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Declares June Pride
Month, Attends
LGBTQ Town Hall at
Affirmations**

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June 8 – 9**

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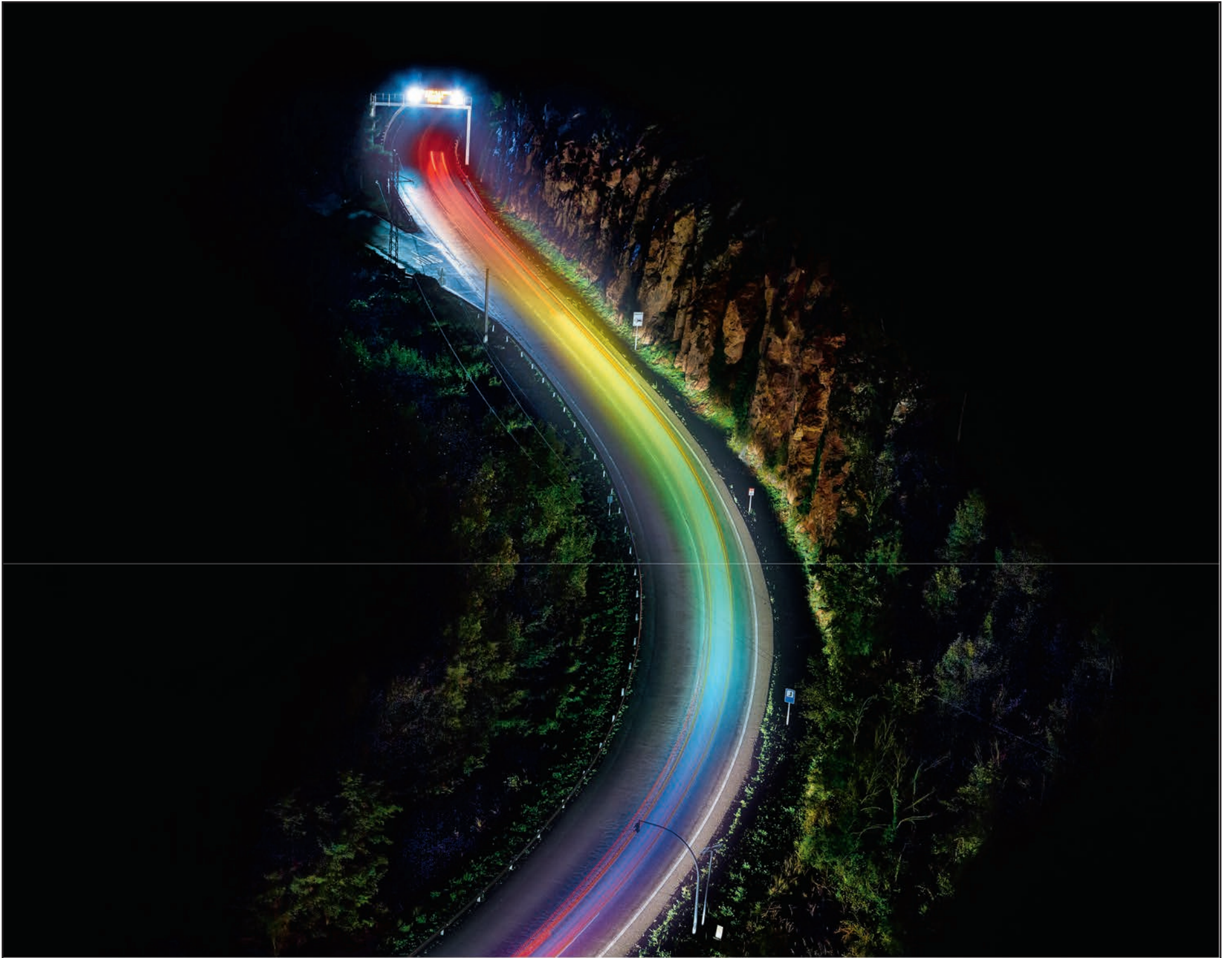
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Gov. Whitmer Declares June Pride Month, Attends LGBTQ Town Hall at Affirmations

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Shortly after signing an official proclamation declaring June Pride month in advance of the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer attended a community town hall meeting at the Affirmations LGBTQ community center in Ferndale. Besides being a fixture in the local LGBTQ community, the center is also the largest of its kind in the state of Michigan. This visit also came on the eve before she opened her office to the introduction of an expansion to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include rights for the LGBTQ community. Before meeting the public, Whitmer was greeted by a toast delivered by Board President Mike Flores, delivered in honor of the Pride season, its semicentennial, and on behalf of members of the Southeast Michigan LGBTQ community and the Center.

"I was asked to make the toast today but cautioned to keep it short, so here we go: happy pride," Flores said to a cheerful crowd. "Everyone always asks, 'Why does Pride continue to be important?' It's very simple: Pride allows us to honor the past, Pride allows us to celebrate community, but, more importantly, pride allows us to continue building bridges. Since January of this year, Lansing has sent very strong signals that they are interested and focused on building bridges, bridges focused on opportunity, bridges focused on equality for all Michiganders, and I'm here to say that Affirmations is extremely proud to be a partner with Lansing in building bridges."

Heartfelt Introductions

After taking time to connect with board members and distinguished guests of the Center one-on-one, Whitmer made her way to the public town hall meeting. There, she was introduced by several speakers representing different aspects of the LGBTQ community who each individually addressed the significance of her visit. Affirmations Executive Director Dave Garcia started things off, calling Whitmer a needed ally in a time that has been antagonistic to the LGBTQ community.

"When we were bullied on the playgrounds of our youth, when you looked up and you saw your friends and they didn't do anything, that hurt worse than the bullies. And when that one person would step in when you were lucky, man, you were friends for life," Garcia said. "Well, we have our share of bullies even as adults — 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. comes to mind. Governor, I just want to say that we've looked up and we see an ally and a friend for



From left: Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and State Sen. Jeremy Moss fielded questions at the town meeting June 4. Top right photo: The Governor was greeted and toasted by Affirmations board members Cheryl Czack, left, Mike Flores and Anthony Sherman. Bottom right: The Governor, center, with elected officials (l to r) Ferndale City Councilwoman Melanie Piana, Oakland County Commissioner Helaine Zack, state Rep. Robert Wittenburg and State Sen. Jeremy Moss. Photos: Eve Kucharski

the first time in a very long time in the state of Michigan."

Jey'nce Poindexter, Equality Michigan transgender victims advocate and specialist for the Trans Sistas of Color Project, spoke next. She vocalized her support for Whitmer's dedication to the LGBTQ community overall during her time in office.

"I had a chance to connect with the governor far before she got popular and I had a chance to really talk with her about what her vision was and about what she expected to do with her powers in the administration," Poindexter said. "And I'm happy to say that she's credible, she's honest and she sticks to her word. That doesn't mean that she's going to do everything that we all like all the time, but we do know her heart, we do know that she's a woman of integrity and quite frankly, I trust her."

Finally, Sen. Jeremy Moss took the stage, the first openly gay member of the Michigan state Senate. He congratulated the Southeast Michigan community first in honor of the gains made in the 50 years since Stonewall occurred and emphasized a message from the late Harvey Milk who encouraged LGBTQ

people to advocate simply by living open and honest lives surrounding their sexuality. He then went on to talk about the significance of Whitmer's public support of the proposed expansion of Michigan's civil rights act to include LGBTQ people.

"So, this comes on the eve of an important day tomorrow, where we have an ally, a strong, vocal ally in the governor's office at last, and tomorrow she is opening up her office in the capitol to us as we introduce an expansion to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act," Moss said to a cheering crowd. "We are going to work to update our state's civil rights law to include discrimination protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression."

He underscored the strength of Whitmer's support, too, by pointing to how quickly she ensured that state employees could not be fired for identifying as LGBTQ.

"Not only is she true to her word by holding this event six months into her new administration, but I got a call on, like, day five of the administration that said, 'Jeremy, we're going to be at Affirmations on Monday, we need

you to come along.'" Moss said. "Because she on day seven, day seven of her administration, signed protections from discrimination for LGBT state employees. That was a day seven act. The last governor did something similar on the third-to-last day in his eight-year term. ... So, we have somebody who is fighting for us as if she were part of the community and that is just so refreshing and so different."

When Whitmer took the stage, she expressed her gratitude for her warm welcome and pledged to continue to fight for LGBTQ equality throughout the length of her term in office.

"We've made strides in terms of ensuring that people who actually work for the state of Michigan have real protection in their workplace and that is something that I was happy, thrilled to do, unilaterally. And if I could extend those same rights to everyone in our state unilaterally, you'd be damn sure that I would," Whitmer said. "But we need legislation to do it, we need to amend our state Constitution to enshrine true civil rights protections in the law for everyone who calls this state home, for everyone who is thinking

See **Whitmer**, continued on p. 12

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Ferndale Pride 2019. BTL Photos: Andrew Potter

Confetti, Rainbows and the Fight for Equality: Ferndale Pride 2019 Breaks Milestones

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Thousands of LGBTQ people from Southeast Michigan and beyond congregated on Saturday, June 1, to kick off pride month together at Ferndale Pride 2019. The ninth annual festival included a strong lineup of vendors from across organizations; performances from Southeast Michigan staples like Sabin and national acts like Shamir; activities ranging from a rock wall to face painting; and unprecedented support from both local and state politicians. The event began with an official address at the MotorCity Casino Main Stage by Ferndale Pride Executive Director Julia Music who thanked her team of volunteers, the local community and the city's politicians for making the festival possible.

"We know that Ferndale is a welcoming and affirming community. This commitment to inclusion comes from the citizens as well as our local government," Music said. "For the last nine months, volunteers from all across Southeast Michigan have worked to create a festival that educates, celebrates, spotlights talent, allows progressive businesses to flourish

and showcases the outstanding organizations that provide services to our community."

Farewells and New Beginnings

Music then announced that Ferndale Mayor Dave Coulter would be taking the stage for the last time in his official capacity as his term ends officially in January of this year. He used the time to reflect on the progress made over the course of the Ferndale Pride's existence in the city, citing the importance of the unique political presence in attendance this year.

"We have never had in the nine years that I've been Mayor and in the nine years that we've been doing Pride here, we've never had a statewide elected official at pride before. ... But we have not one but two statewide elected officials here to show their support including the first openly LGBT elected official at the statewide level in Michigan," Coulter said. "I mention them and the others because it's important to know. I'm a little old and when I ran for office in 2002 there were no Dana Nessel, there were no Jeremy Mosses, there were no people in the state legislature —

certainly not at the statewide level."

Coulter went on to say that this kind of LGBTQ visibility is important to ensure that future generations of LGBTQ leadership can be inspired and put forth more inclusive policies and have "role models and understand that this is possible for them."

"That if Dave Coulter can be the mayor of Ferndale and Dana Nessel can be the attorney general, then maybe I can be the governor someday, or the president someday, so it's so important that they are here," he said. "And by the way, our allies as well, so the Jocelyn Bensons and the Robert Wittenbergs and the Andy Levins. It's important that they stand with us, again, so that those young people know they're not alone and so they can go as far as their talents and their passions take them."

Coulter ended his address by giving a final thanks to those who have supported him during his time in office. Next, Jake Cunningham took the stage, Oakland County's first openly gay circuit court judge, giving a nod to the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. He spoke of the value of the existing progress made regarding LGBTQ equality but



Ferndale Pride organizer Julia Music

also emphasized the value of a continued work ethic toward ensuring full equality in the future. His sentiments were echoed by Sen. Jeremy Moss, who followed up with an address of his own.

"I'm excited about pride, I'm excited about the month ahead, I'm excited to at long last, finally, represent Ferndale," he said. "This is the first time that not only Ferndale has LGBT representation at the state level but I'm actually the first and, so far, sadly, the only openly gay member of the state Senate so we still have a

long way to go to get representation at the state level, but we are still pushing forward our issues, we are still moving the conversation and gaining allies every single day in the state legislature.”

He urged those in attendance to remember the deeply political roots of pride and reminded them of the existing holes in the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act which still does not protect the LGBTQ community.

“I’m so excited that we have someone in the governor’s office that support us, invites us into the discussion and gives us a seat at the table and that’s Gretchen Whitmer. On Tuesday we will be introducing an expansion to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to at long last include gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation as protected classes in the state of Michigan,” Moss said. “I will introduce the bill, we have great allies like State Rep. Robert Wittenberg who will be joining us in the governor’s office itself — that’s a big statement to make.”

Current Secretary of State and LGBTQ ally Jocelyn Benson followed after Moss’s speech, expressing her overall support and work to make services like ID procurement at her offices simpler for the LGBTQ community. The final political address of the day was from openly lesbian Attorney General Dana Nessel. She recounted her successes in targeting LGBTQ-related discrimination and hate crimes and listed some current and future projects.

“we are working fulltime to ensure that anybody who is targeted for a crime, a crime of bias based on their sexual orientation, based on their gender identity, that you will have a voice,” Nessel said. “we were asked by the Civil Rights Commission to reconsider an attorney general opinion that was issued last year by my predecessor which expressly excluded LGBTQ people from the Elliott-Larsen Act. I said two words to him: bring it. So, we are currently working on that opinion and I think it’s going to be issued just in time for pride month. ... And there’s plenty more where that came from.”



Top: Openly gay Ferndale Mayor Dave Coulter celebrates Ferndale Pride outside Affirmations. Coulter is not running for re-election and instead will make a bid for a seat in the Michigan state House in 2020. Dana Nessel is Michigan’s first openly lesbian Attorney General. She spoke at Ferndale Pride’s opening rally. Photos by Andrew Potter

Pride Starts With a (Confetti) Bang!

Immediately after the political addresses, confetti canons went off at the Affirmations LGBTQ community center marking the official start of the event’s festivities. Standing in the rainbow-filled street in front of the center, Executive Director Dave Garcia said he was thrilled to be back in his home state and in time for Ferndale Pride after having worked in Los Angeles LGBT Center for a period of five years.

“It’s great. I am so happy to be home for personal reasons, just to be close to family, but also this is my home,” he said. “I grew up here in Michigan, in the last five years I’ve learned a lot in Los Angeles but I always knew I’d come home and I wanted to bring what I learned at the largest LGBT center back here.”

That joy and support of Ferndale was visibly shared by attendees, too. Tyrone Thomas said he attended pride because of Ferndale’s welcoming and affirming character.

“There’s definitely a sense of community and a sense of home,” Thomas said. “And Ferndale has always kind of seemed like a very liberal very relaxed environment and definitely [has a] sense of community. Everyone is very welcoming and very happy.”

Pridegoer Mark Kindall agreed, saying that the ability to “walk around and be open” was what drew him to the festival this year.

Allies made their way out to support the LGBTQ community on Saturday, too. Jamee Perryman was walking through the crowd with her friend Danielle Gentner when she told BTL that she was in attendance to support her cousin.

“[She’s] gay and she will be here soon, so I’m here supporting her and her fiancé and just having a good time,” Perryman said. “I think it’s sad that pride has to be held, I think

we should all be celebrated all the time but the fact that there are people that don’t think that the people who are part of pride should be celebrated is a problem.”

“Because we’re all human beings,” Gentner added.

Vendors and Sponsors

Among the variety of vendors and booths present at the Festival this year, one highlight included the Sober Space put on The Center for Relationship and Sexual Health. Social Worker Mark McMillan said that this year was the first year that Ferndale Pride had a mental health organization sponsor the space.

“I think any type of public venue, festival, anything around today should have a safe space, if it’s not called a sober space, for those who may be struggling or in recovery to come,” McMillan said. “And this year, besides feeling safe, we’re offering a line of education not only for those who may need that extra bit of safety while they’re enjoying things but others as well to gain information about their loved ones, their family or maybe about themselves, too. Often, someone may not want to disclose and talk openly so that having resources available may help them to receive help at a later time.”

Also in attendance was the Gift of Life tissue and organ donation organization. Volunteer Pamela Bynum said that events like Ferndale Pride have been instrumental in ensuring that those in medical need, like the HIV-positive community, have been able to receive organ and tissue donations.

“It’s important to let them know that they’re human and that they’re important as well. Everyone else can donate and they can donate as well and last year we signed up about 278 people through this event,” Bynum said.

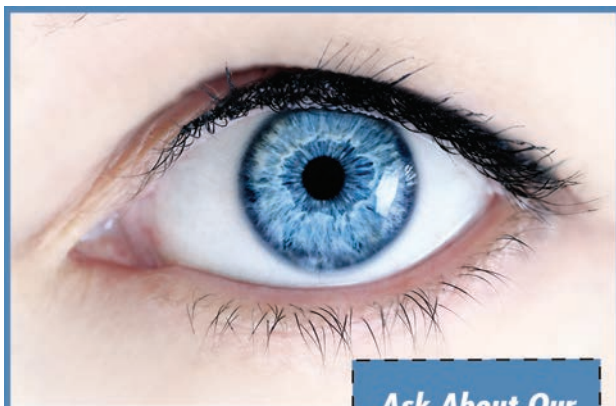
Regarding Sponsorships, Executive Director Music made sure to publicly thank every individual and organization that sponsored the year’s event.

“I personally would like to thank the Candle Wick Shoppe for having our backs since day one. They signed on as naming rights sponsors since the day we opened sponsorship, and we’re proud to have their business’s support financially and to have them as an equal-opportunity employer in the city of Ferndale,” she said. “Our Diamond Sponsors include State Farm, the Candace Eckham Agency, Mojo in the Morning, SMART Bus, Rosie O’Grady’s, Pop’s for Italian, One-Eyed Betty’s, Fifth-Third Bank, Axle Brewing Company, Baker College, The Graphics Geek and Ferndale Elk’s Lodge No. 1558.”

