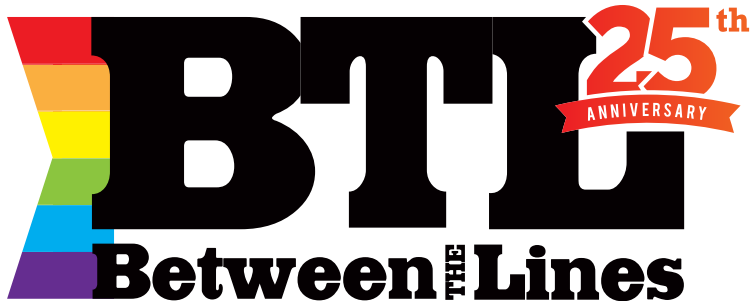


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Curator Clare Rogan Brings
Pop Art to the Fore in Exhibit

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NEWS

6 Former Executive Director Returns to Affirmations

8 Affirmations to Celebrate 30th Anniversary at Spring Bash 2019

8 NAGLREP Greater Detroit Launch Party Brings LGBTQ Professionals Together

12 Michigan Receives 'C' Grade for Its Gun Safety Laws

14 Trump Restaffs AIDS Council 15 Months After Firing All Members

15 Impressive Democratic Field

OPINION

10 Parting Glances

10 Mombian

11 Creep of the Week

LIFE

16 'Queer Eye' Star Karamo Brown on Wedding, New Memoir and Life Advice

20 Ann Arbor Film Festival Out Night March 28

22 Dreaming a Dream in Ptown

26 Happenings

29 Puzzle & Crossword

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

30 LGBTQ Adults in Southeast Michigan Invited to Participate in Health Survey

30 National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund Applauds Introduction of Equality Act



4 Curator Clare Rogan Brings Pop Art to the Fore in New Exhibit

Photo: Andrew Cohen

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BTL photo: Andrew Cohen

Curator Clare Rogan Brings Pop Art to the Fore in New Exhibit

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Bold colors, clear-cut lines and often, deceptive simplicity; those are just a few common characteristics of the pop art movement and exactly what will grace the Detroit Institute of Arts' walls now through late August of this year in the exhibition "From Camelot to Kent State: Pop Art, 1960-1975." Featuring over 70 different objects from the height of the movement, it's a sampling of some of the best-known pop artists of all time, many of whom, like Andy Warhol, were openly LGBTQ. When asked why she chose this particular art form to be her debut exhibition in her current role at the DIA, Curator of Prints and Drawings Clare Rogan said that once she saw the DIA's existing pop art collection, it was an easy decision.

"This is an exhibition based on the DIA collection. Everything in the show, except for the Andy Warhol 'Electric Chair' — which is a wonderful loan from a local collector — belongs to the DIA," Rogan said. "One of the wonderful new things about coming to a new collection is discovering where they have

incredible strengths. I started looking at the prints and drawings collection and I quickly realized that not only did we have wonderful pop art prints and pop art drawings but that we got them early on."

In fact, Rogan went on to say that many of the works in the DIA's collection were purchased within a year of their creation in the 1960s and '70s, at the height of the U.S. pop art movement. Perceptive DIA visitors might recognize a few of the pieces featured in this exhibition have been moved from their regular homes within the museum's contemporary galleries.

"The Oldenburg profile 'Airflow' and the sculpture, the 'Double Portrait of Henry Geldzahler' [by Marisol], are usually in our permanent galleries for contemporary art. But I wanted to bring them into context with the pop art prints, with the pop art multiples," Rogan said. "Multiples is a term used for three-dimensional editions, editions where instead of being a lithograph or a screen print, it's a three-dimensional object but it's not unique — there are a number of them, multiples. I wanted to bring them back into that context."

What is pop art?

Pop art is unquestionably eye-catching and bold, frequently using popular products as source material, and often, Rogan said, it delivers a message that's deeper than what initially meets the eye.

"Pop is really playful. It's witty, it's complicated and it's about embracing the world around us," she said. "It very much comes out of a moment in the '50s when artists were really focused on their inner thoughts, on reaching authenticity using techniques that tapped into very intuitive [places] very much inspired by Zen meditation."

And pop art, or "popular" art, was by many considered to be a direct answer to the abstract expressionists of the day like Jackson Pollock or Mark Rothko, by celebrating the everyday and banal. The British Tate galleries officially describe the movement as a "revolt against the dominant approaches to art and culture and traditional views on what art should be. Young artists felt that what they were taught at art school and what they saw in museums did not have anything to do with their lives or the things they saw around them every day."

That movement resulted in work like Warhol's "Campbell's Soup Cans," a 32-canvas installation that imitated a grocery store's display of the soup, an incredibly popular item of the day and something that only recently had become widely accessible. Though that particular work isn't available to view at this exhibit, Warhol's art, along with that of many of his contemporaries, appears in "Camelot to Kent State" and engages the viewer with that pop art mentality with what Rogan calls "a real celebration of popular culture."

"Really engaging with what was a wonderful period in economic growth of mass media, television, color television, advertising, Madison Avenue, comic books," she said.

What was perhaps most revolutionary about the pop artists of that time, too, was their use of materials and methods that were normally commercial like lithography and screen printing.

"And they're doing this at a time when many of the gatekeepers in art are saying, 'High art is very serious and low art is this mass-produced food, mass-produced packaging, magazines — this is low art,'" Rogan said. "And pop artists

are playing with all of those definitions. They're reaching out and saying, 'Wait a minute, let's look more, let's celebrate, let's critique.'

Perhaps one of the best examples in this exhibit of depth within a literally outwardly commercial package is Corita Kent's 1965 work "Enriched Bread." From the outside, the screen print obviously plays off the packaging of Wonder Bread, a new product at the time, but holds much deeper meaning when Kent's background is explored.

"She was a Roman Catholic nun in a convent in Los Angeles and was head of the art department for the college that the order ran. Though she was a nun, she was engaged with the outside world and fascinated with new technologies around the outside world like grocery stores," Rogan said. "[This print is] based on an advertisement of Wonder Bread and then the quote is from French existentialist writer and philosopher Albert Camus who famously created an essay that urged artists to connect with the outside world. This is a wonderful play between that philosophy and, at the same time as a Catholic nun, it's a metaphor of the Eucharist. It's working on all these different levels."

Camelot to Kent State

Entering the gallery space, the exhibit starts with James Rosenquist's "F-111" and leads through a selection of iconic works from across the realm of the '60s and '70s, and the rapid cultural change felt during that period. Rogan said that the title came from a period of time that not only was prolific for pop art but for U.S. history in terms of mass production, media and modern perceptions of the American dream.

"The title 'From Camelot to Kent State' is a rough arc, but in the early '60s with a new administration, John F. Kennedy, a young president, a young family in the White House, [there was] this sense of youth, of change, progressivism, of optimism," Rogan said, adding that the term Camelot of the Arthurian round table lovingly refers to Kennedy's time as president. "And in the United States particularly, the beginning of pop art is much more about embracing the positive sides of consumer culture and that shifts as you go along, and the whole politics and the turmoil of the '60s and early '70s, the Vietnam war, it shifts and it changes and there's a lot more critique going on in response to all that. I wanted to just gesture toward that arc."

And indeed, though presented through a seemingly bright, crisp and cheery lens, "F-111" does critique '60s society.

"In 'F-111' I used a fighter bomber flying through the flak of consumer society to question the collusion between the Vietnam death machine, consumerism, the media and advertising," Rosenquist said of his work.

The exhibit ends where the title suggests with a powerful and political image of the Kent State Shootings, an image caught by chance by British artist Richard Hamilton when he set his camera up in front of his television set.

"It happened to be the week of May 4, 1970, the week when the Ohio National Guard was called onto the campus at Kent State in response to protests against the Vietnam war and the expansion of it into Cambodia," Rogan said. "He was deeply shaken by it and he strongly opposed the Vietnam war and he felt that by making this he could help keep the shame in our minds. So, this is a screen print working with very, very accomplished German design press, 13 different colors and 13 different screens. [They are] aligned and created in a way that creates that flickering instability of the color television screen in the way that color TV was not crisp and it was wavy and moved and [emphasized] that sense of not quite knowing of what this horrific photograph is in front of us."

Though this style contrasts starkly with the bright, crisp lines and seemingly cheery presentation of the "F-111" bomber shown at the start of the exhibit, the use of the pop art is similar.

Filled With LGBTQ Icons

"Camelot to Kent State" isn't specifically an LGBTQ-themed exhibit, but it presents the work of many artists who were quite open about their identities at a time when it was still a crime in the U.S. Through the then unprecedented proliferation of media materials and the art form's general popularity, those LGBTQ creators like Warhol, Robert Indiana, Robert Rauschenberg and David Hockney still stand as icons not only in the art world but as LGBTQ trailblazers. Rogan herself is openly lesbian and pointed to the fact that pop art's prevalence is part of the reason that they were able to be so open and free with their identities — Warhol especially.

"I would say that pop art was very much part of the whole general social changes in the 1960s and 1970s and that the success of pop art allowed somebody like Andy Warhol who was flamboyantly gay with his platinum hair and his slight figure, ... [to push] the envelope," Rogan said. "And also, the success of pop art and the popularity of it gave it more visibility."

In that way, perhaps, pop art stands out among other popular art forms at the time in terms of shaping LGBTQ history. However, Rogan emphasized that pop art was only a piece of a much larger social movement that existed during the roughly outlined decade of her exhibit.

"I wouldn't tie [expansion of LGBTQ visibility] explicitly to pop art," she said. "I think it's part of broader, huge, dramatic social changes in the '60s and changes in approach to sexuality in general. With the birth control pill and a youth culture and civil rights movements, I mean, [there were] all of these different parts that come together. So, I think pop art is as much along for the ride as it is changing anything."

To find out more about the DIA's "From Camelot to Kent State: Pop Art, 1960-1975" exhibit, visit dia.org.

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Former Executive Director Returns to Affirmations

Antonio David Garcia Will Lead Ferndale's LGBTQ Community Center Again

Antonio David Garcia, known as Dave by most, is back at the head of Affirmations in Ferndale, returning to the role of executive director on April 29 after a break of five years.

Garcia, a Michigan native, left the LGBTQ community center in 2014 after two and a half years as the executive director to move on to a new position as director of policy and community building for the Los Angeles LGBT Center in California.

"Over the past five years, I have been honored to work for the largest LGBT organization in the world here in Los Angeles. I have learned a tremendous amount and have grown both professionally and personally. While LA is truly an amazing and inspiring city and the work of the Los Angeles Center is unmatched across the globe, Los Angeles is not my home. I'm coming home," he said.

This announcement follows the news sent out four months ago that Affirmations was experiencing financial difficulties. The center has been without an executive director since March 2018 when Susan Erspamer resigned. Lilianna Reyes was appointed as interim executive director until she resigned in November 2018 to join the Ruth Ellis Center. Despite facing an impending shutdown, the board of directors pledged to continue operations and embarked on a "discovery and listening tour" to understand what the community wanted in the next executive director.

"The community expressed a strong desire for the next executive director to have an intimate knowledge of the Michigan LGBTQ community. Other stakeholders requested the executive director have a proven track record, and the board envisioned an executive director with foresight, strategic thinking, and strong administrative and development skills. Dave Garcia is a known leader that meets all these requirements, and we are excited to welcome him back to Affirmations," said Mike Flores, Affirmations board president.

According to Cheryl Czach, board vice president and committee chairperson, several candidates for the permanent executive director role presented themselves and, "David Garcia stood out due to his extensive non-profit background and increasing leadership roles at the local and national level."

Garcia first made news back in 2000 when he walked nearly 60 miles from Swartz Creek to Lansing looking to bring attention to the discrimination LGBTQ people face. He was forced out of an administrative position with Swartz Creek Community Schools when he tried to start a gay-straight alliance, and he ultimately won a settlement in a lawsuit over his First Amendment rights.

Garcia then went to work for the YMCA camp in Holly, produced a documentary called "Fences" about finding himself as a gay man, and produced a play in Flint called "Candy Corn, Christ and the Convoluted Creation of Golf!" In 2009 he went to work as executive director of the Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center.

During his time at Affirmations, Garcia helped with a three-year strategic plan, strengthened diversity with the Multicultural Advisory Committee, and reached out to seniors, people of faith and transgender people with connection-building initiatives.

Beyond an improving financial environment on his watch, Garcia was known for making the organization more political and more cooperative. He and other executive directors from community centers around the state got together to create the Community Centers Network. Together they participated in Shore 2 Shore, went to Lansing to protest anti-gay-family legislation and staged a 100-day relaying strike called Hungry 4 Equality.

Upon return, the first thing on Garcia's agenda is to strengthen the board of directors at Affirmations.

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See **Affirmations**, continued on p. 14



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Affirmations to Celebrate 30th Anniversary at Spring Bash 2019

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

An annual spring fundraiser for the Affirmations LGBTQ community center, Spring Bash has long been a mainstay on the 501(C)(3)'s calendar. However, this year is special in two ways: it's a celebration of the organization 30th birthday and the official introduction of the center's brand-new Executive Director David Garcia who will be returning after an absence of five years to take the center's helm.

