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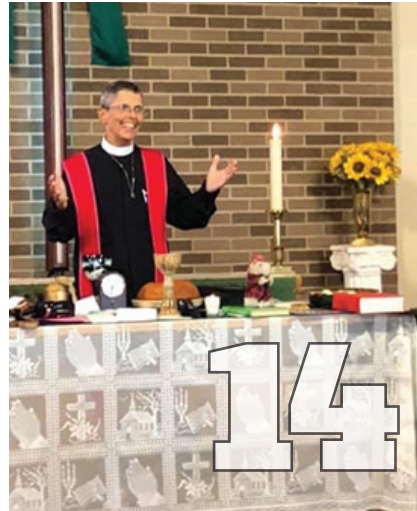
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## 6 COVER: AFFIRMATIONS, CORKTOWN PARTNER

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Top row from left to right leadership from Corktown Health and Affirmations includes Affirmations Development Director John Joannette, Corktown Chief Development Officer Patrick Yankee, Affirmations Executive Director Dave Garcia, Affirmations Board President Cheryl Czach, Corktown Vice President of Special Projects Mike Flores, Affirmations Vice President Anthony Sherman, Bottom row left to right: Affirmations Development and Community Relations Manager Kyle Taylor, Corktown Board Member Teresa Roscoe. BTL Photo: Andrew Potter.

# Affirmations, Corktown Partner to Revolutionize LGBTQ Care

## Agencies to Form Comprehensive Ferndale Health Clinic

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

At any age, it's true that preventative care is the key to identifying and treating a myriad of diseases and medical conditions early. But when it comes to the LGBTQ community, it's not always as simple as choosing a doctor's office and scheduling an appointment. Other factors, like the likelihood of discrimination, must be taken into account. And history has shown that medical discrimination can happen anywhere, like in 2014 when Michigan moms Jami and Krista Contreras took their six-day-old child in for a checkup only to be denied service on religious grounds.

It was around that time five years ago, when the vision of Corktown Health Center was being conceptualized. The goal was a simple

one: providing comprehensive health care to everyone who needs it regardless of their ability to pay and especially for those in the local LGBTQ community. Today, Corktown Health Center has evolved from an idea into a clinic that sees hundreds of patients annually, provides primary care, behavioral health services, cancer screenings and comprehensive HIV care and treatment. The Corktown operating budget for 2018-2019 exceeded \$4.6 million. In 2018, when Between The Lines asked Corktown's Chief Development Officer Patrick Yankee about Corktown's projected goals for 2019, he said that expansion was front and center.

"In 2018 we served over 525 people from the LGBTQ community at Corktown Health Center. My hope for 2019 is that we double this number by this time next year with expanded primary care, aging services and improved

access to behavioral health and preventative services like PrEP and cancer screening," Yankee said.

Now, because of a partnership with Affirmations, Michigan's largest LGBTQ center, it looks as though that goal will be doubly fulfilled: plans are already in motion for a duplicate clinic to be installed within the Ferndale community center's basement level by fourth quarter in 2020. Here's a snapshot of where the project stands currently.

### Merging Ideas

Last year, while Corktown was gearing up to expand current services, Affirmations was going through its own drastic restructuring. Because of financial difficulties and a period of upset due to frequently changing leadership,

Affirmations was in danger of closing its doors. However, according to Mike Flores, who was Affirmations' interim board president — and later board president — at the time, it was that period of uncertainty that allowed for Affirmations to alter its goals to be more in line with community needs. He described the idea for this partnership as the organic result of many community talks.

"As part of those discussions, Affirmations was looking for different types of partnerships to make sure that one: we were providing relevant services to the community. Number two: strengthening our partnerships with other organizations out there that really do specialize in very, very, much-needed services that Affirmations wasn't necessarily an expert in but knew that it was something that the community needed," Flores said. "And Affirmations was



*“Some day somebody’s going to be waiting to see their primary care physician here, and instead of sitting there reading a magazine, they’re going to see stuff going on and happening all over the center. Just that foot traffic alone is going to cause synergies that we’re not even thinking about.”*

- Affirmations Executive Director Dave Garcia.

not in a place, nor did it have the resources, nor would it make sense for Affirmations to start from scratch, so partnerships made sense.”

And health care-oriented services were part of the community’s expressed needs. Flores added that one of the reasons he was drawn to working with Corktown was because of its success in attracting patients beyond its local area.

“Corktown really has been successful in their ability to reduce barriers to health care for our

community in Corktown. And their services are so needed that some people are actually driving almost 100 miles to come and seek services at Corktown,” he said.

In October, Flores announced that he was leaving his role at Affirmations to become a member of Corktown staff. His new title is the vice president of special projects and his first task is the oversight of this new build. He said that one of his first goals in this partnership is to ensure that Affirmations’ health care offerings were expanded efficiently and collaboratively.

And with that in mind, it’s projected that behavioral health, among other services already provided at Affirmations, will be one of the first offerings to debut at the duplicate center. Corktown CEO Anthony Williams said that this path to debut services made the most sense.

“Behavioral health services will roll out first, in large part because Affirmations already has a behavioral health program. This aspect of the partnership is really about working together to make that program more robust.” Williams said. “Most medical services, such as primary care and gerontology, require a clinical environment. Those will launch when the new clinic space opens in November of 2020.”

However, there will be an emphasis on debuting geriatric-related programming as soon as possible because Affirmations’ largest regularly meeting group is the Senior Koffee Klatch. Williams added that the medical staff members who will be administering treatments once the center opens have already been hired.

See **Affirmations, Corktown**, continued on p. 6



The two development directors, Patrick Yankee of Corktown and Jon Jonette of Affirmations, share a light moment during the reception following the joint venture announcement. The health center buildout in the basement level of Affirmations is estimated to cost nearly \$500,000. BTL Photo: Andrew Potter

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## Not a Landlord-Tenant Relationship

When asked how this build will be funded, Williams said that Corktown has agreed to pay for the construction costs, which at this stage of early development could range anywhere from \$350,000 to \$500,000. He said that a combination of foundation-based funding and private giving has made it possible for the project to move forward, though the numbers remain “fuzzy” as both organizations’ development teams have not yet hashed out all the details. Affirmations next budgetary meeting will be Dec. 4, while Corktown has created a community advisory board where public questions about the project are welcomed. He made clear that the build seeks to be as transparent as possible while affecting Affirmations’ existing services as little as possible.

“During planning and construction we are all very conscious that Affirmations will continue to provide much-needed services to the community outside of this partnership. Those services need adequate space and resources to ensure their continued success,” Williams said. “So the design of the space to accommodate the new clinic will be very important. We will pay careful attention to planning in a way that integrates the new clinic into Affirmations’ facility with as little disruption to ongoing activities as possible.”

Cheryl Czach took on the role of Affirmations board president in Flores’ stead. She said that legally the partnership stands as a memorandum of understanding and both Affirmations and Corktown are in the process of negotiating the terms that will help delineate responsibility for both parties.

“Both groups are very committed to it, so I feel pretty confident that any hitches can be worked out, but we’re still in the process of that,” she said.

When asked if she foresees any particular risks or hitches that might impede the project’s



Members of the Senior Koffee Klatch joined the Corktown Health and Affirmations leadership teams at the new health center announcement in Ferndale. The first programs offered by the health center will be behavioral health services and counseling - building on existing programs offered by both organizations. The next step will emphasize senior health issues in response to the growing needs of the area’s older LGBTQ community. The Senior Koffee Klatch is now the largest regularly meeting group at Affirmations.. BTL Photo: Andrew Potter

progress, Czach made clear that she is confident in the partnership despite potential challenges involved in its construction like the relocation of the meeting spots of current groups.

“There will be some inconveniences, certainly to center guests and relocating the youth will be inconvenient. And we have a pretty aggressive timeline, so we’re anxious to get it going. So who knows the risk in what they’re providing,” Czach said. “When we went into this both groups thought, ‘This is what Corktown does really well, and what we do really well is community.’ And so, we’re both coming in with an expertise in our own respective areas, so I think that’s hopefully going to mitigate some risks earlier on. ... But Affirmations needs it because our

community wants it and needs it. And it just makes sense to have a more holistic community center to offer these services.”

Dave Garcia is Affirmations’ executive director. He agreed with Czach, and he pointed to the fact that not only will the expansion of Corktown’s services benefit regulars at Affirmations but it stands to shine light

on more of Affirmations’ services.

“I’m excited about that piece. You know, some day somebody’s going to be waiting to see their primary care physician here, and instead of sitting there reading a magazine, they’re going to see stuff going on and happening all over the center,” Garcia said. “Just that foot traffic alone is going to cause synergies that we’re not even thinking about.”

Garcia was formerly a policy director at The Los Angeles LGBT Center — the largest in the U.S. He said that its health care arm comprised more than 80 percent of its budget and served to help it “thrive.”

Williams pointed out that even allies to the LGBTQ community might be drawn to its services now that it will provide comprehensive care, but the care at this location will stand out because of its “understanding of the [LGBTQ] community and the objective to address health care needs and reduce disparities.” For example, it is projected to provide integrated medical and behavioral health, manage hormone therapy for transgender patients, address higher rates of tobacco use, increase access to PrEP, HIV care and even more support services.

## A Viability Test for Further Expansion

If the integration of both social and medical aspects goes well through this partnership, Williams said that Affirmations could stand to be the first of many expansions across the state.

“This move, this partnership with Affirmations, was just a natural fit. It was a perfect opportunity. Affirmations had been contemplating adding clinical services, and we were contemplating additional access points for clinic services — perfect,” Williams said.

He added, too, that Corktown is also dedicated to education and training.

“We can only see so many people within the walls of our clinic because the LGBTQ community is so large and dispersed throughout the region. So the question is, ‘How do we positively impact the health of the community much more broadly if we can’t physically touch every person?’ The answer is to train the next generation of health professionals to be inclusive and thoughtful in their medical practice to more effectively address the health needs of LGBTQ patients and their families,” he said. “These goals are best met by working together with like-minded organizations. If there are other opportunities out there, we would absolutely love to expand our partnerships.”