Though that list only includes a portion of those who contributed to this year’s Ferndale Pride event, perhaps ally Zoey Blase underscored the value of those sponsorships in the true spirit of pride, particularly on its 50th anniversary.


“I came to support my friends because I want them to know that I’m proud of them,” Blase said. “And I love them no matter what, for who they are.”





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► Whitmer

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Town Hall Q&A

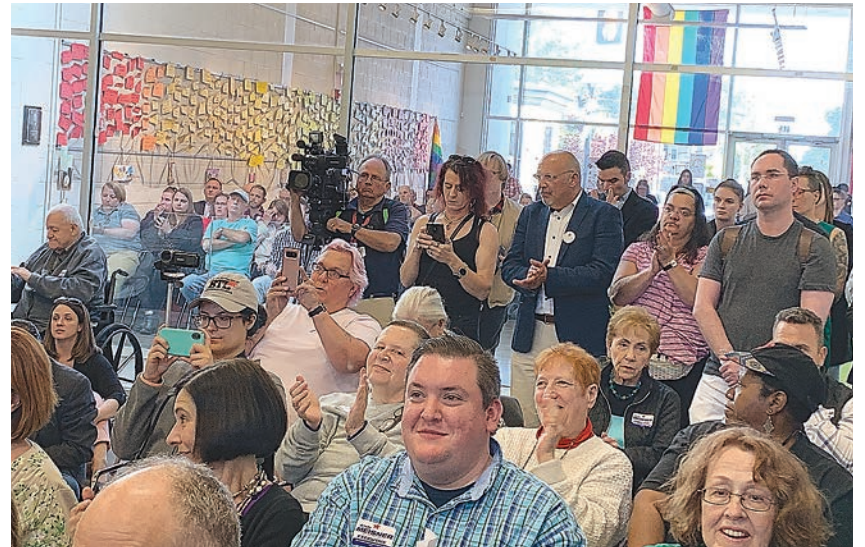
After Whitmer’s introductory speech, the town hall progressed into submitted questions from the audience directed at both Sen. Moss and Gov. Whitmer. When asked how to increase the involvement of youth in politics, Moss answered first. He said that current politicians would do well to learn from the movements made popular by the youth of today like gun rights, that involvement could be increased by providing better mentorship opportunities and increasing support for safe spaces like Affirmations that allow youth to be themselves openly and to talk about the issues that they feel are important. Whitmer agreed, adding that today’s young people inspire her.

“As the mom of daughters who are 15 and 17, there’s nothing that gives me more inspiration and more hope than talking to young people in their generation who don’t understand why it’s taken so long to have true equal rights and equal protections under the laws, who don’t take the bullying that we know exists and stand up to it,” she said. “The conversations that young people are having is what gives me more hope than anything. Whether it’s around climate change or civil rights, we have got a lot of work to do and encouraging young people to run for office, to participate, to support leaders, to learn from leaders like Moss [is vital].”

Regarding a question about Whitmer’s plans to support older LGBTQ adults, she acknowledged that older LGBTQ people have been significantly marginalized. She said that making strides toward equality like pushing to expand LGBTQ rights in Michigan and funding programs with all voices at the table is key to aiding all parts of the LGBTQ community.

“I am proud of the cabinet that I have created ... When having real voices around the table that are representative of different communities in this great state, [it] is how we drive an agenda that makes this a state where everyone can get ahead and that includes older members of the LGBT community as well as younger,” Whitmer said. “This is, I think, reflected in everything that we are putting forward in terms of setting the right priorities in this state and making this a place where people come to for opportunity. And no matter who you are you’ve got a path to prosperity in the state of Michigan.”

Whitmer was also asked about her support of the state’s public school districts, in particular, Detroit Public Schools and other underprivileged



Hundreds gathered at the Governor’s town hall on LGBTQ issues at Affirmations June 4.

regions that primarily serve populations of color. She said that improving the state’s education is one of her main priorities while in office and especially fighting Michigan’s overall bottom ranking in literacy that she plans to tackle starting with an increased budget.

“One of the things I’m most proud of [is] the budget that I introduced, [and] that there is true equity built into the education system for our children. So, DPS, having one of the biggest districts who are living in poverty has disproportionately the biggest investment made in the children of DPS: \$426 per student,” she said. “It’s the biggest investment in 20 years. Now, we’ve made every school district get the biggest investment they’ve seen in 20 years, but a district like DPS sees the biggest step forward because there is equity that’s built into this budget.”

This funding, she said, will help to serve the district in many ways like getting smaller class sizes and resources for teachers like social workers and counselors.

Asked also about ensuring that Flint residents receive clean drinking water, Whitmer said that she and the current Mayor Karen Weaver have partnered resources to remove all lead service lines in the city of Flint and are on track to do so by July while ensuring the availability of bottled water.

Perhaps the standout question of the night asked the likelihood of the modified inclusive version of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act passing. Sen. Moss answered, calling to attention the many gains in support that have been made, but also calling on the community to aid the process as much as possible.

“We have to introduce legislation that reflects our values and then we work for it to gain allies one, by one, by one. We have a Republican co-sponsor of this legislation but the reality is that we have very tough conversations to have with

the conservative Republican leadership of both the House and the Senate,” Moss said. “And this is where you come along; we need you to advocate, we need you to be our lobbyist for the LGBT community to talk to our colleagues, one, by one, by one.”

Moss also encouraged audience members to participate in Equality Michigan’s newly formed Lobby Day, “Where people from our community from every corner of our state come down or up to Lansing to meet with their representative and put a face to the issues that impact us. We want to make sure that not a single legislator can say, ‘I don’t know anybody from the LGBT community.’”

The town hall meeting concluded with a question about the value of safe spaces in schools and centers like Affirmations where LGBTQ youth can be open about their identity. Whitmer said that it’s incredibly important and inspiring that today’s youths are far more in touch with their identities and comfortable starting conversations that are political in nature.

“Young people across our state are very different from how we were back in the ‘70s when I was a second-grader. Young people write me about the roads. One drew a picture of a pothole that says, ‘Two hours later still falling,’” Whitmer said with a laugh. “They wrote about water quality, they wrote about climate change, they wrote about affordability of college. These were not the things I was thinking about as a second-grader. ... And I think that the stories of young people and the ability of young people to use their voice and to speak in a safe space at school or at Affirmations or in their homes is incredibly important. [It’s important] that we foster that and support it because that’s how change is made, through speaking our truth.”

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BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Hazel Park: “The Friendly City”

Just a few miles east and a few hours prior to the opening of Ferndale’s big event, Pride month kicked off in Hazel Park with two much smaller, but no less significant ones: First, a flag-raising at city hall, then a book reading by Lambda Award-winning author, playwright and former Hazel Park resident Frank Anthony Polito.

Under sunny, early summer skies, a crowd of about 40 gathered. Among attendees were city officials, state Rep. Robert Wittenberg and state Sen. Jeremy Moss. Hazel Park residents of all ages attended — LGBTQ and straight alike — including Brian and Clinton Lane. They moved to the city a little less than a year ago, and said they couldn’t be happier.”

“Hazel Park’s been a great place to live, said Brian Lane. “We got married shortly after moving in here, and when we came home, our neighbors decorated our lawn for us ... with signs that said ‘congratulations,’ there were balloons, they had a rainbow strobe light — the whole nine yards. And our neighbors are all straight. We’ve found it to be a super supportive, welcoming community.”

It’s the kind of place they feel comfortable holding hands while walking their dog Connor, and have both applied for city appointments: Clinton for the Arts Commission and Brian, the Downtown Development Authority.

Ed Klobuchar, Hazel Park city manager since 2002, made clear that tolerance and inclusivity aren’t new to Hazel Park — despite sometimes being referred to as “Hazeltucky” in the past.

“By raising the Pride flag in the city of Hazel Park, we are showing the world that Hazel Park is welcoming and tolerant. ... This is the second year that we’ve flown the Pride flag in the month of June, but this isn’t the first time the city of Hazel Park has stood up for the rights of the LGBT community.”

Klobuchar referred specifically to the resolution he authored in 2004, which was passed by the city council, in opposition to the Michigan Marriage Amendment. That was in response to a request made by Ferndale to join them in their efforts. While the amendment was opposed by the majority of voters in both communities, Klobuchar was quick to point out that the referendum not only passed in Michigan, it was approved by the majority of voters in Oakland County.



Getting ready to raise the rainbow flag honoring the start of June Pride Month. BLT photo: Ellen Shanna Knoppow

“So I want everyone to know that while raising the Pride flag may be a relatively recent phenomenon in the city of Hazel Park, standing up for human rights is something that we’ve been doing here for a long time,” he said, adding later that a flag-raising ceremony would become an annual event.

A Masterful Job by the Master of Ceremonies

The festivities were organized by Mike McFall, vice chair of the Downtown Development Authority and a member of the Arts Council. Having recently announced his candidacy for Hazel Park City Council, McFall stands to become Hazel Park’s first openly gay elected official. He and his husband arrived ahead of the crowd to set up for the event, and McFall explained why he spearheaded the effort.

“It was kind of unplanned that we actually flew the flag last year. Jeffrey Olivier had presented the flag to the city the night of the proclamation, and our city manager, Ed Klobuchar, decided we should fly the flag as well. So it was put up unceremoniously last year. And this year, I wanted a little more pomp with that, if I could,” he said with a laugh.

Olivier is a Hazel Park resident and founder of the Michigan LGBT Peer Support Network who was part of that morning’s lineup and who provided an update on his group. McFall added that he felt the official ceremony was important for the community in order to promote inclusivity in Hazel Park and celebrate the welcoming, friendly city it is.

In his remarks, Sen. Moss announced his forthcoming meeting with Gov. Whitmer regarding the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. When the other speeches highlighting the significance of the day concluded, all stood for photos. Without further ado, the Pride flag was raised.

Then Hazel Park native Frank Anthony Polito stood at the lectern. Having lived for many years in New York, the writer and his partner now reside in Pleasant Ridge.

“I can’t even believe that I’m standing ... in Hazel Park in front of a gay pride flag, because I grew up here 30-something years

See **Hazel Park**, continued on p. 16

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State Sen. Jeremy Moss addresses the crowd. BLT photo: Ellen Shanna Knoppow

► Hazel Park

Continued from p. 14

ago, and I felt so alone, and so isolated, and so unloved, and so un-proud to be the person that I was at that time,” Polito said. “And to have all of you here, in my hometown, celebrating with me, all of us together — it just means so much to me, and I was to thank you all. You’ve made a little gay boy’s dreams come true.”

After Party at the Library

At the library adjacent to city hall, about 18 people came to hear Polito read from his first novel, “Band Fags!” Reviewed by Between The Lines in 2008, it’s a coming-of-age story set in the mid-’80s about best friends from opposites sides of town who both attend junior high in Hazel Park. Aside from Varsity Band, the two have nothing in common — or do they?

Polito, who is also a trained actor with years of experience in theater, read from a chapter about the protagonist’s first experience at a local gay bar — think teenagers sneaking out the window late at night and underage drinking. Replete with period details, many audience members commented afterward about such mid-’80s memorables as the hairstyle of Simply Red’s lead singer, and every adolescent’s must-

have: a Swatch watch. (writer’s note: mine was clear plastic.)

Polito chatted with city council member Alissa Sullivan and others following the reading. Elected in 2017 on campaigns that encouraged better representation of Hazel Park’s diverse community at all levels, both she and Mayor Pro Tem Amy Aubry were the top-two vote-getters and residents were clearly receptive to their message. Sullivan, who is also vice chair of the arts council, expressed interest in pursuing an idea that Polito proposed for a writing workshop.

Speaking to BTL as the crowd was leaving, Polito commented that the overall experience that morning was validating, not to mention emotional. That while members of the LGBTQ community can accept themselves and find support among chosen family, for him, Hazel Park’s public acceptance was different.

“For me, growing up, I wanted other people who weren’t like me to accept me,” Polito said. “And so now, to feel like I’m accepted by the larger community, it’s the best.”

It took but a few moments for the Pride flag to ascend the flag pole, but the spirit and symbolism of the morning will certainly be long-lasting, and deeply felt — not just for those in attendance, but for all who witness a rainbow flag flying over Hazel Park City Hall this, and every, June.

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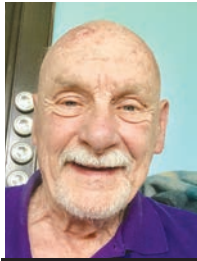
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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

A Slogan Come True Big Time!

Editor's Note: Contributor Charles Alexander fell ill last week and was unable to provide his usual weekly Parting Glances Column. This selection was chosen in honor of Pride month and Stonewall's 50th Anniversary. Everyone at Between The Lines wishes Alexander a speedy recovery.

"Gay is good. You are not alone." This was the slogan when the Affirmations LGBT Center opened its doors in Ferndale more than 20 years ago.

It was a bold statement to make at the time: reassurance for many cautious, confused, isolated young people in need of understanding, trained organizational support and a place to hang out.

I had almost forgotten these long-ago welcoming words. The slogan is not used very much these days; if at all. Truth of the matter, it's now both evident and obvious thanks to Affirmations' year-round presence and multifaceted LGBTQ services to our rainbow community.

That famed slogan was demonstrated in a big way recently on Saturday, June 2, for the 2018 Ferndale Pride event. This year, it took place along 9 Mile from Woodward Avenue to Livernois, and attracted over 10,000 participants, LGBTQ celebrants, allies, parents with children and well-groomed, well-behaved pets (for what it's worth, there were no Bible-thumpers lurking about, offering to pray for anyone wishing to change sexual orientation from LGBTQ to straight, and just maybe, straight to LGBTQ, now that the pope has given his seemingly worldwide religious sanction of one man's gayness).

I don't know the exact number of such pride events I've attended over the past 10 years. Let's say five per year, depending upon day and time — including Chicago, Royal Oak, Ferndale and Motor City Pride — but invariably at some point I'm visibly moved to tearful celebration, inward and occasionally outward.

I came out decades ago when we honestly had nothing much special to be proud of. Except our closeted friendships.

I attended Ferndale Pride with my good friends, Gordon Price and Ron Miotke, partners now for over 20 years (Ron provided strong, sustained leadership services to the Triangle Foundation along with Jeffery Montgomery. For Ron and Gordon it was another opportunity to celebrate their shared gay life by once more in public holding hands as they walked together).

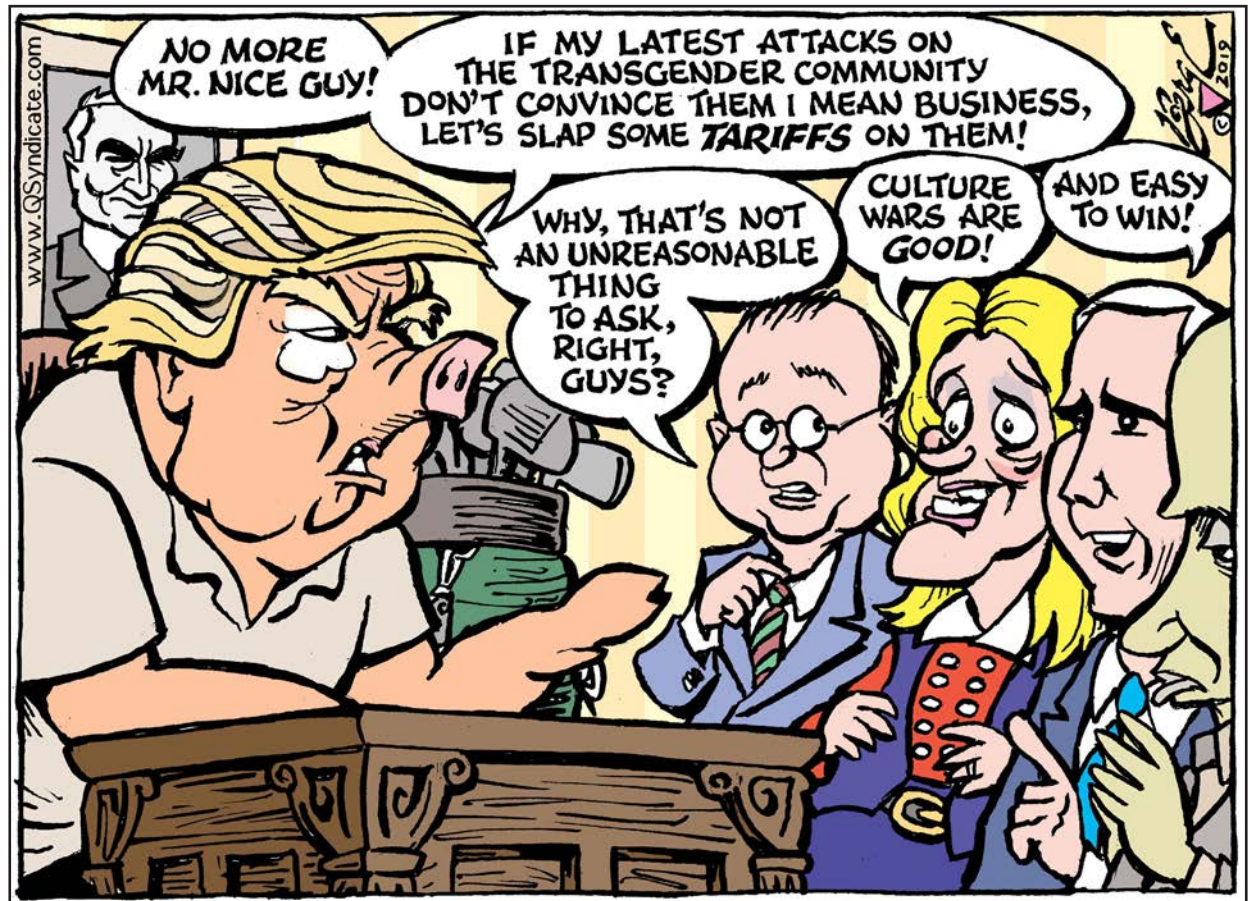
At my age I can only do so much walking before getting quickly fatigued, so as Ron and Gordon walked the extra blocks of this year's Ferndale Pride event, I decided to sit and rest a bit at the Affirmations LGBTQ Center.

