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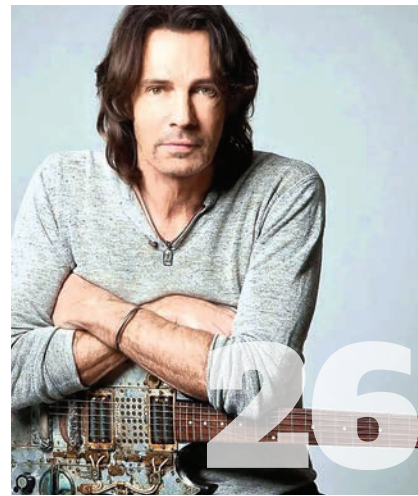


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VOL. 2719 • MAY 9, 2019 • ISSUE 1110

PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP

20222 Farmington Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48152
Phone 734.293.7200

PUBLISHERS

Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief

Susan Horowitz, 734.293.7200 x 102
susanhorowitz@pridesource.com

Entertainment Editor

Chris Azzopardi, 734.293.7200 x 106
chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

Feature News Editor

Kate Opalewski, 734.293.7200 x 108
kate@pridesource.com

Editorial Assistant

Eve Kucharski, 734.293.7200 x 105
eve@pridesource.com

News & Feature Writers

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

CREATIVE

Webmaster & MIS Director

Kevin Bryant, kevinbryant@pridesource.com

Columnists

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

Cartoonists

Paul Berg

Contributing Photographers

Andrew Potter, Andrew Cohen

ADVERTISING & SALES

Director of Sales

Jan Stevenson, 734.293.7200 x 101
jan@pridesource.com

Sales Representatives

Ann Cox, 734.293.7200 x 103
anncox@pridesource.com

National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media, 212.242.6863

MEMBER OF

Michigan Press Association
National LGBT Media Association
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THE '00S - 2007

February - Queer Activist Loses Cancer

Battle: Queer activist, Heather MacAllister, died on Feb. 13 in Oregon as a result of a three-year battle with ovarian cancer. The native Detroiter founded San Francisco's Big Burlesque and the Fat Bottom Revue. After she quit her job as a field organizer for the Triangle Foundation in 2002, she headed west and took on the performance name "Reva Lucian." A memorial was held at the Trumbullplex Theatre in Detroit. MacAllister was committed to anti-racism training, transgender activism and was instrumental in the passing of an anti-seize discrimination law that was passed in San Francisco in June 2000. To recognize her accomplishments, Triangle Foundation named one of their Catalyst Awards in MacAllister's honor.



April - Largest UM Lavender Graduation:

Thirty-six students from the University of Michigan participated in the April 25 Lavender Graduation, the largest in the university's history. LavGrad, established in 1995 by Ronni Sanlo, is a celebration to honor LGBTQ graduates of UM. Pictured: Lavender graduate Sebastian Colon (left), who graduated from the School of Social Work, shared a moment with current student Acca Warren (right).

June - Statewide LGBT Prom a Dream Come True:

The LGBT Community Coalition of Michigan held the first statewide prom, drawing 76 paid participants and dozens of volunteers to the Lansing Center for the event. The group used MySpace to locate youth within a 50-mile radius of Lansing who identified as LGBTQ or an ally in their profiles, and the group located 3,000 youth. The prom was endorsed by Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and Gov. Jennifer Granholm. Pictured: Robert VanKirk, a then 17-year-old gay man from Holt, who helped spearhead the project.

FLASHING BACK TO THE PAST:



November - Gay Mayor Historic First for Michigan:

While some regarded Craig Covey's mayoral victory as headline-worthy, for many the biggest news was the ordinariness surrounding the election of the city's first openly gay mayor. Covey won his post by a vote of 1,918 to 1,605, against his opponent Thomas Gagne. Covey said at the time he hoped his victory would bode well for other gay candidates. "I think nationally, the future is looking good," he said.



October - A Pioneer Steps Down:

Dr. Kathryn Wright, an adolescent pediatrician who devoted 15 years to treating teenagers in Detroit affected by HIV/AIDS, retired. In 1992, Dr. Wright founded the Horizons Project, an adolescent clinic with a mission to support and love children and families affected by HIV. Her life's work, cut short prematurely due to a medical disability, was recognized by over 250 people at a retirement celebration Oct. 12 at the Roostertail in Detroit. Pictured: Dr. Kathryn Wright (right) with her life partner Joette Lambert.

EQUALITY RIDE THROUGH AMERICA 2007

Michigan Travelers to Combat Homophobia Across the Country:

Three Michigan natives - Rachel Loskill, 22, East Lansing; Brandon Kneefel, 20, Livonia; Shawn O'Neil, 22, Marquette - joined 50 young adults on two buses for Soulforce's 2nd annual Equality Ride. The two-month journey was dedicated to being loud and proud across the U.S. on gay rights issues at schools that actively discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Michigan Woman Arrested on Equality Ride:

Loskill was among four young adults arrested on April 2 for walking onto the campus of Covenant College to engage students in dialogue. Loskill was held overnight. Bail was set for \$1,000. This

was the third time Loskill was arrested on the Equality Ride.

Equality Ride Visits Spring Arbor University:

The East Coast team of Soulforce Equality Ride met with students, faculty and community members in Spring Arbor in April. This stop was added after SAU fired transgender professor Julie Nemecek. The university refused to allow the activists on campus, so the group met across the street for four hours.

Soulforce Riders in Handcuffs at Cornerstone University:

A message of love and acceptance yielded handcuffs and bail when the Soulforce Equality Ride rolled into Grand Rapids' bible belt. After being told they were not welcome at the conservative Cornerstone University, Soulforce riders stood vigil along the public roadway



bordering the school. Armed with coffee, riders engaged in dialogue about Christianity and LGBTQ people with students and faculty.

Equality Rider Spoke on Experience at Affirmations:

Loskill discussed her journey to 32 colleges at Affirmations in Ferndale. She, along with other riders, often was forced away from colleges by police, by ropes and signs. Conversations with interested students typically occurred over those barriers. "They hadn't really talked about some of the LGBT issues before," she said. "They really hadn't met someone who was LGBT, so, in that sense, we brought so much awareness. And so much dialogue continued and so many queer and gay/straight alliances started around the country that it was well, well worth it."





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Affirmations ED Dave Garcia Holds First Community Chats

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

A total of 13 people came out to Affirmations April 30 for two community chats with returning executive director Dave Garcia who had just returned to the center the day before. Eight people, mostly members of the Senior Koffee Klatch, came out to the morning session and five to the evening. Four members of Affirmations' staff were present at each meeting and there were two board members at the morning session and three in the evening.

Board President Mike Flores started each meeting with a quick update on the center's operations. Flores beamed as he announced that the center's Spring Bash had raised approximately \$120,000 and netted \$75,000 of that.

"For every dollar that we raised, we only spent about 37 cents of that dollar," Flores said. "It was one of the best Spring Bashes that we've had in a long time."

Flores also reminded the small crowd of what State Sen. Jeremy Moss had announced at Spring Bash, that Gov. Gretchen Whitmer will be hosting a town hall meeting at Affirmations sometime in June. The meeting will mark Whitmer's second visit to the center in her first six months in office. Whitmer had also previously stopped at the center while campaigning.

When he did take the floor, Garcia delivered a hopeful message.

"I wouldn't be an executive director with 20 years [of] experience if I wasn't telling you that we need to concentrate on fund development," Garcia said, outlining his first priority. "We need to raise money. And that means me reaching out to every single donor from the past, every center partner. I'd love to see us get that center partner list doubled."

Garcia credited the strength of the board for his return to the center.

"The stronger our board is the stronger we will be," he said. "I would have never come back if I didn't believe in this board. They are small but they are mighty, and we have the opportunity to grow. There are many board seats to fill and we are working diligently on that to fill them with people that make sense."

Garcia spoke about increasing services for seniors and youth, and said he wants to see the center bustling with activity again.

"It's not just about seniors and youth as important as they are, as critical as they are. We need to do more things in this beautiful 17,000-square-foot building of ours that relate to everyone. If that is a wine reception tasting on the sky deck, or an open mic night or a trivia or a bingo. All of your ideas are extremely important to me. Whatever you think may be fun here.

"We need to create a feeling when you come in this building," Garcia continued. "It's got to



Affirmations Executive Director David Garcia with Board President Mike Flores. BTL photo: Jason Michael

be a vibe, an energy you get when you come in. You look around and you go, 'Wow. What's going on here today? What's going on?'"

While the center celebrated its 30th anniversary at Spring Bash, Garcia said there were more celebrations to come.

"I don't know exactly what that means or is going to look like," he said. "The board and I have to talk about that. But we are going to be doing more events here to celebrate the 30th. We should all be very proud that we are still breathing 30 years later. I'm going to remind people over and over and over again. No matter how mad they might have been 10 years ago at Affirmations or me, personally. You name it. We should be proud that we're still here because many organizations, thousands of organizations, have failed over the years."

If his plans sounded ambitious, Garcia reminded those in attendance of his credentials.

"When I left five years ago, we were at \$1 million in revenue and about \$900,000, I think, in the bank at that time," he said. "I'm going to try really hard to get us back there and go beyond that. Yes, we have a lot of work to do. I'm not naïve."

And as he closed, Garcia said he was glad to be back home.

"The stronger our board is the stronger we will be. I would have never come back if I didn't believe in this board. They are small but they are mighty."

- Dave Garcia

"I learned a lot in Los Angeles," he said. "I think I left things in pretty good shape five years ago. But the truth is I'm a better executive now after being out there for five years. I always knew I was coming back home. I wasn't sure it was going to be this soon. But I think the time is right."

Reflections after on week on the job

As previously mentioned, the community chats took place on Garcia's second day on the job. So what did he do on the first?

"I met with a couple of board members, got my keys and started looking at the numbers and started making some phone calls to donors," he said after one week on the job. "The center wasn't open so there were no community members coming in and that was interesting."

So Garcia said he walked around the building, took inventory and "tried to wrap my mind around everything from the bills coming into our grants and started setting up some meetings with our grant funders and our donors."

While he admitted to being surprised by the small turnout for the chats, Garcia said he was not at all discouraged by it.

"From what I understand, the first community chats they called back in November were very well-attended and they gradually have been going down in attendance since that first chat. I think part of that is people are starting to see that we're starting to turn things around and that things are starting to get better."

Garcia said a lot of people had already heard him speak when he appeared at the Spring Bash.

"They heard what I had to say there or have subsequently heard about it or seen it online. The rest of the community knows who I am. I'm kind of a known commodity."



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MDP LGBTQ&A Caucus Dedicated to Queering 2020 DNC Convention, Sets Goals Surrounding 2020 Elections

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

On Saturday, May 4, a collection of state politicians, representatives from LGBTQ non-profits and chairs of the Michigan Democratic Party LGBTQ&A Caucus arrived at a breakfast meeting to discuss collaborative strategies to hit the ground running in getting more LGBTQ candidates into office in the months leading up to the state and national elections in November 2020. Though a variety of topics were covered, the Caucus' Chair Roland Leggett summed up the crux of the meeting well.

"This breakfast itself is really about the beginning of a conversation about how we're going to organize ourselves and our supporters to needlework the agenda that elects candidates that share our interests and our values and also supports those institutions in our community that do the work that we're focused on doing," Leggett said.

Here are some of the meeting's highlights:

A Look at MDP Delegates

First on the morning's agenda was a discussion concerning voter turnout, specifically regarding delegates, or the voters who will be responsible for choosing the nominees of each party in the primaries in advance of November 2020. Leggett said the Caucus' goal is to get as many LGBTQ people inspired to register to become delegates.

