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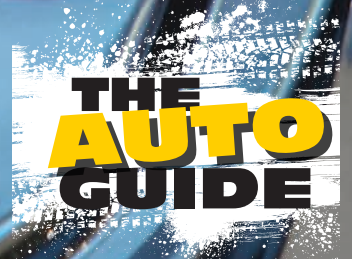
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Mayor Pete Speaks on LGBTQ History, Historic Campaign

BY MARK SEGAL

Editor's Note: This piece is part of a series done in honor of LGBTQ history month. Mark Segal is the founder and publisher of Philadelphia Gay News.

Pete Buttigieg, who has served as mayor of South Bend, Indiana, since 2012, came out as a gay man in a self-penned essay published by the South Bend Tribune. This past April, he declared his candidacy for President of the United States. Mayor Buttigieg and I spoke on the phone about his campaign, his values and who he looks up to in the LGBTQ community.

When you entered the race as an openly gay man, did you realize the historical significance and what the LGBTQ community expected?

You know, it's one thing to realize it in theory; it's another to see it play out in practice. Seeing teenagers come up to me and let me know what this campaign means to them and folks who are of a different generation who just never thought that they would see this, sometimes coming up with tears in their eyes, really has made me feel a different level of awareness and fulfillment but also responsibility around that fact about this campaign.

What people from our community historically do you admire?

Wow, well, of course, anybody who seeks office and is out owes a lot to Harvey Milk and the tradition that he now represents. It's almost impossible to imagine, I think now looking back, what that would have meant at the time. And then more recently, in my own lifetime, I remember seeing the judiciary hearings when they were trying to impeach President Clinton and seeing Barney Frank just run circles intellectually around so many people. Realizing that he was also an out member of Congress I think changed my awareness of what was possible.

I also admire people who have come into the public eye recently, some even later than I have. Danica Roem in Virginia, just extraordinary the way she has been able not just to break barriers and challenge the backward-looking culture warrior that she beat but also to do it in a way that truly focused on her constituents — and talk about issues like traffic and commuting as well as issues like equality. There's so many really inspiring figures out there, Annise Parker, I could go on and on. And, obviously, I'm

aware that I'm standing on the shoulders of so many who helped pave the way.

It's sort of amazing that in just a few short decades we went from zero candidates running for public office to a man like yourself now running, openly gay, for president of the United States. Have you sought advice from some of those pioneers like Barney Frank or Tammy Baldwin or Elaine Noble?

Yeah, I've had a chance to meet Tammy Baldwin, and, again, Annise Parker has been a great source of encouragement and support as well as advice. I'm not sure what's more amazing, the fact that we're the first to do this or the fact that we can do it at all. Part of just living it seems strange that I'd be the first major candidate to do this, then again you think about where we were just a decade ago.

That's a great point. Many in our community never thought we'd see someone being so open and running for President, and we'd always looked at what that opposition would look like. While you've been running, the largest number of those opposing you have been religious protesters, and you've been very good by saying, "I'm going to be judged by my God, not by you." Is there a time that either on a personal level or on the campaign that you've faced homophobia one-on-one?

Well, yeah, somebody will come up on a rope line and have something nasty to say, or you see stuff coming in the mail, although I don't pay too much attention to that. But I gotta say that any homophobia that comes my way is less concerning than what's happening to so many youth and really vulnerable people out there of any age around the country, what's happening to black trans women endangering their life. I try not to dwell on the irritation of any of the nonsense that might come my way because I've got, I can feel all the support that I have, folks from my own team, and from millions of people out there. I think of all the people who don't know that they have that support, who don't know that we're rooting for them when they're dealing with whatever it is their up against.

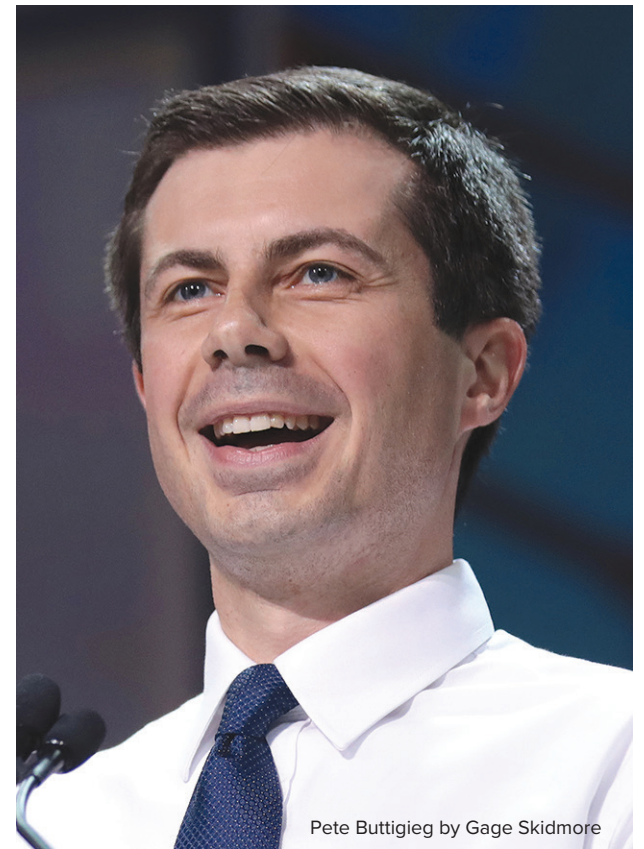
One of the most amazing similarities I see in your campaign is one I saw in President Obama's campaign. When he was a candidate, being the first major African-American running for President, he kept running up to the race issue no matter how many issue papers he put out on certain subjects. Similarly, you're the first

out gay man, and, therefore, no matter how many issue papers you put out, it still comes up. President Obama, then-candidate Obama, did something spectacular. He decided he had to address the issue in a major speech in March of 2008, just on race. Do you think if that one issue keeps plaguing you, you're going to have to give the LGBTQ equality speech, and are you prepared to do that?

Well, I'm not sure my equivalent of that speech will be a speech, although it might be. I think it is important for folks to hear me tell my story, and while I've done it in a number of ways, I may need to find new ways to do it. I think not only about President Obama's example but also the steps that President Kennedy had to take to reassure voters that they could vote for the first Catholic President. So often it comes into form, and I remember this from 2008, people saying, "This is not an obstacle for me but I'm just not sure about everybody else," and finding a way to speak to that and stay ahead of it. I think we'll continue seeking the right ways to do that, true to who I am and true to what we need to convey as well.

There's this old political saying, "Politics is a dime and a day," meaning politics can change on any given issue, and you can't stay in politics unless you raise funds. You've had incredible success at raising funds. In fact, you've done so well that you are basically one of the only candidates who can stay in the entire game if they wish up to the convention. You have an enormity of support from the LGBTQ community, which would like you to stay in through the convention. Do you feel an obligation that regardless of where the polls go or where the votes go that you need to stay in just to be front and center on this issue?

Well, I think there's so many things that motivate this campaign. We're certainly conscious of the historic nature of it, and, at the same time, there are many reasons why we're in this and why I'm going to stay in it. We want to know that I've got the resources to go the distance. And if you say not knowing how things may evolve even from week to



Pete Buttigieg by Gage Skidmore

week, I'm glad that we do, because the very same things that can be a disadvantage in terms of an issue that's visible or something that's in the news, sometimes what's making things harder for you politically can turn around and be an asset a few months or weeks later. So, we're definitely in this to go the distance and feeling increasingly bullish about how this is going to unfold.

Some of the candidates who will be appearing with you at this week's CNN Town Hall meeting on LGBTQ equality have long-standing positions — Elizabeth Warren, Joe Biden — and have evolved on our issues long before most others. How do you differ from them on LGBTQ issues?

I think we all have different areas of emphasis. I'm certainly proud of my record, not just in terms of my identity but what we've done, because I think it's important not to take for granted or assume that, just because I'm out, LGBTQ voters are going to automatically decide I'm the best person to make a difference in their lives. I think that what's really important is to have a robust and strong plan. And, to me, the equality act is very important but I hope it's also understood that that's table stakes, that there's a lot more that we need to do proactively around issues like conversion therapy, protecting LGBTQ youth, attacking the AIDS epidemic, diplomacy around human rights including the way we think about how we treat refugees, [and] work for community-based programs. There's so many things that we need to do that I think each of us has an obligation to put forward a

See **Mayor Pete**, continued on p. 16

CNN LGBTQ Equality Town Hall Overview

BY LISA KEEN

The bar had been set pretty high for CNN's Oct. 10 town hall on LGBTQ issues for Democratic presidential candidates. It was the first national television broadcast by a major media outlet of an LGBTQ-specific discussion with presidential candidates. It was preceded just one month earlier by a very similar event with most of the same candidates answering many of the same questions. And it was scheduled to take place over the course of 4 1/2 hours: nine candidates, 30 minutes each.

While it is sometimes informative to hear a candidate answer the same question in a different forum from time to time, the CNN event, sponsored with the Human Rights Campaign, appeared to be structured toward a goal other than getting the candidates' responses. The real purpose of the night seemed to be one of public education. Over the course of the event, more than 50 members of the LGBTQ community – male, female, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, students, professionals, activists, health care workers, military veterans and even two elementary school children — told their stories and asked their questions.

There was the husband of the parachuting instructor whose Title VII case had been argued earlier in the week before the U.S. Supreme Court. The mother of a young man, Matthew Shepard, who had been beaten to death in Wyoming. A gay man who had survived the gun massacre at Orlando's Pulse nightclub. And CNN moderator Anderson Cooper, who acknowledged that he and other LGBTQ people "just like me" had been "forced

to live in silence for decades" for fear of losing jobs or suffering harassment.

And there was Democratic presidential hopeful Mayor Pete Buttigieg, the openly gay candidate who has been criticized in a few mainstream media of being both "Mary Pete" and too straight-looking. One audience member, Robby Goldman, a doctoral candidate from Illinois, noted that members of the LGBTQ community are not a monolith but that Buttigieg had faced questions about whether he could adequately represent the community.

"I, too, am not always the right kind of gay," Goldman said, who then asked Buttigieg how he would go about representing the community.

Buttigieg agreed there is "much diversity" within the LGBTQ community and that he is "very mindful" of the limitations imposed on him by his experience as a white cisgender gay man. But, he added, "diversity is what we have to offer" and "there is no right or wrong way to be gay"

Buttigieg, the first openly gay presidential candidate for a major party nomination to have garnered a large amount of support beyond the LGBTQ community, was greeted at the town hall by a prolonged, enthusiastic standing ovation. But so was the current frontrunner, U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts. Warren had her touching moment during the event when a 9-year-old transgender boy from her home state asked a question.

Jacob LeMay was one of two young transgender students to pose questions at the town hall. Both were accompanied by their mothers, and Jacob posed the twofer-question himself: "What will you do in your first week as

See **Town Hall**, continued on p. 16



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Expo Exhibits Equality

BTL Wedding, Home and Life Expo Draws Hundreds

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Between the cake, photographers, floral arrangements and wedding attire on display at the 9th annual Between The Lines Wedding, Home and Life Expo on Sunday, Oct. 13, Dearborn's The Henry, Autograph Collection hotel felt transformed into a unique celebration of both marriage and equality. With more than 80 equality-minded vendors in attendance at the event, guests, LGBTQ or allied, could feel comfortable that every business and organization present was there not only to showcase their various offerings but stand in solidarity with LGBTQ people.

Political Implications

Jan Stevenson is BTL's co-publisher and co-founder of the Expo. When she addressed the hundreds-strong crowd in attendance, she summed up the value of feeling comfortable when preparing for any event, especially in this charged political time.

"In this time of the movement, it's really important for us to recognize that these vendors who are with us in the room today are the ones that are really going to make a difference in our lives," Stevenson said. "Some of you may have heard that there was an invitation company in Arizona that sued because they didn't want to make invitations for a same-sex couple. It went all the way to the Arizona Supreme Court and they won. So the current political climate is a scary one for us in the LGBTQ community. But if you want invitations, we just happen to have an invitation company here and they make them for same-sex couples — they know you're gay."

She went on to thank the remaining vendors



Expo Emcee Jason Bowen opens the event with a Broadway tune. BTL Photo: Tih Penfil



BTL Photo: Tih Penfil

for their continued support as both allies and community members themselves. The invitation company she was referring to is Pink Paper Studios, which creates hand-stamped and colored personalized invitations. When asked why acceptance of LGBTQ people is important to them as a business, owner Cathy Glynn said that "everyone deserves their day."

"I saw the event come up on Facebook and I thought, 'You know, I haven't done a wedding expo,' and I thought, 'I'm sorry, but love is love,'" she said. "We have lots of friends that have gone through and they ended up doing something small because they had trouble [finding a vendor.] Everyone deserves their fairytale."

Also in attendance were representatives from The LGBT and Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party whose goal was to encourage more political activism on behalf of the LGBTQ

community.

"We're at the expo this year because we've reached a critical point where we need to get the LGBTQ community engaged and involved," said Caucus Vice-Chair Jacob Johnson. "... The question of whether or not I have the right to be employed in this country. It's not just about a job, it's the right to education and my health care and the rights of my children to education. On the grand scale, people say that, 'Oh, that happens every day, I can be fired for any reason,' but we want legal backing support for our community. We want the same rights and we don't want to be second-class citizens. We're here to energize and engage the community



Couple Sally and Leanne Trainor attended the Expo with their son. BTL Photo: Jamie Feldman.

where they are."

For many other vendors in attendance, the cause was a personal one: either they or a member of their family had come out as LGBTQ and acceptance was the natural response. For Pattie Belanger and Patty Scott, the sisters-in-law who run Le Fontaine De Chocolat catering company, it was their family ties that persuaded them to participate in the Expo.



Various wedding gowns from B. Ellis Bridal, the Expo's longtime sponsor. BTL Photo: Jamie Feldman

"We've been in business for about 15 years. We don't do a lot of shows, however, when Patty's son got married to his husband it was 2012, there wasn't anything for them. And a lot of time when they went somewhere people gave them a look, which infuriates both of us," Belanger said. "And then, my brother just got married to his partner of 15 years. So we did their whole wedding. I think we look at it differently than a lot of people do."

Patty Scott agreed.

"We're inclusive for everybody. We do graduations, baby showers, but we don't do many wedding shows, but we do this one because it's a new market," she said. "And then, we understand the client and their needs. We don't judge anybody and another company might say, 'I don't do that,' but not us."