"This is a huge milestone year for Affirmations," said Mike Flores, the organization's board president and interim executive director. "In addition to David Garcia being there, we announced that Dennis Shepard will be a keynote speaker as well. Of course, Dennis Shepard being the father of Matthew Shepard, so we're excited to hear his comments and how really the LGBT movement has changed over the last several decades."

One of the center's signature events, the evening will be held at the MGM Grand Casino in Detroit and included in the evening's events will be curbside valet, an open bar, a three-course dinner and entertainment featuring DJ Marquis.

However, though Spring Bash is scheduled as normal for this year, those who have been involved in Affirmations' programming in recent months will know that just this past November, it wasn't a certainty that the center would keep its doors open for more than six months.

"So not only are we going to be celebrating 30 years of legacy and all the accomplishments that the organization has done over the last 30 years but really celebrating the future," Flores said. "There was a lot of uncertainty around the November timeframe when we had to make that decision to restructure, to make sure that the organization kept its doors open."

That restructuring process included cutting center programming, staff and hours to stabilize the budget, reconnect with its donor base, develop a plan of action moving forward and finding someone to take on the permanent role of executive director — a role that hasn't been filled since early 2018.

Flores said he's proud of not only the center's

board and staff, but the community support that allowed the center to raise over \$100,000 in barely two months and keep the doors open.

"It was difficult, we understand that; our board went from a governance board to a management board and a lot was asked from the staff that remained in terms of them going above and beyond what their current roles were," he said. "But what we're seeing is a shift in terms of how Affirmations operates, in terms of efficiency that we were able to create during the last couple of months. But, more importantly, it was the shift that we saw in terms of us being able to reconnect with the community and making sure that we took everything the community wanted. We used that information to be able to make sure we're meeting all those needs at once."

Flores said that another shift happened, too: a recommitment to partnerships with other local organizations.

"Not to say that we weren't engaged in partnerships prior to the restructuring, but I think that there was a recommitment to make sure that we strengthened the current partnerships that we had, and established new partnerships moving forward," he said. "Because we realized that the way of doing business in the past was unsustainable. The only way to be able to succeed moving forward was to change our mindsets and our models, and one of those key model elements was partnerships. I think if you ask other organizations in the Metro area, they have seen that."

Still in some of the planning stages of some of those partnerships, Flores said he's not at liberty to say all of the coming projects. However, he said March 30 has surprises in store and along with the coming months.

"As we move further in 2019, you'll be able to start to see some of those partnerships really flourish and the community will start to see services change slightly at Affirmations because of those partnerships," Flores said. "[They're] for the better of the community."

Visit goaffirmations.org/spring-bash-2019. For those interested in supporting the event Kyle Taylor is available at ktaylor@goaffirmations.org or by calling 248-398-7105.

NAGLREP Greater Detroit Launch Party Brings LGBTQ Professionals Together

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Originally established in 2007, the Florida-based 501(c)(3) National Association of Gay and Lesbian Real Estate Professionals was started with the direct intention of not only bringing both allied and LGBTQ business professionals together, but to work on a legislative level to aid in the elimination of discriminatory housing practices in the U.S. Now, in addition to the dozens of chapters nationwide, the Metro Detroit area has its own; its inaugural event was held in Bloomfield Hills on Thursday, March 14. James Christbrook, president of the Greater Detroit chapter said he was excited for the local community to learn about NAGLREP's larger mission.

"It's the first real organization of gay and lesbian real estate professionals and allies. We include everybody because inclusion is important, and the other part of it is doing good business — networking across the country, having a referral network," Christbrook said. "Especially if you have a gay or lesbian client that's more comfortable with that realtor, we have a network across the country that can handle that."

Beyond simply being a great resource for couples looking for a smoother experience when buying a home, Christbrook included that many realtors, even in the LGBTQ community, don't realize that in many parts of the U.S. there still exist housing inequalities that omit LGBTQ people.

"In half the states in the country, it's still allowable to discriminate based on sexual orientation when it comes to housing and many other things," he said. "As a realtor, however, you cannot do that because it's in our code of ethics that we do not discriminate based on sexual orientation. And, actually, the National Organization of Realtors is pushing to change that on the federal level. So, it's a very concerted effort."

And Michigan is still included among those states that do not punish LGBTQ housing discrimination. Christbrook said that though the national organization advocates on a large scale at Human Rights Campaign and at legislative conferences in Washington, D.C., the Greater Detroit group will be doing its own outreach and advocacy on a smaller level.

"We're planning several events throughout the year and most of them are education-based, and that's for everybody to be included; gay, straight, we don't care," he said. "The point of what we're doing is that we feel that anybody who can afford to rent or buy a home should be able to do it anywhere they want regardless of sexual orientation, color, creed, anything. It's good business and it's the right things to do."

Don Chisholm, a launch party attendee and member of the Greater Detroit NAGLREP

chapter, said that not only has his membership increased his business, but it also has given him confidence that he's able to advocate for members of his own community, too.

"I quickly signed on and joined in January of 2018 and have been with them since. I have actually had some LGBT clients who have come specifically to me through the NAGLREP website," he said. "They looked for a city and state via their website and they found me and I matched and they connected. So, it's been good for business and I'm very much in line, from a national perspective, [with what] NAGLREP is doing with fair Housing and LGBT advocacy and non-discrimination. It's very heartening to see at the national level, some of the things that are able to be done when we all work together."

Wives Sherry and Tina Swift were also in attendance. The couple owns a coaching, training and consulting company aimed at supporting real estate professionals and said that they were delighted to join the group when asked.

"A little over 50 percent of our clientele are realtors, so we were invited three years ago to NAGLREP in Palm Springs to speak at the national convention and we have been members and participating ever since," Sherry Swift said. "We are super excited as Detroiters to be able to support the Greater Detroit Chapter and excited to be a part of the leadership and the team here."

Jason Heilig, another member realtor in attendance, said that it was NAGLREP's commitment to community support that drew him in.

"So for Greater Detroit, we're trying to reach out and just bring greater diversity to everybody and we have so many different cultures and people from all walks of life and we go down to Detroit, to Dearborn, up here in Bloomfield Hills, Christopher [Ayers] and I do a lot of business in Southeast Michigan," he said. "so we are seeing people from all different cultures. And it's not all about gays and lesbians, we have allies and straight members as well, so you don't have to be gay to be in NAGLREP."

Swift summed up the local chapter's goals well.

"You know, it's all about the relationships, the affiliate partnerships and connecting people who aren't necessarily inside of the LGBT community and pulling them in and providing an opportunity for advocacy and for partnership," she said. "We are hoping that all of the lenders, all of the title companies, no matter what your orientation is, we're hoping that everyone comes in and can be a part of advocating this presence in the community and area."

find out more about NAGLREP and the Greater Detroit Chapter, go online to NAGLREP.com. For membership information, contact James Christbrook at James@ShainPark.com.

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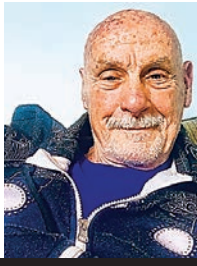
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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Remember Life! Keep 45 in Mind!

For over 50 years Life magazine informed Americans about what was happening here and abroad. Photos and content were dramatic. Mostly conservative. Occasionally controversial. Once in awhile downright shocking.

Life folded in 1973. Circulation 13 million. Readership, 10 times that amount. Its sister publication, Time, marches on to this day.

Five years before the Stonewall Riots of 1969, Life tackled a scary taboo: "Homosexualities in America." An expose focusing on the gay underworld. New York! Chicago! San Francisco! America's collective Sodoms and Gomorrahs.

Middle Americans woke up to the realization that homos were growing in number. Becoming alarmingly visible. A social threat to be somehow remedied. Militancy! Leather! Bars! Codpieces! Parades!

In 1964, San Francisco was not the dynamic gay center of Castro/Market Street, clone-look militancy. It hadn't the high-density population complex of the 1970s and pre-AIDS 1980s; but Life's wide-audience article — unintentionally, to be sure — served as a catalyst for early gay migration there.

Life opened its scare head-on: "Homosexuality shears across the spectrum of American life: the professional, the arts, business and labor. It always has. But today, especially in big cities, homosexuals are discarding their furtive ways and openly admitting, even flaunting, their deviation.

"Homosexuals have their own drinking places, their special assignation streets, even their own organizations. And for every obvious homosexual, there are probably nine nearly impossible to detect.

"This social disorder, which society tries to suppress, has forced itself into the public eye because it does present a problem — and parents especially are concerned.

"The myth and misconception with which homosexuality has so long been clothed must be cleared away, not to condone it but to cope with it."

Accompanying the 14-page belly shock are a dozen photos. Nameless gay men clustered in dark bars or milling about on dimly lighted streets. "These brawny young men in their leather caps, shirts, jackets and pants are practicing homosexuals, men who turn to other men for affection and sexual satisfaction.

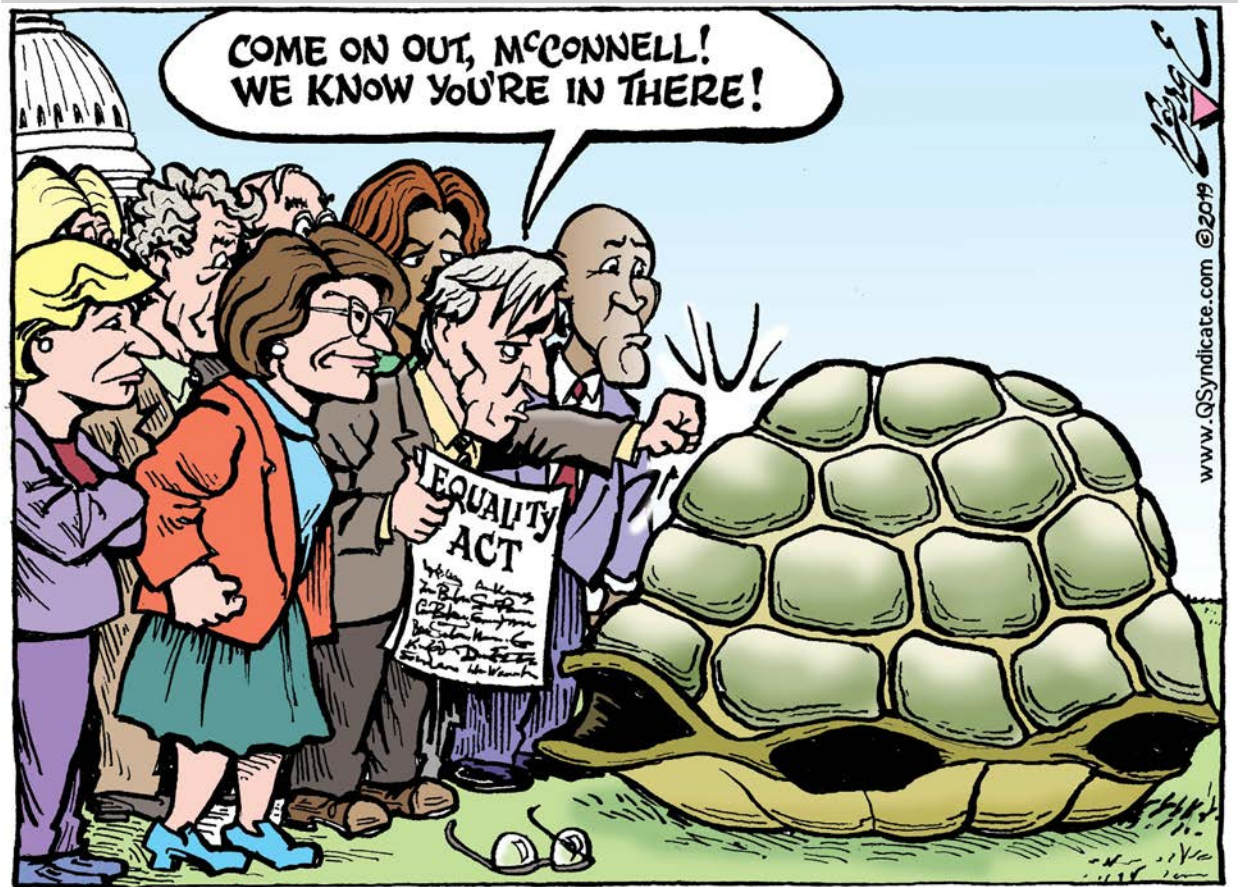
"They are part of what they call the 'gay world,' which is actually a sad and often sordid world."

Gay bars are exposed: "As each new customer walks into the dimly lit room, he will lock eyes with a half dozen young men before reaching his place at the bar. Throughout the evening there is a constant turnover of customers as contacts are made and two men slip out together, or individuals move on to other bars in search of better luck.

"As closing time — 2 a.m. — approaches, the atmosphere grows perceptibly tenser. It is the 'frantic hour,' the now-or-never time for making a contact." Sound familiar?

Here's the early version of the gay agenda: "As part of its anti-homosexual drive the Los Angeles police force has compiled an

See **Parting Glances**, continued on p. 11



BY DANA RUDOLPH

Of Budget and Bias

Mombian

President Trump's proposed 2020 budget, released March 11, reinforces his intention to let foster care and adoption agencies discriminate against LGBTQ people and others in the name of religion, using taxpayer money. There is legislation pending that could stop these religious exemptions to non-discrimination laws, however. Here's what you need to know.

