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PAGE 8

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PAGE 14

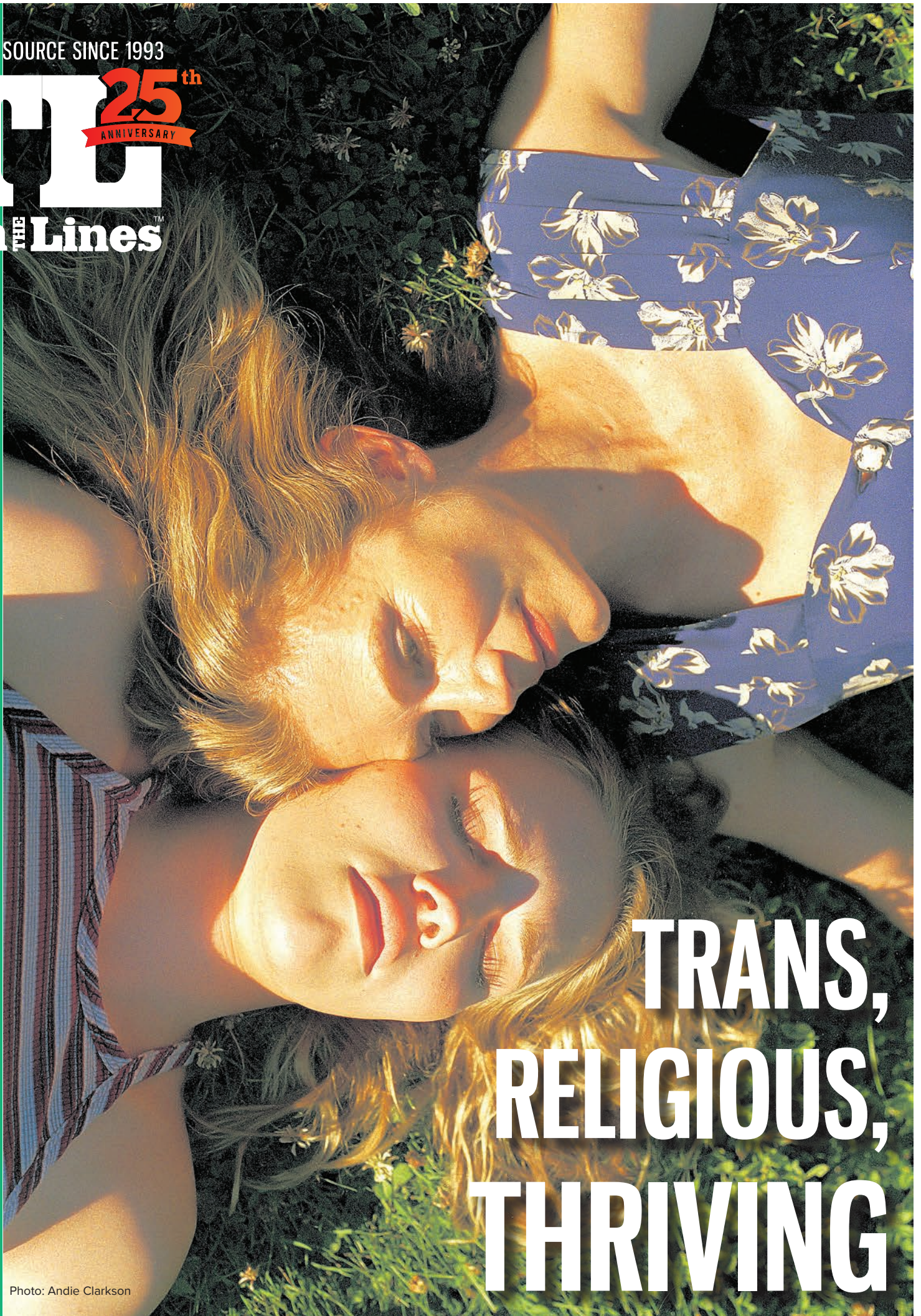


Diane Keaton Q&A

PAGE 20

MAY 16, 2019

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TRANS, RELIGIOUS, THRIVING

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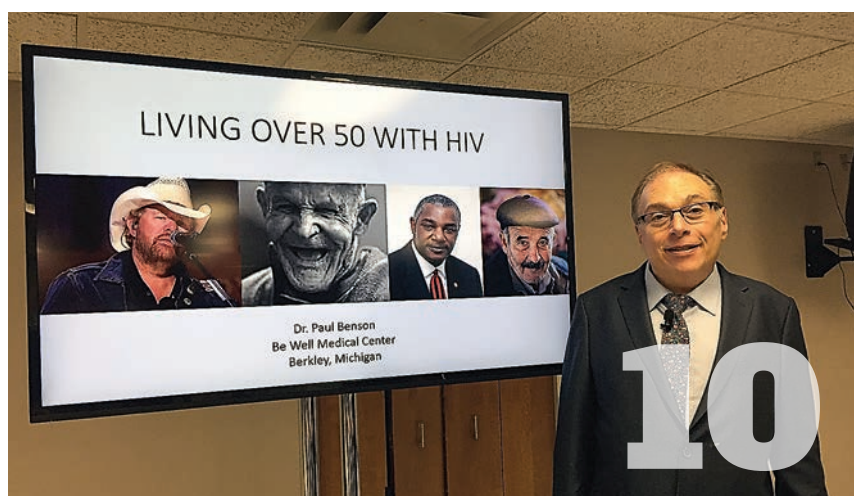
08



16



14



10



26



COVER: 4 TRANS, RELIGIOUS, THRIVING

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NEWS

- 4 Trans, Religious, Thriving
- 6 First Ever Royal Oak Family Pride to Take Place June 12
- 6 370,000 LGBTQ People in Michigan are Vulnerable to Discrimination
- 8 'Your Parents are Going to Hell'
- 9 Trump Comes Out Against Equality Act
- 10 Aging With HIV Requires Vigilance and Hope
- 14 Free Hugs, Fundraisers and Festival Organizers: How Volunteers Make Pride What It Is
- 16 U-M Expands Trans Health Coverage After Graduate Union Campaign

OPINION

- 12 Parting Glances
- 12 Viewpoint: Transmissions
- 13 Creep of the Week: Rep. John Becker

LIFE

- 20 Diane Keaton is Sorry
- 26 Happenings
- 28 Deep Inside Hollywood
- 29 Puzzle & Crossword

MARRIAGE

- 18 Expo Cuts Through Cake Politics
- 18 Blossoming Artists Gallery Relaunches in Midtown

COOL CITIES

- 24 Progress Michigan Has Two New Hires
- 25 Whitmer Makes Appointments to the Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- 30 NEXTGen Detroit Celebrates 3-Year Anniversary
- 30 Ozone House is Opening New Front Doors for Youth in Crisis

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Trans, Religious, Thriving

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

As a faith leader, the Rev. Kate Malin, Rector of Christ's Church in Rye, New York, wears a variety of hats: teacher, theologian, preacher. She is used to giving informed guidance to her parishioners and to the process of researching and preparing thoughtful answers to discussions and questions not only spiritual but regarding all aspects of life. However, when she learned several years ago that one of her identical twins is transgender she admitted her knowledge of the subject was sorely lacking.

"There was definitely for me a period, a space of time, where I felt like I just didn't know and I had to get up to speed super quickly because my child, Emmie, was leading me," Malin said. "Then, what I had to do as a priest was stand before my congregation and basically say to them, 'I need you to know this and I need you to know that I don't know the answer to a lot of the questions that you may have. And I can share with you what I know so far.'"

Today, Emmie Smith and her mother appear to be just as, if not closer, than they were before Smith came out. The duo has appeared in various publications speaking out in favor of transgender visibility ranging from SELF, Huffington Post, Cosmopolitan and most notably National Geographic, where three years ago a 17-year-old Smith allowed a camera crew to document the journey of her gender reassignment surgery in an effort to demystify and humanize a part of the transgender experience. In a continuation of those activism efforts, both Malin and Smith will be featured in a weekend event titled Thriving as a Trans* Family, put on by Christ Church Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills from Saturday, June 8, through June 9.

Re-Examining Faith

Now years removed from the initial announcement Malin made to her parish about her daughter's true identity, she's had time to take stock and re-examine how the experience changed her approach to faith. She said she first began to grapple with her understanding of how members of the transgender community fit into her Episcopal beliefs.

"There's been a lot of conversation in the church about the role of gay and lesbian and bisexual individuals as far as leaders in the church and participants in the life of the church, but a transgender individual is on a different road," she said.

She went on to say that questions began to come up for her around the creation story, gender roles, being baptized by gendered name and surrounding the "binary structure of so much expectation around what God deems to be righteous and unrighteous even though it's not necessarily in the Bible."



Emmie Smith with and her mother, the Rev. Kate Malin. both Malin and Smith will be featured in a weekend event titled Thriving as a Trans* Family, put on by Christ Church Cranbrook from Saturday, June 8, through June 9.

"What does that mean for the identity of a Christian person for whom that identity is not authentic? So, I began to really think about how what I needed as a parent of a child onto transition and what I needed from my own spiritual community, both my colleagues, my bishop, but also my parishioners and what the decision and the process of the sharing this news with them," she said.

She went on to say that that honest re-examination of her beliefs and their potential shortcomings regarding the LGBTQ community generated a lot of discussion among parishioners, too, which allowed her to see how an even unintentionally repressive religious environment could generate significant anguish for those who lose their support system.

"I've been approached by strangers on phone and email and people who heard me preach or talk, and some are parents and they're frightened and they think their child is going to hell. And some are children who believe they will never be able to go to church again, that God considers them an abomination," Malin said. "I realized that there's a lot of spiritual questioning and sometimes real crisis and pain. And oftentimes, these family members are quite faithful and they now need support. And, from the very place that should be a great source of

support, they don't even know how to ask for it and their own priests and fellow parishioners don't know what to say or what to do."

Combatting that feeling of loneliness and isolation is part of the reason that Malin makes a point to share her and her daughter's story and continue being an activist for those in the transgender community. Smith agrees. Regarding her own relationship with God, she said that it's also gotten more introspective and stronger since she's transitioned and begun to live her authentic self. And that's largely because of the immense support of her mother and the parish.

"I feel like my relationship with my faith got a lot clearer because I was able to more effectively communicate with my own understanding of the divine, with my own relationship with my mom and the people who work with her," Smith said. "I feel like everything just got more vibrant, it was like putting on a pair of glasses for the first time when you're nearsighted or farsighted; all of a sudden things just snapped a little more into focus than they ever could have before when I was speaking to God through a pretty thick pane of glass. I think being honest and true to yourself is the only way that I really felt I could have a spiritual relationship with God."

COVER STORY

Mindful of an Accepting Gospel

The Rev. Canon William J. Danaher Jr. is the rector at Christ Church Cranbrook and reached out to Smith and Malin to invite them to share their experience. Although not part of the LGBTQ community himself, as an ally and the father of a non-binary child, Danaher said that it's imperative that his congregation use this upcoming weekend to help re-examine the gospel being preached.

"I do want to say that I'm really, really honored that Emmie and Kate are going to be coming to Christ Church Cranbrook and part of the reason why we're doing this is because I do think it's a relevant question about the times in which we're living. It's not so much that we're preaching the gospel it's, 'What gospel are we preaching?'" he said. "And the kind of gospel that I believe should be preached at my church is one in which people are beloved as they are and as God created them to be and they are nurtured and loved in a relationship with God that brings them deeper into who they are, but also deeper into the love of God and has them experience the body of Christ."

Danaher added that having spent six years of his career in Canada in a more LGBTQ-affirming area than Metro Detroit, his eyes were opened to a possibility that even in more traditionally conservative religious circles there could be acceptance for members of the LGBTQ community.

"It was there that I met people who were in the church and outside of the church who identified with the trans community for whom their transition was completely mainstream," Danaher said. "I don't see that as much here in the United States and I think part of it is that there's less openness and there's also much more suspicion of the trans community and I was initially astounded by it when I would encounter it even among people who identified with the LGBTQ community, but wouldn't identify with the 'T' in the trans community."

He cited activists like Pauli Murray as inspiration for the inclusion of Smith and Malin at the upcoming event with an ultimate goal to "lift up people who are hidden in plain sight," even when experiencing backlash from those not supportive of the cause.

"And I had a bit of resentment, I'm not going to deny it, there have been people who have come after me in the ways that people come after leaders in a church when you make a decision. That's the price of being honest," adding that he knows Malin has faced resistance, too.

Reaching the Resistant

In response, Malin said that the best way to reach those who don't approve of a transgender-affirming gospel is by holding

See **Thriving**, continued on p. 6

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First Ever Royal Oak Family Pride to Take Place June 12

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The first ever Royal Oak Family Pride will take place at the June Food Truck Rally at the Royal Oak Farmer's Market on June 12. The event, which will feature a full schedule of fun and family-friendly activities including drag queen story time, a dog fashion show, face painting, a bounce house, photo booth, a performance by the Sing Out Detroit Choir and more, was the brainchild of Royal Oak resident David Mates Knapp.

"Pride events come in all shapes and sizes, and all of them are so wonderful and necessary," Mates-Knapp said. "Since my husband and I are currently in the process of adopting, I've been trying to find more queer-friendly things to do in the area that are appropriate for kids, too. Most Pride events are fun and friendly, of course, with activities for people of all ages, but I was thinking of something a bit different when I brought this idea to the city of Royal Oak."