The decision to partner with an organization like Affirmations is not an accidental one, Williams said. Affirmations provides “an understanding of community needs” that is uniquely their own.

“The Affirmations-Corktown partnership is also an opportunity to amplify the voice of the LGBTQ community relative to health care,” Williams said. “Together, we are stronger in advocating for important policies and issues that improve the community’s health.”



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— President of Corktown Board Anthony Williams



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## Detroit Lions Pride Night Preview

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The Detroit Lions football team is hosting a Pride Package event at its home game on Sunday, Dec. 15, against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The Lions first held a Pride night back in 2015, in conjunction with the Detroit LGBT Chamber of Commerce, when former Lions player and ally DeAndre Levy donated 100 tickets to LGBTQ youth non-profits. But there hasn't been a Lions Pride event since.

LGBT Chamber Founder and Board of Directors President Kevin Heard said he's excited about how open the Lion's management is to expanding the Pride Package.

"We feel it was a great opportunity to show how far our partnership has come," Heard said. "It only takes one team to move the needle on inclusion and we can do it here in Detroit."

The Pride Package includes a ticket to the game against the Buccaneers, an exclusive Lions Pride T-shirt, plus a networking happy hour in the Gridiron Club. Ford and Comerica Bank are also sponsoring a pre-game mixer and complimentary brunch.

A portion of all ticket sales will be given back to one of four partner organizations purchasers can choose from. These include Affirmations, the Detroit LGBT Chamber of Commerce, Stand With Trans and the Ruth Ellis Center.

"It's significant because the Lions plan to match the funds raised from ticket sales for all the organizations involved," Heard said. "We hope to make an impact on those organizations during this season of giving."

*Tickets, which are \$70, may be purchased from [detroitlions.com/tickets/partners/pride](http://detroitlions.com/tickets/partners/pride). Tickets, which are \$70, may be purchased from [detroitlions.com/tickets/partners/pride](http://detroitlions.com/tickets/partners/pride).*

## 47th Annual Noel Night

The 47th annual Noel Night is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 7, with over 110 participating venues, including the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Michigan Science Center, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, the Detroit Historical Museum, Wayne State University and the College for Creative Studies, along with the area's historic churches, galleries, unique shops, nonprofit organizations, other arts, cultural and educational institutions, restaurants, bars and breweries, to name just a few.

Noel Night is a Cultural Center-wide holiday open house that presents free activities including horse-drawn carriage rides, holiday shopping, family craft activities and performances by over 100 area music, theater and dance groups, along with other special performances. This event is free and open to the public.

Saturday, Dec. 7

1 – 7 p.m. North of Warren Avenue

5 – 10 p.m. South of Warren Avenue

*Full schedule of events and performances, visit [noelnight.org](http://noelnight.org).*

# A Dream Come True: Markita Moore Returns to Cass Tech as Band Director, Seeks to Fundraise for Band

BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

Some believe you can't go home again because if you try to return to a place you remember from the past it won't be the same as it once was. That might be true, but after years of teaching and traveling to faraway places, Markita Moore returned to her high school alma mater, Cass Technical High School in Detroit as band director. She took the reins from the very band director who had instructed her when she had been a member of the school's marching band.

For Moore, it was a dream come true. She remembered being a 16-year-old high school student sitting in that very band room being so moved by the music she was making and experiencing with her classmates. As she took the baton from the band director who had held the position for some 30 years, she knew this was what she wanted to do.

"When the opportunity came up to interview for the position, I went forward with everything I had," she said. "I had built a pretty strong reputation and had a lot of experience under my belt."

Moore is a passionate and versatile music educator who has dedicated her time and talent to teaching in Metro Detroit for the past eight years. She participated in research and curriculum development in Afro-Brazilian music and culture during a Fulbright-Hays Group Project abroad that featured travel, cultural exchange and foreign language acquisition in Brazil in 2018. Moore also received a Music Education Innovator Award in 2019 from the Give a Note Foundation that unites corporate donors with deserving music programs in the U.S. She also taught high school band in Meru, Kenya, in 2019, and she was part of the Rebuilding the Music program at Mary-McLeod Bethune Elementary Middle School in Detroit for two years. In that role, she lead fundraising efforts for instruments while directing several vocal music

and instrumental ensembles.

Moore and her family are no strangers in the LGBTQ community. She calls the city of Ferndale home and raised her two children there. Her sister, Kerene, has served on the board of the Jim Toy Center in Ann Arbor. Her band "Elemental Meaning" has played at venues and events across the area.

Since becoming band director, Moore

Band to participate in the 2020 National Memorial Day Parade. It will be the only band representing Michigan.

This trip to Washington, D.C., will be the band's third trip of the school year. The band will perform some patriotic music like "America The Beautiful" and "Lift Every Voice and Sing," but it will also throw in a little Motown and an "Aretha" mix.

The band needs to raise a minimum of \$30,000 to cover the expenses of the trip including uniforms, travel expenses and upgraded instruments.

At a recent political rally in Detroit, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and Rep. Tlaib each pledged \$5,000 from their campaigns to support the Cass Tech Marching Band. The students still have approximately \$20,000 left to raise to cover travel expenses.

"We're doing some heavy fundraising between now and April of next year," Moore said.

They are turning to the community and the Cass Tech alumni network for support as well. The band is also doing some performances to raise money, too.

Tax-deductible donations can be made through the Cass Tech Alumni Association website [casstechalumni.org](http://casstechalumni.org), designated for the "Adopt A Marcher" fundraiser on the memo line.

Moore believes that the revitalization of music education has always been drawn to Cass Tech and its comprehensive approach to music education. Her goal is to follow in the footsteps of her predecessors as the director of the symphonic, concert, jazz and marching bands at Cass.



**Markita Moore believes that the revitalization of music education has always been drawn to Cass Tech and its comprehensive approach to music education. Her goal is to follow in the footsteps of her predecessors as the director of the symphonic, concert, jazz and marching bands at Cass.**

has been at full speed.

"This is a high-speed train that was rolling when I hopped aboard," she said.

She spends her days getting the band ready for performances across the state and country, raising funds for uniforms and equipment, recruiting students and coordinating the efforts of the dance, flag and majorette squads. But the heavy lift is yet to come.

Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib who represents the 13th Congressional District in Michigan extended an invitation for the Cass Tech Marching

*Michelle E. Brown is a public speaker, activist and author. Her blog radio podcast "Collections By Michelle Brown" airs every Thursday at 7 p.m. Current and archived episodes including her interview with Moore can be heard on Blog Talk Radio, iTunes, Stitcher or SoundCloud. Follow her on Facebook at [facebook.com/CollectionsByMichelleBrown](http://facebook.com/CollectionsByMichelleBrown).*





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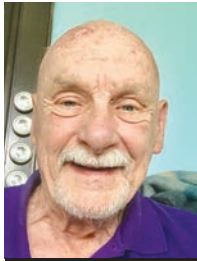
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## Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

### Repeat the Joyful Sound

*This column first appeared in BTL 12/20/17*

Contrary to rumors circulating for years in Story Bookland Weekly Tabloid there never was any real friction between Dorothy, Cowardly Lion, Tin Woodsman and Scarecrow. (And those horrid pictures of an aging Dorothy are photoshopped.)

Although the famous foursome each went separate ways — Cowardly Lion becoming a respected animal rights advocate; Tin Woodsman, expert on emerging robot technology; Scarecrow, an IRS specialist; and Dorothy — what else? — a big-time diva on the fabled LGBT rainbow circuit — they kept in touch by smart phone and email.

They also made it something of a ritual to get together every 25 years on the occasion of the anniversary of their first Yellow Brick Road adventure to seek out the Wizard of Oz, just to say a friendly hello, to renew little people acquaintances, and to see how things were playing out in Oz.

As spokesperson for the fabled partners, Dorothy messaged, “I know you last texted that we drive to Oz in your new Lexus 017, Tin Woodsman, but let’s play the game as we always have. Waltz the Yellow Brick Road, holding hands. Singing our theme song, “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.”

So, agreed, they met at the red, white and blue neon sign, “This Way to Oz!” But failed in their excitement to note a new flashing purple addition to the sign: “Be prepared for surprises when you get there!”

Midway down the Yellow Brick Road they were stopped. Startled, Tin Woodsman dropped his cell phone, Cowardly Lion waved his cane excitedly, Scarecrow pulled some straw hair out and Dorothy sang a few notes just a hint or two off key.

“Where might you dudes be headed?” demanded a hooded militant type, sporting a big silver badge. Government Oz Police. “What business you got here?”

After brief explanations that the four were old friends of the Wizard of Oz, and after a thorough electronic vetting, they were permitted to continue their journey. As they proceeded with understandable caution, it seemed that the temperature dropped and the sky became overcast. Their singing turned to faint mumbling.

After what seemed like hours of walking not waltzing, Dorothy, Tin Woodsman, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion (who was visibly trembling) arrived at the entrance of a gigantic, brand-new, Wizard of Oz Tower. “Well, well, well! I’ve been expecting you,” bellowed an imperial broadcasted voice. “You four don’t know me yet! But I’m the newly crowned Wizard of Oz.”

Dorothy, Tin Woodsman, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion stood stunned. Silent, as an orange neon-halo’d Wizard of Oz trumpeted. “OK, guys! From now on here are your marching orders. Or else! You get me?” He paused for emphasis. “Ready?!”

“Tin Woodsman, you are ordered to make robots who will do my bidding only! Cowardly Lion, listen up. My rights

See next page



## Positive Thoughts

### How I Contracted HIV Is None of Your Damn Business

BY TORAJE HOWARD

How I contracted HIV is none of your damn business. I’m going to tell you what happened, but not because I owe you an explanation. Here goes.

My friend with benefits at the time casually suggested that he should get tested because he knew that he “messed around with several different people.” As he made this suggestion, it forced me to think on the last time that I was tested for HIV, which was a shaky “a year and some months ago.” The fact that I could not pinpoint the exact date of my last negative test result really bothered me, and the butterflies in my stomach began to swirl around like a storm. If thunder strikes, I thought, the lightning should be obvious to see. After all, I knew that with this particular partner, we always used a condom, and I couldn’t recall a “slip-up” of raw sex with any other partner within the last year. My body count — the number of partners a person has had sex with — was “average” in my opinion, based on a review of my peers’ social media posts that included both personal anecdotes and barebacking escapades with people they had met online.