The president's budget includes the line item: "Protect the religious liberty of child welfare providers." It has no funding amount attached to it, but the Every Child Deserves a Family campaign, which works to end discrimination in child services, said in a statement that while such a line in a budget proposal is not statutorily binding, "the wording sends a dangerous signal to child welfare agencies that they can discriminate based on a religious litmus test."

Additionally, the Department of Health Human Services budget in brief that came out at the same time reiterates the role of HHS' new Conscience and Religious Freedom Division "to ensure protection of the conscience and religious freedom rights of individuals and entities working in health care and human services."

President Trump had already personally signaled his encouragement of such discrimination. At the National Prayer Breakfast on Feb. 7, he said, "My administration is working to ensure that faith-based adoption agencies are able to help vulnerable children find their forever families while following

their deeply held beliefs."

Understand what's behind that: The HHS this past January granted South Carolina a waiver from federal nondiscrimination policy so that federally funded adoption and foster care agencies in the state may discriminate based on a person's religion, LGBTQ identity or other factors that do not harmonize with the religious beliefs that the agency espouses.

The waiver came after Miracle Hill Ministries, a Protestant foster care agency, turned away a Jewish woman from serving as a mentor to foster youth because she did not share Miracle Hill's beliefs. The state's Department of Children and Family Services told the agency it must comply with federal nondiscrimination policy or lose its contract, but Republican Gov. Henry McMaster intervened and requested a waiver from HHS, which was granted.

After the waiver was requested, South Carolina also passed a bill to become one of 10 states — Alabama, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Virginia — whose laws now allow religious exemptions in child services. (Similar legislation has been introduced in Arkansas and Tennessee.) All but Alabama allow them to do so even if they receive taxpayer money.

Supporters of religious exemptions have argued that laws which cut public funds for agencies that discriminate have

See **Mombian**, continued on p. 11

... South Carolina also passed a bill to become one of 10 states — Alabama, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Virginia — whose laws now allow religious exemptions in child services.

► Mombian

Continued from p. 10

forced religiously based child service agencies to close and are thus reducing the number of homes for children. Yes, some agencies have chosen to close rather than place children with LGBTQ parents. But as Emily Hecht-McGowan, former chief policy officer of Family Equality Council, explained to me in 2017, this has made “no discernible impact” on children finding homes. These agencies did not make that many public placements to begin with, and the ones that closed were able to transfer all their cases to other agencies.

Last fall, LGBTQ and child welfare advocates defeated federal legislation that would have permitted religious exemptions in child services across the nation and momentum is building to further oppose religious exemption laws. In the past two months, 43 U.S. senators and 95 U.S. representatives have signed letters to HHS Secretary Alex Azar, strongly condemning the South Carolina waiver. And at a March 14 Senate Finance Committee hearing on the president’s budget, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR), the ranking member, said in a statement that religious exemptions in foster care harm children by limiting the number of homes available and raise “alarming questions” about what would happen if children end up in settings “hostile to their faiths” or LGBTQ identities.

Several pieces of legislation could help avoid these scenarios. The Do No Harm Act, introduced in both houses February 28, would ensure that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, meant to prevent the government from “substantially burden[ing] a person’s exercise of religion,” cannot be used to allow discrimination.

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 10

‘educational’ pamphlet for law enforcement officers entitled, ‘Some Characteristics of the Homosexual.’

The strongly opinionated pamphlet includes the warning that what the homosexuals really want is a ‘fruit world.’ (Not a cocktail.)

Gays in the military, 1964: “If we didn’t throw them out, we’d be condoning homosexuality. The services’ position has to be that homosexual practices prejudice morale and discipline.”

Life warns, “For the first time the Supreme Court has agreed to hear the homosexual case,

Additionally, the Every Child Deserves a Family Act, introduced with bipartisan support in the past five Congresses, is expected to be introduced again this spring. The bill would withhold federal child welfare funds from states that discriminate against prospective parents or youth in care on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity (and for prospective parents, marital status), and allow redress in federal courts.

Most prominently, the Equality Act, introduced in both houses (and with much fanfare in LGBTQ media) two days after the president’s budget, is meant to “prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity and sexual orientation” in a wide variety of programs and services. It specifically notes that “Barring discrimination in foster care and adoption will increase the number of homes available to foster children waiting for foster and adoptive families” and “will ensure improved treatment and outcomes for LGBT foster children.”

Contact your own members of Congress and ask them to cosponsor these bills if they haven’t already (or thank them for doing so). Follow the Every Child Deserves a Family campaign (everychilddeservesafamily.com) on social media for updates on federal and state happenings. With over 440,000 children in foster care, over 120,000 waiting to be adopted, and nearly 20,000 aging out of foster care each year without finding a permanent home, according to the latest federal data, preventing bias in child services should be a critical national imperative.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.

but no legal procedures are likely to change society’s basic repugnance to homosexuality as an immoral and disruptive force that should somehow be removed.”

Somehow removed? Maybe AIDS possibly? Afterthoughts on Trump, Pence, the GOP, anyone? Please share as warnings on Grindr.

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

Creep Of The Week

BY D’ANNE WITKOWSKI

Brenton Harrison Tarrant

“Let’s get this party started.” That’s how Brenton Harrison Tarrant kicked off his livestream video of his massacre at the first of two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand.

I want to say this: “It goes without saying that Tarrant is a vile person deserving of universal condemnation.” But I can’t. Because in this world of ours it sadly does not go without saying. There are plenty of people praising Tarrant and admiring his actions.

And wouldn’t you know it, if you made a Venn diagram of people who have contributed to the anti-Muslim hatred that enabled this attack and people I’ve called out as creeps in this very column over the years, well, there’d be overlap, to say the least.

First and foremost is Donald Trump, a man who stoked and encouraged racists his entire career and capitalized on his White Supremacy cred while running for president.

And wouldn’t you know it, Tarrant, in a manifesto he published online before his murder spree, praised Trump as “a symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose.”

Trump of course quickly condemned Tarrant’s murders in the strongest possible terms.

Just kidding. But he did Tweet.

“My warmest sympathy and best wishes goes out to the people of New Zealand after the horrible massacre in the Mosques,” Trump tweeted.

First of all, “best wishes?” Does he think he’s signing a birthday card?

Secondly, on the very same day Trump best-wished New Zealand, he issued his first veto against a bipartisan resolution against his make-believe crisis declaration to claw money for his border wall. And during the veto “ceremony,” Trump used the same language as Tarrant, calling immigration “an invasion.”

“Congress’ vote to deny the crisis on the southern border is a vote against reality,” Trump said. “People hate the word ‘invasion,’ but that’s what it is. It’s an invasion of drugs, criminals, & people ... in some cases, they are killers.”

The only crisis at our southern border is one of the Trump Administration’s own making and it is a humanitarian crisis. There’s no large-scale invasion. Those who are seeking to enter the United States are, by and large, people seeking refugee status as they flee from violence and poverty. Lots of them are women and kids.

So, did he call the New Zealand mosque shootings a terrorist attack? No. Despite

the growing threat of white supremacist-fueled terrorism in the United States and internationally, Trump said, “I think it’s a small group of people that have very, very serious problems.”

Serious problems, yes. But no matter what the size of the group (and it is undoubtedly larger than Trump is willing to acknowledge), Trump’s anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric have emboldened the people who hold these views and are most prone to violence.

Other folks called out as creeps in this column who have really shitty takes on the New Zealand massacre include:

Dave Daubenmire, who used the word “fantastic” to refer to Tarrant’s video, said, “Please pay zero attention to the mosque shooting,” because according to him way more Christians are killed by Muslims than the other way around so the news media trying to get us to pay attention to these Muslims is “the old bait and switch.”

Jesse Lee Peterson who said on his radio show, “In this country, the Muslims are treated better than the Christians and white people in America. We just saw where they allowed two Muslims to become congressmen in our government, and that is not good. Those two women hate Israel and they hate America.” Note: the two women he’s referring to do not hate America or Israel, though they have raised some very uncomfortable questions (albeit sometimes in clumsy ways).

Matt Barber, who tweeted, “Praying for #NewZealand & the families of the innocents murdered by evil, cold-blooded monsters.” And yet, Barber has a long and well-documented history of anti-Muslim rhetoric. He’s claimed that there’s no such thing as a “moderate Muslim” and that all Muslims want to murder Americans. He also wrote this line of hot trash: “Islam is the ‘religion of peace’ in the same way that rape is snuggling.”

Bryan Fischer, who took to his radio program to say that while he doesn’t condone shooting people, he said, “I hate Islam” and agreed with Tarrant that “Islam is something that does need to be stopped.”

The list goes on. What these folks all have in common is hate. Against Muslims, against LGBTQ people, against anyone who doesn’t fit into their worldview. When hate goes unchecked it explodes. White supremacy is a cancer. The longer we ignore it, the harder it is to cure. Ignore it too long and it’s terminal.

Michigan Receives 'C' Grade for Its Gun Safety Laws

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

As part of its Annual Gun Law Scorecard, the California-based Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence ranks all 50 states on a multi-point gun safety rubric and issues both a ranking and letter grade to each. Last month the 25-year-old nonprofit issued Michigan a "C" grade for 2018, ranking it as the 16th highest state in the nation regarding gun law strength, but placing it at 37th regarding nationwide gun deaths. The Center's Legal Director Laura Cutilletta said that despite its relatively low score, the "good news" for Michigan is that there are many ways the state can improve its standing. She said the most common approach states takes to do so is by implementing "child access prevention laws."

"Those are laws that hold gun owners accountable when they store guns in a way that allows children to gain access to them," Cutilletta said. "Michigan does have this law, but it's a fairly weak version of the law, so it doesn't get very many points on our scorecard."

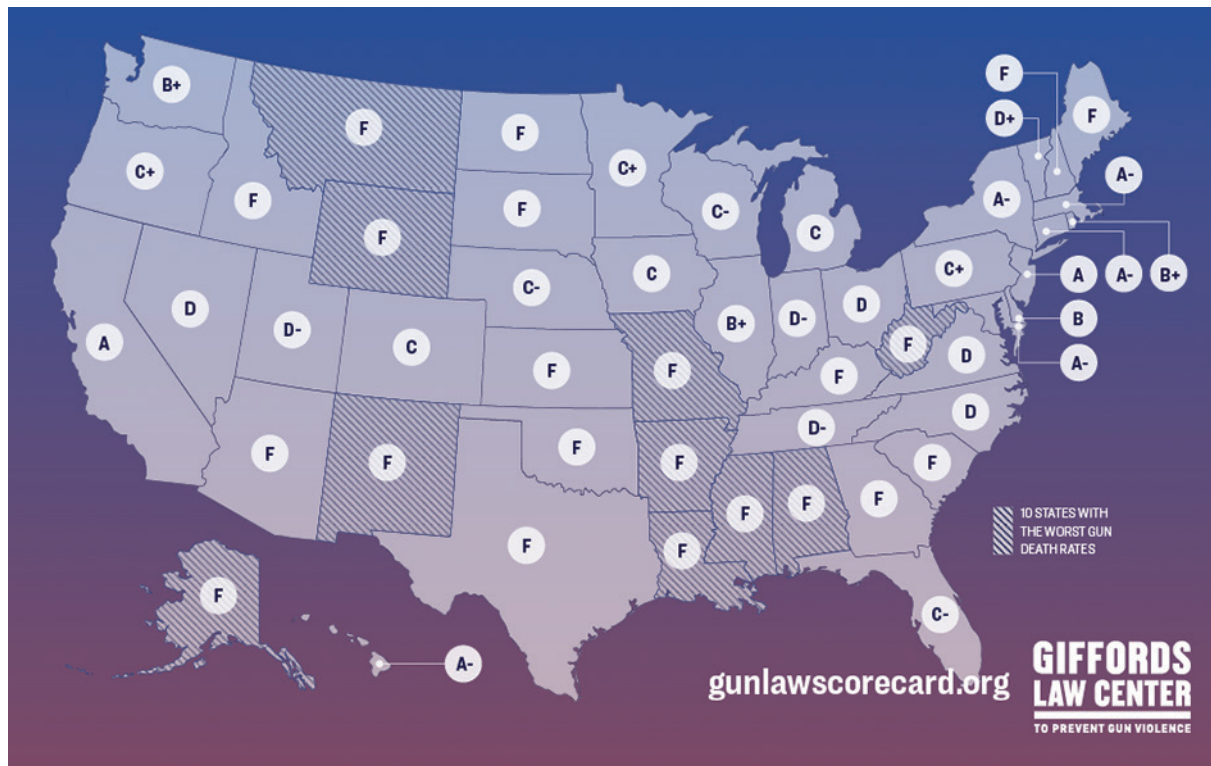
As it stands today, Michigan parents are only penalized for children accessing their guns if they bring them onto school property with their knowledge. However, in states like California that have received "A" ratings, those laws are more comprehensive and prohibit the negligent storage of a firearm, even if a child doesn't gain access. Cutilletta also recommended the enactment of background checks when purchasing firearms from a licensed dealer — something not required when purchased from an unlicensed person.