Mates-Knapp said he's seen very few Michigan pride events across the state that are specifically focused on queer families and their children.

"I also wanted to create an event that served as a resource for queer couples that wanted to learn more about the adoption process or wanted to connect with other queer family hopefuls," he said. "Those resources are priceless. More importantly, I just wanted to see a pride event in Royal Oak."

There hasn't been an official pride event since 2001, when PrideFest changed its name to Motor City Pride and relocated to Ferndale.

"Royal Oak has such a queer and diverse community with amazing business owners who run queer-friendly shops and restaurants," Mates-Knapp said. "I love the idea of having pride in every city we can. With the help of Royal Oak's Judy Davids and Carol Schwanger, Royal Oak Public Library's Mary Karshner and Emily Dumas and volunteers Ellen Knoppow (BTL contributor), the Rev. Preston Boyd, and myself, we came up with an event that is educational and fun, as well as family friendly."

"We plan on highlighting the wonderful history of queer culture while lifting up the vibrancy of the queer community as a whole, focusing on family support for all," Mates-Knapp continued. "We were able to partner with many individuals and businesses in Royal Oak to really shape a Pride event that will highlight the very best Royal Oak has to offer, from food trucks to local supports to adoption agencies that will help queer families thrive. This is truly a community event perfect for families of all shapes and sizes."

Royal Oak Family Pride will take place Wednesday, June 12, from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Royal Oak Farmer's Market, which is located at 316 E. 11 Mile Road in Royal Oak. For more information, visit gaybe.am/4G.

370,000 LGBTQ People in Michigan are Vulnerable to Discrimination

The State Lacks Important Legal Protections for LGBT Youth and Adults

BY BTL STAFF

Michigan's legal landscape puts the state's 311,000 LGBTQ adults and 61,000 LGBTQ youth at risk of discrimination and harassment. The social, economic and health effects of stigma and discrimination against LGBTQ people negatively impact Michigan's economy by tens of millions of dollars each year, according to a new study by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law.

The study documents the prevalence and impact of several forms of stigma and discrimination against LGBTQ individuals in the state, including harassment and discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations; harassment and bullying in schools; and family rejection of LGBT youth.

"Michigan has an opportunity to create a more supportive climate for LGBT people by, for example, adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the state's hate crimes law, and banning the use of conversion therapy on youth," said lead author Christy Mallory, State & Local Policy Director at the Williams Institute.

► Thriving

Continued from p. 4

candid conversations.

"To get people the vocabulary they need so that they can really talk and hear each other. And let them know personal stories and meeting people is so important," Malin said. "Many kids in my parish have come out as gay back in the time back in the time when it was really hard and scary and it's different, that's changed so much and now we have another major social shift. And a lot of suspicions from folks are, 'Is this for real? Are these folks just going through a phase?' There's all sorts of rationalizations and diminishing and mistrust and we need to hear trans people talk."

Smith, currently a student at The University of Michigan, agrees that there is too little transgender representation in the

Key findings of the report include:

Many LGBTQ people in the state experience economic instability.

- 28 percent of LGBTQ adults in Michigan reported having an annual household income below \$24,000, compared to 20 percent of non-LGBTQ adults, according to Gallup data. Similarly, 25 percent of LGBTQ adults in Michigan reported that they do not have enough for food compared to 15 percent of non-LGBTQ adults.

- 10 percent of LGBTQ adults in Michigan reported that they were unemployed compared to 5 percent of non-LGBTQ adults, according to Gallup data.

- The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey found that 19 percent of transgender respondents in Michigan were unemployed and 30 percent were living in poverty.

LGBTQ people in the state experience negative health outcomes associated with stigma and discrimination.

- LGBT adults in Michigan are significantly more likely to have been diagnosed with a depressive disorder and to be current smokers than non-LGBTQ adults: 44 percent of LGBTQ adults in Michigan reported having been diagnosed with a depressive disorder compared to 21 percent of non-LGBTQ adults, and 38 percent of LGBTQ adults in the state are current smokers compared to 20 percent of non-LGBTQ adults, according to data from the "2015-2016 Behavioral Risk Factor

Surveillance System surveys." Depression and smoking are two health outcomes that have been linked to experiences of stigma and discrimination.

- 53 percent of LGB students in the state had seriously considered suicide compared to 17 percent of non-LGB students in the prior year, according to data from the 2017 Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

- LGB students in Michigan were also more likely than non-LGB students to report smoking cigarettes, drinking, and using marijuana in the prior, according to data from the 2017 Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Health disparities for LGBTQ people negatively impact the state's economy.

- Reducing the disparity in major depressive disorder between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ people in Michigan by 25 percent to 33.3 percent could benefit the state's economy by \$122.5 million to \$163.9 million annually.

- Reducing the disparity in current smoking by the same proportion could benefit the state's economy by \$107.9 million to \$143.8 million in increased productivity and reduced health care costs each year.

- Discrimination can lead to lower earnings and unemployment, which can result in an increased reliance on public benefits. For example, discrimination in the workplace against transgender people annually costs Michigan approximately \$256,000 in state Medicaid expenditures.

Read the report online at <http://gaybe.am/wr>.

religious community and elsewhere. Also an actress and writer, Smith is interested in sharing transgender voices in the media, too.

"For me, the most powerful tools against dehumanization are stories and art. We as humans are so good at connecting with a character that we see on screen or on stage or on the page; it lets us into the humanity of other people in a way that I think is really super rare except for, I think, service like church and religious practice," she said. "But there is something so similar about being [with] a person's experience and going through their story that lets you empathize with them in a way that I think just is not possible in other circumstances."

One of her latest projects is a theater production called "Elektrik," which follows a transgender-inclusive cast and is based on a Greek myth. Smith collaborated on the production with her brother, Caleb, and the project won a NEO or New, Emerging,

Outstanding artist grant. Smith said she hopes that one day it, and other shows like it, can make it to Broadway.

"It's not about someone discovering their identity because this character, Elektra in the show, is not struggling to figure out her identity and putting on dresses for the first time and going through that process, she is an active character in her own story and while her identity as a trans woman is important to her, it's not the focus or the engine behind the story, it is just another facet of her character, which comes into play like other aspects of her identity as a woman, as a daughter, as a queen," she said. "That's why I push for LGBT characters ... to keep away from the stories we've heard too many times."

To find out more about the upcoming visit go online to christchurchcranbrook.org.

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‘Your Parents are Going to Hell’

How One Teen Made the Equality Act Her Mission

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

A Harsh Reality

It’s no mystery why 17-year-old Ellie Nagel-Bennett is so passionate about the Equality Act: she’s experienced discrimination and homophobia first-hand, despite not identifying as LGBTQ herself.

“You know that your parents are sinful, right? You know that your parents are going to hell,” Nagel-Bennett recalls being told by a classmate when they were both 6.

“That was the moment I first cognitively realized my parents were different,” Nagel-Bennett said, adding that she was raised in the church to believe that God loves everyone. Because of that early experience, Nagel-Bennett said she began to doubt that her parents should even be together. But by middle school, she came to the realization that her family didn’t need to fit society’s preconceptions.

And although Nagel-Bennett learned self-acceptance, she said she recognized as she was growing up how she and her parents were sometimes treated as a family. She was also aware her parents had been fired from careers in higher education.

“Growing up in the United States, and in Michigan specifically, it was hard in my earlier years,” she said. “Because people didn’t understand how I had lesbian women for parents and they thought a family was a mom and a dad.”

Now a senior at Loy Norrix High School in Kalamazoo. She said she remembers her family specifically being discriminated against in public places, such as restaurants or public events, where they might be asked to sit in the back or even told there was no space left — when clearly there was.

The Equality Act: Real-World Impact

Introduced in U.S. House of Representatives this March, the Equality Act is a bill whose passage would prohibit discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation and gender identity in areas including public accommodations and facilities, education, federal funding,

employment, housing, credit and the jury system. This would occur by amending the Civil Rights Act.

The Equality Act would effectively deem obsolete the patchwork of protections that exist for individual states and municipalities. For Michiganders, the decades-long battle to amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act would be a thing of the past; passing non-discrimination ordinances city by city would no longer be the news of the day.

For families like Nagel-Bennett’s, this would mean turning them away from a restaurant or hotel would be illegal, and her parents would have recourse if they were terminated from their jobs for being gay. And with such protections codified in law, perhaps that would ultimately lead to wider acceptance — and less cruelty of the kind that Nagel-Bennett experienced when she was 6.

Ellie Goes to Washington

It wasn’t just Nagel-Bennett’s negative experiences growing up that launched her trajectory to become an outspoken advocate for the Equality Act. In terms of equal rights, there were the pride festivals she attended from a young age, but the activism piece really came a few years ago, following the Parkland, Florida, shootings when she saw people her age speaking out for the first time. She, too, became involved in student groups that advocated for common sense gun legislation.

Then, during the 2018 midterms, Nagel-Bennett volunteered for Matt Longjohn’s campaign for Congress, a race that was won by Republican U.S. Rep. Fred Upton, a 16-term incumbent. When one of the high school activists she met during the campaign invited her to lobby in Washington, D.C. for the Equality Act, she was eager to sign up. And after some initial protest from her parents, this was a last-minute request, Nagel-Bennett said they were in full support — provided that she pay for her own airfare.

“It was amazing,” Nagel-Bennett said. “It really made me realize that even though I am 17, and everyone else there ... had full-time jobs and families and everything, that I could still make a difference.”

After meeting representatives from the Human Rights Campaign during the trip, Nagel-Bennett returned to Kalamazoo and has been hard at work advocating for the Equality Act ever since. To that end, she said she’s presented to various high school and Young Democrat groups in Kalamazoo and Portage, to educate them on the Equality Act and provide opportunities to get involved — even though they can’t vote.

“I think it’s important to talk to people who

don’t necessarily have that outlet to voice their opinion quite yet,” she said. “It’s been a really positive response.”

While some were hesitant to write letters to Congressman Upton to share personal stories, many have made phone calls and filled out postcards, she said.

In Michigan, HRC’s work on behalf of the Equality Act has focused on the west side of the state, where the organization is targeting Republican Congress members Justin Amash, whose district includes Grand Rapids, and Fred Upton, whose district includes Kalamazoo.

Regarding the meetings they had with staffers of the two west Michigan representatives when she was lobbying in D.C., Nagel-Bennett said she could tell the individual from Amash’s office seemed disinterested. The response from Upton’s aid, however, was different.

“[She] was definitely understanding of what we were saying,” Nagel-Bennett said, adding that the response they received afterward from Upton as well confirmed that he had a comprehensive understanding of the Equality Act — although he’s not expected to vote in favor of it. However, Upton’s dilemma in opposing the legislation while hoping to get reelected is that his only opposition right now is Michigan state Rep. Jon Hoadley, who is openly gay.

What’s Ahead

The Equality Act is scheduled for a vote in the House of Representatives on May 17, and Nagel-Bennett, like many others, predicts it will pass.

“We have the majority to pass it now,” she said. “But I think that the Senate is where our struggle will be. The party which favors equality legislation, especially when it comes to LGBTQ protections, is in the minority in the Senate right now.”

But Nagel-Bennett doesn’t sound too discouraged. If the bill dies in the Senate, she said, “We’ll just have to keep introducing



17-year-old Ellie Nagel-Bennett is so passionate about the Equality Act: she’s experienced discrimination and homophobia first-hand, despite not identifying as LGBTQ herself.

new bills.”

What’s next for Nagel-Bennett? By the 2020 election, she’ll be old enough to vote and studying in her first year of college at Michigan State University’s James Madison College.

“And in the 2020 election cycle you will probably hear my name,” she said, “because I will be working tirelessly to elect a president who represents my ideals and not the ideals of ... frankly, everything that’s been plaguing myself and my family.”

As for the here and now, Nagel-Bennett said her parents and friends have been largely supportive of her activism and advocacy for the Equality Act, although she’s received some negative feedback in the form of “liberal nicknames” from some peers at school who don’t really know her.

“It’s disheartening to see people make just ad hominem attacks at me, for something that I’m standing up for, even though it’s something that’s not part of my identity, right?” Nagel-Bennett said. “But even when they do make those comments, I know they are definitely ill-informed because the Equality Act is something we can all get behind. It’s just common sense. And it’s unfortunate that there are still people in the community and also legislators who don’t realize that we’re just trying to get protections for everybody.”



A senior administration official said President Donald Trump has reservations about the Equality Act. (Photo by Michael Vadon via Flickr)

Trump Comes Out Against Equality Act

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

With a vote on the Equality Act in the U.S. House expected on Friday, a senior administration official indicated exclusively to the Washington Blade that President Trump opposes the bill.

“The Trump administration absolutely opposes discrimination of any kind and supports the equal treatment of all; however, this bill in its current form is filled with poison pills that threaten to undermine parental and conscience rights,” the senior administration official said via email.

More details about Trump’s position on the Equality Act may come soon from the White House, which traditionally issues a Statement of Administration Policy when legislation comes to the floor of either chamber of Congress.

The statement is arguably a change in position for Trump. In 2000, when Trump was exploring a presidential run as a Reform Party candidate, he said in an interview with The Advocate he likes the idea of amending the Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation — a key component of the Equality Act.