The friend with benefits, however, unintentionally saved my life.

“Your diagnosis is HIV positive” were the only words that resonated within me — everything else was a blur. I felt overwhelming relief and pain — I knew that something did not

feel right with my body, but apprehension about knowing my health status with certainty manifested into feelings of silent despair. I had to be honest with myself. I knew that I was not proactively visiting health care providers to receive routine check-ups or following up with comprehensive services. I did not prioritize HIV and sexually transmitted infections testing every three months, because as long as I used a condom most of the time, I felt content. Even though I did not engage in any other behaviors like injecting drugs, there were some symptoms that I tried to overlook but could no longer.

My first defining moment was when I visited a female barber in Hampton, Georgia. While she was shaving the hair under my neck, she touched a swollen lymph node on my chin, and then my Adam’s apple. And then she felt it again. It was extremely tender to the touch. I felt and saw her facial expression change, as if she knew something that I didn’t.

“You need to go get that checked” were the words that followed as she continued to cut my hair. I thought back to when I was hospitalized for proctitis, and the excruciating pain that felt like a thousand knives stabbing me in the stomach from every direction. Could the swollen lymph nodes have been related somehow? Some weeks after, I noticed that I also had swollen lymph nodes under my armpits, but that was dismissed as an adverse reaction to chemicals in the deodorant

See BTL Editorial, continued on p. 11



## ► Positive Thoughts

Continued from p. 11

that I was using. These all were thoughts that raced through my head – I wanted to replay the situation in which the scenario could have resulted in a negative status instead.

The next day, I accepted my fate and my status. I took a photo of my results and threw the testing kit in the trash. At that moment, I chose life over death.

So when I tell you how I contracted HIV is none of your damn business, I don't come from a place of arrogance or conceit. The disclosure of one's health status is a privilege for some, and depending on what state you live in, can be a legal matter that brings jail time if someone says you didn't disclose. Even if there are no official laws criminalizing HIV non-disclosure, people still face stigma and discrimination that can make it nearly impossible to talk about. Instead of focusing on the policing of marginalized bodies and values, efforts should be directed toward education, increasing access to health care for vulnerable communities and eliminating problematic beliefs and stereotypes surrounding the HIV virus itself as well as the people living with it.

You shouldn't feel compelled to ask someone living with HIV how they contracted the virus. If you are unaware of the various routes of transmission, a simple Google search can provide you with answers. If I have no intentions of being in a relationship with you, or if I do not have any inclinations to have sex with you, then why should my health status be any of your business? Would you ever ask a cancer survivor, "Did you get cancer from smoking too many cigarettes?"

From my experience, many people honestly feel that HIV is something that only promiscuous people receive as a punishment for their actions. Many people feel that if they live a "righteous" lifestyle they will be excused from becoming a host to the virus. Many people feel as long as they're not one of those

people – gay, transgender, promiscuous, etc. – they will be safe. You see, HIV does not define my dignity or character. HIV does not distinguish my humanity, nor can it verify the expression of my gender or sexuality. HIV is a virus that invades my immune cells in order to survive. But with the help of HIV treatment, I know that I can be a winner every day. I owe it to my loved ones who are counting on me to thrive. I owe it to you, as you continue to live your story. You have a right to comprehensive care and education, but you are not entitled to the same access to my personal health.

If you are HIV-positive, strive to find comprehensive care that suits your needs and identity, which includes antiretroviral therapy and mental health and any other related services needed to suppress your viral load and increase immune system health. Advocate for those who don't have the same health care access, regardless of your status.

If you are HIV negative, discuss options and talk to your health care provider about pre-exposure prophylaxis, a daily pill taken to prevent and control the spread of HIV.

If you are reading this and are still unaware of your HIV status, go get tested now.

Whatever you do after reading this, don't ask the next person you meet who is living with HIV to tell you how they contracted it.

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*Toraje Howard is a contributing writer for TheBody and a member of Engaging Communities Around HIV Organizing, a leadership development program established by the sexual health advocacy organization Advocates for Youth. This column is a project of TheBody, Plus, Positively Aware, POZ and Q Syndicate, the LGBT wire service. Visit their websites – [thebody.com](http://thebody.com), [hivplustmag.com](http://hivplustmag.com), [positivelyaware.com](http://positivelyaware.com) and [poz.com](http://poz.com) – for the latest updates on HIV/AIDS.*

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Next day, Dorothy texted, "Auntie Em, I've had the most gawdawful nightmare. Thank my lucky stars, I'm awake now. And back in Kansas City! (I think)."

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*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](mailto:Charles@pridesource.com).*

## ► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 10

take precedence over all rights. Human. Animal. Political. Religious. Scarecrow, forget about my taxes, past and present. And Dot! You are ordered never, never — no, no way ever — to sing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow."

"Got that, good buddies! From now on: if ever there was a Wiz Bang who was it's me."

# Creep Of The Week

## Anne Ennis



I spent part of my weekend attending a 2019 Election post-smortem where a group of committed volunteers, activists, candidates and elected officials went over what went right and what went not-so-right in 2019.

Some of you might be thinking, "There was an election in 2019?" And I could say I forgive you and we're all human and let bygones be bygones and all that — but I won't. Because you're not allowed to skip elections. Not now. Not ever again.

Even, and especially, the local ones, which are the races we discussed at this meeting. That's how we managed to get progressive majorities on city councils that used to be deep red. And how we got candidates elected who had never run before. And that's how we plan to use that energy and momentum as we gear up for 2020.

Local elections are so important. They aren't sexy. They don't have the razzle-dazzle of a presidential election or even a governor's race. Local races don't tend to have swag like bumper stickers and T-shirts, and they also lack the chatter of pundits. If you want to learn about school board or city council candidates, you're going to have to drag yourself to a local school or public library for a usually sparsely attended candidate forum. If you see the candidates on TV at all it will probably on a public access channel at 3 a.m.

But local government is what most directly and immediately touches your everyday life. They make decisions about your child's education. They decide whether that empty lot in your town gets turned into a park or sold and turned into a Tim Horton's. They decide what happens with the taxes you pay. You want people serving in these roles who are competent and moral and just. And that doesn't happen by chance.

Conservatives have understood this for a long time and have traditionally been very engaged at the local level. And there have been capable local elected officials who swing to the conservative side. But with the Republican party literally losing its collective mind and turning into a Donald Trump fan cult, it's more important than ever to get your progressive neighbors onto your city council, library board and school board.

A case in point: A recent exchange at a board meeting between a member of the Evansville-Vanderburgh County School Corporation board and members of the Tri-State Alliance — which describes itself as "a social service and educational organization that serves the diverse LGBTQ communities of Southwestern IN, Western KY and Southern IL" — attended the

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

**In the video, a member of the Tri-State Alliance accuses a woman identified as Board Member Anne Ennis of being transphobic. In response, she mimes playing a violin and says, "Cry me a river."**

board meeting to advocate for LGBTQ students "with emphasis on transgender student suicides." This was according to the description of a video on their Facebook page.

In the video, a member of the Tri-State Alliance accuses a woman identified as Board Member Anne Ennis of being transphobic. In response, she mimes playing a violin and says, "Cry me a river."

In response, a voice off-camera says as Ennis walks away, "Oh, cry us a river over kids who've died? Kids commit suicide. You don't care."

The same voice then adds, "You're a shitty person," but the door is already closing behind Ennis.

Now, I don't know this woman. Maybe she's just a really big fan of performance art and is simultaneously really terrible at it. But it seems pretty clear that she was dismissing the concerns brought to her by Tri-State Alliance. If that is not the case, then I welcome her defense and explanation.

We have a federal government that has turned its back on transgender and gender non-conforming students. Remember that under Obama schools received guidance about keeping transgender students safe. Trump yanked that guidance. So there's nobody at the top advocating for these vulnerable young people.

LGBTQ student need champions in their corners. If you want to help protect LGBTQ youth then run for school board or support an ally who is running. You owe it to those kids to do your research on who is running for school board and other local offices and to elect people who say no to discrimination, homophobia and transphobia.

A few years ago, a woman running for school board in my son's district handed me a flier. I asked about her position on LGBTQ students and families. She told me she wasn't anti-anybody, and that she was an ally.

"But that's not really relevant to the school board," she said.

"It's very relevant to me," I said. "This district includes sexual orientation in its non-discrimination clause. Most Michigan districts don't. That's why we moved here."

"You know, I never thought about that," she responded. "But I will."

She got my vote because she was willing to listen, something Ennis seems unwilling to do. Now who's going to run against her?



## Trump Again Omits LGBTQ People in World AIDS Day Proclamation

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

In a proclamation Wednesday recognizing World AIDS Day, President Trump again has omitted any recognition of LGBTQ people as among the groups primarily affected by the epidemic.

Such was the case in proclamations issued in 2017 and 2018. But the latest absence of LGBTQ people stands out even more because Trump takes the occasion to tout his administration's plan to beat HIV by 2030.

"Through this initiative, we will continue to lead the charge in applying the latest science to better diagnose, treat, care for and save the lives of individuals living with HIV by focusing on the cities and states most impacted by the disease," Trump writes.

The cross-agency initiative under the Department of Health & Human Services, as Trump explains in the initiative, seeks to eliminate at least 90 percent of new HIV infections in the United States within 10 years with a PrEP-heavy focus on diagnosis, treatment, prevention and response.

By promoting his administration's plan to beat HIV/AIDS without enumerating the groups most affected by the epidemic, Trump declines to recognize HIV/AIDS as a social justice issue and not just a disease.

In contrast, Obama in his 2016 proclamation spelled out HIV/AIDS predominantly affects "gay and bisexual men, transgender people, youth, black and Latino Americans, people living in the Southern United States, and people who inject drugs."

