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


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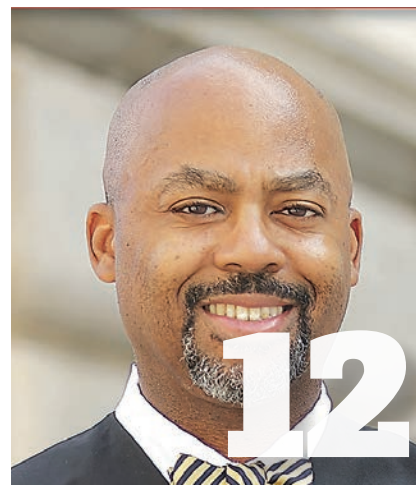
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This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

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 **GILEAD**



New Coalition Seeks to Amend ELCRA Via Citizen Initiative

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

BOLD New Campaign

Earlier this month, a citizen-led campaign is underway that seeks to initiate legislation that would expand the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act and ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression across Michigan. Twenty-one states already provide such protections.

Created by a group called Fair and Equal Michigan, it has received support from activists, nonprofit organizations and business leaders around the state, listing people like Jerry Norcia, president and CEO of DTE Energy, Lansing Mayor Andy Schor and LGBTQ Activist Jim Toy as members of its Honorary Leadership Committee. If the petition receives 340,047 valid voter signatures by May 27, the proposed legislation could be adopted by the Legislature. If not, it would appear on the Nov. 3 ballot.

The Details

This legislation would “extend the [Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights] Act’s prohibitions on discriminatory practices, policies and customs in the exercise of civil rights to prohibit discrimination based upon (1) sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, or (2) the religious beliefs of an individual, by defining ‘sex’ to include gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression, and ‘religion’ as including the religious beliefs

of an individual.”

Adding “religious beliefs” to the language of the ballot initiative should not be confused with inserting a religious exemption. “Religion” is already a protected class in the civil rights act; for example, Jewish people are protected from anti-Semitism. Trevor Thomas, president and co-chair of Fair and Equal Michigan noted that nowhere in ELCRA is there a definition of “religion” and they felt it was important to provide one. The Michigan Constitution defines “religion” as “the religious beliefs of an individual,” so that seemed the appropriate option.

“We are simply making sure to avoid any confusion in the future definition of religion within the civil rights act,” Thomas explained. “I think it’s really important for all parties, actually. We have members of the faith community on our honorary leadership committee and we have members who are agnostic.”

ELCRA already provides for a religious exemption. It applies to religious, educational and other private institutions. For example, women are not permitted certain leadership roles in some religious organizations, and that is permissible under this provision.

“It’s pretty limited in scope,” Thomas said.

Response from Community Leaders

“In Michigan, we have continued to work at this for 37 years, since Rep. Jim Dressel first introduced a bill that would ... recognize

LGBTQ people for the first time in the [Elliott-Larsen] civil rights act here in Michigan,” said Thomas, who is also board chair for the statewide Equality Michigan Action LGBTQ advocacy group. “The legislature has continued to not take action. And so, I think what inspires me is over those 37 years, people have been able to share their stories in a way that many people in the state can now say they know someone who is LGBTQ. And that has resulted in an extraordinary swing in public opinion where more than 77 percent ... support getting this through the legislature, and if not, having a vote of the people to settle it once and for all.”

Fair and Equal Michigan co-chair Alanna Maguire added that they are confident it will pass. Maguire is also President of Fair Michigan, an organization dedicated to advocacy for the LGBTQ community.

“I’m proud to co-chair this effort that is led by so many prominent businesses, community leaders, civil rights organizations and individuals dedicated to equal justice for all,” Maguire said via email.

“It’s also good for the Michigan economy,” said Michael Rowady, Equality Michigan Board Chair. “One of the reasons we’re experiencing brain drain in Michigan and why young people are leaving is they don’t feel safe here. The environment here is not one favoring diversity. And you don’t have to be a gay person to experience that. You could have friends or family ... and [feel], ‘You know what, I don’t want to be here if we don’t have those types of protections.’”

Erin Knott, executive director of Equality

Michigan, is a member of Fair and Equal Michigan’s honorary leadership committee. She agreed to the necessity for amending ELCRA for the reasons cited above. On behalf of Equality Michigan, she had this to say:

“I think the group of individual citizens that came together are tired of the logjam. So perhaps modeled on what we saw in 2018, with the gerrymandering ballot initiative, folks felt enough’s enough. Take it to the voters. There hasn’t been an appetite in the legislature to advance this work.

“As an honorary committee member, I have participated in discussions about the strategy. I will be at the table, but again, I represent Equality Michigan and we remain laser-focused on working with pro-equality friends within the legislature to hopefully find a path forward to amend ELCRA,” she continued. “And if that doesn’t present itself, then we will definitely be working with Fair and Equal Michigan on the signature collection, and then ultimately a public education campaign so that voters have an opportunity to decide on this in November 2020.”

The legislative strategy supported by Equality Michigan and others is currently led by Sen. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield) and Rep. Jon Hoadley (D-Kalamazoo). The two lawmakers issued a statement regarding HB 4688 and SB 351. Rep. Hoadley addressed the need to amend ELCRA, then concluded with the remarks, “The Legislature has everything it needs to act immediately to prohibit anti-LGBTQ discrimination, except for the willingness of the majority party. We need to fix that in 2020.”

Sen. Moss expressed his frustration with the Legislature as well, adding, “[This] announcement of a prospective ballot proposal also serves to renew our call for the Legislature to move swiftly to pass the bills we sponsored because Michigan residents are fed up with inaction.”

Support and Concern

For his part, Dave Garcia, executive director of Affirmations in Ferndale, said he and the community center were on board with the effort.

“Affirmations supports the initiative,” Garcia said. “We will try as best we can to engage our volunteers to help in whatever way is best, including perhaps gathering signatures. I’ve reached out to Trevor Thomas and ... we’re willing to help with our volunteers and we’re willing to help get the word out, and we’re willing to give you space if you need campaign space in Southeast Michigan. [However,] I want to make it clear we will only support this initiative so long as there is no religious exemption.”

There is indeed reason for concern regarding religious exemptions. Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and Speaker of the House Lee Chatfield are on the record with their adamant opposition to expanding LGBTQ rights, most notably Shirkey in his sponsorship of a statewide Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Chatfield has stated that pro-equality legislation amounts to reverse discrimination. Both are term-limited.

Further, some have questioned the possibility that once the signatures are collected, Michigan could see a repeat of the fate suffered by the minimum wage and paid sick time ballot initiatives of 2018. Following signature collection, the Legislature adopted those measures and they were signed into law, then lawmakers wrote their own legislation that in effect undid or “gutted” the original proposals. That possibility is highly unlikely because Michigan now has a governor who supports LGBTQ rights and would not sign legislation unfavorable to the LGBTQ community if it came across her desk.

There exists one other possibility that Thomas shared for the sake of transparency, but suggested is highly unlikely. The Michigan Constitution allows for the state legislature to propose their own citizens’ initiatives, with a majority vote in both chambers. Therefore, at any time in this effort’s process, it is within lawmakers’ power to propose their own initiative that could counter Fair and Equal Michigan’s.

After the verified signatures are submitted, the Legislature has 40 days to simply adopt the initiative as-is, or it will be decided by the voters. But, at any time from now until eight months after the signatures are collected, they may decide to take up the existing, languishing bills before the election.

“We hope we don’t have to go to the ballot,”

Thomas said. “Lee [Chatfield] and Mike [Shirkey] can do the right thing.”

This legislation would “extend the [Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights] Act’s prohibitions on discriminatory practices, policies and customs in the exercise of civil rights to prohibit discrimination based upon (1) sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, or (2) the religious beliefs of an individual, by defining ‘sex’ to include gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression, and ‘religion’ as including the religious beliefs of an individual.”

Call to Action

Roland Leggett, chair of the LGBT & Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party, stressed the importance for the LGBTQ community to come together to amend ELCRA — by whatever method it takes.

“I think any time we’re able to tackle it in a robust way is a good thing. And I commend the folks around the table that are bringing it to the forefront and making it an issue this election cycle. We definitely need to make this a top priority with the candidates and officials that we as a community support.”

He said he would be talking to the organizers of Fair and Equal Michigan about speaking with caucus members regarding how they can get involved. Then Leggett made a final call to rally the LGBTQ community at large.

“I’d encourage folks when they are thinking about this issue, which we know is incredibly important, to focus on direct action. Collect ballot signatures. Donate money. When you have conversations with family members, talk to them about how important this issue is,” he said. “When you’re in the community and you meet folks that are running for office or thinking about it, let them know this issue is a top priority for you. I just really want to encourage folks to get involved. Any reservations that folks might have, we’re here now. Let’s do all we can to support the folks in our community that are most vulnerable. They’re counting on us to get this done. Let’s just do it.”

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AD Feb. 23

Michigan Church Leaders Respond to Proposed Split of United Methodist Church

BY JASON MICHAEL

The United Methodist Church made headlines when it revealed a proposal by church leaders to split the church over the issue of LGBTQ clergy and same-sex weddings. At a contentious church general conference last year, the UMC voted to stick to its stance forbidding the ordination of LGBTQ clergy or the performance of same-sex weddings.

The Rev. Mark Thompson, the senior pastor of Lansing Central United Methodist Church, attended that conference. But, he said, he does not plan on attending this year's conference, which will take place in May in Minneapolis, where the proposed split will be taken up.

"I am not going to attend the general conference because the results of the previous one broke my spirit," said Thompson, who is openly gay. "I do not believe I can withstand much more pain caused by persons who are homophobic and have myopic vision."

When asked his opinion on the proposal, which calls for a new traditionalist Methodist denomination to be spun off from the main United Methodist Church and given \$25 million to regroup, Thompson was frank.

"The proposed protocol that would allow for a significant splinter group to leave the United Methodist Church is only one of many proposals going to the general conference this coming May," he said. "This protocol that was created by an ad hoc group has some significant flaws. It might be good enough to pass through the process of legislation and be adopted. I grieve that significant funds will be given to the splinter group that is indeed homophobic and narrow-minded in its interpretation of scripture."

The Rev. Dr. Jill Hardt Zundel, the senior pastor of Central United Methodist Church Detroit, agreed.

"This proposed split is just that, a proposal," Zundel said. "However, what I don't like in the proposal is that it gives \$25 million dollars to start a new denomination that willfully harms LGBTQ siblings. That is unconscionable to me and would be to Christ as well."

No matter the fate of the proposal, Zundel said, it's time to resolve the issue for good.

"We continue to be in the fight for full inclusion and will not accept anything less."

The Rev. Nancy Lynn, lead pastor of First United Methodist Church of Ann Arbor took a diplomatic approach when speaking on the issue of the split.

"If the question is how I feel about the proposed split, I would say I feel a mix of relief, grief and cautious optimism," Lynn said. "Relief because if something like the protocol that has just been released is approved by our general conference in May, those of us who believe in full inclusion of the LGBTQ community will finally be free to be the church we believe God calls us to be. Grief because, like marriage, splitting up means you couldn't find a way to live with your differences and there is a sense that, as followers of Christ, we should be able to do that. And cautious optimism because this seems to be the closest we've come to finding a way out of a conflict that has caused so much harm for so long. However, there are still a lot of unanswered questions and nothing will be definite until we see what happens in May."

4th Circuit Rules in Favor of HIV-Positive Service Members

The 4th Circuit panel, which included two Democratic and one Republican appointee, said the policy was based on "outmoded" information about HIV transmission

BY LISA KEEN

A three-judge panel of the 4th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals on Jan. 10 unanimously upheld a national injunction to stop the U.S. Air Force from discharging service members just because they have HIV infection.

The ruling immediately helps at least six service members with HIV who have faced discharge for having HIV infection, stopping the military from discharging them until a trial can be held on their lawsuits challenging the military's policy.

Unless the Trump administration appeals the Jan. 10 ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, the case now goes back to U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Virginia, for consideration of policy.

The military policy bans people with HIV from enlisting but allows people already in the military to stay as long as they are fit for duty and deployable to assignments in foreign military arenas, such as the Middle East.

But the Air Force has interpreted the policy to be a de facto ban on any HIV service member by claiming, among other things, that such service members pose a risk to others and noting that some foreign nations ban people with HIV.

The 4th Circuit panel, which included two Democratic and one Republican appointee, said the policy was based on "outmoded" information about HIV transmission and that the military cannot justify banning a person with HIV from all military arenas just because some countries have an HIV ban.

A discharge for HIV, said the panel, "must be based on objective evidence in the record and must consider the individual service member's physical



abilities, fitness and deployability."

The decision was written by Judge James Wynn — a Clinton appointee — and joined by Judges Albert Diaz — an Obama appointee — and Henry Floyd — an appointee of George W. Bush.

In the opinion, Judge Wynn took time to explain some of the history of HIV infection, including the "stigma, fear and misinformation" about the disease that persists today. He noted that the "pre-exposure risk of transmitting untreated HIV during the riskiest sexual activity — receptive anal intercourse" is only 1.38 percent, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Infection through "biting, spitting and throwing bodily fluids," notes the opinion, is "technically possible" but "negligible."