“I like the idea of amending the 1964 Civil Rights Act to include a ban of discrimination based on sexual orientation,” Trump said. “It would be simple. It would be straightforward. We don’t need to rewrite the laws currently on the books, although I do think we need to address hate-crimes legislation. But amending the Civil Rights Act would grant the same protection to gay people that we give to other Americans — it’s only fair.”

The Equality Act, as it will come up in the House, would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Fair Housing Act to ban anti-LGBT discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, jury service, education, federal programs and credit.

But the Equality Act goes further than what Trump said he supported in 2000. In addition to transgender inclusion, the bill seeks to update federal law to include sex in the list of protected classes in public accommodation and expands the definition of public accommodations to include retail stores, banks, transportation services and health care services. Further, the Equality Act would establish that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act — a 1994 law aimed at protecting religious liberty — can’t be used to enable anti-LGBT discrimination.

The White House statement is consistent with the Trump administration’s anti-LGBT actions, such as the transgender military ban, withdrawal of guidance to schools assuring transgender kids have access to the restroom consistent with their gender identity and actions taken in the name of “religious freedom” seen to undermine LGBT rights.

UPDATE: A House senior Democratic leadership aide told the Blade after publication of this article Trump’s opposition to the Equality Act doesn’t change anything in terms of plans for a floor vote on Friday.

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



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Aging With HIV Requires Vigilance and Hope

BY JAN STEVENSON

It would have been an impossible dream 30 years ago, to live with HIV for decades and to actually grow into old age with the virus. Yet with the medical advances and reduced toxicity of the medications that suppress HIV, those who are aging with the virus now face a new set of challenges.

Living with HIV Over 50 was the title of an April 30 lecture presented by Dr. Paul Benson, a longtime specialist in the treatment of HIV/AIDS and the social movement to de-stigmatize HIV and the people infected with it.

“HIV is not your biggest problem. We can control the HIV with drugs. Comorbidity is the issue. We need to use aggressive treatment of anything so as to not allow inflammation to get out of control.”

Dr. Paul Benson

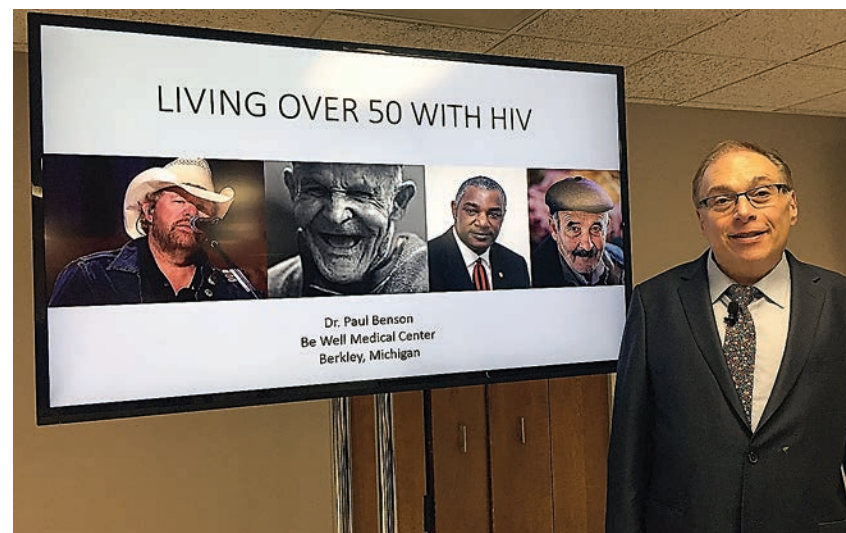
“Times have changed and most of you in this room are old enough to remember that lots of people with HIV would have a hard time surviving from one year to the next. Birthdays and holidays were celebrated thinking that this may be the last,” Benson said. “But now, with all the advances in medicine and technology people with HIV are living longer and we find they are subject to additional health concerns that are not HIV itself.”

Benson explained that inflammation from other diseases is higher in people with HIV, and it is that inflammation that causes more health problems than the HIV virus itself in older people.

“HIV is not your biggest problem. We can control the HIV with drugs. Comorbidity is the issue,” he said. “We need to use aggressive treatment of anything so as to not allow inflammation to get out of control.”

Because inflammation, among other factors, can quicken how a body ages.

“People with HIV tend to have chronic inflammation more than people without



Dr. Paul Benson presented “Living with HIV Over 50” at the St. John Macomb Oakland Hospital. BTL Photo: Jan Stevenson

HIV. And that inflammation causes our bodies to get older quicker,” Benson said. “And so what we need to do medically is to be very vigilant and very aggressive in treating little disorders early.”

By using an app on people’s phones, Benson was able to poll the group of about 50 people with questions related to their status and health. Everyone there said they were over 50, and a large majority reported having HIV over 11 years — 41 percent said they were HIV-positive for over 20 years, and 29 percent between 11 and 20 years. Remarkably, 100 percent reported that they have an undetectable viral load. But over 80 percent of respondents said they are currently being treated for hypertension, depression, low testosterone, cancer, liver disease or high cholesterol.

Benson said many doctors will wait to treat patients who have borderline high sugar levels or who have slightly higher cholesterol numbers and instead encourage their patients to try and reduce these risk factors with changes in lifestyle and eating habits.

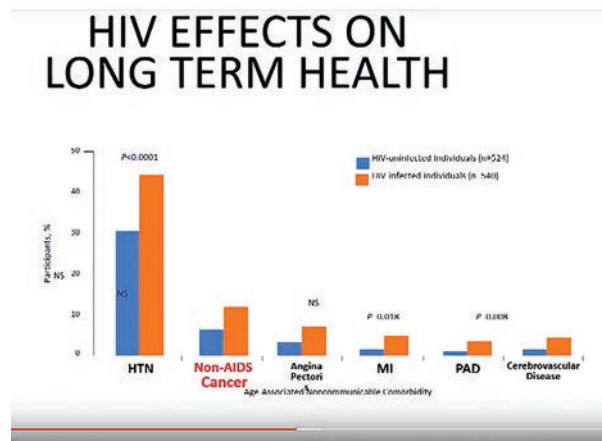
“In the HIV realm of primary care, we can’t allow a little bit of anything. We need to be aggressive and treat all these comorbidities because at the end of the day that results in lower inflammation, which results in us living longer and healthier,” Benson said.

During a lively Q&A session, people asked questions about viral load


measurements, future protocols, how to be more aware of their health, diet and alcohol consumption and more. Benson described some changes he is making in his practice to better serve his clients aging with HIV including more testing to find diseases earlier and treating those diseases as soon as they appear. The practice is starting Group Medical Appointments, one-hour meetings with Benson and/or other staff members and eight to 10 HIV-positive patients to have a deep discussion on issues affecting their health, and allow patients to learn from each other.

He also empowered the group to become spokespeople for the use of PrEP, or Pre-exposure prophylaxis, drugs that can prevent HIV infection.

“You can be the ambassadors. You have the experience with HIV/AIDS. Encourage people to avoid infection by using PrEP,” Benson said.



This chart shows that people with HIV are more likely to develop other chronic illnesses than the general population.




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- Ka'Juan Hill, YouTube personality and HIV activist

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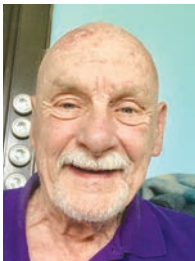


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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

JWs Go Trumpeting Door-To-Door

1. In the year of the Trumpeted Mongrel 666 Beast of War endlessly chasing his flea-bitten tail, a prophet of restless dudes scaled Mt. Rush-No-More, seeking counsel with the electrifying powers that sometimes to Be (or, not to Be).

2. Thus spake the Prophet Dude: "Eternal CEOs of centuries flushed down the oft-clogging, gas-driven drain of time. Ye who have dazzled and conned naive humankind with awe-inspiring displays – triune, quadrasonic to behold – hear my humble – but mainly cool – complaint.

3. "Yea, verily! Ye who made the Sunoco stand still in its skyward climb. Ye who made Noah's rebuilt, tax-free ark a crib for lowly ass and bellowing pachyderm tourists (our present pets).

5. "Ye who turned well water into Palestinian Perrier. Give us thy hands-on blessings of total space out for this the Age of Lukewarm Tea Baggery.

6. "Give us a push-button rod to conjure with, a change-channel staff to comfort us. Give us thy constant rerun soaps. Gridiron images of total adoration. Placebo messages of world dominion. Free-floating! Whiz-bang! Be here now! Do whatever thou wilt!"

7. Then atop Mount Rush-No-More spoke a voice from a burning George Bush, unlike any theocratic tumbleweed past, present or (hopefully) future. "O lowly assembly line kinda guy!" it said, echoing like 10,000 autoharps in perfect E-flat Pluribus Unison.

8. "May We, the autonomous Big Three, presume, that thou art not content to keep Sabbath, ritual, holy day? Lease and buy our chariots, used and otherwise? Kiddest thou us not?"

9. Then answered the Prophet Dude (sun-glassing his eyes for the sight of the DayGlo, smoldering shrub was too much for mere mortal sight), "These are trying, ball-busting times. Years of zillion-dollar hidden tax-return debt. Trickle-down disaster. (All knowing Big-Three: Grant us, thy hallowed hocus pocus to help us make it through the night once more.)

10. "Yea, and howdy doody!" he continueth. "Ye whom the Angels, Cardinals and Cubs praise sky high, ad infinitum, ad nauseam, let our three-score-10 (so short a blue note gig) be sweet and 24/7 entertained, in this badass epoch of mumble-grumble, wife-swap politics, and rightwing, bleach-blond navel fuzzing. Give us top booking. Amen."

11. So moved by this bogue supplication, the Burning Bush toned down its thousand points of light, and in an omnipotent, omnipresent, omnivorous, omnibus, oh-my-gosh voice spoke forth again.

12 "O Prophet Dude, we, the autocratic Trinity Broadcast Network, think thou hast indeed a legitimate axel to grind. Take, then, our magic buyout. With kith and kin go raiseth hell.

13. "Better still. Many are these cellphone charms to chose. (One model never fits all ears). Yea, truly, Prophet Dude, these gizmos are prestidigitation! Images. Tunes. Eden postures. Instant hand-held, high-watt joy.

See next page



The Lines Blur

BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

Caster Semenya is a South African middle-distance runner. She took home Olympic gold in both 2012 and 2016 and has won the world championships three times.

She grew up in the village of Fairlie, located in South Africa's Limpopo province in 1991. While she took up running to train for soccer, it was the former she has made her name in. She started on a career of dominating races in 2008, taking home an impressive array of accolades — and more than a little controversy.

The International Association of Athletics Federations decided to investigate Semenya, taking tests to determine that she was not doping as well as to verify her sex. As a result, the IAAF decided that Semenya had a "rare medical condition" that gives her an "unfair advantage."

It turns out that Semenya, while female, has a body that may provide her with some advantages in her sport. Having what experts are calling a difference of sex development or DSD, Semenya displays characteristics of being intersex, producing a heightened level of testosterone than is typical in women.

As a result, the IAAF has created a new rule to govern women with heightened levels of testosterone in their bodies,

requiring athletes participating in the women's 400m, 800m, and 1,500-meter races — not coincidentally the exact races Semenya would compete in — would need to lower their testosterone levels medically if they have too much of hormone naturally occurring in their bodies.

Semenya is not transgender, but arguments about transgender people in sports have been used against her. Likewise, Semenya has also been used in arguments against transgender people in sports.

In the New York Times, Dr. Eric Vilain, a medical geneticist at UCLA, evoked this specter as far back as 2015, while discussing a sprinter from India named Dutee Chand. Chand, like Semenya, was also asked to take hormone-suppressing drugs in order to compete.

"For me, this is a victory of identity politics and activism," Vilain said. "Now I'm really worried about the future of women in sports because if we push this argument, anyone declaring a female gender can compete as a woman. We're moving toward one big competition, and the very predictable result of that competition is that there will be no women winners."

This is the same argument we have heard from others

See next page

► Transmissions

Continued from p. 12

such as Martina Navratilova, who branded transgender people as cheats in comments she later walked back, adding, “I am trying to do is to make sure girls and women who were born female are competing on as level a playing field as possible within their sport.”

Semenya may not be transgender, but she is African, and that informs us about the opposition to her and her victories. In 2016, Joanna Jozwik came in fifth in a race Semenya won. In response, Jozwik declared that she was the “first European” and “second white” to complete the race.

Sharron Davies, another former Olympian, has taken trans athletes to task and most certainly weighed in on Semenya in a deeply racist Tweet.

“But the testing was not scientific just visual hence internal gonads were not seen,” tweeted Davies. “Parts of Africa still are I’m afraid. Because they don’t have access to the medical support to correctly diagnose. There are agents out there now looking for DSD girls to sign up!”

She later added, “there are more DSD cases in Africa than anywhere else in the world (often not properly diagnosed at birth) this, of course, is getting less as medicine gets wider access which is good.”

It would be so easy to claim that the Semenya controversy is purely about gender and even, by extension, transgender issues, but we simply cannot divorce this from the importance of race in the equation.

One thing I try to remind myself is that anti-transgender and gender essentialist views like those surrounding the Semenya story rarely exist in a vacuum. They are, rather, fed by other forms of bigotry. The lines blur.

Much of anti-trans sentiment is misogynist, based around the notion that women are somehow lesser, and the notion of transitioning to a woman is lowering one’s self. By the same token, many who might think the former might also see trans men as some sort of impossibility.