"Most of the states, I think maybe seven of the 10 states that have the lowest gun death rates, they've all passed background checks and Michigan has not. So, that would be the number one thing it could do, but there are a lot of other things," she said. "They could also require a license to purchase a gun or to own a gun and some states do and that's been proven to be effective."

Cutilletta added that imposing a waiting period before transferring a firearm and limiting the number of firearms that could be purchased at a time also impacts gun injury and death rates significantly.

The U.S. Relative to Michigan

In 2017, the Center found that 109 people died each day from gun violence, resulting in



almost 40,000 total gun deaths. According to the New York Times, when adjusted for population, that statistic brings 2017 to the highest spike in gun deaths since the 1990s. According to Center statistics, strengthening background checks, implementing child access prevention laws, passing extreme risk protection order laws and banning military-style weapons are all methods to fight future data jumps.

However, despite the recent rise in gun deaths, Cutilletta said that 2018 was a landmark year for progress regarding gun safety legislation, in part because of activism on behalf of victims of mass shootings like those in Parkland, Florida.

"This was a record year for the number of gun laws that were enacted to strengthen regulation. And there were 67 gun laws enacted this year in 26 states and D.C. and those were all laws that strengthened gun laws," Cutilletta said. "There were a few victories by the gun lobby but it was limited, and they weren't able to get their biggest priorities like allowing guns without a permit and allowing guns on campuses. And they weren't able to get any of those bills enacted in 2018, so we've definitely seen a huge surge of activism and lawmakers taking action on this issue in 2018."

But as significant as last year's strides were, there's still a long road to improved scores and lowered gun death and injury nationwide. Perhaps one of the most striking pieces of data surrounding Michigan in the Center's report is its hugely "disproportionate impact on communities of color."

"Black men make up just 7 percent of

Michigan's population, but account for nearly 72 percent of the state's gun homicide victims," read the report. "In Michigan, black men ages 18 to 24 are more than 44 times more likely than white men the same age to be murdered with a gun."

Compared to national statistics in 2014, Michigan still outpaces the national average where for young black men, who at that time made up 7 percent of the national population, "the murder rate is close to 90 homicides per 100,000 people — nearly 20 times the national average."

Targeting Urban Violence

Cutilletta said that one of the ways the Center is targeting urban violence in communities of color is through a three-year-old initiative that involves a multi-tiered approach.

"Often in cities, there are a small group of people that are responsible for the shootings. You can even isolate it neighborhood by neighborhood and block by block and it's usually not a huge number of people that are responsible and who are perpetually the victims or the perpetrators," she said. "There's different ways of doing it. It involves policing, it involves going into hospitals immediately after someone's been shot to work with the victim so that they don't become the next perpetrator in retaliation, providing services to different groups of people so that there's an alternative to them from just life on the streets, and those programs are really, really, proving to be effective in Oakland [California]

and they've been effective in other states."

Cutilletta said that not only do programs like that end up saving lives and preventing further incidents, they actually save states money overall, which is one of the lead arguments the Center has for aiding gun violence prevention.

"We're really pushing this year especially that states fund these kinds of programs. For a very nominal amount of money, a state can actually end up saving a huge amount of money in the costs of gun violence in all the health care costs, and the law enforcement and all of the government services that are utilized when somebody's been shot," she said, adding that sometimes that's the best way to get through to people who might feel that

it's "not their issue."

"We do find that people turn a blind eye to these issues," Cutilletta said. "So, that's why we do use the costs the financial gain of investment to ignore a much larger cost later as a way to get through to some people who might not pay attention otherwise, who feel like it's not their problem, who don't live in the city."

Fighting Misconceptions

Cutilletta said that part of the reason some people aren't receptive to legislation targeted at preventing gun violence is because of unfounded fears that mass firearm seizures are the ultimate goal of gun safety advocates.

"It is a misconception to be sure. It is a fear that, frankly, the National Rifle Association stokes intentionally," she said. "But is absolutely not something that is our goal at all, or really any of the groups that are working on this. And one thing that I think is important to note is that in these states that have 'A' grades, that hasn't happened. California's had very strong gun laws for 30 years and not a single law-abiding person has had their gun confiscated. I'm sure there have been errors that have been made and rectified, but there's not been any intentional efforts to confiscate guns from law-abiding people. So, that's a perfect thing, I think, to point out to people who are worried about that."

According to an April 2017 study done by Pew Research Center, the majority of Americans, roughly six in 10, feel that gun

laws should be stricter, 31 percent feel that they are already adequate and 11 percent feel they're overstepping boundaries. What is clear in the report is that the issue is hugely partisan, especially regarding thoughts on the impact of gun ownership regarding mass shootings and general impact on crime.

"Partisans are also deeply divided over whether it is more important to control gun ownership or protect gun rights, according to the same survey," the study said. "Around three-quarters of Republicans (76 percent) say it's more important to protect the right of Americans to own guns than it is to control gun ownership, while just 19 percent of Democrats agree. That 57-percentage-point partisan gap is up from a 29-point gap in 2008."

Despite the seeming increase in divisiveness on certain matters, however, Pew did find that regarding potential gun owners with mental illnesses and those who are on federal no-fly lists both Republicans and Democrats mostly in agreement. Also regarding background checks for private gun sales and at gun shows. Perhaps another sign of the impact of activism on behalf of mass shooting survivors..

Getting Involved

For those who are interested in learning more about gun violence, its impact and ways to prevent its spread, Cutilletta recommended looking for local gun violence prevention groups.

"In a lot of states, including Michigan, there are state groups [to join and] that's probably the best thing to do," she said. "The Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence is one, and online they have a tab that says 'get involved' and it says how to join."

Along with finding local groups, the Giffords Law Center also has a resources tab online, too, including not only facts and national events, but information on model laws, designed to aid activists in states like Michigan who are looking to present public safety legislation that's been shown to be effective in the past. Cutilletta said that these model laws come from the quarter of a century that the Center has been ranking states and their gun safety across the nation and putting out its annual scorecard.

"We're looking at gun violence from the public health approach which really focuses on prevention as though you were looking at a disease from spreading," she said. "So, as part of that approach, we've identified about 30, 35 different policies and we have weighted them according to the impact that each policy has based on studies that exist."

To find out more about The Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence go online to lawcenter.giffords.org. Find The Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence online at michigancoalitiontopreventgunviolence.org or find them on Facebook.

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Trump Restaffs AIDS Council 15 Months After Firing All Members

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

Fifteen months after firing all members of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, President Trump has restaffed the advisory body with nine new appointments.

The Department of Health & Human Services confirmed the new appointments to PACHA morning Thursday morning after letters went out last week informing the new members of their appointments.

Brett P. Giroir, HHS assistant secretary for health, said in a statement the new members “will play a critical role” in responding to HIV/AIDS in the wake of Trump’s recently announced plan to end new HIV infections by 2030.

“More than 1 million Americans are living with HIV and nearly 40,000 are newly diagnosed with the virus each year,” Dr. Giroir said. “Working together, we have the opportunity to tackle some big issues, and I know our new members are up to the task.”

The new members are come from variety of professions, including the pharmaceutical industry, activism and academia.

Gregg Alton, chief patient officer for Gilead Sciences, Inc.;

Wendy Holman, CEO and Co-Founder of Ridgeback Biotherapeutics;

Marc Meachem, head of External Affairs North America for ViiV Healthcare;

Rafaelé Roberto Narváez, co-founder and director of Health Programs for Latinos Salud;

Michael Saag, professor of medicine and associate dean for global health at UAB School of Medicine and director of the University of Alabama at Birmingham Center for AIDS Research;



Photo Washington Blade

John Sapero, office chief for the HIV prevention program at the Arizona Department of Health Services;

Robert Schwartz, head of Dermatology at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School;

Justin Smith, aPh.D. Candidate at Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University; and

Ada Stewart, lead provider and HIV specialist at Eau Claire (South Carolina) Cooperative Health Centers.

The new members will join Carl Schmid, deputy director of the AIDS Institute, and John Wiesman, secretary of health in Washington State, who were already serving as co-chairs.

Created in 1995, PACHA has provided advice to the U.S. presidents on policy and research to promote effective treatment and prevention for

HIV — maintaining the goal of finding a cure.

But PACHA has languished in the Trump administration. In June 2017, six members of the advisory council appointed during the Obama administration resigned in protest over the perceived inaction from Trump on HIV/AIDS.

Cited by the six members as evidence of inaction was Trump’s failure to appoint a director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy, a position that still remains vacant to this day.

Six months later, as first reported by the Washington Blade, Trump terminated the remaining members of the council without explanation via letters sent to them via FedEx.

PACHA was entirely vacant for an entire year, but that changed in December as the Trump administration seemed to have awakened on HIV/AIDS.

In a speech recognizing gay people as among the victims of the epidemic, Secretary of Health

President Donald Trump has restaffed the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS 15 months after firing all members.

& Human Services Alex Azar announced the new co-chairs for PACHA.

In the next month, Trump announced a new initiative during his State of the Union a new initiative to end new HIV infections in the United States by 2030. Trump’s fiscal year 2020 budget seeks \$300 million for domestic HIV/AIDS to fulfill that commitment (although global programs are facing a steep cut).

The new members of PACHA will likely provide advice to the administration on pursuing Trump’s stated goal to beat HIV by 2030. After all, achieving that goal will require a multi-year sustained effort, not just additional money found in a single budget request.

PACHA will also have an additional goal: Updating the National AIDS Strategy developed under the Obama administration..

The 2010 strategy, which enumerated gay and bisexual men as groups vulnerable to the disease, is due for an update in 2020. The update is expected to reassess the epidemic domestically and make new goals in combatting it.

It remains to be seen what recommendation PACHA will make. A progress report from the Trump administration last year adopted Obama-era goals in combatting HIV/AIDS, which includes reducing the rate of new diagnoses among gay and bisexual men.

► Affirmations

Continued from p. 6

“It’s really important to develop the board,” he said, pointing to nine open seats that need to be filled. “I wouldn’t be here if I didn’t think the small group of board directors that we have now, that their heart wasn’t in the right place, and it is.”

Working at the largest LGBT center in the world has prepared Garcia to accomplish this task.

“When you’re required to be at every board meeting for the last five years, you learn a lot about how a truly functional board, not just an LGBT board, should be working,” he said. “And I think this board has that potential, especially as we fill those next nine seats. I’m not scared

about where this board of directors goes. I’m looking forward to it.”

After four months of reorganizing, stabilizing and re-establishing key donors, Affirmations has repositioned itself for the future. A future that can only be successful, Garcia said, if “the community rallies and we do it together. There is a lot of work ahead and no one person is going to be able to turn this thing around, and I think everybody knows that.”

Garcia was quick to say that he’s not coming back to Michigan as a savior, but he’s coming back as someone with a lot of experience.

“I’ve gained a lot of professional and personal experience in the last five years working out here. I want to bring that back home,” he said. “I want to improve my community back home, but no one person can accomplish this alone. It has to be the community.”

“When Dave first told me that he was

being recruited to return to a critical LGBTQ leadership role in Michigan, I wasn’t surprised. I’ve known and worked with Dave for more than a decade and his skill, leadership and dedication are rare. While he was using his talents here, to the great benefit of our Center and our community here and across the globe, his heart never left Michigan,” said Lorri Jean, CEO of the Los Angeles LGBT Center. “For the last five years not a week passed that he wasn’t talking about his home state of Michigan, and how what we do in Los Angeles would be invaluable there. I’m sad to lose Dave, but I’m thrilled he’ll be doing such important work in Michigan.”

Affirmations and the Los Angeles LGBT Center will work closely over the next 30 days to ensure both organizations continue to support their community members as Garcia transitions.

There will be an opportunity to hear more from Garcia about his future plans for Affirmations during the center’s annual Spring Bash fundraising dinner on March 30 at the MGM Grand Detroit.

“I’m excited and looking forward to really telling the community at that time about my ideas and the direction I want this organization to go in,” said Garcia, who is flying in for the event.

Affirmations is set to celebrate its 30th anniversary with Dennis Shepard of The Matthew Shepard Foundation. Purchase tickets online at goaffirmations.org/spring-bash-2019. Visit goaffirmations.org for updated center information. Any further inquiries can be sent to mflores@goaffirmations.org.

An Impressive Democratic Field

BY PETER ROSENSTEIN

The Democratic field of contenders continues to grow and I am impressed by the wide range of talent in the party. On Nov. 7, 2018 I wrote that Democrats need a coherent message and younger candidates to win in 2020. My thought was there should be no one over 70 on the ticket. I stand by that today.

Over the past two years many said they fear there isn't a strong bench in the Democratic Party. To my thinking they have been proven wrong. All we need do is look at the array of candidates who have already announced they will enter the Democratic primary including Sen. Kamala Harris, Sen. Cory Booker, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, former Rep. Beto O'Rourke, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, former Gov. John Hickenlooper, and Gov. Jay Inslee to name just a few. They represent a diverse set of backgrounds; there are women, minorities and even a gay candidate. What they all have in common is they are smart and looking to serve to ensure more equal opportunity for all Americans.