Treatment for most people infected with HIV, wrote Wynn, requires taking one pill a day that dramatically reduces the amount of virus in the body, produces "minimal side effects" and requires no special handling or dietary limitations. Medical monitoring can be done by a general practitioner. And once viral suppression is achieved, people on the regimen "have effectively no risk of sexually transmitting the virus," except through blood transfusions. People with HIV are barred from donating blood.

"Those who are timely diagnosed and treated 'experience few, if any, noticeable effects on their physical health and enjoy a life expectancy approaching that of those who do not have HIV,'" noted Wynn.

"A ban on deployment may have been justified at a time when HIV treatment was less effective at managing the virus and reducing transmission risks," wrote Wynn. "But any understanding of HIV that could justify this ban is

outmoded and at odds with current science. Such obsolete understandings cannot justify a ban, even under a deferential standard of review and even according to appropriate deference to the military's professional judgment."

The lawsuit was filed in December 2018 by Lambda Legal and the Modern Military Association of America, formerly known as OutServe-SLDN.

A district court in Alexandria, Virginia, ruled the discharges violated the men's rights to equal protection under the U.S. Constitution and violated the federal Administrative Procedure Act. It granted a national injunction barring the Air Force from discharging them.

According to court documents, Richard Roe, is a staff sergeant who enlisted in 2012 and has earned "numerous awards." He was diagnosed with HIV infection in 2017, immediately began treatment, and has achieved an undetectable viral load. Despite the support of his commanding officer and primary care doctor, two Air Force panels recommended he be discharged.

The plaintiff identified as Victor Voe enlisted in 2011, was deployed twice, and diagnosed with HIV in 2017. He, too, began treatment and succeeded in reducing his viral load to undetectable levels. The Air Force panels recommended his discharge, too.

The Jan. 10 opinion noted that MMAA identified at least four other members of the Air Force discharged for HIV status alone. Lambda and MMAA have filed two other lawsuits on behalf of other service members with HIV.

The panel affirmed the injunction and said the servicemembers are "likely to succeed" in their lawsuit.

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Inclusion in Prevention: MI Suicide Prevention Conference Puts Focus on LGBTQ Issues

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

A National Epidemic

Claiming the lives of nearly 50,000 Americans annually, calling suicide an epidemic is by no means a stretch, and it's certainly not a silent issue. Even for those people who haven't been touched by suicide personally through close-knit friends or family, it's likely that they can recall well-known public figures who have taken their own lives — fashion designer Kate Spade, chef and writer Anthony Bourdain, and musician Keith Flint might come readily to mind. And for those within the LGBTQ community, the National Alliance on Mental Illness has found that rates of suicide are drastically increased.

It's undeniable that tackling the problem of this scale will require a multi-faceted approach across various fronts, but proactive steps are already being taken. In Southeast Michigan, organizations like the nonprofit Kevin's Song are working to prevent suicide on a local level. From Jan. 23 through 25 the organization will be hosting its fourth annual Conference on Suicide. Themed Advocacy in Action this year, Kevin's Song representatives say that the conference is geared toward “unified, collaborative coalitions of community resources.” And this year for the first time, the event will include an educator-focused School Summit to tackle youth suicide. Kevin's Song Vice President and Co-Founder Gail Urso said that the Conference is open to anyone with an interest in suicide prevention across all careers and walks of life.

“One of the purposes for the conference, in the beginning, was to draw attention to the problem, because suicide is a public health crisis and some people say it's an epidemic. But also to put it out in the general public so that people would know that this is something that a lot of people confront and deal with,” Urso said. “We have just found over the years that there is a great interest from the general public, from professionals, educators. And we just keep deepening the level of information, research, expertise that's presented at the conference.”

Urso co-founded the organization with her husband John in honor of their son Kevin, who died by suicide. She said that the conference, which has drastically increased in popularity in recent years, stemmed from the fact that many existing suicide prevention organizations weren't collaborating as much as they could. She added that besides the potential networking opportunities, she's particularly excited for the public to attend this year's presentation lineup.

“One of our key experts is Dr. Thomas Joiner, and he really is respected as one of the foremost authorities on suicide,” Urso said. “He's a researcher, he's a psychologist, he's from Florida State University, and he has literally written books on suicide that are widely been quoted and read. He has been with us every



Gail Urso, Kevin's Song co-founder.

year and he will be here again this year.”

Along with Joiner, U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI) will be the event's keynote speaker. She will take time to talk about the importance of mental health advocacy.

Taking Positive Steps

A local presenter scheduled at the conference is Rochester Hills-based Psychologist Dr. Nicole Law. She has presented at the conference for three years running and this year will contribute to the School Summit on suicide risk reduction for LGBTQ youth in schools. Much like their adult counterparts, The Trevor Project has found that LGBTQ youth is at a significantly greater risk for suicide than those who are straight and cisgender.

“I think also some of the statistics show that LGBTQ kids are [at a] 40 percent [lower] risk in a suicide attempts if they have at least one accepting adult, and they're 2/3 less likely to even report suicidal ideation if they have high levels of family acceptance,” Law said. “So,

“One of the purposes for the conference was to draw attention to the problem, because suicide is a public health crisis and some people say it's an epidemic. But also ... so that people would know that this is something that a lot of people confront and deal with,”

- Gail Urso

those statistics really point us in a direction that we can concretely say, ‘OK, here are some of the things we can set out.’ How do we actively create safe spaces? How do we help schools help families to learn that it's not enough to say, ‘OK, I love you no matter what,’ but [they should say], ‘I love you for who you are and you are perfect the way that you are?’”

When asked how to foster accepting environments for LGBTQ people, Law suggested posting things like inclusive artwork, wording and posters that immediately let students who enter the space know that they are going to be treated with respect. She added that taking care not to use limiting gendered language when assigning students work is a great way to avoid accidental alienation.

“Often, I hear stories of a gym class or an exercise in which there's going to be an interactive quiz game and the teacher will break students into two different halves of the room and say, ‘OK, boys over here and girls over here.’ Well, someone who is trans or non-binary will sit in the middle and go, ‘Which side do you want me to go to?’” Law said. “... So, being mindful of the daily language that we use on a daily basis can be hugely supportive.

Introducing yourself with your pronouns also speaks volumes.”

Additionally, Law said she has observed many LGBTQ students feeling discomfort when their rights come up for political debate as part of classroom discussion. She suggested educators be mindful of how political debates in the classroom are treated for this reason, and because it can help prevent a long-term sense of apathy and anxiety around political discussions.

“Often, people look at the higher risk of suicide and the higher risk of depression, ideation and anxiety and ... think it's dangerous to be trans because you are going to have a higher risk of suicide. And I think it's really important to clarify ... it's not about identifying with the LGBTQ community, it's about the interactions with the outside world,” Law said. “It's about discrimination. It's about the way they're treated, and a constant sense of, ‘Laws are being written about me and my rights are even up for negotiation.’ Their interaction with the outside world that feels rejecting and harsh is what creates the risk for suicide, not the actual identification of the youth themselves.”

Ending Stigma

However, even mindful actions taken in a classroom, among friends, family or co-workers won't always be enough to prevent suicidal ideation. When asked how to spot the signs of suicidal thoughts, Urso said drastic changes in behavior are often the main signifiers.


“A lot of people are concerned about their teenagers. For instance, someone who was a good student, had a lot of friends, was an athlete who all of a sudden loses interest in things; that could be a sign,” Urso said. “It's the same thing with a co-worker: someone who is outgoing and friendly and a hard worker might suddenly seem very quiet or doesn't come to work or things of that nature.”

Beyond this, paying attention to casual references to suicide in conversation is vital, too.

“Any reference to, ‘I just don't want to live anymore.’ If someone says something like that or, ‘Life isn't worth living,’ a casual statement made in an upset time, those things you have to pay attention to. I've heard people say, ‘Oh, they're just looking for attention.’ No. That is a serious sign,” Urso said. “And what we have learned, and this is fairly new — 20 years ago they would not have said to do this — but now we're being encouraged to ask that family member or ask that co-worker, ‘Have you thought about suicide?’”

Urso said that even a simple question like that can “remove the secrecy” and be the catalyst for healing.

To find out more about Kevin's Song and to register and purchase tickets for the conference visit kevinssong.org.



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BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

A Landmark Decision

“There’s a special obligation that you have as a black attorney. You have a special obligation to fight for civil rights. You have a special obligation to fight for those who don’t have this opportunity. And you have a choice. You are either going to be a social engineer for justice — or you’re going to be a parasite.”

Judge William McConico spoke those words by Charles Hamilton Houston when he accepted the Catalyst Award at Equality Michigan’s annual fundraiser last fall. As he recalled the courtroom decision for which he earned the evening’s honor, McConico added, “And I thought about that. And I said, ‘Today, I’m going to be a social engineer.’”

The day in question occurred in the summer of 2018, when McConico ruled that a brutal attack on a transgender woman in Detroit could be classified as a hate crime and the perpetrator sentenced accordingly. As it stands, Michigan’s Ethnic Intimidation [i.e. hate crime] Law does not protect LGBTQ people because it only specifies crimes based on race, color, religion, gender or national origin, but not gender identity or sexual orientation explicitly. Between The Lines recently sat down with McConico to learn how a career fighting for the civil rights of marginalized people led to that decision, beginning with his experience in the Michigan State Legislature at the forefront of LGBTQ rights.

Idealistic but Undeterred

Recently named chief judge for Michigan’s 36th District Court — the third-largest in the country — it’s hard to imagine McConico as an idealistic freshman lawmaker who was “shocked and startled” nearly 20 years ago when legislation that would protect the LGBTQ community was dead on arrival.

“I thought that this was common sense,” McConico said, of the three-bill package

Judge William McConico: ‘Social Engineer for Justice’

PROFILE

that he, Buzz Thomas and Chris Kolb introduced in 2001.

His bill added protections for hate crimes, Thomas’ would have been the first of any kind to address bullying and Kolb’s would amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include LGBTQ people in its employment provisions. For McConico, LGBTQ rights were also personal: when he was younger, a friend whom he looked to as an older brother was brutally beaten on two occasions just for being gay. The attackers were never found; those crimes were not a priority.

“I thought it was important to have a person who was a married man, a father, an African-American in this package, so this is not a gay issue, this is an issue of civil rights,” McConico explained. “Who could be against extending rights to protect someone from being discriminated against?”

The young lawmaker would soon find out.

Following a press conference with the Triangle Foundation, Equality Michigan’s predecessor, McConico approached the committee chairs about the bills receiving a hearing. He was met with silence. Then, the three were offered a deal: strip out LGBTQ protections from Thomas’ bullying bill, and they would allow it a hearing. Their answer was an emphatic “no.”

“We had people who said, ‘Well, make this a first step,’” McConico said. “‘Do this, and add it later.’ No. No. I would never want to be the person to say, ‘Well, let’s do this and we’ll add African-Americans later.’ No.”

In his three terms in the House of Representatives, the bills never had so much as a hearing. McConico added that even some Democrats confessed to him privately they would hesitate to vote in favor of the legislation should it come up for a vote, who he chose not to name.

“Struggle is Struggle”

Raised in Detroit by parents from the South surrounded by symbols of the civil rights era, McConico’s earliest heroes included Justice Thurgood Marshall and Martin Luther King Jr. He sought a career as a lawyer and a politician because he said he’s always gravitated to people who don’t have anyone fighting for them.

“When minority groups are left out and people think that no one cares or that they’re different, that is how people are allowed to be picked off and targeted and it’s happened throughout history. African-Americans are targeted for certain things and other people sit back and watch it. The next thing you know, your community will be targeted. As an African-American, as a person who has dealt with some discrimination, I can’t watch and let someone else get discriminated and say,

‘Well, that’s not me.’ I can’t do that.”

McConico suggested his motives sometimes aren’t understood.

“I’ve had other people ask me, ‘Bill, why are you focused in on that? Why aren’t you just dealing with our struggle, African-American struggle?’ And my thing is, struggle is struggle.”

He pointed to the original makeup of the NAACP that included a number of white and Jewish members.

“A lot of times people think, ‘If I’m African-American, I have to fight against racism.’ ‘If I am a woman, I have to work on women’s rights issues.’ But if we all get to the table, we can all spread it out and just work to knock this out together.”

The Right Case, Right Time

“This is the definition of a hate crime,” McConico thought when he first heard about the case involving a transgender woman in Detroit who was attacked and shot, weeks before he learned it would be on his docket.

“The woman was in a gas station, minding her own business, someone struck up a conversation, thinking she was born a woman. [It] comes out that she’s transgender, and he attacks her and, ultimately, shoots her because she was transgender. And that is the definition of a hate crime,” he said.

Of the four judges who could have heard the case, it was assigned to McConico. And as it happened, Jamie Powell Horowitz of the Fair Michigan Project was the prosecutor. When McConico found she was charging it as a hate crime, he thought to himself, “Well, I am the only judge in this building that would allow this charge to go forward.”

McConico recalled sitting in his chamber that day, looking at a picture of Charles Hamilton Houston.