Likewise, anti-trans views are often

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 12

14. “Be now gods like Us! Never bored. Wide awake. Pandora power mad. But these new add-on commandments, O Prophet Dude, must be obeyed!”

15. “Make thou no YouTube graven pussy images. No iPod XXXing during prime time. TXT us when in Unisex Stalls. (See if indeed We Three give a damn.) And always recharge in a holy socket. No AC-DC hanky panky. Flush accordingly.”

In short, you’ll rarely find a transphobe who isn’t also bigoted in regards to race, sex, sexuality and any number of other identities that aren’t white, straight and male — and this brings us back to Semenya.

intertwined with anti-gay views and vice versa. Norms and expectations of gender expression and sexual identity are inexorably linked in the minds of those who oppose LGBTQ people. It’s also worth noting that a lot of homophobia is born out of toxic forms of masculinity that view anything even slightly gender transgressive to be a homosexual and trans behavior.

The religious right is tied up in all this, too. Some of them are reportedly bankrolling a supposed offshoot of feminism that excludes transgender people. It makes sense, given they also push against abortion rights: both allow for levels of body autonomy that don’t sit well for the modern evangelical movement.

In short, you’ll rarely find a transphobe who isn’t also bigoted in regards to race, sex, sexuality and any number of other identities that aren’t white, straight and male — and this brings us back to Semenya.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport has ruled against Semenya, who found against the IAAF decision. In doing so, they said, “DSD Regulations are discriminatory but the majority of the Panel found that ... such discrimination is a necessary, reasonable and proportionate means of achieving the IAAF’s aim of preserving the integrity of female athletics in the Restricted Events.”

Discriminating is never the right answer, and by doing so, they have done quite the opposite when it comes to preserving integrity.

Gwen Smith wonders if Joanna Jozwik will get tested, too. You can find her at gwensmith.com.

“Over and never out. Pax! Nix On Snobeismo. Repentance! Ah-men!”

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

Creep Of The Week

Rep. John Becker

BY D’ANNE WITKOWSKI

Hopefully by the time you read this the United States isn’t routinely opening up criminal investigations



into women who have miscarriages. And I say routinely because there are already cases where women have ended up in prison after their miscarriages were called

baby murders. So imagine how much worse it will get for women if the radical right-wingers have their way and overturn Roe v Wade. And if you can’t imagine it, I challenge you to talk to your grandma about what it was like back in HER day or just read a goddamn book. Conversely, you could also watch “The Handmaid’s Tale” on Hulu which is on track to win an Emmy for Best Documentary.

Right now conservative state governments — like Georgia, Ohio and Alabama — are hot to pass anti-choice legislation with the intent that these laws will be challenged all the way to the Supreme Court and that the end result will be to make abortions illegal.

Now, there are plenty of voices in the media and on Twitter (aka Trump’s Hellmouth) calmly reminding that nobody’s making abortion illegal right this very minute in the these states. And that’s true. But when women’s right to make decisions about their own bodies is on the chopping block, don’t tell ladies to calm down. Especially since by and large it is men writing and passing these bills and from the looks of it, most of them don’t know a damn thing about health or anatomy.

Take state Rep. John Becker (R-Ohio) who thinks that you can magically take an ectopic pregnancy and abracadabra it into a viable pregnancy inside the uterus. Don’t know what an ectopic pregnancy is? Well, neither does Rep. Becker but that didn’t stop him from writing laws about what happens inside women’s bodies. If you do know what an ectopic pregnancy is, then you know that Becker and other supporters of this bill are deeply ignorant and/or they clearly think that all women are witches.

The thing is, Becker doesn’t even care that he’s ignorant. He told Local 2 news, “I’m not smart enough to know what causes abortions and what doesn’t. The bill’s just written ‘if it causes an abortion’ and people smarter than me can figure out what that means.”

Here’s the thing: PEOPLE SMARTER THAN HIM ALREADY KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS AND THEY ARE CALLED DOCTORS. He is not a doctor. And yet, here he is deciding what goes on between women and actual medical professionals.

Now, you might be wondering, what does this abortion stuff have to do with LGBTQ politics? The answer is, well, everything. If you were to make a Venn diagram of Anti-reproductive choice folks and Anti-LGBT folks you’d basically have a total eclipse of the hate.

I’ve been saying this for decades, but the same people who want to take away a woman’s right to make her own medical decisions and turn her into a mandatory incubator also aren’t very keen on LGBTQ people having any kind of legal rights.

I remember being told by a heterosexual person that it was “a stretch” when I claimed that the anti-LGBTQ folks would not be satisfied with keeping same-sex couples from getting married, but that they would move on to banning birth control and imposing Puritanical laws on all things sex, no matter who is doing it.

It wasn’t a stretch then, and it sure as hell isn’t a stretch now.

If you identify as heterosexual but you think the LGBTQ equality fight isn’t yours, you are wrong. If you identify as LGBTQ and think the reproductive freedom fight isn’t yours, you are wrong, too.

Rep. Becker also supported the “Ohio Pastor Protection Act,” a so-called “religious freedom” bill that sought to “protect” pastors from being forced to marry same-sex couples. On his website he writes, “Marriage can only be between one man and one woman. (It really is that simple.)” He is also very concerned about transgender people being allowed to use public restrooms.

If you identify as heterosexual but you think the LGBTQ equality fight isn’t yours, you are wrong. If you identify as LGBTQ and think the reproductive freedom fight isn’t yours, you are wrong, too. The bigots want to divide us and gain power when we ignore our collective humanity. So don’t let them. (It really is that simple.)

Free Hugs, Fundraisers and Festival Organizers: How Volunteers Make Pride What It Is

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Alexandra Beninda: Have Hugs, Will Travel

Free hugs.

That's an official volunteer opportunity at Ferndale Pride this year, and when Alexandra Beninda learned of it, she was eager to lend a hand — or arms, to be precise.

"That's right up my alley — I normally do that anyway," Beninda said with a laugh. She called it "an ideal activity" for her. Beninda said she originally signed up for three shifts of hugging, from noon to 6 p.m., but decided to cut that short. Depending on the weather, she said by 4 o'clock she "might be not-so-huggable."

Attendees interested should look for "free hugs" volunteers in their team T-shirts. It's a program sponsored by Jim Shaffer and Associates.

Having volunteered at Ferndale Pride in years past at various booths, including Transgender Michigan, Beninda has lived in Ferndale since 2015. She said she's assisted with fundraisers that support the event as well. Beninda explained that volunteering for Pride is one of the ways she supports not only the LGBTQ community but also the local community.

"For one thing, I love the Pride activities," she said, "but I also love Ferndale, particularly all the businesses in Ferndale. So, when the fundraisers are at different localities that are supported by the different businesses that support pride, I feel doubly obligated to be active and part of those activities."

Before returning to Metro Detroit in 2015, Beninda said she lived in the Washington, D.C. area for 23 years, where she was very active with D.C. Pride.

"I've always wanted to be involved in pride activities wherever I was at," she said, "but I've been excited all the time that they have a pride event right here in Ferndale."

Volunteering in general, and hugs in particular, seems to suit Beninda's nature. She described living in Ferndale's Autumn House Apartments, where she said she takes particular concern in her neighbors there who are disabled or who are elderly and have medical issues.

Though Beninda may be modest and unassuming, her own experience with Pride throughout the years may serve to inspire to others in the LGBTQ community who haven't considered volunteering before.

"The whole Pride event is always important to me. ... It's changed a lot because it sometimes is a lot more commercial and business-oriented ... but it still is the event, where people can get out and enjoy themselves and express themselves how they want. Nobody gets real crazy in Ferndale," she said with a laugh. "That's what I've always enjoyed about the Pride activities ... is that it's a good event for people that are in the LGBT community to be out there and



Top photo: Rolanda Kelley and her partner, Jess Walsh, at the fundraiser. Bottom photo: Sandiego, owner of Midnight Obsessions (a new business in Ferndale) holding a basket of donated goodies. Photos: Rolanda Kelley.

active and supportive. There's a lot of places yet that that's a hard thing to do."

Rolanda Kelley: First-Time Volunteer, Big-Time Fundraiser

For Rolanda Kelley, attending Ferndale Pride each year is something she's always enjoyed. But this time around, it's extra special.

"I love it," Kelley said. "I live in Ferndale and I love the city and I love the community and Pride is always on my birthday weekend ... all my friends come out — my straight friends, my work friends.

"It's where I first started going and feeling that I could be myself," she continued. "[It's] one of the only places that I could be myself, at pride, and hold my partner's hand and not worry about who was watching or who was judging. And it was just something I always knew I wanted to be more involved in."

To that end, this year Kelley talked to

Ferndale Pride event chair Julia Music, who put her in charge of a fundraising event. It was a perfect fit. In the end, Kelley — with the help of her friends — amassed enough donations to put together the most successful fundraiser in Ferndale Pride's history. All told, over \$3,000 was raised for Pride at First Wednesday Queerest Tin Can Raffle hosted by Rose Garcia of "The Real L

Word" at Rosie O'Grady's on May 1.

When asked how she managed to amass that amount, she said that first and foremost she had friends — and her partner especially — who assisted in soliciting items from area businesses.

"Gift cards and gift baskets. Basically, every single business we went to said, 'Absolutely,'" Kelley recalled. "We had a lot of amazing gifts, and so much support from the community — not just the LGBTQIA community, but everyone. It was just awesome. Overwhelming. Such an amazing experience."

Kelley said the event was also a great opportunity to showcase new or little-known businesses in Ferndale, like Midnight Obsessions, whose owner Sandiego attended the fundraiser along with owners of other shops. One-of-a-kind donations were part of the unique-to-Ferndale event, too. A rainbow cornhole set named "Love Wins" was made especially for the raffle by Pammy Bali and Melissa Hearth and was donated to Affirmations by the individual who won it.

From attending Ferndale Pride over the years to becoming a major force behind the scenes, Kelley reflected on the significance of volunteering for something that in 2019

Ferndale, many in the LGBTQ community take for granted.

"They need our help," she said. "It's all volunteer-based, and I think we don't realize that. We go, we're there, we participate and we're excited. But we don't realize all that takes to go into it and it's all volunteer-based. It's all community-based. We all need to get involved. If everyone did just a little bit it would make such a big impact."

Dave Wait: It All Started with a Single Shift

"Seventeen years ago, I helped out with a shift at the festival, and then just got more involved from there."

That might sound like the statement of any particularly dedicated Pride volunteer. But considering those are the words of Motor City Pride's Chair of the Board and Planning Committee Dave Wait, it's especially worthy of note. He is, in fact, a volunteer himself and reported that this year is on track to be their biggest event ever — an event that has always been entirely volunteer-run.

"We couldn't do the festival without the volunteers," Wait said. "And it's just great working with and meeting new people who come to volunteer each year to get involved and give back. And it's also heartwarming to see these people who are going to give up their time

See **Pride**, continued on p. 16

Dave Wait said there are still at least 100 roles to fill for volunteers. Each slot is a four-hour commitment, and volunteers receive free admission to the festival for the weekend (otherwise \$5 per day), a free T-shirt, food vouchers and parking assistance. Saturday afternoon help is especially needed, he said.

Sign up here: gaybe.am/03

Motor City Pride will be held Saturday, June 8 (1 to 9 p.m., entrance closes at 8 p.m.) and June 9 (noon to 7 p.m., entrance closes at 6 p.m.) at Hart Plaza. Cover charge: \$5 (free for age 12 and under)

motorcitypride.org

Ferndale Pride will be held Saturday, June 1, 1 p.m. to 10 p.m.
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U-M Expands Trans Health Coverage After Graduate Union Campaign

BY BTL STAFF

After a years-long campaign by the Graduate Employees' Organization to expand health care coverage for transgender members, University of Michigan health plans will expand to cover new procedures to treat gender dysphoria.

All U-M health plans cover genital surgery, mastectomy in female-to-male transition, hormone therapy and counseling when medically necessary to treat gender dysphoria. As of July 1, the plans will also cover certain facial feminization surgeries, Adam's apple reduction and facial hair removal. New coverage will apply not only to graduate students but will be available to anyone with a U-M health plan.

"We could not be happier to hear that U-M and Blue Cross Blue Shield have finally come around to see the trans community's perspective. Transition coverage is medically necessary, and it's incredibly rewarding to see people's minds change so much on this matter," said Monica Lewis, chair of GEO's Trans Health Caucus.

This expansion in transgender health care is historic. Based on conversations with the university, and to the best of GEO's knowledge, it is GEO's understanding that this is the first time a public institution has extended coverage for these procedures.

However, speech-language therapy and transfeminine top surgery (augmentation mammoplasty) are not covered for transgender employees on any U-M health plan, even after this extension. Moreover, the requirements for accessing covered procedures remain a source of inequity in health coverage that GEO organizers seek to address.

In order to access this coverage, transgender

patients are required to submit themselves to mandatory psychiatric evaluation, with either one or two therapists, depending on the procedure, and to an extended, unnecessary waiting period.

"These barriers obstruct medically necessary health care in a way that many trans people, myself included, find invasive, dehumanizing and profoundly condescending," Lewis said. "We are excited to continue our advocacy work. Other medically necessary procedures remain excluded, but we hope to come to a similar point of understanding about how the current coverage still fails to meet the needs of trans people in many ways."