The furthest Trump gets to those groups in his World AIDS Day proclamation is a call to "remove the stigma surrounding HIV and to address disparities facing people living with this disease."

"Our success is contingent upon collaboration across all levels of government here in the United States and around the world, community interaction and outreach to people with HIV and at-risk populations, and a citizenry motivated by compassion for the suffering of humankind and hope for the future," Trump says.

Trump's budget request to Congress asked for \$300 million in additional funds to combat HIV, but also slashed request for international programs, including PEPFAR and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis & Malaria. Trump critics, including the Human Rights Campaign, have faulted him for insufficiently funding HIV based on those cuts.

But Trump in the proclamation insists the U.S. commitment to beating the international HIV/AIDS epidemic "is clear and as strong as ever" and has invested more than \$85 billion in PEPFAR.

An estimated 1.1 million people in the United States have HIV and 38 million people have the disease worldwide.

Since the beginning of the epidemic, 75 million people have been infected with HIV and about 32 million people have died from the disease, according to the World Health Organization.

"As we mourn this tragic loss of life," Trump writes, "we acknowledge the remarkable advancements in medical care, treatment, acceptance, and understanding surrounding the virus. While admirable progress has been made, it is not enough, and we must continue to work toward a vaccine and a cure."

*Read the full proclamation online at [whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov).*

# AIDS Quilt moving to San Francisco

BY LOU CHIBBARO JR.

The Atlanta-based Names Project Foundation, which has served as the custodian of the massive AIDS Memorial Quilt since 1987, is turning over that task to the San Francisco-based National AIDS Memorial, officials with both organizations announced at a Washington ceremony on Nov. 27.

The officials, who were joined by U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, also announced that the two organizations have agreed to donate the "care and stewardship" of the Quilt's large archival collection of artifacts and documents to the Library of Congress's American Folklife Center in Washington.

A joint statement released by the foundation and the National AIDS Memorial says the Quilt currently consists of over 50,000 individual 3-by-6 foot memorial panels commemorating more than 105,000 people who have died of AIDS since the start of the epidemic in the early 1980s.

"This historic decision will return The Quilt to the San Francisco Bay area, where 32 years ago during the height of the AIDS epidemic, a group of strangers gathered at a San Francisco storefront to remember the names and lives of their loved ones they feared history would forget – and with that seemingly simple act of love and defiance, the first panels of The Quilt were created," the statement says.

"This is the culmination of decades of work that achieves a vision long held by The Names Project leadership who, armed with an unwavering commitment to The Quilt, were determined to see that the AIDS Memorial Quilt would stand the test of time," said Julie Rhoad, president and CEO of the Names Project in the joint statement. "With this set of new caretakers, we are confident that the legacy of The Quilt and the Names Project is secure," she said.

The ceremony in which the AIDS Memorial Quilt changes were to be announced was scheduled to take place Wednesday morning in the Great Hall of the Library of Congress's main building across the street from the U.S. Capitol.

Among those scheduled to speak and participate in the ceremony were Pelosi; U.S. Reps. John Lewis (D-Ga.) and Barbara Lee (D-Calif.); Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden; Names Project Foundation CEO Rhoad; and AIDS



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi attends the AIDS Memorial Quilt ceremony at the Library of Congress. Washington Blade photo by Michael Key

Quilt founders Cleve Jones, Mike Smith, and Gert McMullin.

The Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, D.C. and Broadway performer Glenn Rainey were scheduled to sing during the event.

According to its website, the National AIDS Memorial is the organization that operates the National AIDS Memorial Grove located at a site in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. It also oversees various memorial related programs and projects, including the Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship program.

"The mission of the National AIDS Memorial is to provide, in perpetuity, a place of remembrance so that the lives of people who have died from AIDS are not forgotten and the story is known by future generations," the memorial's website says.

"In 1996, through legislation signed by President Bill Clinton, it was federally designated a national memorial," the website says.

The Names Project Foundation's website says the foundation has been in charge of caring for and displaying the AIDS Memorial Quilt since its founding in 1987. It notes that in October 1987, the Quilt's first 1,920 panels were displayed on the National Mall in D.C., where a half million people came to see it.

An estimated 1.2 million people visited the Quilt when it returned to Washington in October 1996 and covered the entire National Mall from the Washington Monument to the grounds of the U.S. Capitol, the

foundation states.

The foundation notes on its website that in 2000 its Board of Directors elected to move its national headquarters and the Quilt to Atlanta, and the move was completed in December 2002.

The joint statement this week by the foundation and the National AIDS Memorial announcing the transfer of custody over the Quilt to the National AIDS Memorial didn't provide a reason for the change, but further details were expected to be discussed at the Library of Congress ceremony on Wednesday.

"The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress will become the new home for the National AIDS Memorial Quilt Archive in 2020," the joint statement says. "This archival collection currently totals more than 200,000 items. It includes biographical records, correspondence, photographs, tributes, epitaphs, news clippings and artifacts submitted by panel makers that add context about the lives memorialized on The Quilt panels," it says.

"The Library of Congress is proud to serve as the home of the National AIDS Memorial Quilt Archive to preserve its legacy and give the memorial a home on both the East Coast and West Coast," said Librarian of Congress Hayden.

*More details about the Quilt can be found at [AIDSmemorial.org](http://AIDSmemorial.org). This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National LGBT Media Association.*



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# Divine Peace MCC's New Pastor Set on Embracing Spirituality and Making Church a Brave, Safe Space

BY EVE KUHARSKI

'I'm spiritual, but I'm not religious.' It's a common statement and something that many people have likely heard in casual conversation. But it's more than just idle water-cooler chit chat. According to Pew Research Center, it's a measurable trend, and over a quarter of Americans, 27 percent, in 2017 identified this way. As church attendance continues to trend downward, this identification is certainly not lost on the religious community, but it's not always viewed as a negative thing. The Rev. Dr. Gail Simonds recently began her role as pastor at Divine Peace Metropolitan Community Church, and she said that one of her first goals is to emphasize that spirituality and religion don't have to be mutually exclusive.

"This is one of those things that's happened in the last 20 years or so, but church attendance is down, churches are older and the spiritual landscape in the country has changed," she said. "And with more and more people describing themselves as spiritual but not religious, I think the responsibility is ours — people who are in church — to move in that direction. Because for longest time we have said that our spirituality is this box, when, in fact, it's not and it never has been. Anybody who has taken a walk on a beach or in the woods understands that and it's just trying to open people up to that experience that young people are having that they describe as spiritual but not religious."

A self-described process theologian, Simonds said that she's always been drawn to religion and spirituality and has certainly never shied away from interpreting it in a progressive way. Her spiritual journey began the same way it does for most: she went to church with her family as a child. That church happened to be a Roman Catholic one.

"I was born and raised in Wayne city, went to Wayne Saint Mary and we used to play mass when we were kids. And I realized that you can't be a priest because you're a girl, because I was oblivious to my gender in a lot of ways. And then, all of sudden, I realized that I can't play football and can't be a priest," Simonds said.

Still, despite that early life setback, faith remained strong in Simonds' life. And she couldn't ever quite shake the idea of following a religious career path.

"I played around with this idea of

churches that I didn't dress well enough for," she said.

It was finally when she happened upon Divine Peace in Michigan that she felt like she could become a spiritual leader.

"Because it's great to have a congregation where 30 to 40 people show up every Sunday, but they say, 'We need to grow the church.' ... The wrong answer is, 'We need more money in the pews in order to make the payments,' but you hear that sometimes. What I heard was, 'I want other people to have or feel the way I feel when I'm with this group of people and that, to me, is the right answer. ... That says to me that your heart is in the right place.'"

Now, having started her tenure at Divine Peace only two months ago, she said she's working hard to learn the lay of the land. Beyond this, Simonds said that she's spent much of her time trying to instill a culture of not only people "feeling good where they're at," but a mindset of service and being "an active participant in the world."

"Those are the two things that make up church," she said.

She said that she hopes that not only will church become a place for people to feel safe in whatever part of their spiritual journey they're on but also a brave one, because attendees should be "challenged to think outside of whatever your worldview is."

"And that in its essence is what church is because I have a home, I have heat, I have hot water, I have food in my refrigerator, and there are so many people who have none of that," she said. "And as a Christian it's my responsibility to do those things. It's a two-pronged approach always. And we've been doing outreach in the congregation to begin with and you can see folks have a heart for it and that cheered me up."



Rev. Dr. Gail Simonds

church and attending church for a really long time, and then, of all the places in the world, I had a job in Western Kentucky. I went to a United Methodist Church there. ... We did Bible study and all of that and I liked being in church. And what I liked best is the stories inbetween the stories or, in the Jewish tradition, 'This story says this story, but where did Cain's wife come from?' And in Judaism it's OK to tell another story to talk about the story. That's their tradition."

It wasn't long after realizing that it was OK to dismantle and unpack religious stories to get at a deeper meaning that Simonds decided to get a degree. She studied at The Methodist Theological School in Ohio and before long began working at an MCC church there. It was then that Simonds spent nine years in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and then moved between Oregon and Texas. She said it was tricky to find an LGBTQ-affirming church that suited her well.

"I had churches I was too gay for,



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To find out more about Simonds and Divine Peace MCC, visit [dpmcc.net](http://dpmcc.net).





