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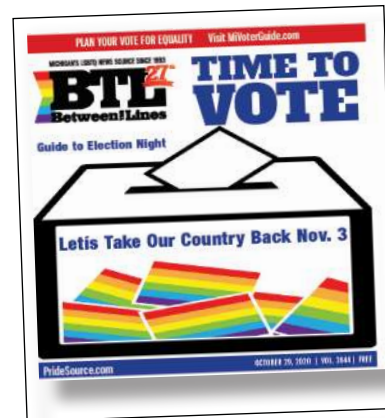
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Here are some of our latest online-only pieces:

Pope Francis Names D.C. Archbishop as Cardinal
By Lou Chibbaro Jr.

Panels from AIDS Memorial Quilt to Be Featured in all 50 States in Virtual Exhibition,
Applications Welcome
By Jason Michael

Tiffany Trump Criticized on Twitter for Promoting Dad as Supporter of LGBTQ People
By Chris Johnson

Virtual AIDS Memorial Quilt to be on display representing all 50 states.

Also, make sure to check back for our LGBTQ Voter Guide at mivoterguide.com and continuing COVID-19 coverage.

'How Do I Know the Voting Process is Safe and Secure'? And Other Election Questions, Answered

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Ask the Clerk

This election season represents Michigan's first major election with widespread no-reason absentee voting, which came about with the passage of Proposal 3 in 2018. So it stands to reason not everyone is entirely confident with the process. Complicating the scenario is the novel coronavirus pandemic, which has made voting from home not just a convenience but a necessity for many.

Yet exposure to rhetoric meant to sow doubt in the integrity of the election process has some voters wondering — and worried about — what their best option is or whether an absentee vote even counts the same as a vote cast in person. “The only thing I can say is for people that are concerned, or they're doubters maybe, they should work a counting board,” said Melanie Halas, city clerk of Royal Oak.

She is referring to the paid workers who process and tabulate the absentee ballots.

“Because I can't even tell you all the people that were able to work in the August election — they were like, ‘Wow,’” she said. “It's just a machine, the way everything works and how everything — when you do get so many ballots per tray let's say, and they go through the scanner, that scanner number has to be the exact same number that was on the report

that went with that tray to that scanner. ... It is constantly checked and balanced throughout the day. There's also challengers in the counting board, who are watching the whole process. So it's a very safe and secure process.”

How Your Ballot Gets Counted

For those curious about exactly what happens to their absentee ballot once the clerk receives it, Halas has the answer. First of all, ballots remain locked up until processing begins.

According to Michigan law, absentee ballots cannot be counted until the morning of Election Day. However, state lawmakers recently passed a bill that permits cities with at least 25,000 people to start pre-processing absentee ballots at 10 a.m. on Nov. 2. Pre-processing includes taking ballots out of their outer envelopes and sorting them so that it's easier to tabulate votes on Election Day.

“We do not start counting any ballots until 7 a.m. on Election Day,” Halas said.

She explained the election inspectors work in teams made up of different political parties.

“What they do is they first have a team that just opens the envelopes; we have teams that just take the secrecy sleeve out of the envelopes,” Halas said.

Another team ensures that the number on the ballot matches the number on the envelope.

“And then we have another group of teams, they put those ballots in a pile,” Halas said.

“We have another group of teams that they take those ballots to the scanner, then we have another group that they're the ones tabulating the ballots — so it's all different teams with different parts.

“There's so many checks and balances that we go through,” she continued.

Halas wanted to clear up a widespread misconception about absentee voting: that those ballots are not always counted.

“The biggest [myth] that we hear all the time is that they say absentees are not counted [unless] the race is close,” Halas said. “That is not true. Every single ballot is counted. As long as it's returned on time. It has to be here by 8 p.m. election night but we ask as soon as you vote that ballot you return it. We really appreciate it. But yes, every single ballot is counted.”

Protecting Voters at the Polls

For many, either out of desire or necessity, voting in person may be the only option. Voting during a pandemic is something Halas said they had a trial run with during the August primary, and she described the setup.

“We have PPE at all the precincts,” Halas said. “So all of the workers have masks on, they have sanitizer, we have the distancing for the floors so voters know where to stand. We also have sanitizer for the voters as well. If for some reason a voter walks in, forgets their mask, we

do have disposable masks the voters can have if they want to wear one.”