"This is a great way for folks who ask to plug in for us to say, 'Hey, there's this great opportunity for you to plug directly into the work the party is doing, to have real conversations about the way in which the things that you care about get pushed in the party,'" he said.

Also in attendance was State Rep. Jon Hoadley, who is now in his third term in the 60th House District and who has announced his campaign for Congress in the 6th Congressional District. He added that not only is voter interest important, but for there to be a diverse pool to draw from, as well.

"Every state has a delegate selection plan and they have to meet diversity goals that are articulated in their Affirmative Action programs and so we have to say when we send a final number of delegates from the state of Michigan to the national convention, that will have to include a diverse selection. ... So, we have to make sure that we've recruited LGBT folks for multiple candidates and in multiple districts across the state that are also significantly diverse so at the end of this as they fill holes to make sure ... they can then pull and say, 'Yes, we want either those folks elected at the district level



From left to right: David Garcia, Jacob Johnson, Kevin Terrell Heard, Roland Leggett, Grace Wojcik, Michael Rowady, Susan Grettenberger, Sen. Jeremy Moss, Cheryl Gilliam and State Rep. Jon Hoadley. Not pictured but also in attendance Michael Gilmore and Jan Stevenson. BTL Photo: Eve Kucharski

or appointed at the state level." Hoadley said.

By Sept. 13 of this year, the MDP will begin implementation of the existing Affirmative Action implementation plan. To find out how to register, vote and more about the plan visit michigandems.com/mdp-bylaws/.

A Unified Front on Issues

Another pressing matter addressed was the distribution of politician-specific questionnaires, aimed specifically at gauging how candidates feel overall on LGBTQ-specific issues. Candidates normally see dozens of similar documents over the course of their campaigns issued by a variety of non-profits, political organizations and caucuses. Though the LGBTQ&A caucus has sent several of these in the past, so have other LGBTQ-specific organizations, often repeating questions on similar issues.

Leggett said that this kind of repetitive sending of questionnaires can actually result in the opposite of the intended result, leading many politicians to ignore answering questions they felt like they have answered before. That's

why this year, the Caucus has decided to put forth a unified form, created in collaboration with a variety of LGBTQ-specific organizations in an effort to get more honest, thoughtful answers.

"Let's have a real conversation with candidates about where they stand on those real issues and see where they stand on those there," Leggett said, providing examples like criminal justice reform and the high rates of murder among transgender women of color. "Let's have a real conversation around where they stand. ... As we know, transgender women of color are murdered at a rate that is far greater in Michigan and in our community in general."

Currently, the questionnaires are in development and are slated to be completed by early June, far in advance of the November 2020 date.

Upcoming LGTBQA Caucus Events

Mentioned in the meeting as well were two key events sponsored by those in attendance at

the Caucus. The first, to be held on Thursday, June 6, is the Ford Globe's 25th Anniversary Dinner. This event is being put on by the Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce in an effort to commemorate Ford Motor Company's Employee Resource Group for its LGBTQ and allied hourly, salaried and agency employees.

"The night will feature keynote speaker Wade Davis and Allan Gilmore will accept his Inaugural award for Outstanding Leadership in Inclusion," wrote event organizers.

Shared second at the Caucus meeting was an announcement for an evening reception to support State Rep. Hoadley's run for Congress. The evening event will be held at the Robert Kidd Gallery located at 107 Townsend St. in Birmingham. For more information about this event go online to actblue.com/birmingham/190620birmingham or contact brandon@jonhoadley.com.

dems.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/dsp-official-final.pdf

New Resolution: GVSU Will Only Contract With LGBTQ-Inclusive Vendors

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

With the end-of-year rush surrounding final exams, summer plan finalizations and the packing up of dorm rooms, the average Grand Valley State University likely didn't notice that the end of April marked a small step toward increased LGBTQ inclusivity at GVSU, but this small change could send a resounding message in the West Michigan community: GVSU has amended its purchasing and overall discrimination policies to contract only with vendors who do not discriminate against the LGBTQ community.

"Based on your recommendation, amendments have been made to the nondiscrimination clause in the office's General Terms & Conditions ... and section 14 of GVSU Purchase Order Terms & Conditions," read a letter announcing the changes from Dr. Jesse M. Bernal, vice president of diversity and inclusion at the university. "Both now contain the exact language expressed in BOT 1.4, including sex/gender (including gender identity and expression) and sexual orientation."

That letter was sent to Eric-John Szczepaniak, a GVSU junior going into his senior year at school who one day hopes to go into teaching or school administration. He was responsible for putting this change in motion. Szczepaniak is also a senator and president-elect of the GVSU Student Senate and is openly LGBTQ. He first thought of bringing forth the idea for the resolution to the previously non-specific vendor policy as a way for his school to expand on inclusivity measures brought forth at the end of Gov. Rick Snyder's administration. He said he was spurred on when in January, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer expanded on that measure by specifying that the state of Michigan would not contract with anti-LGBTQ vendors.

"It got me thinking that, 'Oh, this will be a great thing for more units of government to adopt themselves because the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act has still not been expanded to protect or to define LGBT individuals as a protected class,'" Szczepaniak said. "And I know that Grand Valley State University already has LGBT protections in place for hiring and for students, the question was, 'How far do those [protections] extend?' Because if I can be my full authentic self here at Grand Valley State University, but if I can't be my full authentic self with this degree in hand a couple years from now, then what was the point of me coming here in the first place?"



"I know that Grand Valley State University already has LGBT protections in place for hiring and for students, the question was, 'How far do those [protections] extend?'"

Eric-John Szczepaniak, a GVSU junior going into his senior year

Szczepaniak is now working to put a similar policy in place in Kenowa Hills Public Schools, the district where in 2016 he was elected at 18 years old and broke records as the youngest elected official in West Michigan. Now, he's nearly halfway through his six-year term and is hopeful to play his part in expanding LGBTQ protections where they fall short.

"I brought this up to my superintendent and he has been drafting some policy language which is going to be introduced at our next meeting and voted on the following meeting," he said. "It's just one step forward. Even those municipalities that have non-discrimination ordinances, they should also be considering the vendors that they contract with and if those dollars they're responsible for are going toward businesses that still discriminate."

To read the policy changes visit gaybe.am/TD and gaybe.am/QL.

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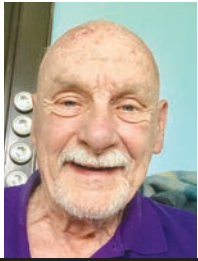
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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

It just might happen again ...

During the Nazi reign of terror that ended only in Germany's defeat by the American, English and French Allies in 1945, about 15,000 gay men were incarcerated in concentration camps from 1935 to 1944, where an estimated 60 percent of homosexual "schweinhund" were brutally worked to death.

Each wore a pink triangle ID armband: 50 years later this logo became the symbol for Detroit and Michigan's Triangle Foundation. (Unfortunately, the triangle was dropped as such from Equality Michigan.)

An estimated 50 million persons (and 6 million Jews) worldwide died during WWII because of Adolph Hitler, the funny little man with the Charlie Chaplin mustache - whom no one took seriously at the time when he became sole dictator in 1933. (Blond hair bleach was not available at the time.)

Those very few pink-triangle gays who survived found liberation by British and American soldiers to be of short duration. As homosexual criminals under Germany's Paragraph 175 penal code, they were sent back to prison. Most perished there.

Gerhard 'Gad' Beck, a gay Jew of mixed Jewish and gentile parentage, early on because of his classified status was fortunate to serve only one year of concentration camp incarceration.

In his autobiography "An Underground Life: Memoirs of A Gay Jew in Nazi Germany" he tells of an incident that occurred during up-at-dawn roll call.

An unfortunate gay prisoner, starved, freezing, did not call out his ID number loud enough. As a penalty for this, a milk bucket was placed over his head, his hands tied and prisoners standing next to him were forced to whack a wooden board over, and over, and over, and over against the bucket.

Beck, who died in 2012 at age 88, was what the 1935 Nazi-imposed Nuremberg Jewish Laws classified as a "mishling," Half-Jew. Half gentile. His mixed "status" aided his survival.

Beck was also a courageous underground resistance fighter, at one point daring to rescue his Jewish gay lover from certain concentration camp death.

He actually stole a German Youth uniform, entered Auschwitz boldly and requested the release of his friend for a fake road building defense project. Beck's pretense worked.

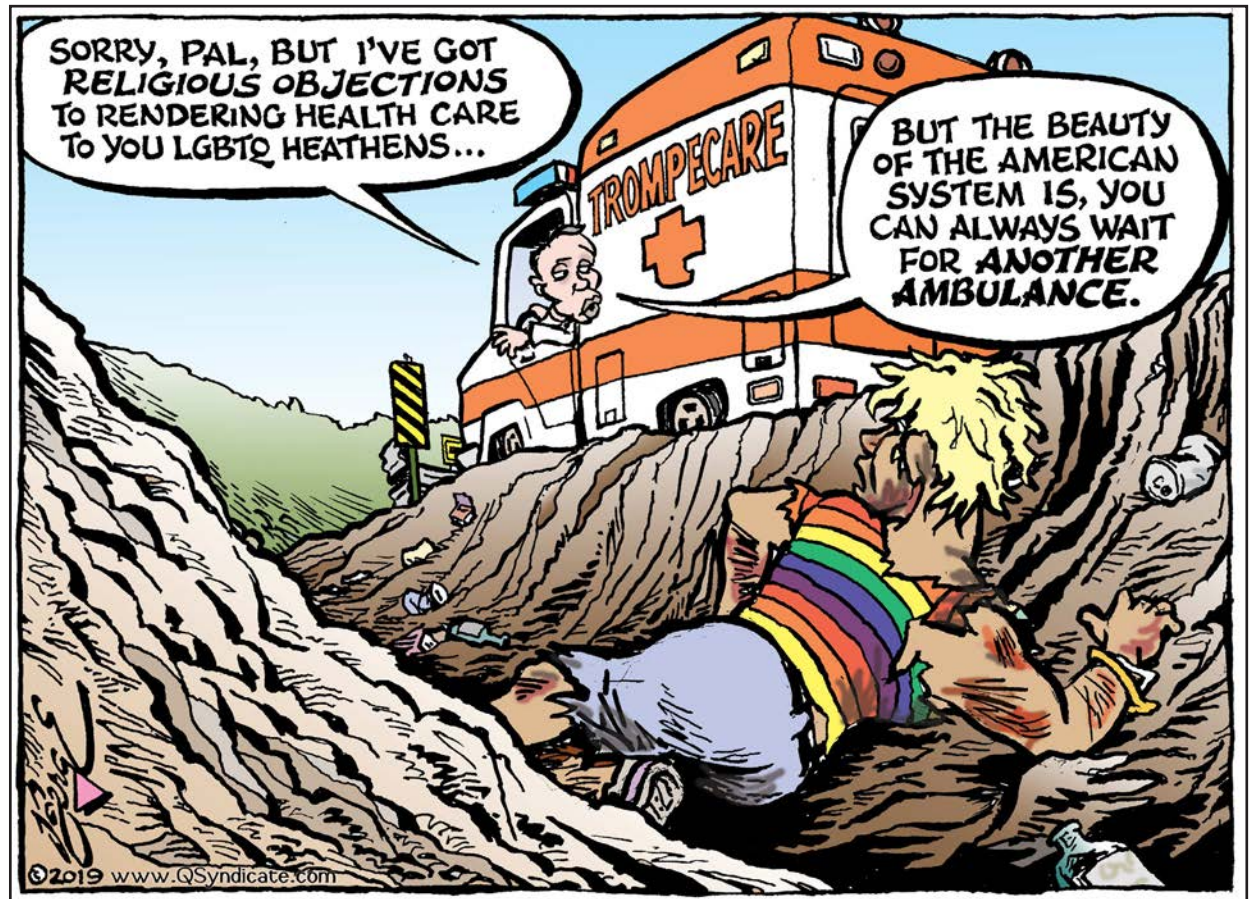
His friend was granted escorted leave; but then told lover Gad, with much sorrow, that he could not leave his parents behind. He and his family perished in the gas chambers.