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[www.lordoflight.org](http://www.lordoflight.org)

• **King of Kings Lutheran Church**  
2685 Packard Rd.  
[www.kingofkingslutheran.org](http://www.kingofkingslutheran.org)

• **Trinity Lutheran Church**  
1400 Stadium Blvd.  
[www.trinityaa.org](http://www.trinityaa.org)

• **Zion Lutheran Church**  
1501 W. Liberty St.  
<https://zlc-aa.org>

• **Battle Creek**  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
2055 Columbia Ave. E.  
[www.tlcbattlecreek.org](http://www.tlcbattlecreek.org)

• **Burton**  
Our Risen Lord Lutheran Church  
4040 Lapeer Rd.  
[www.ourrisenlordelca.com](http://www.ourrisenlordelca.com)

• **East Lansing**  
University Lutheran Church  
1020 S. Harrison Rd.  
[www.ulcel.org](http://www.ulcel.org)

• **Farmington Hills**  
Antioch Lutheran Church  
33360 West Thirteen Mile Rd.  
[www.antiochelca.org](http://www.antiochelca.org)

• **Hope Lutheran Church**  
39200 West Twelve Mile Rd.  
[www.hope-lutheran-church.com](http://www.hope-lutheran-church.com)

• **Ferndale**  
Zion Lutheran Church  
143 Albany St.  
[www.zionlutheranmi.org](http://www.zionlutheranmi.org)

• **Freeland**  
Zion Lutheran Church  
545 7th. St.  
[www.zionfreeland.org](http://www.zionfreeland.org)

• **Grand Rapids**  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
250 Commerce Ave. SW  
[www.bethlehemchurchgr.org](http://www.bethlehemchurchgr.org)

• **Kalamazoo**  
Lutheran Church of the Savior  
3616 East G Avenue  
[www.lcoskzoo.com](http://www.lcoskzoo.com)

• **Kentwood**  
Ascension Lutheran Church  
4252 Breton Rd. SE  
[www.twochurches.org](http://www.twochurches.org)

• **Mount Pleasant**  
Immanuel Lutheran Church  
320 South Bradley St.  
[www.immanuelmp.com](http://www.immanuelmp.com)

• **Okemos**  
Faith Lutheran Church  
4515 Dobie Rd.  
[www.faithlutheranokemos.org](http://www.faithlutheranokemos.org)

• **Rochester Hills**  
Abiding Presence  
Lutheran Church  
1550 Walton Rd.  
[www.AbidingPresence.org](http://www.AbidingPresence.org)

• **Saginaw**  
Our Saviour Lutheran Church  
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[www.oursavioursaginaw.org](http://www.oursavioursaginaw.org)

• **Saline**  
Holy Faith Church  
6299 Saline-Ann Arbor Rd.  
[www.holy-faith-church.org](http://www.holy-faith-church.org)

• **Trenton**  
St. Philip Lutheran Church  
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[www.stphilipelca.com](http://www.stphilipelca.com)

• **Toledo, Ohio**  
St. Lucas Lutheran Church  
745 Walbridge Ave.  
[www.stlucastoledo.org](http://www.stlucastoledo.org)

• **Waterford**  
Christ Lutheran Church  
5987 Williams Lake Rd.  
[www.christwaterford.org](http://www.christwaterford.org)



# Holiday Worship Services

## Sat Dec. 7 Divine Peace MCC

Rev. Gail Simonds  
Christmas Holiday Music and Bake Sale,  
7:00 p.m.  
6650 Elizabeth Lake Rd, Waterford Township  
248-332-1186, dpmcc.net

## Sun Dec. 8 Nativity Episcopal Church

Advent Services 9:30 a.m.  
21220 W. Fourteen Mile Rd, Bloomfield Twp  
248-646-4100, nativityepiscopalchurch.org

## Sun Dec. 15 Nativity Episcopal Church

Advent Services 9:30 a.m.  
21220 W. Fourteen Mile Rd, Bloomfield Twp  
248-646-4100, nativityepiscopalchurch.org

## Sunday, Dec. 22 St. John's Episcopal Church

Healing and Eucharist, 11 a.m.  
26998 Woodward Avenue and 11 Mile Road,  
Royal Oak, 248-546-1255, stjohrnro.org

## Antioch Lutheran Church

Worship, 9:30 a.m.  
33360 W. 13 Mile Road, Farmington Hills  
antiochelca.org

## Divine Peace MCC

Rev. Gail Simonds  
Worship, 9:30 a.m.  
6650 Elizabeth Lake Road, Waterford  
Township  
248-332-1186, dpmcc.net

## Nativity Episcopal Church

Advent Services 9:30 a.m.  
21220 W. Fourteen Mile Rd, Bloomfield Twp  
248-646-4100, nativityepiscopalchurch.org

## Salem Church

Worship Sunday, 10 a.m.  
33424 Oakland Ave., Farmington  
248-474-6880, salemucc.us

## Grosse Pointe Congregational Church

Worship Sunday, 10 a.m.  
Rev. Richard Yeager-Stiver  
240 Chalfonte, Grosse Pointe Farms  
313-884-3075, gpcong.org

## MCC Detroit

Rev. Roland Stringfellow  
Church Service, 11:30 a.m.  
205 N. Main St., Clawson  
248-399-7741, mccdetroit.org

## Whosoever Ministry

Sunday Service, 11:30 a.m.  
240 Chalfonte, Grosse Pointe Farms  
888-770-1322, whosoeverministry.org

## Tuesday, Dec. 24 Christ Church Cranbrook

Christmas Eve Schedule:  
Jazz Mass 1:00 p.m.  
Christmas Eve Family Service 4:00 p.m.  
Traditional Christmas Eve Services 7 & 10  
p.m.  
470 Church Rd., Bloomfield Hills  
248-644-5210  
www.christchurchcranbrook.org

## Dearborn First United Methodist Church

Christmas Eve Schedule:  
Interactive Service young Children 4:30 p.m.  
Lessons & Carols 7:00 p.m.  
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Family Service 5:00 p.m.  
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# THE 'UNIQUELY QUEER' WORLD OF 'EASTSIDERS'

## Show's Creator On Final Season, Writing LGBTQ Stories and His Michigan Ties

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

It's a pretty standard dating rule: if your significant other has cheated on you, the relationship is over. And in the TV world, that's usually the way things play out.

"But what happens in the aftermath of an unforgivable offense if the couple decides to stay together? What does that look like?"

Those are the questions posed in the LGBTQ series "EastSiders" by creator Kit Williamson, who introduced infidelity in the Daytime Emmy Award-nominated show's pilot. Now, seven years after its debut and three seasons in, the show's fourth and final season is set to premiere on Netflix on Dec. 1.

In addition to being a filmmaker, Williamson is a Fordham University and UCLA-trained actor who has graced TV screens in shows like "Mad Men," "The Good Wife" and "Death Valley," along with appearances on both Broadway and Off-Broadway. When asked why he chose to focus on a relationship conflict as the basis for his critically acclaimed show, Williamson said it was a natural starting point.

"I think that all drama is rooted in conflict," he said. "If there is not conflict, there is no story, so I wanted to put the characters into as much conflict as possible."

Fans will know that Williamson has certainly kept his word on that throughout three seasons of "EastSiders," tackling everything from substance abuse to simply navigating life in queer circles. He also plays the part of Cal who is one half of the show's central couple Cal and Thom. And despite all of their in-show challenges, the couple has lasted throughout the show's three seasons, and doesn't show signs up breaking up any time soon.

Williamson made time between flights to chat with *Between The Lines* about the last season of "EastSiders," how his creative process has changed since the show debuted online in 2012, it's uniquely queer love triangle and his future goals as an LGBTQ creator.

**I was excited, as I'm sure our readers will be, to learn you have a Michigan tie! You attended Interlochen Arts Academy your junior and senior years.**

I did, yes. And I've actually been back two times to teach. They were such formative years. I wrote my first plays at Interlochen, I discovered a love of playwriting and dialogue. I discovered a love of poetry and fiction. I met my best friend at Interlochen, Brie Cavallaro; she's a young adult novelist and she actually teaches in the creative writing faculty at Interlochen now. Interlochen has a really special place in my heart.

**Now that "EastSiders" is in its final season, how would you compare your creative approach to when you were just leaving school and starting the show?**

Well, first of all, we were just babies when the show started back in 2012. I was a graduate student getting my MFA in playwriting at UCLA, and I'd actually never written anything that had gotten produced before. And over the years, you can really, I think, track my personal and professional development through the show. I feel like we've really grown up with the show as artists, as people; it tracks seven years now in the life of a gay couple in Los Angeles. A bit of a tangent, but it's really rare that we get depictions of long-term LGBTQ relationships in media and stories, [and] that we get to sit with characters in long-form storytelling like that.

**It's true, that depiction is rare. In 2017 you mentioned in an interview that media was entering a unique time for LGBTQ creators and stories. As a gay creator in 2019, what do you try to convey to audiences when telling those stories?**

I think right now in 2019 we have a lot to tackle in terms of LGBTQ storytelling. Pretty near the top of my list is thinking about intersectionality, thinking about how



“I think right now in 2019 we have a lot to tackle in terms of LGBTQ storytelling. Pretty near the top of my list is thinking about intersectionality, thinking about how stories can be represented beyond just the cis, white point of view that I was born with.”

stories can be represented beyond just the cis, white point of view that I was born with. So, I really respect and understand that and I tried to make season four as inclusive as possible. Another thing that I'm personally thinking more and more about is trying to tell LGBTQ stories outside the framework of respectability. We no longer need to put forth characters that are perfect and pristine and living unvarnished lives — that's not very interesting to me. And last but not least, in projects that I'm developing outside of "EastSiders," I'm thinking a lot about telling stories of LGBTQ people, queer people outside of the coastal urban centers where we tend to gather. I'm from the South, I'm from Mississippi, and I think the industry has a huge blind spot when it comes to not just queer people living in the South but anyone living in the South or rural parts of the country.

**Have you seen Tig Notaro's "One Mississippi"? I think that show is a great example of that kind of media.**

Tig Notaro! Yes. I get why people, particularly LGBT people living in New York or Los Angeles are telling stories about New York and Los Angeles. I certainly was, you know? Because I moved from Mississippi and it was like this whole new world opened up for me in Silver Lake, and that was a big part of what inspired me to write "EastSiders." But now that I'm a little bit older and I've lived here a little bit longer, I guess my attention is turning back toward home a little bit and my roots.

**Speaking of that inspiration, what gave you the idea for it originally?**

I first started thinking about what would only be possible in a queer story. And that's what gave me the idea for the love triangle between Jeremy, Cal and Thom, because I think only in a queer relationship could you go and sleep with the person that your partner cheated on you with (laughs). There's no making that equation unless at least two of the points in the triangle are queer in some way (laughs),

and given the potential for attraction for all three points in the triangle, I thought that was a really interesting complication. I also really wanted to take as a jumping-off point to what happens in the aftermath of something that many would consider unforgivable infidelity.

