds like a strip bar.'"

Name confusion aside, Young has a message for readers who live downstate: He'd like to have more visitors.

"Come up!" Young said enthusiastically. "We have arguably the biggest Pride week in the state; I think we had approaching 4,000 people for our pride last summer, which was awesome. Come on up. Join us."

To find out more visit [tcpolestar.org](http://tcpolestar.org).





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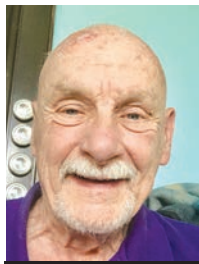
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## Black Gay Detroit Friends (Pt. 2)

# Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

The year I graduated as a commercial art major from Detroit's prestigious Cass Technical High School I did not attend my senior prom.

As a gay male I had no interest in dating a female classmate, although I deemed myself "hip" sporting a ducktail haircut, "cool" pegged pants and "dude" box-toe loafers. I couldn't however convince myself to learn the dance then in vogue in the late '50s: the Hucklebuck.

When I entered CT in my freshman year I was just coming out. A year later I left Gilead Church, a Southern Baptist affiliation, because I knew I would not be "saved" with my homosexual proclivities.

Looking back on my CT years I realize I couldn't have been in a better place for accepting myself as a young, talented gay man. And I soon discovered there were others like myself in the CT Commercial Arts program and CT Music programs as well. Our nascent gaydar started to kick in.

Many of my early gay CT contacts were Black and proud; talented, supportive of encouraging of gay self-acceptance.

(An additional plus for me had been that in my freshman year I could elect as phys ed choice: ROTC, gym or swimming. I chose the latter, and was pleased that we swam naked and unsupervised that semester. By the way: naked swimming was how it was done in middle schools for years, and no one thought anything about it.)

I eventually learned that my regal homeroom and English teacher Lawrence Timothy Ray had been a Broadway dancer in his youth with Clifton Webb. They were carbon copies of each other.

When Detroit-born, Cass Tech friend and graduate Bernard Johnson died, age 60 in 1997, the New York Times carried a quarter-page obit celebrating his life as "a Renaissance man in dance."

Little bigger than a metronome minute – at 5-foot-4-inches – he started dancing at age 11. We became friends during our CT senior year, and were part of an integrated black/white circle of gay art and music students who often gathered after class to "dish" and let our hair down at a nearby Dunkin' Donuts Shop in downtown Detroit. Three of us integrated friends frequently went roller skating at the Bob-Lo Island rink

(As CT art students we were free to roam all seven floors, freehand drawing in pencil and charcoal, mastering the intricacies of one- and two-point perspective. During warm weather we sketched, painted watercolors and socialized in shady nearby Cass Park.)

Johnson majored in fashion design, and was much admired for renderings of furs, fabrics, dresses and accessories. In the late-1950s there were few black CT students majoring in fashion design.

He was also known as an interpreter of ballet and modern dance, invited by our senior art/design instructor Donald Thrall — who we assumed generously to be gay — to perform for an all-school talent extravaganza.

Johnson wore a discreetly brief costume, and his body was painted a shimmering gold. When he stepped stage center into the spotlight, there was an expectant hush among the 1,500 students gathered in the balconied auditorium.

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



BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

"Supergirl," the television show based on the comic book character of the same name, is currently in its fourth season on The CW Television Network. It is part of the so-called "Arrowverse" of DC-comics based TV shows that began with 2012's premier of "Arrow," and includes with it "The Flash," "Vixen," "Legends of Tomorrow" and "Freedom Fighters: The Ray."

The current season has centered its current arc on bigotry against extraterrestrials, of which — for those who are not familiar at all with the comic book background of the characters — Supergirl, also known as Kara, is one.

The new season has also introduced a new character to the story, that of Nia Nal. She too is a superhero, known as Dreamer, who possesses precognitive powers. Unlike the comic book, this version of Nia/Dreamer is transgender. What's more, the character is portrayed by Nicole Maines who is, herself, transgender.

"Supergirl" is not the first case where a transgender person has been cast in a transgender role: The first such that I know of was Jessica Crockett back in 2001, who played Louise in an episode of James Cameron's "Dark Angel" series.

Since then, we've seen other such examples, with Laverne Cox as Sophia Burset in "Orange is the New Black" and "Doubt;" Indya Moore, Mj Rodriguez and more on FX's "Pose;" Scott Turner Schofield on "The Bold and the Beautiful" in

## Transmissions

# Heroic in its Normalcy

2015; Jamie Clayton's portrayal of Nomi Marks on Netflix's "Sense8," and a few others. This, of course, discounts trans people appearing in reality TV and other such venues.

Transgender people have been hard to come by in comics, at least as superheroes. A lot of early examples are more "shape-shifting" characters, including at least one in the "Supergirl" series in 1997, though one can find Kate Godwin/Coagula in 1993's "Doom Patrol" and Masquerade in "Blood Syndicate" back in 1994, both from DC, and a handful of more modern examples

Nevertheless, the casting of an actual transgender person to play a superhero on a weekly television show is still a big step forward, especially in an era dominated by superhero movies and television shows.

I want to contrast Nia Nal/Dreamer with so many other film and television portrayals of transgender characters. She comes away as authentically transgender in a way you see in other performances with a trans actor in a trans role — and don't see when Jared Leto portrays Rayon in "Dallas Buyers Club," when Eddie Redmayne plays Lili Elbe in "The Danish Girl" or when Jeffrey Tambor plays Maura Pfefferman on "Transparent."

The difference, to me, is simple: each of the above characters are presented as an example of what non-transgender people think transgender people are: members of their birth sex who are acting out the gender role they have chosen. Meanwhile, actual transgender people like Maines and others are presenting

See **Transmissions**, continued on next page



## ► Transmissions

Continued from p. 10

the reality of the transgender experience.

The character of Nia Nal/Dreamer was been introduced into the series, as has her transgender nature has been in the forefront. This has not been a “Dumbledore is gay but I never actually show it in the books” J.K. Rowling-styled move.

I suppose it would be wise at this point to say that there are spoilers ahead.

She first came out to boss James Olsen on “Supergirl,” using her experiences as a trans woman to explain why the company should take a stand against anti-extraterrestrial sentiment, a plea that falls largely on deaf ears. It is, nevertheless, handled well in the story.

The next episode focuses on Nia Nal’s/Dreamer’s backstory, as her and Kara/Supergirl travel to Nal’s hometown.

Nia’s “coming out” to Kara on the way to Nia’s hometown was, well, pretty close to how I handle coming out. It was very matter-of-fact, just a part of the discussion between two close friends. It wasn’t treated as a big deal by Nia, nor did it include a lot of over the top backstory.

I think Kara was a bit patronizing at first when Nia came out, but I also think it was intentional to the story and some of what Kara herself was dealing with at the time.

The storyline of the episode hit a lot of right notes, and the biggest to me is this: while

Nia’s transness was integral to the story, it wasn’t the only thing the story was about. It was a part of a larger whole, an element of an otherwise well-told story. She is a trans character, but her being trans isn’t the only thing she is. It informs her choices, but she is more than a cardboard cutout standing in for a real backstory.

I would be remiss if I did not mention one scene in particular, where Nia’s sister fueled by anger at not getting the superpowers that are passed down between mothers and daughters, attacks Nia for not being a “real woman.” While too gets resolved, and maybe a bit quickly, it is handled well, without it being the sole defining characteristic of their relationship.

As I said, Maines is not the first trans actress to play a trans character, but what truly feels refreshing about her isn’t so much that she is transgender, but that her transgender nature isn’t treated as that big a deal. Yes, it informs the issues of bigotry in the main storyline, but that bigotry isn’t necessarily aimed at her as a trans woman.

This is another contrast to the usual portrayal that tends to treat transgender people as someone to be either pitied or reviled — and not the hero of the story, even when they may be the lead character.

Would that we see more of this to come.

*Gwen Smith wants to see a trans person in the Marcel Cinematic Universe. You can find her at [gwensmith.com](http://gwensmith.com).*

## ► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 11

He paused. Struck an elegant pose. Smiled expectantly. Snapped into stunning. Full! No-let-up! Choreographic mastery! Watch me go, girl!

Music was Les Baxter’s LP recording of “Le Sacre Du Sauvage.” Live bongo drummers drummed Bernard through each flashing movement. Performance was primitive. Limber. Elastic. Gleamingly muscular!

When he took several well-deserved bows, sweating glitter from an energetic and orgiastic cadence, everyone stood, whistled, applauded.

Though we didn’t know it then, this was a preview performance for a long and successful career in dance, choreography, film set and costume design, stretching over 40 wonderfully creative years.

“I believe in the power of metaphysics,” he once confided to friends. “Be the best. Associate only with the best. These are the principles I was raised on.”

He was fun company. Just a bit “swish” and campy. He carried his books like a well-bred debutante. But he was not to be trifled with, as a classmate who called him “Miss Thing” during bell change soon found out.

Johnson — who had an impeccable sense of timing — knew just when, where and how to settle a score. In the midst of our design class he loudly confronted the offending dimwit.

“If it’s not too much trouble to put that brain you’re sitting on in gear, I’d like words with you,” he said.

We held our breath. One by one he read the embarrassed guy’s beads. We savored every delicious put-down. Johnson looked dramatically around the room, shook his sketchbook energetically, sat down with just a hint of dance movement, nodded with a don’t-mess-with-a-star look, and we gay friends applauded mentally and discretely audibly.

His accolades are many: fantasy costume designs; several Broadway musical performances; teaching at the University of California at Irvine; induction into the Black Film Makers Hall of Fame.

Bernard had close friendships with Josephine Baker, Judy Garland, pre-controversial Bill Cosby, Lena Horne, Harry Belafonte, the late Aretha Franklin; and international tours, command performances for King Hassan II of Morocco.

For us CT art students — straight, gay, questioning — Bernard Johnson, though short of stature, was someone we all looked up to.

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

# Creep Of The Week

## Eric Porterfield

BY D’ANNE WITKOWSKI

Eric Porterfield is blind, literally. According to his website, Blind Faith Ministries, he lost his eyesight in 2006.

But Porterfield is also figuratively blind, in that he apparently is either ignorant of, or refuses to see, the horrifically violent racism perpetuated thought history by the Ku Klux Klan.

Let me back up. Porterfield is a Republican delegate in West Virginia who, according to the Charleston Gazette-Mail, “went into an extended diatribe supporting legislation that would have enabled LGBT-discrimination in cities that have passed ordinances expressly criminalizing it,” during a Feb. 6 committee meeting.

So, spoiler alert, Porterfield doesn’t like gay people. He definitely wants to see LGBTQ people get discriminated against and wants that discrimination to be legal.