When I sat down, it was half an hour before the pride prom was to begin there. I borrowed a chair from a SAGE table that was being disassembled, and took visual notes. Seniors making space for rainbow youth.

Through the doors and past me came many happy, excited young gays, lesbians and trans youth. I knew they were happy to be there. There was such evident joy. Such a sense of belonging. With many, too, were their parents.

Supportive. Happy that their children, their teen gay sons and

See next page



Viewpoint



Get Your Pride On: Celebrating 50 Years Since Stonewall

BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

It's June and pride is busting out all over!

This year's celebrations are just a little brighter as we also celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising.

It may have seemed like a spontaneous spark but there had been discontent and anger in the LGBTQ community before June 1969. It was a series of injustices, the systematic oppression of LGBTQ people that had gone on for years.

The Stonewall Uprising was just the tipping point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the United States and is widely considered to constitute the most pivotal event leading to the modern fight for LGBTQ rights.

Most of us have heard the account of the events that June in 1969. The six days of demonstrations by the LGBTQ community that began in the early morning hours of June 28 at the Stonewall Inn in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of New York City.

Many of us have made that pilgrimage, getting off at the Christopher Street/Sheridan Square subway stop and taken the short walk to Christopher Park with its sculpture of four

figures honoring the gay rights movement and the events at the Stonewall Inn opposite the park.

It is history, our history, but like most of history, it is full of contradictions.

The monument of four figures paying tribute to the Stonewall Uprising is of two men and two women, all painted white doesn't even hint at the contributions of trans women or people of color who were at the vanguard of the gay rights movement. It was many black and Latino youths who fought to be seen, heard and respected at New York's Stonewall Inn but their stories and their voices were often erased from accounts.

However, this is being corrected and soon the world's first monument paying tribute to transgender activists Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, both women of color, for their roles in leading the gay rights movement will be erected in New York.

Recently Pastor Matthew Bode of Zion Lutheran Church in Ferndale asked local activists, "What does Stonewall mean

Creep Of The Week

Donald Trump

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Donald Trump is the most anti-LGBTQ president in recent history. While past presidents might very well have hated LGBTQ people more, Trump has certainly been the most openly hostile.

So forgive me if I am very not impressed that Trump Tweeted a recognition of Pride Month. I'm also not super impressed that Trump's online merch store is selling a T-shirt that reads "LGBTQ for Trump" in rainbow letters.

Actions speak louder than words. And nothing about the Trump presidency has been positive for LGBTQ people.

Let's take a look at Trump's Tweet, posted May 31:

"As we celebrate LGBT Pride Month and recognize the outstanding contributions LGBT people have made to our great Nation, let us also stand in solidarity with the many LGBT people who live in dozens of countries worldwide that punish, imprison, or even execute individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation. My Administration has launched a global campaign to decriminalize homosexuality and invite all nations to join us in this effort!"

First of all, Trump did not issue an official proclamation that June is Pride Month, unlike Obama. So Trump is neither "celebrating" nor "recognizing."

It's the next part that gets interesting. Trump claims he wants to "stand in solidarity" with LGBT people who live in places that "punish, imprison, or even execute" them, and he invites all nations to join his administration's efforts to "decriminalize homosexuality."

What he's actually saying here is, "Hey LGBTQ Americans. It's not like we're throwing you in jail and putting you to death. So quit yer complaining."

He's also saying, "Don't look at the ways my administration is hurting LGBTQ people in America. Look at places like Syria where gay people are pushed off of buildings! We're not as bad as the Islamic State!"

And it's true. The extrajudicial killing of LGBTQ people is not currently legal or government sanctioned in the U.S. — but that's a pretty low bar.

Trump isn't necessarily trying to make his administration look better on LGBTQ issues. He's highlighting some of the most heinous actions in predominantly Muslim countries under Sharia in order to paint all Muslims as violent and hateful.

Iran is the perfect example. Homosexuality is punishable by death there. Which is beyond reprehensible. We should absolutely be horrified by this. But does the Trump

Administration really care about the lives of LGBTQ Iranians? I highly doubt it. What the Trump Administration does care about, however, is portraying Iran as a backward country full of violent extremists. That makes it just that much easier to sell the American public on going to war with Iran or dismissing the effects that harsh sanctions have on civilians there.

Most folks can see right though Donald Trump, though he has some of his supporters worried.

Bryan Fischer says that Trump is making a big mistake.

"If the president's advisers think this is going to cut any ice with LGBT activists, they haven't been paying attention," Fischer writes on the American Family Association website. "Gay activists are hostile, implacable and vengeful toward their political adversaries."

Imagine that, gays being "hostile" and "implacable" when it comes to people who want to deny us our very humanity, who want to control our sexuality and gender expression and who want to dismantle our families. I just can't imagine why we're so darn stubborn.

"President Trump is simply and badly wrong to grab the rainbow flag and cheerlead the global LGBT parade," he writes.

Is Fischer naive enough to think that Trump is really the Grand Marshal of Global Pride? Probably not. Though the idea that Trump would in any way acknowledge LGBTQ people with even the most tepid support enrages him.

"Because homosexuality is immoral, unnatural and unhealthy, it is a practice that no rational society should ever embrace, celebrate, subsidize or celebrate," Fischer writes.

Nice. But please tell me again how "hostile" LGBTQ people are toward pathologizing our lives and the wholesale denial of our right to exist.

But it seems pretty clear that Fischer, who also hates Muslims, knows what game Trump is playing.

"Outside of Muslim countries, the death penalty for homosexuality is largely a myth," he writes. "For instance, there is not even one confirmed example of a homosexual being put to death in Victorian England, not one."

It all comes down to demonizing Muslims. And glorifying Victorian England? I mean, "not even one confirmed example of a homosexual being put to death?" Sounds very on-brand for Trump. By all means, hand Trump a rainbow flag and put him in a time machine with a one-way ticket.

It's June and pride is busting out all over! This year as we celebrate across the state and country let's bring our full selves, in all of our glorious, intersectional, rainbow colors to the party.

► Viewpoint

Continued from p. 18

to you and the community you serve/come from?" His question made me think how all my intersections as a black, gay, woman had come full circle in these past 50 years.

The turbulent '60s held many flashpoints for LGBTQ, women's and black liberation that in some ways set each group off on its own separate path. Around the time of Stonewall, my concerns were more about black pride than gay pride.

I had been aware of and known family members and friends of the family who were gay. Although it was acknowledged that they/ we were "different," when we all got together the common thread of oppression, racism and discrimination because we were black took precedence.

At the same time, equal rights and greater personal freedom touched on every area of my experience as a woman — including politics, work, family and sexuality.

While the young street kids fought to be seen, heard and respected at New York's Stonewall Inn, many black youth walked the streets of the nation's cities singing, "Say It Loud – I'm Black and I'm Proud," and emerging women/feminists marched across the country to "I Am Woman (Hear Me Roar)" - all wanting to be seen, heard and respected, too.

We were young but that passion to "fight the power" that oppressed us, in all of our

identities, burned brightly.

So "What does Stonewall mean to me and the community I serve/come from" as we celebrate the 50th anniversary?

It's a reminder that we must stand up to oppression and fight the powers that be that would turn back the hands of time.

It reminds me that we – LGBTQ, black, brown, women, all of us — are stronger together, celebrating our differences but stepping out of our silos to fight together for equality and justice for all.

And, as for the community I serve/come from, well, if we do not learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it and condemned to repeat our mistakes.

It's June and pride is busting out all over! This year as we celebrate across the state and country let's bring our full selves, in all of our glorious, intersectional, rainbow colors to the party.

Thank you, Marsha P. Johnson, Stormé DeLarverie, Tammy Novak, Sylvia Rivera and all the others who took to the streets 50 years ago and sparked the flame at Stonewall that led to our rights, victories and fight today. We stand on your shoulders!

In Pride, together we rise!

Michelle E. Brown is a public speaker, activist and author. Her blog radio podcast TAGLINE "Collections By Michelle Brown" airs every Thursday at 7 p.m. Current and archived episodes can be heard on Blog Talk Radio, iTunes, Stitcher or SoundCloud. Follow her on Facebook at facebook.com/CollectionsByMichelleBrown

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 18

lesbian daughters and children in transition had opportunity for the start of fulfilling lives, careers and loving partnerships.

Thank you, Ferndale Pride! Thank you Motor City Pride! Thanks to the hundreds of 2018 Prides across America! Special thanks to Affirmations! Gay <ITAL is> Good! You are indeed Not Alone!

Charles Alexander is prolific both as a BTL columnist (700-plus columns) and as a well-known LGBTQ 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.



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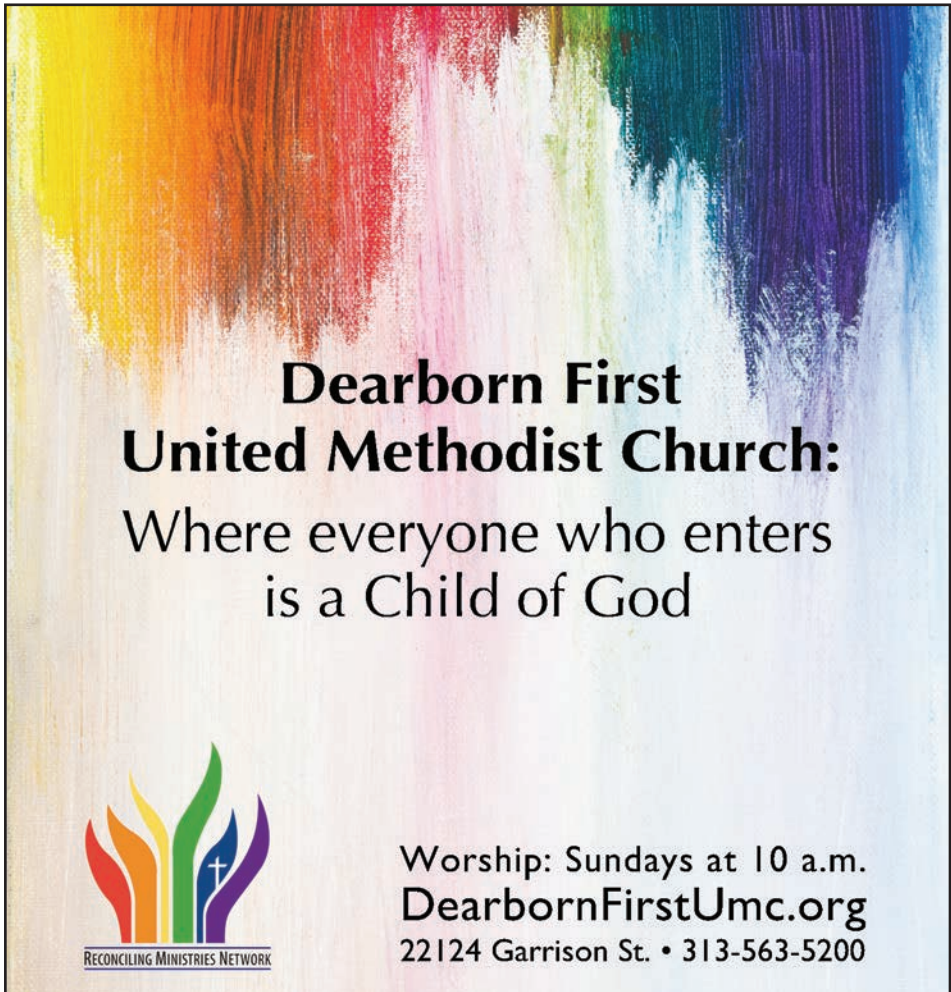
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LOVE Wins

Between THE Lines

The Episcopal Diocese of Michigan Elects First Openly Gay Female Priest as 11th Bishop

DETROIT - The Episcopal Diocese of Michigan announced last week the election of The Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry, rector of All Saints', Chicago, as its 11th bishop diocesan.



Perry is the first woman and first openly gay priest to be elected bishop since the diocese was formed in 1836. This also marked the first time in the history of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan that the slate of candidates was comprised entirely of women.

Perry was elected on the fifth ballot of the Special Electing Convention held today in Detroit. She received 64 clergy votes and 118 lay votes. A minimum of 55 clergy votes and 94 lay votes were necessary for election on that ballot.

The other nominees were:

- The Rev. Dr. Grace Burton-Edwards, Rector, St. Thomas, Columbus, Georgia

- The Rev. Canon Paula Clark, Canon to The Ordinary & Canon for Clergy Development, Multicultural Ministries and Justice, Diocese of Washington

- The Rev. Canon Ruth Woodliff-Stanley, Canon to The Ordinary, Diocese of Colorado

"I am in awe of the trust you have placed in me, and I will, with God's help, do all I can to live up to this trust and this honor," Perry said following her election, "I am so excited about the ministry we are going to do together. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you."

Perry holds a holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary and a Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She was ordained deacon and priest in 1990 in the Diocese of Newark. Perry and her spouse currently reside in Chicago and will relocate to Michigan this year.

Pending the consent of a majority of the bishops with jurisdiction and a majority of the Diocesan Standing Committees, Perry will be ordained and consecrated on Feb. 8, 2020, in the Diocese of Michigan. The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church, will serve as the chief consecrator.

Perry will succeed the Rt. Rev. Wendell N. Gibbs, Jr., who has served as bishop since 2000 and will retire in at the end of 2019.

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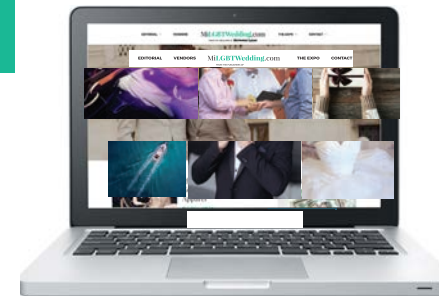


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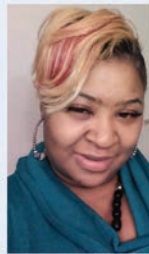
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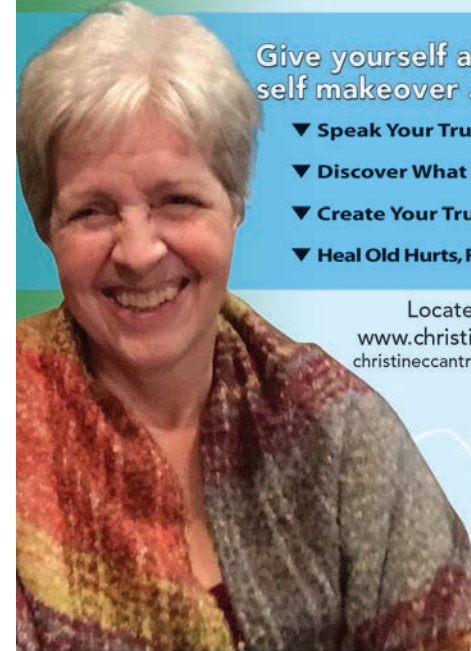


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Gov. Whitmer with LGBTQ Caucus and Elliott-Larsen supporters on June 4. BTL photo: Roxanne Frith

Whitmer Joins LGBTQ Caucus Call to Expand Elliott-Larsen Protections

BY BTL STAFF

LANSING — Today, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, along with Sen. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield), and Reps. Jon Hoadley (D-Kalamazoo) and Tim Sneller (D-Burton) — members of the Michigan Legislature’s LGBTQ Caucus — renewed the decades-old call to expand the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act by adding sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes.

The bills introduced by the legislators would protect LGBTQ individuals from discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations and more.

“It’s time to get Michigan on the right side of history. In the year 2019, nobody should be fired from their job or evicted from their home based on who they love or how they identify,” Gov. Whitmer said. “If we’re going to attract the talented workforce our businesses need to create jobs and grow our economy, we need to continue to make Michigan a state where everyone can come to for opportunity.”

If enacted, Michigan would join 20 other states that protect individuals from discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

“Next month, LGBTQ Americans will mark 50 years since the Stonewall Uprising, and still the community here in Michigan doesn’t have the basic discrimination protection that pioneering activists fought for all those years ago,” Sen. Moss said. “Our community finally has representation in both chambers of the Michigan Legislature and an advocate in the governor’s office committed to seeing this process through.”

Not only is supporting LGBTQ workers a move toward fundamental equality but it would strengthen Michigan’s economic position. A

study from the Williams Institute, a UCLA Law School think tank, found LGBTQ-supportive policies and workplace atmospheres lead to job commitments, better workplace relationships, better health outcomes and increased job satisfaction.

“As I’ve always said, extending legal protections to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Michiganders is a matter of basic fairness and justice,” Rep. Hoadley said. “The time is right to bring Michigan’s critically important civil rights laws into the modern age. No one in our state should have to fear losing their job or losing their home because of who they are or who they love.”