“He always gave a charge to African-American lawyers and law students, that if you’re not a social engineer for justice, you’re a mere parasite. We’ve got a calling that we’ve got to sometimes make the stands that others aren’t going to,” McConico said. “The way African-Americans received most of our civil rights in this country were not through legislation, it was through courts.”

He named ending segregation and securing voting rights as two examples, then compared that to the way LGBTQ people were granted the right to marry.

“If you have to wait for the majority of people to change their minds where people’s civil rights and civil liberties are in the balance, that’s what courts are for,” he said. “I made a decision that day that I was gonna take a stand on this.”

McConico allowed Horowitz to present the case and ultimately let the charge move forward because she proved that the woman was attacked because of her gender.

“So now, there’s a precedent in the state of Michigan. Now others are gonna have to make the decision,” McConico said. “We started

something in the court that day. It would have been great to do it in the legislature. We tried that starting in 2001.”

McConico called this a test case. Indeed, it was heard by the Michigan Court of Appeals which, shortly before print, overturned his ruling by a 2-1 decision. That decision was appealed and it is predicted that the Michigan Supreme Court will rule on the case; if so, ultimately it will become settled law. McConico won’t predict the outcome, but based on the current makeup of the Michigan Supreme Court, he trusts that it will receive a fair hearing on both sides. There exists one other possibility, however. In the Appeals Court decision, a comment was made that this was a matter for the Legislature to decide, not a panel of judges. Sen. Adam Hollier (D-Detroit) introduced a bill this October that would amend Michigan’s Ethnic Intimidation Law, just as McConico himself attempted in 2001, and others have since. Hollier’s bill could receive a hearing and even an up or down vote. At this time, the legislation as well as the legal case hang in the balance.

Activist Judge

There are those who decry “legislating from the bench” or use the term “activist judge” as an unflattering moniker. McConico not only owns those descriptions, he wears them like a badge of honor.

“I am an activist judge,” McConico said proudly. “I don’t take it as a criticism. I believe the courts have always been there for unpopular causes; they have always been the vehicle to extend civil rights and civil liberties. Those are Republican and conservative terms, and I don’t fight any battles on someone else’s grounds. When people say that, they’re talking about me! They’re talking about when rights were extended to African-Americans; they’re talking about when rights were extended to women, when rights were given to poor people — like there’s something wrong with that. I’m not allowing that.”

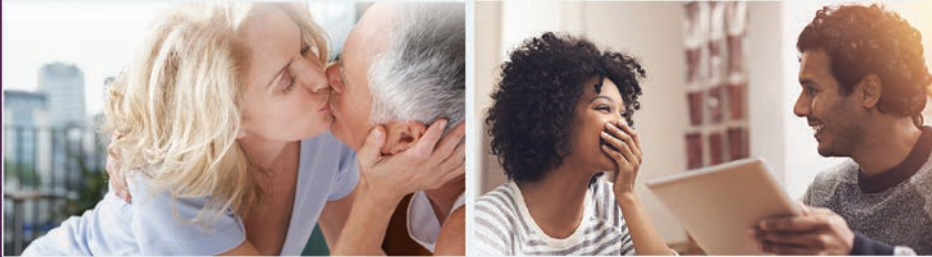
McConico said he was very surprised that the case garnered the attention that it did. He’s encouraged because it shows that people are taking the issue seriously.

“When I got the call that I was getting the [Equality Michigan] award, I was stunned. And it showed me that sometimes things take a long time. And that’s why you’ve got to be patient. You can’t get so frustrated at the time and the pace and just give up. I’m very excited about all of this, but it’s not for me. It just shows people that we started something 19 years ago and we’re finally getting movement on it. So I was pleasantly shocked, bewildered — all of that — by the attention. And I tell people, you do things for the right reasons, you get good results. So, it wasn’t done to get attention or notoriety or anything of that nature, but it just — the case came to me at the right time.”

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Canes, Walkers and Rehabilitations

Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

My brand-name watch battery quit after six years of service. I replaced it last week for another six years of second-by-second, hour-by-hour, day-by-day, month-by-month timeline reassurance.

It occurs to me that the battery replacement is something of a metaphor for myself in my advanced age of 83 — although mentally I feel like I'm in my mid-40s or thereabouts. In fact, 83 read counterclockwise is 38.

As many readers of BTL know, I had a stroke on Memorial Day 2019. It left me visually compromised on my left side, and for many weeks restricted in my walking mobility. I now have new glasses compensating for short-sightedness in one eye and for distant visual intake in the other.

As for walking, my walker is a godsend that allows me to stride with two-stepping ease and, if you'll pardon the play on words, some limbic freedom of movement and mental merriment.

I spent two weeks in the Detroit Receiving Hospital following the onset of my stroke. I have no recollection of my first week's stay there. None. The blanks have been filled in my caring friends who were at my bedside offering prayers, hope and their whispered messages of love, concern and recovery encouragement.

Following my stay at Detroit Receiving Hospital, I spent three weeks of focused and sustained rehabilitation at the Henry Ford Village Rehabilitation Center. I received both physical and occupational all-encompassing therapies.

Physical therapy included use of weights, pulleys and an exercising machine. I seemed to thrive on its challenging usage: the NuStep body tension push/pull monitor, with a dozen strength resistance levels — I got up to number eight.

Occupational therapy was doing standing folding of linen, clothes and picking up items laid out around the room to challenge and encourage balance and movement.

The rehabilitation staff at all times were encouraging, professional, caring, compassionate and complimentary as progress was gained and moved closer to the goal of go-home independence and self-regained respect.

Rehabilitation is, to say the least, a real challenge for those senior citizens for whom the aging process has made its demands. (Keep in mind, beloved PG readers, it happens to all of us sooner or later).

Across from my assigned room at the rehab center was a gentleman who coughed a lot. When I asked why I was told, "We do the best we can to help him out." He's 100.

And just down the hall from was a woman of years and years who could repeat nonstop only one word that no one could interpret exactly. HELP. HELP. HELP? Hope? Hope? HOPE? Over and over ... and over yet again.

In contrast, a Henry Ford Village senior resident, where I now am spending my retirement years, came riding down the hall on her motorized chair. "It's my birthday!" She happily announced. "I'm 101 today!"

It was all an ongoing adjustment for me. (Still is.) I was both a spectator and a reluctant participant. I had, so to speak, tumbled into a world that I, just weeks before, I never knew existed.

Continued on next page



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Childhood Sexual Abuse: The Silent Shame

BY MARK MCMILLAN

Warning: this column may contain content that may be triggering for some readers.

This past year in my practice, I began to see both male and female clients who presented with a past history of child sexual abuse. Unfortunately, the statistics prove that someone misusing alcohol or other drugs most likely has some form of child abuse in their past as well. Add that this person identifies with the LGBTQ community, and the numbers change dramatically.

We are all familiar with the broad term "child abuse." Usually, the focus is on the physical abuse inflicted on a child. There are actually several forms of childhood abuse besides physical, including sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. For this column, I will be focusing on sexual abuse, specifically for individuals that identify in the LGBTQ community.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, child sexual abuse is a significant but preventable adverse childhood experience. By the organization's definition, "child sexual abuse refers to the involvement of a child (person less than 18 years old) in sexual activity that violates the laws or social taboos of society and the child does not fully comprehend, does not consent to or is unable to give informed

consent to, or is not developmentally prepared for and cannot give consent to any form of sexual activity."

For the general American population, the numbers are staggering; here are just a few:

- Approximately 3.7 million children experience child sexual abuse each year in the U.S.
- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys experience child sexual abuse at some point in childhood.
- 90 percent of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child or child's family knows.

Unfortunately, these numbers are much worse if the child identifies LGBTQ. As actual numbers are difficult to come by and remembering that most research is flawed by definition when researching our community due to an inability to capture true LGBTQ numbers, in general terms, most research shows that LGBTQ youth are more likely to have experienced sexual abuse than heterosexual youth. For example, national estimates range from 40 to as high as 80 percent of homeless youth identifying as LGBTQ, which also leads to higher rates of sexual trauma.

See **Viewpoint**, continued on next page

► Viewpoint

Continued from p. 14

It's also important to keep in mind that one's sexual orientation or perceived orientation has nothing to do with child sexual trauma.

A good question here though is why are these youth more vulnerable? Many experts believe it's about acceptance from family and other important systems like school, friends, religion, community and more. This non-acceptance leads one to hide their true self, which in turn leads to all sorts of mental health issues, including shame and low self-worth.

Consider that perpetrators target their victims, including, of course, the process of grooming them. Given the intense rejection by family members and others, it makes sense that most perpetrators would believe they can abuse queer youth with little to no fear of consequences.

Our LGBTQ youth are already labeled as different by society and when rejected by peers as well as family, who will believe them if they come forward? There is also fear of being found out if they were to tell a trusted adult about what happened to them. This leads then to shame; shame is most often what prevents us from talking about this significant but preventable adverse childhood experience.

Shame by definition is a condition of humiliating disgrace, intense guilt or shortcoming. In my practice, I often phrase the feeling of shame as feeling like "being the mistake." Shame lives in fear and darkness; so now is the time to bring the shame around this traumatic experience into the light.

Shame can affect and eventually permeate every aspect of one's life if left untreated. More common mental health consequences from child sexual abuse include depression, anxiety and PTSD; common behavioral

consequences include substance misuse, risky sexual behavior and increased risk for suicide attempts — not to mention the increased risk of suicide ideation.

For LGBTQ adults, another consequence associated with child sexual abuse is re-victimization during adulthood. This may include higher risk of sexual trauma/victimization, intimate sexual partner violence and engaging in sexual practices that are re-traumatizing for the person. Coupled with our community's statistically higher rates of substance use — including the current opioid crisis — and mental health therapy focusing incorrectly doesn't allow for a safe space of trust for the victim to disclose past child sexual abuse.

Still, if it seems that these statistics are painting a bleak and stark picture, they don't have to anymore. We can begin to talk about this more openly, to show unity and support. Though there is research and studies being done that focus on treatment after abuse occurs, there has been little done on preventing abuse from occurring. This means that our community can continue those efforts and work toward acceptance, especially the rejection still happening in families.

Today, more and more informed therapists are trained in "trauma-informed care." This now includes trauma from growing up LGBTQ as well. If you have child sexual abuse in your past, know that you are no longer alone; know that there is help. Please consider finding a clinician trained in trauma-informed care and also gay-affirmative therapy. Know that you can move away from shame and toward your authentic self. There is Hope!

Mark McMillan, LMSW, CAADC is a behavioral health therapist and certified addiction therapist at the Center for Relationship & Sexual Health. He can be reached by phone at 248-399-7447.

are LGBTQ, aging is a second coming out process that sooner or later we must all face. Indeed, since my stroke, I have learned of two friends that have had similar strokes.

I remember when I was a teenager hearing the caution, "Nobody wants you when you're old and g(r)ay."

Yes! I have a new battery in my brand-name watch. It should last another six years. In the meantime, I'll make each precious minute count. I may exercise alone, but I won't exercise in the closet. Old age is a challenge. I'll give it my best.

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

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 14

Before my stroke I had what I thought was a comfortable routine: friends, familiar places, creative timelines. Interludes of LGBTQ church and lighthearted frivolity. In rehab, I saw and learned firsthand the courage that being a senior really requires, living life one day at a time. Bravery to be sure.

I witnessed the determination of many in their 70s, 80s and 90s doing the best they could with the exercises given to aide, strengthen and to possibly bring about the functioning of seemingly useless limbs. For many, it's a challenge that's too difficult for them to meet. It takes courage and determination.

The truth of the matter is that for we who

Creep Of The Week

Paul Gazelka

Genna Gazelka, a 31-year-old who identifies as bi-gender, knows firsthand the pain of conversation therapy, calling it "harassment" and "torture."

According to a May, 2019 interview with the Star Tribune, as a teen they were sent to the counseling center of Marcus Bachmann, the husband of former U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann, an outspoken opponent of LGBTQ rights, and also to Janet Boynes Ministries, which claims to "help those who are trapped in the sin of homosexuality and yearn to be set free."

In November, Minnesota Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka was interviewed by Truth & Liberty Coalition's Andrew Wommack and Richard Harris on their Truth and Liberty live stream. They had quite the conversation about conversion therapy, something Gazelka stopped a ban of last year. He was also the author of the Minnesota's anti-gay marriage amendment, which failed.

The Truth and Liberty stream doesn't have the widest audience. So it took until Jan. 16 of this year for the Minnesota Reformer to uncover and report on Gazelka's interview.

A live stream viewer submitted a question about how to prevent conversation therapy bans, particularly in Minnesota, "and help the youth live godly lives."

"There's a policy sweeping across the country that says a counselor or pastor cannot talk to a youth, an adolescent, about their sexual, uh, feelings of identity," Gazelka replied. "For example, if a gay boy or girl came into a counselor's office or a pastor's office, under that law they wouldn't be able to help them if those were unwanted same-sex attractions. Think about that: don't offer any help, you know, wing it."

That's not the most accurate portrayal of conversion therapy. Also, Gazelka apparently assumes that the only way to help a gay adolescent would be to de-gay them, not help them accept themselves.

"I think the best place to land is let the church have the total freedom to do as they please," he continued.