While they speak of a better future they have differing ideas on how we get there. They speak to the American voter in different ways

and over the year we will see what resonates with those voters. They all recognize Trump and his policies are anathema to the future of America they believe in. They would all be wise to remember Barack Obama was elected on the slogan of hope and change, and try to reignite the feeling of hope in the voters that things can get better.

As an older American myself I feel comfortable calling on the elders in the Democratic Party to realize we are at a crossroads in our country. Millennials and young people are going to be the biggest voting bloc in the nation. Like each new generation they think and view the world differently than we do. They may like the programs we elders rely on like Medicare and Social Security but may not feel they will be there for them. They also realize they will be paying into those programs to support us elders for many years. They legitimately will question the party if we continue to put up candidates who can be their grandparents or in many cases their great grandparents.

I remember my excitement in 1960 as a 13 year old supporting John F. Kennedy. He was young, vibrant and someone I could connect with. Democrats win with younger vibrant

candidates such as Kennedy, Carter, Clinton and Obama. In 2018 we elected a host of younger candidates to Congress.

I am not suggesting those over 70 don't have a role in the party — they do and an important one. They have worked hard to move us forward and in doing so gained their experience and wisdom. Sharing that with the next generation of leaders is important. We also want to know the next generation we elect recognizes that wisdom and experience and understands there are so many roles from issue advisers, to White House advisers, to cabinet secretaries they can fill. President Obama recognized he needed Hillary Clinton as secretary of state and chose Joe Biden as his vice president, both having years more experience than he did.

Today, the youngest of the announced candidates is Peter Buttigieg at 37. Clearly if he were to be elected he would need the elders of the party to share their knowledge and wisdom. The same for the broad, diverse spectrum of other candidates like Harris, O'Rourke, Klobuchar, and Booker. I would think those elders would make the same decision Hillary Clinton has made and realize the time has come for them to step off center stage.

I have seen columns attacking each of our

News Analysis

candidates as they announce. Bringing up all their problems and making it clear we have no perfect candidate. But then there is no perfect voter. We each have our foibles and have each done things in our lives we would rather not have done or said. Attacking someone for being a cis white male of privilege makes little sense. He had no more choice in being born that way than someone of color or a member of the LGBTQ+ community. The focus should be on what you do with that privilege.

The diversity of our candidates is exciting. I hope Democrats end up with a woman on the ticket. There are a number of qualified women running. Each of our candidates will have their chance to make their pitch to the primary electorate in the next year before the first primary. We should listen to them all carefully as they make their case. I will also try to think about how they will be able to make their case to the general electorate, which is different from the Democratic primary voter. For the good of the nation and the world we must defeat Trump and reclaim our government.

Peter Rosenstein is a longtime LGBT rights and Democratic Party activist. He writes regularly for the Blade.



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'Queer Eye' Star Karamo Brown on Wedding, New Memoir and Life Advice

BY MARIAH COOPER

Karamo Brown has become known as a gay, male version of Oprah as the resident culture expert of the Netflix reboot "Queer Eye."

Over the show's past two seasons, Brown, who has a background in psychotherapy and social work, has offered life advice and shared a different perspective in a way that seems to profoundly change the "heroes" of each episode. Before he landed "Queer Eye," he also unexpectedly made history as the first out gay black man on reality television during his stint on "The Real World: Philadelphia."

However, Brown's life view wasn't always so grounded. In his memoir, "My Story of Embracing Purpose, Healing and Hope" (which came out March 5), the 38-year-old chronicles how he came from a broken place of drug addiction and other traumas and was able to build himself into the advice guru he is today. He also brings light to rarely talked about topics such as how he discovered he was a father when his son was 10 years old. Now, Brown has full custody of his son and his son's brother and is engaged to his fiancé, director Ian Jordan.

Brown spoke with the Blade from another speaking engagement in Raleigh, N.C., about his memoir, new episodes of "Queer Eye" and an update on the stress of wedding planning.



Karamo Brown of 'Queer Eye' fame says now is the right time for a memoir because he's learned so much about life. Photo by Alex Rhoades

Washington Blade: Let's take it back to when you were on "The Real World: Philadelphia." You were the first out gay black man on reality TV in the U.S. When that happened were you trying to be a pioneer? Did you find out before the show?

Karamo Brown: I found out after the fact. I was not even that strategic to say, at that age, "You know what I'm going to go on here and do something that's never been done." It wasn't even that. I was like, "How can I go in this house and have a good time and party and have fun." There was no thought in my mind about "Am I the first?" Once I came off the show and that was immediately told to me by MTV and that narrative started getting pushed, I immediately started to feel the pressure as people wrote to me and said, "Oh my god, I haven't seen anyone that looked like me. Thank you," and I was like,

"Wow, there's a whole lot of eyes on me right now, and if I don't do what's right, I'm not screwing up myself, I'm screwing up others." And that was difficult but also pretty amazing because I opened up a door, just a little bit enough, so that other people could run through and do what they do.

Blade: How did the audition come about to be a "culture expert" on "Queer Eye"?

Brown: Being in bed I hear Carson Kressley and Andy Cohen talking about the reboot. I got on the phone with my agent and said, "I have to be a part of this," and he told me it was done. Luckily, he pushed for me to get in because the casting was already finished and they took a chance on me. But once I got in there I realized that culture couldn't be what everyone else had seen it be the first go around,

where it was about Broadway tickets and art museums. Having training as a psychotherapist and a social worker, I was like, "Someone has to fix the hearts and minds." Change is great, it is phenomenal, but if you only have outward change and no inward change then what happened?" You just go back to what you did before because you haven't acknowledged the behavior. So when I think about culture, I think about the shared attitude and values that make people do the things they do. That's how I approach culture.

Blade: How is the fame circuit now different than it was when you did "Real World"?

Brown: Oh my gosh, it's great now. The first time around people were thinking, "Come here and come fight" and now people come to me and they're like, "Please help me remove the drama from

my life." That is a major shift. Before, they wanted to be in the drama and now they're like, "Please remove the drama from my life. I want to be happy with myself and with my boyfriend and my girlfriend and my family." They're like, "Help me understand how I can be drama free," and I think that's what the biggest shift is.

Blade: You come off as though you have such a wealth of knowledge and life advice. Were you always this way?

Brown: No. I wish that I could say that I came out of the womb knowing the answer to every question but it's not true. I went through a lot of hard times dealing with abuse, domestic violence, drugs, colorism, religion. I think what makes me so happy about my book is that I'm showing people that even in my darkest moments, I try to find what the lesson was in it so I can use

that as a springboard to get toward my greater self. I think that's hard to do for most people because we don't have the language or the tools. In my book, I try to show people that you can find the tools, here's the language, here's how you do it. So who I am today is not who I was even on "The Real World." And I'm glad because I was able to grow through and heal from all the traumatic things that have happened to me and still be able to do that work. That's what I show people that they can do as well in my book.

Blade: The third season of "Queer Eye" returned in March. The show has become known for the memorable stories of people like Tom and Skylar. Can you give me a preview of any memorable stories coming up in the next season?

Brown: They won't let me tell you about the heroes but I will tell you this: For my category, I am most proud. Season one I was embarrassed for the fact that I didn't fight for what the culture category was, being more about fixing the inside. I was doing that work but I didn't have a clear conversation with executives. Even though they weren't fighting against me, it was my own internal battle. Season two you saw me be more, "Oh, he's fixing the inside. Oh, he's the mental health expert." But season three, it comes full forward. If you loved the laughing and the crying, we do it so much. We have real conversations, really deep, real growth for these individuals. It's more diverse. I think it's almost half and half men and women, which is great. So more diverse in race. I think it's great when people are able to say, "Wow, great, I see myself" and a large part of that is what I'm doing and I'm really proud of that. My brothers and I, when we first came into this a year ago, the Fab Five, we didn't know each other. We were so worried. Someone said to us, "OK, we're going to put you on a treadmill and you can't crawl, you have to run full speed." And at first we were like, "Oh, can we do it?" and we locked hands and we have done it. I'm so proud of us.

Blade: You guys recently went to Japan to film "Queer Eye." How was filming there different than filming in the U.S.?

Brown: Us being in Tokyo was something the network wanted us

See **Karamo**, continued on p. 18

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Karamo Brown speaks at the 2018 International LGBTQ Leaders Conference. Washington Blade file photo by Michael Key

► **Karamo**

Continued from p. 16

to do because they wanted what we do to really translate internationally. Us going into a country with people who don't speak the same language. It's funny because in my book you see I talk about how emotions are universal and we all have them. Somehow we feel disconnected yet every single person, whether you're in Tokyo or Texas, experiences the same thing. That experience lets me know, especially in my category, that you don't really need words to understand what someone is going through. You can help them to realize that their emotions are the words. I can't wait for people to see those. The Tokyo episodes aren't a full season; it's just a special season that will be coming out who knows when. But we're all excited about it.

Blade: Why did you decide that now was the time in your life to come out with a memoir?

Brown: Because I've grown a lot. I've had a lot of life experience. I've also been trained as a psychotherapist and social worker, I know how to articulate what I'm feeling in a way that's digestible and in a way the people can relate to it and apply it to their own lives. This is just me telling infinite stories of how I've grown so that people can do the same with clear insights. I'm not saying my journey of growth is done but I've had enough life experience that I'm like, "Let's share this with someone else." I'm very transparent in the book.

Blade: You're very open about fatherhood

and how you found out you were a father. Why was that such an important story to share for you?

Brown: You don't really hear stories about single black fathers stepping up, taking full custody of their children and still having a supportive relationship with the child's mother. The narrative we get told in the media is that black fathers and black mothers don't have a good relationship and everybody is fighting and, "You're my baby mama" and whatever BS that gets put out there. That's not the case for me. I am a black man raising two black boys on my own. Secondly, you never hear the story of gay, black men who are saying, "I can raise my children and there's not any issues because of my sexuality, and yes, me and my child's mother are going to be able to co-parent." I have a very untraditional trajectory toward fatherhood. Though it's not traditional it's still the same in so many ways. I've worked with fathers and mothers across the country and we always are like, "We're experiencing the same thing." So although I got my son when he was a little bit older I still experience what it's like to be a parent. I talk about that in the book because, first of all, look at the narrative that you're hearing about people who look like you but secondly, stories are universal and here are some tips for you to understand how to talk to your kids, how to have better conversations with them and how to manage what you're feeling as a parent.

Blade: You give out so much advice to other people but what's the best piece of advice you've ever gotten?

Brown: Don't be afraid of going slowly only of standing still. Because sometimes we get stuck in our lives doing something and we're like, "I'm not going to be happy but I'm going to stay here." But if you take one small step every day toward what you truly want you'll make it.

Blade: You recently got engaged. How is wedding planning going?

Brown: Wedding planning is going great for me. My fiancé not so much because he has full anxiety of it. This is a special day. I was the little boy who dreamed of my wedding and I'm not ashamed to say that. I want little boys to know around the world they can dream of their wedding day too. I don't think it's fair that we say girls should dream about their weddings but men can't. Especially in heterosexual relationships. We tell girls, "Oh you should want a wedding" but you don't tell the boys the same? What kind of screwed-up mixed narrative is that you're sending? Marriage is not for everyone but it is for me. I have been planning an extravaganza. When I was at a Vanity Fair party, Nick Jonas and Priyanka Chopra were there and I so badly wanted to go up them and be like, "I'm rivaling your wedding." Of course, they have more money than me so theirs is always going to be more fabulous. But in my mind I'm coming close to what they created.

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Ann Arbor Film Festival Out Night March 28

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Michigan mainstay for nearly 60 years, the Ann Arbor Film Festival is billed as the oldest avant-garde experimental film festival in North America, receiving thousands of submissions from over 70 countries around the globe. And for roughly a third of the time the festival has existed, it's had its own LGBTQ-specific Out Night, too. Leslie Raymond is the executive director of AAFF and said that the night is a significant one in the festival's history because it aligns with the overall goal of the event.

"I think one of the things the film festival does is make a space for voices that are not as heard," Raymond said. "I think whether that's the LGBTQ community or black voices or women's voices, we want to make sure we're a platform to that. I would say in addition, because we're outside the mainstream, outside of commercial film festivals, even just making space and showing artist's films is in the same spirit of providing a platform for everyone's voices. [Rather] than that one sort of mainstream more homogenized voice we're used to seeing when see television."

And beyond just sharing those voices, AAFF provides cash and in-kind prizes to filmmakers who screen their work at the festival. One of AAFF's 22 awards is the aut FILM Award for Best LGBTQ Film worth \$300, awarded to the filmmakers who address LGBTQ issues and gives voice to members of that community. The award is named after the former owners of Ann Arbor's aut Bar, Martin Contreras and Keith Orr, who just this year sold the space after



Courtesy of AAFF "Wonders Wander" still.

decades of cultivating it as an iconic LGBTQ destination in the Ann Arbor area which it remains to this day.

In advance of the festival, BTL caught up with Sean Donovan, a doctoral student in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts at the University of Michigan, who is a guest programmer for Out Night this year to get a feel for what viewers can expect

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from the seven chosen LGBTQ films this year and to learn more about the LGBTQ-specific evening.