Constantly wiping down the voting booths and sanitizing them is another way voters are protected at the polls. Halas also said there are no longer pens attached to strings in the individual booths; when a voter walks in, the pen they pick up and use is theirs to take out of the precinct.

“We're just doing everything that we can think of to make it as safe as possible and make the voters feel safe as well,” Halas said.

Be Kind

Because the potential for voter intimidation has been in the news lately, we asked Halas for her thoughts on that subject. The election administrator sounded confident that it will not be tolerated.

“For all of my precincts we have a lot of seasoned workers,” Halas explained. “So even though I've hired a lot of new workers, I still have my seasoned chairs and co-chairs that are coming back and they know the protocols and the processes, and they know if someone is giving someone a hard time they are gonna call my office immediately and we are gonna send someone to the precinct to find out what's going on.”

See **Voting Process**, continued on p. 8

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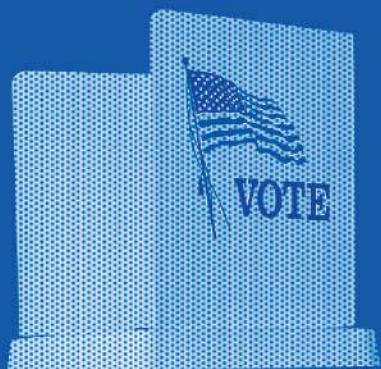
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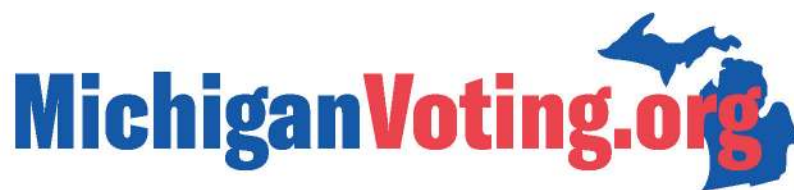
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LGBTQ Election Night Watchlist

BY LISA KEEN

It's a good bet that many LGBTQ people will be glued to their social media and news venues on Nov. 3. The Williams Institute, an LGBTQ think tank at UCLA, estimates that over 9 million LGBTQ people are registered to vote, and other statistics point to LGBTQ people being more politically engaged than the general population, too. Looking at projections on fivethirtyeight.com, the respected poll analysis website founded and run by openly gay statistician Nate Silver, gives Democrat Joe Biden an 87 percent chance of winning the White House. He gives Democrats a 96 percent chance of keeping the House and a 74 percent chance of taking control of the Senate. In addition to the other important national contests, the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund estimates that "at least 574 LGBTQ candidates" are on the ballot on Nov. 3. Its website identifies about 300 who have won their explicit endorsement and financial support.

To fill LGBTQ readers in on the most important national LGBTQ races, here's an hour-by-hour guide to how the night of Nov. 3 will unfold for major LGBTQ candidates and for the contests to control the U.S. House, Senate and the White House.

6 p.m.

U.S. HOUSE SEAT - Indiana's 2nd Congressional District

Most of Indiana will vote until 7 p.m., but South Bend, home of former Democratic presidential contender Pete Buttigieg, closes at 6 p.m. There, probate attorney Pat Hackett is making her second try at unseating four-time Republican incumbent Jackie Walorski. Walorski's record on LGBTQ issues has earned her a seven out of a possible 100 score from the Human Rights Campaign. A graduate of Liberty Baptist College and a staunch Trump supporter, Walorski has raised \$2.2 million for her campaign, compared to Hackett's \$770,000. Only \$11,500 of Hackett's support has come from LGBT political action committees, including the Equality PAC of the Congressional LGBTQ Equality Caucus, the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund and the L PAC. Buttigieg made a statement in support of Hackett but, as of Oct. 14, his Win the Era PAC had not contributed to her campaign. Hackett has a master's degree in theology from Notre Dame and lives in South Bend with her spouse Rita.

7 p.m.