Ah, yes. Let the church have "total freedom to do as they please" with adolescents and LGBTQ people. What could go wrong?

Gazelka then mentioned suicide rates for LGBTQ youth, as if the harmful practice of conversion therapy doesn't contribute.

"Some people never shake a sexual attraction that the Bible would say is sin," Gazelka said. "They never shake it. You know, that doesn't mean they have to give into it. Others find a way to have total freedom. But my job is to walk alongside them speaking the truth and

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Gazelka apparently assumes that the only way to help a gay adolescent would be to de-gay them, not help them accept themselves.

love. I want them to know that I care for them and I'll help them any way I can."

Like by championing their dehumanization and furthering the stigma against them? By convincing them that the love they feel for another person is sinful and gross? Gosh, with love like that, who needs hate?

Gazelka then told a story about hearing a speaker talk about "a lady who was lesbian, and he said before you judge her let me just tell you her backstory. He was a counselor and he said she was chained to a toilet as a like 2-, 3-, 4-, 5-year-old girl and raped by her dad, for years and years. How do you think she's gonna feel?" he asked. "I really took that one to heart."

Being chained to a toilet is horrific. Being raped by your dad is horrific. But neither of these things, alone or combined, turn someone into a lesbian. It's telling, though, that Gazelka believes something really truly heinous must've happened to someone in order for them to be gay or lesbian. He says he "took that one to heart." I wonder if he has one.

Gazelka recalled a time he asked a gay man who'd come to his office, "Were you raised by your mom and dad or was it just your mom?"

"Because a lot of times [with] same-sex attraction there's not a good connection to the biological parent of the opposite sex," Gazelka continued, then corrected himself. "Of the same sex, I'm sorry. And he said, 'It's funny you say that because my mom and my grandma raised me.' And the point I'm trying to make is we actually had a conversation that we could talk about the issues around the why and the what."

What? Gazelka's belief that homosexuality is caused by a lack of both a mom and dad isn't how sexual orientation works.

Gazelka's thoughts on sexuality and conversion therapy are backwards and harmful for all LGBTQ people, but especially for Genna Gazelka, his child.

"He says that he loves me, and I question that," Genna Gazelka told the Tribune of her father. "Because I'm like, 'How can you say you love me and still do this? And do this at the governmental level, exercise your governmental authority because you can't stop me in my individual life?'"

Really hoping that Paul Gazelka finds it within himself to take this to heart.

Win in Birth Certificate Fight for Indiana Married Same-Sex Couples

BY LISA KEEN

A federal appeals panel of Republican appointees ruled Friday that the state of Indiana must treat same-sex married couples the same as male-female married couples when determining who to list on a child's birth certificate.

The case, *Henderson v. State of Indiana*, originated when the state of Indiana refused to list the non-biological mother of a child born by her female spouse on the birth certificate of her son. The lesbian couple sued, noting that Indiana would list a non-biological father on a birth certificate of a child born by his wife.

Indiana argued that birth certificates were meant to reflect biology, but the appeals panel noted that Indiana law states that a "man is presumed to be a child's biological father if [he] and the child's biological mother are or have been married to each other and the child is born during the marriage." The state, it said, was refusing to provide a similar presumption if the child's biological mother was married to a woman. That, it said, contradicted the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which struck down state laws treating same-sex couples differently in marriage licensing.

The appeals panel said the Indiana laws governing birth certificates "are products of a time when only opposite-sex marriages were recognized in Indiana" and that they also fail to recognize the "possibility" that a female-female couple could have two biological mothers (one who donates an egg and one who carries the child to birth).

The panel said *Obergefell* does not allow a state to provide all husbands the presumption of being fathers "while denying an equivalent presumption to parents in same-sex marriages." *Obergefell* held that same-sex couples must have the same rights and protections under state marriage laws as opposite-sex couples.

The *Henderson* decision also noted that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Pavan v. Smith* in 2017 that same-sex couples are entitled to marriage "on the same terms and conditions as opposite-sex couples." The *Pavan* case involved a refusal of the Arkansas health department to issue a birth certificate for a same-sex couple's child that included both mothers.

The Indiana case panel included Judge Joel Flaum and Judge Frank Easterbrook — both appointed by President Reagan — and Judge Diane Sykes — an appointee of President George W. Bush. Easterbrook authored the opinion.

Sykes, who has been considered one of President Trump's short-list nominees for a U.S. Supreme Court seat, appeared to ready to rule against the lesbian couple during oral argument. According to reports, she said, "You can't overcome biology."

The couple who pressed the challenge, Ruby and Ashlee Henderson, lived in Lafayette, Indiana, and had one child before they were able to marry, following the *Obergefell* ruling. After they married, they tried to get their child's birth certificate amended to show them both as parents; the state refused.

The 10-page opinion took an extraordinary amount of time to produce: 2.5 years. The case was argued in May 2017.

The 7th Circuit jurisdiction includes Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin.

Meanwhile, in the same week the *Henderson* decision was released, Lambda Legal argued in federal district courts in Georgia and Maryland that a similar disparity is taking place for same-sex couples whose children are born abroad.

"Children born abroad to married different-sex parents who are U.S. citizens are routinely recognized as U.S. citizens," said Lambda in a press release about the cases, "but the State Department is deliberately misapplying federal statutes to deny similar treatment to the marital children of same-sex couples."

In Georgia on Jan. 16, Lambda filed suit on behalf of an Atlanta male married couple whose child was denied U.S. citizenship because she had been born in England where the surrogate mother lives. And in Maryland earlier this month, Lambda filed suit for another male couple who married in California who had their daughter using a surrogate mother in Canada. The State Department in both cases is claiming the children were born "out of wedlock" even though both couples were legally married at the time they had their children.



US Supreme Court to Review Religious Exemption Appeals in Health Insurance Coverage

BY LISA KEEN

In a move that LGBTQ legal activists see as "deeply worrisome," the U.S. Supreme Court on Friday said it will review two appeals in which the Trump administration is seeking to make it much easier for employers to exclude health insurance coverage for some medical procedures by saying such procedures violate their religious beliefs or moral conscience.

The cases, *Trump v. Pennsylvania* and *Little Sisters of the Poor Saints Peter and Paul Home v. Pennsylvania*, originated as lawsuits by a wide variety of groups to stop new Trump administration regulations around the Affordable Care Act. Original ACA rules required most employers to include full coverage for certain preventive care, such as contraception. The ACA excluded churches from the requirement, and a later Supreme Court ruling, in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, extended that exemption to corporations owned and operated by families.

But the new Trump regulations propose to extend exemptions to "conscience-based," religious and moral objections to a larger more wide-ranging variety of employers.

"The Trump rules set the stage for targeted, discriminatory exclusions of insurance coverage for reproductive care, gender transition care and family health benefits for workers with a same-sex spouse, among other things about which an employer might claim a religious objection," said Jenny Pizer, senior counsel at Lambda Legal.

Pizer characterized as "deeply worrisome" the Trump regulations' "effectively limitless religious exemption."

The Supreme Court consolidated both cases out of Pennsylvania, both of which were lost by the Trump administration at the 3rd Circuit U.S. Court of the Appeals.

The 3rd Circuit panel upheld a national injunction issued by the district court to stop the new Trump regulations from taking effect. The regulations sought to enable a wide array of employers to deny coverage for procedures, by saying they have "conscience-based," religious or moral objections.

The National Center for Lesbian Rights and GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders joined other civil rights groups in a brief at the appeals court level. They argued the Trump regulations would provide an exemption to "nearly every employer or university with a religious or moral objection from complying."

The Trump administration's petition to the Supreme Court argued that the administration was trying to resolve lawsuits brought by "many employers" who have religious and moral objections to certain coverage. It said the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act requires its proposed regulations. The RFRA says the federal government may not "substantially burden a person's free exercise of religion without demonstrating a compelling interest in doing so."

But openly lesbian Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey led a brief at the district court level, saying states

have a compelling interest in "protecting the health, wellbeing and economic security of their residents."

The brief was joined by California, New York, Michigan, Illinois, 15 other states and the District of Columbia.

Healey, who is expected to lead a brief on the Supreme Court appeal, too, said her office would "urge the Supreme Court to protect access to no-cost contraception for women across the country." "We will keep fighting for equality and do everything we can to protect personal health care decisions," said Healey.

Pizer said that Lambda Legal has warned that "from the beginning, the dangers for LGBTQ and HIV-positive people, and others, of the religious exemption arguments pressed by employers."

"We believe the 3rd Circuit gave proper answers to these questions and was on solid legal ground when blocking the Trump administration from enforcing its outrageous rules," said Pizer.

These two cases will likely be argued in March, with decisions coming out in June. LGBTQ legal activists also expect the Supreme Court to rule in June — though it could rule sooner — on whether Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination against employees because of sexual orientation or gender identity. The justices heard oral arguments in October and is expected to issue two opinions on those matters, probably in late June, when the 2019-20 session ends.

LGBTQ Activists Celebrate Ratification of Equal Rights Amendment

BY PHILIP VAN SLOOTEN

LGBTQ activists in Virginia and across the country continue to celebrate the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in the state's General Assembly.

Vee Lamneck, executive director of Equality Virginia, told the Washington Blade in a statement their organization is "encouraged by the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment here in the commonwealth" on Wednesday.

"This sends an important message that all Virginians deserve equal rights under the law," they said. "We are one step closer to creating a Virginia where everyone can live, learn and work free from fear of discrimination."

Lamneck added Equality Virginia urges "our lawmakers to carry this spirit of equality forward and pass the Virginia Values Act, which will update and strengthen our laws to protect all people, including LGBTQ Virginians, from discrimination in housing, employment and public spaces."

"It's heartening to see Virginia pass the ERA and affirm the importance of equality under law," said Human Rights Campaign Deputy Communications Director Nick Morrow, who pointed out to the Blade the 2020 legislative session began eight days ago on Jan. 8. "Already, the new pro-equality majorities in the Virginia General Assembly are working on behalf of

the rights of all — not just some — in the commonwealth."

Kate Kelly, a human rights lawyer for Equality Now, told the Blade the ERA's ratification protects the rights of "women, girls, non-binary folk, our transgender siblings and all marginalized genders."

"As a queer woman, I cannot tell you how elated I am to finally see myself reflected in our nation's most foundational document," added Kelly.

Virginia is the 38th state to ratify the ERA, an important milestone needed to formally ensure gender equality is part of the Constitution.

"Putting gender equality in the Constitution does not right the wrongs of the past, nor fix all forms of discrimination," cautioned Virginia House of Delegates Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn (D-Fairfax County). "But it lays down a marker on a map that leads us to a more just and equal future."

Currently, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin and sex. The U.S. Supreme Court is still considering if "sex" includes sexual orientation and gender identity.

Still, many view the ERA's ratification as both historic and a step in the right direction.

"As someone who was a young legislative aide in 1980 when the ERA went down in defeat in

the Virginia Senate," said Virginia Democratic Party Chair Susan Swecker. "I am overjoyed that our Commonwealth has finally ratified the Equal Rights Amendment."

Swecker added watching the measure pass under the leadership of a House speaker and Virginia Senate president pro tempore who were both women made her "unbelievably proud to be a Virginian and a woman today."

Nevada in 2017 became the 36th state to ratify the ERA and Illinois followed suit the following year, but Virginia last year again failed to ratify it.

The ERA passed in the House by a 59-40 vote margin and in the Senate by a 28-12 vote margin. Gov. Ralph Northam has signaled his support for the measure.

Attorney General Mark Herring in a press release described the vote as "historic" and a "major milestone in the fight for equality in this nation."

"I am preparing to take any steps necessary to ensure that Virginia is recognized as the 38th ratifying state," Herring said. "That the will of Virginians is carried out, and that the ERA is added to our Constitution, as it should be."

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



Equality Virginia Executive Director Vee Lamneck said ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in the Virginia General Assembly sends "an important message." (Photo courtesy of Vee Lamneck)

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The Risk of Good Intentions

BY EVE KUCHARSKI



'White Feminist'
Creator Lee Minora
Talks Painful Truth
of Well-Meaning,
No-Impact Activism

Photo: John C. Hawthorne

The road to hell is paved with well-intentioned white women. Or at least, it's paved with those white women activists who don't consider the impact of their intentions. Lee Minora is the creator of "White Feminist," a show that unapologetically slices through the failings of non-intersectional feminism and its inherent hypocrisy. Throughout the course of the show, audiences, and ideally the white female liberal activists who will attend, are forced to ask themselves the unspoken question, "How do white women navigate their dual roles as oppressed and oppressor?"

Though the answer to that question may vary depending on the audience members who see it presented and choose to take it on, one thing is certain: Becky Harlow's approach to feminism is far from ideal. Minora's one-woman show centers around the fictional Harlow, who is the host of "Becky's Time," a talk show that attendees "participate" in as a pseudo studio audience. At least on its surface, the show unintentionally showcases both the hilarity and painful truth of well-meaning activism causing harm without accountability. Audiences are invited to "sit back, relax and watch" Harlow "make progress."