His reasoning, however, is pretty ignorant. “The LGBT is the most socialist group in this country,” he said on Feb. 6. “They do not protect gays. There are many gays they persecute if they do not line up with their social ideology.”

First of all, I’m pretty sure he doesn’t know what “socialist” means. Even as a member of “the LGBT,” I don’t understand what he’s referring to.

Secondly, his claim that “the LGBT” doesn’t protect gays is odd. First of all, it’s not like he WANTS gays protected. Secondly, his proof of gay-on-gay persecution is Milo Yiannopoulos, a right-wing provocateur who is an enemy to the equality and justice that LGBTQ people want and deserve.

Porterfield pointed out that when Yiannopoulos went on tour “the LGBT stormed that building and did \$200,000 worth of damage because he didn’t line up with their ideology. He is apparently referencing a protest at UC Berkeley in 2017, though reports I have read put the damage at half that.

Porterfield then said, “We cannot allow discriminatory bigots to determine how our citizens are going to live.” OH, THE IRONY.

People were upset about Porterfield’s anti-LGBTQ comments and West Virginia Democrats called him out. Thankfully, Porterfield was able to talk to the Charleston Gazette-Mail on Feb. 8 and smooth everything over.

“The LGBTQ is a modern day version of the Ku Klux Klan, without wearing hoods with their antics of hate,” Porterfield said, adding that gays were a “terrorist group” who were persecuting him.

There are many things wrong with this, but let’s start at the obvious. Porterfield, a white man, speaks of the KKK as if they are a thing of the past, when not only does the

**So, spoiler alert, Porterfield doesn’t like gay people. He definitely wants to see LGBTQ people get discriminated against and wants that discrimination to be legal.**

KKK still exist, but the white supremacy that fueled their terrorism against black people in America is currently shared by the president of the United States, FFS. The reign of racist terror in the United States never went away. Yes, cross burnings are a rare occurrence now, but racism has morphed into a more institutional framework that systematically oppresses people of color. White people don’t have to live with this day-to-day, and thus many don’t see it. Even “woke” white people are often oblivious to how long tentacles of racism are.

The KKK were, and are, terrorists. Full stop. They murdered black people and drove them out of cities and neighborhoods. They burned churches. Calling LGBTQ people equivalent in any way to the KKK is nonsense. LGBTQ people are not murdering people who don’t agree that we deserve full and equal protection under the law. This comparison both demonizes LGBTQ people and minimizes the KKK’s past and present history as a terrorist group.

Porterfield posted on Twitter, that since his comments “members of the LGBTQ have exercised hate crimes and threatened my safety.”

I do not condone threats or acts of violence, but please spare me the “LGBTQ people are so intolerant of my intolerance” act. When an official in power threatens to hurt LGBTQ people with legislation that would strip them of their rights or block their access to rights that official always seems to be surprised that LGBTQ people might react to that in a negative way. That some would even resort to posting nasty things on the internet or to name-calling. The audacity!

I have read comments online that attack Porterfield for being blind and for being overweight. These comments are dumb. What he looks like and what his physical abilities happen to be have nothing to do with his ignorant and hateful attitudes toward LGBTQ people. There is no reason to meet his bigotry with ableism or sizeism.

You want to attack Porterfield? Then attack him at the ballot box. Support his challenger in the next election. Support Fairness West Virginia at [fairnesswv.org](http://fairnesswv.org) or the state’s ACLU organization at [acluwv.org](http://acluwv.org). Join like-minded voters and work to elect people who not only understand the difference between “LGBTQ” and “KKK,” but understand why it really, really matters.





# A Mutual Benefit: Letting Employees Define their Families

BY DANA RUDOLPH

People and families come in many forms, as any LGBTQ person can attest. Now, Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company or MassMutual, as it's more commonly known, is using that concept to improve upon its already LGBTQ-inclusive employee benefits. The Fortune 100 company, which has approximately 7,500 employees around the country — and nearly 70,000 life insurance policyowners in Michigan — is rolling out new benefits around leave, gender affirmation, family creation and more that empower all employees and demonstrate a deep understanding of LGBTQ people's lives.

Dr. Claudia Coplein, MassMutual's head of health and wellness, who brings to bear her multiple experiences as a physician, attorney, mother and former U.S. Air Force officer and flight surgeon, explained in an interview.

"We heard from our employees that we needed to modernize our benefits. They were pretty paternalistic in the past," she said.

This led the company "to undertake a holistic review" in order to better support its "multi-generational and increasingly diverse workforce." In particular, she said, their 450-member Pride Business Resource Group, a network for LGBTQ employees and allies, was "very positive and influential" in the process.

Under the new benefits, employees will get up to two weeks paid leave to care for a seriously ill loved one and up to 15 days leave after the death of a loved one. More strikingly, Coplein said, "We've left it up to the employee to define who is a loved one."

"A loved one could be your next-door neighbor who raised you because your parents had to work two jobs each to support

the family," she said. "Or it could have been a grandmother who raised you. Who are we to decide who an employee's loved one is?"

Lisa St. Germain, portfolio and organizational effectiveness lead and chairperson of MassMutual's Pride BRG, said via e-mail, "I really think we're onto something special by breaking the norm of how you define a loved one. Everyone's situation and circle of loved ones is different. By empowering our employees to define family on their own terms and to take the time they need for caregiving and when they lose someone close to them feels like a real game changer."

This attitude is part of a longer commitment. In 2015, MassMutual announced a new two-word dress code: "Dress appropriately."

"That was a step towards encouraging employees to use good judgment, placing trust, empowerment and accountability in their own hands," Coplein explained. "That's what we're seeking to do with all of the benefits that we offer."

MassMutual's new parental benefits are also flexible and structured to include LGBTQ families — something that isn't always a given. A 2018 survey by the HRC Foundation found that even employers offering paid parental leave may exclude LGBTQ families: Less than half of respondents said their employer's policies cover new parents of all genders equally. Similarly, less than half said these policies include all paths to parenthood; some exclude older children placed through foster care or adoption.

At MassMutual, however, birth parents now get 18 weeks of fully paid leave. Non-birth parents, including adoptive parents, get eight weeks of fully paid leave that can be used all at once or incrementally for up to a year.

MassMutual is also one of a growing number

of employers that cover employees' fertility treatments without a medical diagnosis of infertility. Coplein asserted, "That's a huge step. Before I came to MassMutual, I was medical director for a health plan. The definition of infertility was always critical for making those determinations. Here, we've just included anyone who wants to have a child, because again, why should we limit that ability for our employees? This ensures that members of the LGBTQ community and single parents by choice receive equitable access to fertility benefits."

Offered through fertility benefit company Progyny, these benefits are "designed to provide all-inclusive and comprehensive coverage for fertility treatments," she explained. Instead of a fixed dollar amount, which might not cover all that someone needs, they cover two full "Smart Cycles," customized to the individual, that include all office visits, tests and treatments, except for purchase of donor cells, if needed. They are in the process of adding a benefit for surrogacy as well.

The company's new benefits for transgender employees are similarly thoughtful. While they previously covered gender affirmation services such as hormone therapy and testing, mental health counseling, genital surgery and mastectomies, they now include cosmetic procedures often not covered by other employers, such as facial feminization surgery, thyrochondroplasty or tracheal shaving, electrolysis and more. Those procedures "help to improve social function," Coplein said.

"Appearance is important, but the social function helps people to maximize their success and feel good about themselves," she said. "That's why we felt it was important for us to cover all of those services."

Additionally, she said, "We've created a workplace gender transition support team that includes managers, allies, our Pride BRG, a transition partner and an HR partner to help an employee who is transitioning, as well as help their manager, their allies and colleagues go through this entire process of gender affirmation. Having this support system available makes people feel that they are welcome and can be themselves in the workplace. I think this product that has largely been influenced by the Pride BRG is something that really sets us apart as a company. It's been so well received."

"I'm really proud of our new offerings as they touch so many employees," St. Germain said. "For those of us who have struggled

with 'traditional' employee benefits, they give a message that the company is listening and cares."

The expansion of gender affirmation benefits, she said, "demonstrates a much deeper level of respect and understanding."

Additional new benefits for all employees include paid volunteer time, easier-to-access behavioral health counseling services, and a concierge service to help employees or their dependents diagnosed with cancer.

MassMutual has made a public commitment to LGBTQ equality, too. Coplein noted that the company has signed the Business Statement for Transgender Equality and joined the business coalition for the federal Equality Act. It also signed on to amicus briefs in support of LGBTQ equality in cases involving the Defense of Marriage Act, North Carolina's anti-transgender public accommodations law, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' ban on providing gender affirmation surgery to transgender veterans, among others. They also supported the Yes on 3 campaign in Massachusetts last year that successfully stopped a repeal of protections for transgender people.

"It's just doing the right thing for our employees and the communities where they live," Coplein said. "It's putting a stake in the sand as a company, saying, 'This is what we believe in.' We've been very consistent about that over a number of years."

In addition, there are business advantages. She noted that aligning their benefits with diversity and inclusion objectives "is key for attracting and retaining and engaging talent from a very broad pool of society."

"For us," she added, "the business benefit is that we're holistically supporting the well-being of our employees by providing them with a robust suite of benefits that address their physical, emotional, financial and social wellness, so we're helping them and their loved ones, however they may define them, live their best lives. In return, we're going to have employees who we hope will stay with MassMutual. They come to work every day knowing that they work for a company that supports them and in turn, we think they'll be productive," she said. "It's a win-win situation in our minds."

*Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian which can be found online at mombian.com, a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.*

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# HRC and LGBTQ Community: Here's the Real State of the Union

BY BTL STAFF

WASHINGTON — Last week The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBTQ civil rights organization, reacted to the advance text of Donald Trump's 2019 State of the Union with the facts of his administration's dangerous anti-equality record and stories from real members of the LGBTQ community impacted by his discriminatory agenda. LGBTQ people around the country and across the globe have been under near-constant attack by the Trump-Pence Administration since they took office. The Trump-Pence White House's announcement of eliminating HIV domestically by 2030 has been met with skepticism in light of their disturbing record on HIV and AIDS.

"For more than two years, Donald Trump and Mike Pence have made attacking LGBTQ people and other marginalized communities a top priority of their administration," said HRC President Chad Griffin. "From undermining protections for transgender youth, to threatening to deport Dreamers, to attempting to ban transgender service members from the military, to working to eviscerate health care coverage for those most vulnerable — this is a presidency rooted in prejudice and fear. But

at every turn, we have put up roadblocks on this administration's path of destruction and discrimination, uniting with our allies across movements. Now, with a pro-equality majority in the House of Representatives poised to pass the Equality Act and tackle other critical issues, we continue to demonstrate that when we stand together we are a force to be reckoned with."