“I have always been proud of Michigan’s role in the fight for social progress,” Rep. Sneller said. “Updating the ELCRA and extending these important protections to LGBTQ Michiganders would serve as a symbol of our continued commitment to those values and show the nation that Michigan will not stand for discrimination of any kind.”

Equality Michigan has called upon the legislature to move forward in a bipartisan manner by taking swift action in 2019.

“The time has come to modernize Michigan’s policies to make it clear that discrimination against LGBTQ people will not be tolerated,” said Erin Knott, Executive Director of Equality Michigan.

Michigan residents who believe they’ve faced discrimination can file complaints with the Michigan Civil Rights Commission as of May 2018, but the legal grounds for such complaints remains uncertain without explicit changes. The governor has also issued an executive directive to extend discrimination protections for state employees and contractors, but there is nothing yet to protect individuals outside of that scope.

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US Supreme Court Denies Appeal Challenging Trans-Inclusive Policy

BY LISA KEEN

It was a discernible ray of light flashing across an otherwise dark and stormy sea: The U.S. Supreme Court Tuesday, May 28, declined to accept an appeal from a group of students challenging a public school's policy of allowing transgender students to use the high school restroom and locker rooms consistent with their gender identity.

After weeks of escalating attacks on the rights of transgender people by the Trump administration, the Supreme Court announcement in *Doe v. Boyertown* felt like a victory to LGBTQ activists.

"This is an enormous victory for transgender students across the country," said Ria Tabacco Mar, senior staff attorney for the national ACLU's LGBT & HIV Project. The ACLU represented a coalition of LGBTQ youth groups which intervened in the lawsuit to support the Boyertown, Pennsylvania, school district's pro-transgender policy.

But it's also a confusing development. While Tuesday, the Supreme Court left intact a pro-transgender student policy, two years ago, it essentially vacated one.

In the 2017 case, the high court vacated a 4th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruling in *Gloucester v. G.G.* in which the lower court ruled that Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972—which prohibits discrimination based on sex by federally funded educational institutions—also prohibits discrimination based on gender identity. The 4th Circuit ruling would have allowed the transgender student in a Gloucester, Virginia, to proceed with his challenge against the school district's policy of requiring students to use a restroom that corresponds with the gender listed on the student's birth certificate.



In the current case, the high court simply refused to hear the appeal of a 3rd Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruling that upheld the constitutionality of a Boyertown school policy that allowed students to use a restroom of the gender with which the students identify.

In the Virginia case, Mar said, the transgender student "was asking for his school to allow him to use the same restrooms as other boys." The Pennsylvania lawsuit was "the inverse," she said because it asked that "school districts be forbidden from allowing boys and girls who are trans to use the same restrooms and locker rooms as other boys and girls."

John Doe and other students challenging the pro-trans

Boyertown policy argued that it violates their right to privacy and amounts to sexual harassment.

"No court has accepted the notion that transgender people are a threat to others," Mar said. "In the few challenges that have arisen to transgender-inclusive policies, courts have uniformly allowed those policies to continue. Today's announcement from the Supreme Court reflects that consensus."

Eden Heilman, legal director for the ACLU of Virginia which is representing the transgender student in the second-go-round of the Gloucester case, said Tuesday's Supreme Court action in the Boyertown case is a "victory for trans students because the [lower] court upheld a decision that found trans-inclusive policies do not violate anyone else's privacy rights."

But she said the ACLU will continue to press the Virginia case "because we are asking the district court to decide schools are not only permitted but required to treat trans students equally under the law."

Asaf Orr, Transgender Youth Project Staff Attorney for the National Center for Lesbian Rights, also called Tuesday's Supreme Court action a "major victory" for transgender students.

"The vast majority of people in this country support equal treatment of all students, including those who are transgender," Orr said. "The lawsuit challenging Boyertown's supportive school policies was a political stunt brought by an anti-LGBTQ organization whose agenda is to strip transgender people of basic legal protections. The lower courts rightly rejected that hateful agenda, and we are relieved that the Supreme Court has allowed their decisions to stand."

Tuesday's action stood in stark contrast to a long litany of attacks by the Trump administration against transgender people, including students. In May alone, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has proposed to revise regulations under the Affordable Care Act that would allow discrimination based on gender identity in health care. Earlier in the month, HHS finalized a rule to enable health care providers to refuse certain services by citing personal religious and moral beliefs. And the Department of Housing and Urban Development proposed a rule to allow homeless shelters receiving federal funds to turn away transgender people seeking help.

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SHOCKWAVES FROM STONEWALL:

Revisiting Gay Liberation in Michigan

BY TIM RETZLOFF

The Stonewall uprising had reverberated. Multiple nights of rioting against police in June 1969 sent shockwaves across the country and sparked gay organizing on a mass scale. A new, radical group in New York called itself the Gay Liberation Front, the “front” from the National Liberation Front, another name for the Viet Cong. Fervent demands for freedom supplanted polite pickets asking for rights.

The combustion of Stonewall was seemingly spontaneous, yet reflected a lot of pent-up rage. Many gay activists had already become emboldened by 1969. More militant ideas and feelings were already percolating.

They were volatile times. New Left rebellion, Black Power and a feminist resurgence were all in the air as opposition to the Vietnam War reached new heights.

In part a form of generational rebellion, in part a community coming out and into its own, Gay Liberation in Michigan left a lasting, largely untold legacy.

Michiganers now understood that under the rubric LGBTQ they felt galvanized to come

out and to take action. Some were motivated by ire at the straight strictures of society, some wished to be honest, some understood visibility as a key to asserting political and social change.

Yet while the years from 1970 to roughly 1974 marked major transformation, the turning points and individuals that made a difference have too often been forgotten.

I was typing up the Sunday church bulletin in December of 1969 and on the calendar, I see a note that says, “Gay Meeting.” So, I go to the priest ... and I said, “Daddy-o, what is this gay meeting thing?” And he said, “I don’t know what it is. One of the guys in the draft resistance group said. ‘Can we have a gay meeting here?’ And I said, ‘Well, whatever that is, if we can’t have a gay meeting here we might as well shut this God Box down!’”

—Jim Toy interviewed for the OutWords Archives.

Foundings

The origins of Gay Liberation in Michigan can be traced to a personal ad.

In October 1969, months after Stonewall and long before Grindr and other apps made meeting online a routine part of same-sex dating, a factory worker named Wayne King placed an ad in an anti-establishment newspaper called the Fifth Estate: “Gay radical, 27, wants to meet same 18 to 30. Masc. only. Box 631-A, Detroit, 48232.”

Within weeks King changed the ad. “Those interested in forming a ‘gay liberation’ group write Box 631A. ...” An initial meeting was set for January 1970 at St. Joseph Episcopal Church.

Within a couple months, according to minutes Jim Toy took as meeting secretary, 50 people on average were coming to meetings. Attendees reflected the city, multiracial, cross-cultural, co ed. Most were in their 20s. They initially called themselves the Detroit Gay Liberation Movement but soon decided on the Detroit Gay Liberation Front.

The statewide activism initiated by the Detroit GLF included raps, zaps, dances, a gay switchboard, newsletters, classroom outreach and a bail bond fund. It also came to encompass lobbying and old-fashioned electoral politics.

Gay Liberation in Michigan gained its strongest foothold in three main centers of gravity, Detroit, Ann Arbor, and the Lansing area. GLFs also formed in Battle Creek, Kalamazoo and Port Huron.

In March, Toy and others decided to start a group in Ann Arbor and without qualm



Dressed for Gay Dance at Wayne State. Photo from Franz Martin

embraced the name Gay Liberation Front. Activists at Michigan State adopted a less antagonistic moniker, launching the Gay Liberation Movement in April 1970.

Campuses, in particular, became hotbeds of gay activism. Besides U-M and MSU, early campus organizing began in 1970 and 1971 at Central Michigan University, Eastern Michigan, Grand Valley State, Wayne State and Western Michigan.

At the same time, Gay Lib groups met with resistance from the highest levels of university administration. In May 1970, when the Ann Arbor GLF sought to hold a Midwest conference at U-M, university president Robben Fleming denied use of school facilities. Student leader Jerry DeGriek, who had keys to the Student Activities Building, snuck GLF in and they held the conference anyway.

Two years later at MSU, university officials refused to allow the GLM to hang a banner at the Abbot Street entrance for Gay Pride Week. Word got back to the GLM that Vice President Jack Breslin did not want to advertise a club for men engaged in oral sex “on his campus,” only his language was reportedly more offensive.

Rivalries and differences of opinion led groups to fold and new groups to emerge over time. The Detroit GLF gave way to the Detroit Gay

Activists. Political divisions eventually ruptured the DGA, with one faction focusing on the Gay Liberator newspaper and another forming the short-lived Motor City Alliance of Gays.

Lesbians on Their Own

The West Michigan Gay Alliance in Grand Rapids was notable for having lesbian leadership and strong female participation, but was an exception among Gay Liberation groups in the state.

In other instances, women came out through feminism and many sought to organize on their own.

Trudi Sippola arrived at MSU from the Upper Peninsula in 1971, her first time away from home. In a recent phone interview, she explained how she found the campus Women’s Center and became involved there despite being warned she’d “run into lesbians.”

She thrived in the large consciousness-raising groups and from highly politicized dialogues, drafting political statements and developing lesbian-feminist theories to put into action. “I was in a pretty radical state of mind,” she said.

At some point Sippola realized she found

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Gay Liberation in Michigan

Tim Retzloff teaches history and LGBTQ studies at Michigan State University.

He is nearing completion of his first book, “Metro Gay: City, Suburb, and the Changing Map of Queer Detroit.”

Dr. Retzloff will be discussing Gay Liberation in Michigan at three upcoming public talks:

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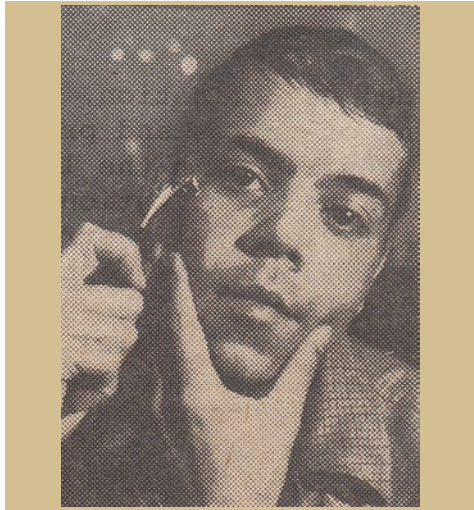
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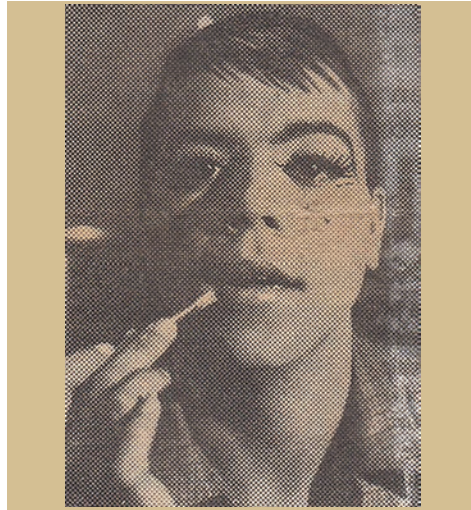
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A. Michael Weber, aka Sabrina: Photo from the Detroit Gay Liberator



some of the other women attractive.

She accepted an invitation to a lesbian gathering, where someone invited Sippola up to her bedroom.

"I didn't know you were gay," the woman said to her. "How long have you been out?"

"About 20 minutes," Sippola replied.

She soon moved into lesbian communes. In one small lesbian house she lived in, they displayed a large woman's symbol and fist as a taunt to the fraternity across the street.

Sippola was vaguely aware of Stonewall and had little interaction with the MSU GLM. For her, the early 1970s were important as a time for lesbians to get together on their own.

Organizations expressly for lesbians that emerged at the time included the Detroit Daughters of Bilitis, which met at Gay Whiteside's home in Dearborn Heights, the Radical Lesbians followed by the Gay Awareness Women's Collective in Ann Arbor and the Purple Perils in Lansing.

New Visibility

Gay Liberation in Michigan and elsewhere entailed a new definition of coming out. As historian John D'Emilio notes, before Stonewall coming out meant coming out into the gay world. During Gay Lib,

coming out came to mean coming out to everybody.

On April 15, 1970, at a large anti-Vietnam War rally in Detroit's Kennedy Square, Jim Toy became the first person to publicly come out as gay in Michigan.

As revealed by Detroit Red Squad files, a heated battle ensued during planning for the rally over whether to let someone from GLF speak.

Lincoln Park native and anti-war activist Kirk Essler was at the planning meeting. Speaking by phone last month, he recalled having told a few close friends he was gay, but GLF's demand for a speaking slot impressed Essler to the idea of gay politics. He soon met Detroit GLF member Ken Dudley and later became active in the Wayne State GLF, coming out in an op-ed in the South End.

Christopher Street Detroit '72, a week of events to commemorate the third anniversary of Stonewall in 1972, might be considered an act of collective daring. The celebration culminated with Detroit's and Michigan's first-ever Pride march. About 200 participants crowded a single lane of Woodward Avenue from Cass Park to Kennedy Square.

Susan Swope, who wrote for the Gay Liberator under the name Susan Williamson, was the sole woman to speak at the rally. Still heterosexually married while she increasingly embraced her lesbian self,

she worried her in-laws would see her on television.

"I thought I just have to do it. It's important, and if that happens it happens. And I remember standing up there and delivering that speech and being really nervous," she said in a 2011 oral history. "But of course, in the event, what got on TV was the drag queens. That's who always gets on TV when you have a gay march."

There were television cameras that roved around. I do remember that they picked out this guy in elaborate drag, the full gown, the full bit. And, of course, they asked him first, "Are you willing to be interviewed?" He said, "Yes." So, the question came, "Tell us your name and where you work." And in this deep bass voice he said, "My name is Charles Johnson and I work at Ford's." So, working-class gay men in Detroit were proud and assertive in a period when the gay movement was largely student based and often looked down on working people...

—Christopher Z. Hobson interviewed for the LGBTQ youth public radio program "Outcasting."

Media Breakthroughs

On local television, homosexuality was a novelty, an object of amusement and something to garner ratings. Detroit GLFers Sunny King, Ray Warner and Ken Dudley all appeared on The Lou Gordon Show, a program that relished controversial topics. Warner's family was so upset by his revealing his sexuality, that he began using Ray West as his movement name.

Alternative newspapers like the Fifth Estate, the Ann Arbor Sun and Joint Issue in Lansing covered gay activities with more seriousness. The mainstream dailies took notice, too. In October 1970, the Detroit Free Press Magazine did a lengthy report on "The Homosexuals of Detroit." Four years later, in November 1974, the Free Press Magazine ran a feature "Gay Women of Detroit."

Gay Lib activism was all over student newspapers, from the Michigan Daily at U-M, the South End at WSU and the Lanthorn at GVSU to the Eastern Echo and the Oakland Forward.

Gay people began to produce publications of

their own, as well, such as the Gay Liberator, Gayzette, and Gayscene. In Lansing, a gay newspaper called Sunflower lasted two issues. The Revolutionary Lesbians in Ann Arbor, for whom the Radicalesbians were not radical enough, published Spectre. It lasted six issues.

Starting in 1973, Gayly Speaking added gay and lesbian voices to the airwaves of WDET-FM.

Protests

The Ann Arbor GLF seemed most eager to take to the streets. In its first action, the group demonstrated in support of the campus Black Action movement. During the dispute with U-M president Fleming, burly GLF member Harry "Kitty" Kevorkian in drag crashed a formal tea held at the president's home.

An October 1970 FBI memorandum, later released under the Freedom of Information Act, outlined secret surveillance of the group. "It is to be noted that the above-captioned organization is small in number and ineffectual," an unknown agent reported.

In November 1970, when the Ann Arbor GLF and the Detroit GLF demanded to address the Episcopal Dioceses convention about the eviction of the GLF from St. Joseph, church leaders gaveled the convention to an early close.

For the Detroit GLF, decades of police harassment of gay men provoked much of their attention. In January 1971, 25 GLFers staged a demonstration in 5-degree temperature at the Murphy Hall of Justice. In April 1971, the group picketed the Detroit Traffic Court to protest the arrest for alleged homosexual soliciting of Michael Fylstra, one of the few local gay men willing to challenge police entrapment.

Detroit Gay Activists demonstrated against Hudson's downtown and at Oakland Mall in January 1972 for colluding with police who apprehended men cruising the department store's restrooms.

In September 1972, the Ann Arbor GLF picketed the Flame Bar for excluding transsexuals. A month later, the Michigan Gay Confederation, a coalition of groups from around Michigan, marched on the state capitol against Traxler Bill, which would have decriminalized sodomy, because legislation would have made no change in laws against cross-dressing.

Perhaps most disruptive, the MSU GLM helped instigate shut down of Grand River Avenue in May 1972 to protest continued U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

As Leonard Graff recalled in a 1994 oral history interview, GLM member Don Gaudard pretended to drop a contact lens in the middle of the intersection, it was Grand River and M.A.C. Several people scurried to the ground pretending to look for the contact, stopping traffic.