Comfort in Planning

Unfortunately, that rejection can be all too real. And in some areas of the country without explicit protections for sexual orientation and gender identity in all areas, Michigan included, discrimination is a real threat that extends beyond wedding preparation. One of the vendors in attendance was Don Chisholm from Real Estate One. A member of the LGBTQ community himself, he pointed out why LGBTQ couples can benefit from using a service provider who is well-versed in what rights clients have.

"At the federal and state level there are not necessarily sexual orientation laws in place for non-discrimination, so in certain parts at the national level it's legally OK to discriminate against someone based on their sexual orientation when it comes to housing to rent and so forth," Chisholm said. "I've been fortunate in my business that I've not had first hand discriminatory experiences from myself and my clients, but it's important to me that I put my clients in such a position that they're not going to ever have to worry about that."

And beyond providing expertise, there's a level of ease that couples can uniquely feel when working with a vendor who is accepting.

Couple Sally and Leanne Trainor attended the Expo with their son. They said that they enjoyed the stress-free nature of the event, too.

"It was just nice to come out to a relaxed atmosphere, being a same-sex couple with a child and see people interested in the same things that we are," Sally Trainor said.

Leanne Trainor agreed.

"It's a sense of community to be with other same-sex couples," she said. "It's comfortable, it's home, it's our community; It's a relaxed atmosphere with like-minded people."

Fiancees Chelsea Manning and Christy McGraw are scheduled to tie the knot in the spring of 2020. They said that they hadn't known about the expo before they made their plans but they were eager to keep service providers from the Expo in mind for future events.

"When we were trying to find venues and find caterers and everything one of the questions I always felt like I had to ask was, 'Are you LGBT-friendly?' And some people were like, 'Of course, of course.' And other people were like, 'Yeah, we've done three gay couples,'" she said with a laugh. "So, I wish we had had this [resource] before."

It was perhaps Mary Gondert of Mary Anastasia Photography who summed up the value of an inclusive vendor best — both from a personal and business-minded perspective.

"It's something that I value partially because I came out late in life as bisexual, and I struggled to find a place within the queer community, and I struggled to find my own identity as I moved forward. And as I started making more friends in the community and more trans friends, in particular, I started seeing the value of having a photographer that was actually showcasing those couples and making it less about acceptance like, 'I threw an LGBT photo in my gallery so I could tell people I do LGBT wedding,' versus enthusiasm," she said. "A lot of my photos are LGBT couples. So I find that very, very important."

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HIGHEST SAFETY RATING POSSIBLE FROM:

5th Annual Trans Empowerment Workshop Oct. 19

BY BTL STAFF

Over a million people across the United States identify as transgender, but few have the resources and community support that they need to safely transition let alone deal with the discrimination that often follows a gender-diverse identity. Often, that unchecked discrimination can contribute to mental health struggles like anxiety and depression. Stand With Trans is a Michigan-based nonprofit organization that dedicates itself to providing support services to transgender youth and their parents. This year, it's working to help the local transgender community with the fifth annual Trans Empowerment Workshop to be held on Saturday, Oct. 19, at the Orchard Lake United Methodists Church. Roz Keith, the organization's founder, said that attendees can expect a brand-new lineup this year.

"We have new speakers, new topics. For example, for the little kids we have Drag Queen Storytime and we have a couple of people of coming with their therapy dogs and they'll be able to hear about what they do and what the dogs do when they go to the hospital and they'll get to pet the dogs. And we have two surgeons coming who perform gender confirmation surgery and know they'll be on a panel with parents Dr. Laura Rodriguez from Henry Ford Health Systems and Dr. Edwin Wilkins from the University of Michigan," she said. "John Austin who is the former of the Michigan Department of Education will speak to parents about rights in schools. And we will host a session on How to implement a non-discrimination ordinance in your town. And we have Mary Jo Schnell, who is the executive director of the Out Center in Benton Harbor, and Laura Ann Goos, who is the mayor pro tem in St. Joseph, Michigan, speaking."

Studies have shown that simply having services like these can drastically improve the mental health of young transgender people who may be experiencing mental health struggles.

"Over half of transgender youth have attempted or seriously contemplated suicide," said the event's press release. "A major cause for this alarming rate is a lack of support from family and community. When a transgender child feels like they have support, the suicide attempt rate drops to less than 5 percent. LGBTQ+ kids who have at least one supportive adult in their lives are 40 percent less likely to attempt suicide than those who have no supportive adults. One person can mean the difference between life and death for an LGBTQ+ child."

The church is located at 30450 Farmington Road in Farmington Hills. Advance registration is required and a light breakfast, lunch and snacks will be provided. For more information reach out to keith at roz@standwithtrans.org or register here: <https://bit.ly/2Mbj3Yy>.

Ferndale City Council Bans Conversion Therapy

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The Ferndale City Council voted unanimously Monday night to ban conversion therapy. The legislation was proposed by Councilwoman Julia Music, the director of Ferndale Pride, who was voted last month to a three-month term to fill a vacancy on the council.

"It's essential for LGBTQAI people to have access to proper mental health care, and for those who are impacted by conversion therapy to access care that can start to undo the harm conversion tactics inflict," Music said in a statement. "Council bringing up a ban on this therapy continues our mission of building safe and inclusive space to all people."

The ban will go into effect as soon as the ordinance is officially published. Violations of the ban will be considered misdemeanors and will be punishable by a \$500 fine and up to 93 days in jail. Ferndale is the second Michigan city to enact such a ban. Huntington Woods became the first in June.

Democratic State Rep. Yousef Rabhi of Ann Arbor and State Sen. Mallory McMorrow of Royal Oak have introduced legislation that would ban conversion therapy for LGBTQ youth. But both chambers are currently controlled by Republicans who oppose such a ban.

Conversion therapy, sometimes called reparative therapy, has long been debunked and deemed harmful by the medical community at large. Nationally, 17 states and the District of Columbia ban conversion therapy.

Music said that the idea for the ban was presented to her by a constituent.

"He stated that he thought it was time for our city to take a stance against this harmful practice and join Huntington Woods in banning this therapy," Music told Between The Lines after the meeting. "I'm very thankful to Councilman Dennis Whittie who pointed out that we could make the ordinance more stringent by changing some wording. Dennis' contribution has given us the voice to make the most strict enforcement possible."

Though her term may be short, Music said she is determined to make the most of it.

"There are several things I hope to get done during my time on council," she said. "A lot of the council year is already set in motion so I want to make sure that my voice is brought to the table on those issues. Blight has been something that I have been working against for years and hope to be able to move more stringent enforcement ahead while on council."

David Balas, Benefactor and Early Out Elected Official, Dies at 67

BY TIM RETZLOFF

In eulogizing David Balas, Rabbi Michael Schadick noted that Jewish sages teach that those who pass away during the High Holy Days "are particularly special to God."

David Lloyd Balas, arts supporter, benefactor and three-term, openly-gay member of the East Lansing City Council, died Oct. 1 with his husband Jim Sellman at his side in the home they shared in Saugatuck. Balas was 67 and his passing followed a lengthy battle with cancer.

"David Balas passed away on Monday evening, which was Rosh Hashanah, which was the first day of our New Year," Rabbi Schadick noted at a funeral for Balas held on Oct. 3 at Temple Emanuel in Grand Rapids. "Could there ever have been a doubt in our minds that this would be the season of the year in which he would pass away?"

Balas was particularly special within Michigan's LGBTQ community as well. From 1983 to 1995, Balas served on the East Lansing City Council. At a time when few officeholders were openly gay, Balas made no secret of his sexuality.

Among his achievements on the council were sponsoring the state's first ordinance that banned smoking in restaurants and authoring a requirement that owners take a safety course before being granted a handgun permit.

"I will always remember David and his smile," said Bob Egan, who knew Balas since the 1980s, in part through involvement with the Capital Men's Club, a social organization for Lansing-area gay men. Egan, who later served as president of the Michigan Organization for Human Rights and co-chair of a ballot fight to defend Lansing's human rights ordinance, recalled that Balas was "always supportive" of local gay and lesbian efforts.

Balas was born in Mt. Clemens on Jan. 16, 1952, and graduated from University Liggett High School in 1970. He received his bachelor's degree from Miami University in Ohio in 1974 and earned his J.D. at the University of Toledo Law School in 1977.



Following a short stint working for the Washtenaw County Prosecutor, Balas joined the Michigan Attorney General's Office in 1979, and enjoyed a long career as an Assistant Attorney General providing counsel in such areas as transportation, aeronautics and retirement.

Balas and Sellman met in East Lansing in 1982 and were together for 37 years. When Balas retired in 2003, the couple relocated from Lansing to Saugatuck, settling into a house they built there in 1995.

Their years in Saugatuck were filled with cultural riches, and they gave back to their community. Balas served on the Saugatuck Historic District Commission and on the boards of the Mason Street Warehouse equity theatre and Ox-Bow School of Art

& Artists' Residency.

As a couple, they contributed generously to arts and LGBTQ causes, providing financial support to West Shore Aware and establishing the Balas-Sellman Family Fund through the Allegan County Community Foundation.

The two were united in marriage on July 13, 2015, just weeks after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled same-sex marriage legal in all 50 states.

"David wanted to wait until the state in which he lived recognized his union," Schadick said in his eulogy.

In addition to Sellman, Balas was survived by his twin brother Philip, his sister Leslie, a niece and two nephews.

"I think David Balas understood how precious each of his days were," Schadick said. "While he was with us he chose to do what many of us find too difficult or time-consuming, and that is to bring people together and shower his love and affection on them."

A Celebration of Bigger than Life will be held for Balas on Oct. 25, 2019, at the Saugatuck Center for the Arts on Culver Street in Saugatuck, at a time to be determined.



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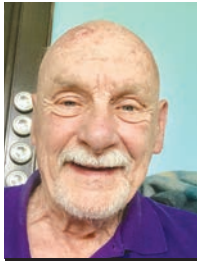
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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hide

This column first appeared in BTL in Oct. 2010

To diddle an old saying: You can't judge a gay author – or his book – by the cover.

Case in point: Groundbreaking 1951 sociological expose, "The Homosexual in America." Gay nom de plume: Donald Webster Cory. Real name: Edward Sagarin. Outed dramatically 24 closeted years later. (A gay Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hide. Er, Hyde.)

Cory's "Homosexual" followed three years after Alfred Kinsey's shelf-shocker, "Sexual Response in the Human Male." Both books provided in-your-face facts, focus, insights on a previously little discussed – statistically undocumented subject – homosexuality.

Kinsey, a biologist and authority on gall wasps, turned his scientific cataloging to humans. His research institute colleagues interviewed 5,940 men about their sex lives. The result: 804 pages of tables, charts, statistics. Dull; but, for the American public, titillating best-seller reading.

Data showed 37 percent of the male population had at least some overt gay experience to ejaculation; 4 percent of white males were exclusively homosexual after the onset of adolescence. Findings were startling, staggering and, from our perspective today, ultimately liberating.

It's safe to say of the time frame 62 years ago that the average Joe believed he had never met a homosexual; that fags, fairies, fruits were few, but even so: they were perverts, mentally unbalanced, to be incarcerated, punished if caught with their collective pants down, justifiably shunned by church, family, employers, military, government; to be dealt with by psychiatrists and/or police. (Sound just vaguely familiar?)

Those Americans living in large cities – Chicago, New York, San Francisco and Detroit – were likely to be aware of thriving gay subcultures gathered secretly in gay bars. (Detroit's bar community dates to Prohibition, with earlier house parties in the '20s. Gay bars thrived during World War II.)

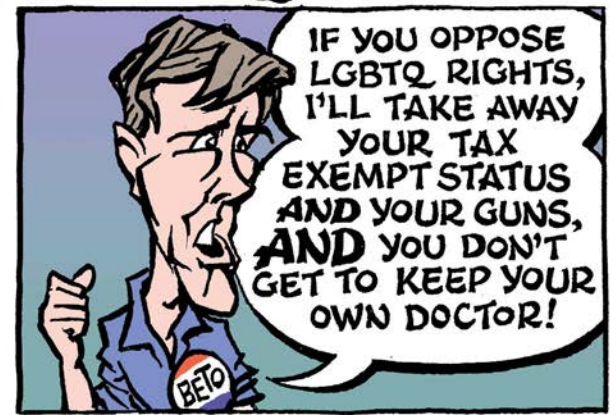
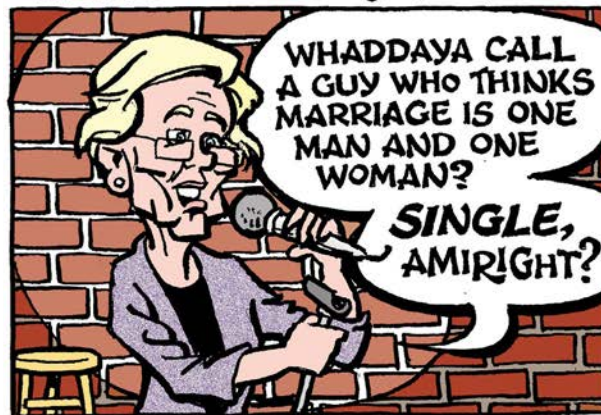
Sagarin, a married bisexual, sociologist, trained criminologist (and perfume authority), documented gay life as a social phenomenon and as a participant observer in his "The Homosexual in America." He provided a fair-minded understanding of gay persons, their subculture, slang, sexual acts, their basic proximity to the so-called heterosexual "norm."

"As a minority homosexuals are caught in a particularly vicious circle," said Sagarin, writing as Donald Webster Cory, a pen name name gleaned from André Gide's 1924 gay novel "Corydon," later published in America in 1950.

"On the one hand, the shame of belonging and the social punishment of acknowledge are so great that pretense is almost universal. On the other hand, only a leadership that would acknowledge (being homosexual) would be able to break down the barriers of shame and a resultant

See next page

HIGHLIGHTS of the DEMOCRATS' LGBTQ+ TOWN HALL



BY SOPHIE WHITE

A Transgender Woman's Take on Aimee Stephens' Supreme Court Case

Last week the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in three cases that will determine if people can discriminate against LGBTQ people based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The future of our community's rights is at stake here in the U.S. The three cases that are before the Supreme court are Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia, Altitude Express v. Zarda, and R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Home v. EEOC. The first two cases involve plaintiffs who were fired for being gay. The Harris Funeral Home case involves plaintiff Aimee Stephens, who was fired for being transgender.