The Human Rights Campaign is amplifying the voices of LGBTQ people impacted by this administration's hateful agenda in response to Donald Trump's State of the Union address:

"Trans service members lace up their boots every day, accomplish the mission and prove again and again that we belong. We've faced the same arguments used against the inclusion of every minority group and shown them to be as inaccurate now as ever. We're focused on protecting the ideals of the constitution we swore to defend; we just wish we didn't have to do it under the swirling maelstrom of uncertainty that we face today."

– Lt. Col. Bryan Bree Fram, active-duty U.S. Air Force rocket scientist of 16 years.

"For two years straight, the Trump-Pence administration has targeted my transgender son,

and all transgender youth, for discrimination. Donald Trump has laid out an agenda built on fear and hate at a time when young people of every background need their government to have their backs. My child is not a political pawn, and we won't stop fighting for him and other transgender people until everyone is treated with the respect that they deserve."

– Amber Briggie, a member of HRC's Parents for Transgender Equality from Texas.

"I was raised to be hardworking and to help others, but my ambitions are not possible under an administration that denies me a chance to achieve my dreams and further my education. My parents came to this country to provide me with more opportunities and a better life. As a college-educated and LGBTQ dreamer, I call the United States my home. I am not the exception. I represent a community that believes that we all deserve the right to be who we are, to achieve our dreams and also to serve our country."

– Edgar, Young LGBTQ Dreamer and recent college graduate.

"Today's political climate has made it ever more dangerous to be a social outlier trying

to navigate regular life. LGB and transgender persons, undocumented immigrants, those dependent on state or federal programs and employment: all of us are suspect to the whims of those who aim to placate the ignorance of voters. Yet, each act of persecution, each declaration of prejudice and each attack on our rights as human beings makes us, as a whole stronger. Tougher than spite, tenacious and determined, this same climate is one which will create heroes. Heroes of justice, equity and truth. Don't give up the good fight; because the fruit is the last thing to appear on the tree of hope."

– Aryah Lester, Deputy Director, Transgender Strategy Center.

"Transgender people and people living with HIV deserve a government that has our backs. If Donald Trump truly wants to stop the spread of HIV, his administration must reverse their attacks on Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act and the rights of LGBTQ patients. No real public health agenda can ever include dangerous cuts or discrimination against those who need services the most."

– Blossom Brown, an activist and transgender woman living with HIV.

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# LGBTQ Military Organizations Applaud Lawmakers

## Members of Congress Bring Visibility to Transgender Military Service Through SOTU Invitations

BY BTL STAFF

Several members of Congress invited actively-serving and veteran transgender service members as their honored guests to President Trump's State of the Union Address on Tuesday, Feb. 5.

For many of the legislators, the Supreme Court's recent decision to allow the current administration to implement their ban on open transgender military service came into play.

"I am humbled that more than 15,000 selfless, transgender patriots will be represented on the House floor during the State of the Union Address, thanks to the invitations from several members of Congress," said OutServe-SLDN Executive Director Andy Blevins. "Through their invitations, these legislators are reminding our nation of an important fact that our commander-in-chief seems to have forgotten—our nation's armed forces are not better despite open transgender military service, they are better because of their open and authentic service."

It is estimated that more than 134,000 of the nation's veterans identify as transgender and more than 15,000 actively-serving patriots identify with a gender different than the sex they were assigned at birth. For the last thirty months, transgender individuals have been able to openly serve and enter the nation's armed forces.

- Army Maj. Ian Brown and Army Capt. Jennifer Peace attended as the guests of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA, 12).

- Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Megan Winters attended as the guest of Rep. Donald



From left, Navy veteran Tavion Dignard, Army Maj. Ian Brown, Capt. Jennifer Peace, Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Megan Winters and Air Force Staff Sgt. Logan Ireland attend the State of the Union Address on Tuesday, Feb. 5. (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

McEachin (D-VA, 4). Petty Officer Winters serves as a plaintiff in *Karnoski v. Trump*, one of the class-action lawsuits challenging the Trump-Pence Administration's proposed ban on open transgender military service.

- Navy Lieutenant Commander Blake Dremann attended as the guest of Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY).

- Air Force Staff Sgt. Logan Ireland attended as the guest of Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA, 14).

- Navy Veteran Tavion Dignard attended as the guest of Rep. Chris Pappas (D-NH, 1).

"By bringing these highly trained, decorated service members to the State of the Union, members of Congress are helping to put a face to the thousands of transgender troops serving our nation around the world at this very moment," said American Military Partner Association President Ashley Broadway-Mack. "Instead of being singled out by the Trump-

Pence administration for discrimination, these patriotic Americans deserve our nation's utmost thanks and support for their sacrifices and service. We are grateful for the Members of Congress who have stood behind our transgender service members and their families through this incredibly difficult time."

"Day after day, our transgender service members prove just how capable they are," said SPARTA Communications Director Bryan Bree Fram. "Visible to their commanders, they are regularly recognized by the military for their accomplishments. Now, thanks to these legislators, their visibility is magnified, and the American people can get a glimpse of everything they do to support and defend the constitution and this nation."

OutServe-SLDN and Lambda Legal filed the lawsuit, *Karnoski v. Trump*, in August 2017, on behalf of nine individual plaintiffs and three organizational plaintiffs – the Human Rights Campaign, the American Military Partner Association, and the Seattle-based Gender Justice League.

The State of Washington later joined the lawsuit. In addition to *Karnoski v. Trump*, *Stockman v. Trump*, *Doe v. Trump*, and *Stone v. Trump*, filed by the National Center for Lesbian Rights, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders, and the American Civil Liberties Union respectively, are also challenging the proposed ban.

Read more about *Karnoski v. Trump* at [lambdalegal.org](http://lambdalegal.org).

## ICE Confirms 45 Transgender Women Being Held at Texas Detention Center

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement this week confirmed to the Washington Blade that it is currently housing 45 transgender women at a privately-run detention center in Texas.

Danielle Bennett on Tuesday said the trans women are being held at the South Texas Detention Complex in Pearsall, Texas. The GEO Group, a Florida-based company, operates the facility that is roughly 60 miles southwest of San Antonio.

The Blade first learned about the trans women at the facility on Feb. 1 during an interview with Estuardo Juárez Moscoso of Asociación Lambda, a Guatemala City-based advocacy group that provides assistance to LGBTI migrants.

Bennett told the Blade that 111 "self-

identified transgender individuals" were in ICE custody in 20 facilities across the U.S. as of Feb. 4. She said there were "self-identified transgender individuals" at the Cibola County Correctional Center, a privately-owned prison in Milan, N.M., that has a specific unit for trans detainees, as of the same date.

Roxsana Hernández, a trans woman from Honduras with HIV, had been housed at the Cibola County Correctional Center before she died at a New Mexico hospital on May 25.

Moscoso said Hernández received medication from Asociación Lambda when she at its Guatemala City headquarters before she and a group of other migrants traveled to Mexico.

U.S. Sens. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), Tom Udall (D-N.M.) and Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) in a letter they sent to Acting ICE Director Ronald Vitiello and U.S. Customs and Border

Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan on Dec. 5 cited reports that indicate Hernández "endured freezing temperatures and was denied adequate food, water and medical care" while in custody at the San Ysidro Port of Entry south of San Diego and "vomited" while ICE transported her between facilities. The initial cause of Hernández's death was listed as cardiac arrest, but the results of a second autopsy the Transgender Law Center commissioned shows Hernández was beaten before she died.

"When I found out the news (that she had died) it was very impactful," Moscoso told the Blade.

Immigrant and LGBTI rights advocates over the years have sharply criticized ICE and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the agency, over its treatment of those who are in their custody. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen continues

to face calls to resign over the implementation of President Trump's immigration policy that includes the separation of migrant children from their parents and demands for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Bennett has previously described allegations that Hernández was abused while in ICE custody as "false." Andrew Lorenzen-Strait, the openly gay deputy assistant director of ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Custody Programs, defended his agency's treatment of trans, lesbian, gay and bisexual detainees when he spoke with the Blade at ICE headquarters in D.C. on Dec. 18.

"LGBTI care is of paramount importance to us," he said.

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





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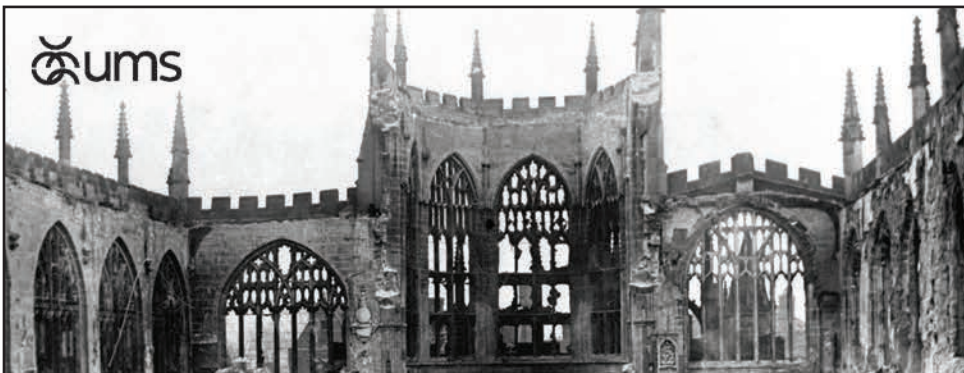
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Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* was commissioned for the re-consecration of Britain's Coventry Cathedral, which was destroyed by a Nazi bomb raid in 1940. The work requires huge forces, including a large orchestra and chorus, two organs, a chamber orchestra that accompanies the soloists, and a boys' choir.

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Artist Clyde Petersen hosts the show “Boating With Clyde,” a digital interview series that happens on the waters of the Puget Sound. Photo courtesy of artist.

## Artist Clyde Petersen on Queer Narratives, ‘Torrey Pines’ and New Projects

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

As a multi-faceted, medium-diverse artist, it’s likely that many fans of Clyde Petersen’s work might know him from a specific project — like “Boating With Clyde,” a digital interview series that happens on the waters of the Puget Sound — and not realize that his body of work spans from stop motion animation and installation artwork to music and live action filmography. The prolific, openly queer and transgender creator is Seattle-based, and just as comfortable creating a fully scaled cardboard Ford Econoline as he is behind the mic at a Your Heart Breaks concert — the band he’s toured and played with for two decades this year. However, among his many projects, it’s perhaps “Torrey Pines,” an internationally known autobiographical stop motion animated film about life with a mentally ill mother for which Petersen is most famous.

It’s in that film that Petersen was able to, among other things, widely share a story about a queer protagonist, a narrative that he notes is often lacking in mainstream storytelling. On Thursday, Feb. 21, Petersen will talk about that narrative and more with Southeast

Michiganders when he arrives to deliver an artist lecture at The University of Michigan’s Penny Stamps Speaker Series. BTL caught up with Petersen before his talk to get a feel for his thoughts on accessibility in storytelling, LGBTQ representation and upcoming projects.