"A small crowd got to be a bigger crowd. 'What's going on?' 'What's going on?' 'We're



SHOCKWAVES FROM STONEWALL

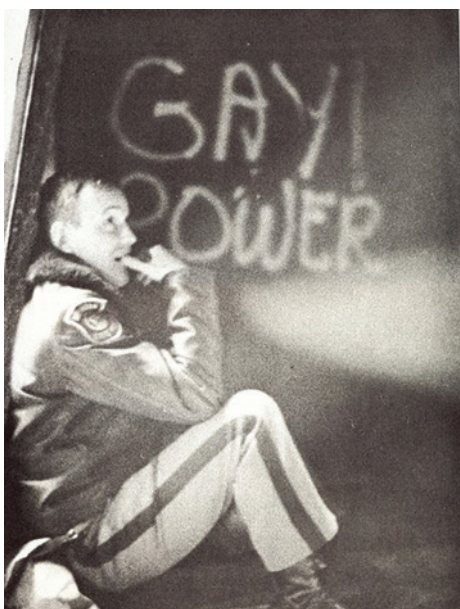
► Gay Lib in Michigan

Continued from p. 29

just looking for a contact lens,” Graff explained. “Then, ‘OK, let’s sit down. We’re going to have a blockade.’ The next thing you know, people are dashing off to get some friends and the streets were just filled with protesters. And we brought Michigan and Grand River to a stand-still for days. For days.”

We must realize that although some of us feel comfortable and believe ourselves to be liberated, as long as we quietly allow “other homosexuals” in “other places” to be arrested for inviting someone to bed or for cross-dressing; as long as we ignore the lonely desperation of other Gays who feel like degenerates because of the need to love; as long as we allow any Gay anywhere to be oppressed or discriminated against in any way — that not only are we perpetuating Gay oppression by our complacency, but we ourselves — no matter how safe we feel — are in jeopardy.

—West Michigan Gay Alliance newsletter.



Anti-war protest in East Lansing. Photo from the Gay Liberator

Creating Community

Gay Liberation succeeded in fostering new, often lasting institutions outside of bars and private friendship networks. Among these was the Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit, which came into being out of the Christian Caucus of the Detroit GLF.

MCC Detroit members chose not to take part in gay pride picnic in June 1972 for fear the FBI would be watching. However, in July 1973, under Pastor Tony Clemente, the congregation held a memorial service and benefit that raised \$800 for victims of the arson attack on the Upstairs Lounge in New Orleans.

In November 1971, U-M hired Cyndi Gair from the Radicalesbians and Jim Toy from the Ann Arbor GLF as Human Sexuality Advocates, what today is the Spectrum Center, the first such office in the U.S.

In June of 1972, the Green Carnation Community Center opened at 660 Virginia Park in Detroit. Later that summer, activists in Lansing launched a community center in a rented house at 117 S. Pennsylvania and the West Michigan Gay Alliance began a community center at 129 Fulton S.E. in Grand Rapids.

Similarly, Geneva House at 97 Geneva St. in Highland Park, a commune originally begun as the Geneva Street Theater House until the last of the straight residents moved out, served as a sort of community center for Detroit’s lesbian community into the mid-1970s.

However long- or short-lived these centers were, they embedded the idea of needing collective space to gather as a community, an idea that endured.

Internal Contention

From the earliest manifestations of Gay Liberation in Michigan, activists expressed genuine affinity and kinship. They sought solidarity and felt solidarity. Yet many did not



Palmer Park picnic. Photo from Merrilee Melvin

always earn solidarity.

Those who fell short were not so sensitive to multiple forms of oppression, or the realities of discrimination targeted at people for being women, gender non-conforming, black, Chicano or Chicana and Native American.

The still familiar fault lines of race and gender took a toll.

The Detroit GLF picket of the Murphy Hall of Justice precipitated the exodus. Most of the Black Gay Caucus left the group in anger because the protest statement emphasized police homophobia while omitting police racism. The upheaval left John Kavanaugh with a feeling of devastation.

“Their contention was: single issue. Let’s deal only with gay questions. Well, that’s a code word. What it means is let’s deal only with white male gay issues. Blacks and women realized what was being said and walked out,” recalled Kavanaugh in an oral history recorded in 1994. “I was chairing the meetings when they walked out. And frankly, these were friends that were walking out. It hurt very much.”

Ken Dudley was the only person of color to address the Christopher Street Detroit ’72 rally.

His speech encapsulated the chasm and insult felt among many local gay African-Americans.

“There are many black gays who are not marching with us today,” Dudley said. “That may be explained in part by the idea that black gay people march every day. If not by virtue of their gayness, then surely by virtue of their blackness.”

The “masculine only” preference in Wayne King’s original Fifth Estate personal ad reflected another fissure in the Michigan movement. In the Gay Liberator, A. Michael Weber repeatedly challenged negative attitudes toward transsexuals, the term then in use.

“Other gay people should realize transexually oriented people have long been the most isolated of all for most of their development,” Weber wrote.

Sexism seemed particularly glaring and rarely acknowledged among gay men. Merrilee Melvin, who was hired to organize events for Christopher Street Detroit ’72, felt detached working with them.

“I remember being in a room with a lot of gay men but sitting almost in the middle in this chair off by myself, trying to tell the men



what it felt like being a woman working with them and not being heard, not being taken seriously, not being seen,” Melvin shared in a 2011 oral history. “I remember being in tears. And I remember them looking puzzled at what everybody was talking about, too. It was hard. ... Because it’s like the gay men were my gay brothers.”

Lesbian activists from around the state confronted their gay male counterparts about the sexual divide at a meeting of the Michigan Gay Confederation in September 1972.

The sisters from Ann Arbor, Lansing, East Lansing, Grand Rapids and Detroit are unified in their strong convictions about protecting women’s rights within this Confederation. We are not going to allow the men to ignore our constituency. We can see no future in this Confederation as long as sexist attitudes continue to exist.

We are here today to voice our opinions and plans of action as women and Lesbians. Our primary aim is to end sexist attitudes, especially here in the gay community. In order to support this Confederation, you must join in our struggle to end this sexism.

—Statement to the Michigan Gay Confederation as published in *Her-Self* MGC unraveled shortly thereafter.

Lasting Achievement

Despite tumult and burnout, Gay Liberation in Michigan yielded some significant accomplishments.

In March 1972, East Lansing barred discrimination against gay people in city hiring. In July 1972, the Ann Arbor City Council enacted an ordinance prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing and public accommodations. In May, East Lansing followed suit with its own ordinance, though its did not cover housing. In November 1973, Detroit voters approved a new city charter that prohibited discrimination city-wide based on sexual orientation.

Gay Lib activists instigated these reforms, putting Ann Arbor, East Lansing and Detroit



Christopher Street Detroit '72 march. Photo from the *Gay Liberator*



Kathy Kozachenko. Photo courtesy of Bentley Historical Library.

among the national gay vanguard, models for other cities.

The years to come would show whether these were true achievements or gestures of begrudging tolerance.

Elective office, too, suggested slowly evolving attitudes.

In 1972, Don Gaudard ran as an openly gay

candidate for the East Lansing School Board. A year later, Connie McConnohie ran as an out lesbian for the Detroit City Council. Both lost. McConnohie’s rift with local Gay Lib activists, her prison record and her campaign slogan “Put a Real Man in Common Council” likely contributed to her loss. Gaudard and McConnohie nonetheless set an example.

Nancy Weschler and Jerry DeGriech hold the distinction of being the first openly gay elected officials in the country. They weren’t out when they were elected to the Ann Arbor City Council in April 1972 on the Human Rights Party ticket. Rather, they came out at an October 1973 council meeting when their colleagues refused to act on complaints that the Rubaiyat disco refused to allow women to dance together.

Human Rights Party candidate Kathy Kozachenko, in April 1974, became the first openly gay candidate to be elected official in the U.S. when voters from Ann Arbor’s Second Ward elected her to council. It was a game changer. On election night, she told her supporters, “Many people’s attitudes about gayness are still far from healthy, but my campaign forced some people at least to re-examine their prejudices and stereotypes.”

Coming out, telling people you were gay, was a hard thing to do in 1973. We lived in a society that still considered gays to be sick. Being openly gay meant risking your job and perhaps losing friends. It often meant harassment

by the local police, being excluded from public accommodations or being physically assaulted. When Jerry and I revealed that we were gay, it caused a stir on the Council and in the city. The other Councilors became more hostile. The mayor told Jerry he was ‘sick’ and he told me that I ‘took the cake.’

—Nancy Weschler quoted in the book *“Radicals in Power.”*

With the end of the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, and President Richard Nixon’s resignation from Watergate, political fervor began to wane after 1974.

In terms of gay and lesbian activism in Michigan, Brian McNaught, Sappho Sisters Rising, Lesbian Connection and the Leaping Lesbian, the Association of Suburban People, Metro Gay News, Nancy Wilson at MCC Detroit, the founding of the Michigan Organization for Human Rights in response to Anita Bryant, the Lansing Association for Human Rights, Moonrise in Flint, Lavender Morning in Kalamazoo, various chapters of Dignity and the Gay Community Services Center in Ann Arbor all took the movement in new directions.

Emerging from the shockwaves of Stonewall, Gay Liberation in Michigan, in turn, had reverberation of its own.

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PRIDE Stage

SATURDAY

- 1:00pm Out Loud Music Chorus
- 2:00pm Jharid
- 3:00pm Remembrance for LGBTQ+ Victims
- 3:30pm Sabin's Drag Revue with Special Guest RuPaul's Ongina
- 5:00pm Joey Suarez
- 6:00pm **Greyson Chance**
- 7:30pm Alise King
- 8:30pm DJ Nader
- 9:00pm Stage Closes

SUNDAY

- 1:00pm SingOut Detroit
- 2:00pm Accoustic Ash
- 3:00pm Boy Radio
- 4:00pm The Killer Flamingos
- 5:00pm **Tunde Olaniran**
- 6:30pm DJ Kevin Bailey
- 7:00pm Stage Closes

FESTIVAL Stage

SATURDAY

- 1:30pm Namoli Brennet
- 2:30pm I'm With Molly
- 3:30pm LVRS
- 4:30pm Lipstick Jodi
- 5:30pm Mae James and The Fort St. Union
- 6:30pm The Band Mint
- 7:30pm The Sympathy Orchestra
- 8:30pm Stage Closes

SUNDAY

- 1:30pm The Idiot Kids
- 2:30pm Crayfish Hunters
- 3:30pm Delia Kolanowski
- 4:30pm Laura Rain & The Caesars
- 5:30pm The Doables
- 6:30pm Stage Closes

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PYRAMID Stage

SATURDAY

1:00pm Phresh Syndicate
 2:00pm Solar Disco Force
 3:00pm Holmes and Act Natural
 4:00pm Furrilostar
 5:00pm Paytra
 6:00pm Alexyn Wonderland
 7:00pm Stage Closes

SUNDAY

1:00pm Lela XO and her band
 2:00pm Sam Tolson
 3:00pm Remington Taylor
 4:00pm J. Santino
 5:00pm Harding's Production Drag Show
 6:00pm Stage Closes



UNDERGROUND Stage

SATURDAY

1:00pm Detroit Deep Sessions-DJ DiscDetroit
 2:30pm TYLR
 4:00pm DJ DigiMark
 5:00pm DJ Knowledge
 6:00pm Jason Ricketts
 7:30pm DJ Jace
 9:00pm Stage Closes

SUNDAY

1:00pm DJ Tone
 2:30pm Nader
 3:30pm DJ Kevin Bailey
 4:30pm DJ Holographic
 5:30pm Haute 2 Death
 7:00pm Stage Closes



SATURDAY

Welcome Gates Open at 1:00pm

Festival Events 1:00pm - 8:30pm

**Four Stages of Entertainment
Featuring over 50 Artists!**

Over 120 Sponsors, Vendors, Non-Profits & Food Booths, plus thousands of LGBTQ+ people coming together for Equality!

1PM-5PM Family Area with youth activities and games See Page 29

3PM Remembrance for victims of LGBTQ+ violence

8PM Festival Entrances Close (No Admittance or Re-Admittance after 8:00pm)

9PM Festival Closes

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SUNDAY

Welcome Gates Open at Noon!

Festival Events Noon - 7:00pm

**Four Stages of Entertainment
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Noon 2019 Motor City Pride Parade Sponsored by Fiat See Page 29

1PM-5PM Family Area with youth activities and games See Page 29

6PM Festival Entrances Close (No Admittance or Re-Admittance after 6:00pm)

7PM Festival Closes

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Motor City Pride has another great lineup of entertainment this year. See schedule on pages 34 and 35 of this issue. File Photo: Tih Penfil

Motor City Pride 2019 Returns to Hart Plaza

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

It's the state's biggest Pride festival and this year it's bigger than ever. Motor City Pride takes place Saturday, June 8, and Sunday, June 9, in downtown Detroit's riverfront Hart Plaza.

"The plans are going well for the festival," said Dave Wait, chair of the Motor City Pride planning committee. "The initial interest has been higher than ever. Our exhibit booths sold out in May – and they have never previously sold out before the festival. We have several new sponsors that are helping us to plan a packed schedule of entertainment. And the parade has several new entries. All of this activity indicates that we will have another great year."

The LGBTQ Flag Flies High

Motor City Pride technically started on Wednesday morning with the annual LGBTQ Pride flag-raising ceremony. Though in previous years the flag has flown in the same plaza as the event, this year the flag will fly in Spirit Plaza, in front of the Coleman A. Young City County Building.

"This prominent location will connect the festival with the city and will allow someone

that is not attending the festival see that the City of Detroit is a strong supporter of equal rights," Wait said.

New to the festival this year will be a sports component.

"We know that our community has a wide range of interests, so we are adding," Wait said. "We are looking for more people to display pieces of art on one of the walkways at Hart Plaza. Motor City Pride is also branching out and adding sports activities as part of the festival. This year will have a three-on-three basketball tournament on June 8, with plans to add other sports next year. Plus, the Pistons and Red Wings are also participating in the parade."

This year's festival is designed to offer something for everyone. There will be a family friendly area open both days from 1 to 5 p.m. The area will feature face painting, dinosaur bone digs, game and other activities. For those wanting a quieter Pride experience, the Riverfront Patio offer an area to relax, enjoy the riverfront and listen to great music with a beverage in hand.

"The only real challenge this year is fitting in all of the new vendors and sponsors," Wait said. "This challenge will provide new opportunities for our community to connect with even more organizations and companies that support



The Motor City Pride Parade will take place starting at noon on Sunday, June 9, at the corner of Fort and Griswold. File Photo: Tih Penfil

equality."

Wait said his favorite part of Pride is meeting people who haven't attended it before because it reminds him of the value of the event.

"It moves me when I hear their stories and am grateful to be able to participate on this team that provides a welcoming space for people to be their authentic selves," he said.

Performance Highlight: Ongina

But the stars of the show, for many at least, are those of the actual shows that'll be at the event.

"We pride ourselves on being able to

See **Motor City Pride**, continued on p. 38

► Motor City Pride Preview

Continued from p. 37

provide five areas of entertainment,” Wait said. “All of these stages allow our entertainment team to assemble a great mix of acts from around the U.S. to perform, with both up-and-coming and veteran performers. The schedule offers a wide variety of genres with something to appeal to everyone.”

One of the most exciting acts scheduled to appear is Ongina. The onstage persona of Filipino-American Ryan Ong Palao, Ongina appeared on the very first season of “RuPaul’s Drag Race” back in 2009. Ongina touched many across the world when she revealed in the fourth episode that she was HIV-positive.

“The response was received very well,” Ongina told Between The Lines. “There were a few negative things and at first it would affect me really badly. But I grew a thicker skin and I know that my coming out, which I did for myself due to winning that challenge and being overwhelmed with emotions, gives other inspiration. Still, to this day, I receive messages about how that has helped others.”

Sadly, Ongina would go home in the following episode after losing a “Lip Sync for Your Life” challenge to BeBe Zahara Benet, who went on to win the competition. At the time she filmed “Drag Race,” Ongina said she and other competitors had no idea the low-budget show would go on to become a cultural phenomenon and a decade later, after a switch from LOGO to VH1, earn an Emmy for the category of Outstanding Reality Competition Program along with a few more for



Ongina will be performing on the Pride Stage Saturday at 3 p.m. For more information on Motor City Pride and other performers, visit motorcitypride.com.

RuPaul’s role as host.

Currently, season 11 of the show just wrapped. There have also been three All-Stars seasons as well.

“We, including the producers, had no idea [the show would become such a hit],” Ongina said. “But I’m so glad it is now mainstream because the show truly spreads love. RuPaul is an amazing icon and his successes are well-deserved.”

“Season 1 was raw,” Ongina continued. “Yes, content was edited to make an exciting TV show, but I think the show has evolved to something more. While they continue to make an entertaining TV show, it has also touched on many life issues with queens sharing their personal adversities and experiences which reaches behind the LGBT community. The show has also evolved in terms of competition and I think it’s much, much harder now than season one.”

Ongina said she credits the show with helping her become a true, professional drag queen.

“It has also helped me advocate for HIV and AIDS, which we continue to find a cure for,” she said. “Though accidental from my ‘coming out,’ I’m happy to use that moment as a platform to educate others about what it’s like to be a gay drag queen minority living with the virus.”

Ongina is currently involved in an amfAR campaign called Epic Voices. It seeks to find a cure by 2030 and re-engage the conversation about the virus.”

While her success on the show has allowed her to travel all over, Ongina said that performing at Prides is one of her biggest thrills.