While I care deeply about all three cases, as a transgender person, Aimee Stephens' case resonates with me the most. It will have broad implications on the ability of people like me to work and provide for ourselves. We are already marginalized, and this could be a crippling blow to our community. The employer argued that redefining sex to mean gender identity

creates chaos, which is unfair to women and girls and puts employers in difficult situations. However, I call bullshit.

The whole argument comes down to a few things: one is power, another is religion and the final one is money. The funeral home where Aimee was fired wants to be able to determine how a person presents themselves in their business according to management's religious beliefs. In my opinion, this is not their choice and, frankly, none of their business. It is the individual's choice of who they are, not the employer's religious desires about who their employees should be.

The constitution gives us freedom of religion, which I believe means you cannot impose your religious beliefs on other people. This is what the funeral home is trying to do. The funeral home is worried about how the public will respond to an employee for being transgender and also worried

See Transmissions, continued on p. 13

► Viewpoint

Continued from p. 12

that it might hurt their business. I have experienced this type of discrimination first hand. I think the public, especially those grieving the loss of someone, care less about a person's gender identity and more about if a person is kind, compassionate and competent.

I believe the way people reacted when I started to come out as transgender in my chiropractic practice is typical of how most client/customers will respond in other businesses. For the first six months of my transition, I started dressing androgynously. I then started to slowly dress in a more feminine way. My patients never missed a beat and just accepted me. A few asked which pronouns they should use, and a couple asked if it was because of my acting. However, I didn't lose any of my patients because I changed gender. In fact, I think I made several of my female patients more comfortable.

On the other hand, I also started a new job around the same time. When the wife of the owner found out that I was transgender, after seeing it on my Facebook page, I was fired less than a week later. Of course, they claimed it was for some other reason, rather than to admit the truth. I always love this about the religious right.

The funeral home sees Aimee as a guy in a dress. However, I am sure that's not

I have experienced this type of discrimination first hand. I think the public, especially those grieving the loss of someone, care less about a person's gender identity and more about if a person is kind, compassionate and competent.

how she sees herself. I struggled for years with this issue and it's never been about the dress: it is about how the world sees me, but, more importantly, how I see myself.

Stephens was a model employee until she revealed that she was transgender. Remember it's not about a guy in a dress, or about transgender people using their preferred bathrooms. Just like it was never about water fountains in the 1960s. It's about money, power and religion ... plain and simple. As always, love, light and peace. Sophie.

Sophie Marie White is a transgender actress and filmmaker. She has a co-starring role on an upcoming episode of "Chicago Med" airing on Oct. 30, 2019.

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 12

discrimination.

"Until we are willing to speak out openly and frankly in defense of our activities, and to identify ourselves with the millions pursuing these activities, we are unlikely to find the attitudes of the world undergoing any significant change."

Nonetheless, for all his advocacy on the behalf of America's gay population, Sagarin very cautiously, quietly, and only in 1962, joined the homophile Mattachine Society. His participation was supportive but "don't rock the boat"; he did no militant advocacy for civil rights.

As a sociologist, himself in psychotherapy, Sagarin believed that homosexuality was a pathology; that homosexuals should seek psychotherapy. Few of his gay friends or colleagues knew that he was the famous (at least in gay circles) Donald Webster Cory. His second gay book was "21 Variations on a Theme."

His identity remained secret until a 1974 American Sociological Society convention held in Montreal. He appeared on a panel, "Theoretical Perspectives on Homosexuality," speaking strongly against liberationist scholarship. A colleague, Laud Humphreys, took umbrage – and perhaps some polymorphous perverse delight – in exposing Sagarin by repeatedly calling him "Mr. Cory."

Sagarin broke down in tears, withdrawing thereafter from all issues concerning homosexual discussion. He died in 1986, age 73. Mr. Hide or not, he was a pioneer for humane understanding of gay people (R.I.P.).

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

Creep Of The Week

John McCormack

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

On Oct. 10, the day before National Coming Out Day, the Democrats running for president convened for a town hall on the topic of LGBTQ rights. It was a historic event, especially for those LGBTQ people who never thought they'd see something like this in their lifetimes, myself included. If you would have told me when I was a teenager that one day every single major Democratic contender would fully support my right to live and love I would have said you were out of your goddamn mind.

And yet, here we are. And it feels pretty great.

Of course, not everyone agrees that LGBTQ people are deserving of equal rights, let alone worth expending political capital on.

In fact, John McCormack of the National Review called the town hall "disastrous," arguing that there are other more pressing matters going on.

McCormack wrote, "The Democratic field was catering to a domestic special-interest group on CNN for several hours at a time when war is breaking out between Turkey and the Kurds in northern Syria — a war that was given a greenlight by the sitting Republican president."

He went on to imply that the Human Rights Campaign somehow strong-armed Democrats into talking about LGBTQ rights when the town hall's focused should have switched to what Trump did to the Kurds.

Now, McCormack has written a lot about what he calls Trump's "worst foreign-policy blunder of his presidency" and absolutely no one is arguing that this isn't a big deal (except, perhaps, Trump himself). But to scold Democrats for daring to talk about something else implies that LGBTQ rights are not important. And this is perhaps to National Review readers. But LGBTQ rights and the issues of equality are important topics, especially to Americans like me and my family. McCormack also seems to be implying that since the Democrats were focused on LGBTQ issues, they don't care about what's happening in Syria. This is, of course, not true.

Was the timing of the town hall bad? Perhaps, but that isn't the fault of the Democrats or HRC. If the Democrats had to scrap any and all planned appearances in order to respond to whatever the last thing Trump has said or done they would literally never be able to plan ahead. You couldn't write a speech or even make an outline of remarks without it being usurped by another reckless and ignorant comment or act from the dangerously unfit man in the White House.

McCormack then goes on to lambast Democrats for their support of the Equality Act, which would prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ people, calling it "extreme."

McCormack echoes claims that the Equality Act is a threat to religious liberty. He quotes Professor Douglas Laycock who said, "This is

LGBTQ people have gotten a bruising under the Trump Administration. Democrats don't exactly have a long history of support for LGBTQ people. So, this town hall helped assure LGBTQ people that they are not an afterthought in this election or in this country.

not a good-faith attempt to reconcile competing interests. It is an attempt by one side to grab all the disputed territory and to crush the other side."

As if what we currently have, where it's totally cool to discriminate as long as you can say your religion made you do it, isn't a one-sided grab of its own.

McCormack calls out Elizabeth Warren for joking that a man who believes in one man/one woman marriage should just marry one woman.

"If you can find one," she added to much applause and laughter.

"Long gone is the Democratic party of the 2000s that tried to unite blue-staters and red-staters under the Obama-esque rhetoric of hope and change," McCormack lamented. "You're a supporter of Elizabeth Warren but respectfully inform her your religion teaches you marriage is a union between one man and one woman? Candidate Warren would like you to know she thinks you're probably an incel. Not merely a cuck."

If McCormack thinks this is disrespectful, wait until someone tells him what Trump has said and done to women. Always bares repeating that Trump is currently accused of sexual assault by a large number (I've lost count) of women. Also, as if Warren was ever going to get the incel vote.

McCormack calls out Joe Biden's rambling about "round-the-clock sex" at "gay bathhouses" and I don't blame him. It was weird! Jesus, Joe. But McCormack leads with this tidbit in order to paint the entire town hall as a joke.

It wasn't. LGBTQ people have gotten a bruising under the Trump Administration. Democrats don't exactly have a long history of support for LGBTQ people. So, this town hall helped assure LGBTQ people that they are not an afterthought in this election or in this country.

What is a joke, however, is the man we're currently supposed to call president. And there is absolutely no humor to be found.

Supreme Court Analysis

A Look at the Probabilities in the Title VII Rulings

BY LISA KEEN

U.S. Supreme Court observers are more reluctant than usual to try and predict how the court might come down on the always hot-button issue of rights for LGBTQ people. There is a newly minted conservative majority on the court since the last LGBTQ case was heard and this time, the bench's reliable swing vote in favor of equal protection — Justice Anthony Kennedy — is in retirement.

So, it is no surprise that post-argument analysis by many Supreme Court observers this week sees a toss-up: It is simply too hard to predict how the court will rule on whether sexual orientation and transgender status are variations of sex discrimination and, thus, prohibited in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

But it is possible to narrow down the prospects. This can be done by looking at each individual justice — what they said during the Oct. 8 arguments, how they voted in past LGBT matters and relevant remarks they have made in past opinions. Combined, the information points to some probabilities.

The court must make two rulings: Whether Title VII prohibition of employment discrimination “because of sex” can cover sexual orientation and whether it can cover transgender status.

A “No” means the justice rules against LGBTQ people and finds that Title VII does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or transgender status. A “Yes” means the justice rules for LGBTQ people and protecting them from employment discrimination under Title VII.

Chief Justice John Roberts: Strong Probable No

During oral arguments, Chief Roberts gave voice to the idea that the Title VII challenges were asking the court to “update” the federal law to include sexual orientation. This, he said, seemed more like a responsibility for Congress. He also wondered why it would be sex discrimination to fire a man in a same-sex relationship if the employer would also fire a woman in a same-sex relationship. He said the bathroom issue was a “huge problem.” He worried about how the law would handle employers with religious objections to LGBTQ

people. And he essentially said that transgender status was a “whole different case” and a “different answer” than discrimination based on biological sex.

In the past 11 cases that had significant specific interest to the rights of LGBTQ people, Roberts voted against such rights 55 percent of the time (in six cases). A notable exception was *Hollingsworth v. Perry* where Chief Roberts led the 5-4 majority that dismissed an appeal brought by proponents of California's Proposition 8, which banned same-sex couples from marriage.

But as some observers noted, the majority could have struck down such bans in all 50 states, but it did not. On a technicality, it struck the ban only in California. And in his opinion, Roberts emphasized that he sees as “an essential limit” on the court's power. “We act as judges and do not engage in policymaking properly left to elected representatives,” he said.

National Center for Lesbian Rights legal director Shannon Minter said, at least on the transgender case, Roberts is “plainly not on board.”

Justice Clarence Thomas: Almost certain “No”

Justice Thomas is famous for almost never speaking or asking questions during oral arguments, so his silence Oct. 8 was simply routine. Plus, he had missed the first day of the session (Oct. 7) due to illness.

In the past 15 LGBTQ-specific cases on which Thomas has voted, he has opposed equal rights for LGBTQ people 13 times (87 percent opposed). Of all the justices on the bench today, his record is the most consistently opposed to the interests of LGBTQ people.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg: Almost certain “Yes”

During oral argument, Justice Ginsburg was the fourth most active questioner, and her questions and comments were pointedly helpful to the attorneys arguing in favor of Title VII covering discrimination based on sexual orientation and transgender status. She prompted attorney Pamela Karlan, who was representing two men fired for being gay, to address the chief arguments of those who want

to limit the reach of Title VII — including that Congress never intended, when it passed the Civil Rights Act in 1964, to cover sexual orientation. She undercut the opposing side's claim that firing a male employee for being gay would not be sex discrimination because the employer would fire a female employee for being gay.

As Ginsburg pointed out, “There's nothing in the record as far as I can see that there was a policy on the employer's part of discharging lesbian women.”

And she said, in the transgender case, that “the object of Title VII was to get at the entire spectrum of sex stereotypes.”

In 15 previous LGBTQ cases before the court, Ginsburg voted in support of equal rights for LGBTQ people 13 times (87 percent supportive). Her voting record is the most consistently pro-LGBTQ of any justice on the bench today.

Justice Stephen Breyer: Almost certain “Yes”

Justice Breyer was the most vocal of the justices during the Oct. 8 oral arguments, asking questions and commenting 35 times, with the bulk of his questions aimed at challenging the opposition to Title VII covering sexual orientation and transgender status. He constructed a hypothetical for the opposition attorney Jeffrey Harris, representing the employers who fired two men for being gay, that led Harris to agree that firing a Catholic for marrying a Jew was still “religious discrimination” even if the employer claimed he fired the employee because he was against interfaith marriages. Breyer said his hypothetical was “an identical case to this one.” And he dismissed opposing attorneys' “parade of horrors” concerning bathrooms, locker rooms and sports teams.

Historically, Breyer has voted in support of equal rights for LGBTQ people in 11 out of 15 cases (73 percent supportive).

Justice Samuel Alito: Almost certain “No”

During oral argument, Justice Alito's position became immediately clear: This issue needs to be resolved by Congress.

“What some people will say [if this court rules Title VII covers sexual orientation] is that whether Title VII should prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is a big policy issue and that it is a different policy issue from the one that Congress thought it was addressing in 1964,” he said. “And if this Court takes this up and interprets this 1964 statute to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, we will be acting exactly like a legislature.”

In 11 decisions involving LGBTQ issues, Alito has voted against the interests of LGBTQ people seven times (64 percent opposed). His dissent in *United States v. Windsor* — in which the majority struck down the Defense of Marriage Act — focused on there being no “right to enter into same-sex marriage” because there was no explicit statement about same-sex marriage in the Constitution.

“Any change on a question so fundamental should be made by the people through their elected officials,” he said.

That was essentially what he repeated during oral argument regarding sexual orientation and Title VII.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor: Almost Certain “Yes” on sexual orientation only

Justice Sotomayor was tied with Justice Gorsuch for second place in terms of the number of questions and comments asked by the justices Oct. 8. Perhaps anticipating that some justices would express concern about the “social upheaval” some believe would be caused by recognizing sexual orientation and transgender status in Title VII, Sotomayor put the issue on the table very early in the argument. She said the concern about the bathroom issue was “raging in this country” and asked how the courts should deal with women who are uncomfortable with a transgender person in the bathroom. She also stated emphatically that “we can't deny that homosexuals are being fired merely for being who they are and not because of religious reasons, not because they are performing their jobs poorly, not because they can't do whatever is required of a position, but merely because” they are gay.

“It was clear that the Justices are much less familiar with transgender people than they are with gay people,” Minter said. “And it was

also clear that many of them, including even Justice Sotomayor, are still affected by many of the most common misconceptions about transgender people — including especially just a fundamental inability to believe that a transgender woman is really a woman or that a transgender man is really a man.”