Recently some members of biblical evangelical/fundamentalist mental low-wattage have stooped to a new egregious low by telling yet another Trump-like Big Lie - one might add, just like the Nazis propagandists once did - claiming that homosexuals in Nazi Germany were responsible for the Holocaust.

Evangelical/fundamentalists don't seem to be aware that the New Testament Gospel of St. John is anti-Semitic, blaming Jews, not Romans, for Jesus' death. Pontius Pilate washes his hands of the matter and turns Jesus over to the mob.

Nor do these Bible-belters know that Martin Luther, founder

See next page



BY DANA RUDOLPH

Viewpoint

HHS Rule Allows Religious Discrimination in Health Care

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has finalized a new rule that will allow health care workers to refuse to provide or assist in providing medical services if doing so violates their religious or moral beliefs. In other words, it will allow them to discriminate widely and putting LGBTQ people and our families, among others, at risk.

The rule is designed to "protect the rights of individuals, entities and health care entities to refuse to perform, assist in the performance of, or undergo certain health care services or research activities to which they may object for religious, moral, ethical or other reasons." It focuses mainly on abortion, sterilization and assisted suicide. That's bad enough, as it violates the rights of women and transgender people, among others, to have control over their bodies.

As Fenway Health explained in a statement, however, the impact could be broader: "Potential religious or conscience-related conduct protected by the final rule could include a refusal to serve LGBTQ people or their children based on the belief that same-sex couples should not be allowed to marry or raise children, that people should not have sex outside of heterosexual marriage and that gender identity should not differ from sex at birth."

HRC noted in its blog post on the ruling, "In practice, the broad reach of the rule could allow health care providers to refuse to provide not only abortion and sterilization procedures, but also to deny treatment or preventative care for AIDS

or HIV, hormone therapy treatment and transition-related care and in-vitro fertilization for lesbians, single women or interfaith couples."

All health care entities that receive any federal funds, including Medicare and Medicaid, must abide by the new ruling. Lambda Legal adds, too, that, "The proposed rule also shields health care providers even if they refuse to give a referral after denying care, regardless of the consequences to the patient, and in violation of medical and ethical requirements and standards of care." The discrimination is allowed not only inpatient health care but also health research and health insurance coverage.

Health care facilities will be required to post notices to their employees that the facility "complies with applicable Federal conscience and anti-discrimination laws prohibiting exclusion, adverse treatment, coercion or other discrimination against individuals or entities on the basis of their religious beliefs or moral convictions" and informs them, "You may have the right under Federal law to decline to perform, assist in the performance of, refer for, undergo or pay for certain health care-related treatments, research or services (such as abortion or assisted suicide, among others) that violate your conscience, religious beliefs or moral convictions."

The Law, Rights, and Religion Project at Columbia Law

See next page

Creep Of The Week

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Trump Administration

In a parallel universe somewhere President Hillary Clinton is expanding access to health care in the United States and LGBTQ people are fully protected under the law.

Unfortunately, Trump is the president and he, along with the heartless ghouls who make up his administration, seek daily to restrict health care access, especially for groups of people they don't like: the poor, women and LGBTQ people.

I recently saw a video of Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) posted by Progress Iowa where a constituent tells him that by repeatedly voting to repeal the Affordable Care Act threatens her life. He literally gets in her face and says, essentially, that she's silly for worrying about that because it isn't going to happen. He's voted to repeal seven times. That's like telling your child, "I want to kill you in your sleep" and then being mad at that kid for having nightmares about something that "isn't going to happen."

As someone with health issues of my own (I'm a two-time cancer survivor and just happen to be trying to pass a kidney stone right now), I totally understand where this woman is coming from. Every single one of us has to trust the health care system with our lives. At the bare minimum we should have guaranteed access to the system and be protected from discrimination.

That's literally the opposite of the Republican health care plan. Not only do they want fewer people to have access to care, they want health care professionals to be allowed to refuse treatment if they have a religious or conscientious objection.

This sounds all well and good on the surface. I mean, someone shouldn't be forced to participate in something that violates their sincerely held beliefs, right?

But when you consider the fact that what health care providers participate in is life-saving treatment, suddenly it's all a lot less well or good.

It's important to note that right-wing, so-called Christians have been waging a war on science for decades so these objections can very well be based on reasoning that is contrary to science and established medical treatment.

The main procedures the Trump administration wants to let people opt out of is abortion, contraception, assisted suicide (which could more broadly be interpreted as end of life care, which includes DNR orders and removing life support from patients who are not going to recover), sterilization and gender affirmation surgeries.

This new rule comes with the full support of the Department of Health and Human

Services Office for Civil Rights.

"This rule ensures that healthcare entities and professionals won't be bullied out of the health care field because they decline to participate in actions that violate their conscience, including the taking of human life," OCR Director Roger Severino said in a written statement. "Protecting conscience and religious freedom not only fosters greater diversity in healthcare, it's the law."

Oh, thank goodness "healthcare entities and professionals" won't get bullied out of the field. Nevermind that patients from vulnerable populations might very well get bullied out of care or, you know, life.

Vanita Gupta, president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, said in a statement, "HHS's final denial of care rule will substantially harm the health and well-being of many – in particular women and transgender patients."

Not that Severino would care. According to The Advocate, Severino "has opposed marriage equality, defended 'ex-gay' therapy and objected to allowing transgender people to serve in the military." He was also behind a memo that sought to erase trans people by simply declaring they do not exist.

Trump and Vice President Mike Pence celebrated the new rule during a Rose Garden speech on the National Day of Prayer.

Mike Pence stood in the Rose Garden and said, "In this White House, under this president, we believe in prayer."

Seriously? Trump, the man who embodies the opposite of just about every one of the Ten Commandments, is the prayer President? Gross.

And then Pence says: "From early in this administration, President Trump has taken steps to ensure that the federal government will never, ever penalize anyone for their religious beliefs ever again."

WTF ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT TRUMP LITERALLY TRIED TO BAN MUSLIMS FFS!

Of course, religious freedom really means right-wing Christian dominance. Which isn't very Jesus like.

It's like that famous poem about Jesus walking with Trump in the sand when Jesus says, "When you saw only one set of footprints, it was because you were in a golf cart and when I tried to counsel you out your trials and testings you kept yelling, 'Fake news!' And soon there were no footprints because I peaced out of there to go find some real Christians. And then your golf cart disappeared into the sea and I sent you my thoughts and prayers."

► Viewpoint

Continued from p. 10

School has a different take, however. They remind us that, "Communities and people of faith hold a wide spectrum of views regarding abortion, sterilization and other health services implicated by the rule. In fact, several religious denominations hold that the right to reproductive health care is an essential aspect of religious freedom." Furthermore, "The rule violates the religious liberty of all Americans by establishing a formal legal preference for particular religious beliefs, including opposition to abortion and sterilization."

The rule also comes during the continued advance of so-called "religious freedom" laws that allow child-placement agencies to discriminate against LGBTQ prospective parents and others if serving them conflicts with the agencies' religious beliefs or moral convictions. Some of these laws also allow agencies to refuse to serve certain children, to deny children services to which the agency objects (like hormone therapy, contraceptives or affirming mental health care) or force them to undergo discredited "conversion therapy," as HRC detailed in a recent report. And President's Trump's latest budget includes the line item: "Protect the religious liberty of child welfare providers." It has no funding amount attached to it but clearly indicates that abortion, sterilization and assisted suicide are only the tip of the religiously protected

iceberg.

The rule will go into effect 60 days after its publication in the Federal Register, which will likely happen very soon. It is awful and likely to provoke lawsuits. The New York Times reports that "Xavier Becerra, the California attorney general, who has already taken on a number of Trump administration policies, suggested he may fight it."

Still, it may make life difficult for those unable to access equity-minded health care facilities. Those of us who do have some flexibility in that regard may wish to peruse HRC's Healthcare Equality Index, which evaluates health care facilities' policies and practices related to the equity and inclusion of their LGBTQ patients, visitors and employees.

Another powerful tool, too, is word of mouth among the LGBTQ community and our allies about which healthcare providers are and are not welcoming to and inclusive of all patients. Please share information if you have it — online, with your friends and family or wherever it may be needed. The rule may be awful, but our community has dealt with awful before. We can help each other be strong.

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

good just some of the time. For some of the people. Jews and gays not included.

Unfortunately, it can happen again. Out of sight. In an isolated concentration camp in the Grand Canyon. While so-called Christians look the other way.

Especially if hate mongers Trump and Pence have anything to do about it, now that LGBTQs have been conveniently dropped from the U.S. Census. And Pat Robertson and Franklin Graham regularly give the mass extermination of gays, one way or another, mentally or physically, their blessings.

"Those who do not learn the lessons of the past are doomed to repeat them," said the philosopher Jorge Santayana. Don't say we haven't been warned! Ask McConnell for confirmation, and act accordingly.

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.

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 10

of Lutheranism, wrote an eight-item diatribe of how he felt Jews – killers of Christ – should be treated. It's a shocking, chilling religious document.

Shamefully, and point by vicious point, Luther's recommendations were implemented by the Nazis on Kristal Nacht, 1938. Homes and businesses were destroyed. Jew murdered. The skies were filled with suffocating terror. Gas chambers and flaming ovens followed soon after.

Should today's bigoted right-wing Christians be blamed for America's recent bullying, abuse and murders of Jews? And what about North Carolina Pastor Charles L. Worley, of Providence Road Baptist Church, who recently suggested airlifting all the "queers and homosexuals" and dropping them off into electric fenced pens until they all die?

There's a slogan making the rounds these days in many mainline churches: "God is good all the time." One can only wonder. Maybe

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New HHS Rule Puts Religious Objections on 'Steroids'

BY LISA KEEN

A new Trump administration regulation permitting religious bias came carefully wrapped up in the language of civil rights; its text promises to “remove barriers” for people who want to work in health care, support a “more diverse” field of health care workers and stop “discrimination in health care.”

But LGBT activists and allies see a wolf in sheep's clothing and read an invitation to people who harbor personal bias toward LGBTQ people to exercise that prejudice under the cloak of “religious or moral conviction.”

The new final rule will go into effect 60 days after it is published in the Federal Register. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services did not respond to this reporter's query about when that is, but LGBTQ activists expect it to be in the coming days.

Such “conscience” laws or “religious refusal” rules have been in place for almost a decade at the federal level and in some states. They have been primarily aimed against women who seek an abortion or emergency contraception, terminally ill patients wanting to accelerate a painful dying process and LGBTQ people generally.

The new federal rule announced by HHS May 2 replaces a 2011 rule that applied to only three federal statutes. The new rule will apply to 25 and will enable HHS to strictly monitor compliance and withhold federal funds for non-compliance.

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi blasted the Trump administration's action as an “open license” to discriminate against LGBTQ people in health care.