“I love Pride festivals,” she said. “I believe the biggest I’ve ever done were Montreal and San Francisco. They were super nerve-wracking but amazing! The people are out there to celebrate being proud LGBT human beings and they are joined by their allies. The energy is so amazing, and I just feed off that.”



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Holland Pride Festival 2019 June 21, 22

BY BTL STAFF

Broadening its support and creating a larger festival that reaches beyond Holland are two of the goals of the organizers of this year's Holland Pride Festival on June 21 and 22.

Derek Hoehn and Sydney Sturm have taken over the helm of the annual festival, presented once again by Out On The Lakeshore LGBTQ community center. The duo said they have surprises in store for those who attend the two-day event.

"We want to create an event where all demographics feel included and to come out and support," Hoehn said. "We plan to do this by having a variety of activities and some new entertainment. We also want the festival to be larger than ever and get more support from the surrounding areas outside of Holland."

Like previous years, events will be held Friday night at the Park Theater and Saturday in Centennial Park. But Hoehn said they didn't want the fun to stop there, so they added a Pub Crawl Saturday night with 10 local businesses in downtown Holland.

Purchasing a Pub Crawl punch card for \$5 will get you one dollar off the first drink at each location. The punch cards are available during open hours at Out On The Lakeshore and will

also be available during Holland Pride.

"It is a great way to get more of the community involved and the entire town lit up," he said. "The other thing we were doing is reaching out to more vendors outside of Holland, for instance in Grand Rapids, and getting their support."

Live entertainment will be featured Friday night at the Park Theater, including Funny Girls, Mimi Gonzalez and Delilah DeWylde. The entertainment starts at 7 p.m. and ends at 11 p.m.

"It should be a lot of fun," noted Hoehn.

Saturday the entertainment will continue in Centennial Park with DJ Keller Shaw, Groove Party, and more. Vendor booths will be selling merchandise, food, or giving information about their group. Food vendors will include Hop Cat, Holland Police with Hudsonville ice cream, Uncommon Grounds, A&B BBQ and Kona Ice, Sturm said.

"I got involved with Pride as I am a strong advocate for those that are underserved as well as advocating and celebrating who I am as an individual," Sturm said. "It is my passion to better serve this world and give my efforts, as I can be visible for those who cannot."

In addition to all the fun, Hoehn said the festival also presents a time to reflect on all



of those who fought and are still fighting for LGBTQ individuals today.

"This is a time to remember and thank them for all their efforts and celebrate how far things have come from years past," Hoehn said.

Holland Pride 2019 Schedule:

Friday, June 21, at Park Theater
7 to 8 p.m.: Funny Girls
8 to 9 p.m.: Mimi Gonzalez
9:30 to 11 p.m.: Delilah DeWylde

Saturday, June 22, in Centennial Park
Noon to 1 p.m.: DJ Keller Shaw will start the event and also play during the breaks of other performances.

1 to 2 p.m.: Maciek the Magician
2 to 5 p.m.: Groove Party
5:30 to 9 p.m.: Pub Crawl

More information can be found by emailing outonthelakeshore@gmail.com.

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Grand Rapids Pride Center Hosting 31st Annual Grand Rapids Pride Festival

BY BTL STAFF

The Grand Rapids Pride Center, a local nonprofit organization that empowers the West Michigan LGBTQ community through supportive services and awareness, will be hosting the 31st Annual Grand Rapids Pride Festival on Saturday, June 15, from noon to 10 p.m. at Calder Plaza, 300 Monroe Ave.

The festival, which is one of the largest one-day events in Grand Rapids, will bring together LGBTQ community members, businesses, organizations, and allies to celebrate diversity and inclusion. The theme of this year's event is "Proud To Be," which encourages attendees to celebrate who they are "Proud to Be!"

Festival attendees will enjoy 100+ vendors, 10 food trucks (including B.D.'s BBQ, Patty Matters, Pressed in Time and Underground Cookie Co.) and beverage options from Bell's, who is serving as the Official Beer Sponsor for the festival. There will also be a Community Stage presented by the Drunken Retort from noon to 5 p.m. that will feature local artists performing spoken word, slam poetry, music and more.

"The Pride Festival is something that people in Grand Rapids look forward to every summer and we are so excited for this year's event," said Thomas Pierce, Executive Director of the Grand Rapids Pride Center. "Between the amazing musical performers, 100+ vendors, and family friendly activities there will truly be something for everyone. This year's festival will be a wonderful celebration of diversity and inclusion."

The main attraction for this year's Pride Festival will be the main stage musical performances from Mýa, the Grammy Award Winning artist who collaborated on the chart-topper "Lady Marmalade"; MAX, iHeart 2019 Best New Pop Artist nominee known for his hit single "Lights Down Low"; and Sizzy Rocket, singer and songwriter best known for her 2016 debut album "Thrills." Performances will begin at 6 p.m. on the Main Stage.

Meijer will be presenting the "Meijer Family Fun Zone" in partnership with IBM, Capgemini, Kellogg and other community partners: Grand Rapids Children's Museum, Children's Advocacy Center and UICA. Fun Zone guests can also enjoy free entry to UICA, member pricing on UICA films, and \$2 off admission to the Grand Rapids Children's Museum.

Tickets for the festival are \$8 for General Admission and \$50 for VIP. The VIP tickets provide festival-goers with access to the VIP lounge, catered food, a complimentary drink and front-stage, up-close access to all entertainment. Children 12 years old and younger can enter the festival for free. Tickets can be purchased online at grpride.org/festival or the day of at the event. All proceeds from the event will support the Grand Rapids Pride Center.

The Grand Rapids Pride Center will be hosting multiple events throughout Pride Month. For more information on upcoming events, visit grpride.org.



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Motor City Bears Host LGBTQ Charity Car Wash June 8

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

LGBTQ bear culture has long been about body positivity said Motor City Bear Rob Pearce — a member of the male-specific social club for bears and their admirers. That's why, when the opportunity arose to combine that concept with a charitable event, the group jumped at the chance and start the Motor City Bears Speedo Car Wash, this year held on Saturday, June 8, at the Level One bank on Woodward Avenue in Ferndale.

"Well, I came up with the speedo idea. I didn't put a crazy amount of thought into it," Pearce said with a laugh. "But we were looking at fundraiser ideas at the time and the car wash idea [was suggested]. I don't remember who came up with that, and I said, 'Well, what if we did something like a reversal of the bikini car wash with women and we did something in the gay community with that?'"

The response was a good one, and eventually, the car wash became an annual fixture among the packed annual volunteer and donation schedule that the 180-strong Motor City Bears group participates in. Every year the event raises hundreds of dollars for a charity of the group's choice, and for 2019, both the Ruth Ellis Center and Affirmations LGBTQ community center were selected as the recipients of all proceeds.

"Well, we've been with Ruth Ellis and Affirmations for many years," said Scott Wood, another member of the Bears. "We have looked at other sources, but we really feel that those two can take our donations and put them to very good use and those are very high on our list of [organizations] that we want to support."

Pearce added that he hopes the benefits of the car wash will be twofold: actively helping the LGBTQ centers, and promoting a body-positive image for everyone in the LGBTQ community and outside of it.

"The whole idea of our club, in general, is that people feel good about who they are and also feel good about the skin that they're in, whoever and whatever size that may be. And this is kind of an attempt, at least on some level, to have people feel good and celebrate who they are and have fun doing it," Pearce said. "That's what this is, it's reinforcing that and telling people that, 'You can celebrate who you are without having to fit into a stereotype or someone else's idea of what is acceptable.'"

And if one doesn't have a car but would like to participate, Wood said not to worry. Over the years of doing the event, the Bears have washed almost any mode of land transportation.

"Rollerblades or bike or speedos or whatever. We've had people just stop by to have their pictures taken, we've had people just walk up or drive up to say, 'I don't want a car wash, here's a donation to your cause.' We even had one year somebody that came out to protest it and they were protesting the whole fact of us being a gay group and that type of thing, but then when they talked to us, they found out that we were doing this for the charities, and they changed their mind and everything. They grabbed their sign and walked away and said, 'Oh, I didn't realize you were doing this to help the community,'" Wood said with a laugh.

Level One Bank is located at 22635 Woodward Ave. in Ferndale. The Motor City Bears will be at the event from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Find out more on the event Facebook page.



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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, 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.

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‘State of Pride’ YouTube Originals Documentary Looks Back at 50 Years Post Stonewall Riots

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Those in the LGBTQ community who lived through the Stonewall Riots in 1969 still hold a personal and unmistakable connection to that pivotal point in American history that sparked the modern gay liberation movement. Fifty years later, that iconic moment has cemented itself into the lives of the LGBTQ community everywhere across the U.S. and across all ages. In honor of the riots’ semicentennial, Raymond Braun stars in a YouTube Originals documentary released in May titled “State of Pride” that asks a younger generation its thoughts about the significance of Stonewall and the actions of the activists that changed the course of a generation. Braun said that today pride celebrations are an excellent “looking glass” into the types of LGBTQ communities one can find across the nation and beyond.

Looking Back 50 Years

“What I meant by that is I think that a way the community responds to prides tells you a lot about its values,” Braun said. “What an interesting way to look at our country right now and all the differences across the country and how it chooses to respond to pride. So, take any location, any town, any city, anywhere in the world, really, and just ask the question: ‘Do they have a pride?’ If they don’t, why don’t they? If they do, how big is it? How much support does it get from the community, do people protest it? Who is on the board? Who is the leadership? Who has the most visibility and spotlight? Is it a party, is it a protest, is it a festival?”

Braun said that perhaps the biggest

lesson learned from the production of the documentary is that though the LGBTQ community has grown significantly in its supporters and openness, there’s still a lot of work to do to be inclusive for everyone. He gave an example of an activist who felt that for the transgender community, Pride historically hasn’t been accepting.

“I spoke to a trans woman who talked about how she doesn’t think that Pride is inclusive of trans women and those are really important conversations that we should all be engaging in. And so, even if you as an individual are getting a lot out of Pride, consider how to make each Pride, each community, welcoming and more respectful of everyone in our community and that’s something that I’ve been thinking about a lot,” Braun said. “Especially after having gone to all these celebrations and seeing who felt really included and seeing who also felt there’s a lot of work to be done.”

However, as far as summing up Pride’s importance — particularly as someone who said he has always felt it to be a vital celebration of LGBTQ history and community — Braun cited the words of a non-binary activist Kin Folkz, “Pride is both the party and protest.”

“I think that you need to have both,” Braun said. “It’s essential to have elements of both in any kind of pride gathering because first and foremost pride is a connection to our history. As LGBTQ people, we have our trailblazers and our ancestors to thank for the fact that we’re able to congregate at Pride and I think it’s really important during any Pride celebration or during Pride season to learn and research our history and to really thank the people that made it possible to be here today.”

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The Importance of Location

Throughout the course of “State of Pride” Braun visits pride celebrations in San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Washington, D.C. and Tuscaloosa, Alabama. When asked why he chose those particular locations he said that it was a meticulous choice made only after surveying hundreds of potential celebrations across the country.

“We simultaneously did a nationwide search of LGBTQ that we wanted to hear from everywhere and then if we found a story that was really compelling then we asked the questions, ‘OK, what is your Pride? Does that fall in our production window?’” he said. “There were people who were really open about wanting to share their story but then maybe their family or their Ppride organizers weren’t able to give us access or weren’t comfortable being on camera, so there were considerations if we were able to tell every angle and element of your story which involves people other than you being open to being on camera.”

Eventually, San Francisco seemed like a natural choice because of its decades-long mark on LGBTQ history and its millions-strong attendance.

“And then the complete other end of the spectrum was Tuscaloosa, Alabama,” Braun said. “[It was] really important to show a Pride that’s in its infancy, that’s in its third or fourth year, that brings in 100 or 200 people to kind of understand the role and the value of a small town Pride and we would juxtapose it against that.”

Salt Lake City came in as an important thematic element, too, because of its heavy association with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the church’s famed opposition to LGBTQ rights.

“One of the things that I found in speaking to LGBTQ people was that one of the number one justifications used to kind of justify discrimination against LGBTQ people is religion and there’s often this tension you find between religion and the LGBTQ community — which of course I think is unfair because there’s a lot of LGBTQ people of faith and a lot

of congregations that are inclusive or growing more inclusive, but there’s still that kind of cultural stereotype about religion and the LGBTQ community being at odds,” Braun said. “So, we thought, ‘What an interesting location to explore that,’ given the prevalence of the Mormon church in Utah in Salt Lake, and also given the role that the LDS church has played in Proposition 8 and other major moments in LGBTQ activism.”

Washington, D.C. as the final location was the partial inspiration for the documentary’s name: “State of Pride.”

“So filming in the nation’s capital was a really interesting element to it,” he said. “That was the first Pride that my mom had ever attended so going to that with her and then Troye Sivan was the headliner and we got the amazing opportunity to film his performance at Pride and then interview him as well.”

Delivering a Message

When asked what he hopes that viewers of the film will get from the interviews of people across the country from a variety of backgrounds, Braun said he first and foremost hopes to improve the visibility of those LGBTQ people who feel like they’re not being heard. He said he saw the value of that firsthand when he premiered the film at South by Southwest this year and saw the impact it had on the participants from Tuscaloosa who drove from their home state to be there on opening night.

“For some of the people that we had filmed with in Tuscaloosa they had never met or been in a group with other LGBTQ people and so to be able to go to Pride and meet other people like them, a lot of the folks that we filmed with in Tuscaloosa got to know each other and became friends. For the premiere in Austin, Texas, at SXSW a group of them actually drove from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, to Austin, Texas.” He said. “I’ll just never forget watching their faces as they saw themselves on screen for the first time and it was just yet another reminder of representation and giving people the opportunity to see their stories reflected on screen.”





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Free Mom Hugs Brings the Love Out at Pride

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Twenty seconds. According to Jill Lash's research, that's the time it takes to give the perfect hug. And as she's the Free Mom Hugs Southeast Michigan chapter co-leader, she's likely more qualified than most to know.

"I've read and they say 20 seconds is the perfect hug because [it affects] the chemicals in your brain and about developing trust and respect and all of these things," she said. "I don't know if that's true but it sure feels like it."

"A Lot Behind the Hug"

Free Mom Hugs is a nonprofit organization that encourages its members to provide affirming, emotional support by offering hugs, high-fives and occasionally linking those in need with resources specific to the problems they are facing. Resources can include providing food, clothing, a ride or even emergency housing. For the group, pride season is a busy time as it will be present across Michigan at Pride celebrations ranging from the Motor City to Cadillac. Lash has been in her current role as co-leader since April and she said that she's excited to kick off her first pride season with the group.

"It just felt so right to me. ... I was always the mom that would be like, 'Could you drive us to Pride but not tell Johnny's mom,' or, 'This friend is in trouble because of this, and we were always that family that kind of rescued everybody else,'" Lash said. "So, when I saw that there was someone out there who was actually doing something about it and kids who are homeless or disowned or abused or whatever, I just knew that in the state that our world is in right now we just need love. If their parents won't do it I'm going to have to."

So Lash "jumped in with both feet" when she saw a Facebook ad for the group and contacted event organizers at Free Mom Hugs to get involved.

Religious Beginnings

Now in 46 states, the organization is built on a foundation of active parents like Lash who felt that they needed to act to further LGBTQ equality. Free Mom Hugs was established by Sara Cunningham, a devout Christian Oklahoma woman who was forced to grapple with her religion when she found out her child was part of the LGBTQ community. Eventually reaching the conclusion that the LGBTQ community and Christianity are able not only to coexist but thrive together, Cunningham



Jill Lash is Free Mom Hugs' Southeast Michigan chapter co-leader. She and her organization will be present across dozens of Pride celebrations this summer. BTL Photo: Eve Kucharski

formed the organization as it exists today. When asked if she had a similar experience Lash said no because she isn't religious, but she added that her work consistently reaffirms that she's doing the right thing.

"I went to the mall and I happened to go when Jeffree Star was opening his store because I knew that [the LGBTQ community] was part of his demographic. I did have someone come up to me and I had a moment where they cried and it was very touching," Lash said. "I've had a few like that where they weren't at an official event, actually, it was just some kind of random moment with a stranger. And I think maybe that's because at pride those things are expected, you are getting an outpouring of love."

The Importance of Consent

Lash said that she didn't expect to be asked for hugs more than she offers when she wears her Free Mom Hugs shirt or button, but she agrees to provide them just the same. When asked about the importance of consent in her efforts, Lash said that she always makes sure to follow the existing Free Mom Hugs guidelines to ensure that she's not hugging someone who might be uncomfortable.

"Of course, if someone doesn't want a hug I'll ask, 'Can I offer you a free mom hug or high-five?' Because sometimes, they don't feel comfortable and I've had people who were OK with a high-five but they weren't quite ready and they exchanged a few words," Lash said. "Sometimes, if they seem awkward, I might do something cute like ask a silly mom question like, 'Have you eaten today? Are you getting enough rest?' Those kinds of things just to get a chuckle and sometimes, then they'll hug you. You can see the thought process in their heads and for anybody missing that at home

or anywhere."

This process is also something she highly encourages potential huggers to look at incorporating in their efforts and viewing the official guidelines online.

"The most basic step is just to be a hugger and all that we ask is you read our event policy information on how to deal with consent and all these touchy subjects," Lash said. "We have a list on how to do it with consent and respect and then represent us with a shirt or a button or something and go hug."

Future Goals

And for interested fathers, Lash said there's space for "Dad Hugs," too. She added that Free Mom Hugs has only been expanding, with thousands of participants being added across the country on a regular basis and she hopes to expand her chapter's involvement with Southeast Michigan's community well past the summer Pride season.