Before her scheduled week-long stretch

in Ann Arbor with "White Feminist" at the University Musical Society's No Safety Net 2.0 series, Minora filled in on what it took to develop Becky Harlow's character, the "hygiene" required to practice true intersectionality and her technique for calling out hypocrisy in activism.

For those who don't know, who is Becky Harlow?

(Laughs) When I started making this show it was after Trump had won and Hillary Clinton had lost the election, as the #MeToo movement was sort of at its peak. And I was really fascinated by Megyn Kelly who had kind of made her way to the front of the #MeToo movement just by being a very flawed person. So, I started working on the piece with her in mind for Becky Harlow, someone who I didn't agree with politically who still, of course, needed feminism and had benefitted from it and had also hurt it in a number of ways. My interest is to make theater that's challenging for people who actually attend the theater, and that doesn't tend to be people who sympathize with Megyn Kelly. And so, when Becky was a little too right-leaning — which I workshopped her a little more conservative initially — she wasn't as challenging for audiences. So, I

"I think I have a curiosity about the next step, which is, 'How do we make sure that that participation is actually creating change?'"

started to move her on the political spectrum to be more of a left-leaning character. So she is a well-meaning talk show host who has very little awareness of her actual impact, despite wanting to help and make the world a better place.

Did you see the movie "Bombshell"?

Yes!

It showed Megyn Kelly's story during the downfall of former Fox News executive Roger Ailes for sexual misconduct. Three years after you started developing the show, did that change your opinion of her at all?

I don't think it's changed much of my opinion on her. There's parts of me that has sympathy for her and there's parts of me that are

pretty repelled by her, and that stayed true seeing the film. I was thinking, "Yeah, she's enduring a good amount of misogyny, but she's also sort of hoist by her own petard." By nature of working at Fox News, a place that is white supremacist, heteronormative, fearmongering, you're going to be participating in old models of our society that hurt women. She holds those models up, so it's very confusing. I did think the film was interesting and I was glad I saw it.

Because Becky's character has a lot of blind spots when it comes to her activism she reminds me of the quote, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." Did you start to think about your own blind spots as the creator?

First, I literally used to have my press release subject line with, 'The road to hell is paved with well-meaning white women' (laughs). But in regard to blind spot, I was thinking a lot when I was making this piece about intention versus impact. So, you may mean to do something that you think will have a really positive outcome, but that may not be the impact of what you've done. And I think being someone who is socially conscious or interested in intersectional feminism and making sure your feminism is always

“How do white women navigate their dual roles as oppressed and oppressor?”

intersectional is a form of hygiene. And you have to participate in hygiene all the time in order to be hygienic. You don't get to brush your teeth once a year and be like, 'That's it, I brushed my teeth this year.' It's a constant process of turning over, so that's one prong. I'd say another prong is when, in reference to intention versus impact, you have to honor and listen to the impact that you may have had if someone tells you. So, rather than, 'Oh, you stepped on my foot.' 'Well, I didn't mean to step on your foot.' Well that doesn't really matter, does it? Because that's what you did ultimately.

Have you found that sometimes people attending the show don't realize they share many of Becky's blind spots?

Yes! Yes, definitely. That's sort of a satire paradox, I think. That people can have blind spots so glaring that they can't quite see themselves in there. I think that there are some elements of the show where I think it's unavoidable that you get sort of caught realizing that you might have some contradictory beliefs because of the way it's crafted. So, a question is asked, you answer it affirmatively. And then another question is asked, and if you have to answer that one affirmatively you realize you may have some beliefs that are in conflict or done some things that are in conflict.

The show regularly takes on new meaning as current events develop. Do you find yourself adding and changing content regularly?

(Laughs). Yes, exactly. Luckily, Becky doesn't know that much a lot of the time. So, there's always that available to you, but I do have to stay informed. I just did a show in New York and was making changes to the show day-of. I'm always updating based on what's happening, and I'll probably get some feelers about what's happening in Ann Arbor.

Did creating this show change your view of "woke culture" as used by activists — well-intentioned or otherwise?

I think I have an interest in my work — as opposed to me personally, I'll say from the perspective of what I'm creating — I have a big interest in hypocrisy. I spent some time studying this very specific type of clown, not clown like you think of at the circus, but it's more of a theater-making technique called bouffon. And the bouffon doesn't quite have any allegiance to anyone, but they have a large interest in hypocrisy. And that's where I live in that work. My questions around wokeness is that you absolutely have to know what's happening to participate and then I think I have a curiosity about the next step, which is,

“How do we make sure that that participation is actually creating change?” I do think that sometimes that means that there needs to be infighting or correcting people or taking time to do labor where someone can educate someone. Hopefully, people can find ways to do that without putting burdens on people who are constantly having to do it, but it does require knowledge.

Do you think the outspoken Becky Harlows of the world might be part of the reason why some women refuse to call themselves feminists?

(Laughs) Becky Harlow calls herself a feminist. She does in the show entirely, but is she like the cousin of someone who might not call themselves a feminist? Sure. I think so. But she's pretty outspoken about the fact that she's a feminist, she just has very little intersectionality in her feminism despite not realizing that she has very little intersectionality in it. I think she's maybe just a generation too young to be part of the women who don't call themselves feminists. I don't think I have an answer to this, but I certainly have a curiosity about how we take care of other generations of differing opinions and just people who are just struggling to keep up inside of that conversation. Can you still be doing it right? Can you still be a good ally if you're not necessarily abreast of everything? Like, where does that come back to that hygiene thing I said earlier?

There does seem to be a priority shift for some people who over time, willfully or otherwise, fall out of touch with social justice movements of the day.

Exactly, which is why it's so important to go to the second thing, which is listening to the people around you and how your behavior is impacting them. So, maybe you don't have the time to do the keeping up, but you need to find the time to do the listening.

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'Ms. Dolly' on How Her LGBTQ-Inclusive Netflix Series Is Rooted in the 'Golden Rule'

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Dolly was there, almost, holding court despite her lack of humanness, as queer writers on assignment huddled giddily in front of her, awe-stricken by the realness of a fake Dolly.

I stood, out of body, piled into the country legend's Chasing Rainbows Museum as the tech magic that is Dolly Parton's hologram welcomed me to a Dolly shrine, perhaps the most holy site I've seen since my parents took me to church as a kid. A regular experience at the museum,

the 3D image of our honky-tonk goddess dove-coos about holding onto special memories and keepsakes; then, she asks you to remember one thing, breaking out some a cappella lines to let you know "that I will always love you." She blows kisses and bids farewell: "I'm outta here," she says. And poof, there she goes, melting into the most magical cloud of blue fairy dust, falling to the floor. Dolly transforms into a soaring butterfly. Because... Dolly Parton.

When human Dolly descended upon a conference room at her DreamMore Resort in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, it was like she'd just

stepped out of a Saturday-morning cartoon – or out of that holographic screen. She whooshed into our room of journalists with a hearty, "Well hello eve'ybody!" and zinged up to the front of a throng of already-seated journalists, making an astute observation on her jolly way: "Y'all like a bunch of kids: quiet, waiting for Ms. Dolly, Ms. Teacher, to come in."

Then Ms. Dolly got down to business, talking about her new Netflix anthology "Heartstrings," where lessons are carefully taught with a steady hand and her unique ability to unify America, a topic recently explored in depth

by Jad Abumrad on his podcast "Dolly Parton's America" (having experienced Dollywood, including some of its otherworldly cinnamon bread, I can also say he's spot on in coining her universe the "Dollyverse").

Expanding her ditties into full-on mini movies, the eight episodes produced for the series extend hearty lessons inspired by a mixture of both iconic and more obscure Dolly Parton songs; they gently and sneakily school the ignorant, the blissfully unaware and the downright bigoted, all told in Ms. Dolly's preferred socio-political manner: through her

stories.

The “Jolene” episode tells the tale of the eponymous misunderstood woman that Dolly fears will take her man in the song (played by Julianne Hough), though the episode concludes that it’s the cheating men who are the real problem. Forbidden love is the crux of “Down from Dover,” centered on a young black soldier and a white reverend’s daughter during the Vietnam War. The lesson of the “Two Doors Down” episode is classic Dolly because it’s the gay one. If you’re a queer Dolly-head, you won’t be surprised to discover her introduction to the episode, which spotlights a same-sex love story. But your homophobic uncle might be – in fact, he might even finally learn what non-binary means and that transgender people are real people, all thanks to Ms. Dolly’s Queer 101 classroom introduction.

The “Great Unifier,” as she’s been called, introduces every episode – and it is always the best part of each installment. Here, she explains that even when she couldn’t be with her blood family on the road, she was with “a whole new family, with bands and crews that were made of all kinds of people who were different colors, gay, lesbian, transgender and all different faiths. But it didn’t matter as long as we all loved each other and got along. And we did. And we still do. Because what it all comes down to is love is love, in road families and in real families. Now life might not always be a party, but you are better off if you can just enjoy yourself, have fun and accept and love the people around you.”

What a wise teacher we have in Ms. Dolly. She reiterated a similar sentiment that day in the conference room, talking about the “golden rule” – that is, once she reached the stage. “I’m gonna need another lift,” she chirped. “These are not the kind of shoes you want to take chances in. These boots aren’t made for walkin’” She stomped the floor, then we were off. According to Ms. Dolly, that rule is treating people right – and that if know your values, your morals, and you know what to sacrifice and what not to, “you’ll be all right.” (When asked about goddaughter Miley Cyrus, she further illustrated this point by saying: “People say you need to talk to Miley; I say, no, I don’t need to talk to Miley. Let Miley be Miley, I’ll be me and everybody needs to do their own thing.”)

“Heartstrings” practices the golden rule, and like her brand emblem – the butterfly, which is everywhere at Dollywood and at the DreamMore (even the toilet paper in my

hotel room was butterfly embossed) – happy endings are also ubiquitous in the Dollyverse. And so it’s no surprise that “Heartstrings” is an extension of that world. A world Netflix knew the streaming population needed more of, a series that Ms. Dolly said “really did tug at your heartstrings.”

In her mind, her songs are already movies anyway: “I grew up way back in the mountains, and early in my early days we didn’t even have electricity and we listened to the Grand Ole Opry on a battery radio.” She didn’t watch movies, and there was no TV, so to pass the time she would “paint pictures in my songs and tell stories,” she said. “So it was just a natural fit, I thought, to do a series based on songs that I’ve written.”

Ms. Dolly could’ve tapped into her most well-known songs for “Heartstrings” – you may have noticed there’s no “Heartstrings”

“What it all comes down to is love is love, in road families and in real families. Now life might not always be a party, but you are better off if you can just enjoy yourself, have fun and accept and love the people around you.”

episode centered on “I Will Always Love You” (maybe next time, she says) – but aside from featuring a few of her biggest hits, “we wanted to pick songs that are also different.” She loves Westerns and dressing up in Wild West get-ups, so since she’s Dolly Parton and she can, she did a “J.J. Sneed” episode. Also, she loves dogs and “so I had a little song I had written years ago called ‘Cracker Jack,’ so we wanted to get one of those in

as well. We wanted to cover all the emotions.”

At one point during the press conference Ms. Dolly sneezed, which is a non-story except that this was Dolly Parton sneezing, so it was an event. She asked for a tissue and whooped a laugh, teaching us all another lesson: even honky-tonk goddesses are susceptible to seasonal sickness. “With this weather changin’ and all that,” she explained, before a man who was, I believe, a journalist – but looked like he could’ve easily been in one of these “Heartstrings” episodes – passed her a tissue. She thanked him, calling him “cowboy.”

Like she was throwing the “Cracker Jack” dog a bone, she dangled the tissue out in front of our group of journalists, joking that she was going to fling it out so someone could sell it on eBay. Non-holographic Ms. Dolly, extraordinarily human at this point, called it “star snot.”

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



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The Ark Hosts 43rd Annual Folk Fest Jan. 31-Feb. 1



Brandi Carlile performing at the 42nd annual Folk Fest. Photo by Andrew Rogers.

Folk Fest's lineup:

Friday, Jan. 31

Calexico and Iron & Wine
Ingrid Michaelson
The Lone Bellow
Cedric Burnside
Rainbow Girls
Elliott BROOD
Willy Porter, Emcee

Saturday, Feb. 1

Nathaniel Rateliff (solo)
Mandolin Orange
Bettye LaVette
Molly Tuttle
John Moreland
Cold Tone Harvest
Willy Porter, Emcee

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

A mutual love of campus, coffee and community merged in 1965 when four Ann Arbor churches created The Ark. Originally a meeting house and creative outlet for artistic students, it wasn't long before music acts became a staple of the gathering place's programming. Fast forward to today, and The Ark is regarded as one of Michigan's premier Americana music venues that's hosted artists ranging from Patti Smith to The Dustbowl Revival. At the end of the month, that tradition continues as the nonprofit organization hosts its 43rd annual Folk Fest from Friday, Jan. 31, through Saturday, Feb. 1. Headlining the event will be acts like Ingrid Michaelson and Nathaniel Rateliff.

Barb Chaffer Authier is the venue's marketing director. She said that over the years, the Folk Fest has become The Ark's signature event and number one fundraiser, encouraging both longtime fans and first-timers to come and take a listen to the lineup.