GEO laid out recommendations for new coverage to the university in an April 2018 conference. A review of coverage was initiated by the university's Medical Benefits Advisory Committee, with its first meeting held in June 2018. The MBAC meetings were closed to the public, information about the proceedings was withheld and GEO was not permitted to attend. GEO's requests to interface with the panel were denied.

The inclusion of trans voices in the review process was a central goal for GEO organizers, though requests for open MBAC forums were denied twice. After organizing efforts by GEO, the university responded by allowing trans people to discuss their concerns with the MBAC chair and the associate vice president of human resources.

GEO has a long history of advocating for improvements to transgender health care. In 2005, GEO proposed coverage for many procedures, including facial feminization surgery and permanent hair removal and the university denied both at the time. The conversation that led to this most recent



The Graduate Employees' Organization's most recent campaign has just resulted in the University of Michigan health plans significantly expanding coverage of procedures to treat gender dysphoria.

extension of trans benefits started in GEO's 2016-17 contract campaign. The union brought forward a number of proposals related to trans health equity during bargaining, with little progress. After the GEO membership authorized a walkout, the university responded with significant movement on many of their demands, including an agreement to hold a series of "special conferences" to discuss the

coverage and accessibility of treatment services related to gender dysphoria. The walkout was called off and the GEO membership ratified the new contract, signed in May 2017. The first meeting of the special conference series on transgender health care was in December 2017, and there have been three more to date (the most recent of which was in January 2019).

► Pride

Continued from p. 14

to help put on the festival for other individuals."

"We'll get about 300 volunteers to help out at the festival," Wait continued, estimating this year's number. "A lot of them help out at the welcome gate, the family area, with the entertainment and then also with the beverage sales. We have people help out with the parade, to make sure it keeps flowing and [to] help people get lined up."

Wait added they have a core production team that helps throughout the year. Planning for the following year's festival begins almost immediately after each year's ends, and goes into full swing in September.

Why He Does It

Although Wait began volunteering 17 years ago, he said he really started devoting most



Motor City Pride volunteers.

of his free time to the organization a few years back, after Equality Michigan assisted Motor City Pride in becoming its own 501(c)

(3) nonprofit. One reason Wait said he enjoys giving of himself to the degree that he does for the festival is that he like bringing people

together: the event is an opportunity for people to connect with the many nonprofits, health providers and various organizations and companies that support Motor City Pride.

But when it comes to his continued commitment to Motor City Pride, Wait said creating a space that enables LGBTQ people to feel comfortable being who they are is what he finds most gratifying.

"I think the biggest moving thing for me is when I see people who aren't out in their everyday life or aren't able to be their authentic self that can come to the festival and have a safe space that they can really be who they are for that day or for that weekend," Wait said. "And I meet people like that every year, who aren't comfortable or able to be out on a day-to-day basis. This is a place that they can do that to be able to begin that journey."

"And in a way, it's too bad that it's still a challenge for people in today's time," he said. "But it really makes it show how relevant festivals like this truly still are."

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Expo Cuts Through Cake Politics

BTL announces new venue, new season for the 9th Annual LGBTQ Wedding and Anniversary Expo

Same-sex marriage may be safe for now, but the LGBTQ community is not safe from business owners who are allowed to refuse patrons service because of their religious beliefs. Anti-LGBTQ sentiment has been on the rise since President Donald Trump took office and he recently strengthened the right to discriminate against LGBTQ people in the false name of “Religious Freedom.”

It’s with this in mind, Between The Lines is proud to present close to 100 LGBTQ-friendly vendors and venues at

the 9th Annual Ultimate LGBT Wedding & Anniversary Expo from noon to 4 p.m. at The Henry in Dearborn Oct. 13. This is a new venue and a new season for the Expo, which in past years has been in the spring.

The event will include bakers, photographers, banquet halls, hotels, cruise lines, real estate agents, travel agencies, caterers, wedding planners, officiants, churches and adoption agencies. These are the companies and business people who value us not just as potential customers but as full celebrants of marriage equality. It is important for us to recognize our friends, thank them and support their businesses as they support us.

“We really cherish our reputation for

being inclusive,” said Katherine Lesse, co-owner at Abracadabra, a jewelry and gem gallery in Ann Arbor. “One of the most important aspects of being an inclusive vendor is helping our customers feel comfortable and supported as we help them translate both beauty and love into a piece that represents their union.”

When asked if she has any advice for LGBTQ couples shopping for jewelry, Lesse said, “If you don’t feel like you’re being listened to, taken seriously or respected, do not work with that vendor, for any aspect of your celebration.”

For more information and to sign up as a vendor go to MiLGBTWedding.com



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Blossoming Artists Gallery Relaunches in Midtown

BY BTL STAFF

One of Detroit’s most prized neighborhoods has gained a new addition to its gallery district with the relaunch of Blossoming Artists Gallery in Midtown. Located on Third Street and Willis, the space previously featured high-end pieces by major artists. In its new form, Blossoming Artists features the work of up-and-coming artists from Detroit, New York and abroad.

The gallery showcases and sells the work of a different artist each month, at prices hipsters can afford, according to Timothy Price, managing partner and curator. Blossoming Artists partners Norman Silk and Dale Morgan are excited about the Midtown gallery and its focus on local artists.

“Blossoming Artists is an art space that will feature the best and most creative of local ‘eMERGING’ artists, including

student work,” Silk said. “Our goal is to offer exposure to creative art at affordable prices.”

Organizing the mixed-media gallery space is Price, who served as operations manager in the early years of Movement Music Festival, and he lived in Germany for 10 years while managing electronic music artist Richie Hawtin. Price is currently working with Corktown Experience to launch an exhibit at the Detroit Historical Museum called The Journey to Now about the 19th-century Workers’ Row House in Corktown, which the team plans to repurpose as a community hub and cultural center.


Price said he is “excited” about Detroit’s renaissance and wants to draw on his background in the music industry to help promote fine arts and culture in the city.

“We plan to use the gallery to help launch and promote some really talented artists,” he said. “There’s a lot of talent

here in Detroit, and we want to bring some national and international artists in, too. People will be able to buy the art itself and other merchandise as well. We’ll be working with photographers, digital artists, illustrators and many more.”

The Blossoming Artists teams is busy redesigning their website and showing off this month’s featured artists: Sanda Cook and Geno Harris (aka ‘One G Sirrah’). Future exhibits include local artists; Tyler Graves, Jason Reed, Tamela Ekstorm, Evan Derian and photographer Mathias Matthew. An opening reception will be held Friday, May 24, from 6 to 9 p.m.

Blossoming Artists Gallery is located inside Blossoms Midtown, located at 4152 Third St. in Detroit. For more information on Blossoming Artists, visit blossomingartists.net or contact Timothy Price at blossomingartistsdetroit@gmail.com.



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Diane Keaton Is Sorry (NOT SORRY)



Photo: STX Entertainment

Hollywood Icon Talks Gay Following She Never Knew She Had & Lesbian Roles ('I'm Available')

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Diane Keaton doesn't have all the answers to all the questions and she's sorry about that. She's sorry a lot. So sorry I kindly urge her not to be, like she's not Diane Keaton but a familiar friend, her fizzy, giddy, no-pretense charm making it easy to be honest with her.

In conversation, Keaton reads less Oscar winner, more fun, drunk aunt who loves a kiki, her on-brand self-deprecation and bewilderment amusingly intact. For all her Hollywood clout, Keaton is not exactly keen on her own Keatonness, despite a rich awards-speckled history of acclaimed roles ("The Godfather"), box-office

smashes ("Father of the Bride," "Something's Gotta Give") and "The First Wives Club," her sassy-sisters-unite comedy.

We are talking Annie Hall herself.

But Keaton is especially floored to hear the LGBTQ community still pays any mind at all to "The First Wives Club." Yes, it came out in 1996; no, Diane Keaton didn't know you can't put a date on a timeless gay cult classic. The 73-year-old actress' androgynous style – suits and top hats – may make her appear lesbian-bar-ready, but her life is not that iconic gay club scene in the film, shared with co-stars Bette Midler and Goldie Hawn. Keaton doesn't go to bars of any kind anymore, she tells me. She is "boring." She is sorry.

"You don't have to apologize for being yourself.

We don't do that," I tell Diane Keaton, who laughs and responds affirmatively. Opposite her apologetic state is the older-girl-power message of her new film, "Poms": being who you are, no apologies. Imagine the Golden Girls in "Bring It On" and you have "Poms," with Keaton as Martha, a woman who joins a retirement community with spunky old ladies (Jackie Weaver, Pam Grier and Rhea Perlman co-star) and against all odds – bad hips, bad husbands – end up forming a cheer team. "Poms" is the story of how Martha gets her groove back. And of women staying in it; of refusing to be bullied; of something the gay community knows well: perseverance.

Gay men love to celebrate our ladies. Ladies with staying power. Keaton, of course, is one

– even if she doesn't know it. She should know and so I tell her that she is "a masterclass in authenticity." She is flattered, but can't put her finger on why, despite ageism and sexism, there's always been a place for older women in the gay community. "Huh? What's the question?" She laughs. "I'm too stupid. I really am."

I repeat the question; she gives it her best shot: "Maybe because they love their mother. I don't know! But I appreciate it!" (At least on Twitter, Keaton must have some sense gay men follow her considering this gay-inclusive tweet she once sent about "Magic Mike XXL": "OK, girls and guys, we're one week away from HEAVEN.")

Later, unable to name any actors who could possibly pull off drag like Chris Pine did in

their 2006 TV movie, "Surrender, Dorothy," she apologizes again. For the whole interview. "Sorry I was a loser," she says. "I'm gonna bone up on things." "On gay stuff?" I ask. "You bet. I'm gonna read everything I can."

Until then, Keaton talks about the lack of a "First Wives Club" sequel even though she's game, not taking fashion tips from anyone (no offense, queers), and not recalling the night she thought Lena Dunham was a lesbian.

You are aware you have an LGBTQ following, right?

Me? No. I wasn't really aware.

But you did "The First Wives Club."

Oh yeah! I know I was in it. But I'm not aware. I don't think I follow things. Maybe I'm missing out. (Laughs) This is good news!

It is good news.

You better believe it!

Your tomboy fashion has been celebrated by the lesbian community. Do you get tips from lesbian friends or do you give them tips?

I don't give tips to anybody and I don't take tips, either. Because for me, it's just something I'm interested in, do you know what I mean? I pick out what I like; I don't have a stylist or anything like that. And also I just go with – look, I'm a person who collects magazines. I'm addicted. And I always check out the magazines, I always check out the newspapers – the New York Times, you know. T Magazine is interesting with what they do with fashion. So that's what I do. I sit there and I cut them out, and I have all of these scrapbooks filled with all these fashion ideas, so that's where I go for clothes.

T Magazine is a good choice. They publish issues entirely dedicated to fashion.

T Magazine is really an amazing magazine on so many levels – graphically, and just their articles. And when they do have their fashion issues, when they have one for women and one for men twice a year or something, when they dedicate the magazine to fashion for both sexes, it's great.

A few years ago, Lena Dunham said that you misread her as a lesbian at a Jennifer Aniston party. Has that been your only gaydar fail?

I'm sorry, say that again.

You once misread Lena Dunham as a lesbian at a Jennifer Aniston party.

Oh, did I? Stupid.

Hey, it happens to the best of us.

I hope she will forgive me.

I wonder if that was your only gaydar fail.

Well, I guess, since I never heard about it! And since I have no memory of saying it! But I'm sure I must've. Perhaps I was drinking too heavily.

Is that a thing?

It's a MAJOR thing, can't you tell? (Laughs) No! It's not much of a thing. But maybe, you know, I was anxious. You never know.

In "The First Wives Club," your lesbian daughter is instrumental in getting you what you want. How have gay men and women been instrumental in your own life?

Well, all along, you know, I've had a lot of gay friends, both sexes, and it's just been part of my life. I was probably living in New York when I first kind of formed friendships that were gay, but I was aware even in junior college – I went to junior college – and I remember going on a U.S.O. tour (in 1964) of "Bye Bye Birdie." Can you believe that? And I remember one of the guys there I really liked, and he was kind of playing the lead opposite me and he was gay. He was a friend and he was really talented too. And I remember some girl coming up to me and saying, "Don't you try to be his girlfriend! You're just trying to be his girlfriend!" (Laughs) It's just like one of those stupid things, you know. And I wanted to tell her that I knew he was gay, but then I just let it pass.

She actually thought you were gonna try to convert a gay man?

Yeah, right. Wrong!

During the gay bar scene in "First Wives Club," openly lesbian actress Lea Delaria plays a lesbian who makes some moves on Goldie Hawn's character. Has a lesbian ever made moves on you?

Um, I don't think so. I'm trying to think back...

That's disappointing.

Am I disappointed?

I said, "That's disappointing," but are you disappointed?

Well, maybe!

I'm very surprised to hear this. You've been to a gay bar, I assume, right?

Yeah.

What's the most fun night you've had at one? And was it anything like the one in "First Wives Club"?

No, I don't really – I'm not somebody who really goes out a lot to bars at all anyway. I'm boring, you gotta understand. I'm somebody who's friggin' boring. I am! But yeah, I'm sorry.