"Come fall we really hope to educate and advocate for the community and work with some churches and schools. And we're going to start adult ally training soon in the area and have some workshops on gender expression and identity," she said. "Because a lot of parents are saying, 'I want to learn more.' We are working so that once pride is over and school starts again, we can go out there and work with several youth groups that were trying to find the right fit and there's a lot. Once we're done hugging this summer we have a lot of plans."

To find out more about Free Mom Hugs visit freemomhugs.org or check out the Michigan group's Facebook page to see where they'll be hosting events next.



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SUMMER OF PRIDE

June 7

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

June 7-8

Kalamazoo Pride

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

June 8

Lake Effect Pride

Pride is hosted by The OutCenter (Benton Harbor). The 2019 event will be located at Four Winds Casino in New Buffalo, Michigan. gaybe.am/Qd

June 8-9

Motor City Pride

An all-volunteer-run event celebrating the lives of Michigan's LGBTQ citizens. MCP moved down to Hart Plaza in Detroit back in 2011 for a fun-filled two day festival of food, entertainment and community organizations showcasing their work on the Detroit Riverfront. facebook.com/motorcitypride

June 12

Royal Oak Family Pride Day

A new event in 2019, the day is sponsored by the city of Royal Oak. gaybe.am/V5

June 15

Grand Rapids Pride

Grand Rapids Pride is a West Michigan mainstay that has been recurring since 1988.

The event, as all Prides do, brings LGBTQ people together in a celebration dedicated to the acceptance of everyone's identities.

facebook.com/grandrapidspridecenter

June 15

Michigan Pride

On its website the organization states it "provides education, outreach, support and events to enhance the lives of lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender people and builds quality relationships with all Michigan residents." It holds events throughout the year in the greater Lansing area and produces the June Pride event on the steps of the capitol followed by a festival in Old Town. facebook.com/MichiganPride

June 15

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June 22 Grosse Pointe Pride

Grosse Pointe Pride will feature a Family Friendly March in support of the LGBTQ community at the Grosse Pointe South High School for face painting and a rally, and then lead into a step-off at Maire Elementary for a community picnic with vendors and more. facebook.com/gppride/

June 29 Great Lakes Bay Pride

This event will be held at Wenonah Park in Bay City and will include retail, LGBTQ resources, food, vendors and activities.

facebook.com/greatlakesbaypride

July 18-21 Battle Creek Pride

This event pledges to provide a safe and supportive space for all members of the LGBTQ community and will include entertainment, a parade, a talent show, a candlelight vigil and more.

battlecreekpride.org

July 23-28 Hotter Than July

This event is the world's second oldest black pride celebration and has evolved into a social justice rally that emphasizes culture, spirituality and education.

facebook.com/DetroitHTJ

August 3-4 Ann Arbor Pride

Formerly known as OutFest, the event is a full weekend of entertainment, activities and more. Proceeds benefit the Jim Toy Community Center. annarborpride.com

August 10 Transgender Pride

in the Park

This event serves to both empower and provide support for the Michigan transgender community. transgendermichigan.org

Hotter Than July will take place July 23 - July 28. Follow facebook.com/DetroitHTJ

Park and encourages attendees to bring both friends and a dish to pass around. At the event will be games, activities and more.

facebook.com/lapeerpride

June 17-23 Up North Pride

The sixth annual Up North Pride Week takes place in Traverse City June 17-23, featuring free special events every night of the week celebrating the LGBTQ+ community.

Up North Pride Week is hosted by Up North Pride/Loud and Proud - visit www.upnorthpride.com.

facebook.com/upnorthpride

June 21-22 Holland Pride

Sponsored by the Out On The Lake Shore LGBTQ community center, Holland Pride is an event that invites all LGBTQ people and allies to celebrate. There will be events in the Park Theater on Friday night with a community celebration in Centennial Park on Sat., June 22. facebook.com/HollandPride

June 22 Flint Pride

Pride events are a positive stance against discrimination and violence toward the LGBTQ community, and Flint Pride aims to do that. Entertainment will be included in the event.

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June 22 Sault Ste. Marie Pride

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Pride Festival Map June 15, 2019

MAP KEY

- Entertainment
- ATM
- Restrooms
- Vendors
- Food Vendors
- First Aid

1 - 10PM

- \$10 adults
- \$5 Kids 5-18
- 4 & under FREE

Other locations marked on the map include Esquire, Sir Pizza, and Spiral Dance Bar.



LAURA LINNEY HAS 'TALES' TO TELL

Photo: Netflix

'Tales of the City' Vet Talks Returning to Barbary Lane and Being a 'Mini' Gay Icon

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Driving into San Francisco, Laura Linney's Mary Ann Singleton is flush with nostalgia, her lips gently bending into a soft, soothed smile. Home is here and she is home.

It is present-day when Mary Ann arrives at 28 Barbary Lane like she did the first time, in 1976; she is still fresh-faced and naive. And lost again, in need of a reset. In tow: flashes of warm memories as brilliant and vivid as the strung-up lights aglow in the courtyard within Anna Madrigal's fantasyland domain. When openly gay author Armistead Maupin's beloved "Tales of the City" novels were originally adapted into a series that aired on PBS in 1994, these mystic grounds opened their doors to a community of LGBTQ pariahs who hadn't found their people yet – or themselves. For them, 28 Barbary Lane was home too.

When Mary Ann returns, Mrs. Madrigal (Olympia Dukakis) is still holding court at the same address, where she, a free-spirited trans woman, continues to guide all walks of LGBTQ life with the same warmth and wisdom of a mama bear protecting her cubs. Linney, who reprises her role and also executive produced the show alongside Maupin, hopes the Netflix revival – the fourth TV adaptation of the book series, premiering June 7 – will act as it did when she first starred in the miniseries over two decades ago: as a safe haven for self-expression and free-love, no matter the queer-averse outside world. The 55-year-old Emmy winner, traverser of TV ("Ozark," "The Big C"), film ("The Truman Show," "Love Actually," "The Laramie Project") and theater ("The Little Foxes," alongside Cynthia Nixon), says, "We really hope this series will reach people who are lonely and disoriented."

When did you first become aware that, with "Tales," you were part of something that was so deeply affecting to members of the LGBTQ community?

Well, I'm glad I didn't know when the project first came to me. I'm really glad I didn't understand how broad the reach and how deep the reach was of Armistead's work. I'm sure it would've completely intimidated me – and I'm sure I wouldn't have handled it terribly well – so I'm glad that I was somewhat ignorant when I first started to make the series. But it became very clear to me shortly

after we finished just how loved these stories are, and the more I got to understand and know Armistead, the more I understood that phenomenon. He's truly a great man.

How did you know that the show had this weight?

I just noticed that everyone was very happy to see me all of a sudden! (Laughs) Honestly, I would walk down the street and people would just be very happy and it was really wonderful. It's been a real joy.

"Tales of the City" has made you a bit of a gay icon, hasn't it?

I wouldn't say full-blown icon. Like, mini. I'm sort of like a mini icon.

A half Cher?

A quarter Cher, maybe. Not even. A fifth Cher. Cher is a big deal! But it's something I'm so proud of, and it's really just a tremendous gift.

Knowing that your "Tales" role has contributed to helping a community feel loved and accepted, I wonder about the difference in doing a project like this versus, say, "The Truman Show."

You certainly hope that that's the impact of anything you do, that if you get to the truth of something it will impact someone on a deep level. But with this, it was also for and about a community which already meant so much to me. And the fact that I could, at the time, help advocate for my friends and for the people who I loved (ITAL and love was a wonderful thing to be able to do. Fortunately now, it's not necessary to have the straight, white girl anymore.

But at the time, Mary Ann and her relationship to the LGBTQ community was really groundbreaking.

It kind of took an "Alice in Wonderland" person to hold the hand of the audience and bring them into a world that they had maybe not encountered before, and fortunately that's not the case now.

Did it feel daring to you at the time?

Not to me. (Laughs) I think it was daring to other people, but not to me. To me it just felt like family and home.

It sounds like you had exposure to the community at a very young age, even before "Tales."

I did, through the kind, wonderful people I grew up around. I think just people who I loved and loved me, and I never even realized that there was a discriminatory land out there until I realized that there really was.

People as in friends?

Yeah, friends of the family. People who lived in my building, growing up in New York City. You know, just people. Just good ol' people who loved me and I loved them, whether from a big kindness or a little one. Neighbors. Friends of the family. Just wonderful, wonderful people.

There's a story that during the original "Tales" you washed and massaged director Alastair Reid's feet out of his concern for his bunions. And you're laughing right now as if it were true.

(Laughs) I didn't *quite* wash them – it makes it sound like he's Christ and I was one of his disciples (laughs). But he was a wonderful, wonderful man and he was having real problems with his feet and, yeah, he needed some help and I was happy to give it.

That brings me to my next question, which is not feet-related but could be: What's your best behind-the-scenes story from the revival?

The revival: You know, it's just people. It's about being able to do this work with people who I have such a long connection with. It's being able to giggle with Armistead looking at the monitor and watching it come back to life again. It's about being with Olympia, who is 88 years old and remarkable. And then it's about Paul Gross (portraying Brian Hawkins, Mary Ann's ex) and Barbara Garrick (WASPy socialite DeDe Halcyon Day), and it's also about this wonderful younger generation of people for whom the series is really for now. You know, there's this sense of passing the baton onto a younger, and in some ways very much more evolved, group of LGBTQ people and a community that has expanded in a way that did not exist when we did the first series.


And in such a way you probably couldn't even perceive at that time.

Oh god, no, absolutely not. The whole perception of being trans is completely different, and non-binary didn't even exist – of course it existed, but it wasn't in anyone's awareness; there was no language for it and there was no identity for it. It had not been named yet. People who were not within that intimate community were not aware of it, even those of us who were LGBTQ-friendly, so there's a lot that has changed.

What has it been like for you to be part of a show that has existed at various points in LGBTQ history?

It's a remarkable, amazing experience. And it intersects with my own life at different periods of time as well. I mean, with Mary Ann, very rarely does anyone get to do

See **Laura Linney**, continued on p. 56



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► Laura Linney

Continued from p. 55

something that spans over 25 years of their life. And it's amazing to see how our culture has changed, how our identity has changed, how our relationships and understanding of each other has changed, in some ways for the better and maybe in some ways for the worse. And it's also amazing to see a generational shift. What it was to be LGBTQ in 1990 is very different than 2019, and what it means to be either gay or trans or non-binary or queer. It's amazing to see things evolve.

Beyond informing mainstream audiences, I think LGBTQ people of various generations and experiences can learn a lot about each other by watching this show.

I hope so. That's really what we wanted. The entire writers' room was LGBTQ, our directors are all LGBTQ, and there is a sense of, "What can the generations learn from each other?"

When you drive up to 28 Barbary Lane again during the revival's premiere episode, you enter it almost like Dorothy enters Oz. During that shoot what were you feeling?

Oh, you know, it was just great fun and you're thrown back to 25 years ago. You realize how much is the same and how much is different,

how much you were the same and how much you've changed.

Where does your mind go to find all the emotions that are unspoken but written so vividly on your face?

Well, it's not hard. When there's good writing and a good circumstance to throw yourself into, it comes pretty easily. And my connection to "Tales" is deep and intimate and important, particularly to 28 Barbary Lane. All that it represents is important to me.

How about your connection to Melissa Etheridge's "Come to My Window"?

Oh god! You know, it's just horrifying. I am not a singer! I am so not a singer!

Isn't that the point of that karaoke scene?

Yeah, boy, but did we really have to prove it to that extent? I don't know (laughs). I love that song – I think it's a gorgeous song – and I love Melissa Etheridge and, god, I hope she forgives me. I hope *everyone* forgives me for that because it was just agony. Awful, awful.



Laura Linney and Olympia Dukakis star in Netflix's "Tales of the City." Photo: Netflix

Your daughter in the series, Shawna, is played by openly lesbian actress Ellen Page. And many of the other characters are played by LGBTQ actors. When "Tales" originally aired, casting openly LGBTQ actors was not a reality.

No, it was not.

What has that change meant to you and to the series?

Well, it's fantastic! It's long overdue. And it's been a painful process for people, you know, so our team of producers are very, very proud of the fact that we were able to cast all LGBTQ writers, all LGBTQ directors and, not all, but most of our actors intersect with their own identity. Yeah, so it's just good.

I searched high and low and I couldn't find any evidence but perhaps in theater: Have you ever had a proper LGBTQ role yourself?

You know, I haven't. I'm always the blonde, straight girl. (Laughs)

Considering the dialogue about straight actors playing LGBTQ roles, is that something you wouldn't even be interested in touching at this point in your career?

You know, it depends. It depends. I mean, I doubt it. I doubt that I would. But I come at it from two different viewpoints: There's the political standpoint of how important it is for sexual orientation and available acting parts to align correctly, and then there's the other viewpoint, which is that actors should have the experience to do everything. And we're not there yet. But I believe it should cross both ways, and I believe LGBTQ people should play cisgender roles and should play straight people, and I believe it should go back and forth.

Because, otherwise, we may be limiting our

LGBTQ actors if there's not a back-and-forth?

Absolutely. And there's just a lot to learn. So I go back and forth about it, but I think right now, the more what I consider appropriate casting for this community that happens, the better.

This is a limited series, but is there a possibility that "Tales" could take us back to 28 Barbary Lane in the future? And would you return?

Yeah, sure. We'll see. One hopes, but we'll see what happens. It certainly seems to have a life of its own, so that bodes well.

"Home is a feeling" is the series' tagline. To end, what does home mean to you, and in which of the most unexpected places have you found it?

What a wonderful question. For me, home is always the people in the home (laughs), so it's about the people, the like-minded people, that you're surrounded by, the people who just intrinsically understand and love you and challenge you and frustrate you – all of that. The people who you're able to feel a sense of intimacy with and bond with. And then the most unexpected place I've felt home: I think on a film set, quite frankly. It was never what I expected to do, and actually the first "Tales" was the very first job where I thought, "Oh, maybe I could actually work in front of a camera. Maybe it might be OK."

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

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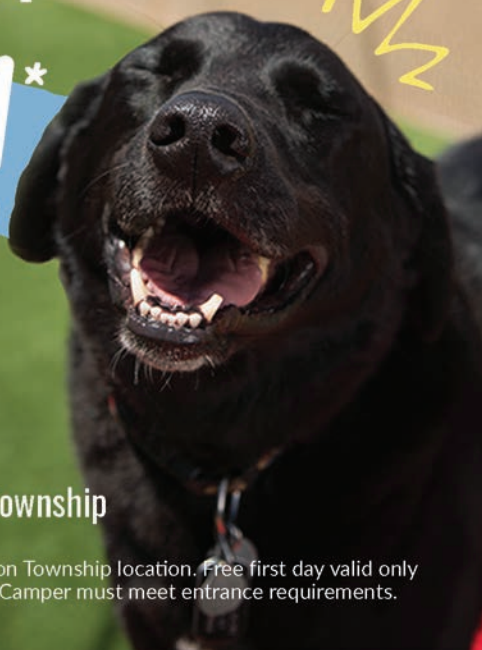
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Allison Williams Knows What She Has to Do

Photo: Netflix

'The Perfection' Star on On-Screen Queerness, LGBTQ Allyship & Her New Sapphic Thriller

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

For Netflix's horrifically relevant "The Perfection," Allison Williams has been encountering the same challenge she did after playing the Crazy White Girl in writer-director Jordan Peele's "Get Out": talking about it.

Little should be revealed about the twisty, Sapphic thriller, its cryptic trailer a feverish, blood-splattered, suggestively queer montage: In the desert, something squirms inside the arm of a cello virtuoso, Lizzie (Logan Browning), as Charlotte (Williams), a troubled musical prodigy who now stands in Lizzie's star-student shadow, offers her a giant cleaver. "You know what you have to do," she says with a smirk, chillingly nonchalant about Lizzie's alarming condition.

Careful not to over-divulge, the 31-year-old actress recently talked about "The Perfection." She also discussed the queerness you might've missed in "Get Out," how playing the eponymous flying boy in NBC's "Peter Pan Live!" was a "happily queer experience," and why she was concerned when she didn't hear from more gay

men after her rim-job scene in "Girls."

So can we at least agree "The Perfection" is a lesbian power movie and lesbians will save the world?

(Laughs) Sure, your words to God's ears!

But for real: I'm not sure if I came out of that film with a real sense of Charlotte's sexual identity. Did you?

When we were working on it and prepping it, we never ever talked about labeling it one thing or the other. She existed in this sort of vacuum but knew she had this connection with Lizzie from their shared history and from their shared experience and trauma, obviously, but did not know that when they were face to face there was gonna be this undeniable and instant connection between the two of them, and that Lizzie would pull her in and they'd be drawn to each other in a way that I genuinely don't think Charlotte was expecting. Especially in Charlotte's case, she would not have had the opportunity in

her life to do much exploration in this world, so I think just because of Lizzie's confidence and comfort she was able to just go with it. And I'm proud of her (laughs), which is a weird thing to say about a character, but I'm proud of her for just following her instincts and following her heart.

Is this your first onscreen lesbian experience or queer experience?

Well, if you don't count the completely botched threesome attempt on "Girls" where Marnie and Jessa make out.

Right! How could I forget? I was so focused on your scene with Andrew Rannells, when you have sex with a gay man.

(Laughs) Also a fantastic experience! It's so funny: I just rewatched that season and that scene made me so happy all over again. But yes, if you don't count that moment with Marnie and Jessa, then yes it was.