**It's true, that kind of matchup would be impossible on a straight sitcom.**

We're always trying to ask ourselves, "How is the show uniquely queer?" So, what is it about this show that you can't get on network television or that you can't get on most cable television shows? I'm always trying to lean into the queerness of the show and the queerness of the characters. That's why season four centers around a drag queen's wedding and a unique kind of debate that I think you don't have outside of queer circles about masculinity and masculine versus feminine gender presentation.

**This show is unique because it's been funded largely by fans since it was developed, and that has seemingly given you a lot of creative autonomy. Now that it's ending, will you miss that kind of creative freedom that you might not get in a more traditional network setup?**

I actually have a Patreon right now that supports the development of other independent queer projects that I'm putting together. It's just patreon.com/kitwilliamson. I have a lot of ideas of things to do on there, but I am also simultaneously developing something that would get within a traditional network or cable pipeline. Because, ultimately, I feel like the show has grown as big as it can grow without having the full backing of a larger entity. It's great that we've been able to achieve this level of distribution given how humble the project's origins are.

**I also heard that as a companion to season four you'll be releasing a documentary about how "EastSiders" was made. When will that be released?**

Stay tuned (laughs)!



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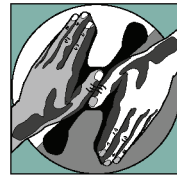
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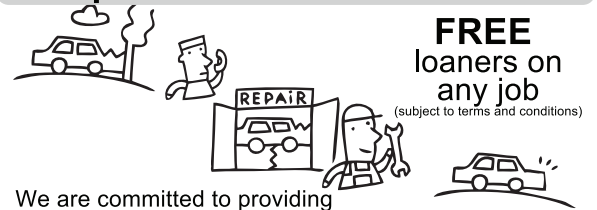


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# Taylor Mac to Deck the Halls With ‘Holiday Sauce’

## Get Ready for Some ‘Radical Fairy Realness,’ Says the Performance Artist

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

The shopping, the decorating, the worshipping, the mandatory small talk – the holidays can already be a time of great stress. Adding a queer identity into the mix can often complicate things further. Still, as tricky as navigating the upcoming special days can be for those who are LGBTQ, the stress doesn’t have to spell disaster. At least Taylor Mac certainly doesn’t think so.

In “Holiday Sauce,” a performance described by the San Francisco Chronicle as a unique mixture of “subversive politics, circus pageantry, sartorial riot and boundless compassion to the holidays,” Mac — who prefers “judy” as

a gender pronoun because you can’t roll your eyes and say “juuddy” without emasculating yourself — has decided to break down and unpack what makes modern holidays tick with song, celebration and extravagant outfits.

A playwright, performer and singer-songwriter, Mac has been making headlines since the ‘90s for creative works that have pushed boundaries and unapologetically asked audiences around the world to reexamine their everyday lives. For judy’s efforts, Mac has received a Guggenheim Award, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2017 and a recipient of the MacArthur Genius Grant, among many others achievements. “Holiday Sauce,” a performance conceived, written,

performed, co-produced and co-directed by judy, promises to deliver a holiday show that packs Mac’s trademark wit and creative spirit, while also exploring chosen family and other ways to make holiday traditions more inclusive for those who are queer.

“Taylor Mac’s Holiday Sauce” will be presented by Ann Arbor’s University Musical Society on Saturday, Dec. 14 and Sunday, Dec. 15. Ahead of the show, Between The Lines caught up with Mac to talk about judy’s inspiration for the show, how to find the good as well as the bad in holiday traditions and the importance of making a space where everyone feels included.

**“Holiday Sauce” is a look at, at least in part, the LGBTQ “chosen family” as a survival mechanism during the holidays. How did you get inspired to do a show about that?**

I would say it a little bit more positively than survival, but more just wanting to manifest the world that you want through the art that you make, rather than just wishing for the world that you want or commenting on the world that is. And so, I just set out to make a show that would allow me to enjoy the holiday season. And that included hanging out with chosen family and focusing on generations of queens that came before me and also singing

See **Taylor Mac**, continued on p. 24





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## ► Taylor Mac

Continued from p. 22

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### What were the holidays like for you growing up? Were they stressful?

I think for a lot of people it is. Not just queers, you know, but for a lot of people who feel the pressure of family, biological family, and needing to get along and the kind of social pressure and etiquette of the holiday season. Combined with a kind of religious dogma that can sometimes feel very oppressive to certain people and was very homophobic. The religion when I was growing up, we were celebrating this kind of homophobic tradition (laughs). So it didn't feel really fun, and it still doesn't. And the flip side of it is the capitalism. It's hard to celebrate capitalism every year and to feel sentimental about capitalism. And so, I recognize there are different ways to frame the holiday season and I guess that's just what we're setting out to do because we can't get rid of it, it's here (laughs) and it keeps getting louder every year. So, maybe the best way to do it is to turn it into something that actually does feel good.



### What would you say is the best way to spend the holidays?

Well, one of my favorite times of the holiday year was when I was invited to have queer orphan Christmas at my drag mother's house in New York City, at her apartment. And she had all of these wonderful artists and interesting bohemians that were there, and it was just fun and it was just sweet hanging out with everybody and having a good time. And so, that's kind of one of the things that I try to do; I try to create that feeling that I had with Mother Flawless Sabrina. When I was making the show she died, and so I decided, "Why don't we make this kind of an annual memorial service to Mother Flawless." Instead of a celebration of Jesus' birth, can we celebrate Mother Flawless for bringing us life?

And I try to make room for everybody. Like Thornetta Davis is very religious and so I said to her, "I hope that you will come and sing with us even though we're critical of a lot of the dogma that this holiday gives us. I hope that we can make space for people who still have that faith." And they're not in

## INFO

### Taylor Mac's 'Holiday Sauce'

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charge of the show, that's clear; it's not that we're not going to be honest about how it's harmful to us (laughs), but at the same time we try to make space for everybody.

### This show is billed as the go-to survival guide for the holidays. Does the show go over pitfalls to avoid during the season?

We practice some techniques to help us get through things and some of them are to deconstruct things, some of them are to engage in them fully as is, some of them are to reframe something, some techniques are just to gather people that you love around you and sing some songs (laughs). Music tends to help. And drag. Lots of drag and ridiculousness and wonderful costumes and beautiful aesthetics always help — and ridiculous aesthetics and surprising aesthetics. So those help you get through things. And you know, there's nothing prettier than a bunch of trees with sparkly lights on them in the clear night (laughs). So we try to bring that aesthetic into the theater, which is one of the nice things about the holiday.

### You've said in previous performances that you try to make the audience as much a part of the show as possible. Is that what attendees can expect this time around?

I always treat my audience as important. You know, I think of them as, "We can't get to journey's end without them," and so I always try to figure out how they can matter to the show so that if they weren't there we couldn't actually perform it. That's why we never do run-throughs of the show where I do all my dialogue and all my banter and everything. We'll sing songs and stuff in rehearsals, but we don't do the banter in rehearsals because I always feel like I actually need the audience for that, and I can't rehearse on my own for that. And there are times where we have the audience do things. For this show we don't make the audience do things because that wasn't the vision for this particular work, but we do a couple of things — but nobody's brought up on stage and has the spotlight put on them. It's kind of a radical fairy realness ritual sacrifice holiday show, but we do other things (laughs).

### What's something you wish people knew before seeing the show?

The spirit of the show is, can we all hang out together for a while? And can we make that the ritual? And what's fun about coming back to Ann Arbor is that Ann Arbor helped develop our "24-Decade" show (Mac created and performed an award-winning 24-hour-long show that featured 246 songs from 1776 to present day), so we've been there two times already and it just feels like, "Ah, now we're starting to build a relationship." Once you show up at least three times, it's like, "OK, we're starting to make a commitment to each other." But I really appreciate that and like that. I know it's a big turnover there when students are gone and hopefully we will have some return offenders.

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# Happenings

## DETROIT ROLLER DERBY AT THE MASONIC TEMPLE

On Saturday, Dec. 14, head out to The Masonic Temple to catch up with Detroit Roller Derby's celebration of 15 years in the Motor City. This is game two of home season 15 featuring the Devil's Night Dames V. Grand Prix Madonnas. Tickets start at \$10. Visit themasonic.com for more information.

## OUTINGS

### Saturday, December 7

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

**Handel's Messiah** 8 p.m. Music director Scott Hanoian conducts the UMS Choral Union and the Ann Arbor Symphony in this annual community tradition. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. http://ums.org

### Sunday, December 8

**Catholic Weekly Liturgy for LGBTQI Community** 6 p.m. Dignity Detroit meets every Sunday evening at The School at Marygrove (formerly Marygrove College). 8425 W. McNichols, Detroit. dignitydetroit74@yahoo.com www.dignitydetroit.org

### Monday, December 9

**LGBT Game Night** 6 p.m. 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. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105

**Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups - Macomb County** 6:30 p.m. Macomb Teen/Youth Support Group. Dakota High School, 21051 21 Mile Road, Macomb. 586-723-2700

### Tuesday, December 10

**Foster Care and Adoption Orientation** 6 p.m. Join us for an informational orientation to learn how you can become a foster parent or adoptive parent for a child in need. Orchards Children's Services, 24901 Northwestern Hwy., Suite 601, Southfield. 248-258-0440 www.orchards.org

**Shaku Kanneh-Mason, cello** 7:30 p.m. One of the brightest young stars on the

classical music scene, Sheku Kanneh-Mason became a household name worldwide in May 2018 after performing at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle at Windsor Castle. Rackham Auditorium, 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. (734) 764-8572 www.rackham.umich.edu

### Wednesday, December 11

**Stand with Trans Youth Support Group - Flint - Genessee** 6:30 p.m. Meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month @ Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint, 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy., Flint. 810-232-4023 www.standwithtrans.org

### Thursday, December 12

**Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups - Farmington Hills - Oakland County** 7 p.m. Meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month @ Orchard United Methodist Church.