Sotomayor’s voting record has favored equal rights for LGBTQ people 9 out of 11 times (82 percent supportive).

Justice Elena Kagan: Almost certain “Yes”

During oral argument October 8, Kagan pointedly emphasized the court’s fixation on looking strictly at the text of a law, rather than other factors. “For many years,” she said, “the lodestar of this Court’s statutory interpretation has been the text of a statute, not the legislative history and certainly not the subsequent legislative history. And the text of [Title VII] appears to be pretty firmly in Ms. Karlan’s corner.” Speaking to attorney Harris, who represented the employers who fired gay men, Kagan said, “Did you discriminate against somebody...because of sex? Yes, you did.” Minter said Kagan was “very active and eloquent—and did a tremendous job of poking holes in the arguments of the government and the employer.”

Kagan’s voting record on LGBTQ cases has been pro-LGBTQ six out of nine times (67 percent supportive). She surprised many in the LGBTQ community last year when she voted with the majority that said a Colorado commission showed hostility to a baker’s religious beliefs against same-sex couples marrying.

Justice Neil Gorsuch: Possible “Yes” on sexual orientation; uncertain on transgender issues

Justice Gorsuch’s performance got the lion’s share of media attention because he made a couple of comments that suggested he is on the fence. For instance, he said that, while sexual orientation discrimination may have been in play when the employers fired the men for being gay, he asked, “Isn’t sex also in play here?” And “isn’t that enough?” for a Title VII violation, he asked.

“The statute,” he said, “talks about a material causal factor ... not the sole cause, not the proximate cause, but a cause.”

Gorsuch said he was “really close” to seeing the argument that Title VII’s text should cover sexual orientation and transgender status, but he also expressed concern about what he said would be the “massive social upheaval” of such a decision. Based just on those comments.

“It would have been easy to conclude that we may well have his vote,” But the transgender discussion, Minter said, “was much tougher.”

Gorsuch joined the bench in April 2017

under a cloud of controversy: Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to let then-President Obama’s nominee replace the recently deceased Justice Antonin Scalia to proceed through the confirmation process. Once President Trump took office, McConnell allowed Trump to nominate Gorsuch. During his confirmation hearing, Gorsuch evaded answering questions about his positions on LGBTQ legal issues, but he did say, “If you want to create a revolution in the area and change the law dramatically, that’s for [Congress] to do.”

He was also criticized for an article he wrote before becoming a judge that claimed “liberals” were filing lawsuits on “everything from gay marriage to assisted suicide” to achieve their “social agenda.”

In four LGBTQ-related cases, Gorsuch has voted against the interests of LGBTQ people twice (50 percent).

Justice Brett Kavanaugh: Probable No

Justice Kavanaugh is the newest member of the bench, joining in October 2018. His confirmation, too, came under a storm of controversy after several women went public with allegations that he had sexually assaulted them in high school and college. During the two hours of arguments, Kavanaugh spoke up only once. He asked attorney Harris, representing employers, “Are you drawing a distinction between the literal meaning of ‘because of sex’ and the ordinary meaning of ‘because of sex’? And, if so, how are we supposed to think about ordinary meaning in this case?”

Harris responded that he didn’t see a difference and Kavanaugh did not offer any explanation or delve further. Title VII does not define sex, but a 1975 decision at the U.S. Supreme Court, *Burns v. Alcala*, said “words used in a statute are to be given their ordinary meaning absent persuasive reasons to the contrary.”

In another decision four years later, *Perrin v. United States*, the court said, “A fundamental canon of statutory construction is that, unless otherwise defined, words will be interpreted as taking their ordinary, contemporary, common meaning.”

Minter said a “literal” reading of the word “sex” in the statute helps LGBTQ people, while an “ordinary” reading would help an employer who wants to discriminate.

“Justice Kavanaugh was either highlighting a potential weakness in the employer’s argument or — more likely — warning the attorney not to make an argument that would require the Court to disregard the literal text.”

Disregarding the literal meaning, Minter said, “would push Justice Gorsuch to support the plaintiffs based on a strict textualist interpretation of the law.”

Kavanaugh has yet to vote on an LGBTQ-specific case before the Supreme Court. Like Gorsuch, he dodged questions about his views on LGBTQ issues during his confirmation process.

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► Town Hall

Continued from p. 5

president to make sure kids like me feel safe in schools? And what do you think schools need to do better so I don't need to worry about anything but my homework?"

Warren answered that she wanted to appoint a secretary of education who would care about all kids and enforce civil rights laws to protect them. She started to lay out the history of the secretary's position but then seemed to change course.

"And here's my plan, Jacob," she said. "I'm going to find just the right secretary of education, but here's what I plan to do. I want to make sure that the person I think is the best secretary of education meets you and hears your story and then I want you to tell me if you think that's the right person and then we'll make the deal."

It was an unabashed one-on-one pander by the former schoolteacher who has clearly not forgotten how to talk, with respect, to children. It was also a powerful image for the American public to see: that the victims of anti-LGBTQ discrimination include children.

Shortly after that interaction, CNN moderator Chris Cuomo noted that, in 2012, Warren criticized the idea of prisons providing

surgery for transgender-related medical needs. He asked if she regretted taking that position.

"Yes, it was a bad answer," Warren said. "Everyone is entitled to medical care that they need, including transgender people."

The viewing public also got to see the unfiltered anger of black transgender women, a demographic that has increasingly become a target for people who harbor anti-LGBTQ hostility. Trans activists of color interrupted the forum several times to draw attention to the growing number of murders of trans women in the U.S. CNN moderators Anderson Cooper and Don Lemon both enabled the activists to speak their minds to the studio and television audience before resuming their interviews with the candidates.

Other highlights of the forum included:

- Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey related the struggle of transgender people to use restrooms consistent with their gender identity to segregated facilities, including bathrooms, for people of color. He also said laws "cannot allow people to use religion as a justification for discrimination."

- Former Vice President Joe Biden shared a

laugh with the audience for his choice of words when he started to tell the story of publicly revealing his support for letting same-sex couples marry.

"When I came out," he said, then immediately realized his choice of words had a double meaning and tried to change it to "when I publicly stated." The audience laughed, and Biden laughed with it. "That would be news," quipped moderator Anderson Cooper. Biden, smiling, walked over to him, put his hand on Cooper's shoulder and joked, "I got something to tell ya."

- Asked what he says to people who tell him homosexuality is a sin, Buttigieg said, "I don't believe it is, but I also get that people reach their own understandings of their own faith."

He said his goal is not to respond in a way that pushes such people "back into the arms of the religious right" but to encourage them toward "greater acceptance."

- One audience member, noting that teaching about sexual orientation and gender identity in the schools was often controversial, asked Warren for her thoughts. Warren said she supports such curricula because "it's teaching children about our world, about people, about differences."

"I strongly support ... doing it in age-

appropriate ways when very young."

Prior to the Oct. 10 forum, several of the Democratic presidential candidates released plans for addressing a wide range of LGBTQ issues. U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris, for instance, said she would appoint a "Chief Advocate for LGBTQ+ Affairs" at the White House, fund a "new office" to work with the community in conjunction with various federal agencies and appoint openly LGBTQ people to positions throughout her administration, "including her cabinet."

Harris and Buttigieg have been jostling for position in the polling for the Democratic nomination, but campaign news in recent days has suggested there may be some new jostling underway.

In four of the last six national polls, Sen. Warren has led the Democratic field, dropping Vice President Biden to second place and U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders to third. Sanders, 78, recently suffered a heart attack and the sudden loss of his daughter-in-law to a fast-moving cancer. He said he would resume campaigning, but his poll numbers had begun to drop even before the heart attack. Biden, meanwhile, has become a nearly constant target of President Trump in a controversy involving Ukraine.

► Mayor Pete

Continued from p. 4



robust plan, and not simply make it seem as though we think that the struggle was won when marriage equality came to the land or that the equality act is all we've got to do.

One of the most important things you do is the fact that you've become a role model for LGBTQ youth. That's a heavy responsibility. How does that weigh on you?

You know, I liken it to a moment of growth that happened to me, around what's now been a very small thing when I was mayor, which was when I was a candidate I used to think, when I was riding a bike, a little bit of irritation, "Oh, I better wear a helmet, because if somebody sees me without one they're going to say something." And somewhere along the line I realized my responsibility was different, and I started thinking, "I better wear a helmet because somebody might see me without one and decide not to, and I'd be responsible for their safety."

And I think it's the same now on a much

"I'm very mindful of the obligation to live up to the need to model and support those values, knowing just how many people have pinned their hopes on the conduct of this campaign as well as its outcome."

bigger stage. When people are looking to you and people see in you so much more than one person can really be, you realize that it's not just you but what you're building. And, to me, the best way to make good on that is not only to seek to act with integrity and do the right thing but also to make sure that our campaign organization shows the values that we're trying to promote — including the idea of belonging. It's part of what I'm trying to build for the whole country. And I'm very mindful of the obligation to live up to the need to model and support those values, knowing just how many people have pinned their hopes on the conduct of this campaign as well as its outcome.

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Courtesy photo

Christopher J. Webb's career in car design has a lot of miles and great memories, but his love of everything automobile still drives like new.

BY EMELL DERRA ADOLPHUS

In his work as senior creative designer at General Motors Industrial Design, Christopher J. Webb draws on a childhood fascination for the engineering and elegance of automobiles.

"I used to call out the name, make and model of cars," Webb recalled of his holiday drives to the English countryside with his parents. "I could even tell [the] brands at night from their headlamp and taillights."

Born and raised in Bristol, England, Webb

only recently became an American citizen after moving to Michigan 19 years ago to start his career at GM. A recruiter offered him an associate creative design position on the spot upon seeing his graduate show.

"I've always enjoyed design and been artistic," Webb said, who studied fashion and textile design in with business studies in England at the University of Brighton.

"By sheer chance, we were told to do a project where we used non-traditional fashion fabrics. Just outside of Brighton is Caterham, home to the Caterham sports car, and I visited

their facility for inspiration," he said. "They generously gave me carbon fiber and glass fiber to make garments from and, jump forward to my final degree show, I was approached and offered a job by GM design recruiters."

Over the span of his career, Webb has received the 2005 GM Chairman's Honors Award for being on the team to streamline the exterior paint development process and an award for his support of the American Heart Association Gala. He has worked in color and trim designing, selecting the color and materials for concept cars, designing exterior car colors

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► Car Craftsman

Continued from p. 18

for production and concept vehicles as a colorist, and now to his current role: leading design for GM's internal and media events.

"Probably the best and most simplistic way to describe our role is we work on all projects and products that surround and support the vehicle but not the actual vehicles themselves," Webb said. "Growing up, I saw vehicles as a means to independence and a way to see all my friends, so they very quickly became significant in my life for that reason."

The journey from collecting toy cars to designing cars as collectible toys has been a dream come true for Webb, and he credits his love of cars in helping to build a better understanding of what it means to be LGBTQ across communities.

"The industry in which one is working impacts dramatically how numerous, comfortable and visible their LGBTQ community is," he said. "Like anyone who comes into an industry as 'someone different,' new fresh eyes can be a wonderful and sometimes scary and threatening thing."

As a member of GM PLUS — the company's LGBTQ & Ally Employee Resource Group for direct, contracted and retired employees of General Motors, its subsidiaries and affiliates — Webb said that he's come to know a surprising number of LGBTQ people in the car industry.

"We are, of course, a small group in comparison to the other affinity groups at GM, but we thankfully have a visual presence and senior executive support."

Beyond GM's ERG, that support comes directly from the top in the form of GM's chief diversity officer and first-ever female CEO, Mary Barra, Webb said.



"Of course fashion, interior design and the cosmetics industry have always been highly supportive and welcoming industries for us. [In] automotive, if you were LGBTQ you were mostly not out," he said. "I personally feel that things have dramatically changed for the better for all diversity groups including all those [who are] LGBTQ. Diversity is so important and, in my opinion, if this company wants to have long-term success the people designing, building, marketing and selling our products should be as diverse as the customer they are serving and trying to connect with."

Websites such as gaywheels.com have made a point to remind car brands that not only do LGBTQ people need cars, too, they also care about quality in design and engineering. Webb, whose first car at 16 was a bright green Mini Metro, has since refined his tastes to dreams of owning an Aston Martin.

"I love the balance of performance and handmade craftsmanship, and if it's good enough for British Royalty then it's good enough for me," he said with a laugh. "If I could have any vehicle today, it would be a Cadillac Escalade if it were to be an SUV ... A daily driver, I'm happy with my 2019 Cadillac XT4 Sport."

Although Webb didn't come from a family involved in the automotive field, "My father was a policeman, my mum a nurse and my sister is a science teacher," he hopes the continued support of LGBTQ people in the industry will encourage others to take an interest in it like he did.

"The numbers of openly LGBTQ employees has increased in this industry, and I am confident it is striving to be even more inclusionary as we move forward," Webb said. "I can't really say it's a 'gay thing' or a 'fashion design background thing,' but the way I perceive and handle materials and colors is definitely different from the traditional automotive designer. I would like to think I have learned as much and have imparted to others over my time at GM."

He added, "I feel the best is yet to come."

But in the meantime, he's enjoying the drive.




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BY JAY KOBLENZ

For many people, the first question is, "Do I need car insurance?" All states except for New Hampshire require vehicle owners to have liability insurance, with the amount of coverage varying by state.

The economic downturn triggered a sharp rise in the uninsured motorist rate. One in six drivers went without insurance for financial reasons, according to the Insurance Research Council.

That makes getting the best deal more important than ever. Finding the best coverage and rate requires concerted shopping of insurance companies and coverage. After finding a policy that fits the bill, don't stop looking around. It's really not a bad idea to shop every time your policy comes up for renewal, but it's a good idea to check at least every few years.

Loyalty to a company or insurance agent may sound like a nice idea, but it could be expensive. It's not unusual to save several hundred dollars by simply switching companies while maintaining exactly the same coverage.

Each state decides its own insurance laws. There's little federal regulation. In fact, the insurance business remains the only major industry that is exempt from antitrust laws, allowing companies to collaborate on rates.