FLORIDA - Mayoral Seats in Fort Lauderdale and Wilton Manors

These are among the most heavily LGBTQ municipalities in Florida. The Fort Lauderdale

Sun Sentinel endorsed openly gay incumbent Mayor Dean Trantalis with a strong editorial supporting a second term. He's seen as having a relatively easy path to reelection. Wilton Manors City Commissioner Julie Carson, a lesbian and cancer survivor, decided to run for the mayoral seat only last February when incumbent openly gay Mayor Justin Flippen died suddenly of a brain aneurysm. She faces two other candidates, including another former mayor. South Florida Gay News Publisher Norm Kent wrote last week that, while her opponents are worthy candidates, Carson "galvanized" the community of 12,500 following Flippen's death and has "judiciously integrated our community's social responsibilities" with the town's economic needs.

VIRGINIA - Richmond Mayoral Seat

Lesbian civic leader Alexis Rodgers, 29, has taken on a steep climb, trying to unseat a popular mayor in a five-way race of Virginia's capital city. It's her first bid at elective office, but she's raised the second-largest amount of money after incumbent Mayor Levar Stoney. That gives her a fighting chance to be one of two candidates in a possible runoff come December — Richmond has an odd Electoral College-like system that often leads to runoffs. The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported recently that a poll of likely voters had Rodgers a distant third place, but 30 percent of voters were undecided.

PRESIDENTIAL RACE

There are 60 votes in six states on the line at this hour. Four of the six states — Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, South Carolina, with a cumulative 44 electoral votes — went to Trump in 2016. Two states — Virginia and Vermont, with 16 electoral votes — went to Clinton. But polling in Georgia is unusually close in 2020; the latest, by CBS Oct. 23, showed a tie. An upset there could ring like the shot heard round the world. At this point, considering the polls are so close, and sticking with the historic voting patterns, the probable electoral vote count will be Trump 44 to Biden 16.

U.S. SENATE RACES

There are three close races closing out this hour and Democrats have a decent chance of picking up two new seats.

The two are in Georgia. Both Republican incumbents — David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler — have poor voting records on LGBTQ issues, and their Democratic challengers — Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock — have support from the LGBTQ community. The latest polls showed Perdue with only a 1-point lead over Ossoff,

and Warnock with a 6-point lead over Loeffler.

In South Carolina, the Human Rights Campaign scored Republican incumbent Lindsey Graham a consistent zero. When asked in a recent campaign interview about his support for the right of same-sex couples to marry, Graham said, "I have tried to be tolerant, I've tried to understand that people have different life experience. But I can tell you right now, when it comes to South Carolina, I think I've been an effective voice for who we are." The latest poll shows Graham with a 6-point lead over challenger Jaime Harrison. HRC has endorsed both Warnock and Harrison.

7:30 p.m.

LOCAL INTEREST

North Carolina Republican candidate for lieutenant governor, Mark Robinson, has said he would not support "this mass delusion called transgenderism." In West Virginia, State House Delegate John Mandt Jr., running for reelection, resigned suddenly after news reports drew attention to a Facebook chat posting in which he appeared to ask whether another member of the House was a "homo" and suggested the member was probably bisexual. Mandt's name is still on the ballot, however, and he says he'll serve a new term if reelected. In Ohio, lesbian Charmaine McGuffey is running for sheriff of Hamilton County, which includes Cincinnati.

PRESIDENTIAL RACE

There are 38 electoral votes at stake in three states: North Carolina, Ohio and West Virginia. Trump won all 38 in 2016. The latest polling has been swinging back and forth. Different polls on the same days in North Carolina showed Trump with a 1-point lead and Biden with a 4-point lead. The same thing was seen in Ohio, where two conservative-leaning polls showed Trump ahead by 3 percentage points and Biden ahead by 1 during the same time period. West Virginia is solidly Trump. The probable electoral vote count is Trump 82 to Biden 16.

U.S. SENATE RACES

There's a reasonable chance Democrats will pick up another Senate seat this hour. At latest polling, North Carolina's Senate polling has been somewhat erratic — from a tie a few days ago to a 6-point Democratic lead on Oct. 23. The Human Rights Campaign Fund and gay presidential contender Pete Buttigieg have endorsed Democrat Cal Cunningham. Republican incumbent Thom Tillis scores a consistent zero in HRC's Congressional scorecard on LGBTQ issues.

8 p.m.