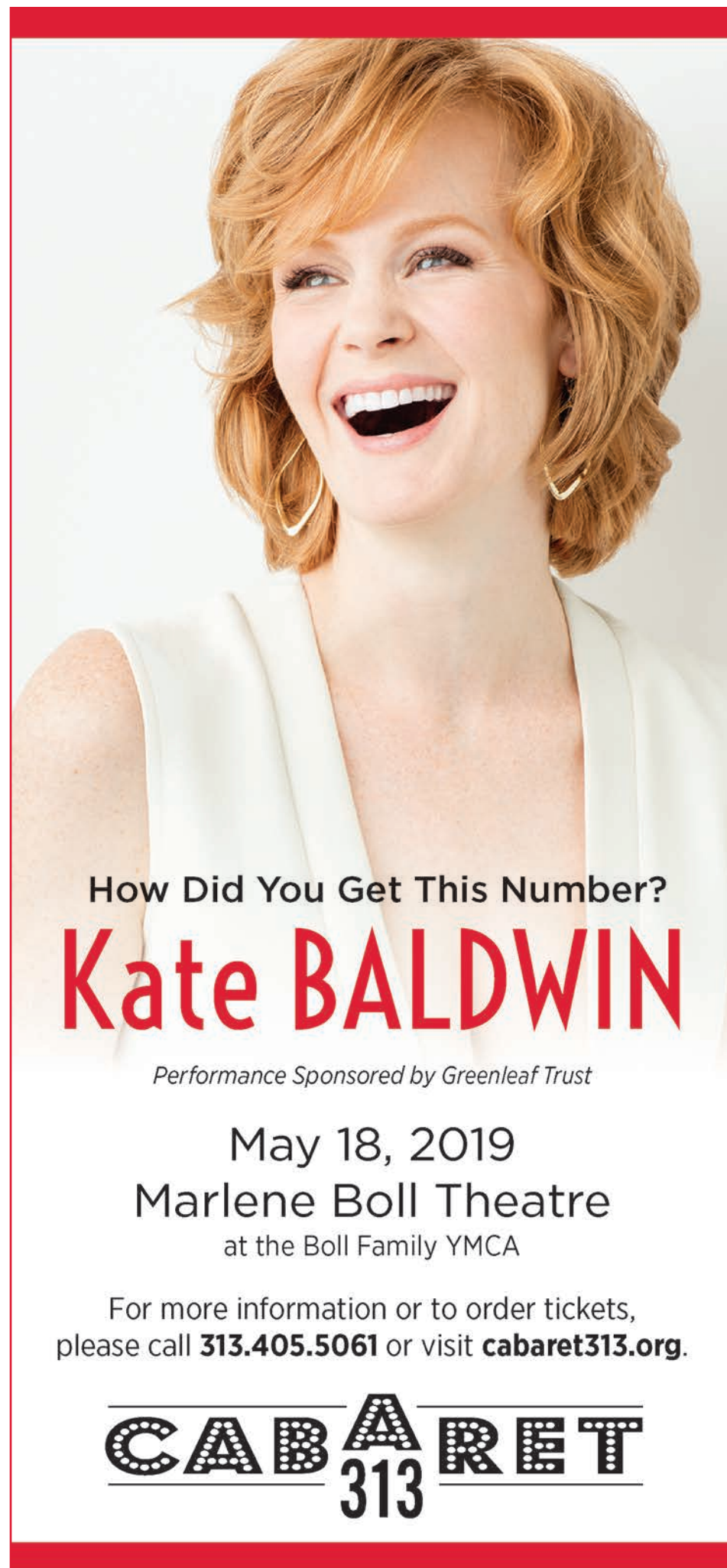
You don't have to apologize for being yourself. We don't do that.

(Laughs) OK!

There have been few moments in cinematic history that have shook gay men as much as your "You Don't Own Me" number with Bette and Goldie. When did you know that you'd started a gay frenzy with that musical number?

I never knew! This is the first I'm hearing of it.

See Diane Keaton, continued on p. 22



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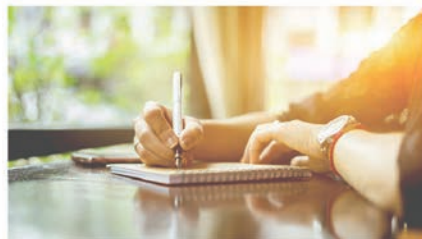
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► Diane Keaton

Continued from p. 21

I did not know that.

Hearing that, how does that make you feel?

Well, I'm sure that it's over. You know, no one's coming up to me going, "Oh god, that was fantastic!" I mean, it's so far gone. It's far in the past. Who cares! But it's nice to hear (laughs) and I hope somebody enjoyed it. It's like, maybe Goldie enjoyed it. Or Bette! They've had more interesting lives.

There was talk of a reunion project called "Divanation" for Netflix that was supposed to happen. Do you know about this project?

About what? Which project? What?

It's called "Divanation" and it was gonna reunite you with Goldie and Bette.

WHAT?! Where am I? I never heard that! I'd love to do something with Goldie and Bette again. They were fantastic. That was a fun movie.

Would you like to revisit that film with them?

Of course I'm interested, but it never happened. And we tried, in a way, the girls, but we never got a good script and I don't know why and now it's sort of like, it's over, right? No one's gonna have us get in a movie together, the three of us. But I love that movie, and I love them.

In the 2005 dramedy "The Family Stone," you memorably sign your love to your gay deaf son in that film. How do you reflect on that scene and how that may have influenced parents with LGBTQ kids?

It's a very touching scene, and he (Tyrono Giordano) was a very extraordinary person and I've never seen him again. He was in that one movie, and sometimes I think back on him. He had that opportunity and he was really very touching and wonderful in the movie, but it's kind of sad to me that there was no future for him, you know? It's too bad.

Did you understand at the time how that scene could be influential for parents of LGBTQ kids?

You know, I'm not that bright, let's get real. I was thinking about, "Oh, gee, how'd the scene go?" And, "How was that?" And, "Did the movie do OK?" I was thinking about the most superficial things, so it's like, I should've thought about it, but I never did because, "Oh, how'd it go? OK, we did good!" And I liked Tom (Bezucha, who is openly gay). Tom is brilliant, our director. And he's a friend. I'm sorry. I'm a failure.

Stop it.

No, I'm gonna go on and on and on. Wanna hear *my* sad story? (Laughs)

In the TV movie "Surrender, Dorothy" you seemed to enjoy dancing with Chris Pine, who was in drag. Do you remember this?

Yeah, a little. I mean, it's not one of my better projects: "Surrender, Dorothy"? Give me a

break, you know. I've had some hard times.

But that scene: Can you understand why gay men might love that scene? You, Chris Pine as a gay man, Chris Pine in drag...

Yeah. He went on to do well.

Looking back at your roles, have you ever questioned the sexuality of any of your characters?

Questioned the sexuality: Well, sure. I mean, "Looking for Mr. Goodbar" (in 1977), I questioned that. She was killed! (Laughs) Yeah, I think sexuality is a double-edged sword sometimes. You have to be careful. I mean, she put herself into a situation where she became a victim in that movie. I remember my dad seeing it and he was not happy.

Why?

Because I died and he didn't want me going to bars meeting guys who were inappropriate for me (laughs). He was a dad!

You questioned the sexuality of that character, but have you ever played an actual lesbian character?

I don't think so, uh-uh.

Has there been a lesbian character someone else has played that you wish you had?

No, not that I know of. But you know, if it came up, I'm here. I'm available.

If you were to play one, who might you cast as your love interest?

Oh, I don't know. I don't think about it. I don't really have anybody in my mind. I'd have to think about it, right? But it also probably wouldn't even be my choice. I'm the actress. I'm not the director. Unless you're asking me to be the director, now that's a different matter.

I'm telling you you're Diane Keaton and you should have some say in it.

OH MY GOD! (Laughs) It doesn't work exactly like that!

Well, say you did have a say. Who might you pick? Hypothetically, Diane.

I don't know. I really don't know.

Meryl Streep would be my pick.

That's a good choice.

There are a lot of women who've played lesbians who I think would be good for you.

I'm sure that's true. Probably many we don't know yet, so let's not leave them out.

No, we should not, you're right.

Get them in the mix.

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 Q, Vanity Fair and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.



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Progress Michigan Has Two New Hires

Cool Cities Lansing

BY BTL STAFF

To expand both coverage of the Great Lakes Beacon, and Progress Michigan's presence on the west side of the state, Progress Michigan announced today two new hires: Cayley Winters, a West Michigan Communications Organizer; and Evan Kutz, a Multimedia Reporter for Great Lakes Beacon.

The hires are examples of how Progress Michigan has grown over the last several years. The progressive advocacy and communications hub already has offices in Lansing and Detroit and the expansion to West Michigan represents a commitment to reaching the entire state.

Cayley Winters is a Michigan State Alumnae with a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Science, who has six years of experience in political organizing. She started her political career as a volunteer with Planned Parenthood of Michigan. Her biggest passions lie in reproductive justice and health care reform. Originally from Battle Creek, she now resides in Kalamazoo.

"I can't wait to take the lessons I gained while organizing in Lansing the last few years and

bring it home to my old stomping grounds on the westside," Winters said. "Progress Michigan's goal of lifting up progressive voices and empowering grassroots organizations is needed in West Michigan and I'm excited to get to work in the community."

The hiring of a multimedia reporter for the Great Lakes Beacon, an independent news outlet, which is a project of Progress Michigan, will take the publication in a new direction focused more on video storytelling.

Evan Kutz recently graduated from Michigan State University's School of Journalism, where he studied environmental reporting and documentary filmmaking. Kutz's favorite stories to tell feature folks acting as agents for change in their communities.

"At the Great Lakes Beacon, I'm excited to share the stories of real, everyday Michiganders who are doing the hard work to change their communities and push for progressive change," Kutz said. "There are stories across this state that aren't being told and I look forward to lifting up those voices."

"Progress Michigan continues to grow in both staff size and influence and I am proud to welcome Cayley and Evan to our team," said Lonnie Scott, executive director of Progress Michigan. "They bring passion for progressive causes and a skillset that will make our organization that much better."

May 9 - June 9, 2019

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Gov. Whitmer Makes Appointments to the Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration

BY BTL STAFF

LANSING, – Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced last week several appointments to the Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration, citing a need for meaningful reform in Michigan's current criminal justice system as the main reason.

“The number of people in local jails has tripled over the last 35 years, but crime rates in Michigan are the lowest they’ve been in 50 years,” Whitmer said. “This task force is an opportunity to see how we can make the system better for the people of our state and make Michigan an example for the country on jail and pretrial reform.”

Those appointed are listed below with each term set until Sept. 30, 2020:

- Amanda Alexander, of Detroit, is the founding executive director of Detroit Justice Center.

- Jerry Clayton, of Ann Arbor, is the Sheriff of Washtenaw County.

- Craig DeRoche, of Novi, is the Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Public Policy at Prison Fellowship and a former Speaker of the House of Representatives.

- William Gutzwiller, Sr., of Essexville, is the Director of Public Safety for the City of Essexville.

- Dale “DJ” Hilson, of Muskegon, is the Muskegon County Prosecutor.

- Monica Jahner, of Lansing, is the Advocacy, Reentry, Resources and Outreach program manager and legislative advocate at Northwest Initiative, a Lansing grassroots organization to eliminate barriers for returning citizens.

- Sheryl Kubiak, Ph.D., of Milford, is the Dean of Social Work at Wayne State University.

- Jim Miller, of Allegan, is a Lieutenant and jail administrator for the Allegan County Sheriff's Department.

- Takura Nyamfukudza, of Lansing, is a criminal defense attorney with Chartier & Nyamfukudza PLC and a veteran of the United States Army National Guard.

- Bill Peterson, of Alpena, is an Alpena County Commissioner.

- James R. Talen, of Grand Rapids, is a Kent

County Commissioner.

- Robert VerHeulen, of Walker, is a Kent County Road Commissioner.

In addition to Gov. Whitmer's appointments, the following representatives of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of state government will serve on the Task Force:

- Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II will represent the executive branch of state government.

- Attorney General Dana Nessel will represent the executive branch of state government.

- Chief Justice Bridget McCormack of the Michigan Supreme Court will represent the judicial branch of state government.

- Judge Prentis Edwards, Jr. of the 3rd Circuit Court of Wayne County is designated by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

- Judge Thomas P. Boyd of the 55th District Court of Ingham County is designated by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

- Sen. Jim Runestad of the 15th Senate District is designated by the Senate Majority Leader.

- Sen. Sylvia Santana of the 3rd Senate District is designated by the Senate Minority Leader.

- State Rep. Mike Mueller of the 51st House District is designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

- State Rep. Tenisha Yancey of the 1st House District is designated by the House Minority Leader.

The Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court are designated as co-chairpersons of the Task Force.

The Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration was established by Governor Whitmer's Executive Order No. 2019-10. The Task Force acts in an advisory capacity with the goal of developing ambitious, innovative and thorough recommendations for changes in state law, policy and appropriations to expand alternatives to jail, safely reduce jail admissions and length of stay, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Michigan's justice systems.