“These bigoted rules are immoral, deeply discriminatory and downright deadly, greenlighting open discrimination in health care against LGTBQ Americans and directly threatening the well-being of millions,” Pelosi said in a statement.

A spokesman for her office said the office is “assessing our options” for countering the new rule.

So, too, are LGBTQ groups.

“There were already robust conscience

protections,” said Robin Maril, associate legal director for the Human Rights Campaign, referring to the 2011 rule adopted by the Obama administration. “This puts that on steroids.”

Jamie Gliksberg, a senior attorney for Lambda Legal, said her organization has represented “a large number of LGBT people denied care” by health care entities. The new rule, she said, “is doing a real



President Trump on May 2, announced the final version of a “conscience rule” for health care providers that critics contend would allow anti-LGBT discrimination. (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

religious beliefs or moral convictions against each particular service or procedure that is the subject of this rule,” states the analysis.

The analysis did not explain why HHS was moving ahead with the rule change despite this stated lack of significant information, except to say, “The Department finds that finalizing the rule is appropriate without regard to whether

data exists on the competing contentions about its effect on access to services.”

The timing of the May 2 rule release coincided with President Trump's remarks to the National Day of Prayer event at the White House. The president devoted one sentence to the new rule.

“And just today, we finalized new protections of conscience rights for physicians, pharmacists, nurses, teachers, students and faith-based charities,” Trump said.

harm to LGBT people by encouraging more.”

An analysis section of the new rule specifically rebuffed statistics on the denial of service to LGBTQ people, saying, “those statistics were general in nature and did not assist the Department in estimating what degree may be attributable to the lawful exercise of religious beliefs or moral convictions.”

Surprisingly, HHS's analysis of the new rule acknowledges that the “Department attempted to quantify the impact of this rule on access to care” but was not able to do so. It said it could not find “enough reliable data” and that analysis itself was “subject to too many confounding variables” to enable HHS to “arrive at a useful estimate.”

“For instance, the Department is not aware of a source for data on the percentages of providers who have

HHS 'Unaware' of Discrimination

Under the rule, any entity receiving HHS funds – including “religious nonmedical health care institutes” such as foster care agencies – are covered by the new rule.

The rule, entitled “Protecting Statutory Conscience Rights in Health Care; Delegations of Authority,” claims, “The Department is unaware of any cases claiming denial of services regarding [HIV treatment, pre-exposure prophylaxis, and infertility treatment] brought under any of the statutes implemented by this rule.”

“In the event that the Department receives a complaint with respect to HIV treatment, pre-exposure prophylaxis or infertility treatment,” states the rule, “the

Department would examine the facts and circumstances of the complaint to determine whether it falls within the scope of the statute in question and these regulations.”

But later in the discussion of the rule’s development, HHS acknowledges having received “comments expressing concern” that the new rule “could impact counseling or referrals for LGBT persons.” It brushed that concern off, noting, without explanation, that “many medical treatments and services performed by health care providers are not ‘part of’” a federally funded health care program.

The rule suggests HHS will deal with refusals to provide “sterilizations performed in the context of gender dysphoria” on a case-by-case basis. (Gender transition treatments do not require sterilization, and the United Nations has said that requiring sterilization as a condition of transition treatment violates fundamental human rights.)

While the LGBTQ community is concerned

decline service “would depend on the facts and circumstances of each case.”

The Department said it would not permit instances where “the connection between an action and a procedure is irrational.”

LGBT health centers around the country were quick to condemn the new rule.

Sean Cahill, director of health policy research at Boston’s Fenway Health, called the new rule “extremely alarming.” He said the rule is “designed so that government employees and health care providers can deny service or treatment to LGBT people by claiming that providing such service or treatment would violate their religious beliefs or sincerely held principles.”

Magda Houlberg, chief clinical officer for the Howard Brown Health clinic in Chicago, said the rule “puts the personal beliefs of health care providers above their sworn duties to follow science, give all medically accurate information and serve their patients.”

Such “conscience” laws or “religious refusal” rules have been in place for almost a decade at the federal level and in some states.

They have been primarily aimed against women who seek an abortion or emergency contraception, terminally ill patients wanting to accelerate a painful dying process and LGBTQ people generally.

that the new rule will encourage and facilitate discrimination against patients based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, the Trump administration said, in the rule, that it is attempting to address a “significant increase in complaints” since November 2016 alleging discrimination based on “religious beliefs or moral convictions.” An analysis section of the new rule states that “it is important not to assume that every patient who wants a particular service is offended by the provider’s unwillingness to provide that service.”

But even if a patient does feel emotional distress when a health care provider refuses to provide a service, said the analysis, “Congress ... did not establish balancing tests that weigh such emotional distress against the right to abide by one’s conscience.”

Likelihood of Distress?

The likelihood seems strong that an LGBTQ person would experience distress when they are denied medical service, especially given that the new rule allows even clerical personnel, janitorial staff and, in some circumstances, ambulance drivers to refuse service based on “religious beliefs or moral convictions.”

“Scheduling an abortion or preparing a room and the instruments for an abortion are necessary parts of the process of providing an abortion” explains HHS in its analysis.

Regarding emergency medical personnel, HHS said “EMTs and paramedics are trained medical professionals” and their right to

HHS did not respond to a request for how support and opposition for the proposed rule broke down among the more than 242,000 comments from the public since the proposed rule change was published in the January 26, 2018, Federal Register.

But the rule change May 2 is seen as the latest Trump administration attack on the LGBTQ community inspired by religious right conservatives supporting the president.

Trump’s efforts to show favor to particular religious beliefs – those hostile to LGBTQ people – began in May 2017, when he signed a Religious Liberty executive order that directed all departments to “vigorously enforce Federal law’s robust protections for religious freedom.” It specifically directed HHS to “consider” amending regulations “consistent with applicable law” to “address conscience-based objections.”

In October 2017, then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions issued an eight-page memorandum to all departments, providing “guidance interpreting religious liberty protections in Federal law.” And three months later, HHS proposed its “Conscience and Religious Freedom” rule.

“Since Day One,” Pelosi said, “this Administration has waged a cruel campaign of intolerance and discrimination targeting the civil rights of our most vulnerable communities. House Democrats fully, flatly reject these attacks on LGBTQ Americans and on the rights of all Americans to get the health care they need and will fight these hateful actions.”



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Poll: 70 Percent of US Voters Willing to Vote for Gay Male President

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

With Pete Buttigieg continuing to show strong numbers in the Democratic presidential primary, a new poll has found 70 percent of voters would be open to voting for a gay man as U.S. president.

However, that same poll reveals a majority of voters — 52 percent — believe the United States isn't ready to elect a gay man to the White House.

The Quinnipiac poll, published Tuesday, found 70 percent of voters — including a plurality of Republicans — are willing to vote for a gay president, although 23 percent said they would not and 7 percent said they didn't know.

For Democrats, 85 percent said they'd be willing to support for gay presidential candidate, although 11 percent said they would not and 4 percent said they didn't know. For Republicans, 46 percent said they'd vote for a gay president compared to the 45 percent who said they would not and 9 percent said they didn't know.

Adults between the ages of 18 to 34 were the most likely to say they'd back a gay president. 82 percent said they would, compared to 14 percent who said they wouldn't and 4 percent who said they didn't know.

Among Hispanics, 77 percent said they'd be willing to vote for a gay president, compared to 69 percent of white people who said they'd be willing to back a gay candidate and 66 percent of black people.

But the situation changes when voters are asked whether they think the United States is ready for a president. Only 36 percent say that's the case, compared 53 who say no and 12 percent who say they don't.

Democrats say the country is ready for a gay president by a margin of 43-49, with 8 percent saying they don't know, while Republicans say the country is ready for a gay president by a margin of 30-60, with 10 percent saying they don't know.

Tim Malloy, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University poll, said the findings are both good news and bad news for Buttigieg, an openly gay being taken seriously as a potential Democratic presidential nominee.

"The good news for Mayor Pete Buttigieg is that voters seem ready to accept a gay man as president," Malloy said. The bad news for Buttigieg is that voters believe it just isn't going to happen."

The same poll found former Vice President Joseph Biden is surging among Democrats and voters leaning Democratic, with 38 percent of the vote, followed by 12 percent for Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, 11 percent for Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and 10 percent for Buttigieg.

The poll was conducted from April 26–29 by Quinnipiac University, which surveyed 1,044 voters nationwide with a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points.

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



Mariela Castro, daughter of former Cuban President Raúl Castro, participates in a march observing the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia in Havana in 2017. A statement that CENESEX released on May 6, 2019, said IDAHOBiT marches that had been scheduled to take place in Havana and the city of Camagüey have been cancelled. (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

LGBTI Marches in Cuba Cancelled

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

The organizer of Cuba's annual International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia marches on Monday announced they have been cancelled.

The marches were to have taken place in Havana on May 11 and the city of Camagüey on May 17.

The National Center for Sexual Education, directed by Mariela Castro, the daughter of former Cuban President Raúl Castro who spearheads LGBTI issues on the island, in a statement it posted to its Facebook page said the "current uncertainty the country is experiencing" prompted the decision. The statement added the country's Ministry of Public Health that oversees CENESEX directed the events to be cancelled.

"The new tensions in the international and regional context directly and indirectly affect our country and have tangible and intangible impacts on the normal development of our daily life and on the implementation of the Cuban state's policies," it reads.

The announcement comes less than a week after Title III of the 1996 Helms-Burton Act — a law that allows Americans and Cubans who became U.S. citizens after the 1959 Cuban revolution that brought Mariela Castro's uncle, Fidel Castro, to power, to sue companies based in the U.S. and Europe who use confiscated property to do business in Cuba — took effect.

A U.S. embargo against Cuba has been in place since 1962.

President Trump last week threatened to impose a "full and complete embargo" and additional sanctions against Cuba over its continued support of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. Trump made this threat, even though media reports indicate his company and four of his associates violated the existing embargo in 1998 and again in late 2012 or early 2013.

The White House has also said it plans to further restrict Americans from traveling and doing business in Cuba.

"Down with Yankee imperialism and its lackeys," wrote Mariela Castro in a Facebook post that coincided with May Day commemorations in Cuba. "Respect Cuba, Trump."

Mariela Castro and her supporters have used previous IDAHOBiT marches to highlight their opposition to U.S. policy towards Cuba. The statement that CENESEX released on Monday notes other IDAHOBiT events — including a gala at Havana's Karl Marx Theater during which Cleve Jones will be honored — will take place as scheduled.

"I am confident that nothing or nobody will be able to force us back into the closet," wrote Francisco Rodríguez Cruz, a gay Cuban blogger who writes under the pen name Paquito el de Cuba, on Monday.

Rodríguez has close ties to CENESEX. Activists who work independently of Mariela Castro's organization have sharply criticized the decision to cancel

the marches.

"Why didn't they cancel the May Day parade," asked one activist on Facebook.

The Blade has reached out to Jones for comment.

The marches were to have taken place less than three months after Cubans overwhelmingly approved the draft of their country's new constitution.

Evangelical church groups publicly highlighted their opposition to an amendment in the draft constitution that would have extended marriage rights to same-sex couples. The government's decision to remove the amendment late last year sparked widespread outrage among independent LGBT activists.

Rodríguez after the Feb. 24 referendum wrote the new constitution, among other things, "expressly prohibits and punishes under law" anti-LGBTI discrimination and defines marriage as "a social and legal institution." Maykel González Vivero, publisher of Tremenda Nota, the Washington Blade's media partner in Cuba, maintains the country's government blocked access to his website on the island ahead of the vote after it reported Mariela Castro and Luis Ángel Adán Roble — who are both members of the Cuban National Assembly — knew about the results of a survey on attitudes towards LGBTI people before they were made public.