"So the Folk Festival is important to

us as an organization not only because of the music it presents but it's also bringing in a big piece of the funding that keeps us operating over 300 nights a year throughout the whole year. ... But the other thing that's really special about it is that we basically take what we do every other day of the year in our 400-seat listening room and we bring that into this much bigger venue of Hill Auditorium, which seats about 3,500 people," Authier said. "We get to display what we do on a much grander scale, and we're able to have bigger name headliners that bring in people that might not be aware of The Ark or following some of the up-and-coming artists that we're presenting."

And because the venue displays some of those up-and-coming talents, Authier said that the event not only directly benefits the venue but it's a great way to give back to the area's local music scene as well, which Authier said is the venue's "bread and butter."

"So, you can come to the Folk Festival, get a taste of all the kinds of music that we present, discover something new and then come back to see the event

at The Ark," she said.

And the venue's programming extends far beyond music, too. Fans of comedy might be interested in the venue's 50 First Jokes show that highlights local comedians, its storytelling festival, mindfulness meditation Tuesdays or even the sound production workshops that happen biannually. All of this is wrapped up in an inclusivity-focused package, too, because Authier said the organization strives to book artists and events that are LGBTQ- and diversity-affirming.

"Certainly, we're not a place where everybody who comes to The Ark has one particular outlook, but it's important to us that we are a welcoming space. ... The LGBTQ community for sure has been a community that we have had a close relationship over the years, hosting women's dances and we've been a media partner with Pridesource and Between The Lines for many, many years," she said. "And many of the artists that perform at The Ark are coming from the LGBTQ community ... so it's something that we're very, very happy and proud to be a part of."



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The Not-So-'Unsung' Stephanie Mills

BY JASON A. MICHAEL



Stephanie Mills will be appearing at 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 30, at the Sound Board at Motorcity Casino Hotel. Tickets start at \$44 and can be purchased at ticketmaster.com.

Few artists can claim a career so storied as singer Stephanie Mills. Although she doesn't claim the label, Mills is by all accounts an rhythm and blues legend. Her career has taken the Brooklyn-based artist from a role as the original Dorothy in the Broadway production of "The Wiz," to a whopping five No. 1 R&B hits during the '80s like "Home," "I Feel Good All Over" and "I have Learned to Respect the Power of Love." In addition, she's worked with other music legends like Teddy Pendergrass, Anita Baker and Mary J. Blige. And Detroit fans will be pleased to know she made the city her home for a period of five years. Now, both longtime and new fans can see her live in concert on Thursday, Jan. 30, at the MotorCity Casino Hotel Sound Board stage. Mills joined BTL over the phone from her North Carolina home in advance of the show to talk about her career, her time in Detroit and various new projects.

Career Beginnings

Long before Mills was gracing Broadway stages, however, she was signed with ABC Records to record her debut album "Movin' in the Right Direction." Although that failed to generate much buzz, for her sophomore effort, "For the First Time," Mills signed with Motown Records. The label, now based in Los Angeles, paired her up with super songwriters and producers Burt Bacharach and Hal David. Despite these efforts, it didn't do well commercially. Mills said that might have been because it diverted from her preferred genre.

"It was very pop," Mills said. "I think it was ahead of its time. There were some great songs on it though."

Still, Mills enjoyed making the album. "I was a huge fan of The Jackson 5, and Diana Ross I love dearly. So, I was just thrilled to be on the same label as they were," Mills said. "And to sit across from Berry Gordy in a meeting ... it was really something."

It wasn't long after that that Mills got a big break on the Broadway stage with the lead role in "The Wiz." She earned great reviews during the show's run, and it was during the show that Mills and Michael Jackson, who was living in New York at the time, actually began dating.

"He was such a king, sweet soul, very gentle," Mills said. "I never heard him say a bad word about anybody. We were really friends, which is why I feel the need to defend him if someone says something

about him."

And she's serious about that. Just ask British crooner Sam Smith who, in 2018, said he didn't like Michael Jackson's music. Mills attacked.

"Don't come for MICHAEL JACKSON when you wish you have sold as many records and you wish you were the King of Pop like he was," Mills said in an Instagram post. "Go sit your one-hit wonder ass down."

Speaking about the incident now, Mills does not regret her words.

"Sam Smith, for him to say, basically, that he didn't like any of Michael's music, including all that great Motown music, I didn't believe that," she said.

Longevity and Recognition

Following her string of No. 1 records, Mills married WJLB program director Michael Saunders and moved to Detroit.

"I loved living in Detroit," she said. "I kind of took five years off from performing while I lived there and just focused on being a wife."

After she and Saunders split she found herself back on the road. To this day, she continues to light up stages across the globe. And she certainly hasn't allowed her commercial success to distract or detach her from issues that matter. For her tour last year, Mills had her entire band dress up in black Nike warmup suits to pay homage to former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick and his struggle with the NFL.

"I wanted to stand up for Colin, who was really taking a knee to oppose police brutality," Mills said. "I thought what they

did to him was wrong."

Mills said that she has continued to be politically active throughout her career. Regarding the upcoming 2020 election, she said she hasn't chosen a candidate to support yet.

"I'm not liking anybody yet, but I'm hoping somebody will appeal to me because we've got to get this man out of office."

Somebody she'd gladly throw her support behind is Billy Porter, Broadway star and recent Emmy winner for his role on the FX series "Pose."

"He was unsung, but not anymore," Mills said. "The world knows his talent now. He is doing it his way and he is getting all the props he deserves. I love him."

Regarding her own career being considered legendary, Mills disagrees. But unlike Porter, Mills most certainly does not consider herself unsung. So, when the producers of the TV One musical docuseries "Unsung" came calling on her door to do an episode about not being recognized for her success, Mills flatly turned them down.

"I wasn't interested. I don't consider myself unsung. I've had a great career. I wasn't interested in going down that road, rehashing everything," she said.

That's right. Can't nobody make Ms. Mills do what she does not want to do. So what does she want to do? Make some new music to please her long-waiting fans perhaps?

"I haven't been in the mood to create music," she said. "But the other day something hit me, and I began to think about it. I'd like to do backing vocals on a record or sing the hook. Yeah, sing the hook. That would be great."

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Happenings



JAX ANDERSON AT EL CLUB FEB. 8

Previously known as Flint Eastwood, Jax Anderson is a Detroit-based alt-pop artist who has built up an international fanbase championing "authenticity in a world filled with fake news" and empathy. Famous for hits like "Queen," "Glitches" and "Real Love," find out more about Anderson's music at iamjaxanderson.com and catch her live at El Club in Detroit. Ticketing information can be found online at elclubdetroit.com.

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OUTINGS

Saturday, January 25

Queer Conversations 11 a.m. Saturday LGBT Chat is an on going social discussion group meets every week to discuss issues LGBT people face. Coming out, dating and much more. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

Sunday, January 26

Community exhibition opening featuring poet Semaj Brown 1:30 p.m. Join the Flint Institute of Arts and Flint Poet Laureate Semaj Brown to celebrate the opening of Community, Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 810-234-1695. flintarts.org.

Tuesday, January 28

Strand with Trans Support Groups – Ann Arbor – Washtenaw 6:30 p.m. Trans Support Group meeting the 4th Tuesday of each month @ Journey of Faith Christian Church. Parent Support Group Facilitator – Yma Johnson, ymaj1968@gmail.com or 734-780-4092. Journey of Faith Christian Church, 1900 Manchester Road, Ann Arbor. standwithtrans.org.

Wednesday, January 29

Is This A Room: Reality Winner Verbatim Transcription 7:30 p.m. June 3, 2017. A 25-year-old former Air Force linguist named Reality Winner is surprised at her home by the FBI, interrogated, and then charged with leaking top-secret evidence of Russian interference in our voting system. Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-764-2538. smt.d.umich.edu.

Sunday, February 2

Stand with Trans Wyandotte Support Group for Trans Youth and Parents of

Trans Individuals 4 p.m. There is no fee to attend the groups. For Parent Support Group information, contact facilitator Kim Tooley, 734-747-4363. St. Stephens Episcopal Church, 2803 1st St., Wyandotte. 734-747-4363. standwithtrans.org.

Monday, February 3

White Feminist 7:30 p.m. Gender and privilege collide in this scathing comedy that will grab you by the pussy hat. As the host of a morning talk show, "Becky's Time," Lee Minora skewers and dissects the failings of non-intersectional feminism. James and Anne Duderstadt Center, 2281 Bonisteel Blvd, Ann Arbor. 734-763-3266. dc.umich.edu.

Tuesday, February 4

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Lake Orion / Oakland County 7 p.m. FREE and OPEN to the community. St. Mary's In The Hills Episcopal Church, 2512 Joslyn Court, Lake Orion. 248-391-0663. stmarysinthehills.org.

Friday, February 7

Michigan Tobacco-free Coalition for People Living with HIV (MiTCH+) 10 a.m. A new community-led organization comprising community stakeholders, including People Living With HIV and people who use tobacco products. Forest Community Health Center,

Lansing, 2316 S Cedar. 517-887-4597. cwheeler@ingham.org. hd.ingham.org.

Wednesday, February 12

Stand with Trans Youth Support Group – Flint – Genesee 6:30 p.m. Free to all, Trans Youth Support Group meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month @ Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint. Facilitator Sara Griffin, MA, LPC is a psychotherapist and a parent of a transgender son, eiregriff@aol.com Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint, 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy, Flint. 810-232-4023. uuf Flint.org. standwithtrans.org.

Editor's Pick

NICOLE BYER AT THE MAJESTIC THEATRE FEB. 14

Comedian, writer, actress and host Nicole Byer is perhaps best known for her role on the "Nailed It" baking show on Netflix. She also has a sitcom called "Loosely Exactly Nicole" based on her life, and Byer has earned the Time Out LA "Comic to Watch" title. Now, local fans can get excited because she's heading to Detroit's Majestic Theatre on Feb. 14. To find out more about the show and get tickets visit majesticdetroit.com.



Editor's Pick

JOSH GROBAN AT CAESARS WINDSOR FEB. 9



An internationally renowned singer, songwriter and actor, Josh Groban's signature baritone voice is instantly recognizable to most fans and the reason behind his millions of records sold. Catch him at 8 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 9 at The Colosseum stage at Caesars Windsor. Learn more online at caesars.com.

Wednesday, February 19

Stand with Trans Support Groups – Livonia – Wayne County 6:30 p.m. Free to all, group meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month @ Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Parent Support Group Facilitators Karen Sessler, ksessle@yahoo.com or 734-673-3590 and Scott Sessler, pastorscott@emmanuel-livonia.org or 734-673-2485 Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 34567 7 Mile Road, Livonia. <http://www.standwithtrans.org>

Transgender Support Group – Westland 6 p.m. 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

Friday, February 21

Dorrance Dance: Myelination 8 p.m. Founded in 2011 by MacArthur "Genius" Dorrance Dance honors tap dance's uniquely beautiful history in a new and dynamically compelling context. Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. 734-647-3327. smt.d.umich.edu. ums.org.

MUSIC & MORE

Toastmasters International SpeakOUT! LGBTQ Meeting January 23, 7 p.m. Focusing on professional and personal communication skills development. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867. lawrencemoebis@gmail.com. speakout.toastmastersclubs.org.

Minnesota Orchestra January 25, 8 p.m. The Minnesota Orchestra returns for its first UMS performance since its 1972 debut in an all-Sibelius program, including the stunning and rarely heard Snöfrid with the UMS Choral Union. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-

764-3464. ums.org.

Martin Katz & Friends – What's in a Song: Hugo Wolf's Complete Mörike Song February 5, 8 p.m. There are many important art song composers, chief among them Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and Richard Strauss, but Hugo Wolf occupies his own special place. Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 North University, Ann Arbor. 734-763-3333 ums.org.

Cecile McLorin Salvant February 6, 7 p.m. Though only 29 years old, Cécile McLorin Salvant has spent the last decade evolving from a darling of jazz critics and fans to a multi-Grammy Award winner and a prescient and fearless voice in music. Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 North University, Ann Arbor. 734-763-3333. ums.org.

Mandy Patinkin in Concert: DIARIES February 6, 8 p.m. Mandy Patinkin in Concert: DIARIES, presents the acclaimed actor, singer, storyteller in his most electrifying role: concert performer. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. 313-872-1000. broadwayindetroit.com.

Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan February 14, 8 p.m. No other mariachi in history has had a trajectory or influence remotely comparable to theirs; they are widely considered the finest in the world. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-764-3464.

Angélique Kidjo's Remain in the Light February 16, 7 p.m. Global pop star Angélique Kidjo has partnered with super producer Jeff Bhasker (Rihanna, Kanye West, Harry Styles, Bruno Mars, Drake, Jay-Z) and an international band to create Remain in Light. This new project finds the Benin-born Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. ums.org.

HD Broadcast: Bolshoi Ballet Giselle February 23, 7 p.m. In this brand new production by the Bolshoi Ballet, renowned choreographer Alexei

Ratmansky brings a fresh perspective to one of the oldest and most iconic ballets. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. ums.org.