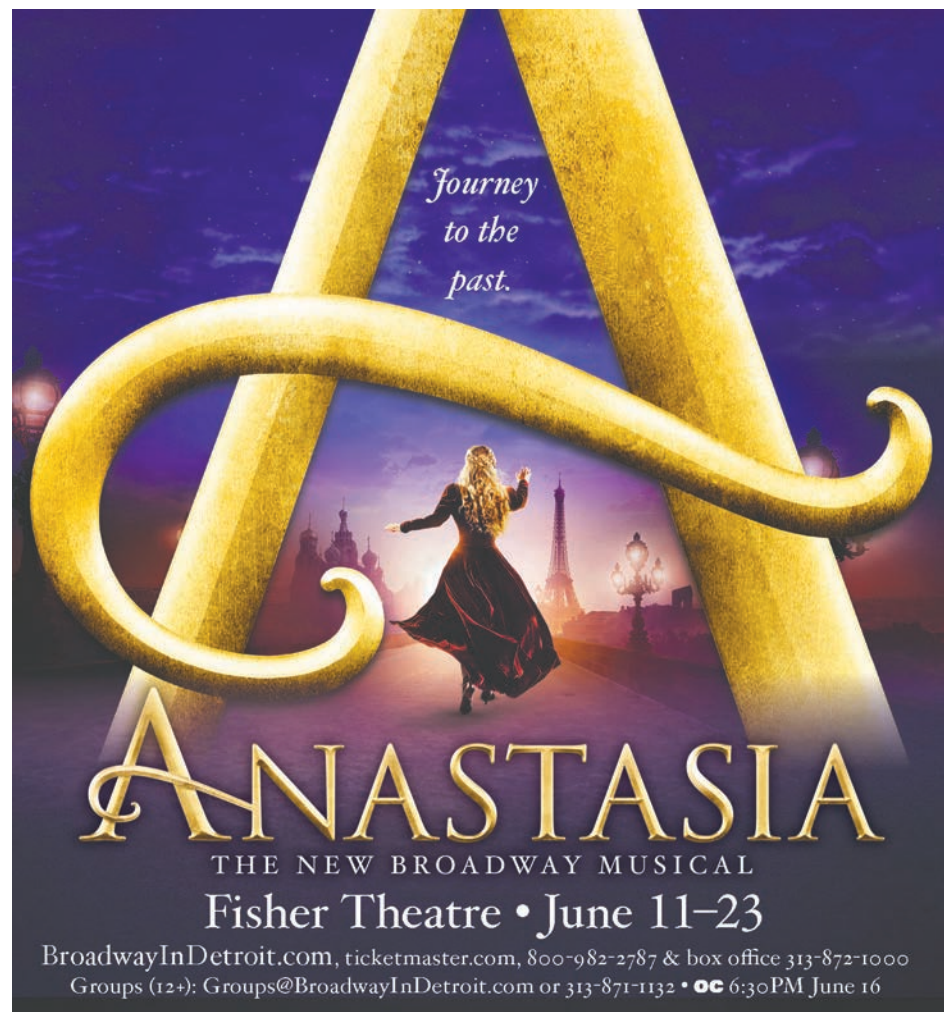
These appointments are not subject to advice and consent of the Senate.

TRUE LGBTQ Teen Group Weekly at Lansing Salus Center

LGBTQ support group TRUE is a program from Gateway that helps lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth between the ages of 13 and 18 in the Lansing area. The mission of TRUE is to provide a safe space that is free from bullying, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia for LGBTQ youth and allies ages 13 to 18. Presented by Lansing's Salus Center, which

is dedicated to serving LGBTQ youth, the group meets weekly on Tuesday at the center at 4 p.m., with the next meeting Tuesday, May 21.

For more information, contact Morgan at truelgbtq@gmail.com or leave a voicemail at 725-222-8783. For the privacy of attendees the guest list for this event has been made private.



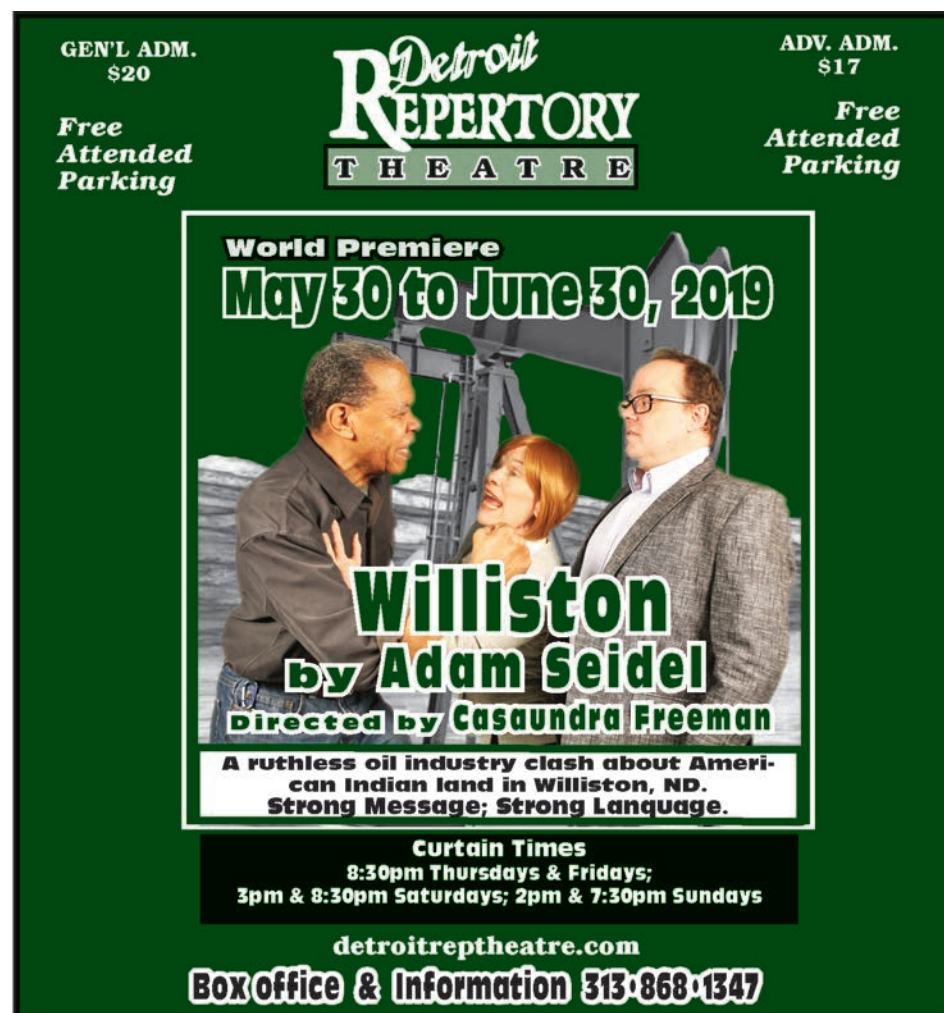
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Happenings

Detroit VOICES Film Festival

Thursday, May 16, Michigan filmmakers will premiere their short films at the Cinetopia Film Festival for a chance to place in one of two new categories: narrative and documentary. One of the featured films is "Femme Queen Chronicles." Directed by Ahya Simone, it follows four black trans women navigating through love, life, trade and shade in Detroit. To find out more about the film's premiere, where to watch and more, visit cinetopiafestival.org.

OUTINGS

Saturday, May 18

Cinetopia Film Festival 8:00 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 Community Chat 11 a.m.

Saturday LGBT Chat is an ongoing social discussion group meets every week to discuss issues LGBT people face. Coming out, dating and much more. Java Hut Ferndale Michigan, 165 W 9 mile, Ferndale. 248-632-8274. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

LGBT Social Meet Up 6:30 p.m. Lgbt social meet up group is a group for all lgbt people who want to meet have light hearted discussions and social activities some activities, all is welcomed. Hazel Park Community Center, 620 West Woodward Heights, Hazel Park. 248-632-8274. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

Sunday, May 19

Stand with Trans Wyandotte Support Group for Trans Youth and Parents of Trans Individuals 4:00 p.m. Free. For Parent Support Group information, contact facilitator Kim Tooley, 734-747-4363. St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 2803 1st St., Wyandotte. standwithtrans.org.

Monday, May 20

LGBT Game Night 7:00 p.m. LGBT Game Night is an opportunity for all

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

Wednesday, May 22

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.

Thursday, May 23

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups - Farmington Hills - Oakland County 7:00 p.m. All youth are welcome to attend this FREE group.

Toastmasters International SpeakOUT! LGBTQ Meeting 7:00 p.m. With better

communications skills, you'll better your leadership style as well as your relationships. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867. lawrencemoeb@gmail.com. speakout.toastmastersclubs.org.

Tuesday, May 28

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

Saturday, June 1

Ferndale Pride: Since 2011, Ferndale has kicked off summer with its annual pride

festival. Ferndale Pride holds a full week of events leading up to Pride's premiere event - the daylong street fair on June 1 in 2019. facebook.com/ferndalepride

Sunday, June 2

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups - Adrian-Lenawee County 6:30 p.m. Free. For parents of transgender kids. Hilltop Counseling, 115 W. Maumee St., Adrian. 313-909-5408. standwithtrans.org. hilltopcounseling.org.

Tuesday, June 4

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups - Lake Orion / Oakland County 7:00 p.m. Free. Support Group Facilitated by Lisa Goyette, ally, activist. St. Mary's In The Hills Episcopal Church, 2512

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Editor's Pick

Movement Music Festival May 25 - 27

Located in Hart Plaza, Detroit, this Memorial Day weekend thousands of people across the U.S. and the world will gather for the Movement Music Festival. Attendees will celebrate Detroit's electronic music and techno heritage and witness new and classic artists. Find out more online at movement.us.



Joslyn Court, Lake Orion. 248-391-0663. stmarysinthehills.org. standwithtrans.org.

Thursday, June 6

Ford GLOBE 25th Anniversary Dinner 6:00 a.m. Celebration of The Ford Motor Company's Employee Resource Group on 25 years. Honoring former Ford Vice Chair Allan D. Gilmour, with keynote speaker and former NFL star, Wade Davis The Dearborn Inn, 20301 Oakwood Blvd., Dearborn. 313-673-3001. info@detroitlgbtchamber.com. detroitlgbtchamber.com.

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. The Dearborn Inn, 20301 Oakwood Blvd., Dearborn. 313-673-3001. info@detroitlgbtchamber.com. detroitlgbtchamber.com.

Pewabic House and Garden Show – Preview Party Fundraiser 6 p.m. The House & Garden Show kicks off with a ticketed preview party fundraiser. Enjoy live entertainment, strolling Pewabic Pottery, 10125 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit. 313-626-2000. pewabic.org.

Pride Night at Thunderbowl! 7:00 p.m. Meet & Greet First Thursday of every month, unlimited bowling, shoe rental, private room, private bar area, drink specials, billiard room, 250-foot video wall. Come as you are! Thunderbowl Arena, 4200 Allen Road, Allen Park. 313-928-4688. thunderbowl.org.

Friday, June 7

Kalamazoo Pride: (Day 1) The 2019 theme is "Love Who You Are." Now in its 12th year, the two day event will take place at Arcadia Creek Festival Place. facebook.com/KalamazooPride

Pewabic House and Garden Show 10 a.m. The House & Garden Show features the release of Pewabic's newest pieces plus work by more than 80 ceramic artists from throughout North America. Pewabic Pottery, 10125 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit. 313-626-2000. pewabic.org.

Ypsilanti Pride: It's the third annual event and organizers are excited. "Reaffirming our visibility and culture one step at a time." facebook.com/YpsiPride

Saturday, June 8

Kalamazoo Pride: (Day 2) The 2019 theme is "Love Who You Are." Now in its 12th year, the two day event will take place at Arcadia Creek Festival Place. facebook.com/KalamazooPride

Motor City Pride Festival and Parade 1:00 p.m. The Motor City Pride Festival and Parade returns to Hart Plaza for Michigan's largest pride celebration! Hart Plaza, 1 West Jefferson, Detroit. motorcitypride.org.

Sunday, June 9

Om @ The Max 10:30 a.m. Practice yoga to live music! Certified yoga instructor and DSO Librarian Ethan Allen leads a group yoga session open to all skill levels — accompanied with live music performed by DSO musicians. Namaste. The Cube, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. dso.org.

Monday, June 10

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. Come and meet other trans* youth and teens and support each other through your journeys. Dakota High School, 21051 21 Mile Road, Macomb. 586-723-2700. chippewavalley.schools.org.

Wednesday, June 12

Stand with Trans Youth Support Group

– Flint – Genessee 6:30 p.m. Facilitator Sara Griffin, MA, LPC is a psychotherapist and a parent of a transgender son, eiregriff@aol.com. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint, 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy, Flint. 810-232-4023. uufflnt.org. standwithtrans.org.

Thursday, June 13

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Farmington Hills – Oakland County 7:00 p.m. Oakland United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road, Farmington. 248-626-3620. oaklandumc.org. standwithtrans.org.

Saturday, June 15

Pride Performance by PRISM Gay Men and Allies Chorus On Saturday, June 15, the PRISM Gay Men's and Allies Chorus will perform a series of tunes as part of a double performance, titled Destination Detroit – Music That Put Us on the Map. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. 4th St., Royal Oak. 248-399-2980. royaloakmusictheatre.com.

Stand with Trans Support Groups – Livonia – Wayne County June 19, 6:30 p.m. Free. Parent Support Group Facilitators Karen Sessler, ksessler@yahoo.com or 734-673-3590 and Scott Sessler, pastorscott@emmanuel-livonia.org or 734-673-2485 Trans Youth Support Group (12+) Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 34567 7 Mile Road, Livonia. standwithtrans.org.

MUSIC & MORE

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!" One event May 18 at 8:45pm The Marlene Boll Theatre, 1401 Broadway, Detroit. cabaret313.org.