Editor's note: Tremenda Nota will have additional information about Monday's announcement on its website.



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Location: Ferndale Fire House

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Photo: Mary Ellen Matthews

In Wine There's Truth, and Gays

Amy Poehler and Rachel Dratch on Gay Wine Buddies, LGBTQ Fans & Being 'Soft Butch'

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Amy Poehler and Rachel Dratch are as thrilled as I am over Netflix's meta itinerary for journalists like myself who have landed in Napa Valley, California to cover their new heavy-on-the-imbibing dramedy, "Wine Country." Appropriately, the itinerary is: first, wine; second, wine; fifth, wine.

On an outdoor rooftop deck overlooking the idyllic, rolling views of Artesa Vineyards and Winery, one of their first interviews of the day and where they shot part of the film, Dratch, amused, told Poehler she didn't realize Netflix was actually flying journalists to wine country for the occasion *and* hooking them up with a private tasting.

"And then they have to go write the thing," enthused Dratch, rightfully beloved for her hilariously dry "Debbie Downer" skit on "SNL." A laugh. "We're golden!"

An impromptu in-the-moment sketch is born, as Poehler whoops a booming laugh herself and looks ahead to a day full of blitzed on-the-job reporters essentially reliving their movie, impersonating a juiced journalist who maybe enjoyed too much of Artesa's very drinkable Rosado before assessing "Wine Country": "I LOVED IT! What's not to love?! Life is short!"

Dratch cracked up at the thought of Netflix's wine-soaked vision. Buzzed writers! Buzzed TV reporters! The laughs kept coming and they weren't even drinking yet (and, oh hey boss,

full disclosure: neither was I).

"It's genius, it's genius!" Dratch raved in a conspiratorial tone.

But it's no stretch: "Wine Country" is marinated in wine and women. Based on a girls getaway they took to Napa for Dratch's 50th birthday with a tight posse of fellow "SNL" besties, including Maya Rudolph, Tina Fey, Ana Gasteyer, Paula Pell and Emily Spivey (who all star in the film), the boozy but heartfelt friends-gone-wild romp is Poehler's feature-film directorial debut, after already checking multiple career boxes: producer ("Difficult People," "Russian Doll"), Golden Globes host, author ("Yes Please") and actress ("Parks and Recreation"; "Mean Girls," as the "cool mom").

Like the Pinot being generously poured inside

the winery, our gay morning conversation flowed freely. Poehler's "soft butch" aesthetic (during our sit-down: orange slacks, a white button-up and a textured gray suit coat), living like the Golden Girls and how "Wine Country" passes the "Jeffdel test" (no two cis straight men converse!) were discussed, and Poehler, all smiles and hearty laughs, was so pleased she extolled, "We have nowhere to go but down after this interview. This is gonna be the interview of the day."

Dratch beamed back: "Let's just go to the wine tasting now."

Have you been known to enjoy a glass of wine with a gay friend or two?

Amy Poehler: Are you kidding me?

Rachel Dratch: I have a standing rosé Tuesday with my gay bestie. Ha! We've been doing it for a couple of years now 'cause he's always in the neighborhood on Tuesdays at my apartment. Among many other gay pals who I imbibe with!

Amy, do you partake in these wine nights?

Poehler: Sometimes! Rachel and I live in different cities, but when we do see each other we joke, "Shall we head to the Pinot Grigio Islands?" We do that! We sail to the Grigios! Ha!

Do you party with the gays when you go on your girls trips?

Poehler: Oh yeah! I mean, we had an amazing dinner in Palm Springs for Ana Gasteyer's 50th.

Dratch: At Sparrows.

Poehler: We stumbled across an amazing group of middle-aged gentlemen who were big fans of our work and knew one of Ana's characters, specifically. Remember those guys we met? We had an awesome night with them. It was a really fun night. And you know, I would say Rachel borders on gay icon status. I'm sorry, but...

Dratch: Ha! Oh, I'll take it!

Speaking of gay icons, let's talk Fran Drescher.

Poehler: Yes! Fran Drescher!

If she wasn't already a gay icon, "Wine Country" makes her one.

Poehler: Emily Spivey and Liz Cackowski, who wrote the script, were so funny because they were like, "We have to do a scene where these millennials are obsessed with Fran Drescher," and, to be honest, because I'm a Gen-Xer, I didn't quite get it. I was like, "You know, are they? OK! Oh, sure!"

Did you not watch "The Nanny"?

Poehler: I didn't watch "The Nanny" because I was a little older than you.

Dratch: Me too! Ha!

Poehler: And so every young female in my office was like, "Oh my god, it's so true: I love Fran Drescher!"

The film honors Fran through a queer lens. There's a real LGBTQ presence at that Fran Drescher art show.

Poehler: Yes, everybody is dressed very neutral and everyone is very fluid, and we wanted to quickly show the stark representation between the options and fluidity of the younger generation compared to us, 'cause at the time we are out of touch with ourselves, personally, in the movie. Also, we come upon a hip scene that we get very defensive about. And I'm proud to say that this film not only passes the Bechdel test, it passes what we like to call the Jeffdel test, which is that no two straight men talk to each other. Ha!

Wow, it does.

Poehler: Oh, I combed through. There's no two cis straight men who talk to each other.

Is this a standing rule for all future Amy Poehler projects?

Poehler: Hahaha! Well, it's a fun thing to try to strive for!

OK, let's talk "Spring Breakdown."

(Poehler and Dratch gasp in unison while looking at each other gleefully with wide eyes.)

Memories, right? How would you compare the gayness of that film, which I think is -

Poehler: Quite high!

Ha! Yes! How would you compare its gayness to the gayness of "Wine Country"?

Poehler: I will say that the lovely (openly lesbian) Paula Pell ups our gay quotient pretty high in this film because the only real romantic element of the film is between two gay women, and so we were really excited about (that). I mean, even though - spoiler alert! - Rachel and I's characters sleep with the same guy, we don't even really discover it till the end and it's not even part of the story. Haha! But I would say "Spring Breakdown" maybe had a higher gay quotient.

Dratch: Well, 'cause it was written and directed by Ryan Shiraki, who's quite a gay man.

Poehler: A professional gay man!

You have both played gay before, so that's something.

Poehler: Yes, that's right. We were actually talking last night at dinner about our generation. There wasn't any - there were certainly no LGBTQ organizations at my high school, but there was not one openly gay person at my high school.


Dratch: Or barely even in college.

How does this current time for the LGBTQ community compare to your high school experience?

Dratch: We have little kids and I just like that they're like, "Oh, that person has two dads." It's not a big thing at all. It's not like, "Let me sit you down and explain." They're just used to it, so that's kind of refreshing and cool that they won't have any prejudices - or whatever they are, they won't have any fears. I don't know if that's because we live in big cities or what.

Poehler: Yeah, our kids know some kids who are figuring out their gender and if they wanna transition, and there's all this discussion about that too. The young kids are just way ahead of us in terms of how they accept. So I feel like our generation of women who are now in their late 40s and 50s, we're kind of the straddle technologically because we didn't have the internet when we were in college, and from an LGBTQ perspective because we just didn't have people coming

See **Wine Country**, continued on p. 18



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► Wine Country

Continued from p. 17

out or living authentically, or feeling like they could. That's something that's been a huge change in our lifetime.

LGBTQ representation also seems to be an important part of what you do as a filmmaker, Amy. Obviously that is reflected in "Wine Country" as something that was necessary and important to you.

Poehler: Yes! Thank you. It was.

Dratch: I also like that Paula's storyline is just so, "Oh yeah. She likes this person." It's not like, "Here's the gay part of the movie!"

Poehler: Maya Erskine (who plays the character Paula Pell's Val is interested in romantically), who's also in a great TV show right now called "Pen15," just says, like, "I'm mad at my girlfriend," and she walks away and Paula turns to Maya (Rudolph) and she's like, "Did you hear about her girlfriend?" Maya (Rudolph) just goes, "Jackpot!" Then they high-five and there's not that real estate taken up with someone being like –

Dratch: "And I'm gay, first of all."

Poehler: "I need to tell you something."

Looking back at the beginning of your career, when did you know you had an LGBTQ audience?

Poehler: Remember when you did "The Girl With No Gaydar" (on "SNL")? That was such a good sketch! Such a funny sketch!

Dratch: By the way, that came from a real party I was at! I was at my gay friend's birthday party and there were literally like 80 gay men there and two women. I mean, it was like, What am I doing in terms of trying to find a date?

Poehler: Hahahaha!

Dratch: I mean, that wasn't my goal that night, but uh, I was just joking, like, "I'm gonna get lucky tonight! Look at the ratio!" So that's how that scene was born. I love those things in life when something happens and you're like, "Let's go write this as sketch." That's my favorite way to come up with sketch, 'cause when you just sit there and you're like, "Let me think of a sketch," it just doesn't work. You have to have the real-life situation. So that's why that scene was really fun.

And was it when that sketch ran that you realized you had a gay following?

Dratch: I feel like the "SNL" ladies have this. Like, "SNL" ladies have a built-in gay following.

Poehler: Yeah – yes! I think so. It felt that way (for me), and because we were a little bit of a gang, like a little pack. I mean, well, let's just say that on a daily basis Rachel and I get mistaken for each other. So her success is my success.

Dratch: Sometimes people just go like, "Amy Poehler!" and I'm just like, "Yep." Like, why correct them? I'll be Amy Poehler.

Poehler: Haha! Absolutely the same people are like, "Rachel Dratch!" Someone will come up to me and go, "Debbie Downer!" Ha! I'm like, "That's right! That was me!" And so that didn't really answer your question.

Dratch and Poehler: Hahahahahaha!

Poehler: But I'm gonna speak for Rachel because –

Dratch: Because you are me.

Poehler: Ha! But because Rachel has such a cadre of good, good friends and amazing gay men in her life, I have to say.

Dratch: That's true.

Poehler: You really do have an army of besties who love and support you, and you right back to them.

See **Wine Country**, continued on p. 20



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► Wine Country

Continued from p. 18

Poehler: And I surround myself with young gay women! Ha! Because they're very good at how they dress.

This might explain your recent Vanity Fair shoot with Maya Rudolph.

Poehler: Hahaha! Soft butch?

Dratch: Soft butch?!

And Maya, high femme.

Dratch: Maya is high femme? That is awesome!

Poehler: That's right: Maya's high femme, yeah.

I'm gonna reference a tweet I read recently about those VF photos.

Poehler: Oh dear, is it a bad one? I'm not on Twitter.

Dratch: No, it's complimentary!

"What in the gay heaven are these photos?"

Dratch and Poehler: Hahahahahaha!

Dratch: High compliment!

Poehler: Well, I would take any of these women as my wife if they allowed me to, and Maya loves dresses and dressing up and I had a revelation a few years ago. You know, it's nice to get to a point – it doesn't even have to be in your career, but in your life – where you do start dressing the way you want or having always wanted. But I had a moment recently with Maya: When Maya puts on a gown for an award show, I see her relax. She loves fashion. And when she puts a dress on her body, she loves it. When I put on a dress on, I just stare at everybody else dressed in jeans and t-shirts and I just wanna be back over there. It took me a long time to really come to terms with that because we have a job where we have to dress up a lot and I just thought it was my awkwardness about dressing up, but the older I get the more I realize I feel much more comfortable in menswear. I like the feel of it. I feel much more myself.

Are you conscious of challenging gender norms when dressing in men's clothes?