ART 'N' AROUND

Community exhibition opening featuring poet Semaj Brown January 26, Join the Flint Institute of Arts and Flint Poet Laureate Semaj Brown to celebrate the opening of Community. This exhibition features works in multiple mediums from some of the most important artists 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 810-234-1695. flintarts.org.

THEATER

Bright Colors and Bold Patterns January 20, 8 p.m. Bright Colors and Bold Patterns is a play by Drew Droege is described as a "hyper-verbal and tragicomic one-man show that asks some essential questions about contemporary gay life." The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 248-545-5545. theringwald.com.

A Bronx Tale January 21, 8 p.m. Three years ago, Academy Award nominee Chazz Palminteri teamed up with Academy Award® winner Robert De Niro, Tony® Award winner Jerry Zaks and Tony® Award nominee Sergio Trujillo to create this streetwise musical. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. 313-872-1000. broadwayindetroit.com.

The Believers are but Brothers January 22, 7:30 p.m. A multimedia show that weaves together stories of three disaffected men and their journeys to radicalization and indoctrination via online extremism, anonymity and hate speech. Arthur Miller Theatre, 1226 Murfin Ave., Ann Arbor. 734-764-2538

Jesus Christ Superstar February 4, 8 p.m. An iconic musical phenomenon with a world-wide fan base. In celebration of its 50th Anniversary, a new mesmerizing production comes to North America. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 313-237-SING <http://broadwayindetroit.com/shows/jesus-christ-superstar>

Robert Dahl's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory February 18, 8 p.m. It's the perfect recipe for a delectable treat. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 313-237-SING <http://broadwayindetroit.com/shows/roald-dahls-charlie-and-the-chocolate-factory>

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PUZZLE P. 33



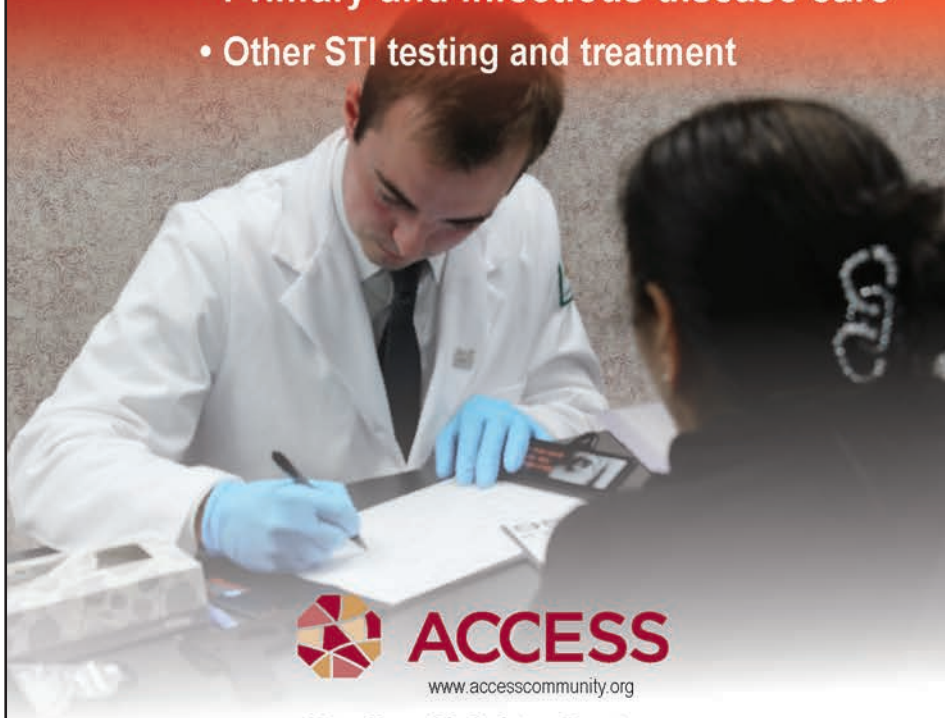
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- Primary and infectious disease care
- Other STI testing and treatment



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5 Ways to Get a Loan That's Not From a Bank or Loan Shark

BY MIKEY ROX

Hard up for cash but afraid you won't qualify for a traditional bank loan? You're not alone; not every LGBTQ person is the financial guru the media makes us seem. You can, however, get the cash you need – and quick – with these alternatives that won't drive you years into debt.

1. Borrow From a Life Insurance Policy

If you've been paying into a life insurance policy, that money is already yours. Certainly it's intended to cover the costs of your death and perhaps alleviate some of the financial strain on your loved ones and/or dependents once you're gone, but if you need to tap into those funds while you're still alive, it's an option. Whatever you withdraw will be deducted from your beneficiaries' payout, which makes them SOL upon your death, but at least you don't have to worry so much about paying back what you've taken out – because, ya know, you'll already be six feet under.

2. Borrow Against a Vehicle With a Clear Title

A clear title on a vehicle means that there's no financial lien against the car being sold. If it's rightfully yours – and you need cash – borrow against it, says debt and credit expert Kevin Gallegos of the Freedom Financial Network. This tactic probably won't work against your beat-up hoopty, so exercise solid judgment before contacting a financial institution.

3. Refinance Your Home and Take Out Cash at Closing

Though a risky move and not possible for all homeowners, if you're in dire need of a loan, you have the option of refinancing your home and taking cash out at closing to pay whatever impending fees for which you need the money. But you really, really need to know what you're doing in this case, lest you want to be homeless shortly thereafter.

If you don't want to refinance, you also could borrow against your home. Still risky, but less ride-or-die than refinancing.

"If you own your home and have enough equity, you may be able to take out a home equity loan or line of credit," says Gallegos. "You can use the

money for anything you'd like, including debt consolidation, and the interest you pay on the loan will be tax deductible."

However, using your house to pay off unsecured debt can be very risky. If you choose this route, make sure you leave yourself some financial breathing room so that if something unexpected does happen, you will not risk losing your home.

4. Secure a Personal Loan

"Personal loans are best for people who know it will take them longer than a year to pay off the debt," say Gallegos. "This is because personal loans typically charge an origination fee of 1% to 5% of the loan amount, and that must be taken into consideration when calculating overall interest savings. If the timeframe is only a year, with the origination fee, the cost is generally too high."

Keep in mind, too, that personal loans are not good for people who are unable to make minimum payments on current debt. If that's the case, you should look into other help, such as debt negotiation (settlement) or credit counseling.

5. Friends & Family

As a gay personal finance expert, I don't usually recommend asking for money from friends or family – it rarely goes off without a hitch – but if you're in a serious pickle and you've exhausted all other options, you may need to bite the bullet. You can negotiate a lower interest rate than you can elsewhere (probably), but that doesn't mean that you should take advantage of someone's goodwill. To make this work as best as possible, set repayment terms and dates and stick to them. There are few things people hate more than lending somebody they love money and not being paid back on time. Be a decent human being by doing right by the relative or good friend willing to help you out. Otherwise, you run risk of ruining that relationship and a host of other consequences – like potential legal action and being branded an A-hole.

Mikey Rox is an award-winning journalist and LGBTQ lifestyle expert whose work has been published in more than 100 outlets across the world. He currently lives in his van, saving money and traveling the country. Connect with Mikey on Instagram @mikeyroxtravels.

FERNDALE, MICHIGAN – REC AIDE



Department: Parks and Recreation
Location: Recreation
Salary range: \$15.00 Per Hour
FLSA: Non-Exempt
Employment Type: Part Time

Assists Parks & Recreation Director and Deputy Director with all aspects of planning, organizing, and coordinating community parks and recreation programs for youth, teens, adults and/or seniors, including sports, enrichment programs, special events, and camps. The Rec Aide will also be responsible for assisting with other aspects of Parks & Rec activities including building and park rentals. TYPICAL HOURS: This position will work a combination of weekday evening and weekend hours up to 28 hours/week. Hours will be dependent on program/rental schedule. This is a part-time position, and the hourly pay rate is \$15 hr.

Visit www.ferndalemi.gov/jobs to apply.

FERNDALE, MICHIGAN – FIREFIGHTERS



Department: Fire Department
Location: Ferndale Fire House
Salary range: \$47,550 - \$64,568 +6.5%
FLSA: Exempt
Employment Type: Full Time

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For a full list of qualifications and to apply, go to <https://www.ferndalemi.gov/jobs>.

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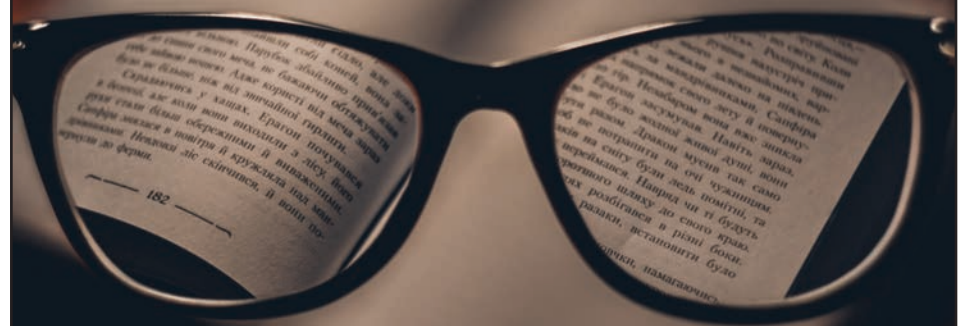
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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Jake Gyllenhaal invites you to the 'Fun Home'

This is not a drill: "Fun Home" is going to be a movie. The autobiographical, bittersweet musical about a young lesbian's coming-of-age in her family's funeral-home business – one run by her difficult yet loving and deeply closeted father – will continue its evolution from Alison Bechdel-created graphic memoir to Tony Award-winning stage musical to big-screen production, thanks to producer Jake Gyllenhaal. The musical, adapted by Lisa Kron and Jeanine Tesori, will also star Gyllenhaal as the father. Every time a queer project gets a big screen push, we worry a little that heterosexual hands will dilute their strength, but we trust the "Brokeback Mountain" star here. He's a proven ally and clearly knows that we're a picky population when it comes to our stories being told well. So far there's no other cast, no production information or release date, but we can wait patiently for something worth waiting for.



Jake Gyllenhaal.
Photo: Starfrenzy

Netflix delivers queer YA movie 'The Half of It'

In 2005, the romantic comedy-drama "Saving Face," directed by Chinese-American filmmaker Alice Wu, broke ground for its realistic portrayal of queer issues in Chinese-American families (Wu wouldn't sell the script to a studio in order to maintain artistic control). Naturally, this means it took 15 years for her to be able to make another film. But now she's back with what promises

to be a sweetly queer Netflix YA film, "The Half of It." It's about a shy, bookish, high school girl named Ellie (Leah Lewis, "Nancy Drew") hired to script some love letters and articulate romantic dialogue for a kind but not-too-bright jock (Daniel Diemer, "Sacred Lies") who needs help getting the attention of his opposite-sex crush (newcomer Alessia Lemire). And then Ellie realizes she has feelings for the same girl. We're going to guess that this ends up one for our team, but you know what, anything can happen in 2020. So we'll be sitting our John Hughes-loving selves down to watch it on Netflix later this year when it drops.

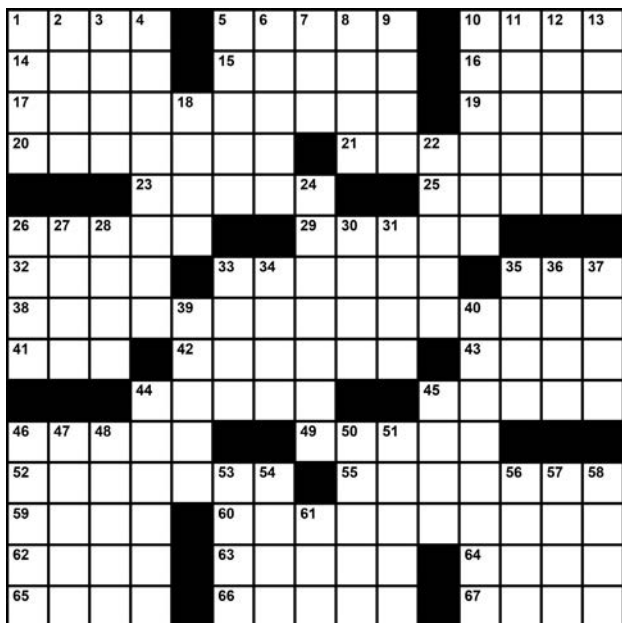
'Steven Universe' sees a 'Future' with Indya Moore

More Indya Moore! The transgender, non-binary actor who plays model Angel Evangelista on "Pose" has a new side gig and we're very happy about that. They're the voice of Shep, a non-binary character introduced in "Steven Universe: Future," the continuation of Cartoon Network's queer-inclusive animated series "Steven Universe." The groundbreaking original series about the magical space adventures of a young boy who is half-human, half-alien already featured characters who were transgender and intersex – imagine, if you can, if Peppermint Patty and "Scooby Doo"'s Velma had actually been written as lesbians and what that would have meant to earlier generations of queer kids – and the new show upholds the foregrounding of queer characters leading lots of the action. The story takes place in Steven's adolescence and there's little question that it will continue to push the boundaries of cartoons aimed at young audiences. The future is here.