Relapse Prevention May 21 7:30 p.m. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. dawnfarm.org.

Rick Springfield at Motorcity Casino's Sound Board May 23, 8 p.m. Fans of the Grammy Award-winning musician can mark off Motor City Casino Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 313-309-4700. motorcitycasino.com. soundboarddetroit.com.

Co-Occurring Disorders: Understanding Self-Medication and Complex Recovery May 28, 7:30 p.m. 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. 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. Join us for a one-night-only set with Ozone's jazz trio. The Cube, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. dso.org.

ART 'N' AROUND

Kensington Metropark Art Show May 25, 10:00 a.m. Join the thousands of people who attend Kensington Metropark Art Fair each year. The event offers art, food and lakefront family activities — and brings together a juried group of 85 artists to display and 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, 7:00 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.

Jersey Boys at Music Hall! May 18, 2:00 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.

THEATER

Detroit Repertory Theatre Presents "Aubrey" May 18, 3:00 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 18, 8:00 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/

The Grapes of Wrath May 19, 2:30 p.m. This heart-wrenching opera, based on the classic novel by John Steinbeck, 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 Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 313-237-SING. michiganopera.org.

Detroit Repertory Theatre Presents "Williston" May 30, 8:30 p.m. Three energy reps travel to Williston, ND, to get mineral rights to the last big piece of undeveloped land. A scintillating exploration of how business corrupts people and the fine line between commerce and conscience. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. 313-868-1347. DetRepTh@aol.com. detroitreptheatre.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! Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 North University, Ann Arbor. 734-763-3333. a2ct.org.

Barbu Electro Trad Cabaret – Cirque Alfonse June 20, 8:00 p.m. Part of the Ann Arbor Summer Festival entertainment series, Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. 734-647-3327. info@a2sf.org. smtd.umich.edu.



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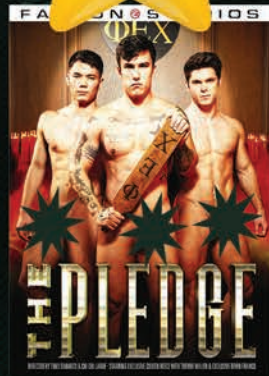


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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Britney's back 'One More Time'

We are always rooting for Britney Spears. We know that right now, as of this column, her personal life has hit a bit of a rough patch, and the messages coming through to the public are mixed, so it's tough to know what's really happening. But we live in hope that all will be well. In the meantime, her professional life keeps looking up. There's the upcoming stage musical built around her hits, called "Once Upon a One More Time" to be directed by Kristin Hanggi ("Rock of Ages," which seems appropriate) with a book by Jon Hartmere, coming to Broadway in 2020. And news just broke that Sony just bid up the film rights, a movie that Spears will produce with her manager, Larry Rudolph, as well as John Davis. And the plot is fascinating, too, concerning four fairy-tale princesses who read Betty Friedan's pioneering second-wave feminist book, "The Feminine Mystique." And no, we're not making that up, and yes, it does sound more radical than "Mamma Mia"'s which-one-of-you-old-guys-is-my-father nonsense. So go Britney! We're ready for anything and everything.

Lee Daniels is making a superhero movie called 'Superbitch'

You have to hand it to Lee Daniels, he knows how to keep the conversation going and how to steer it in his own direction. Recently, at the Time 100 Summit, he breezed right past Van Jones' questions about "Empire" and Jussie Smollett in order to dish about his own past using money from drug sales to take his career to the next level, and then to hype up the project called "Superbitch." Based on a real-life Instagram personality of the same name, a cape-wearing queen who does backflips (meanwhile every "Drag Race" contestant is thinking, "Oh yeah?"), Daniels will produce the film but not direct. And the star? Will it be Superbitch bitchself? Or an actor with superbitchy qualities? It's unknown at this time, and Daniels isn't ready with more details, but you know it'll be wild when it hits. Casting tip to drive the media wild: put Jussie in it.

Tessa Thompson and Ruth Negga are 'Passing'

In 1929, a Harlem Renaissance writer named Nella Larsen published a novel titled "Passing," about a very provocative topic: the practice of light skinned black people living their lives as white in order to get more opportunities and avoid Jim Crow laws that codified white supremacy. Unlike other more celebrated and well known books by black authors of that era, "Passing" is notable for its contribution to



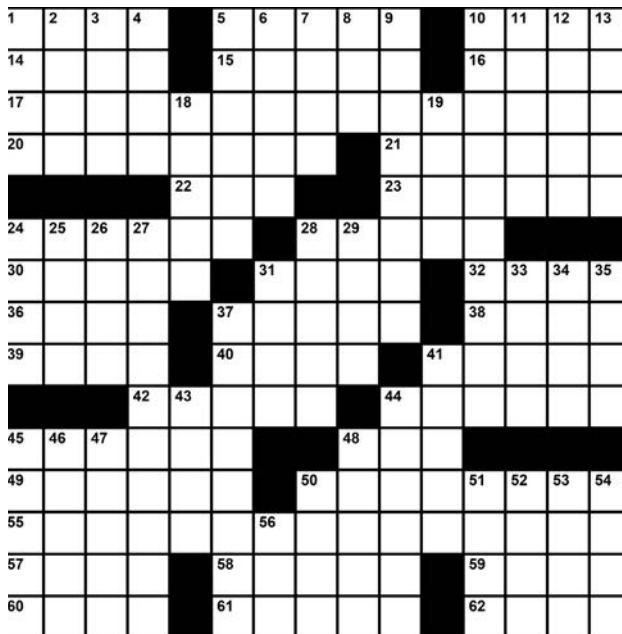
Britney Spears. Photo: KathClick

literary history yet still hadn't made the leap to a film version, at least until now. The book is in production from actor-director Rebecca Hall and will star Tessa Thompson ("Avengers: Endgame") and Ruth Negga ("Loving"). The women will play school friends who are reunited several years later as adults, their relationship fraught with difficulty as one of the women lives as white for the sake of her husband. The project, currently in pre-production, should go before the cameras soon, so there's no scheduled release date just yet, but Thompson's star is on the rise, so expect this to make some noise when it finally makes it to screen.

'Call Me By Your Name's Luca Guadagnino plans 'To Be Murdered'

Italian filmmaker Luca Guadagnino leapt from the swooning, romantic "Call Me By Your Name" to the death-obsessed "Suspiria." And he seems to like it in the dark corners of human experience, because his next project (OK, after the "Call Me" sequel) is called "Born to Be Murdered." Starring John David Washington ("BlacKKKlansman") and Alicia Vikander ("The Danish Girl"), "BTBM" is set in Athens, Greece, where a couple on vacation inadvertently becomes involved in a conspiracy plot that leads to violence and tragedy. That's all the plot we know right now, and no, we cannot be sure that Guadagnino muse Tilda Swinton "won't" pop up unannounced, playing three different characters in wacky prosthetic make-up, but if she does we won't be angry about it. Bring on the freaky murders and all the Swinton the project requires, that's our official position.

Romeo San Vicente only plans for makeouts, never murders.



QPuzzle

RecomPence

Across

- 1 Ones stuck under G-strings, e.g.
 5 "Downton Abbey" neckwear
 10 Mistake for Paul Taylor
 14 Chocolate sandwich
 15 Joe of "NCIS"
 16 Go in only partway, at the beach
 17 Start of a Mike Pence "quote"

attributed by Bill Maher

- 20 Switch positions
 21 Minor scrape
 22 Wet area around bushes
 23 Makes alterations to
 24 Fraiser portrayer
 28 What the Devil wears, in a movie
 30 More frigid
 31 Angry in., for example

Down

- 1 Do that may need hair spray
 2 Sea bordering Uzbekistan
 3 Top Four game
 4 Where Dr. C. Torres works
 5 Leslie in "Gone with the Wind"
 6 Cuddle in bed
 7 Tent site
 8 The Plastic ___ Band
 9 High-ranking active partners?
 10 Queen of diamonds and queen of

- spades, e.g.
 11 Steven Greenberg, for one
 12 Bonehead
 13 Bill of legend
 18 Put forward
 19 Cultivated pansies
 24 Catwoman portrayer Eartha
 25 Off-the-wall feedback?
 26 One with flaming pants?
 27 Pick a time to become wives
 28 Benjamin Britten's Peter
 29 One way to have your meat
 31 Golda from the land of the cut
 33 Have an opening for
 34 British peer
 35 Feminizing tail
 37 "I Shall Not Care" poet Sara
 41 Gracefully tactful
 43 Adam and Steve's locale?
 44 Presided over
 45 Jazz genre
 46 Ex of one we hope will soon be an ex-president
 47 "___ Room"
 48 Tee shot for Rosie Jones
 50 Peter or Paul but not Mary
 51 Mail carriers at Hogwarts
 52 Debussy's milk
 53 British car wheel
 54 Lickety-split
 56 Cruising locale

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FERNDALE

FERNDALE, MICHIGAN – FIRE DEPARTMENT

Ferndale, MI (pop. 20,428) – The City of Ferndale is located in southeast Oakland County, Michigan, offering an outstanding, unique and dynamic urban experience with easy access to major metropolitan areas and an international airport. Known for its award-winning downtown; community events; excellent housing options; and welcoming culture, the City of Ferndale is proud of the high quality of life it offers its residents.

Department: Fire Department
 Location: Ferndale Fire House
 Salary Range: Patrol, \$47,550 - \$64,568 +6.5%
 FLSA: Non-exempt/Union
 Employment Type: Full-time

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

Thank you!

NEXTGen Detroit Celebrates 3 Year Anniversary

BY BTL STAFF

Federation's NEXTGen Detroit Pride celebrated its three-year anniversary in fabulous fashion with its Anniversary Gayla event on May 2, 2019. Hosted by local celebrity drag queen Sabin, the event was held at The Underground @ DIME Detroit and featured an improv comedy show by Go Comedy!, food, drinks and lots of laughs.

Attendees were treated to a photo booth with props that included cutout faces of famous LGBTQ celebs such as Ellen DeGeneres, Anderson Cooper and Laverne Cox. Henry Ford Health System co-sponsored the event and was in attendance to educate guests about medical services that they provide to the LGBTQ community.

Created in 2016 by NEXTGen Detroit board member Sam Dubin, NEXTGen Detroit Pride serves as a space and community for young adult LGBTQ Jewish Detroiters ages 21-45. A sampling of events includes Shabbat dinners, story slams, Painting with a Twist, game nights and more.

To learn more about NEXTGen Detroit Pride, visit their booth at Ferndale Pride Saturday, June 1st, or email Hannah Goodman at hgoodman@jfm.org.

Ozone House to Open New Front Doors for Youth in Crisis

BY BTL STAFF

Ozone House is set to open a new home for youth in crisis in Ypsilanti by the end of 2019. As of April, Ozone House's "Front Door" fundraising campaign has raised more than \$3.8 million to build a new 19,000-square-foot facility at 1600 N. Huron River Drive.

"When young people walk through our front door, it changes the trajectory of their lives," says Krista Girty, executive director at the Ozone House.

Susan Allison, campaign co-chair, described the house. It will have 16 private bedrooms that can sleep up to 32 young people, up from five shared rooms that sleep 12 at their two current facilities, 11 dedicated counseling rooms, three kitchens, seven youth bathrooms, a food pantry, multiple laundry and shower facilities, easy access to public transportation and it will be fully ADA compliant. Allison said the new home will be on the Huron River on a wooded lot, ideal for providing young people a space to heal and overcome trauma.

"Young people that are fleeing violence, neglect or rejection need to know there is a safe place they can go in their community. We have been doing this work for 50 years and it's time for our facilities' quality to



match the quality of our services," Girty said. "Ozone House has moved seven times in its 50-year history and is ready for the stability of a forever home in the community."

Homelessness for youth means more than the absence of a safe place to sleep, enough food to eat or shelter from the cold. It means a lack of safe, stable, reciprocal relationships and vulnerability to dangers such as physical assault, sexual assault or human trafficking. Ozone House helps young people in Washtenaw County, ages 10-24, develop safe and reciprocal relationships, as well as

Ozone House reached over 4,000 young people in 2018, providing 24-hour year-round services at no charge to youth and families. The Ozone House invites community members to make a contribution that will ensure Ozone House can support young people and their families for the next 50 years and beyond. To make a donation visit ozonehouse.org, call 734-662-2265 or send checks to Ozone House with "Front Door" in the memo line to 1705 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, MI, 48104. For more information about the Ozone House, visit ozonehouse.org.

shelter them from the cold and dangers of being homeless.

The community is invited to Ozone House's 50th-anniversary celebration on Sunday, June 2, at The Farm at St. Joe's, 5557 McAuley Drive in Ypsilanti, from 2 to 5 p.m. Please RSVP at rsvp@ozonehouse.org. Tours of the new home and presentations from young people will occur throughout the event.



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Department: Police Department

Location: Ferndale Police Department

Salary Range: Officers at Academy, \$45,000
 Officers in Field Training, \$49,000
 Patrol, \$51,127.15 - \$68-869.00

FLSA: Non-exempt/Union

Employment Type: Full-time

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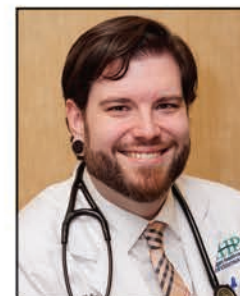
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