Poehler: I don't know if I would say I'm that conscious of it.

Dratch: You're sort of letting yourself embrace what you actually like.

Poehler: I had a moment where I was in heels and a stupid-ass dress walking down the carpet of a premiere with all the women I worked with and I literally couldn't walk, and I remember thinking, I can't do this again. I just didn't feel like what –

Dratch: What a powerful executive!

Poehler: Haha! But I'll tell you: I've met some powerful executives who do heels like nobody's business. So to answer your

question, yes, we were aware we were doing a soft butch/high femme situation.

Dratch: You were?! I didn't realize that.

Poehler: Yeah! I asked for it.

Dratch: That's so cool.

Poehler: Because it made me feel really comfortable, and I think Maya really liked it. And whatever my beautiful wife wants, she gets. Haha!

Has this same group given any consideration to remaking "The Golden Girls"?

Poehler: Oh my god, it's funny you say that!

Dratch: We talked about living like that! We talked about later on just having a house "Golden Girls"-style, and I think we each claimed which character we were gonna be. Someone said they were gonna be the Rue McClanahan; our other friend just said, "I'm gonna get laid all the time!" I don't know which one I would be, but we talked about living like that. In terms of actually (remaking the show), I'm so old-fashioned. Like, don't touch the classics.

Poehler: Yeah!

Dratch: Don't remake them! But then there's plenty of successful things like that.

Poehler: Also, what is shocking is, if you go back and look at the ages of the Golden Girls, they were in their late 50s, early 60s. They were not that old!

Let's really narrow this down: If this were to happen, which Golden Girl would you be?

Dratch: I feel like we would both be Sophia, the mom, acting-wise.

Poehler: We *would* both be cast as her.

Dratch: Like we play that kind of part.

Poehler: Dratch and I always joke that if there was an upstairs/downstairs kind of film like "Downton Abbey" we would definitely be downstairs. We would be scrubbing potatoes. We would *never* make it upstairs.

Dratch: Because we come from peasant stock. And we have the ankles to prove it.

Poehler: Haha! We do! We have the shtetl ankles to prove it.

Dratch: We have the *CANKLES* to prove it. She of the Irish potato family. I, of Russian peasant descent.

Poehler: I'm supposed to live in a cave. It is amazing that if you put a babushka over either one of us we immediately look like Russian peasants. There is nothing high society about us. But someone like Ana or even, say, Tina, they have an elegance that makes them, I would say, upstairs. And, you know, we're fine with that. Ha!

Dratch: We're cool with that.

As editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBTQ wire service, Chris Azzopardi has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. His work has also appeared in GQ, Vanity Fair and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.

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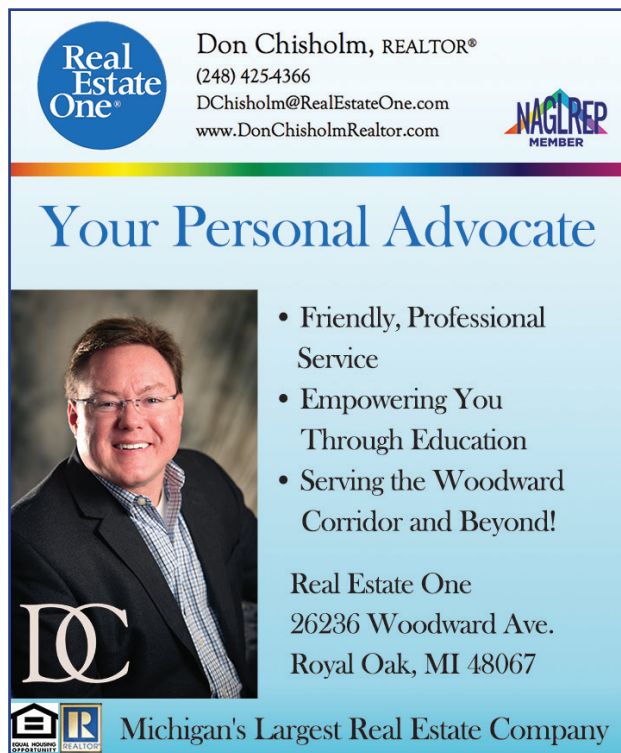
On Saturday, June 15, the PRISM Gay Men's and Allies Chorus will perform a series of tunes as part of a double performance, featuring the chorus first at 3 p.m. and again at 8 p.m.

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BY BTL STAFF

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Although the drag queens take center stage, attendees can also expect their fair share of attention from the performers. Winners can earn a variety of Five15 merchandise, as well as photo opportunity with performers.



Bingo can last 90 minutes to two hours, and provides a variety of finger foods for guests like pizzas, flatbreads, burgers and chicken fingers. For bingo-goers looking for a larger meal, Sunday performances feature a brunch option.

Find out more about the event and reserve a spot online at five15.net.

St. Dunstons' Theatre Guild of Cranbrook Presents 'Mamma Mia!'

BY BTL STAFF

BLOOMFIELD HILLS – The Greek Islands come to the Greek Theatre as St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook closes out its season with the smash hit musical, "Mamma Mia!" All are invited to experience "theatre under the stars," while enjoying some ABBA tunes as this show will be performed in the outdoor Greek Theatre, located right behind the St. Dunstan's pavilion in Bloomfield Hills.

"Mamma Mia!" is the tale of young Sophie's search for her birth father. The story unfolds on a Greek island paradise on the eve of her wedding. Sophie's quest to discover the identity of her father brings three men from her mother's past back to the island they last visited 20 years earlier. ABBA's timeless songs, including "Dancing Queen," "Super Trouper" and many more, propel this exuberant tale of love, laughter and friendship. Director Sean Kecskes (Waterford) has been a member with St. Dunstan's since 2014, and currently serves on the Board of Directors. Sean has been seen on stage many times (most recently as Teddy Roosevelt in this year's production of "Arsenic & Old Lace"), and he has also worked behind the scenes in many productions. He is excited to take on the role of Director saying, "this has been an event that has revitalized my love for community theater. The amount of passion, talent and effort that has taken place to bring this show to life, equal to anything professional, is staggering. The love that this community has for the performing arts shows in both the people involved and in the audience supporting us; we are all exuberantly waiting for opening night to be able to share this joyful theatrical experience with each other."

Kecskes is joined by a fabulous production crew, including assistant director Peggy Lee (Lake Orion); choreographers Stephanie Peltier (Royal Oak) and Sarah Kwas (Berkley); music director Stan Harr and co-producers Jennifer



Crouch and Manda Walters.

This production will feature a stellar cast starring Patty Ward (Bloomfield Hills) as Donna Sheridan, Analisa Guido (Grosse Pointe Woods) as Sophie Sheridan, Celeste Blanch (Berkley) as Rosie, and Kris Held (Troy) as Tanya.

The three potential dads are played by Gary Jones (Beverly Hills) as Harry Bright, Tom Pagano (Clinton Township) as Bill Austin, and Dean Gaboury (Bloomfield Hills) as Sam Carmichael. Angela Vankempen (Ypsilanti) and Sarah Seely are playing Sophie's friends and Josh Kimball (Royal Oak) will play her fiancé, Sky. This production also features a strong ensemble including Michelle Ankoviak, Karen Brody, Julia Cody, Deb Dworkin, Suzette Ho, Eric Franz, Katie Kezelian, Bill Kirsch-Carr, Brittany Lauren, Kara McGahey, Elaine Parenteau, Kimberly Paullin, Emma Schulte, Samantha Silver, Emma Stevens, Craig Vankempen and Mark Walters.

St. Dunstan's will present Mamma Mia! on May 31 through June 15. All shows begin at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20 each for adults and \$18 each for students and seniors. St. Dunstan's is located at 400 Lone Pine Road in Bloomfield Hills. To order tickets, or for more information — including details on parking and seating — visit www.StDunstansTheatre.com or call 1-844-DUNSTAN (1-844-386-7826).



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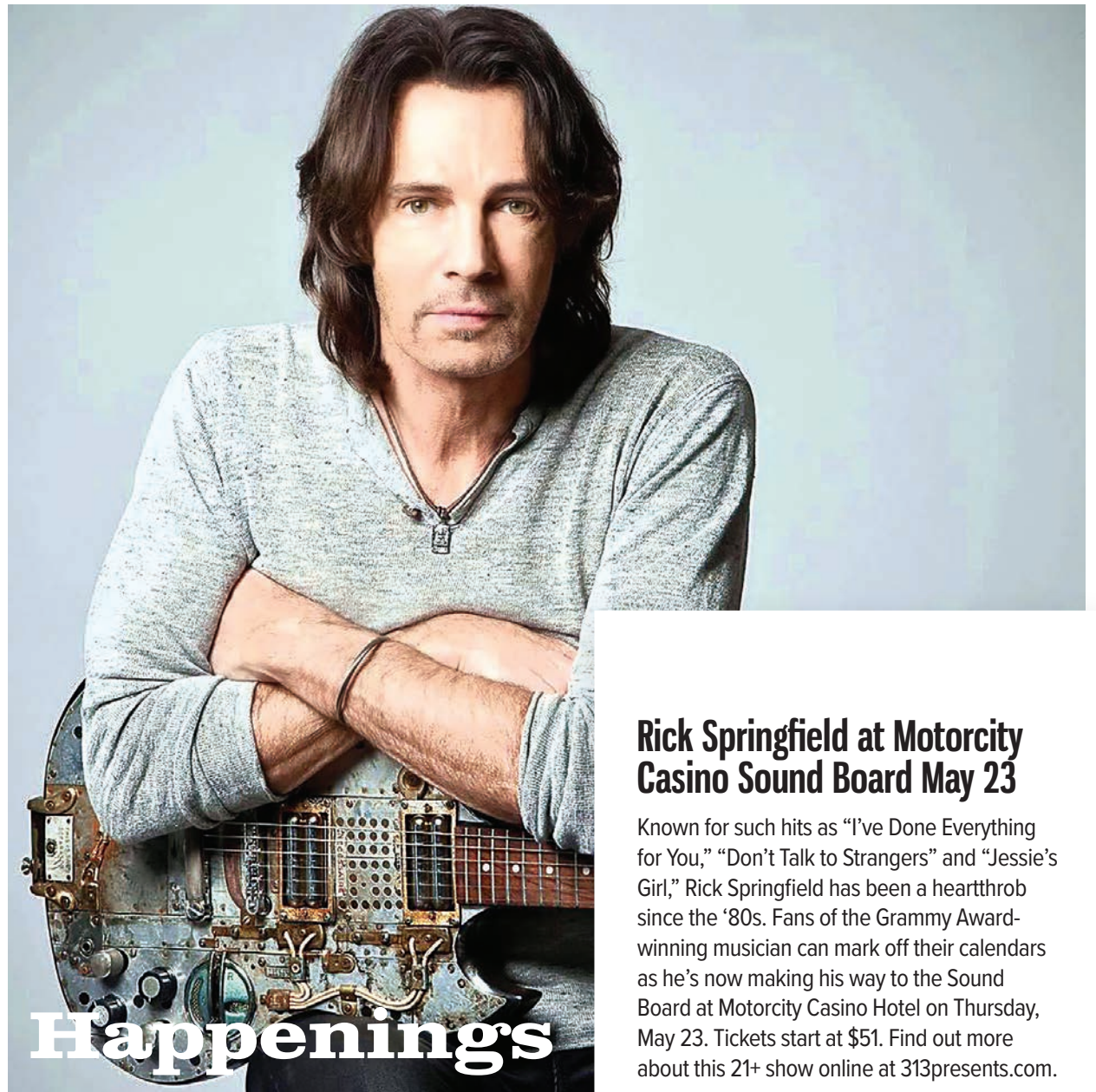
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Rick Springfield at Motorcity Casino Sound Board May 23

Known for such hits as "I've Done Everything for You," "Don't Talk to Strangers" and "Jessie's Girl," Rick Springfield has been a heartthrob since the '80s. Fans of the Grammy Award-winning musician can mark off their calendars as he's now making his way to the Sound Board at Motorcity Casino Hotel on Thursday, May 23. Tickets start at \$51. Find out more about this 21+ show online at 313presents.com.