This year's Out Night themes are memory, community and historical belonging. Why did AAFF choose to focus on those topics?

Out Night is an event that the Ann Arbor Film Festival holds annually as part of the experimental film festival and that theme really just emerged from the submitted filmmakers' work. It's really what we saw recurring in a lot of the submissions we got. So, I think that theme came organically from the filmmakers themselves. But it is interesting to think about 2019 as this moment that has inspired this very reflective, historically poignant, sort of aesthetic consideration in queer experimental filmmaking.

You've mentioned before that Out Night being a part of a non-LGBTQ-specific festival is a great opportunity, could you talk more about that?

In the past, I've worked as a programmer for LGBTQ-specific film festivals. This is my first time on the programming end for a non-queer-specific film festival. But through the few encounters I've had with people who are loyal to the Ann Arbor Film Festival and come every year, it seems like they're down for pretty much anything and will be there Thursday at Out Night just like they go to the rest of the screened material. So, I think it is a really great opportunity to highlight the platform for queer experimental art that is not strictly within the big banner of an LGBTQ film festival, and I'm really excited about that.

Why is it important that specifically experimental LGBTQ films get shown?

I think one of the great things about experimental film festivals, in general, is that it is both filmmakers and audiences responding to an overall environment of media consumption that is maybe not exactly what they want. There is not as much pushing of the boundaries, testing of the limits, experimentation with form; that's why artists keep coming back to the Ann Arbor Film Festival. They like to see those boundaries tested in a way they're not in an average movie theater. But, what gets forgotten is that LGBTQ audiences and consumers feel that same anxiety and I think it comes with more political stakes in the lives of queer viewers.

I identify as a queer man and when I was growing up I was often frustrated that when I saw gay characters on television when I saw queer experiences in the movies, I didn't feel like the representation neatly mapped onto me or my experience. And the effect of that pretty colossal; if you feel like you are not

being represented on screen, it leaves you feeling a bit unmoored or unsure of your identity or of what you see as a workable, thriving, happy life. And the point of experimental filmmaking is not really to give you a representation that you feel is concretely you, but one that speaks to some part of your soul and some part of the queer experience in a more abstract way. I think that's what a lot of these folks do, they sort of color outside the lines and work outside of the boundaries of what we think of as traditional LGBTQ representation and try to find something more experimental and new. I think that's a valuable thing.

There's often a noticeable difference between content made for LGBTQ people by those not in that community and LGBTQ-made media.

I think part of it, the sort of mainstream Hollywood fix of [the LGBTQ representation] problem is to give us a lot of positive representation, [with] happy gay characters, happy lesbian characters, but sometimes those kinds of characters and representation can feel a bit flat if you've actually gone through the pain, the nuance, all of the emotional intensity that being a queer person comes with. I think some of these films dig into some of that pain and finding unique and artistic ways to represent.

What are some of the highlights you're looking forward to sharing with the audience this year? Are there any films that stood out to you, or you feel that will stand out to viewers?

One thing that I think is great about the Out Night programming that we have this year is that we have not only the traditional short film compendium that screens at 7:15 on Thursday, the 28th, but we also have after that feature film called "Wonders Wander" which was submitted by a Spanish activist collective and is really just a utopian sci-fi queer extravaganza that is very fun and that's not often what you expect from that kind of content.

You hear queer experimental filmmaking and you sometimes think it's very serious, very brooding, sometimes sad, and I think it's great that this year we have the short films which do strike a quieter, kind of more reflective tone and then this feature film that is much more celebratory and loud and is all about really paying tribute to the beautiful aspects of queer life. I think it's great that we have both of those things. We have a lot of trans content this year, too. That was an important thing for me with programming this particular version of Out Night to highlight trans filmmakers and trans voices.

To see the full list of films at this year's Out Night and all of AAFF, visit aafilmfest.org.



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Dreaming a Dream in Ptown

The Famously Inclusive Resort Getaway Has All Your Warm-Weather Needs

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

It's September in Provincetown, Massachusetts, the cool-crisp calm before the bitter-cold calm: wintertime, when travelers admire the cozy Cape Cod resort town's frosted beauty beside a fireplace inside a cabin. The iced rich-blue Provincetown Harbor to the southeast, Cape Cod Bay to the south and west, Massachusetts Bay to the northwest and north, and the Atlantic Ocean to the northeast catch peeks of sunshine that the boys of summer cannot enjoy until they eagerly return again.

After a long stretch of hibernation, those boys fly or ferry back to the island, beach-ready. When temps reach a desirable enough high (60

degrees is fine), they rush over in droves to one of the hottest gay vacation getaways to partake in the reason for the season: pool parties. They are reunited with direct sun, gyrating porn stars, unicorn floats and Mr. Turk speedos.

A luxury resort owned and run by three gay men who are partners in business *and* life, Thomas Walter, David Sanford and Ken Masi, the Brass Key Guesthouse has established itself as a home away from home for LGBTQ (and sometimes straight, married) vacationers. For the town's biggest party, Carnival Week, last year at the Brass Key, held as a benefit for the Provincetown Business Guild, everything that might restrain pool-goers' pure water fun – tables, lounge chairs – was stashed away to

accommodate a line so long it looped around the block. A couple hundred attendees splashed and romped around in the pool, riding their gay floats, sipping their festive margs.

It's busy. How busy? Because of shampoo and "whatever else," "the water's not so clear" at the end of the day, said Walter, sitting in a quiet, conversational nook near the pool where, come 1 p.m. Aug. 19, porn star Trenton Ducati will greet sunbathers with a smile and a bulge. (Ducati will meet-and-greet guests and visitors inside the Shipwreck Lounge, a laid-back bar that also serves as the Brass Key's check-in lobby.)

Nestled within the Brass Key's 43 rooms and suites, housed in nine buildings, is an

enchanting, flower-filled playground: the heated infinity-edge outdoor pool, a sizable 15-person hot tub, with rows of poolside recliners for ogling nearby frolickers (there's even a small nudist section if you prefer an even, full-body tan). Within the pool area is an inviting communal patio, where every day at 9 a.m. I stepped down from my pleasantly new-old upstairs room and enjoyed a hot, hearty breakfast; at 5 p.m., I sipped wine and overindulged on hearty spreads of artisan cheese set up for happy hour.

Guests will say hi. They might pull up a seat. This happened to me; as a lone traveler, I greatly relished their amiable company. I met a polite and self-effacing gay guy and his

spunky gal pal, a lovely gay couple who invited me on their afternoon bike-riding excursion into town, some chatty lesbian wives, and a manager of a nearby boarding house known for its bathhouse-type appeal who took a late-night dip in the hot tub with me. His budget lodge is far from a resort, and he said he really loves their jacuzzi. In Provincetown, everyone is dreaming the same dream.

Convenient adventures await you elsewhere: Brass Key is just steps from Commercial Street, Ptown's main drag, lined with art galleries, clothing boutiques, trendy restaurants and glimpses of the bluest of water. Like clockwork, the ever-popular Tea Dance, the town's outdoor gay dance party, begins at 4 p.m. and runs through 7 p.m. at the Boatlip Beach Club (beginning May 3).

Charming, right? Walter and Sanford, who met in their senior year of high school, thought so too. Even though Fire Island was closer, they would occasionally leave New York, where they were living, to head to Ptown. "We were just drawn to Ptown," Walter said. "We just fell in love."

They envisioned themselves living there one day, but thought it a long shot. "It was always a pipe dream," Walter said. But when they eyed a corner property, the Dusty Miller Inn, on Bradford Street, their hearts were set on owning it. Aware of their interest, their friend Adam left a message on their answering machine: the current owners of the guesthouse at the time were willing to sell, he told them. In 1998,



(Left) Commercial Street and (right) Brass Key Guesthouse's Carnival pool party. Photos courtesy of Crowne Pointe and Brass Key

Walter and Sanford officially became the owners of the property, now called Crowne Pointe Historic Inn & Spa (Masi would join them as a proprietor in 2007).

Their quaint sprawl comprises six buildings, including the full service Shui Spa, one of two spas in the country exclusively using Kiehl's products, and The Pointe Restaurant. Named one of "The Best Hotel Restaurants in Cape Cod" by Fodor's Travel, the pier-to-plate restaurant impresses with a modern, premier



dining experience and a full wine bar.

Across the street is the Brass Key, a property they bought in 2008 (altogether, Walter said they own "around 20" buildings in Ptown, including the Provincetown Pet Resort). Unit by unit, the owners gutted the Brass Key's buildings to modernize their "grandma" look, adding luxury suites and the Shipwreck. Now, the property is coastal chic, but still of another time. Walter calls it "historically hip." With big hand-carved headboards and antique furniture,

"each building has its own identity," he said.

"Ken and I were saying it was closed off and known as the place rich old men would stay and it's not friendly," Walter said. "We worked really hard to change that culture and change that perception." On Shipwreck's patio, a giant fire pit sizzles, occupied by a small crowd of diverse, friendly blend minglers. The non-guests look on through the gate, curious of what dreaminess

See **Ptown**, continued on p. 24



Photo by Jean-Claude Carbonne

La Fresque (The Painting on the Wall) Ballet Preljocaj

Angelin Preljocaj, artistic director
Tuesday-Wednesday, March 26-27 // 7:30 pm
Power Center

Angelin Preljocaj, one of France's leading stars of contemporary dance, brings his fascinating exploration of the supernatural powers of art. His choreography plunges us into the rich symbolism and metaphor of a traditional Chinese legend about a traveler who is mesmerized by a woman in a magnificent fresco and steps through the painting to join her.

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Photo by Frédéric Nauzyciel

William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar

Théâtre National de Bretagne
Created in conjunction with **American Repertory Theater**
Arthur Nauzyciel, director
Friday-Saturday, April 5-6 // 7:30 pm
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Guests gather for Brass Key Guesthouse's happy hour. Photo courtesy of Crowne Pointe and Brass Key

► Ptown

Continued from p. 23

and late-night debauchery awaits.

Inside the bar, Masi or Walter sometimes tend bar, because if you own a business, everything is your responsibility. As a business developer for a major entertainment TV giant (he said he's unable to mention the company by name, per their request), Walter wore many hats, involving marketing, accounting and creative ventures, which offered him insight when it came to running his own business. Staying in a variety of hotels, he said, is where he learned hospitality dos and don'ts.

As for Sanford, his engineering background aids in maintaining the physical plan and overseeing renovations and maintenance, while Masi, a Duke grad who Walter calls "chameleon-like," was an editor for Boating magazine and does promo and website writing for their properties. He said their day-to-day is wildly unpredictable.

One late night during my visit, Walter was handling a diabetic guest who wasn't responsibly managing his alcohol intake (he sent a pizza to the man's room); the next morning Walter was checking on – and, naturally, playing with – the dogs at their pet resort. "Because there's three of us, we're able to divide and conquer," he said. "David always thinks of the business as a cruise ship: I'm the captain and my job is to just get the cruise ship from one place to another."

Their operation is fine-tuned, their dream realized. The three of them split their time between two gay-friendly places, Fort Lauderdale and Ptown. Walter said Ptown "is not necessarily a gay town; it's a town where being gay is a non-issue; it's not even really considered; it's not even a factor in town politics."

"It's a town where sexual orientation is a non-issue, which is unique and special," he emphasizes, "and one of the things that

"It's a town where sexual orientation is a non-issue, which is unique and special, and one of the things that drew us to it."

drew us to it."

For this reason, my new Ptown friends Jay and Allen return to Brass Key every year. They love it in September, just as the party winds down and solitude sets in. I loved it then too.

One early afternoon, we walked the magnificent breakwater, a mile-long stretch of granite boulders, snapping photos of each other as we trekked through scattered brush and the damp low-tide bed, bound for the lighthouse near the shore of Herring Cove Beach. They kindly treated me to dinner at Mistralino Ristorante on our last night.

After we finished our meal, we laughed some hearty laughs over more wine on the porch of the two-level Brass Key suite they book every year. For one night, we were all experiencing the same magic of a shared dream in the wine-drenched stillness rendered by our postcard-perfect surroundings.

Chris Azzopardi is the editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service. His work has also appeared in GQ, Vanity Fair and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.

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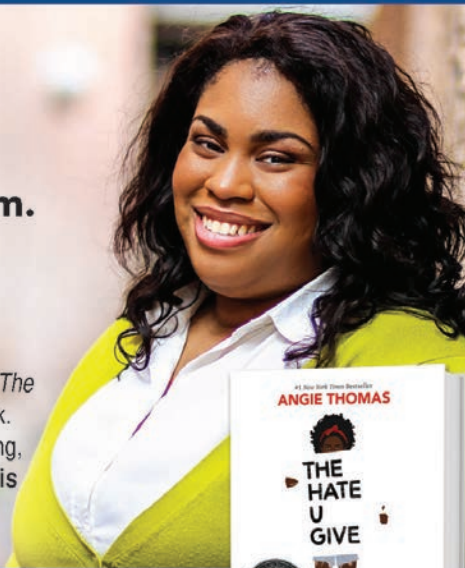
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Happenings

RODGERS + HAMMERSTEIN'S CINDERELLA



Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella" at Fox Theatre

From March 29 through 31, the 2013 Tony Award-winning musical "Cinderella" will grace the Fox Theatre's stage. The performance has been lauded for its "fresh, new" take on a classic story that's long held a place in fans' hearts. Tickets start at \$34. Find out more about the show and ticketing online at 313presents.com and ticketmaster.com.