**Your talk is titled *Alternate Realities, Intentional Histories and Queer Survival: Building Your own World in Dystopic Times*. Could you elaborate on how that relates to LGBTQ storytelling?**

I think it’s related to all of the different kinds of art that I work on. It’s definitely really story time for sure in the ways of preservation of history and being a queer person and telling your own story. I build a lot of installation work these days — giant cardboard rooms full of things — so, I’ve been having a lot more art shows like that, so it’s more related to that but it’s kind of all-encompassing. I have a show right now [called “Merch and Destroy”] at the Bellevue Arts Museum [in Washington] that’s a larger-than-life touring van for a rock ‘n’ roll band and it’s in the process of unloading. There’s also a fake green room. I’ve been building those kinds of things for a while, the last 10 years, and thinking about

what it means to recreate spaces and to kind of change who tells the stories of those spaces. I’m definitely going to be showing a lot of my work and animation and short films and “Boating With Clyde” and the installations.

**That Bellevue exhibit is made entirely of cardboard, and your film, “Torrey Pines,” is paper cutouts. What drew you to that medium?**

Cardboard and paper are just so accessible and strong. That was the first instinct with them. There’s a scene in “Torrey Pines” where I’m pulling cardboard boxes out of the dumpster to build a fort and that’s very autobiographical. I love boxes and I’ve loved building forts since I was a little kid, so it’s always been a material that I really enjoy. And, now that I’m an adult, I can buy giant 4-by-8 sheets to work with (laughs). You can buy like a pallet of 4-by-8 sheets of cardboard and build giant crazy things and it’s really joyful. It’s a lot more lightweight than wood and it clearly doesn’t last as long, but in the right environment it can last for years.

**Did you always want to be a visual artist?**

I always wanted to be a filmmaker, so I studied documentary filmmaking in college and then right after college I was in a band, the same band I’m in now. After college I was just like, ‘I want to go on tour and I want to film stuff and I want to play music,’ so I just did that for a really long time, like 10 years. I just got in a van and toured with a lot of bands and artists and saw the world, and then grew up in a kind of punk DIY scene that way. And then I, a bunch of years into it, thought, “I want to get back into film.” I have the skill set, so I moved back to Seattle and I started working in a post-production house making commercials and I hated it so much (laughs). So I got into animation and started making music videos. After I made 40 or 50 I wanted to make a feature, so I made “Torrey Pines.”

**This might sound silly, but what is a Torrey Pine?**

No worries (Laughs). It’s two things. It’s a town in California where the film takes place — it’s a very small town. The most famous thing in that town is a very famous rich person’s golf course, but the town is named after a very specific kind of pine tree that only



grows in two places in the whole world and Torrey Pines is one of them and a very small island somewhere else. It's a kind of pine tree that's very small but grows giant pine cones. Enormous. Comical for the size of the tree.

**(Laughs) I appreciate you clearing that up! I've heard you're working on two new films now, too. What are they and will they match the artistic style of "Torrey Pines"?**

My new film that I'm working on that is related to the "Torrey Pines" style of stop motion animation is called "Our Forbidden Country," and it's a stop-motion animated film about gay cruising pre-AIDS. It takes place in Seattle, Washington, in 1979. And so that is a similar style. It'll look different, but similar in the way it's animated. The other film I'm working on is a documentary of a band called Earth that is a live action shot-on-film documentary so that'll be more of a different situation.

**When can fans expect those to come out?**

"Our Forbidden Country" is in storyboarding right now — I'm snowed in in Seattle and have been doing storyboarding for a few days. It's pretty fun and we're building sets and stuff for it, but it's probably going to be about three years out. And then, this other film, the documentary I'm making is called "Even Hell has Its Heroes." That movie is probably about a year out.

**"Torrey Pines" also didn't include any dialogue, just sound effects and a soundtrack. Will your new projects follow along the same lines?**

I think primarily, yeah, but there will probably be some speaking in it but not very much. It's nice to create these films that can go around the world without subtitles. It's one of my favorite parts about it, taking it to Japan or anywhere and not having this language barrier.

**Do you find that international audiences are able to connect with it more without subtitles?**

Yeah, but you have to think about how it's going to translate culturally, but that's a different situation. But, you know, when I made "Torrey Pines" I was studying American Sign Language so that was a big part of it, just thinking about visual communication and how animation is such a good platform for that. And so I carried that idea into my animated works.

**Has that lack of dialogue been a challenge at times?**

It really depends. The choice to not use dialogue, it creates challenges and it opens up opportunities. It's both for sure. I'll find myself in a situation where I have to translate some really complex idea into visual language and, you know, it'll be a real head scratcher

for a minute like, "How are we going to do this?" But we usually figure it out.

**I will say, I really related to the scene in "Torrey Pines" where you have to shave your legs for the first time without knowing what to do. So dry!**

Yeah, absolutely (laughs)!

**Does Your Heart Breaks have any projects happening now?**

I have a new record out and we just released the first music video for it this week and I'm touring it in April and May and my record is called "Drone Butch Blues" like "Stone Butch Blues" — a famous queer/gay book from an author named Leslie Feinberg. But basically, I spent the last three years reading works by queer authors and writing a musical record about it and one of the tracks, like the first track on the record is called "Our Forbidden Country."

**Fans will see that it's very self-referential, like the fact that "Torrey Pines" was first a song you wrote.**

Yeah. So, it's kind of like a "Torrey Pines" situation again where I wrote this record, did all this research about queer history before AIDS and then was like, "I want to make a film about it." Now the film has a theme song (laughs) and the record comes with a reading list that is like 24 books that you should read. It's all connected.

*See Clyde Petersen deliver his lecture at the Michigan Theater at 5:10 p.m. The venue is located at 603 E. Liberty St. in downtown Ann Arbor. This lecture is free and open to the public.*



Clyde Petersen was influenced by Leslie Feinberg's "Stone Butch Blues" in the creation of his band's latest album "Drone Butch Blues." It resulted in record's song "Our Forbidden Country," which is also the title of a brand-new film he's working on that deals with gay cruising before AIDS.

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# Screen Queen



BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

## Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again

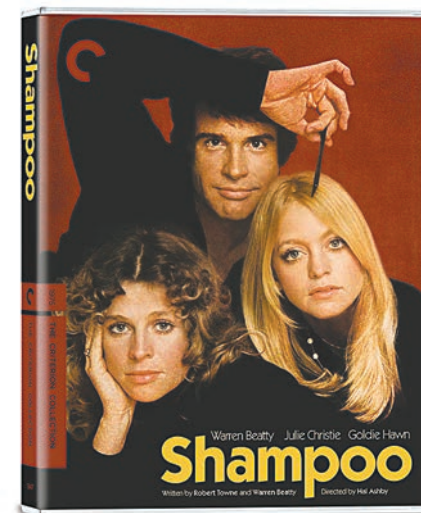
You don't need to see "Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again" more than once. That's still one more time than you needed to see the original "Mamma Mia!," when Meryl Streep bopped and pranced around the streets of Greece's dreamy Kalokairi island. One very famous woman's infectious buoyancy, however, couldn't entirely save the jukebox musical's no-fun drudgery, nor could she cleanse Pierce Brosnan's croak of a "voice." For good reason, then, Streep bowed out of "Here We Go Again" – almost, anyway (her single scene is literally otherworldly and more tearfully tender than it ought to be; also, I'm a crybaby). But no matter: Your mom's favorite movie of 2018 is a brand of stupid-fun I support, probably best viewed after eating an edible. It tells the story

of Streep's Donna without Streep (played in her youth circa the 1970s, through flashbacks, by a very alive Lily James), as she journeys to matriarchal womanhood with the man triad who swept her off her feet, naturally set to deeper-catalog ABBA bops/ballads not in its predecessor. Like an amusement park ride you promised yourself you'd never go on again but then you just couldn't help yourself, "Here We Go Again" is just that, with the gratuitous and appropriately dramatic and well-lit addition of a mini Cher concert. "Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again," after all, isn't really a movie anyway; it's a gay reason for gay sons and their gay-adoring moms to bond together and want to plan a trip to Greece together and emphatically say "OMG, don't you just love Christine Baranski?!" together. So just surrender to its dumb charms and then gaily skip to the special features to see Meryl do a drag-worthy vocal impression of Cher.



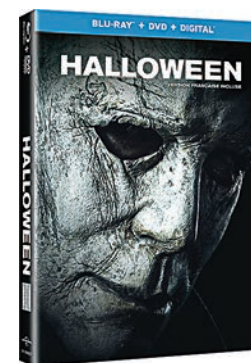
## A Simple Favor

Blake Lively and Anna Kendrick making out in "A Simple Favor" was the lesbian kiss 2018 needed, so thanks a million for that, Paul Feig. The comedy writer-director who we love because he loves putting women first in his films (particularly his muse Melissa McCarthy, in both "Spy" and "Bridesmaids") has his finger on the pulse of so many gay things in his latest flick, merging dark, twisted comedy with his signature farce. Beyond the Lively-Kendrick hookup that rocked our world, Feig somehow knew exactly what was missing from queer cinema: a frothy Hitchcockian crime soap opera about a bisexual mom (Lively) and a straight mom (Kendrick) that also features a Mr. Mom (Andrew Rannells, gay). Kendrick's cat-sock-wearing Stephanie meets the sophisticated, wouldn't-be-caught-in-cat-socks Emily, deliciously played by Lively, at their kids' school. They are night and day, and their mom differences (Stephanie would never hang a giant painting of her bushy vag in her home!) makes for some genius comedic awkwardness. But things get weird and twisty and gayer when Stephanie disappears after asking Emily to pick up her son from school. Emily goes into Nancy Drew search mode: "We are soldiering on with cookies and origami," she bravely shares with the moms who watch her dorky domestic vlog. Come for the kiss and Blake Lively in men's suits; stay for the bonkers shift into "Murder, She Vlogged."



## Shampoo

Before we knew straight men could look as good as gay men and not even identify as gay, there was Warren Beatty as George, whose sexuality was the subject of speculation in 1975's raunchy sex dramedy "Shampoo." During a business meeting, George explains to aging private investor Lester (Jack Warden) that beauty school led him to his profession as a hairdresser, leaving Lester looking as stumped as any old white guy who can't conceive of breaking gender norms. Little does Lester know that George's bedhead poof of a Mick Jagger mane is the result of the lady carousel he's riding hard. One of those women is Jackie (Julie Christie), Lester's mistress. Lester is blind to their affair: "You think George is a fairy?" he asks Jackie. (Later, when the two are caught in an intimate hair-styling moment, George feigns gay.) Then there's Goldie Hawn and Lee Grant, as Jill and Felicia, respectively; George keeps both women around for different reasons, though role-wise Hawn got the feebler of the female parts while Grant got an Oscar. Set against the 1968 presidential election, "Shampoo" is a sign of the times with regard to evolving homosexuality and big-picture politics, marked by an intimate love story that's messy, bittersweet and holds up timelessly in 2019. During one of many supplemental features on Criterion Collection's new restoration, critics Mark Harris and Frank Rich discuss Carrie Fisher's use of the word "faggity" and the film's striking gay implications.