Happenings

OUTINGS

Friday, May 10

Cinetopia Film Festival 8 a.m. The eighth annual CFF kicks off a month earlier this year starting on Friday, May 10, and concludes on Sunday, May 19. Spanning 10 days, Cinetopia brings films to local theaters and venues. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. info.cinetopiafestival.org. cinetopiafestival.org.

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. Hazel Park Community Center, 620 West Woodward Heights, Hazel Park. 248-632-8274. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

Saturday, May 11

LGBT Community Chat 11 a.m. Saturday LGBT Chat is an ongoing social discussion group meets every week to discuss issues LGBT people face. Java Hut Ferndale Michigan, 165 w 9 mile, Ferndale. 248-632-8274. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

Monday, May 13

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Macomb County 6:30 p.m.

Macomb Teen/Youth Support Group: All youth are welcome to attend this free group. Dakota High School, 21051 21 Mile Road, Macomb. 586-723-2700. chippewavalleysschools.org.

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 Nlne Mile, Ferndale. 248-632-8274. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

Wednesday, May 15

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. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105.

goaffirmations.org.

30 by Jim Luckey – VIP Reception 6 p.m. A fundraiser for the Ruth Ellis Center, a VIP ticket includes complimentary valet, hors d'oeuvres, sparkling wine, runway show and an opportunity to win a bespoke pair of Jim Luckey pants! Planterra Conservatory,

Editor's Pick

'The Waitress' at the Fisher Theatre Through May 19

Following the story of Jenna, a waitress and expert pie-maker, viewers will see her Tony Award-winning struggle to get out of her rocky marriage and escape her small town blues. Find out more information about the show and tickets at broadwayindetroit.com.



Editor's Pick

Slushii at The Fillmore Detroit May 16

Los Angeles-based DJ Slushii has worked with artists like Marshmello, Ookay and Jauz. Now coming to Detroit, he'll be performing hits from his latest album "Dream." Find out more about tickets on ticketmaster.com.



7315 Drake Road, West Bloomfield Township. 248-661-1591. planterraevents.com. ruthelliscenter.org.

Dining for Dollars 6 p.m. Join community leaders, business supporters and friends for a night of festivities. We are celebrating our 24th year of dining, silent auction and raffles. A benefit for Unified – HIV Health and Beyond. The goal Ann Arbor City Club, 1830 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-662-3279. annarborcityclub.org. miunified.org.

Stand with Trans Support Groups – Livonia – Wayne County 6:30 p.m. Free to all. Support Group Facilitators Karen Sessler, ksessler@yahoo.com or 734-673-3590 and Scott Sessler, pastorscott@emmanuel-livonia.org. Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 34567 7 Mile Road, Livonia. standwithtrans.org.

Sunday, May 19

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

Thursday, May 23

Toastmasters International SpeakOUT! LGBTQ Meeting 7 p.m. Professional and personal communication skills development. With better communications skills, you'll better your leadership style as well as your relationships. Warm and welcoming members. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867. lawrencemoeb@gmail.com. speakout.toastmastersclubs.org.

Tuesday, May 28

Stand with Trans Support Groups – Ann Arbor – Washtenaw 6:30 p.m. 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. standwithtrans.org.

Thursday, June 6

Ford GLOBE 25th Anniversary Dinner, In partnership with the Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce 5:30 p.m. Keynote speaker will be former NFL player and motivational speaker, Wade Davis. Allan Gilmour, former Vice Chair of Ford Motor Company, will be presented with the inaugural Allan D. Gilmour Outstanding Leadership in Inclusion Award. The Dearborn Inn, 20301 Oakwood Blvd., Dearborn. 313-673-

3001. info@detroitlgbtchamber.com. detroitlgbtchamber.com.

MUSIC & MORE

Flint Symphony Orchestra Presents 'Mahler's Resurrection' May 11, 7:30 p.m. FSO bringing you yet another Classical Concert featuring Enrique Diemecke, conductor with the Flint Symphony Orchestra. Pre-Concert talk at 6:30 p.m. These fun and informative talks take the mystery out of classical music. Flint Institute of Music, 1025 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 810-238-1350. thefso.org.

Cabaret 313 Presents Kate Baldwin May 18, 6:30 p.m. Kate Baldwin makes her Cabaret 313 debut in "How Did You Get This Number?" a new stage show featuring signature songs from her acclaimed performances in "Finian's Rainbow," "Giant," "Big Fish" and "Hello Dolly!" Electrifying works fill the program with gorgeous. The Marlene Boll Theatre, 1401 Broadway, Detroit. cabaret313.org.

Relapse Prevention May 21, 7:30 p.m. Erik Anderson will discuss the dynamics of relapse from substance use disorder recovery, how to develop a relapse prevention plan and creative, effective strategies to handle both everyday and high-risk situations. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. dawnfarm.org.

Co-Occurring Disorders: Understanding Self-Medication and Complex Recovery May 28, 7:30 p.m. Jeremy Suttles, MSE, LMSW; will provide an overview of what co-occurring disorders are, how they are identified, their prevalence, and a comprehensive model of recovery. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. dawnfarm.org.

Movie Music of Spike Lee June 2, 4 p.m. The Movie Music of Spike Lee & Terence Blanchard showcases stunning scores and songs. Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-576-5111. dso.org.

Makoto Ozone Trio June 5, 7 p.m. Japanese pianist Makoto Ozone is a unique force in both jazz and classical music. The Cube, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. dso.org.

ART 'N' AROUND

Kensington Metropark Art Show May 25, 10 a.m. Join the thousands of people who

attend Kensington Metropark Art Fair each year. Kensington Metropark, Martindale Beach, 4570 Huron River Parkway, Milford. 810-227-8910. eve@integrityshows.com. metroparks.com.

Jeremy Ian Harvey's New Art Show – Ghost the World June 8, 7 p.m. Local artist Jeremy Ian Harvey is known for his wildly colorful paintings, his new show is a deeply personal one called Ghost The World. Hidden Gate Gallery, 1353 Division St., Detroit. 313-686-3433. hiddengategallery.com.

Continued on p. 29

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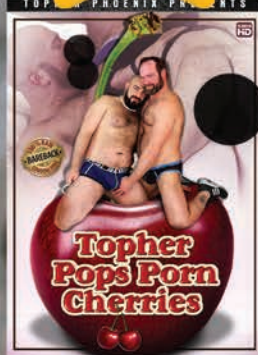
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The Frivolist: Stay at One of These 6 LGBTQ-Welcoming Hotels for WorldPride NYC

BY MIKEY ROX

For the entirety of June (and the first time in its history), WorldPride lands in the center of the universe – New York City – to commemorate Stonewall's 50th anniversary, which will culminate in the massive LGBTQ Pride March on June 30 – and of course you're gonna need a place to rest your pretty little head after each day's blowout events. Consider booking these fine hotels that are welcoming our community with open arms.

1. INNSiDE by Meliá New York NoMad

Recently TAG approved as a LGBTQ friendly hotel, INNSiDE by Meliá rolls out the proverbial rainbow carpet for queer guests who kick up their highest heels in spacious, stylish guestrooms that boast the most my-opinion-only comfortable beds (it's like sweet-dreaming on a marshmallow) and brim with natural light through oversized windows. The highly rated The Wilson restaurant, adjacent to the always-abuzz lobby, serves up affordable contemporary dishes (order the Brussels sprouts!) in the context of Manhattan dining prices, only to be usurped with wallet-friendly starting stay rates of \$199 a night. Meliá extends its commitment to our community beyond its physical presence as a key sponsor of the 34th Annual AIDS Walk in Central Park. innsidenyc.com

2. Arlo Hotels

Arlo SoHo and Nomad boutique hotels, both of which feature floor-to-ceiling bedroom windows and stunning rooftops for sweeping views of Manhattan (plus a full-service restaurant, bar, java shop, and 24-hour bodega for all your "supplies"), offers 15% off best available rates with code PRIDE at checkout as well as 15% off in the bodega and free coffee throughout your stay. arlohotels.com

3. Crown Plaza HY36

The Hudson Yards-adjacent Crowne Plaza HY36 offers a Pride package for guests itching to get their party on upon check-in. Revelers who book the deal will receive a curated in-room gift bag – complete with Pride-themed bandanas, fans, and Absolut Rainbow Vodka minis – to pregame the parade, and the property will donate \$5 to a select LGBTQ charity each time the package is booked.

For LGBTQ couples inspired by all the love in the air, the hotel's resident ordained minister can officiate the elopement of a lifetime on site. Paying homage to pioneering authors of the movement, the hotel also will display famed works of classic and

modern LGBTQ literature throughout the common area and in-suite for guests to enjoy. crowneplazahy36.com

4. Moxy Hotels

The newly opened Moxy Chelsea and veteran Pride destination Moxy Times Square will offer its Pre-Pride WarmUp package that includes access to exclusive LGBT celebrations, like the Pride Luminaries rooftop brunch and a historical excursion through Greenwich Village, plus a glass of champagne to toast LGBTQ solidarity upon arrival.

In addition to the hotel package, which includes fabulous and complimentary Pride gear (packed with rainbow and glitter everything!), both properties will feature exciting programming exclusive to each hotel, including a special #TALKAtMoxy at Moxy Times Square and an Instagrammable color explosion inside Putnam & Putnam's flower shop at Moxy Chelsea. moxy-hotels.marriott.com

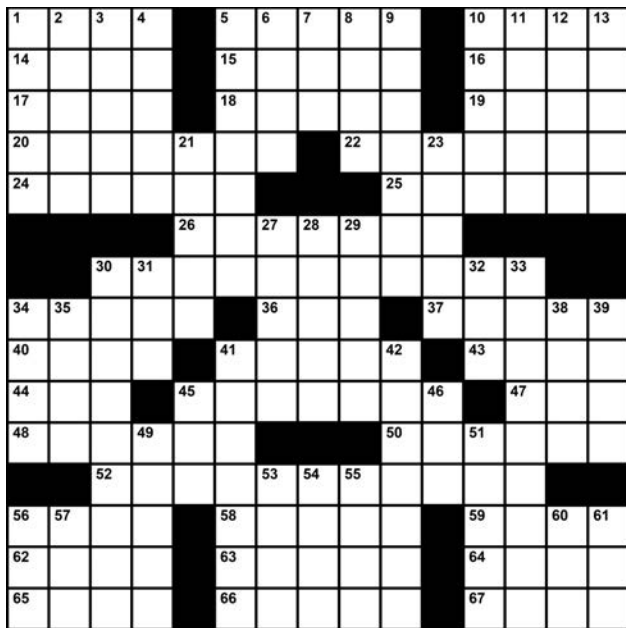
5. Hilton Hotels

Hilton's Weekend Like a Local package includes 50% off Sunday nights plus discounts for local experiences when you book three nights with Hilton (about 50 locations are available) for WorldPride. Broadway shows, museums and galleries, world-class restaurants and that iconic skyline are all part of the Big Apple magic, and if you need a break from all the extra-ness of Pride proper, you can cop discounts through the hotel chain, including 50% off Unlimited Biking rental and tours, 30% off Roundabout Theatre tickets, 20% off site-seeing bus tours from On Location Tours, and much more from participating partners. travel.hilton.com