### Saturday, December 14

**Taylor Mac's Holiday Sauce** 8 p.m. Plies acerbic wit, subversive politics, circus pageantry, sartorial riot, and boundless compassion to the holidays." (San Francisco Chronicle) Power Center, 121 Fletcher Street, Ann Arbor. (734) 647-3327

### Sunday, December 15

**Stand with Trans Wyandotte Support Group for Trans Youth and Parents of Trans Individuals** 4 p.m. Meets the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month @ St. Stephens Episcopal Church. St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 2803 1st Street, Wyandotte. 734-747-4363

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## Editor's Pick

### SAVED BY THE '90S PARTY AT SAINT ANDREW'S HALL

On Tuesday, Dec. 31, ring in the new year at Saint Andrew's Hall with a '90s themed party for the ages! Party like it's 1999 20 years later! Tickets start at \$13. Visit saintandrewsdetroit.com for more information.





## Editor's Pick

### MENJO'S NEW YEARS EVE — THE END OF IT ALL BALL 2020



Head on down to Menjo's to celebrate their "year end blowout clearance sale on everything fabulous" at their New Year's Eve party this year. This event will feature a unique mix of dance club music with special guest DJ Mr. Doug Roberts with Lee's annual holiday buffet. Find out more online at [newmenjoscomplex.com](http://newmenjoscomplex.com).

#### Tuesday, December 17

**Yoga: A Holistic Approach to Substance Use Disorder Recovery** 7:30 p.m. Erin Shawgo, LMSW, CIYT, C-IAYT will review the research supporting yoga as an effective complementary practice, discuss ways that yoga can benefit recovering people, and provide suggestions for developing a personal yoga practice. Michigan Heart and Vascular Institute, 5325 Ypsilanti. [www.dawnfarmeducation.org](http://www.dawnfarmeducation.org)

#### Wednesday, December 18

**Stand with Trans Support Groups – Livonia – Wayne County** 6:30 p.m. Meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month @ Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Parent Support Group Facilitators Karen Sessler, kssessle@yahoo.com or 734-673-3590 and Scott Sessler, pastorscott@emmanuel-livonia.org or 734-673-2485 Trans Youth Support Group (12+) Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 34567 7 Mile Road, Livonia. [www.standwithtrans.org](http://www.standwithtrans.org)

**Transgender Support Group – Westland** 6 p.m. Free adult support group held on the third Wednesday of each month at the Westland Public Library Meeting Room B, 7-8:30pm. Westlan Public Library, 6123 Central City Parkway, Westland. 734-326-6123 [westlandlibrary.org](http://westlandlibrary.org)

## MUSIC & MORE

**Handel's Messiah** December 7, 8 p.m. Music director Scott Hanoian conducts the UMS Choral Union and the Ann Arbor Symphony in this annual community

tradition Also on December 8 at 2:00pm Ann Arbor Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. <https://ums.org>

**Hug Detroit Day 9th Annual Coat and Blanket Drive/ Benefit Concert Ft. Satin Doll Revue** December 8, 4 p.m. Featuring Satin Doll Revue starring music by Nina Simone, Dinah Washington, Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday. This event stars Faye Bradford, Nina Simone, Chelly K and Sky Covington Tangent Gallery, 715 East Milwaukee Ave., Detroit.

**Shaku Kanneh-Mason, cello** December 10, 7:30 p.m. One of the brightest young stars on the classical music scene, Shaku Kanneh-Mason became a household name worldwide in May 2018 after performing at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle at Windsor Castle. Rackham Auditorium, 915 E. Washington St, Ann Arbor. (734) 764-8572

**Toastmasters International SpeakOUT! LGBTQ Meeting** Dec. 12, 7 p.m. LGBTQ Toastmaster Club focusing on Professional and personal communication skills development. Better communication skills improves leadership style and relationships. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867

**Moscow Ballet's 'Great Russian Nutcracker'** Dec. 22. Coming to Detroit's Fox Theatre for three performances, the "Great Russian Nutcracker" will stun with hundreds of costumes, sets and more. Tickets start at \$29. [gaybe.am/wN](http://gaybe.am/wN) Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

## ART 'N' AROUND

**2019 Holiday Show** Dec. 6, 4 p.m. Join us for a free event, open to the public, families with children welcome! Participate in glassblowing workshops, shop in our gallery for one-of-a-kind sculptures and unique handmade gifts. 15 percent off gallery prices! Orchard Lake Road, Pontiac. 248-745-3786 [www.epiphanyglass.com](http://www.epiphanyglass.com)

**Yourist Studio Gallery Holiday Show and Sale** Dec. 13. Featuring exceptional ceramic art from our resident artists and selected students in a convivial holiday atmosphere. Our show opens with a festive preview sale and artists' reception on Friday, Dec. 13, 5 to 8 p.m. Yourist Studio Gallery, 1133 Broadway, Ann Arbor. 734-662-4914

## THEATER

**Ebenezer** It has been 15 years since the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future intervened in Ebenezer Scrooge's life. Now renowned for his philanthropy, generous spirit and selflessness, his heart yearns to continue spreading joy The Marlene Boll Theatre, 1401 Broadway, Detroit. [www.detroitmercyarts.com](http://www.detroitmercyarts.com)

**Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Fallen Souffle** A world premier by David MacGregor and directed by Michelle Mountain, it's Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Fallen Souffle. Purple Rose Theater, 137 Park St., Chelsea. 734-433-7673 [purplerosetheatre.org/](http://purplerosetheatre.org/)

**A Very Golden Girls Christmas** This unauthorized parody by Dyan Bailey and Christopher Kamm is sure to get you in the holiday spirit. xThe Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 248-545-5545 <http://theringwald.com>

**Taylor Mac's Holiday Sauce** December 14, 8 p.m. "Taylor Mac's Holiday Sauce plies acerbic wit, subversive politics, circus pageantry, sartorial riot, and boundless compassion to the holidays." (San Francisco Chronicle) Power Center, 121 Fletcher Street, Ann Arbor. (734) 647-3327

**A2CT Auditions : The Play's the Thing** The Play's the Thing is a unique collaboration between playwrights and audience members. Playwrights hear their works read and the audience gives feedback to facilitate new play development. Each performance features plays of varying lengths. A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228 [www.a2ct.org/audition](http://www.a2ct.org/audition)

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PUZZLE P. 29



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# Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

## Colin Farrell travels 'The North Water'

Andrew Haigh ("Weekend," "45 Years") is busy working on a new limited series, "The North Water." Haigh adapted the novel by Ian McGuire and is directing the BBC four-parter due in 2020. Colin Farrell stars as a harpooner on an Arctic whaling expedition (he also happens to be a murderous psychopath, but nobody's perfect). On board he meets a ship's doctor (Jack O'Connell, "Unbroken") who's not quite ready for the encounter or for the brutal journey of survival the two will come to share. Supporting cast includes acclaimed actor-filmmaker Peter Mullan ("Ozark") and legendary British character actor Tom Courtenay ("45 Years," and, you know, little movies like "Doctor Zhivago"). It's not necessarily a queer-specific story – even if the captain of this TV ship is – but it's already reminding us a little bit of "The Lighthouse," with its vibe of tortured, toxic, freaked-out masculinity and sublimated homoerotic rage. So this'll be fun!



Taika Waititi. Photo: KathClick

wild comedy ("What We Do In The Shadows"), Marvel Cinematic Universe box-office juggernauts ("Thor: Ragnarok"), and daring Oscar-buzz satires ("Jojo Rabbit"). So naturally his next move is an inspirational sports film about a Samoan soccer team. It's called "Next Goal Wins," and it's about a real-life team's resurgence after suffering the longest losing streak in international football. What's queer about that? The existence of Jaiyah Saelua, the first non-binary player to compete in a men's FIFA World Cup

qualifying match. And what's queer about the casting is that it will be the debut film role for actor Kaimana, who is a "fa'afafine" Samoan actor (in Samoan culture, "fa'afafine" people comprise a non-binary gender identity). In other words, this will be the next step in non-binary representation in cinema, both in character placement and casting (after non-binary actor Asia Kate Dillon's role in "John Wick: Parabellum") and that's a significant development.

## 'Cicada' gives 'SNL's Bowen Yang a movie role

We listen to Yang's podcast "Las Culturistas" and know him as one of the new cast additions to "SNL." Of course, more importantly, like the rest of queer America, we also now know him as one of the writers of the instantly legendary "Sara Lee Instagram" sketch. At this point we're pretty much just stalking his career wherever it happens to meander, like into the indie drama "Cicada," currently in production. The first narrative feature from filmmaker Matthew Fifer, it's the story of a young queer man who enters an interracial relationship and who then must, over the course of a summer, come to terms with traumatic childhood experiences. Fifer will play the one of the leads, as will fellow newcomer Sheldon Brown, but the supporting cast includes Yang and some very established names like Cobie Smulders ("Avengers"), Scott Adsit ("30 Rock") and David Burtka ("A Very Merry Harold & Kumar 3D Christmas," where he played a bizarre version of himself alongside husband Neil Patrick Harris). We're expecting this one to hit indie film festivals first, so keep tabs on it.