The fourth coming of 'Jackass'

It has been more than 20 years since "Jackass" entered our lives, asking us to love it, and making the world a better place with idiotic stunts. The men of that television and cinematic universe – Johnny Knoxville, Bam Margera, Ryan Dunn (R.I.P.), Chris Pontius, Steve O., and others – risked good sense and bodily well-being in the pursuit of plotless comedy mayhem. That they also won the attention of LGBTQ+ audiences with their idiosyncratic form of queer allyship and goofy male intimacy was just part of a collective stance. They were too cool to care about "no homo" bro culture. So now that there's a fourth "Jackass" movie in the works from Paramount, slated for a spring 2021 release, our official position is one of happy anticipation. And a little fear. These guys are all in their 40s. Bouncing back from spinal injuries is no joke.

Romeo San Vicente's idea of a dangerous stunt is carrying a cup of hot tea from the kitchen to the table.



Remembering Jerry

Q Puzzle

Across

- 1 Spread out on the breakfast table
- 5 What Trump calls "fake news"
- 10 Meadow sounds
- 14 Stick it in your bunghole
- 15 Online exaggeration?
- 16 Like some twins
- 17 Jerry Herman musical based on "The Matchmaker"
- 19 Jerry Herman musical about an

auntie

- 20 Top choice
- 21 Stopped sitting for Diana Davies?
- 23 Leather pelts, e.g.
- 25 Hotel quote
- 26 Kahlo's cash
- 29 Early Peruvian
- 32 "Exotica" director Egoyan
- 33 Singer O'Connor
- 35 Rear on board
- 38 Jerry Herman musical about a

- gay couple that runs a drag club
- 41 Lodge man
- 42 Couch potato's tool
- 43 Alan of "The Aviator"
- 44 Big name in cutters
- 45 "The Celluloid Closet" author Vito
- 46 Eat alive
- 49 "Terminal Bar" playwright Paul
- 52 Mary Cassatt and Michelangelo
- 55 Gets a foamy head
- 59 "We ___ a Little Christmas" (song from 19-Across)
- 60 Song from 38-Across that became a gay anthem
- 62 Madonna's "Truth or ___"
- 63 Plumed wader
- 64 Pennsylvania city
- 65 Biathlete's slats
- 66 Portia de ___
- 67 Actor Auberjonois

Down

- 1 Newspaper publisher Adolph
- 2 Co-founder of MGM
- 3 First name in detective stories
- 4 Word sung with a long O?
- 5 Changed from red to pink
- 6 It comes ahead of mentioned
- 7 KFC rank
- 8 Outed, for example
- 9 Lid problem
- 10 Grieve over
- 11 Word used to stop seamen
- 12 Anouk of "Lola"
- 13 You can go down on them in

- winter
- 18 Cole Porter's Miss
- 22 Madrid museum
- 24 Like the bodies of ballet dancers
- 26 Needing some South Beach rays
- 27 List ender
- 28 Batman word like "Pow!" and "Bam!"
- 30 Shout at an open call
- 31 Colette's coffee
- 33 Baldwin's "The Evidence of Things Not ___"
- 34 Alpo alternative
- 35 Start of a Shakespearean title
- 36 They may start a dragnet
- 37 ___ Wu of verse
- 39 Big squares above crossword clues
- 40 Response to Margaret Cho
- 44 Moves like Rudolf Nureyev
- 45 Novelist ___ Mae Brown
- 46 Smooths
- 47 Need lubricating, maybe
- 48 "Scary Movie" Cheri
- 50 Cary of "Robin Hood: Men in Tights"
- 51 "Gross Anatomy" actress Christine
- 53 Stadium level
- 54 Palm starch
- 56 Land of Emma Donoghue
- 57 Prince's purple precipitation
- 58 Nemesis of Tinkerbell
- 61 Dalloway title

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- ✓ PrEP Education



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Your risk of getting HIV from sex can be even lower if you combine PrEP with condoms and other prevention methods.

Find over 300 Non-Profit Listings Serving Michigan's LGBTQ Online @ pridesource.com

AIDS/HIV

There are dozens of AIDS/HIV organizations and resources listed at www.PrideSource.com. Here are just some of them:

Metro Care Coordination Network

Free, comprehensive services for those living with HIV/AIDS.
877-931-3248
248-266-5545
Metrocarenetwork.org

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond

3968 Mt. Elliott St.
Detroit MI 48207-1841
313-446-9800
www.miunified.org
Michigan HIV/STED Hotline
800-872-2437

Matrix MAC Health

429 Livernois St.
Ferndale, MI 48220
888-226-6366
248-545-1435
<http://www.matrixhumanservices.org/programs/matrix-mac-health/>

Macomb County STD Clinic

27690 Van Dyke
Warren, MI 48093
586-465-8440
<http://health.macombgov.org/Health-Programs-HPDC-HIVAIDSCounselingTesting>

Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency (OLSHA)

196 Cesar E. Chavez Ave.
Pontiac, MI 48343
248-209-2647
www.olhsa.org

Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Service (ACCESS)

Sterling Heights Center
4301 East 14 Mile Rd.
Sterling Hts., MI 48310
586-722-6036
www.accesscommunity.org

Advocacy

Equality Michigan

19641 W. 7 Mile, Detroit, MI
313-537-7000
equalitymi.org
[Facebook.com/equalitymichigan](https://www.facebook.com/equalitymichigan)

Campus

Currently there are 19 organizations listed as active online at www.pridesource.com/ yellow pages. The following are some in the southeast Michigan area:

U-M Ann Arbor

Spectrum Center
Spectrumcenter@umich.edu
<http://spectrumcenter.umich.edu>
734-763-4186

Oakland University Gender & Sexuality Center

gsc@oakland.edu
www.oakland.edu/gsc
248-370-4336

Eastern Michigan University

LGBT Resource Center
emich.edu/lgbtrc
734-487-4149

The Lawrence Tech LGBT Resource Center

ltu.edu/student_affairs/lgbt.asp
Wayne State JIGSAW
[Facebook.com/groups/WayneStateJIGSAW](https://www.facebook.com/groups/WayneStateJIGSAW)
wsujigsaw@gmail.com

Community Centers

Michigan has eleven active LGBTQ community centers, with a tenth planned in Lansing. Here are three of them.

Jim Toy Community Center

Ann Arbor
www.jimtoycenter.org
[@LGBTDetroit](https://www.facebook.com/jimtoycenter)
or follow them on Twitter @JimToyCenter.
319 Braun Court
Ann Arbor, MI
734-995-9867

LGBT Detroit

Detroit
www.lgbtdetroit.org
[@LGBTDetroit](https://www.facebook.com/lgbtdetroit)
20025 Greenfield Road
Detroit, MI
Phone: 313-397-2127

Affirmations

Ferndale
<http://goaffirmations.org>
www.facebook.com/Affirmations/
or follow them on Twitter @GoAffirmations.
290 W. Nine Mile Road
Ferndale, MI
248-398-7105

Legal

American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan

Jay Kaplan, Staff Attorney, LGBT Project
2966 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI
www.aclumich.org
313-578-6800

Fair Michigan

PO Box 6136
Plymouth, MI 48170
877-432-4764, 313-556-2300
fairmichigan.org
[Facebook.com/fairmichigan2016](https://www.facebook.com/fairmichigan2016)

Know Your Rights Project

Outlaws U-M student group
outlawslegal@gmail.com
734-995-9867

Older Adults

SAGE Metro Detroit

290 W. Nine Mile Rd. Ferndale, MI
313-578-6812
sagemetrodetroit.org
Facebook: SAGE Metro Detroit

Political

The LGBT and Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party

[Facebook.com/TheLGBTACaucusoftheMDP](https://www.facebook.com/TheLGBTACaucusoftheMDP)
Stonewall for Revolution
www.facebook.com/stonewall4reolution

Professional Groups

Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 32446
Detroit, MI 48232
detroitlgbtchamber.com
1-800-DET-LGBT

Ties Like Me

Professional networking events
third Weds. 5:30 - 8 p.m.
TiesLikeMe.org
Suits And The City
Lansing, MI
suitsandthecity@gmail.com
www.suitsandthecity.org

Transgender

FtM Detroit

<https://www.facebook.com/FtMDetroit/>
ftmdetroit@gmail.com

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FtM A2 Ypsi

ftmannarborypsilanti@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/ftma2ypsi/>

Transgender Michigan

23211 Woodward Ave.
Ferndale, MI
info@transgendermichigan.org
www.transgendermichigan.org
800-842-2954

Trans Sistas of Color Project

19641 W. 7 Mile Rd. in Detroit
313-537-7000 Ext 107
info@tscopdetroit.org
www.facebook.com/TSCOPD/

Youth

Ruth Ellis Center

77 Victor Street, Highland Park, MI 48203
info@ruthelliscenter.org
Facebook: Ruth Ellis Center
313-252-1950

Ozone House

102 N. Hamilton Street
Ypsilanti, MI
734-662-2265
734-662-2222

Stand With Trans

Farmington, MI
www.standwithtrans.org
248-739-9254

Find these resources online

- Adoption Services
- AIDS/HIV Hotlines
- AIDS/HIV Organizations
- Alzheimer's Association
- Animal Shelter
- Anti-Violence
- Archives/Collections
- Campus; Student and Alumni Groups
- Cancer Support Groups
- Choruses
- Community Centers
- Employee Resource Groups
- Families and Parents
- Foster Care
- Foundations and Funders
- Hotlines & Switchboards
- Labor Union
- Legal Organizations
- Museums
- Music Groups
- National Organizations
- Political Organizations
- Professional Organizations
- Religious & Spiritual
- Senior Living
- Seniors
- Social/Community Organizations
- Sports
- Substance Abuse
- Transgender Groups/Services
- Women's Health
- Youth Services



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Performed by **Becca Blackwell, Emily Davis, Pete Simpson, and T.L. Thompson**

On June 3, 2017, a 25-year-old former Air Force linguist named Reality Winner was surprised at her home by the FBI, interrogated, and then charged with leaking top-secret evidence of Russian interference in our voting system to the media. In this production, the verbatim transcription of that FBI interrogation is staged as a play — an offbeat thriller — that reveals a verbal dance between the knife-sharp Reality and the FBI agents.

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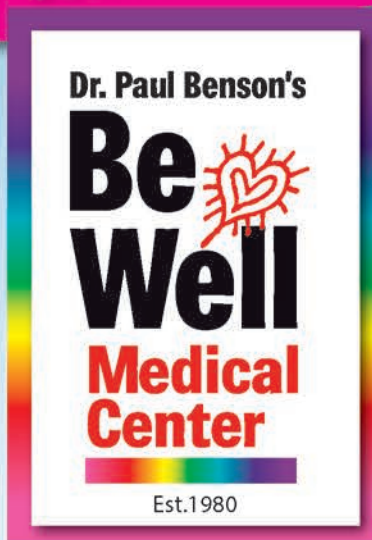
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Since 1980, our medical team has been committed to providing compassionate, sensitive care for all lifestyles. The topics and specialists featured on the podcast will help you keep pace with the most up-to-date info to improve your health!



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Sleep is one of the most important, but least understood aspects of our lives and wellness.

2 Living with HIV in the 21st Century (Dr. Benson & Caleb Youngblood) Release: **1/16/2020**

HIV is a chronic manageable disorder, perhaps easier to live with than Heart Disease or Diabetes. Learn the latest about the HIV virus, new therapies, and the lessons learned from our history of dealing with HIV and its social stigma.

3 On the Edge: Transcending the Standard of Care

(Dr. Paul Benson, Dorea Shoemaker & Gretchen Haughton) Release: **1/30/2020**

Take matters into your own hands and become an active participant in your health. We'll discuss Cannabidiol (CBD) and its properties to improve and manage health with an expert, Dorea Shoemaker. CBD may be a new and safer alternative for pain instead of Tylenol or ibuprofen. We'll also discover benefits of whole food supplements to keep us healthy.

4 The Transgender Population – Understanding and Embracing this Population (Leon Bullough) Release: **2/13/2020**

A report from the World Professional Association on Transgender Health's (WPATH) Annual Conference. Hormone Replacement therapy is only a part of the transitioning process. Community and mental health support is essential for success. Individualized care plans based on evidence based

medicine and created to match each individual's desires and pace is essential to make the transition process a safe and healthy journey.

5 Sexual Health and HIV Prevention

(Dr. Paul Benson & Mark Rosen) Release: **2/27/2020**

We'll discuss sexually transmitted infections and their prevention. Many healthcare providers sweep this topic under the rug, but outcomes improve when we talk about how to stay healthy and infection free. Sexual health is not simply the absence of disease. It's living comfortably without fear or stigma; and embracing your sexuality while living day to day in your comfort zone.

6 Living Well Over the Age of 50

(Dr. Benson and Colin Colter) Release: **3/12/2020**

We'll discuss simple steps you, with the assistance of your doctor, can implement to live longer and healthier. Proper health maintenance makes a big difference at any age, but becomes even more important as the decades pass. We'll talk about prevention and aggressive strategies to manage co-morbidities sometimes encountered as we age. We can't turn back the clock, but you *can* improve your heart, liver, brain function, kidneys, and virtually every organ system.



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