## Also Out

### Halloween

The new "Halloween" is not great. If you've never seen a horror movie before or lived through America in 2018, there are some scares, and one particularly effective and artfully shot sequence is thrilling:



a long, strolling shot of the franchise's masked terror, Michael Myers, on Halloween night amid trick-or-treaters going about his usual knife-bludgeoning business. It's the perfect throwback to John Carpenter's 1978 classic, his legendary score still bone-chilling 40 years on. The big sell here is Jamie Lee Curtis returning as Grandma Laurie Strode, even though she fell to her death in 2002's "Resurrection," a movie that doesn't matter (and never mattered; it's bad) because director David Gordon Green's Trump-era "Halloween" asks you to forget that Curtis was even in a movie with Busta Rhymes and Tyra Banks. This contemporary pseudo-feminist take featuring generations of women standing up to an evil man (sound familiar?) serves as a direct sequel – and, occasionally, slick homage – to Carpenter's classic. Curtis' Laurie is one-note frayed and fierce, but at least watching her kick major ass is more inspirational than anything the other Grandma Lauries watch on the Hallmark Channel.

### Philadelphia

For just under five minutes, Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington and Mary Steenburgen, along with openly gay screenwriter Ron Nyswaner, reflect on the intent and legacy of their landmark AIDS-centric drama "Philadelphia." These new interviews featured on the 25th Anniversary 4K Ultra HD and Blu-ray Edition of the 1993 film, renowned for giving a human face to AIDS and gay discrimination, are slight. Perhaps that's because viewing this historical snapshot all these years later – post same-sex marriage, post PrEP – does most of the speaking on its own. It speaks to a time. It speaks to a community. It speaks to those *outside* of the community: "I don't think 'Philadelphia' was made for gay people," Hanks says. "It was made for straight people who didn't understand how you could be gay or why you were gay."



### Some Like It Hot

American cinema will tell you that if you're a man in peril – running from criminals? looking for a way to see your kids after losing custody of them? – slipping into a dress, plopping on a wig and powdering your face can free you from your troubles. Beloved crime-comedy caper "Some Like It Hot," to which Mrs. Doubtfire and those White Chicks owe their thanks, would become the definitive landmark crossdressing farce, and the 1959 film is preserved as beautifully as Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis (and, of course, Marilyn Monroe) in lace and lipstick with this new 4K digital restoration Blu-ray from Criterion. Special features are plentiful: a 1988 talk between Curtis and critic Leonard Maltin, a new costume-centric featurette, and a wonderful essay written by author Sam Wasson.



As editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service, Chris Azzopardi has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. Reach him at [chris@pridesource.com](mailto:chris@pridesource.com).

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## Actor Jason Bowen Talks True-to-Life Themes in Stagecrafters' 'If/Then'

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Multiple everyday choices are a part of regular life, but there are a few among those many that stand out and those few are usually the ones that have life-changing consequences. In "If/Then," the Broadway musical written by Brian Yorkey that's now playing at Royal Oak's Stagecrafters through Feb. 17, those decisions are explored at length. The show follows a character who, early on in the play, is faced with a decision to go with either her friend Kate or her friend Lucas. In a traditional play, the audience would have to wonder what happens if she decides to go one way or the other; not here. The storyline splits and begins to follow two separate, alternative plots. Playing through this weekend, BTL caught up with Michigan actor Jason Bowen who plays an integral character within one of the two storylines. He filled BTL in on the LGBTQ themes present in "If/Then," unique challenges in playing his role and how the show hits close to home.

**Although the show's lead isn't a part of the LGBTQ community, there are definitely ties that BTL's audience would appreciate. Could you fill us in on what they are?**

The show centralizes on a character named Elizabeth. She comes back to New York after quite a few years, she's recently divorced, wants to start her life over and she connects with two of her friends. One, a female friend

who happens to be a lesbian and then her friend Lucas who she had a relationship with in college but is also bisexual. So, the show starts out with the question of "What if?" And we've all gone through that in our life where we've been presented with a decision and we make our decision but we always wonder, "What if?" What would have happened if I had gone the other direction?

**Has the show made you reflect on some "What if?" moments in your own life?**

Totally. The whole show, in a nutshell, is very reminiscent of life. Like I said, we all go through situations where we wonder what we should have done or what we could have done better or if we hadn't have done this, or if we hadn't have been in that park at that time would we have met that one person? And I actually, I moved to Detroit about five years ago for a job from Chicago. I'm a professional actor and I took a corporate entertainment job here and I met my fiancé here, and if I hadn't have taken that job, I probably would never have met him. He claims we would have but I don't feel like our paths would have crossed. So, obviously, moving to Detroit was the best decision for me, you know?

**Is this show breaking new ground for you? Had you ever played anything similar before?**

As an actor, I'm a musical theater actor so

[www.PrideSource.com](http://www.PrideSource.com)



I'm used to comedy and slapstick and tap dancing and I still dance and I do puppetry, but doing a show that's real that's also a musical is pretty amazing. My fiancé said, 'I've never really seen you do something where your character is real.' I've done 'Young Frankenstein' and things that are fantastical types of shows, but this is the first time that I've done something that's, I would say, more of a challenge. As an actor, you're always honest under whatever circumstances you're under and this is probably one of the most realistic circumstances — barring that people break into music and can dance and sing and all that kind of stuff too.

**Is it uniquely difficult being in a show where there are varying roles for many of the cast members?**

To have everyone in the ensemble playing multiple roles and Lynette, who plays Elizabeth, is phenomenal. You know, it's the character that Idina Menzel [originally] played, so obviously you know the music is huge and she never leaves the stage. And when she does leave the stage, it's to change her sweater and she comes right back on. So, being able to have a role in a show like this,

to be able to see everyone work together and commit and connect, it's the reason I do live theater.

*"If/Then" is at Stagecrafters until Feb. 17 and is rated PG-13. Tickets start at \$23 but more information can be found online at stagecrafters.org or by calling 248-541-6430. The show is presented at the Baldwin Theatre located at 415 South Lafayette in Royal Oak.*





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# Happenings



## Le Butcherettes at El Club Feb. 23

Famous for their unabashedly feminist lyrics, Le Butcherettes is a Mexican garage punk band that was started in 2007 by lead vocalist Teri Gender Bender. The group has released four records, their latest dropping this month titled “bi/MENTAL.” The group is scheduled to perform at Detroit El Club. Tickets start at \$15. Find out more at [elclubdetroit.com](http://elclubdetroit.com).

## OUTINGS

### Thursday, February 14

**Jazz & Soul Singer Sky Covington & Club Crescendo Live Every Thursday Night** 9pm Jimi Blues on Keys, Alex Brooks on Drums, Greg Cook on Bass & Special Guest. No cover. Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore, Detroit. 248-445-1277. [northernlightslounge.com](http://northernlightslounge.com).

### Friday, February 15

Forum Foundation Valentine's Dance 7pm LGBT Fundraiser. Open Bar, Family Style Dinner – Dessert, 50/50 Raffle, Pot-O-Gold Drawing, Dancing. 586-573-9932. The Ukrainian Cultural Center, 26601 Ryan Road, Warren. [theforumfoundation.brownpapertickets.com](http://theforumfoundation.brownpapertickets.com).

### Saturday, February 16

**LGBT Community Chat** 11am Saturday An on going social discussion group meets every week to discuss issues LGBT people face. Coming out, dating and much more. Come join us every Saturday at 11 am. Java Hut Ferndale Michigan, 165 W 9 mile, Ferndale. 248-632-8274. [redbellysenegal90@gmail.com](mailto:redbellysenegal90@gmail.com).

### Sunday, February 17

**Stand with Trans Wyandotte Support Group for Trans Youth and Parents of Trans Individuals** 4pm Free. For Parent Support Group information, contact facilitator Kim Tooley, 734-747-4363. St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 2803 1st St., Wyandotte. [standwithtrans.org](http://standwithtrans.org).

### Men's Swing/Latin/Ballroom Lessons

4pm Same Sex Men's Touch Dance lessons, Casual Attire This is touch dancing where you hold your partner close. No partner needed plenty of single men available. Singles, couples, Beginners or Seasoned dancers. Jordan Mac Studio 444 W. Maple Suite E Troy, MI, 444 W. Maple Suite E, Troy, 248-288-7624. [xanaduspa@me.com](mailto:xanaduspa@me.com). [meetup.com/Shell-We-Dance](http://meetup.com/Shell-We-Dance).

### Monday, February 18

**LGBT Game Night** 7pm 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](mailto:redbellysenegal90@gmail.com).

### Wednesday, February 20

**Affirmations Senior Koffee Clatch!** 1pm A discussion and networking group for people 45 and older. Various discussion topics, social outings and potlucks are held throughout the year. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. [goaffirmations.org](http://goaffirmations.org).

**Stand with Trans Support Groups – Livonia – Wayne County** 6:30 p.m. Free to all. Parent Support Group Facilitators Karen Sessler, [kssessle@yahoo.com](mailto:kssessle@yahoo.com) or 734-673-3590 and Scott Sessler, [pastorscott@emmanuel-livonia.org](mailto:pastorscott@emmanuel-livonia.org) or 734-673-2485. Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 34567 7 Mile Road, Livonia. [standwithtrans.org](http://standwithtrans.org).

### Rainbow League Bowling!

7pm 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. [rainbowbowlingleague.com](http://rainbowbowlingleague.com).

### Thursday, February 21

**Clyde Petersen** 5 pm Clyde Petersen is a Seattle-based artist working in film, animation, music, installation and spectacle. A proud member of the transgender and queer communities in Seattle, Petersen's work explores identity and narrative form. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. [stamps.umich.edu](http://stamps.umich.edu).

### Saturday, February 23

**Erotic Poetry and Music Festival at Tangent Gallery** 8 pm Come join us for an eclectic celebration of the erotic arts all in one evening! Tangent Gallery, 715 East Milwaukee Ave., Detroit. 248-445-1277. [facebook.com/EroticPoetryandMusicFestival](http://facebook.com/EroticPoetryandMusicFestival).