## 'Follies' on film, finally

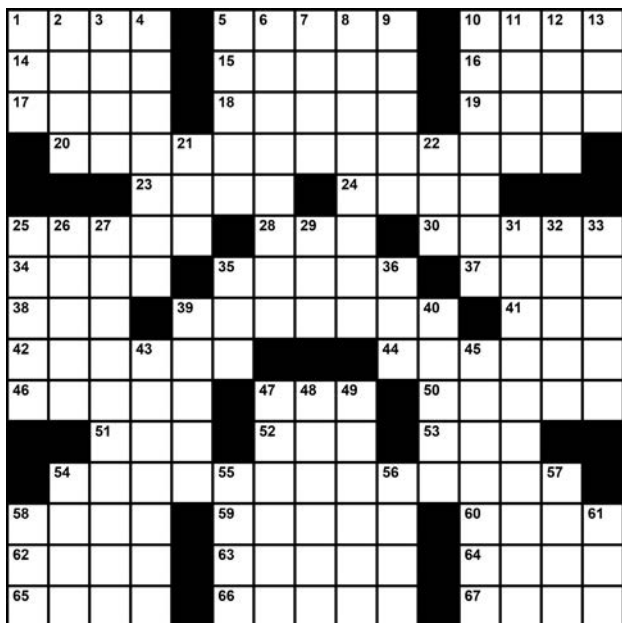
Stephen Sondheim's Tony Award-winning 1971 musical "Follies" is getting the movie treatment, deservedly so, after nearly 50 years. Filmmaker Dominic Cooke ("On Chesil Beach") will adapt the show, after directing the 2017 stage revival at London's National Theatre (a production so popular it was brought back for encore performances in 2019). Featuring the musical theater standards "Broadway Baby," "I'm Still Here" and "Losing My Mind," (famously covered by Liza Minnelli and The Pet Shop Boys in the late '80s) the story is set in a Broadway theater scheduled for demolition, where a reunion of former performers is taking place. The middle-age-to-senior cast tell stories of success and disappointment and heartbreak, so when casting shapes up (somebody ask Liza!) it's going to be a who's who of baby boomer (and older) Broadway babies. No word yet on who they'll be, or when it's supposed to hit screens, so more on this one soon.

## Taika Waititi's non-binary goals

Filmmaker Taika Waititi's career now spans

Romeo San Vicente loves Sara Lee poundcake and you'll have to get your own because he doesn't share.





## Giant Actor

## Q Puzzle

### Across

- 1 Traci Des Jardins, for one
- 5 Prodded, with "on"
- 10 Result of four balls
- 14 What "let" means to Mauresmo
- 15 Hit the road
- 16 "Lord of the Rings" singer
- 17 Hurler Hershisier
- 18 Opportunity for Glenn Burke

- 19 Negative word, for Gomer
- 20 Start of a quote
- 23 Head output
- 24 Gaza Stripper, e.g.
- 25 With 37-Across, source of the quote
- 28 Chem. pollutant
- 30 Rubbernecks
- 34 "Uh-oh!" to Shelley
- 35 "Robin Hood: Men in Tights," for one

- 37 See 25-Across
- 38 Goal on a hole
- 39 Like Harvey Milk to Castro Street?
- 41 "\_\_\_ was saying ..."
- 42 "Sure Feels Good Anyway" singer
- 44 Sounded like a pride of lions
- 46 "... to boldly go where \_\_\_ has gone before ..."
- 47 Chiding sound
- 50 "I'm all ears"
- 51 Big Gay \_\_\_, and others
- 52 Sodom suffix
- 53 '50s idol Hunter
- 54 More of the quote
- 58 Pasta tubes
- 59 Assumption of the virgin?
- 60 Takes to court
- 62 "Got it" to Ginsberg
- 63 Greasy spoon, e.g.
- 64 Phallic fishes
- 65 Phnom \_\_\_, Cambodia
- 66 Avoid going straight
- 67 Bites of Antony's girlfriend

### Down

- 1 Early man's opening
- 2 Deli sandwich
- 3 "East of \_\_\_"
- 4 Sondheim musical
- 5 Make heady
- 6 Judy Garland song
- 7 Kotter portrayer Kaplan
- 8 She played Liane d'Exelmans in

- "Gigi"
- 9 Try to put a restraint on
- 10 Left the straight and narrow
- 11 Adult film store aisle
- 12 Ancient harp
- 13 Mary, of cosmetics
- 21 Meas. of a braggart?
- 22 Pester
- 25 Asian archipelago
- 26 You must remember this
- 27 "Peter Pan" cross-dresser
- 29 Whisper sweet nothings
- 31 Langston Hughes collection, with "The"
- 32 Deejay Casey
- 33 Nastily derogatory
- 35 Oral input
- 36 Way out
- 39 Home for Troy Perry
- 40 "A \_\_\_ help you are!"
- 43 Dixie capital.
- 45 Salty tasting Asian body
- 47 Having a connection
- 48 End of the quote
- 49 Essential part of cornholing?
- 54 Baldwin staffer
- 55 "Livin' La \_\_\_ Loca"
- 56 Verb of Verlaine
- 57 Fox's cry
- 58 Get up and go
- 61 Sound of an inflated doll leak


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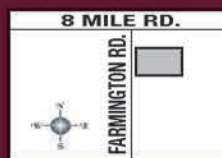
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## Community Connections

### Theatre NOVA Calls for Michigan Playwrights Festival Submissions

BY BTL STAFF

ANN ARBOR — After the success of Theatre NOVA's inaugural Michigan Playwrights Festival four years ago, the theatre is continuing its semi-annual tradition and announcing a call for submissions for this season's festival of new plays by Michigan playwrights. The next festival will run April 22 through 26, 2020. The deadline for submissions is Jan. 1, 2020.

The festival will feature full-length plays. The submitted play must be written by a Michigan resident and be ready to be produced, but it must never have received a full production at another theater. Those interested in submitting plays for consideration should send complete, finished scripts in PDF format to TheatreNovaPlaySubmissions@gmail.com with "Festival Play Submission" and the play title in the subject line. Included in the email should be the playwright's name, address, phone, and a two-sentence synopsis of the play.

Theatre NOVA focuses on new plays and new playwrights and is dedicated to working with new and local playwrights to help them develop their craft and to offer brand new plays for audiences. The theater created the Michigan Playwrights Festival to nurture Michigan

playwrights and to develop full-length plays for future seasons. Plays that were products of Michigan Playwrights Festivals that have received their world premieres at Theatre NOVA include "Mazel Tov, John Lennon" by David Wells (Wilde Award for Best New Script), "Resisting" by David Wells (Wilde Award for Best Original Production), "Mrs. Fifty Bakes a Pie" by Linda Ramsay Detherage, "Clutter" by Brian Cox (Wilde Award for Best New Script), "Irrational" by R. MacKenzie Lewis and David Wells (Wilde Award for Best New Script), "Katherine" by Kim Carney (Wilde Award Nomination for Best New Script), "Spin" (aka "Swimming While Drowning") by Emilio Rodriguez, and "Bird" by Kristin Hanratty.

*Theatre NOVA is Ann Arbor's resident professional theatre company. Its mission is to raise awareness of the value and excitement of new plays and playwrights and provide resources for playwrights to develop their craft by importing, exporting, and developing new work. This activity is supported by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts. To find out more visit theatrenova.org.*

### Ann Arbor Art Center Offers Winter Workshops

As the weather gets colder and the snow piles higher, The Ann Arbor Art Center is offering a great way to avoid cabin fever with its winter workshops. All through the month of December fans of crafting can get in touch with their creative sides with projects like making block-printed tea towels, creating clay snowmen, decorating holiday treats, decorating stenciled plates and more. This year a fan-favorite is back, too.

"Our favorite George Bochnig ornaments are back and they're bringing the holiday shop with them! That means more locally-made

paintings, ceramics, jewelry and Motawi tiles for the holidays!" wrote event organizers. "Come see the holiday shop today and make the commitment to buying local this season."

The Center is offering kid-friendly events, too, with winter break art camps for children ages 5 to 12. Attendees can learn about The Art of Wizardry, hand-building clay and more.

*To find out more details about the holiday events visit annarborartcenter.org or call 734-994-8004. The center is located at 117 W Liberty St. in Ann Arbor.*



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**FERNDALE**  
**5:30PM-8:30PM**  
*Walk-in or by Appointment*

Affirmations  
Matrix MAC Health  
**FERNDALE**  
**9AM-4:30PM**  
*Walk-in or by Appointment*

Matrix MAC Health  
**FERNDALE**  
**9AM-4:30PM**  
*Walk-in or by Appointment*

Affirmations  
**FERNDALE**  
**1PM-3PM**  
*Walk-In*  
**1ST & 3RD SATURDAYS**  
*12:30-3pm*

NO SUNDAY TESTING

Call 1.888.226.6366 or visit TimeToKnowDetroit.com to make an appointment and for information.

**1 (888) A CONDOM**



MATRIX MAC HEALTH IS A PROGRAM OF MATRIX HUMAN SERVICES. LEARN MORE. GIVE. VOLUNTEER. DISCOVER MATRIX AT MatrixHumanServices.org





# THIS IS A SAFER PLACE

Dr. Paul Benson's



**We are committed to provide quality health care and to serve our patients without regard to race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, political preferences, or sexual orientation.**

It is our intention not to discriminate, be judgmental, or have bias towards anyone. These are not simply published words, but are practices we strive and train for to do our best each and every day. We must all be respectful and put our commonalities first. Our priority is your good health.

We are here to help you and want each and every one of our patrons to feel comfortable in our patient-centered medical home. It is the essence of equality that defines who we are. Please join us in this endeavor.

1964 Eleven Mile Rd, Berkley, MI 40872  
(248) 544-9300  
doctorbewell.com

**Primary Care • HIV Rapid initiation of Therapy • PrEP • Hormone Affirming Therapy**

## Most Experienced and Knowledgeable

Established in 1980 as the first Primary Care Medical Clinic in the Detroit area specializing in our LGBTQ community.

## Board Certified in Family Practice & Designated Patient-Centered Medical Home

by Blue Cross Blue Shield as a Center of Excellence.

**We're a Recipient of the Peter M. Fox Excellence in HIV Credentialing Award** from the American Academy of HIV Medicine. Also, Dr. Benson was one of the first physicians credentialed and has maintained the AAHIV-S specialist designation since.

**Certified Clinical Research Professional** by the Society of Clinical Research Associates. A Principle Investigator in Clinical Trials since 1989 providing early access to life-saving HIV Medications.

## Extensive Network of Sensitive Specialists

with an ongoing relationship to refer as necessary.

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

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

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

## He leads our team of professional and talented Providers:



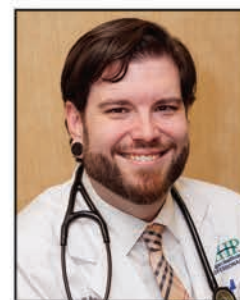
Dr. Paul Benson, D.O.



Caleb Youngblood, PA-C, AAHIV-S



Mark Rosen, PA-C



Leon Bullough, NP-F



Keyuna Nance, MSW