Factors used in setting rates include type of vehicle, driver experience with accidents and moving-traffic violations, the car owner's address and claims made against the insurer. While any of these factors may increase the risk to the company by a small factor, there's nothing to prevent the company from using any factor it chooses in order to increase rates. Companies are free to increase rates dramatically when risk increases only slightly. In fact, your state's motor vehicle department plays a role here. The state profits by selling information on your driving record to the insurance companies.

Here's a look at the common coverage offered on motor vehicles:

- **Bodily injury liability:** This covers the policyholder's responsibility for injury to other persons in an accident, and is required in most states. Some states require as little as \$25,000 coverage, a number that rarely goes up with inflation. Most people should buy considerably more coverage.

- **Property damage liability:** This covers



damage to others' property caused by the policyholder's vehicle. Although some policies can be written for as little as \$15,000 coverage, most policies cover at least \$50,000.

- **Medical payments:** Medical expenses of occupants of the policyholder's car are covered under this if they are injured while riding in the car. Coverage can be as low as \$500 per person, not much considering today's medical costs.

- **Collision damage:** This covers damage to the policyholder's vehicle, when the driver of that vehicle is at fault. This coverage is not required by any state but if you finance your vehicle the lender will require it. A higher deductible – which can range from about \$200 to \$1,000 or more – saves premium cost. The policyholder pays the deductible amount first, and the insurance company pays for any damage beyond that amount. It's safe to drop this coverage on older and battered cars.

- **Comprehensive damage:** This is generally the best buy in auto insurance, and no one should be without it. This is an umbrella category that covers fire, theft, storm and vandalism damage to your vehicle – almost anything that isn't the result of a collision. Modified, rare or antique cars call for extra coverage.

- **Uninsured and underinsured motorists:** This covers claims for injuries resulting from an accident in which another vehicle is at fault and is not insured or is underinsured. It also applies in hit-and-run accidents. Many states require it.

Get more information about insurance from your state insurance regulatory agency or from such industry supported groups as the Insurance Information Institute, www.iii.org.

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SheHive Workplace Building Workshop

BY BTL STAFF

Creating a cooperative workplace is often a simple task, but sometimes, for a variety of reasons, even well-meaning co-workers can get on each others' nerves — especially when in a manager-subordinate position. Ferndale's SheHive is an organization that works to connect women of all professions and is hosting a workshop series titled Like a Boss: Building Workplaces that Don't Suck from October to December on the first and third Thursday of each month. The event will focus on female managers in often male-dominated fields like the automotive industry and IT.

"This six-part series is for women who manage others and want coaching on new or different ways to handle day-to-day challenges at

work," said event organizers. "Join women who have lived through your situation, have ideas and experiences to share, and who are interested in how your experiences will help them. We'll use a format that is based on sharing, listening, receiving feedback and planning for action."

In the first session, members of the discussion will decide on priority topics that will be developed as sessions continue.

"SheHive KeyHolder, Pam Hansen, and SheHive Founder, Ursula Adams, are both Organizational Development consultants whose work has included complex culture change initiatives for clients in automotive IT, health care, nonprofit and financial services technology," organizers write. "They separately both manage successful coaching practices

dedicated to helping clients deepen their self-awareness, build their strengths and practice strategies to grow as effective leaders."

Those interested in learning more about the event and SheHive can visit theshehive.com.



Haunting at the Hackett Auto Museum

BY BTL STAFF

It's undeniable that Michigan's main claim to fame is its century-old automotive industry. And with a variety of car models once produced across many of the state's cities, each holds its own unique car history. Today, many formerly bustling factories have closed down and been converted into museums chronicling their industrial past. In Jackson, The Hackett Auto Museum serves to preserve the legacy of the Hackett Automobile Company and even its ghosts. Held on the night of Saturday, Oct. 19, Hauntings at the Hackett is an event that allows the public to accompany paranormal investigators as they attempt to commune with the dead people whose presences they claim are still at The Hackett.

"This is your chance to experience first hand how paranormal investigations happens. The Hackett Auto Museum building has become known for experiences by multiple team

investigators. Paranormal investigator team members will demonstrate the equipment used in their research," wrote event organizers.

Attendees will not only learn a bit about the automotive history that was made at The Hackett but how the equipment works for paranormal investigators. Organizers say that the proceeds from the event will be used to aid in the preservation and restoration of the building.

"Must be 18 years or older to participate. Please dress accordingly, no open toed shoes permitted. We reserve the right to remove any person(s) deemed to be disruptive," organizers said. "Please note, the first 15 minutes of each program will be a walking tour of the site. Guests will then be escorted to their assigned seats."

Tickets start at \$49.99. To find out more about the museum visit hackettautomuseum.org. It is located at 615 Hupp Ave. in Jackson.

Inside China Automotive Conference Nov. 19

BY BTL STAFF

According to export.gov, China continues to "be the world's largest vehicle market with the Chinese government expecting that automobile output will reach 30 million units by 2020 and 35 million by 2025." With that kind of projected growth, it's imperative that those involved in Michigan's automotive industry understand how that will impact not only China's industry but U.S. production. To aid in that the University of Michigan is hosting an automotive conference called Inside China: Understanding China's Current and Future Automotive Industry on Tuesday, Nov. 19.

"Our 12th annual Inside China Automotive Conference features insights by manufacturers, suppliers, consultants and UM experts on the current and future prospects for the automotive industry in China," wrote event organizers. "This year the Chinese auto industry is facing another major test as growth levels off and

foreign manufacturers continue to take advantage of the government's decision to allow foreign manufacturers to increase their share of their joint venture companies. And this is happening in the midst of a trade war with the U.S."

The event's speakers will discuss what this means for the future of the industry as well as analysis of current and potential future trends.

"The sales environment, trade issues, the New Energy Vehicle mandates and subsidies, labor issues, as well the global ambitions of their domestic manufacturers and suppliers will all be discussed," said event organizers. "Some of the questions addressed are: "Can the government increase consumer confidence to support lagging sales?"

To find out more about this event visit eventbrite.com. Companies or groups interested in sponsoring this conference should contact Bruce Belzowski at bbl@umich.edu or 734-936-2704.

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20th Anniversary Global Automotive Summit

For the past 20 years the PUSH/CEF Automotive Summit has discussed diversity and inclusion in the automotive industry for people of color. Held at the MotorCity Casino Hotel in Detroit on Thursday, Oct. 31, through Friday, Nov. 1, this year's theme is "Expanding the African-American Opportunity Pipeline."

"The automotive industry is a continuously evolving sector that creates pathways for growth to those properly positioned and connected. Too many times, however, African-Americans have been left out of that evolution," wrote event organizers. "Only when forthright discussions occur, we can reach a true consensus on how best to level the economic playing field for African-Americans in the automotive industry."

Since 1999 the summit has reached thousands of automotive workers, executives, suppliers and more.

"Please join more than 500 executives, entrepreneurs, suppliers, dealers, consumers, government and elected officials, automotive manufacturers, community leaders, advertising agencies, media outlets and others, as we convene for our 20th Global Automotive Summit to discuss strengthening and creating opportunities in the automotive industry for people of color," organizers said.

This year's event schedule kicks off with a celebration of Rev. Jesse L. Jackson's birthday followed by discussions like "Top-Down Leadership and Its Influence on an Organization" and "Ensuring Parity and Reciprocity in Changing Times."

To learn more about the event visit eventbrite.com. Room reservations at the PUSH rate start at \$172.

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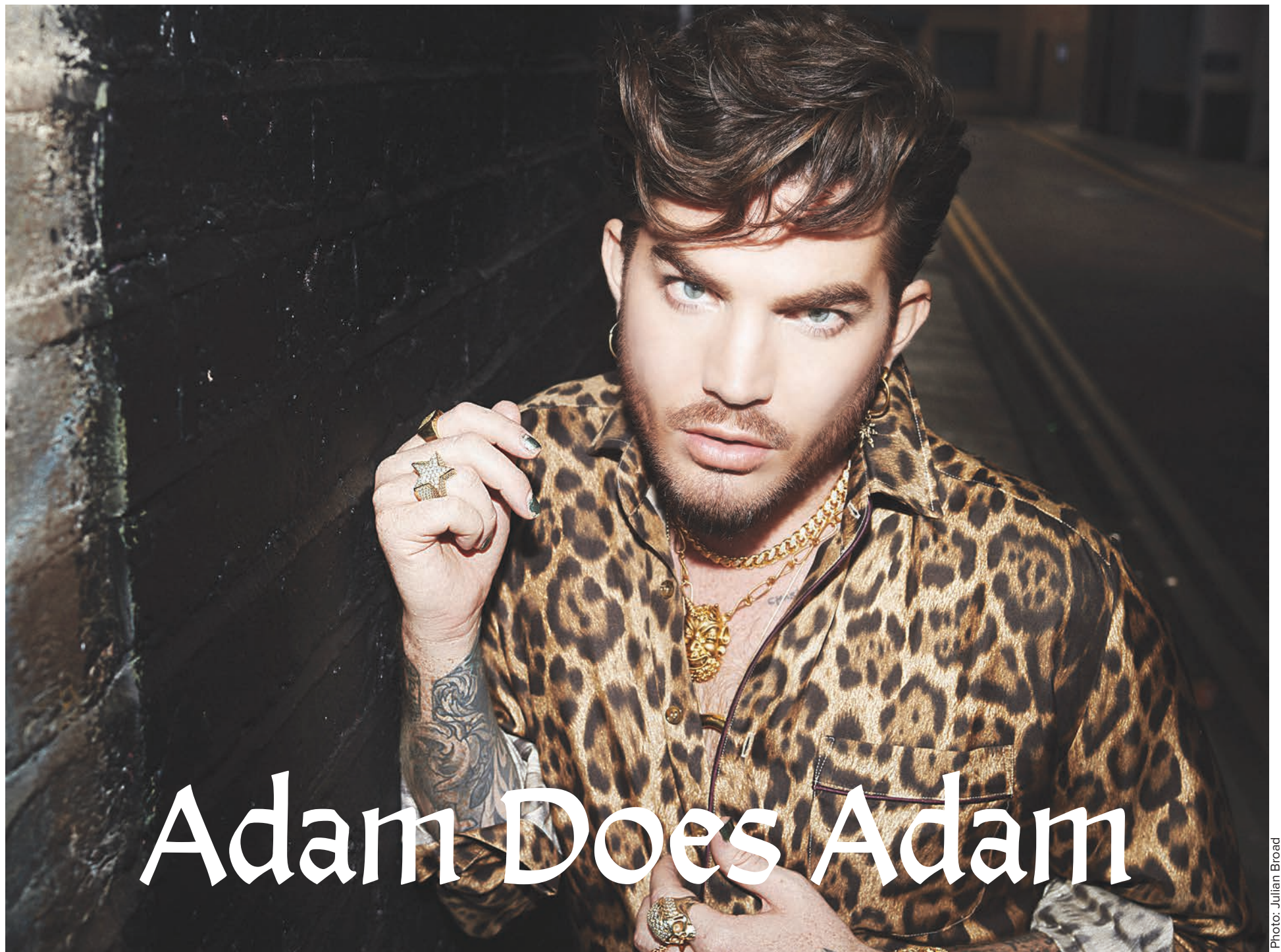


Photo: Julian Broad

Adam Does Adam

Glam-Pop Performer Talks Creative Freedom, LGBTQ Music Evolution and His Full-Circle Cher Moment

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

At this point, “American Idol” is a mere footnote in Adam Lambert’s undaunted, venturesome, decade-long career. It was 2009 when Lambert astonished gays and moms with his confident strut and those sky-high notes, ultimately giving him the runner-up spot during the reality show’s eighth season. Since then, the out San Diego native, now 37, has checked some pretty wild boxes. Making Cher cry? Check. Queen frontman? Check. With his latest album, “Velvet: Side A,” the glam pop-rocker is checking yet another box, one that’s especially important to him: the box that lets him call the creative shots.

Recently, Lambert phoned to talk about the

classic, Queen-influenced sound of some of his best music yet, the progress made for LGBTQ artists, and his ongoing mission to root his career in “honesty and authenticity.”

It must be such a great feeling to promote a project you were so invested in from the get-go.

Because I was so involved and so in the driver’s seat on this one, the sense of gratification I get from talking about it and sharing it runs deeper than ever before.

What are you giving yourself permission to do that you couldn’t do at the beginning of your career?

I think it really all comes from knowing

myself better. Knowing myself as an artist, knowing myself as a person, knowing what is keeping it real. And if something comes up that just doesn’t feel authentic, I’m just like, “No, I don’t want to do that.” Which is great. And obviously, having put the time in over the last 10 years into my career, I think I’ve earned more of that right. I’m doing what I want to do, period, the end. Everything about this project is me doing what I want to do. Creatively, I’m not having to compromise with anybody.

So are the EDM days over then?

For now. (Laughs.)

That must feel refreshing.

Yeah. I think I wanted to do something sonically that just felt like a different page for me, and also something that felt timeless, something that wouldn’t go out of date in three years. I just wanted to do something that felt classic.

Has touring as the frontman of Queen influenced that desire?

There’s definitely some parallels there, for sure. I think having been part of that lineup has definitely rubbed off on me and made me realize it’s not always about the next sound. That’s not always the way to have the strongest connection with an audience. It doesn’t always need to be something that’s the next wave. It can be something that works

that people love.

When you decided to make the move and jump from your former label Warner Bros. to Empire, an indie label, what was the breaking point? At what point in your career did you feel so limited that you just couldn't stand it anymore?

I don't know if it was all that dramatic, to be honest with you. I love the way you put it. Very dramatic. (Laughs.) I don't think there was a final straw or anything; there was no big drama. But I just got to the point where I was done with my last solo tour, and I was doing some touring with Queen and I reflected on all the work that I put into it. I was wondering if there was enough return on my investment: "Am I feeling a sense of personal gratitude and gratification here?" And I had to ask myself some hard questions. So a lot of the changes that I made were to protect and insulate my creativity a little bit more. I felt like as an artist I wasn't reaching my fullest potential, because a lot of the things that were being done were being done where the main motivating force was money or popularity or obvious things that pop music revolves around. I think I just had to get the balance right. Obviously it is a business and I'm still playing the game to a certain extent, but the balance was off. So that was the big, important realization I had.

Who do you admire for putting artistic integrity before commercial success?