OUTINGS

Saturday, March 23

LGBT Community Chat 11 a.m. Saturday LGBT Chat is an on going social discussion group meets every week to discuss issues LGBT people face. Coming out, dating, and much more. Come join us every Saturday at 11 am. Java Hut Ferndale Michigan, 165 w 9 mile, Ferndale. 2486328274 redbellyseagal90@gmail.com redbellyseagal90@gmail.com

LGBT Social Meet Up 6:30 p.m. Lgbt social meet up group is a group for all lgbt people who want to meet have light hearted discussions and social activities some activities, all is welcomed, we are on going every ongoing Hazel Park Community Center, 620 West Woodward Heights, Hazel Park. 2486328274 redbellyseagal90@gmail.com redbellyseagal90@gmail.com <http://MichiganLgbtpeer.support.network.facebook>

Sunday, March 24

Men's Swing/Latin/Ballroom Lessons 4 p.m. 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 calls only xanaduspa@me.com xanaduspa@me.com www.meetup.com/Shall-We-Dance <http://www.meetup.com/Shall-We-Dance>

Monday, March 25

LGBT Game Night 7 p.m. LGBT Game Night is an opportunity for all LGBT people and allies to come play a board game, drink coffee and socialize with other LGBT individuals. Java Hut, 165 W Nine Mile, Ferndale. 2486328274 redbellyseagal90@gmail.com redbellyseagal90@gmail.com

Tuesday, March 26

Strand with Trans Support Groups – Ann Arbor – Washtenaw 6:30 p.m. Trans Support Group meeting the 4th Tuesday of each month @ Journey of Faith Christian Church. Parent Support Group Facilitator – Yma Johnson, ymaj1968@gmail.com or 734-780-4092. Trans Youth Support Group

Facilitator – Joy Cavanaugh, LPC Journey of Faith Christian Church, 1900 Manchester Road, Ann Arbor. <http://www.standwithtrans.org>

Wednesday, March 27

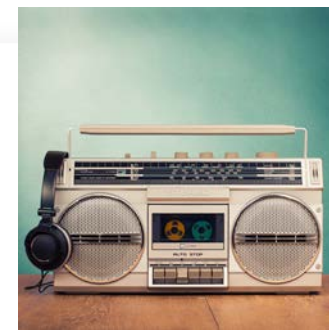
Affirmations Senior Koffee Clatch! 1 p.m. A discussion and networking group for people 45 and older. Various discussion topics, social outings, and potlucks are held throughout the year. With age comes wisdom but, for LGBT seniors, loneliness can often come along. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105 <http://www.goaffirmations.org>

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

Editor's Pick

'90s Dance Party at Ferndale's Boogie Fever

Dance to all the classics of the '90s at Ferndale's Boogie Fever nightclub on Friday, March 29. Doors open at 8 p.m. and cover starts at \$8.



Editor's Pick

Art+Feminism: Wikipedia Edit-A-Thon

Held at S. Ayers Art from 4 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 23, the Art + Feminism: Wikipedia Edit-A-Thon is aimed at increasing the number of female editors on Wikipedia to check and recheck the information written about women around the world. Find out more about this event and others in the area online at artandfeminism.org.



Thursday, March 28

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

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

Detroit Pistons Equality – Celebrating Pride Night at LCA! 7 p.m. The Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce has partnered with the Detroit Pistons to bring you Piston Equality-Celebrating Pride Night! Grab your friends and family to see the Pistons take on the Orlando Magic for Little Caesar's Arena, 2645 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 3133495777 info@detroitlgbtchamber.com <http://detroitlgbtchamber.com>

Pride Night at the Detroit Pistons 7 p.m. Grab your friends and family to see the Detroit Pistons take on the Orlando Magic. Come early to watch the Detroit Prism Gay Men's Chorus perform our national anthem, and entire the LGBTQ themed Little Caesar's Arena, 2645 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 3133495777 info@detroitlgbtchamber.com <http://Pistons.com/Pride>

OUT Night at the Ann Arbor Film Festival 7:15 p.m. This year's Out Night films focus on recurring themes of memory and community and historical

belonging, said guest programmer Sean Donovan, a doctoral student in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts at the Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397 info@aafilmfest.org <http://aafilmfest.org>

Saturday, March 30

Spring Bash at MGM Grand Detroit 6 p.m. Come celebrate Affirmations 30 years of service to the LGBTQ community! MGM Grand Detroit, 1777 3rd Avenue, Detroit. (877) 888-2121 goaffirmations.org

Sunday, March 31

Lavender Graduation 1 p.m. Our 7th annual Lavender Graduation Celebration will congratulate and honor the OU LGBTQIA+ graduates of 2019. OC Banquet Room A. www.hrc.org <https://www.hrc.org/resources/lavender-graduation>

MUSIC & MORE

Cabaret 313 Presents "11 O'clock Numbers" March 23, 6:30 p.m. This brand new musical revue, when originally launched at Feinstein's/54 Below in New York City earlier this year, played to a sold-out audience and received a standing ovation, and now it's coming to Cabaret 313. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 313-237-SING <http://cabaret313.org/shows-tickets/11-oclock-numbers/>

Flint Symphony Orchestra Presents "Ravel's Bolero" March 23, 7:30 p.m. FSO March Classical Concert featuring

Enrique Diemecke, conductor, and Baron Fenwick, pianist. The Whiting Auditorium, 1241 E. Kearsley Street, Flint. 810-237-7333 www.thewhiting.com <https://tickets.thewhiting.com/EventDetail.aspx?p=7779>

57th Ann Arbor Film Festival March 26, 5 p.m. The Ann Arbor Film Festival is the oldest avant-garde and experimental film festival in North America. The six-day festival presents 40 programs with more than 180 films from over 20 countries. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397 https://stamps.umich.edu/stamps/detail/57th_ann_arbor_film_festival

Grief and Loss in Addiction and Recovery March 26, 7:30 p.m. Jerry Fouchey, MA, CADC, will explain theories of grief and grief recovery. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725 www.dawnfarm.org/programs/education-series

Sarah Vowell April 4, 5 p.m. By examining the connections between the American past and present, she offers personal, often humorous accounts of everything from presidents and their assassins to colonial religious fanatics, as well as thoughts on utopian dreamers, and Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397

Michigan Philharmonic Presents "PhilPalooza2" April 6, 7:30 p.m. Michigan Philharmonic, Plymouth Arts & Recreation Center, 650 Church St., Plymouth. <https://michtix.com/events/phil-palooza-2>

THEATER

Theatre and Dance at Wayne Presents "Venus" March 23, 2 p.m. Traveling from her home in southern Africa for what she hoped would be a better life, Saartjie Baartman became an unfortunate star on the 19th Century London freak show circuit. Studio Theatre at the Hilberry, 4743 Cass Avenue, Detroit. www.theatreanddanceatwayne.com.

Williamston Theatre Presents "The Gin Game" March 23, 3 p.m. Winner of the 1978 Pulitzer Prize for Drama! Weller Martin is playing solitaire on the porch of a seedy nursing home. Enter Fonsia Dorsey, a prim, self-righteous woman. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road, Williamston. 517-655-SHOW info@williamstontheatre.org <http://www.williamstontheatre.org> <http://the-gin-game>

Detroit Public Theatre Presents "Girlfriend" March 23, 8 p.m. Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. 3135765162 <http://www.dso.org/TicketsReserve.aspx?performanceNumber=5324>

Stagecrafters Presents "Boeing Boeing" March 23, 8 p.m. Baldwin Theatre, 415 South Lafayette, Royal Oak. 2485418027 <https://www.stagecrafters.org/on-stage/main-stage/36-boeing-boeing.html>

Detroit Repertory Theatre Presents "Aubrey" March 28, 8:30 p.m. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. 313-868-1347 DetRepTh@aol.com <http://www.detroitreptheatre.com/aubrey/>

Young Frankenstein March 29, 7:30 p.m. This monster musical comedy is an adaptation of Mel Brooks' legendary cult classic film. The Marlene Boll Theatre, 1401 Broadway, Detroit. tasiopeg@udmercy.edu <https://www.udmercy.edu/life/theatre/frankenstein.php>

Mamma Mia! Presented by Theatre and Dance at Wayne April 5, 8 p.m. Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-577-2960 www.theatreanddanceatwayne.com

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre Presents "Fahrenheit 451" April 25, 7:30 p.m. Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-764-2538 www.a2ct.org/shows/fahrenheit-451

Angels in America: Part Two – Perestroika April 26, 8 p.m. Following the events of Part I: Millennium Approaches, Perestroika continues the complex and fantastical examination of homosexuality, race, and AIDS in 1980s America. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. (313) 577-2972 <https://www.wsushows.com>

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By D.L. Coburn



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See puzzle on pg. 29



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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Glenn Close and Sunset Boulevard's next close-up

Dear Patti LuPone stans, please don't be too disappointed that the upcoming film version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical "Sunset Boulevard" will star Glenn Close. Close is, after all, a Tony Award winner for her turn as silent-movie-star-turned-problematic-person Norma Desmond, and she can knock out those ALW tunes just as powerfully, so let's all agree that there are no losers here. Choreographer-turned-director Rob Ashford ("The Sound of Music Live!") will handle the film with a screenplay by BAFTA-nominated writer Tom MacRae ("threesome"). For you young people, the project is an adaptation of the classic, Academy Award-winning Billy Wilder film about a delusional former star clinging to the hope of returning to the silver screen, and the young writer who enters her strange world. The production has a scheduled October start date and 2020 release planned, so Close still has another shot at that elusive Oscar the Academy keeps on not giving her.



Glenn Close. Photo: Starfrenzy

Lee Daniels and Tyrese resurrect Teddy Pendergrass

If there were ever a person that earned the adjective "busy," it's Lee Daniels. Every time you turn around he has a new project on the burner. We like to think of this sort of hyper-productivity as a gay trait, and who knows, maybe science will find the genetic marker for it soon enough, but probably not before Daniels produces the upcoming biopic about R&B legend Teddy Pendergrass. The sexy, soulful singer's biggest hit, 1978's "Close The Door," is a perfect example of his baby-making slow jams, and will be sung (lip-synced?) in the film by none other than "Fast and Furious" star Tyrese Gibson, who'll star as the tumultuous Pendergrass. Widow Joan Pendergrass will executive produce, and Little Marvin, creator of Amazon's series "Them," will pen the script. Now, will Tyrese's beard game be strong enough to make us think it's Daddy Bear Teddy we're watching? Because that's the biggest question on our minds right now.

Charlize Theron takes aim at 'Atomic Blonde 2'

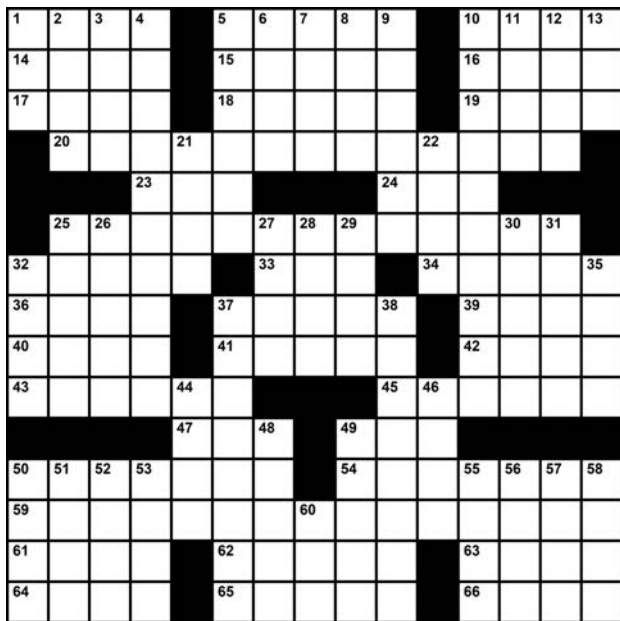
Possibly while you weren't looking, the Charlize Theron action film "Atomic Blonde" kicked up about a hundred million bucks at the box office and a devoted post-theatrical cult audience. And you know what that means: FRANCHISE TIME. If you missed it, Theron played a lady-loving British spy named Lorraine Broughton. The film was filled with neon,

lesbian make-outs, cool music and ass-kicking. We're fans. And we're really fans of Theron's plan to go down that road again. Right now all we know is that the project is "going forward," which could mean just about anything, and there'll be more on this as it brings on a cast and start date. But in the absence of a "Mad Max: Fury Road" prequel or Theron stepping into James Bond's shoes (and she should, quite frankly), we're ready for a fast tracking. We don't even care if it goes straight to Netflix, just please bring on the furiosa.