### Tuesday, February 26

**Strand with Trans Support Groups – Ann Arbor – Washtenaw** 6:30 p.m. Parent Support Group Facilitator – Yma Johnson, [ymaj1968@gmail.com](mailto:ymaj1968@gmail.com) or 734-780-4092. Journey of Faith Christian Church, 1900 Manchester Road, Ann Arbor. [standwithtrans.org](http://standwithtrans.org).

### Wednesday, February 28

### Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Farmington Hills – Oakland County

7pm Free. Oakland United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road, Farmington. 248-626-3620. [oaklandumc.org](http://oaklandumc.org). [standwithtrans.org](http://standwithtrans.org).

### Toastmasters International SpeakOUT!

**LGBTQ Meeting** 7pm Professional & personal communication skills development. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867. [lawrencemoebbs@gmail.com](mailto:lawrencemoebbs@gmail.com). [speakout.toastmastersclubs.org](http://speakout.toastmastersclubs.org).

### Sunday, March 3

#### Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Adrian-Lenawee County

6:30 p.m. Free. For parents of transgender kids. Facilitator Socorro Sevilla, MSW: [socorro@hilltopcounseling.org](mailto:socorro@hilltopcounseling.org). Hilltop Counseling, 115 W. Maumee St., Adrian. 313-909-5408. [standwithtrans.org](http://standwithtrans.org). [hilltopcounseling.org](http://hilltopcounseling.org).

### Tuesday, March 5

#### Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Lake Orion / Oakland County

7pm Free. For parents of transgender kids. St. Mary's In The Hills Episcopal Church, 2512 Joslyn Court, Lake Orion. 248-391-0663. [stmarysinthehills.org](http://stmarysinthehills.org). [standwithtrans.org](http://standwithtrans.org).

## MUSIC & MORE

#### Wanted Dead or Alive

February 15, 7pm 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, Livonia Road. [shows@themurdermysterycompany.com](mailto:shows@themurdermysterycompany.com).

#### The House on Poe Street at The Detroit Repertory Theatre

February 15, 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](mailto:DetRepTh@aol.com). [detroitreptheatre.com](http://detroitreptheatre.com).

#### Dragon Training

February 16, 11am Get ready for the new How to Train Your Dragon movie with skill challenges. For age 3 & up. Capital Area District Libraries – Dansville Branch, 1379 East Mason St., Dansville. 517-623-6511. [smiley@cadl.org](mailto:smiley@cadl.org). [cadl.org](http://cadl.org).

#### In the Mood for Swing!

February 16, 7:30 p.m. Swing into Valentine's weekend., Vocalist Lauren Norris will join the orchestra sharing music from The Village Theater at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton. 734-394-5300 ext 3. [cantonvillageheater.org](http://cantonvillageheater.org).

#### Black History Month Concert Series—in the Tradition

February 17, 2pm In the Tradition is an African-centered jazz group nominated for numerous Detroit Music Awards. Capital Area District Libraries – Downtown Lansing Branch, 401 South Capitol Ave., Lansing. 517-367-6350. [cadl.org](http://cadl.org).

#### Dispelling Myths about Smoking, Mental Health/Substance Use Disorders and Recovery

February 19, 7:30 p.m. Health educator Rosemary Bak Lowery, will shed light on the relationship between tobacco, mental health and substance abuse disorders. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. [dawnfarm.org](http://dawnfarm.org).

#### On the PATH to better health (6 week program)

February 20, 1pm Personal Action Toward Health, developed by Stanford University, teaches strategies for the day-to-day

management of chronic conditions. Reservation is required. Jewish Family Service—Oak Park, 25900 Greenfield Road—Suite 405, Southfield. 248-592-2313. [osemenova@jfsdetroit.org](mailto:osemenova@jfsdetroit.org).

#### Meet True Crime Author Rod Sadler

February 20, 6:30 p.m. Hear about some of Ingham County's most infamous murders from the author of “A Slayer Waits” and “To Hell I Must Go.” They include a 1955 Stockbridge couple's double homicide, and the story of Williamston's Capital Area District Libraries – Downtown Lansing Branch, 401 South Capitol Ave., Lansing. 517-367-6350. [cadl.org](http://cadl.org).

#### Flint Symphony Orchestra Presents ‘Beethoven's No. 5 Destiny Symphony

February 23, 8am Enrique Diemecke, conductor; Anthony Elliott, cello; Cheyanne Coss, voice; Beethoven, Barber, Bloch. Cheyanne Coss appears courtesy of St. Cecilia Society, host of the William C. Byrd Young Artist Competition. Pre-concert talks at 6:30, these fun and informative talks take the mystery Flint Institute of Music, 1025 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 810-238-1350. [thefim.org](http://thefim.org). [thefso.org](http://thefso.org).

#### Candy Chemistry

February 23, 11am Experiment with candy to learn science concepts. For age 5 & up. Capital Area District Libraries – Dansville Branch, 1379 East Mason St., Dansville. 517-623-6511. [smiley@cadl.org](mailto:smiley@cadl.org). [cadl.org](http://cadl.org).

#### Cabaret 313 Presents Carole J. Bufford

February 23, 6:30 p.m. With music made famous by Janis Joplin, Dusty Springfield, Tina Turner, Carole King and more, Carole J. Bufford returns for her third performance with Cabaret 313 – You Don't Own Me: The Fearless Females of the Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-833-7900. [cabaret313.org](http://cabaret313.org).

#### Black History Family Festival at the Tangent Gallery

February 24, 5pm Black History Family Festival at the Tangent Gallery, come join us! Tangent Gallery, 715 East Milwaukee Ave., Detroit. 248-445-1277.

#### Shen Yun Performing Arts at the Detroit Opera House

March 1, 7:30 p.m. Shen Yun invites you to travel back to the magical world of ancient China. Experience a lost culture through the incredible art of classical Chinese dance, and see legends come to life. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 313-237-SING. [shenyun.com](http://shenyun.com).

#### 90th Annual Spring Dance Concert at The Bonstelle

March 1, 7:30 p.m. Celebrate our 90th Anniversary of Dance

continued on p. 26

## Editor's Pick

### 'My Favorite Murder' Podcast in Detroit Feb. 22

Made famous by Karen Kilgariff and Georgia Hardstark, the “My Favorite Murder” podcasters will be presenting a live version of their true crime comedy show at the Fox Theatre. Having broken iTunes download records, the duo has accumulated a huge following of fans called murderinos and been featured in publications like The Atlantic, Rolling Stone and Nylon. Tickets start at \$44.50. More information can be found online at [313presents.com](http://313presents.com).







Photo courtesy of The Purple Rose Theatre Company.

## Review: Carey Crim's 'Never Not Once' at Purple Rose Powerful and Poignant

BY MARIN HEINRITZ

CHELSEA — It is a rare experience, indeed, to witness live theater so moving it renders faces wet with tears both on stage and throughout the audience. Opening night of “Never Not Once,” a world premiere in the intimate space of The Purple Rose, provided that rare experience.

It's impossible to say what really needs to be said about this play without spoiling it for those who have yet to see it. However, the seeds of its story are more common than one would hope, evidenced by how deeply its larger themes resonate.

“Never Not Once” is the fifth Purple Rose premiere from playwright Carey Crim, and the play won the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award in 2017. In it, the daughter of a lesbian couple comes home from college with her boyfriend and declares she's hired a private investigator to help her find her father. Her birth mother swears she can't remember the name of the only man she ever slept with — a forgettable college one-night stand. But her other mother reveals what might be the man's name, and the daughter narrows her search, only to discover she does “not come from good.”

The desire to know one's origins, to face the violence of one's past and to seek redemption are all at play here, and these desires unfurl via intense relationships that come to life in powerful scenes that mostly ring true through largely excellent performances.

Casaundra Freeman as Nadine and Michelle Mountain as Allison create a vibrant, loving, desirous, middle-aged interracial lesbian couple whose banter and depth are delightful to see. Their connection is the anchor for the entire show. The way each woman relates to Eleanor, the daughter, played with aplomb by Caitlin Cavannaugh, also builds the complexity and enduring love among this family of women.

Mountain is also wonderful with Rusty Mewha, who plays the man from her past, as they successfully navigate the deeply emotional twists and turns of unwittingly facing the shape-

shifting darkneses of their past — particularly when they don't have a shared experience of what happened or its fallout.

Which is partly why one of the most potent scenes in the play is between the two men — Mewha and Jeremy Kucharek — as Eleanor's boyfriend, an otherwise peripheral character, in a confrontation that signifies the unavoidable truth that it is men who must call each other out for misogyny. What transpires between them brings the audience to ask the question: “Why is it that the best in women is always asked to forgive the worst in men?”

Guy Sanville's direction heightens the drama by making the most of its realness and humor. More often than not what appears to unfold is genuine emotion; however, blocking in moments of conflict as if in a boxing ring with actors circling each other and the line delivery with the cadence of overly-emphatic slam poetry can be a bit heavy-handed.

Still, the technical aspects are clean and understated. Thanks to Noele Stollmack's lights, Sarah Pearlina's set shifts from upper middle-class home to other locales without incident, and they show the audience where to look with subtlety.

In some ways, “Never Not Once” can be read as an emotional revenge fantasy born of the #MeToo moment, one in which women and their love for each other endures and conquers all; and yet, therein lies the rub: If, in this cultural moment, there is no change, no reconciliation, no reparations, then is there progress? Or is finding the gift in that which doesn't come from good all the redemption we need?

Not quite being able to answer these questions is perhaps the deeper reason beyond the particular circumstances of “Never Not Once” that made the audience spontaneously weep by the play's end.

*Never Not Once runs through March 16 at The Purple Rose Theater in Chelsea. [www.purplerosetheatre.org](http://www.purplerosetheatre.org). Box Office 734-433-7673*

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# FreQshow Provides New Platform for LGBTQ Artists of Color

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

It's a new concept. A nude art show aimed at attracting an audience of queer folks of color. FreQshow, which will be co-produced by artist and local style icon DL Perrett and Imagine This Productions, will take place Saturday, Feb. 23, at the Charlevoix Gallery on Detroit's east side.

"I attended a nude art show some years back and I fell in love with the environment, the people and the art," Perrett said. "I felt like I was in my comfort zone ... in an area where I could thrive."

Perrett, who is both a painter and a fashion designer, started entering a few shows, but said he wasn't pleased with how they turned out.

"So, I started doing research about what I was trying to create," he said. "I would do Google searches for sexy men or powerful women and I would never find people of color. I would have to scroll through three or four or five pages before I would find a person of color. I thought this show was a perfect way to reshape the imagery."

The show, said Perrett, is going to be "bold."

"It's going to be tasteful and very intriguing," he said. "It's going to be eye-opening ... maybe even inspiring. I'd like folks to go home and maybe have a little fun. The show will feature one-of-a-kind art and some interactive playful exhibits. We're going to have a DJ to provide us with some sounds. There are going to be some wow moments ... just enough to get people's hearts beating a little faster."