There's a list, for sure. But recently, I do think that Lady Gaga has been an amazing example of somebody who's gone against what was obvious or expected of her and done what made her happy, and I think at the end of the day the thing that I had to come to the realization of is, "If I'm happy with it and it feels authentic to me, that will come across to the public." In the past I may have been guilty of trying to please the outside before the inside, and trying to just do what was trendy or popular or what somebody else was doing as opposed to something that felt like it would make me happy, first and foremost.

Was there a lot of pressure on you to conform?

(Hesitates.) There was definitely some pressure put on artists in my position. But also, it's me not being an idiot. I'm looking around, aware of how it works, and that is in many cases just how it works. You have a lot of people you're trying to make comfortable, a lot of people you're trying to make feel like they're a part of something. And you have to make a lot of compromises in order to do that.

You've said one of the reasons you decided on the name "Velvet" for the album is because "The Velvet Rage: Overcoming the Pain of Growing Up Gay in a Straight Man's World," published in 2005, left a big impression on you during your formative gay years. How did you come across "The Velvet Rage" and what was one of the greatest lessons you learned from it?

Just word-of-mouth. Somebody had mentioned it and then I read it, and it's an eye-opener because it basically breaks down the

general psychology of what being a gay man is, and most specifically what they identify as and how to grow up gay in a straight world. Obviously it's a bit out of date now – we are in a time where gay is way more mainstream, and a lot of these things are kind of obvious – but I think at the time, when I read it, it wasn't as discussed, it wasn't common knowledge like it is now. But it kind of breaks down the sort of different gay tropes and patterns and behaviors, and it opened my eyes.

Did it make you feel more comfortable with yourself?

Yeah. And also more comfortable with my community. I think it made me understand all of us more. It was a personal realization, like, "Where do I fit into these patterns?" but also meeting people and realizing like, "Oh, I get it, that's probably why they are this way – because of this." And it made me more empathetic toward others in the community, like my gay friends, people who I dated. It just made me understand it all more.

And now you've been this trailblazer for the LGBTQ community for the last decade, and there are so many artists who have followed in your footsteps: Troye Sivan, Hayley Kiyoko and Lil Nas X. The list is much longer than when you first came out publicly on the cover of Rolling Stone in 2009.

I know, I love it. I love seeing that. I love that it's become sort of a non-issue. I think young people today are like, "Yeah, so what?" (Laughs.) And that's how it should've always been. It's true, though, something has shifted. When I came to the business, it was people who were older than me who were the ones who were fearful. They were the ones who were ignorant to the type of person I was and also ignorant to the idea that sexuality doesn't have to be at the forefront of every choice that I'm making as an artist. It's not. It doesn't work that way. We're all people. It's something that I'm really proud of. It's a very key defining part of my personality, but you don't have to be gay. The executives didn't realize that you don't have to be gay to listen to a gay artist.

A big part of your fanbase seem to be straight moms, so clearly you can bridge gaps and cross boundaries. You've done it.

Yeah, I'd like to think so. Look, over the past 10 years, I definitely don't consider myself an expert in any way. I've been confused and scratching my head along the way as well, but I always try to keep the mission going forward with honesty and authenticity. I can promise myself and my fans those two things and that's all I need to worry about, really, at the end of the day: if I'm being real and if I'm being truthful.

When it comes to LGBTQ artists in music, where do we go from here? What's next?

I feel like we're heading in the right direction.

See **Adam Lambert**, continued on p. 26

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► Adam Lambert

Continued from p. 25

Obviously, society is in a weird place right now given the current political climate. We were all in a much more progressive forward-motion a couple of years ago, before the changeover, and I think that the pendulum has swung backward and we're seeing a lot of bigotry brought to light, a lot of hate and negativity that's kind of swirling around. So I think as artists the best thing we can do is continue to combat that with positivity and lead by a good example and try to give a voice to those who feel like they're being told they're not allowed. I think what we need to do is continue. Keep going, keep pushing. And when the opposition is stronger, we have to push back stronger.

The other thing that I'm really loving about where we're at right now is 10 years ago, when you look at mainstream entertainment, it was a small selection of entertainment that got pushed out. There were only so many songs on the radio, there were only so many films going on, and that's what everyone talked about. But now with media it's really interesting because we have way more at our fingertips. We have streaming, we have YouTube, we have a zillion channels on TV. There's more available to people. So I think that artists can now find their audience more easily; there's an audience for everything. And I think that's one of many reasons why we're seeing more gay success in music, because we're able to be put in front of our audiences. There's less gatekeeping going on.

Right, because you can tweet your followers directly.

And that was not the case 10 years ago. Twitter was just started 10 years ago, and I remember being like, "Oh." We were sort of at the mercy of the machine, and I think that's a big difference to where we're at now.

Getting back to Queen: Do you have a drink with its veteran members, Roger Taylor and Brian May, at the hotel bar after a show?

Occasionally, yeah. I've been known to have a cocktail with Brian and Roger at a bar, yeah.

What's your drink of choice when drinking with Queen?

Oh, tequila always. I'm a tequila man. And I'm only snobby about a couple of things in my life and tequila's one of the

things that I'm a bit of a snob about. I've become a tequila snob. And I'm mostly snobby about it not because I wanna seem like, "Oh this is how much this costs," but more so the quality and what it does to my stomach. (Laughs.)

We're officially old.

I don't want alcohol regret.



Last year you sang a beautiful ballad version of "Believe" for Cher at the Kennedy Center Honors and brought her to tears.

I really had an amazing time doing that. Cher is one of my heroes. Obviously, she's an icon. She's had, like, moments in every decade that she's been around; it's so undeniable, and to sing for her, what a treat. And it was such an honor. I remember getting that album when I was in high school and when I finally got my first car during my senior year – I was driving the family car forever – that CD had just come out and I remember listening to it really loudly on the freeway and listening to "Believe." So when I got up on stage to do that, that memory came flooding back to me.

Did you get to tell Cher that story?

Unfortunately I didn't get to see Cher afterward because she had to leave right away to get to New York because her Broadway show was opening the next day. I got a message from her via email, via her manager, and they were all very sweet.

And she cried during your performance. Is there any better compliment?

I didn't realize she was crying because

I couldn't quite see that far back in the audience. But when I saw the footage afterwards, I was like, "Wow, that's pretty special."

Have you given any thought to what a "Velvet" tour might look like?

Yes. I'm not ready to talk about it yet, but of course I've been thinking about it. It's something that I'm planning on putting together, but it's a ways off. One thing at a time.

One of your Glamberts wanted to know if you would ever consider doing a show where your fans could decide the setlist?

(Pauses.) Mmm. A whole show? No. (Laughs.) But I would definitely consider having some fan input on something in the show. Yeah, I think that'd be cool. Trust me, I'm on social media, I watch and look at what people are responding to and how people are reacting. On this project, a lot of this stuff was kind of for me. I wanted to make myself happy first and foremost on this project, but also, of course, I had my fans in mind when I wrote these songs.

With "Superpower," for example, I wanted to write something so everybody could feel a sense of confidence when they listen to it, everyone could get a sense of standing up for yourself and having that empowerment moment. That wasn't just for me – that's for everybody. For "Stranger You Are," I've seen so many fans write things about feeling like an outsider, feeling unsure about being different, and that was one of the things they felt was a common connection between us: the fact that I'm that way too and that I've walked through the world feeling that way as well. And "Stranger You Are" is all about that. It's acknowledging, "Yeah, no shit, being different is not always the easiest road but that's who we are and I'm gonna celebrate it."

To clarify: You do trust your fans?

One-hundred percent.

Just not enough to create your setlist?

Well, it's kind of like when you go to a restaurant and you let the chef pick the menu. Like, sit down. Let me give you a great meal.

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 The New York Times, Vanity Fair, GQ and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.

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The Frivolist

6 Changes to Make When Your Stubborn Love Handles Keep On Stickin'

BY MIKEY ROX

You work hard at the gym, and it can be frustrating when all that exercise and effort isn't providing the results you want – like melting away the fat around your midsection. Part of the problem may be that you've gotten yourself into a routine that's no longer working, causing your weight-loss goals to plateau. There are ways to tackle this universal issue, from obvious habit changes to more under-the-radar solutions, like planning an adventure getaway. Take a look.

1. Reduce your stress

Stress causes unwanted anxiety, but it also can lead to other adverse health effects, including headaches, high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, skin conditions, asthma, arthritis, and, yes, weight gain. In fact, elevated levels of stress hormones can make your body reluctant to release excess weight and may even lead it to store more. Figure in all that stress eating and you're ballooning in no time.

Integrative health and nutrition consultant Devon Battaglia provides a few tips for stress reduction: "Stress management techniques such as daily deep belly breathing

for even as little as five minutes can work wonders," she says. "[as can] meditation, laughter, playing with our pets and unplugging from all media."

2. Cut out carb-heavy foods

Even as gay men, we love pizza, wings, snacks and beer. But you can't go to the gym, make progress, then go home and ruin it all by diving face first into a pepperoni pie and expect to see your waist slimming. At best, you'll maintain the weight you're at, but eventually those eating habits will catch up to you, no matter how much time you spend sweating it all out.

One of the biggest causes of belly fat is consuming carb-heavy foods," says Dr. Catherine Metzgar, a nutritional biochemistry expert at Virta Health. "Glycogen is the storage form of carbohydrates in the body. For it to exist in your cells, it has to be surrounded by a barrier of water. The human body tightly controls blood sugar levels, so when you eat a carb-heavy meal, glucose gets transported into your cells and liver. Once there, it gets added to existing glycogen, which required more water and causes more 'bloat.'"

To reduce water retention and ultimately get rid of those love

handles, Dr. Metzgar suggests addressing the primary cause of carbohydrate intake by eliminating processed carbohydrates and focusing on fruit and vegetable intake, lean protein and healthy fat.

3. Track your progress properly

Hopping on the scale to see how many pounds you've lost or gained isn't the best way to monitor your progress – not singularly, at least. According to Mary Weidner, co-founder of the training and nutrition app Strongr Fastr, you should take regular body measurements (torso, arms, legs, etc.) and weigh yourself every day at the same time of day, then look at long-term trends instead of focusing on the day-to-day changes.

"Sometimes people find their weight is staying the same while the size of their love handles are decreasing," she says. "There are many things that go into one's weight day-to-day and only long-term trends are important."

4. Increase healthy fat consumption

It's harder for men over 40 years old to lose belly fat because the metabolism begins to slow down, but the amount of food one eats

continues the same – and the human body favors adding fat to the stomach area before any other body part.

"This is why you'll often see men with big stomachs but tiny legs," quips Anthony Treas, a men's health and brain performance coach.

To lose body fat, he suggests increases healthy fat consumption, which includes nuts, seeds, fish, olive oil and avocados. "Healthy fats added to one's diet will help the body to burn the fat that is already within the body," he says.

5. Try Fitpacking

Backpacking is a great way to trim your love handles, and adventure company Fitpacking provides half-week to 14-day trekking experiences for people who want to lose weight while spending time exploring the United States' national parks and nature preserves. You'll burn fat during the multi-mile daily walkabouts as you carry your outdoor and camping necessities in your pack, plus you can only eat whatever you can carry. (Sorry, Doritos don't travel well.) You'll see results over the course of your expedition by monitoring the "overhang" on your pants. "By the end of your trip, you can gauge your progress by how much tighter you

can cinch the belt," says Fitpacking founder Steve Silberberg.

6. Switch it up and go harder

Eliminating or at least slimming those love handles isn't easy, but if you've plateaued at the gym, it's probably time to establish a new regimen.

Courtney Meidenbauer, a registered dietitian nutritionist and the state media representative for the Wisconsin Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, agrees.

"Typically for those who are established in their gym routine, I recommend trying a new activity or increasing the intensity," she says. "If you find yourself doing a cardio activity, think of another cardio activity that is different from what you usually do. The change in activity can be a new challenge for our bodies, which can help kick-start weight loss again."

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

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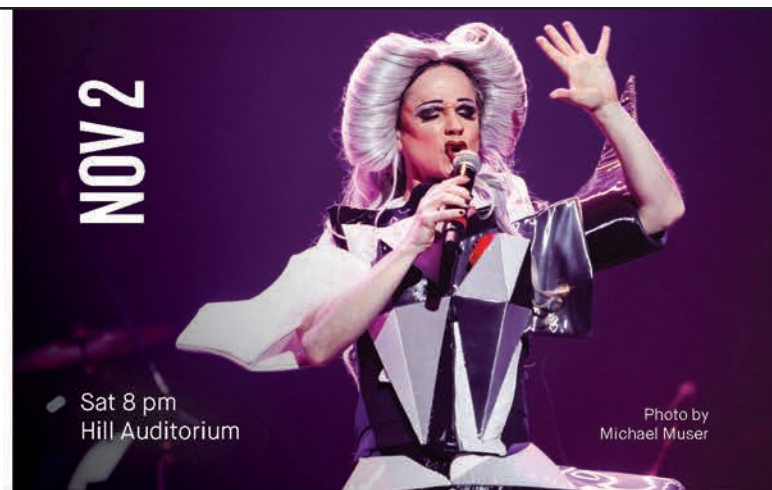
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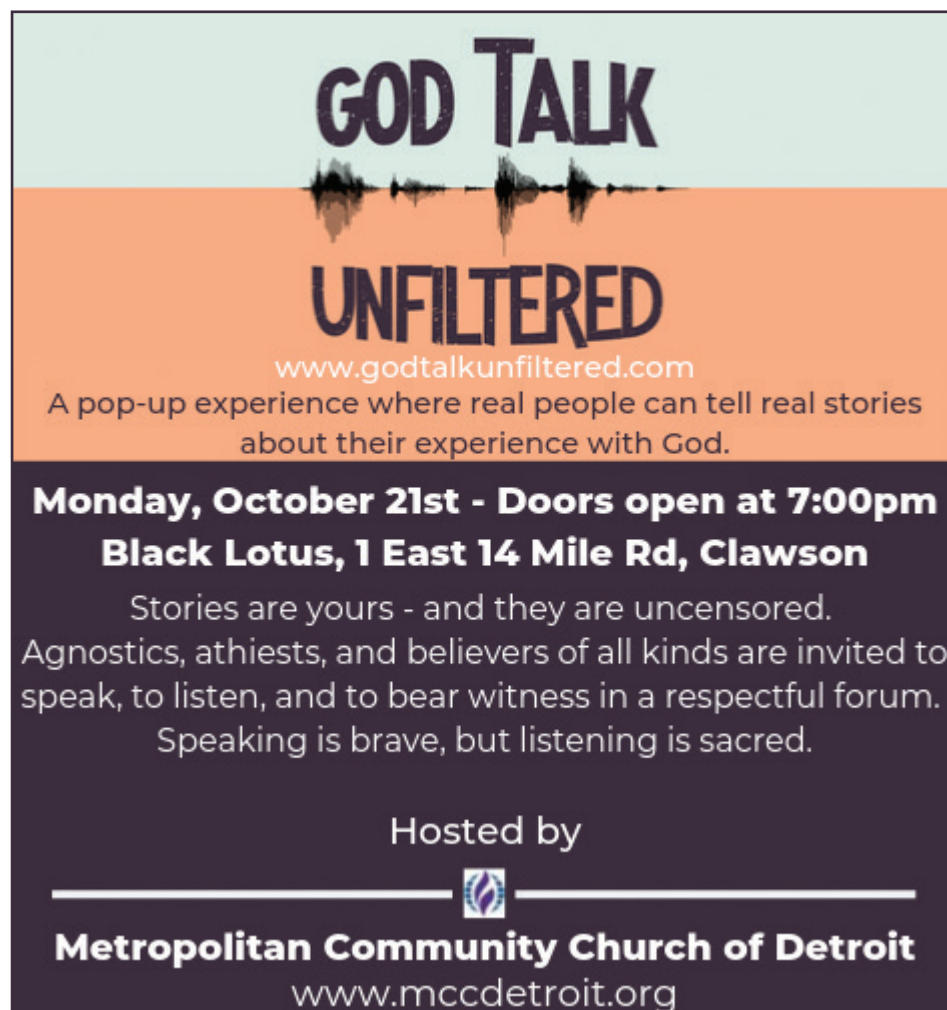
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Queer Conversations 11 a.m. Saturday LGBT Chat is an on going social discussion group meets every week to discuss issues LGBT people face. Coming out, dating, and much more. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105.

redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

LGBT Social Meet Up 6:30 p.m. Hazel Park Community Center, 620 West Woodward Heights, Hazel Park. 248-632-8274. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

Sunday, October 20

Stand with Trans Wyandotte Support Group for Trans Youth and Parents of Trans Individuals 5 p.m. There is no fee to attend the groups. St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 2803 1st St., Wyandotte. 734-747-4363. standwithtrans.org.

Monday, October 21

LGBT Game Night 6 p.m. LGBT Game Night

is an opportunity for all LGBT people and allies to come play a board game, drink coffee, bring your own drinks and socialize with other LGBT individuals. All are welcomed. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

Tuesday, October 22

Strand with Trans Support Groups – Ann Arbor – Washtenaw 7:30 p.m. Journey of Faith Christian Church, 1900 Manchester Road, Ann Arbor. standwithtrans.org.

Wednesday, October 23

David Sedaris 7:30 p.m. With sardonic wit and incisive social critiques, David

Sedaris has become one of America's preeminent humor writers. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. 313-872-1000. broadwayindetroit.com.

Saturday, October 26

Affirmations Fall Fling 2019 7 p.m. Affirmations presents their annual fundraising event Fall Fling. Themed the Wizard of Wine Party, come enjoy food, drink, wine, entertainment and a 50/50 raffle. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org.

MUSIC & MORE

Isango Ensemble – The Magic Flute October 19, 8 p.m. Isango Ensemble is a South African theater company that draws its artists from the townships surrounding Cape Town. Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. 734-647-3327. ums.org.

Chick Corea Trilogy with Christian McBride and Brian Blade October 19, 8 p.m. American jazz legend Chick Corea brings together bass powerhouse Christian McBride and drum master Brian Blade for this special concert. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-644-3464. ums.org.

Isango Ensemble – A Man of Good Hope October 20, 4 p.m. Experience the riveting true story of a Somali refugee with a painful past, miraculous good luck, and a brilliant head for business, told through roof-lifting songs and dance accompanied on marimbas. Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. 734-647-3327. smd.umich.edu.

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edu.ums.org.

Patti LaBelle October 20, 7:30 p.m. Singer, actress and entrepreneur Patti LaBelle is making her way to Detroit this October for a live performance at the MotorCity Casino Sound Board stage. 21+. Tickets start at \$80. Motor City Casino Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit. 313-309-4700. motorcitycasino.com. gaybe.am/ne.

Ray Lamontagne October 23, 7:30 p.m. Ray Lamontagne will be "Just Passing Through" the Fox Theatre on his tour of the same name on Oct. 23. Joined by Canadian folk duo Kacy & Clayton, Lamontagne will perform acoustics "filled with raw emotion." Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-471-6611. gaybe.am/PG.

Laura Mendoza Live in Concert October 24, 7 p.m. Detroit musician Laura Mendoza live in a 2 hour concert at SpreadArt Gallery. Art show and flea market onsite. 5141 Rosa Parks Blvd., Detroit. 586-806-9343.

ZauberLand (Music Land) – An Encounter with Schumann's Dichterliebe October 24, 7:30 p.m. A quintessential work of European Romanticism, Schumann's Dichterliebe is infused with yearning for love and landscapes that no longer exist. Composer Bernard Foccroulle and writer Martin Crimp created 16 new songs to be performed seamlessly alongside Schumann's. Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 North University, Ann Arbor. 734-763-3333. ums.org.

Sankai Juku – Meguri: Teeming Sea, Tranquil Land October 25, 8 p.m. Over the course of the past 40 years, the work of Ushio Amagatsu and Sankai Juku has become known worldwide for its elegance, refinement, technical precision and emotional depth. Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. 734-647-3327. smd.umich.edu.

CUBE Poetry Slam – UNPLUGGED 8 p.m. Spoken word artist La Shaun Phoenix Moore hosts an evening featuring Detroit's finest poets and DJ Stacye J.

Editor's Pick

HALLOWCRAWL ROYAL OAK OCT. 19

Cocktails and costumes collide at Royal Oak's Halloween crawl: the annual Halloween pub crawl across the city's downtown. Held on Saturday, Oct. 19, from 1 to 6 p.m., tickets start at \$20 and include Halloween-themed swag, a lanyard for beer, shot specials and cocktails and much more. Find out what's included and the bars to be visited on the event's Facebook page at gaybe.am/PL.



Editor's Pick

'80S ZOMBIE PROM & COSTUME BALL OCT. 19

Held at Mt. Clemens' Emerald Theatre, those looking for a chance to try out their costumes on a spooky night out before Halloween can come to the 2nd annual '80s Zombie Prom & Costume Ball. Doors open at 7 p.m. and DJ RED kicks things off at 7:30 followed by ROCKSTAR who will perform classic '80s tunes. Tickets are \$15 for this all-ages event. Find out more online at theemeraldtheatre.com.



plus an acoustic set by R&B singer and WDET's Tiny Desk Fan Favorite Johnyce. The Cube, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. dso.org.

A Fun Conversation with Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin October 30, 7:30 p.m. Come hear the stars of Grace & Frankie share their insights on life, politics, feminism, the planet and the secrets to their long-lasting friendship. A moderated evening with wit, laughs and fun. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-471-6611. 313presents.com.

Carrie Underwood October 31, 7 p.m. Seven-time Grammy Award-winner Carrie Underwood is coming to Little Caesars Arena this Halloween on her new "Cry Pretty Tour 360." She'll be joined by Maddie & Tae and Runaway Jane. Little Caesars Arena, 2645 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-349-5777. gaybe.am/Km.

Music November 1, 8 p.m. Founded in New York City in 2008, Uses its unique configuration (string trio, flute, clarinet, and trumpet) to "playfully overstep the boundaries of musical genres." (New Yorker) This concert is a celebration of young Rackham Auditorium, 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. 734-764-8572. rackham.umich.edu.

John Cameron Mitchell November 2, 8 p.m. John Cameron Mitchell performs songs and stories from two groundbreaking decades of post-punk, neo-glam rock – a collective quest for love, hope and identity. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-764-3464. ums.org.

Celine Dion November 5, 7:30 p.m. One of the most celebrated pop stars in history, Celine Dion announced that her "Courage World Tour" will bring her to Detroit's Little Caesars Arena. Find out more information online at gaybe.am/PC.

Alec Baldwin: A Hilarious Uncensored

Conversation November 14, 7 p.m. Alec Baldwin brings his show A Hilarious Uncensored Conversation to the fabulous Fox Theatre in downtown Detroit Thursday, Nov. 14. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-471-6611.

Teac Damsa – Loch na hEala (Swan Lake) November 15, 8 p.m. Rooted in a place where ancient Irish mythology and modern Ireland meet, Loch na hEala (Swan Lake) is a Swan Lake for our time. Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. 734-647-3327. smt.umich.edu.

Vivaldi's Four Seasons – Max Richter's Vivaldi Recomposed November 16, 8 p.m. Experience back-to-back versions of Vivaldi's timelessly thrilling masterpiece, The Four Seasons, including Max Richter's modern "recomposition" that topped classical album charts in 22 countries. Rackham Auditorium, 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. 734-764-8572. rackham.umich.edu.

Orchestre Metropolitain de Montreal with Yannick Nezet-Seguin and Joyce DiDonato November 20, 7:30 p.m. Joyce DiDonato and Yannick Nézet-Séguin join forces once again. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-764-3464. ums.org.

Stew & the Negro Problem – Notes of a Native Song November 22, 8 p.m. "A celebration of Baldwin's legacy as an inspiration for artists to create their own work that, like his, defies genres and expectations." (New York Times) Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 North University, Ann Arbor. 734-763-3333 <http://ums.org/performance/stew-and-the-negro-problem/>

THEATER

Come From Away October 8, 8 p.m. Broadway's COME FROM AWAY is a Best Musical winner all across North America!

Written by Tony® nominees Irene Sankoff and David Hein, and helmed by this year's Tony-winning Best Director, Christopher Ashley. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. 313-872-1000 <http://broadwayindetroit.com/shows/come-from-away>

Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Fallen Souffle October 19, 7 p.m. A world premier by David MacGregor and directed by Michelle Mountain, it's Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Fallen Souffle. An event every day that begins at 7:00pm, repeating until December 21 Purple Rose Theater, 137 Park St., Chelsea. 734-433-7673 <http://purplerosetheatre.org/sherlock-holmes-and-the-adventure-of-the-fallen-souffle/>

A2CT Presents: My Three Angels Ann Arbor Civic Theatre is proud to present My Three Angels by Samuel and Bella Spewack, directed by Barbara Mackey King, sponsored in part by The Standard Bistro and Larder, October 24-27, at UM's Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-764-2538

The Michigan Playwrights Festival 8 p.m. Four new plays by Michigan playwrights will be given readings. Theatre NOVA, 410 w Huron, Ann Arbor.

August Wilson's Jitney Winner of the 2017 Tony Award for Best Revival of Play, August Wilson's Jitney is directed by one of Wilson's foremost interpreters, Ruben Santiago-Hudson. Detroit Music Hall, 350 Madison St., Detroit. 313-887-8501 www.musichall.org

Teac Damsa – Loch na hEala (Swan Lake) Rooted in a place where ancient Irish mythology and modern Ireland meet, is a Swan Lake for our time. Dance is interwoven with storytelling, song, and live music. Power Center, 121 Fletcher Street, Ann Arbor. (734) 647-3327



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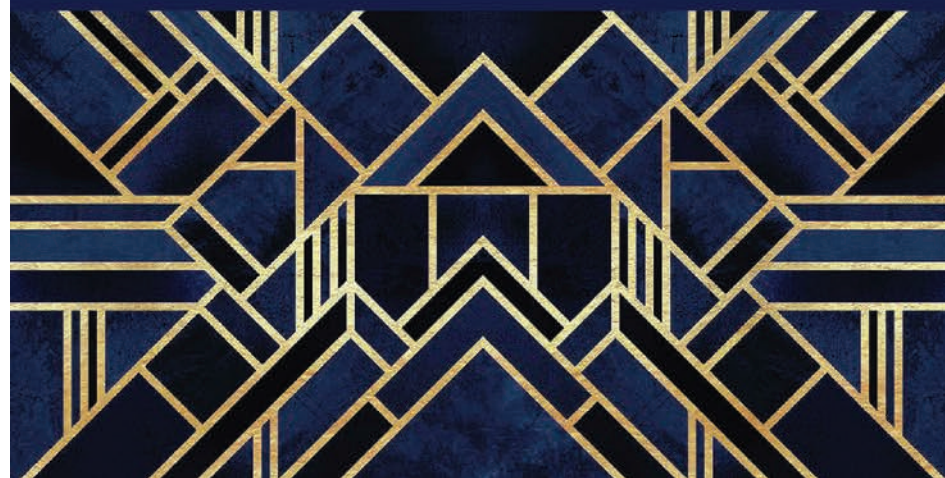
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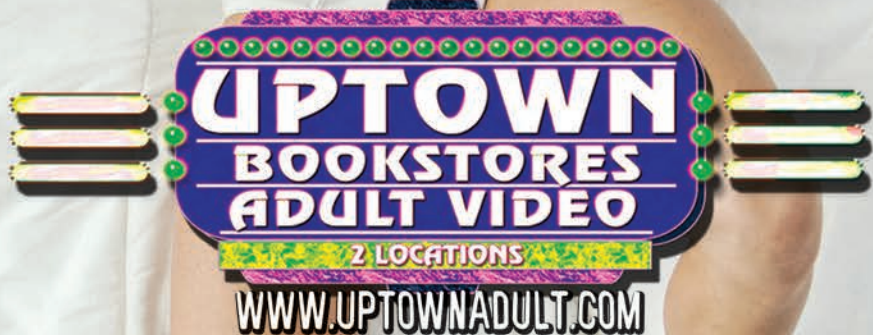
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Detroit Is Different Festival Oct. 25

BY BTL STAFF

Calling Detroiters from all walks of life, the Detroit is Different Festival, held from Oct. 25 to Oct. 27, invites everyone from the city and around it to learn about the cultures and subcultures that make the city have vibe all its own.