How did shooting a sex scene with Logan in "The

Perfection" compare to the one you shot with Andrew for "Girls"?

Oh, you're asking me to compare apples and oranges! I will say that one common denominator was just the comfort and safety of both of them. I'm very, very happy to report that in my somewhat surprisingly vast experience (laughs) in this arena I've always felt safe and comfortable, and this scene was absolutely no exception, if not more so because it was just four people in the room. It was our cinematographer, who was operating the camera, and Richard (Shepard), our director, who was hiding in the corner watching a monitor, so it was totally comfortable.

We felt like it was furthering the plot; we did not feel it was exploitative in any way. It was a communication of feeling and everything about it was exactly what you wanted it to be in that situation. And Logan is amazing, and we had gotten to know each other so well before that – and our working relationship was so easy and harmonious – that it just added to the level of comfort.

If you have to shoot a sex scene, that all sounds like what one would hope for.

You feel so vulnerable anyway, for every single reason. Not to mention the fact that it's all immortalized on film! (Laughs)

While we're on the subject of sex: the rimming scene in season four of "Girls" created quite a stir in the queer community. Did any of your gay friends help you prepare for that scene?

(Laughs) No! No, they did not. It's so funny: I think that was my first day on set that season, and I think that was the day after my birthday. There were a lot of things that were weird about that scene, chief among them the fact that I didn't know what Ebon (Moss-Bachrach, who played Desi) was gonna do in terms of his head movements, so the first time we did it I cracked and I laughed so hard because I just did not see that coming (laughs). We hadn't talked about it! I didn't know that was the choice he was gonna make! (Laughs) So it took me a little while to do it with a straight face. But no, if anything, I would've thought I would hear from more of them. But the fact that I didn't either means it was an embarrassment and they didn't want to talk to me, or that I did it well and actually they didn't feel like they needed to give me any pointers.

I feel like you're not following #GayTwitter enough, because then you'd know you did us proud.

(Laughs) No, I definitely am not. There is no such thing as enough. That was some of my favorite dialogue in all of "Girls" and a perfect way to start the season and catch up on where Marnie is. Desi says to her, "I love that," and Marnie says, "I love you too." Which is just so perfect.

I'm hoping you heard from more of the community after "Peter Pan." Were you feeling the gay love after your live performance?

Yeah, I was! I was! And also, you know, the Lost Boys were helpful in making me feel that as well. It was a very happily queer experience across the board, and I felt the approval and the love from the beginning, in person and afterwards. So it was a true honor for a brief moment in time to experience that sunshine.

In "Get Out" there's a fleeting reveal that Rose has recruited at least one woman to bring home to her family when we're shown a photo of her arm wrapped around another woman, played by Betty Gabriel. What was your read on Rose's sexuality?

It was that Rose, at her core, was stuck developmentally at the age where she started doing this with her family and truly saw herself as – and it's a terrible word to use in this context but not altogether inaccurate – a sniper-type vigilante who would do whatever

it took to get the job done. That included, of course, morphing into whoever she needed to be, which explains the different ways she looked and felt, her different energies in all those photos, whoever she thought she needed to become to entice the person in question. So if – and I mean, as disgusting as it sounds – in her mind there was demand for a woman then she would be someone who would be in love with a woman. But I think it went no deeper than that for her, which is so chilling to me!

And it's just a photo – we don't get much. But the LGBTQ community looks for representation wherever we can find it.

Yeah, one of the things that I love about ("The Perfection") is from the beginning we weren't gonna dwell on it. I love that it didn't have to be about that; it was about the fact that they had a connection and then: "Can we keep going? Because there's a whole lot of the rest of the movie we need to get to." Like, "I know that these two people are really into each other, and can we move on with it?" I love that that was the way the movie treated it, because it doesn't need to be dealt with with such a heavy touch all the time. And that's one of the many things that drew me to "The Perfection" in the first place, that there's all kinds of themes like that, that what the movie represents is in the eye of the beholder.

Let's shift to your role as an LGBTQ ally: In 2017, you wore an ampersand pin as a sign that you stand with all communities subject to discrimination. When did LGBTQ issues become important to you?

Having not been on the other side of that hate and vitriol and discrimination and marginalization, I learned about it and the minute I learned about it, the minute I drew those connections – this is when I was pretty little – between learning about it and also the people I knew in my life who were part of that community and it just felt like such a no-brainer. I felt confused by it because, of course, it doesn't make any sense. So to have to learn about something so illogical and to then also make the very, very obvious move of adding "joining the fight" and enlisting yourself as an ally seemed like a very obvious move and one that I am proud to continue to this day and will forever more.

You say you have ties that go back to when you were young. You grew up in a small town in Connecticut. What was your introduction to the LGBTQ community?

My actual introduction to the community, my mom was telling me, was in Washington D.C., when I was in first grade. We were walking down the street, and for the first time – definitely not the first time I had

See Allison, continued on p. 60



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► **Allison**

Continued from p. 59

seen a queer couple, but the first time I saw two women holding hands – and I asked my mom, “Are they two mommies?” and she said, “Maybe, but they love each other,” and I said, “OK!” And that was it (laughs). That was my actual introduction to it.

Over time my parents would tell me about the men we knew who were in love with a man and I connected the dots and started to build this web of very special people I knew who happened to be in love with people of the same sexual orientation and gender and just thought, “OK.” I owe my parents for that, because they didn’t make it a big news flash, like scandalous or a scintillating detail. It was just something that, if I asked, they told me about, but it was not a defining characteristic to the people who didn’t want it to be a defining characteristic.

That’s how you hope every kid is raised.

Yeah, I feel really, really fortunate because it meant that I was ready from the beginning to just show my support in any way that would be helpful so that I could be a better ally for my friends who feel vulnerable and marginalized.

Based on your work in “Get Out” and now “The Perfection,” it seems you’re interested in work that is a social, political or cultural critique, or at least comments on something important. Is that true?

One-hundred percent. I think one of the great privileges of doing what I do is that I get to be part of art that will make people talk about these themes in a way that they’re not used to talking about them, which I think can elevate or at least change the playing field of the conversation. We get stuck in these grooves in the way we talk about stuff, like race and assault and trauma. Being lucky enough to be in projects like these, I get to be a part of throwing a grenade in that former conversation and forcing it into a new realm, which is such an exciting opportunity for me. And hopefully it’s entertaining people in the process. I’m really excited to see what kind of conversations happen as a result of “The Perfection,” and my hope is that people watch it with friends so they can talk about it afterwards. I can’t wait to hear what they say.

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

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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! Check our website for all the info on the Festival, Parade, Candlelight Vigil, and all other activities, including entrances. 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

game, drink coffee and socialize with other LGBT individuals. Java Hut, 165 W Nine Mile, Ferndale. 248-632-8274. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

Monday, June 10
Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Macomb County 6:30 p.m. Free. 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. chippewavalleyschools.org.

LGBT Game Night 7:00 p.m. LGBT Game Night is an opportunity for all LGBT people and allies to come play a board

Wednesday, June 12
Affirmations Senior Koffee Clatch! 1:00 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, June 13
Toastmasters International SpeakOUT! LGBTQ Meeting 7:00 p.m. Professional & personal communication skills development. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867. lawrencemoeb@gmail.com. speakout.toastmastersclubs.org.

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Editor's Pick

New Kids on the Block at Little Caesars Arena June 18

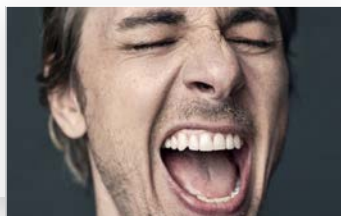
Multiplatinum selling pop group New Kids on the Block is set to perform at Little Caesars Arena on June 18 for their brand-new "Mixtape Tour." Longtime fans of theirs can get excited to hear tracks from the '80s and '90s and from their touring partners: Salt-N-Pepa, Naughty By Nature, Debbie Gibson and Tiffany. Tickets start at \$29.95. Find out more online at 313presents.com.



Editor's Pick

Chrysler Pacifica Presents: Armchair Expert Live in the Midwest

Actor, comedian, writer, director and Michigan native Dax Shepard will bring his Armchair Expert podcast to the Fox Theatre in The District Detroit on Friday, June 21 at 8 p.m. The live broadcast was announced today as part of a select four-city tour titled "Armchair Expert Live in the Midwest" presented by Chrysler Pacifica. Tickets start at \$44. Find out more online at 313presents.com.



Sunday, June 16

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. 734-747-4363. standwithtrans.org.

Wednesday, June 19

Stand with Trans Support Groups – Livonia – Wayne County 6:30 p.m. Free to all, group meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month @ Emmanuel Lutheran Church. 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.

Thursday, July 4

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.

Sunday, July 7

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Adrian-Lenawee County 6:30 p.m. Contact facilitator Socorro Sevilla, MSW: socorro@hilltopcounseling.org Hilltop Counseling, 115 W. Maumee St., Adrian. 313-909-5408. standwithtrans.org. hilltopcounseling.org.

MUSIC & MORE

Pride Performance by PRISM Gay Men and Allies Chorus June 15, 3:00 p.m. 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, featuring One event on June 15 at 8:00pm Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. 4th St., Royal Oak. 248-399-2980. royaloakmusictheatre.com. royaloakmusictheatre.com.

Coordinating a Community Response to the Opioid Epidemic June 25, 7:30 p.m. Molly Welch Marahar, Opioid Project Coordinator; and Carrie Rheingans, Project Manager, will be joined by a panel to discuss coordinating a community response to the epidemic. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. dawnfarm.org.

Jeremy Ian Harvey's New Art Show – Ghost the World 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.

THEATER

Stagecrafters Baldwin Theatre Presents "Oklahoma!" June 7, 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.

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre Presents "Curtains" June 7, 8:00 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! When the faded actress collapses and dies after curtain Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 North University, Ann Arbor. 734-763-3333. a2ct.org.

Detroit Repertory Theatre Presents "Williston" June 7, 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.

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

SUMMER OF PRIDE

SEE PAGES 52-53





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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Cate Blanchett fights feminism in 'Mrs. America'

History lesson time, kids! In the 1970s there was a proposed change to the Constitution called the Equal Rights Amendment. It failed to be ratified, and a major reason for that failure was conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly. It was an ugly battle, made uglier by the lies and distortions that conservatives told about the passage of the amendment. They whipped up fear and it worked. Now FX will present a limited series, "Mrs. America," to remind America what was lost. In a stroke of near-perfect casting, Schlafly will be played by Cate Blanchett, and a host of other historical figures by an A-list roster: Uzo Aduba as Shirley Chisholm, Rose Byrne as Gloria Steinem, Margo Martindale as Bella Abzug, Tracey Ullman as Betty Friedan, as well as Sarah Paulson, Ari Graynor, Jeanne Tripplehorn, Melanie Lynskey, James Marsden and John Slattery. Schlafly was an early spark that lit the flame of the Religious Right's ascendance in the 1980s, so get ready to be depressed when it airs in 2020.

Finally, a Bob Mackie documentary

Valentino, McQueen, YSL, Halston, Diana Vreeland, Andre Leon Talley, and the entire September issue of Vogue magazine: they've all had documentaries made about them. And if you're fashion doc devotees like us you've spent your days wondering when the legendary Bob Mackie, costume designer for Cher, Carol Burnett and countless others, would get his turn to shine for posterity. Well, that time is now, and it's coming right on schedule, as the man receives his lifetime achievement award from the Council of Fashion Designers of America; finds himself Tony Award-nominated for "The Cher Show"; and gets to see his own creations duplicated on screen in the Elton John musical biopic "Rocketman." It's a good moment to be Mackie, and the upcoming untitled doc, from filmmaker Matthew Miele, director of "Scatter My Ashes at Bergdorf's," will dive deep into the designer's flashy past. But we'll all have to wait a bit longer: it's slated for a December 2020 release, a holiday gift for any post-election blues that might need a lift.

Feeling the 'Fear' with Amandla Stenberg

Rising young queer star Amandla Stenberg, whose performance in last year's underrated "The Hate U Give" was the kind of nomination-worthy work you'll be hearing more about as her career develops, is about to pay her teen movie dues in a remake of "Fear." If you



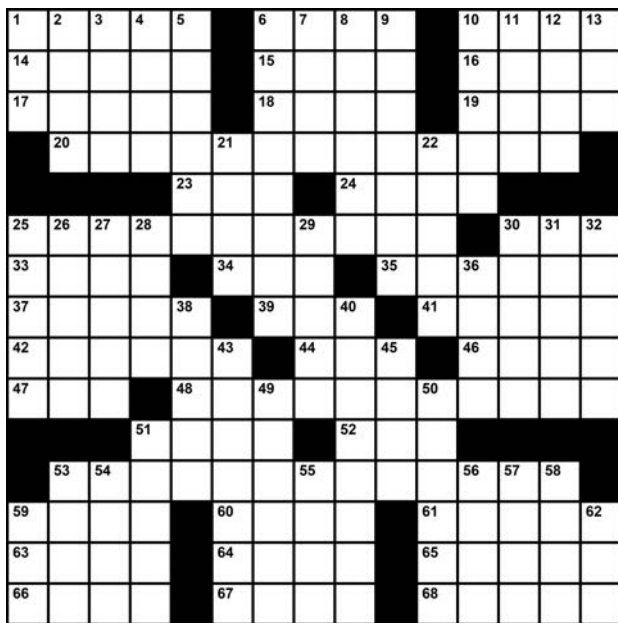
Bob Mackie. Photo: KathClick

remember the old weird '90s, that was the one with Reese Witherspoon and Mark Wahlberg, the one where he becomes a wildly violent – then murderous – stalker when she decides he might not be her dream guy. See, back then, this kind of misogynist peril was considered date night entertainment, and so it'll be interesting to see how a new generation's version handles the pitfalls of subject matter so ready to be turned into exploitation filmmaking. There's no word yet on who'll direct but "Straight Outta Compton" screenwriter Jonathan Herman will be handling the script. Good idea: make the director a woman. No, seriously.

Zendaya and the Mystery of 'Euphoria'

These days they drop TV shows like Beyoncé drops albums, with next to no warning, ready to make a quick burst of noise and grab your attention before you're distracted by the next new thing. That seems to be what's happening with the YA-themed "Euphoria," coming up "very" soon on HBO – June, in fact, right around the corner – and suddenly it's all we can think about. For starters, because it stars Zendaya and a cast of bright young things – Storm Reid, Maude Apatow, Algee Smith, Jacob Elordi, Sydney Sweeney and Austin Abrams – as they navigate all the usual teen tragedies with an updated 2019 sensibility. And because the series has cast trans model Hunter Schafer as a trans character, one we hear becomes romantically involved with Zendaya's character. Just in time for Pride Month, y'all. We'll be watching.

Romeo San Vicente is busting out all over.



A Sad Day in Hollywood QPuzzle

Across

- 1 Streisand's "Prince of ___"
- 6 Ventimiglia of "This Is Us"
- 10 Smurf patriarch
- 14 South Beach setting
- 15 Top Norse deity
- 16 Figure skater Rippon
- 17 "Calamity Jane" song that became an LGBT anthem
- 19 Jam holders

- 20 Web site concerned with HIV
- 21 Butler's "___ for Strings"
- 23 F, in the orchestra pit
- 24 Bowling units
- 25 Caesar's body
- 29 "___ mia!"
- 30 What S&M people are as smart as?
- 31 Setting for "The Lion King"
- 35 Boat bottom

- 36 Run over the edge
- 37 Regressive diva?
- 38 "Sound of Music" song
- 40 Word from Bruce Weber, perhaps
- 41 Get on the soapbox
- 42 Took it all off
- 43 Erections of small-handed Trump
- 45 Fooling around
- 46 "___ touch!"
- 47 Tape-recorder adjunct
- 52 Culture Club's "___ Miracle"
- 53 Frequent costar with Doris Day
- 55 Work your fingers to the bone
- 56 Helm location
- 57 Hersey's "A Bell For ___"
- 58 Star journey for George Takei
- 59 You might wear them on your knees
- 60 Pluck 'em

Down

- 1 Pleasure oneself, with "off"
- 2 Thespian rapper
- 3 South Beach building style
- 4 He shot off at O.K. Corral
- 5 Come from behind
- 6 Like old bread, perhaps
- 7 They come before kissing
- 8 Tyler of "Lord of the Rings"
- 9 Like a Las Vegas bandit
- 10 1957 Doris Day film, with "The"
- 11 "Lesbians ignite!" e.g.
- 12 City Porter loved in song
- 13 Schoolyard retort
- 18 Neckwear
- 22 Rhett Butler's final word
- 24 Amounts left on nightstands
- 25 Suffix with beef or fruit
- 26 Got a little behind
- 27 South Korea's first president
- 28 1959 Doris Day film with 53-Across
- 29 Edwin of Reagan's Cabinet
- 31 Narrow openings
- 32 Like McKellen's Magneto
- 33 Q to a Scrabble player
- 34 Fingered
- 36 Seduction of a hairy gay guy?
- 39 Singer with wings
- 40 Homoerotic, e.g.
- 42 Word on a door
- 43 Aristotle, to Alexander the Great
- 44 Clark of fashion
- 45 Pretends to have an orgasm
- 46 Fly catcher
- 47 Reproduced nonheterosexually?
- 48 Swirl around three men in a tub
- 49 Russian ruler of yore
- 50 The sound of music
- 51 Mireille of "The Killing"
- 54 Plug extension

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
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