Featured in the show will be artists such as Chayse Ardon, Demetruis Green and Clay Drew, body painter Charley the Artist, performance and poet Jice Demere and photographers Rihanna Chester and J Cross.

"This is an outside of the box platform for LGBT artists of color," Perrett said. "I'm hoping that people will leave with a sense of self-discovery and self-appreciation."

Demere said it was easy decision to sign on to be part of the show. He will be performing a piece "about freedom and how freedom can be expressed through nudity."

"Because of the society that we live in

and the moral grounds of our country, we're encouraged to cover up and put on clothes," Demere said. "To that end, a lot of people are insecure about showing flesh and showing skin. Any time you conquer a fear it releases a part of freedom inside of you. That's why I think this show is good because it kind of challenges the moral standings in society. Hopefully everyone walks away seeing that nudity isn't necessarily always attached to erotic thoughts."



Photo by J. Cross.

Green, who will be painting live during the show, said the event, for him, will be a new challenge that he's excited to take on.

"It's kind of thrilling in the most heart-throbbing manner," he said. "I'm a bit nervous."

Very comfortable with nudity, Green said he prefers to be naked when he paints.

"I like being just as bare as my canvas at the beginning," he said. "There's less room for errors or spills, unless it's intentional. When I paint in the nude I'm simply more comfortable. With each brush stroke I began to harness more confidence. But even the less calculated or vulnerable strokes give aesthetic authenticity."

*FreQshow will take place Saturday, Feb. 23, from 6 to 10 p.m. The Charlevoix Gallery is located at 14505 Charlevoix St. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$25 at the door. To purchase advance tickets, visit [dlperrett313.ticketleap.com](http://dlperrett313.ticketleap.com).*

## Editor's Pick

### Academy Awards Short Films at DIA Through Feb. 28

Now through the end of the month, the Detroit Institute of Arts is presenting all five of the 2019 Oscar short film nominees. General admission costs \$9.50 with discounts for members, students and seniors. Advance ticket purchase is recommended. More information about the event can be found online at [dia.org](http://dia.org).



### ▶ Happenings

Continued from p. 24

at Wayne with this thrilling weekend at the Bonstelle Theatre. Join us as we highlight national and international works from top-performing artists. Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-577-2960. [theatreanddanceatwayne.com](http://theatreanddanceatwayne.com).

**Stagecrafter's Second Stage Presents 'Sondheim on Sondheim'** March 1, 8pm Part musical revue, part documentary, Sondheim on Sondheim gives us an intimate portrait of famed songwriter. Baldwin Theatre, 415 South Lafayette, Royal Oak. 248-541-8027. [stagecrafters.org](http://stagecrafters.org).

**Art A Thon for Ron Zakrin** March 8, 8pm Detroit artists are drawn together to help a fellow artist on his road to recovery. On Friday, March 8, 8pm the local art and music community will join forces to raise money for living expenses Tangent Gallery, 715 East Milwaukee Ave., Detroit. 248-445-1277.

**Franck, Fireflies and Fortissimos** March 10, 2pm Fortissimos thread together the playful spirit of fireflies and Mozart's Symphony No. 35 along with Franck's remarkable Symphony in D minor. First United Methodist Church, 42501 N. Territorial Road, Plymouth. 734-453-5280. [michtix.com/events/franck-fireflies-and-fortissimos](http://michtix.com/events/franck-fireflies-and-fortissimos).

**Black History Month Concert Series—Curtis Taylor** March 10, 2pm Grammy Award-winning trumpeter Curtis Taylor has played at the Kennedy Center and NPR's Jazzset—now he's here to entertain us at CADL Downtown Lansing! Capital Area District Libraries – Downtown Lansing Branch, 401 South Capitol Ave., Lansing. 517-367-6350. [cadl.org](http://cadl.org).

**Mapplethorpe in Performance** March 14, 5pm Thirty years after the death of Mapplethorpe, we still cannot turn away from what his photos reveal. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397.

**Does Addiction Treatment Work?** March 19, 7:30 p.m. Dr Carl Christensen, MD, PhD, D-FASAM will review the recent criticisms of treatment for substance addiction including Twelve Step, residential, and medication assisted therapy. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. [dawnfarm.org](http://dawnfarm.org).

**Peter Sellars** March 21, 5pm MacArthur Genius Fellow Peter Sellars is an American theater director, noted for his unique contemporary stagings of classical and contemporary operas and plays. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397.

### THEATER

**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. More information about this Hillbery Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. 313-577-2972. [theatreanddance.wayne.edu/theatre](http://theatreanddance.wayne.edu/theatre).

**Wanted Dead or Alive** February 15, 7pm 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, Livonia Road. [showsthemurdermysterycompany.com](http://showsthemurdermysterycompany.com).

**Stagecrafters Presents If/Then** February 15, 8pm 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](http://stagecrafters.org).

**Williamston Theatre Presents 'To Quiet the Quiet'** February 15, 8pm 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](mailto:info@williamstontheatre.org). [williamstontheatre.org](http://williamstontheatre.org).

**Angels in America: Part One – Millennium Approaches** February 15, 8pm In Part I of 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, Hillbery Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. 313-577-2972. [wsushows.com](http://wsushows.com).

**Reap the Grove by Caity-Shea Violette** February 15, 8pm An estranged family reunites for their mother's final days. Matrix Theatre Company, 2730 Bagley St., Detroit. 313-967-0599. [www.matrixtheatre.org](http://www.matrixtheatre.org)

**The House on Poe Street at The Detroit Repertory Theatre** February 15, 8:30 p.m. Gothic ghosts encounter modern monstrosities when twin sisters inherit the house where Poe. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow

Wilson, Detroit. 313-868-1347 [www.detroitreptheatre.com](http://www.detroitreptheatre.com)

**A2CT Presents: The Play's The Thing** February 22, 8pm A2CT presents a weekend of new works at the A2CT Studio Theater All performances are free. More info: [www.a2ct.org/shows](http://www.a2ct.org/shows). A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228 [www.a2ct.org](http://www.a2ct.org)

**Erotic Poetry and Music Festival at Tangent Gallery** February 23, 8pm 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 Avenue, Detroit. 2484451277 <https://www.facebook.com/EroticPoetryandMusicFestival>

**Fisher Theatre Presents 'The Lightning Thief'** February 26, 7:30 p.m. The Greek gods are real, and they're ruining Percy Jackson's life. As a son of Poseidon, Percy has newly discovered powers he can't control, monsters on his trail, and is on an epic quest. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. 313-872-1000 <https://www.broadwayindetroit.com/shows/the-lightning-thief>

**Wharton Center Presents 'Miss Saigon'** March 12, 7:30 p.m. Experience the acclaimed new production of the legendary musical Miss Saigon, from the creators of Les Misérables. Wharton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. 517-353-1982 [wharton@msu.edu](mailto:wharton@msu.edu) <http://www.whartoncenter.com> <http://www.whartoncenter.com/events>

### PUZZLE SOLUTION

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### CROSSWORD P. 29





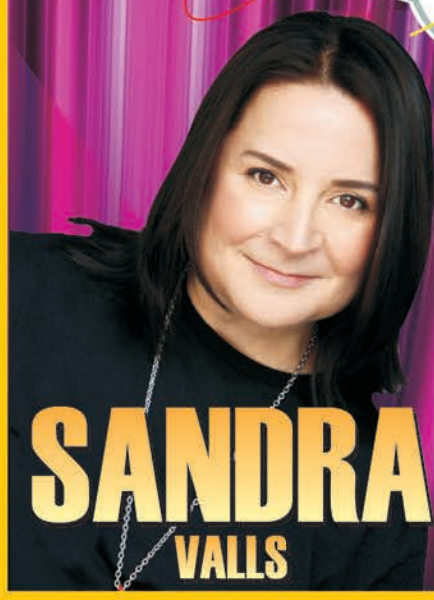
# ONE NIGHT ONLY

## SATURDAY

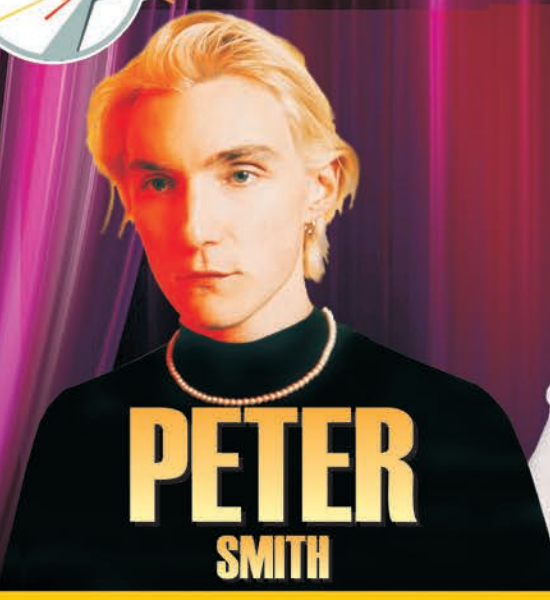
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\*Please note that breakfast is not included with group rate.  
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# [www.comedyfest.org](http://www.comedyfest.org)

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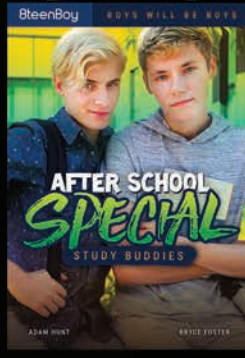


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## The Frivolist: 6 Reasons Your Next Vacay Should Be a Cross-Country Amtrak Trip

BY MIKEY ROX

If you haven't experienced America the Beautiful by rail yet, hop on an Amtrak ASAP for an eye-opening experience that could have you replacing planes as your preferred mode of travel indefinitely. Here are six reasons to book right now.

### 1. It's way cheaper than you think

I booked my first cross-country Amtrak trip last fall after reading an article about how travel expert and blogger Derek Low designed a trip of his own, originating in San Francisco and ending in New York City, for around \$200. Impossible, I thought, so I reached out to ask if he could help me score a similar deal. He obliged, and for a \$49 consulting fee he returned a reverse itinerary (New York to San Francisco) for just over \$400. My trip wasn't as cheap as Low's because he traveled straight through on his ride and I was making a few stopovers in cities I wanted to explore (Chicago, Denver and Salt Lake) for a day or two, but it was still mind-bogglingly inexpensive. Low's trip totaled 71 consecutive hours on the train while my on-and-off experience lasted an amazing eight days.