"Even if you visit Detroit, are from Detroit or live in Detroit, you never knew all this culture was alive and thriving in Detroit. Detroit is Different is a multi-media house for culture creators who podcast, blog, vlog and produce art," write event organizers. "Over 40 Metro-Detroiters use Detroit is Different as a hub to engage audiences interested in an array of subcultures including but not limited to: Women in Hip-hop; Black (African-American) Comedy; Islamic Social Justice; the Black

(African-American) Gay Professional class; the Natural Hair Movement; Lesbian-Trans-Women Social Justice; Women Visual Artists; Artists under the age of 25; and many other groups and circles."

Some of the scheduled events include What the Text Game Show, I'm Scared of Detroit Comedy Show 2019 and The My Natural Hair Show.

"These subcultures are the anchors of the Detroit feel that is often summarized as the 'clique-ish' culture of the city," organizers wrote. "The Detroit is Different Festival provides you the rare opportunity to witness, experience and familiarize yourself with the diverse subcultures that make Detroit DIFFERENT!"

To find the event's full schedule and learn more about Detroit Is Different visit gaybe.am/rt.

Planned Parenthood's 103rd Roller Skating Birthday Bash Oct. 23

BY BTL STAFF

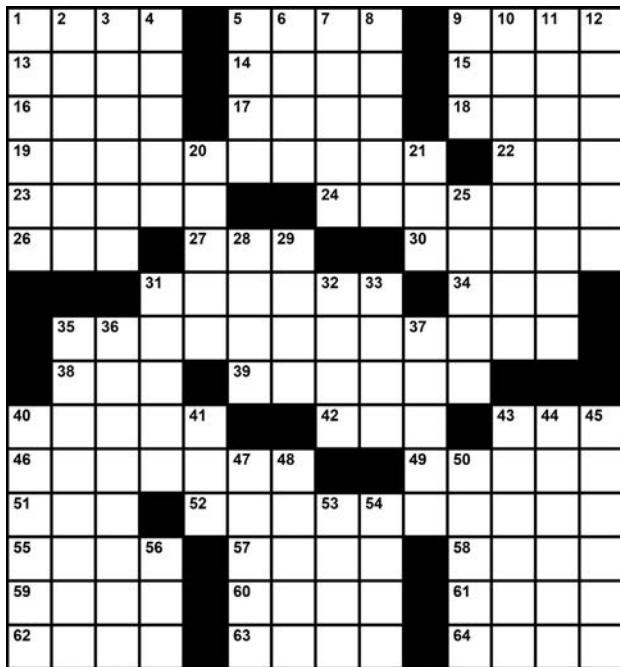
Planned Parenthood is a national nonprofit that has been delivering reproductive care and family planning services across the nation for a century, and as birthday 103 approaches Detroit's branch will literally roll into it at its Roller Skate Birthday Bash. The event will be held at the RollerCade Roller Rink on Wednesday, Oct. 23, from 5 to 8 p.m.

"All Planned Parenthood birthday party goers will be allowed free entry to RollerCade and food vouchers for pizza, hot dogs and beverages," wrote event organizers. "And of course, no birthday party is complete without cake and ice cream! We'll have cake provided by RollerCade and treats from Good Cakes and Bakes too. Join us in celebrating Planned Parenthood's legacy and meet and mingle

with our new Detroit Regional Community Organizer and our Black Organizing Program Coordinator."

The event's venue is located at 2130 S. Schaefer Hwy in Detroit. Those with questions are encouraged to reach out to PPAM's Program Manager Emily Clancy at Emily.clancy@ppmi.org.





Satan, Satorially

Across

- 1 Common connections
- 5 Go in only partway, at the beach
- 9 "How queer!"
- 13 Honey-pot lover
- 14 Anal alternative
- 15 Etheridge concert series
- 16 Shirley's la Douce role
- 17 ___ Hari

- 18 Low-voiced lady
- 19 She plays Ms. Charlton in a fashion industry flick
- 22 Log Cabin org.
- 23 Pound poem part
- 24 Wireless inventor
- 26 "Can't Get It Out of My Head" band
- 27 Young ___ (kids, to Gomer)
- 30 John, who is working on a

Q Puzzle

- musical version of a fashion industry flick
- 31 2009 James Cameron film
- 34 Bit of resistance on the circuit
- 35 She plays Ms. Sachs in a fashion industry flick
- 38 Long, in Hawaii
- 39 Like clothing after an orgy
- 40 With 52-Across, "The ___" (fashion industry flick)
- 42 Pleased sound
- 43 R. Simmons' loss
- 46 "Fabul"
- 49 Like Everett, as a movie husband
- 51 Bellows on the set
- 52 See 40-Across
- 55 Hertz competitor
- 57 Brisk pace
- 58 "___ a Kick out of You"
- 59 Sexy clothing material
- 60 "Lohengrin" soprano
- 61 Go downhill fast?
- 62 Concerning
- 63 Phillippe of "Gosford Park"
- 64 Staying power, in "Variety"

Down

- 1 Singly
- 2 Tom Wilkinson's trans film
- 3 Tile with pips
- 4 Commandment word
- 5 Orientation location, some say
- 6 Inland Asian sea
- 7 Bit spit out by a computer
- 8 Writer Dykewoman
- 9 Vowel for Socrates
- 10 Vidal's "Live from ___"
- 11 What a Subaru Forester gives a lesbian?
- 12 Visit casually
- 20 "___ Got Mail"
- 21 Threesome for Marcella Hazan
- 25 Performer with a big mouth?
- 28 "Ixnay" and "No way"
- 29 RBI to Glenn Burke
- 31 Lover of Henry and June
- 32 Blade brand
- 33 Daughter of Uranus
- 35 Pub proprietresses
- 36 Stein, for one
- 37 What S&M people are as smart as?
- 40 Explorer Vasco ___
- 41 Down in the dumps
- 43 "A ___ of Their Own"
- 44 Homophobe, e.g.
- 45 Stonewall candidate lists
- 47 What to scan in poetry
- 48 Before the cock rises
- 50 A dentist may stick it in your mouth
- 53 Lorca's pink
- 54 Gay-dog owner of "South Park"
- 56 "The L Word"'s old network

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30 Years Later 'Tongues Untied' Continues to Push The Conversation Forward

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

With its unique blend of poetry, music and personal testimonials of black gay men living their authentic truths in 1980s America, Marlon Riggs' "Tongues Untied" stood out among documentaries of the day both in its presentation and its focus. Even 30 years after its initial release, the film still stands out as a seminal work that, long before today's standards of acceptance, paved the way for future LGBTQ creators — especially those of color — to draw attention to issues directly impacting their community. October marks LGBTQ History Month and calls upon the community and its allies to honor the work of people like Riggs who dared to call still controversial issues to the forefront in a more conservative time. In celebration of the film and its lasting effects and still-resonating message, Between The Lines chatted with L. Michael Gipson to learn more about its impact.

"The Revolutionary Act"

Gipson is the founder of the Black Bear Brotherhood a Detroit-based social collective that centers black gay men of size. Recently, in a community collaborative event sponsored by the Counter Narrative Project and BBB, in partnership with LGBT Detroit, Adodi Detroit and Onyx Great Lakes, Gipson presented the film to an intergenerational panel and audience at an event called "Tongues Untied: 30 Years Later ... What's Different?" He said that beyond serving as a reclamation of black culture for black gay men "Tongues Untied" also makes bold political statements.

"Politically, the film talks very intimately about what it is to grow up as black gay people in America and to have questions thrown at you on all sides like, 'Are you gay first?' 'Are you black first?' — be it from the black community or the LGBTQ political community in terms of your prioritization of your alliances," Gipson said. "It talks very graphically about homophobia in the black church, homophobia in black families. It talks very graphically about attempting to assimilate into white gay culture and finding racism there and what it means to claim and love your own. One of the things that the film makes maybe one of the most memorable taglines is 'black men loving black men is the revolutionary act.'"

It's arguable, too, that its deviation from the norms of filmmaking at the time is a political act as well. As Gipson put it, "It does a lot in less than an hour." But it is perhaps the initial public reception surrounding the film that served to

illustrate its necessity: even before its release on Public Broadcasting Service's "POV" television series, the film sparked a debate about using public funds to create art that some might consider offensive because "Tongues Untied" had received \$5,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts. After its release, "Tongues Untied" caused more of a stir because of its never-before-seen portrayal of black gay men.

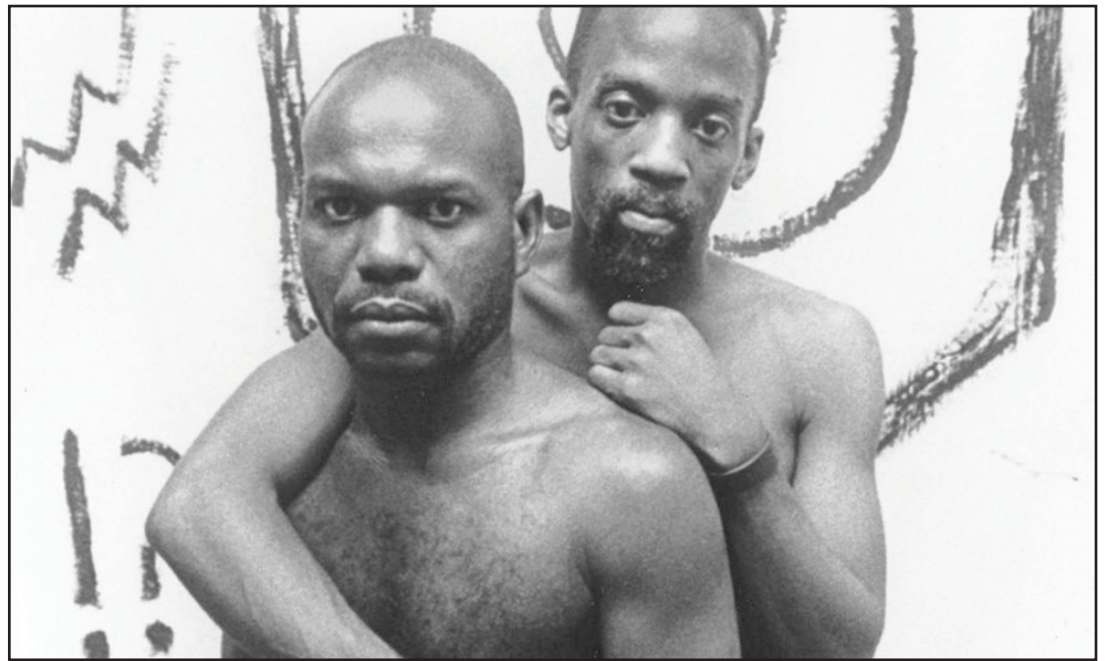
"It was the first-ever [film] showing two men kissing on national television, and it also had some graphic language in it. So that was kind of revolutionary for PBS to have that in there, because there's a sexual scene talking about HIV and how HIV has impacted the community and one of the [quotes is], 'now we think as we fuck' — and they don't edit it, they don't remove it," Gipson said. "I remember seeing it myself in 1991 or '92 when they screened it in Chicago. I was 17, and I remember being shocked that I was watching black gay people's lives and cultures being displayed in public on PBS — the same station as 'Sesame Street.'"

Despite the controversy initially surrounding the film, as time has passed the film continues to be honored and receive awards for its subject matter, with many stating that its relevance is tied directly to its still-present themes and message. Billy Porter, star of the drama "Pose" on FX, honored the film at the 78th annual Peabody Awards stating, "To this day, 'Tongues Untied' continues to wield a transcendent power over audiences with a message of self-love, perseverance, righteous anger and pain, and snap divadom!"

What's Different 30 Years Later

At the event, whose participants ranged from their early 20s to late 60s, Gipson said that takeaways varied greatly. He said that those in the older generations tended to view the 30-year anniversary of the film as a celebration of the progress made since its release, while younger people were split among their opinions: some said that meaningful change for black gay men had yet to be made, while others said they saw positive changes regarding equality. Gipson said that at 44 he had the unique position of having directly experienced some of the topics mentioned in the film.

"The film resonated to me as far as I got to



Marlon Riggs and Essex Hemphill in "Tongues Untied," a documentary directed by Riggs.

"Politically, the film talks very intimately about what it is to grow up as black gay people in America and to have questions thrown at you on all sides ..."

— L. Michael Gipson

see my language, art — like snapping fingers — quips and wit being honored and displayed not as caricature but as something valuable. And I remember that being very powerful at 17 to see voguing and the ballroom scene being portrayed for the first time, because I was a member of ballroom culture at that time," he said. "But looking back on it, I think what was more powerful to me was the reclamation. There were some people who were like, 'Why are they doing poetry? And why are they doing performance art?' There were some questions that some of the younger folks had who were much more comfortable with a straightforward documentary style. You know, I didn't understand at 17 what I could understand at 44 that Marlon was saying that all of this is us, too. There's no part of black life, no part of black culture, no part of black expression that we're not a part of. And I don't know that I got that at 17 in the way that I got that at 44. That was important and also very

emotionally moving to me."

Some members of the panel also had personal connections to the film via friendships and close connections to Riggs himself and its featured artists like Essex Hemphill who is featured prominently throughout.

Still, Gipson added, too, that despite the progress that he's seen in his own lifetime since the release of "Tongues Untied," "we're not perfect" and "we need righteous fire."

"We need righteous anger. Without the righteous anger you don't get [pushed] forward, and we're not perfect. We're not everywhere we need to be in terms of equity, much less equality," Gipson said. "I joke ... that a few years before I was born I was considered mentally ill. And then for all of my entire teens and more than half of my 20s, any sexual activity I engaged in was a crime; I was a sexual outlaw until 2002. I just got the right to marry somebody I love four short years ago. Those are huge jumps and there's lots of time in-between those jumps when things happened. So, you can't say that's nothing's changed and nothing's happened, and you can still be angry that we can do better and there's more to do. And I'm glad that these young people are angry and ready to pick up the mantle to take us to the next frontier. I look forward to see what they do with it."

Perhaps in another 30 years, Gipson said, Riggs' work will once again be re-examined and take on new meaning again.

To find out more about the Black Bear Brotherhood visit blackbearbrotherhood.life.

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Dr. Benson is an Associate Professor at Michigan State University providing training to our next generation of physicians.

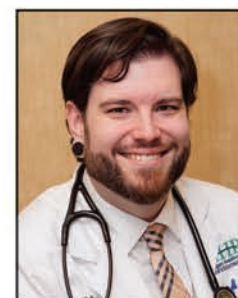
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