6. AKA NYC

AKA NY properties will provide travelers with Pride-themed items, a dedicated team of Pride experts to help navigate the abundant celebrations, special LGBTQ film screenings at select properties, and other exciting add-ons for travelers who book the WorldPride package. Each AKA location – in a different, vibrant neighborhood on Manhattan – will help visitors immerse themselves in this year's landmark celebration. To book this package, call the AKA hotel of your choice directly. stayaka.com

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



There's Something About Marrying

Across

- 1 "Hairspray" composer Shaiman
- 5 Twinkle in your partner's eye
- 10 Visit Barneys, e.g.
- 14 Person with a PC
- 15 Two to one, for one
- 16 Scroll for the cut
- 17 Circumcision or baptism
- 18 Gussy up

- 19 Prefix with science
- 20 Start of a question in "There's Something About Marrying"
- 22 More of the question
- 24 Ten-incher, for example
- 25 Tips off
- 26 Kind of straight, in poker.
- 30 End of the question
- 34 Be intense like a queen
- 36 Rear on board

- 37 Bone of John the Baptist, e.g.
- 40 Nuts
- 41 On-line locales
- 43 Airline to Ben Gurion
- 44 He cared for Samuel
- 45 Comic Lea
- 47 The I's have it
- 48 Emulates Isadora Duncan
- 50 Seasonal serving
- 52 Cartoon series of the episode "There's Something About Marrying"
- 56 Ryan of porn
- 58 German sub
- 59 "Lions and tigers and bears, ____!"
- 62 Matching notes for Rorem?
- 63 Head-oriented group
- 64 Secure with lines
- 65 Pain suppressed by Schumacher?
- 66 Chat room request
- 67 Flock females

Down

- 1 Many a painting by Frida's Diego
- 2 Broadway whisper
- 3 Change labels
- 4 Thick liqueur
- 5 Will Geer's role on "The Waltons"
- 6 Cheryl of "Charlie's Angels"
- 7 War zone, in brief
- 8 Opera singers put them on?
- 9 Yves, but not YSL
- 10 Pilot's place
- 11 Character who married some gay couples and asked the question
- 12 Phrase from Ripley
- 13 Two queens, and others
- 21 Start of a Sappho title, perhaps
- 23 Kind of statesman
- 27 Response to an online personal, perhaps
- 28 1993 treaty acronym
- 29 Pass the threshold
- 30 Fruity kind of computer?
- 31 Latin I word
- 32 Urvashi has one
- 33 Degeneres program, for short, with "The"
- 34 Hauled ass
- 35 Marlene Dietrich role in "Blue Angel"
- 38 "Otello" villain
- 39 Drain trouble
- 41 "Mississippi Sissy" author Kevin
- 42 Breaks for Almodovar
- 45 Report card blemish
- 46 "Fourscore and seven years ____"
- 49 "Boys Don't Cry" actress Sevigny
- 51 Fairy story figure
- 53 "Suuure!"
- 54 "Tales of the City" character
- 55 Time gone by
- 56 Part of a Stein line
- 57 "The Times of Harvey Milk," for short
- 60 He comes between Larry and Curly
- 61 Periods that last 525,600 min.

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▶ Happenings

Continued from p. 27

THEATER

Angels in America – Parts I and II April 26, In this two-part epic, Prior Walter, a young man living in NYC in 1985, is diagnosed with AIDS. His boyfriend, Louis, struggling to cope with the disease and his own fears, abandons him. More information about this Hillbery Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. theatreanddance.wayne.edu.

Stagecrafters Baldwin Theatre Second Stage Presents "Southern Comfort" May 10, 8 p.m. Southern Comfort is based on the true story of Robert Eads, a transgender man with ovarian cancer, who lives in rural Georgia

with his chosen family of transgender friends. Baldwin Theatre, 415 South Lafayette, Royal Oak. 248-541-8027. stagecrafters.org.

Detroit Repertory Theatre Presents "Aubrey" May 10, 8:30 p.m. Aubrey Gagnier, a heroin addict, haunted by her role in her lover's overdose death, seeks out the grave digger and coffin maker. They become each other's best hope to live. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. 313-868-1347, DetRepTh@aol.com detroitreptheatre.com.

Stagecrafters Baldwin Theatre Presents "Oklahoma!" May 17, 8 p.m. Oklahoma! is classic Broadway at its best. The story opens in the Oklahoma territory just after the turn of the century, when cowboys and farmers eked out a living on the Western frontier. Baldwin Theatre, 415

South Lafayette, Royal Oak. 248-541-8027. stagecrafters.org.

Jersey Boys at Music Hall! May 17, 8 p.m. They were just four guys from Jersey, until they sang their very first note. They had a sound nobody had ever heard and the radio just couldn't get enough of. Detroit Music Hall, 350 Madison St., Detroit. 313-887-8501. musichall.org. broadwayindetroit.com.

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre Presents "Curtains" June 6, 7:30 p.m. 1959. Boston, Colonial Theatre. Opening night of Robbin' Hood, a new western musical starring film star Jessica Cranshaw, turns into closing night for her – forever! Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 North University, Ann Arbor. 734-763-3333. a2ct.org.

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Ricky Ian Gordon's 'The Grapes of Wrath' at MOT for Four May Performances

DETROIT — Based on the classic novel by John Steinbeck, The Michigan Opera Theatre will present Ricky Ian Gordon's opera, "The Grapes of Wrath" May 11 through 19.

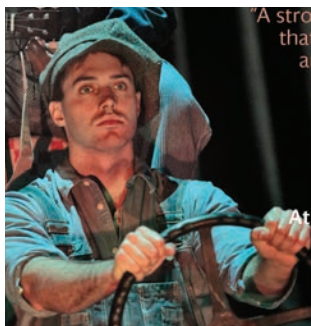
This heart-wrenching opera in two acts, tells the story of the Joad family on their quest for survival during the 1930s Dust Bowl. Featuring folksy, jazz-inspired music by Ricky Ian Gordon and a libretto by Michael Korie, this production is directed by James Robinson and conducted by Michael Christie.

From MOT's news blog:

While historically a European art form, opera has expanded over the years to include works by composers and librettists from around the globe. These operas explore a broader range of human experiences, including American stories ranging from Civil Rights to baseball to life in Appalachia, often sung in English.

In "The Grapes of Wrath" opera, composed by Ricky Ian Gordon with a libretto by Michael Korie, John Steinbeck's Great American Novel is turned into the Great American Opera.

In the midst of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, the story follows the Joad family on their quest for survival, traveling from drought-ridden Oklahoma to the farms of California. Along with hordes of other migrant workers, the Joads struggle to find work and living wages, constantly facing starvation and injustice.



Korie said the novel explores themes of corporate indifference and the failure of the American dream.

"When people see the opera, they're bowled over how true it is, even though it took place 90 years ago," he said. "You realize these themes are cyclical in America. Inequities you believe to be resolved turn out not to be."

Gordon said the novel is significant, because its themes resonate worldwide, even though it is an American story.

"The story is about people who have very little who are asked to give it up by the people who have a lot. Those who have nothing give their bodies and their kindness and generosity, while those who exploit them live off of their sacrifices," he said. "The story is current, universal and biblical."

A co-production with Opera Theatre of St. Louis, it will be sung in English with supertitle projections, with a running time of about 2 1/2 hours. Tickets are available online at michiganopera.org.

LGBTQ Comedian Mimi Gonzalez in Recovery, High spirits Over a Month After Life-Threatening Crash

"I feel so held and protected and provided for by my tribe of homo-core queer amazon nation beautiful rainbow people."

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Around dawn on Wednesday, March 13, Comedian Mimi Gonzalez was taking a familiar drive near her Michigan home. Under normal circumstances on this road, her speed of 60 mph would have been a safe traveling pace, but when she hit a patch of black ice, she immediately lost control of her vehicle; before she knew it, she was flung from the road.

"When I replay the moment of hitting the ice and suddenly the car losing contact with the road and not being able to steer an airborne car across the road, [I remember] it started to turn and I was going into an area into a ditch and thank God no one was coming and the school buses weren't there," Gonzalez said. "[There was] a clump of four oaks, one caught the car and stopped me and flipped the car up into the other one, which completely took out the roof the back seat and the trunk — my four-door is a two-door."

And yet, despite the gravity of the accident, Gonzalez said she's thankful and surprised that she was able to walk away with relatively good health, suffering some fractures in her spine and pelvis and some soreness. Beyond even that, however, she said



she's thrilled at the support she's received on her behalf via love-filled messages from friends, family and a GoFundMe page set up in her name by her friend Sarah Bozinowski to aid with Gonzalez's medical costs. It was active for a month following the accident and surpassed its \$12,000 goal.

"I feel so held and protected and provided for by my tribe of homo-core queer amazon nation beautiful rainbow people," she said with a laugh. "I tell ya, I know a lot of people are praying and I know it's working, my recovery is fast. People look at that car, that picture with the tires behind it when it was brought into the local garage, and it's very clear what happened. And, I mean, just by different inches we wouldn't be having this conversation."

Gonzalez said that every cent of the \$2,876 that surpassed the originally requested amount of funding will be "given back to the community." One of the ways in which she plans to do

that is through the fourth annual Go Girl Saugatuck! LGBTQ-affirming women's weekend event that she hosts yearly.

"Go Girl Saugatuck!, my event, it's happening, but I'll have to adapt the wrecking ball bouncy house that's going to be there because I'd be too tempted to jump around and fall because that's too much fun. I'm like, 'Switch that for the Velcro body toss!'" she said with a laugh. "But Go Girl Saugatuck! is happening and I'm returning to my life and my community put back together by their love. ... I love my community, my community is a beloved community and they showed me how much love they have for me and I just feel lucky they're here when I need them. Thank God my friend did it for me, I couldn't have done it alone."

To find out more about Gonzalez's event visit the Go Girl Saugatuck! Facebook page. To find out more about her comedy, visit mimigonzalez.com.



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He leads our team of professional and talented Providers:

There is a difference. We're a patient-friendly Private Practice small enough to individualize care by a staff that knows you and large enough to manage all of your Primary Care Needs.

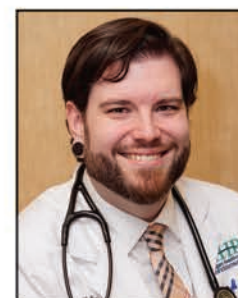
- HIV Prevention (PrEP), Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), STI testing & treatment
- Hormone Affirming Therapy for HIV positive and negative transgender individuals
- Evening Clinic Hours Monday-Thursday, most Saturdays, and Same Day Appointments
- Full-time Patient Navigator/Advocate Social Worker on site
- Most Insurances accepted
- Ryan White Provider
- Medcart Pharmacy on Premises
- Group Medical Appointments (available soon!)
- Tele-Medical Visits (available soon!)



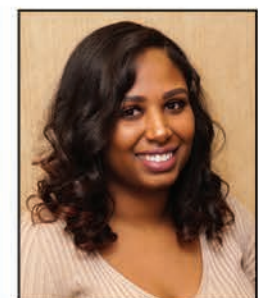
Caleb Youngblood, PA-C, AAHIV-S



Mark Rosen, PA-C



Leon Bullough, NP-F



Keyuna Nance, MSW