### 2. The whole experience is relaxing from start to finish

Amtrak's sightseeing routes all are aboard the national rail carrier's Superliners, which consist of bilevel passenger cars plus dining, lounges and sleeping cars. I slept in my coach seat during the overnights I was on the train, but private roomettes are available. Just don't expect the same low-cost deal I'm describing if you're booking the latter. A sleeper car will easily put your trip over a grand, sometimes much more. Coach is quiet and perfectly comfortable for the budget traveler. No matter where you sleep, however, your trip will be relaxing from start to finish – because all you need to do is kick back and enjoy the ride. The biggest advantage to rail travel is that there are no long security lines, TSA bag screenings, or costly bag fees like you have at the airport, so you're not stressed out before your vacation even begins. After you're settled in your permanent seat, claim a spot in the Sightseer Lounge, which features floor-to-ceiling windows so you can watch your trip unfold right before your eyes. I spent every waking hour in this car drinking wine, making friends, and watching the most dramatic scenery glide by, complete with mountain views and wildlife sightings, including elk, bald eagles, moose, coyote, and more.

### 3. BYO food and drink to save even more money

The lack of pre-travel hassle is a major pro when traveling by rail but equally appreciated is Amtrak's BYO food and drink policy. I packed snacks and wine for days, which saved me a bundle on refreshments. I didn't have enough

room in my bags to cover the full trip (and I didn't want to lug around that much weight either), but I got through at least two days without a spending a dime, money that adds up if you're buying food and booze on the train from the jump. It's also an opportunity to eat healthy-ish in the beginning, because once your home-packed provisions run out, your good-for-you snack options are extremely limited in the café car. Seated meals, on the other hand, are sufficiently healthy if you choose the healthy menu items. If you're city hopping on your trip, restock your private stash while you're off train and venture on full up.

### 4. You'll see parts of the country you can't see any other way

Cars, planes, boats, and other modes of transportation can get you places, but they can't access some of the most remote crevices of our beautiful country, like the hills and valleys of the Rocky and Sierra Nevada mountains. East Coast and Midwest legs of an Amtrak cross-country are pretty, sure, but those views aren't in the same league as stunning scenes of snow-covered peaks, brilliant yellow aspens, winding rivers, slopes of never-ending forest, and myriad tunnels that still serve as individual feats of American engineering at its finest.

### 5. It's wildly romantic

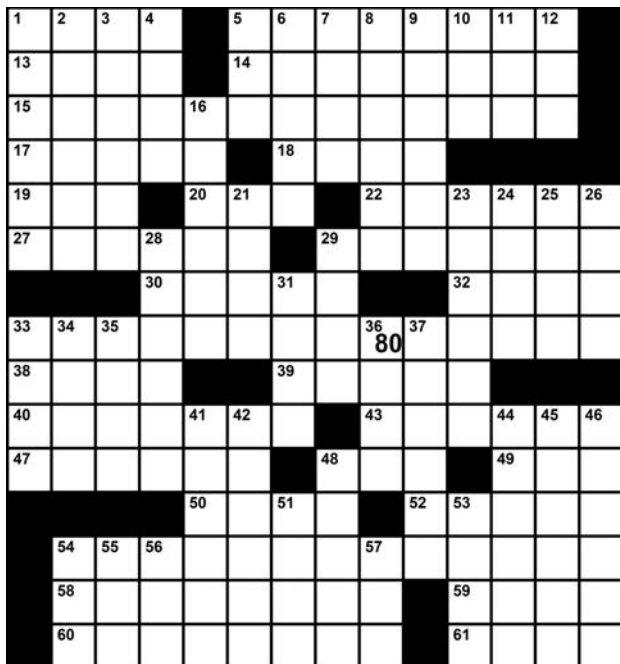
What's more romantic than cuddling up in the cozy coach seats with your partner, one head on the other's shoulder, and falling asleep to the consistent drone of a moving locomotive after a full day of refreshments, sights and enjoyable conversation with other travelers? It doesn't get any better than that for me. Oh, and the sub-level bathrooms are large and unattended; you can figure out the rest.

### 6. This is all about the journey, not the destination

If you want to save the most money and stay on the train coast to coast, you won't regret it. These Superliner routes are designed specifically for sightseeing, and if all you do is ride the whole way, you'll be satisfied. This trip is about the journey, not the destination. You can get off along the way to stretch your legs and have a smoke break if needed (sometimes for longer stretches if there's a delay in service – the only time you'll look forward to this when traveling), then you'll hop back on and chug along. No money spent on rental cars, fuel, hotel rooms, expensive dinners and bar tabs, or activities. Your cross-country is all that rolled into one for the lowest fee that you make it.

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





## Goodbye, Dolly

## QPuzzle

### Across

- 1 LesbiaNation.com and Gay.com
- 5 Gig for Michael Carbonaro
- 13 He cruised for 40 days straight
- 14 Without dissent
- 15 Beloved Dolly portrayer (1921-2019)

- 17 "...farewell, auf Wiedersehen, \_\_\_"
- 18 JFK predictions
- 19 Zadora in "Hairspray"
- 20 "Annie Get Your \_\_\_"
- 22 Trunks of Mapplethorpe's photos
- 27 Heated arguments
- 29 Make grief-stricken
- 30 Clark of fashion

- 32 Killed, to King James
- 33 Start of a quote by 15-Across
- 38 Street urchin
- 39 Supporter for Cassatt
- 40 Tinged with gold
- 43 Treat badly
- 47 Type of arm tattoo
- 48 Guns N' Roses frontman Rose
- 49 Long of "If These Walls Could Talk 2"
- 50 Current band of the past?
- 52 Lets up
- 54 End of the quote
- 58 Worked at Barneys, e.g.
- 59 Mr. Right-now, e.g.
- 60 Use Viagra successfully
- 61 "Sex and the City" creator Darren

### Down

- 1 Opens bottles
- 2 Worker under Ricky Martin
- 3 Rope to catch a long little doggie
- 4 Where a cobbler puts the tongue
- 5 Britten's raincoat
- 6 Visibly shocked
- 7 Whipping boy
- 8 Present from birth
- 9 L-word bleeper, perhaps
- 10 Friend of Rimbaud
- 11 Pink-slip
- 12 "Star Trek" sequel, briefly
- 16 Landau's "Ed Wood" role
- 21 R. Nureyev's land, once
- 23 Hawk at a flea market
- 24 Casa part
- 25 Out partner
- 26 Works under Edith Head, perhaps
- 28 Chewy candy
- 29 Sappho's B
- 31 Comment about watching gay porn?
- 33 Christmas poem opener
- 34 Word before ass
- 35 Wilde country
- 36 Throw in the trash
- 37 Disney dog Old \_\_\_
- 41 Virtual reality stand-in
- 42 Computer whiz
- 44 Oust, as a homophobic incumbent
- 45 Nap for Lorca
- 46 Judy Garland's parade day
- 48 Remembers some S&M
- 51 Oscar \_\_\_ Renta
- 53 Totals
- 54 Jackie O.'s second husband
- 55 Kevin Bacon in "Footloose"
- 56 Truncation abbreviation
- 57 Ending for a fruity drink

**SOLUTION P. 26**

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# Black History Family Festival at Tangent Gallery Feb. 24

DETROIT — On Sunday, Feb. 24, Detroit's Tangent Gallery is presenting its first annual Hug Detroit Day Black History Family Festival. Organizers of the event said that this day will be a celebration of Black History Month and a special way of honoring "cultural trailblazers of the past" as they explore the impact they've had on the present.

"Detroit leaders such as comedian Mike Bonner will host and perform at our festival. Also: speaker and activist Henrietta Ivey; Co-founder of Hug Detroit Day and Everette's Natural Hair School President Sheila Hale; Motivational Speaker Brenda Pedleton; Co-Director of Detroit's Trinity International film Festival Film Producer Lazar Favors; jazz vocalist Sky Covington; State Rep. Isaac Robinson; and Co-Founder and Partner at Conscious Community Cooperative ThinkTank - C3 B Anthony, will hope to inspire and encourage audiences through their accomplishments," organizers said.

Since the theme for Black History Month 2019 is black migrations,

organizers said that much of the content will adhere to information about those movements across the world. "Tracking the continuous movement of blacks from the American South to the industrialized North and beyond," organizers said. "Beginning in the early 20th century, a growing number of black industrial leaders and black entrepreneurs emerged as families relocated from farms to cities, and from the South to the more industrialized Northeast and Midwest."

The festival will also address the emergence of new music genres from those moves — like ragtime, blues and jazz — as well as the impacts this had on Detroit. Additionally, there will be discussions of these topics and more.

*Tickets can be found onlien at eventbrite.com and doors opens at 5 p.m. The Festival lasts until 11 p.m. Tickets are \$10 but are fee for children. For more information contact Nicole Freeman at 248-445-1277. Group rates are also available.*



## Itinerary for Feb. 24:

5 to 5:15 p.m.: Greeting ( Community Prayer)

Prayer for the betterment of our People led by Minister Nen Bailey

Words from State Rep Isaac Robinson

5:15 to 5:30 p.m.: Public speaker, Organizer, and Political Figure at SEIU Healthcare Michigan

Henrietta Ivey and Singalong "Lift Every Voice and Sing"

5:45 to 6:15 p.m.

Lazar Favors

Co-Director of Detroit's Trinity International film Festival Film Producer Lazar Favor

Short Film about Black Bottom and Paradise Valley

Co-Director's Trinity International Film Festival

6:15 to 6:45 p.m.

Storytime

"Only Twice I Dreamed for Heaven" by Dawn Turner Trice

"The Bulging Bag" by Unoma N. Azuah

"Rail Under my Back" by Jeffery Renard Allen

From the book "Gumbo: An Anthology of African-American Writing"

6:45 to 7 p.m.: Hair Show by Hairstylist Makyha Womble

7 p.m.: Motivational Speaker Brenda Pedleton

7:15: Poet Deep Water

7 p.m. Artist Talk

Ifoma Stubbs & Monique Simon

7:30 to 7:45 p.m.

Co-Founder and Partner at Conscious Community Cooperative ThinkTank - C3 B Anthony

7:45 to 8 p.m.: Sky Covington speaks on "Service"

8 to 8:30 p.m.: Comedian Mike Bonner

8:30 to 9 p.m.: Poet JE McGee performs

Activist and Poet Nikki Giovanni

Mike Bonner Introduces Tim Ellerbe

Recording of an interview with Nat King Cole

9 to 9:30 p.m.: Tim Ellerbe performs Jazz Legend Nat King Cole

9:40 to 11 p.m.: FINALE Nina Simone JE McGee introduces Sky Covington performing Nina Simone

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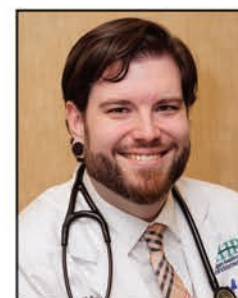
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Mark Rosen, PA-C



Leon Bullough, NP-F



Keyuna Nance, MSW