Desperately seeking queer superhero

Now this is an interesting Help Wanted ad: Marvel is looking for an openly gay actor to play a superhero. The call is out for a roughly 30-to-50-year-old actor with a superheroic body to co-star in the 2020 film "The Eternals." Any ethnicity will do, but there has been a stated preference for a queer candidate to take a role in the Chloe Zhao ("The Rider") film. What's up with this? Well, last year, Marvel Studios President Kevin Feige stated that the studio wanted to incorporate more LGBTQ+ inclusion in their films, both in terms of casts and characters. And here is the form that commitment is taking. And you know what? We'll take it. More on this one as it develops. In fact, while we're at it, we think it would be appropriate if Marvel not only included a queer actor or character here and there, but if an alternate universe all-LGBT Avengers happened and they destroyed anti-gay villains throughout the galaxy. Free ideas here, Hollywood.

Romeo San Vicente's superhero origin story is currently streaming on Pornhub.



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- 1 It may come before 69
 5 "Caligula" playwright
 10 30 Rock's style
 14 Ellen of "The Umbrella Academy"
 15 They don't watch gay porn on TV
 16 Julia who played Gomez Addams
 17 Breezed through
 18 Zellweger of "Chicago"

- 19 Home of the Bruins
 20 Observation about a heterosexual
 23 Shakespearean prince
 24 USA alternative
 25 Start of a retort to the observation
 32 Free, in France
 33 Tie for Madame Butterfly
 34 Song type for Harvey Fierstein

- 36 Laura Nyro's "___ Him on a Sunday"
 37 Barrel bottom bits
 39 Cyber-chat area
 40 Sit for Robert Giard
 41 More of the retort
 42 Ticklish doll
 43 Like a nervous Nelly
 45 Bridal paths
 47 JosÉ's huzzah
 49 Std. of a line through Auden's land
 50 Surfer's protection
 54 Group that needs reads
 59 End of the retort
 61 Begin to wake up
 62 Cicely of "Fried Green Tomatoes"
 63 "Zhivago" heroine
 64 Blow hard
 65 Hung loosely
 66 Eric Stonestreet award for being Cam

Down

- 1 Place for sweaters
 2 Auto dash dial
 3 Former Time film critic
 4 Not currently available to tackle tight ends
 5 Songs about donning gay apparel
 6 Iowa State University site
 7 "Want a ___?" (pre-kiss suggestion)
 8 Person with a PC
 9 Condom, for one
 10 Places to buy condoms
 11 A pop
 12 "Rocky Horror Picture Show" fans, e.g.
 13 Plug attachment
 21 Letter enc.
 22 Sceptic's response
 25 "American Idol" judge Cowell
 26 Too big for your britches
 27 Chi Chi LaRue's field
 28 Help with the heist
 29 Colette's Parisian heroine
 30 Internet troublemaker
 31 "___ to bury Caesar..."
 32 Suction head
 35 Med. care grps.
 37 Swashbucklers, two at a time
 38 Like a quickie
 44 Toe woe
 46 "Try ___ for size"
 48 Alcohol for Merman?
 49 Mounted
 50 Request by a well
 51 Caesar's final reproach
 52 Cry before getting off
 53 One in bondage
 55 "Spamalot" writer Eric
 56 Emulated Diana Nyad
 57 Six years for a senator Baldwin
 58 "Don't leave me!"
 60 The Buckeyes, for short

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Walk-In

WEDNESDAY

Affirmations
FERNDALE
 5:30PM-8:30PM
Walk-In or Appointment
Mpowerment Detroit
MIDTOWN
 11AM-7PM
Walk-In

THURSDAY

Matrix MAC Health
FERNDALE
 9AM-4:30PM
Walk-In

FRIDAY

Matrix MAC Health
FERNDALE
 9AM-5PM
Walk-In
STD Testing ONLY
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SATURDAY

Mpowerment Detroit
MIDTOWN
3rd Saturday of each month
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Walk-In

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National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund Applauds Introduction of Equality Act

BY BTL STAFF

WASHINGTON — The National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund applauds Rep. David Cicilline and Senators Jeff Merkley, Tammy Baldwin and Corey Booker for reintroducing the Equality Act in the U.S. House and Senate this week.

“As a Christian, black, bisexual woman, if one of my identities is not protected under the law, then none of them are,” said Stacey Long Simmons, advocacy & action director of the National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund. “The Equality Act will cover and expand protections for LGBTQ people and women, ensuring that no part of one’s identity can be used to discriminate against them in housing, credit, education, employment, publicly-funded programs like child welfare agencies, expanded public accommodations to include retail, taxis and more.”

“The Civil Rights Act must protect all black people – including LGBTQ people and women,” Long Simmons continued. Rea Carey is the executive director of

the National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund. She added that LGBTQ people continue to face discrimination without “explicit federal protections that cover all of who we are.”

“All the time. We have seen an increase in discriminatory actions and hate violence against so many communities in the age of Trump, particularly religious minorities, people of color, immigrants and LGBTQ people, making it all the more urgent to strengthen protections in existing civil and human rights laws,” Carey said.

The expansion of legal protections has long been a subject of discussion among LGBTQ rights activists. In 1974, the Task Force was credited with the direct intent of getting Rep. Bella Abzug to introduce the original federal protections bill – the first piece of federal legislation that would have provided non-discrimination protections for sexual orientation.

Today, according to The Center for American Progress, one in four LGBTQ people have reported being discriminated against. Transgender people and people of color endure even more detrimental impacts, with 47 percent of transgender people reporting workplace discrimination. Black people in same-sex relationships report rates of poverty that are double the rate of black people in opposite-sex relationships, too.

“The country is ready for Congress to strengthen existing federal protections and we are grateful to our Congressional champions for reintroducing this comprehensive measure,” Carey said. “Now it’s time for lawmakers, progressive groups and grassroots advocates to move swiftly to advance the Equality Act.”

LGBTQ Adults in Southeast Michigan Invited to Participate in Health Survey

BY BTL STAFF

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

Findings will help Corktown Health Center understand how to improve existing health services in Southeast Michigan and help create the center’s new five-year plan. The anonymous online survey takes about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Participants must be at least 18 years of age or older. The survey is available until March 31. Anyone interested in participating can access the survey online at corktownhealth.org or request a paper copy.

“The Community Health Needs Assessment survey is one way community voices will be heard, as we work to ensure Corktown Health Center continues to deliver excellent healthcare services,” said Latonya Riddle-Jones, MD, Corktown Health Center medical director. “The center will follow the survey with community conversations to discuss the results. Through the anonymous survey and community conversations, the center aims to identify new ways to improve health in the southeast Michigan LGBTQ community.”

Visit corktownhealth.org for more information.

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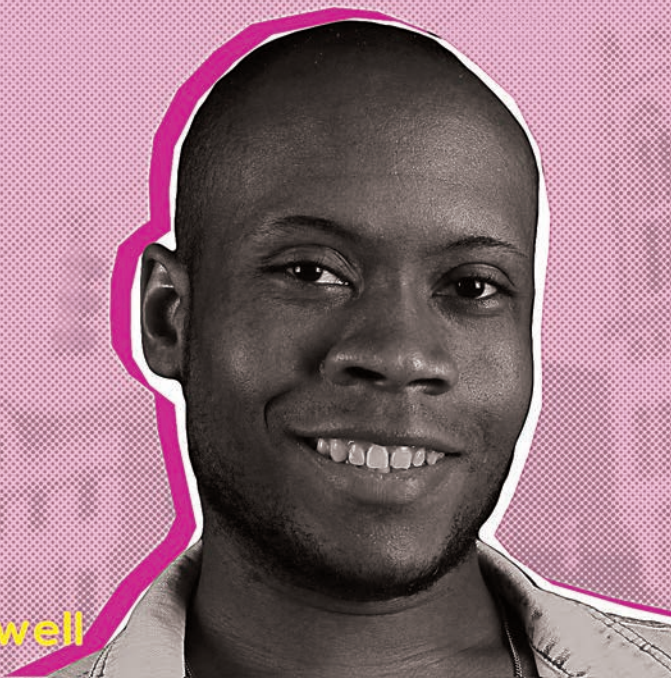
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Firefighters serve and protect the community. Our firefighters are first responders, combating and extinguishing fires; performing rescues, hazmat responses, and life support functions; and engaging in other specialized duties under emergency conditions, frequently involving personal hazard and/or severe weather conditions. Must have completed the written firefighter test with EMPCO and have a valid CPAT. Preference will be given to those applicants with a paramedic license, valid in the state of Michigan. Medical, Dental, Vision, Life, FSA, and Retirement Plans are available. For a full list of qualifications and to apply, go to <https://www.ferndalemi.gov/jobs>

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March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month

The American Cancer Society has updated its colorectal screening guidelines.

They may be found on the following link:

www.cancer.org

To learn more, click on "signs and symptoms of colon cancer."

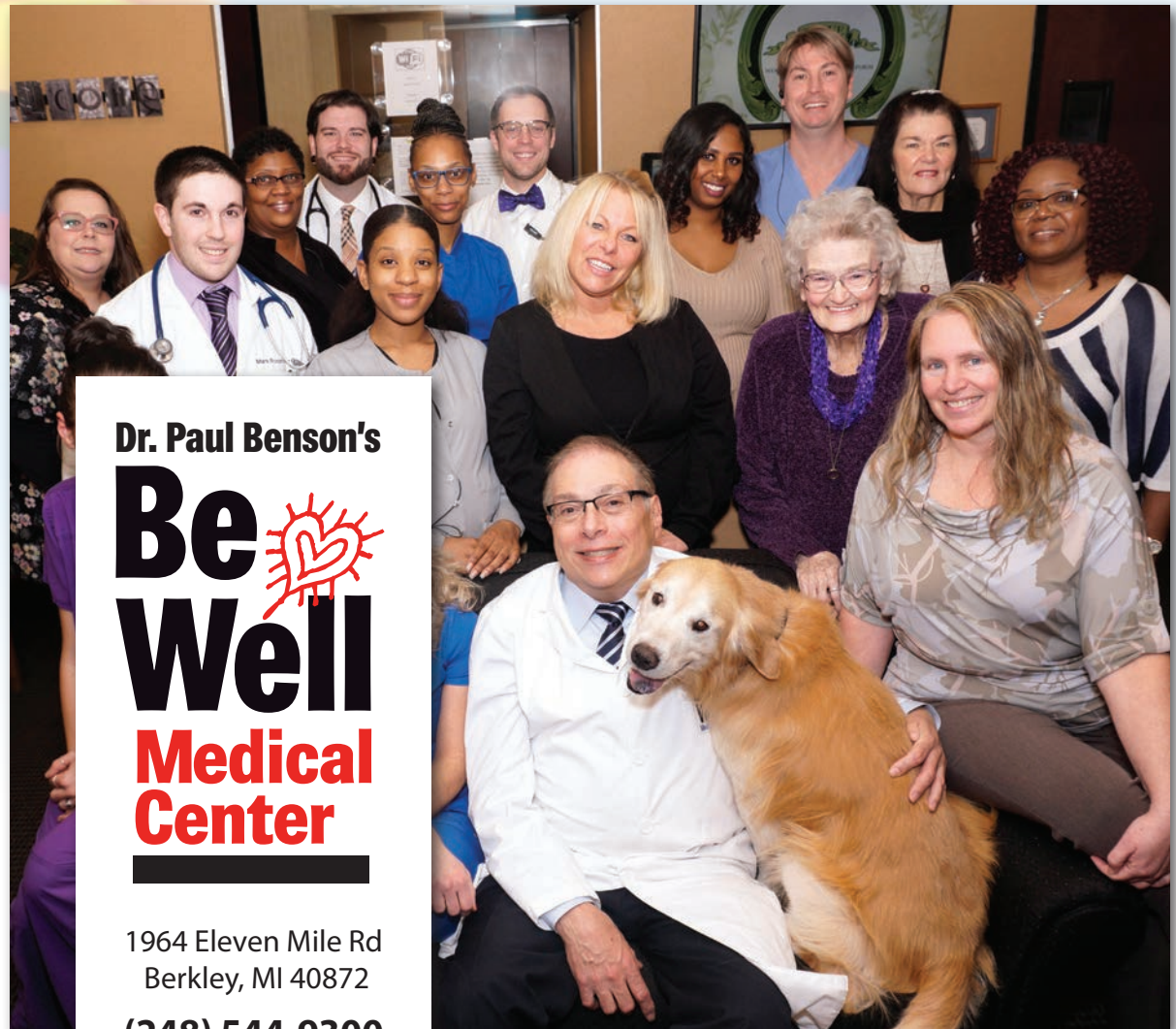
Colon Cancer is a non-AIDS related malignancy. Non-AIDS related malignancies, such as colon cancer, are the number one cause of death in people living with HIV. These malignancies occur more frequently and at an earlier age in persons living with HIV as compared to the general population.

Dr. Benson and his providers screen patients living with HIV for cancers earlier and more aggressively than the general population. Our standard of care is the cutting-edge.

Soon the American Cancer Society's guidelines will catch-up for those living with HIV. They will recommend what we are already doing.

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— Dr. Paul Benson



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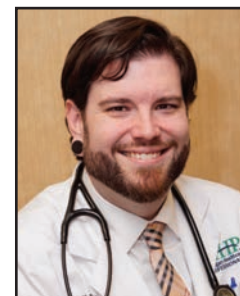
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