U.S. HOUSE SEATS

Of the four LGBTQ candidates for Congressional seats, two seem on their way to easy reelection: Sharice Davids, a first-termer from Kansas' 3rd Congressional District, and David Cicilline, from Rhode Island's 1st.

- **In New Hampshire's 1st Congressional District:** First-term incumbent Chris Pappas' Republican opponent last week tried to draw attention to Pappas being gay by drawing attention to his boyfriend, a move the Victory Fund criticized as a "dog whistle" for anti-LGBTQ sentiments. The media attacking the boyfriend seemed to focus on him being a former lobbyist for Amazon, but it also seemed interested that the Republican candidate, Matt Mowers, did consulting work for pharmaceutical companies. Fivethirtyeight says Pappas has a 10-point advantage.

- **In Michigan's 6th Congressional District:** Jon Hoadley has also been hearing the dog whistle in his bid to unseat Republican incumbent Fred Upton. According to the Victory Fund, the National Republican Congressional Committee has posted Twitter messages and sent out a campaign mailer to voters' homes, describing Hoadley as a "pedo sex poet." Upton, meanwhile, has the endorsement of the national Log Cabin Republicans group. RealClearPolitics calls it a toss-up, though Upton has a 4.5-point advantage.

PRESIDENTIAL RACE

During this hour, 172 electoral votes are in play. In 2016, Trump won 94. This year, two of those states — Florida with 29 electoral votes and Pennsylvania with 20 — are in play. Trump's youngest daughter Tiffany spoke to an LGBTQ rally organized by gay Trump appointee Richard Grenell on Oct. 17. Equality Florida Executive Director Nadine Smith dismissed the event as "a pathetic attempt to hide his appalling record," adding that, "Donald Trump is the worst President the LGBTQ community has ever seen." At deadline, Biden had about a 2-point lead in Florida and a 7-point lead in Pennsylvania. If they split the baby, Trump gets Florida, Biden gets Pennsylvania, resulting in a probable vote count of Trump 155 to Biden 115. But keep in mind, many political number crunchers say that, barring unusual outcomes in Georgia or Texas, Pennsylvania is Biden's must-have ticket to 270.

9 p.m.

U.S. HOUSE SEATS

- **In Minnesota 2nd House District:** Angie Craig won her seat in 2018 and polls suggest voters are leaning her way for reelection. But a complication for Craig developed when a third-party candidate for the seat died. Under state law, if a "major party" candidate dies within 79 days of a November election, a special election must be held in February. Craig filed suit and won an order, Oct. 9, from a federal district court judge. But her Republican opponent has appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, so the election should be delayed until February.

- **In Texas' 23rd House District:** Gina Ortiz Jones appears poised to win a vacant seat from the San Antonio area. She lost by only 1,000 in 2018 and the incumbent has decided to retire this year. She's won the endorsement of San Antonio's mayor and the San Antonio Express-News. If elected, she'll become the first openly LGBTQ person to represent Texas in Congress.

- **In New York's 18th House District:** Incumbent Sean Patrick Maloney is hoping to win a fifth term. Fivethirtyeight says he has an 18-point advantage. Three newcomers seeking U.S. House seats from New York are facing tougher battles, but they have promise.

- **In New York's 15th House District:** Democrat Ritchie Torres is hoping to fill a seat representing the Bronx that was left vacant by a Democrat's resignation. Torres beat out a field of 15 Democratic candidates in the primary. He's won the endorsement of former President Barack Obama and Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden. His chances are good of joining the LGBT Caucus in Congress.

- **In New York's 17th House District:** Democrat Mondaire Jones is seen as the front-runner in a three-way race to replace retiring Democrat Nina Lowey in this seat north of New York City. He is expected to win, but he's faced some challenges from a third-party candidate in recent days.

- **In New York's 23rd House District:** Newcomer Tracy Mitrano is having a harder time in her bid to unseat a 10-term Republican whom she lost to by 9 points in a 2018 bid. But the latest poll showed her within 2 points this time.

- **In Wisconsin's 2nd House District:** Incumbent Mark Pocan ran unopposed in 2018, but he has a Republican opponent this year. However, given that Pocan won 120,000 votes in his primary and the Republican challenger garnered only 19,000, Pocan seems like a sure bet.

LGBT RACES

First-term Colorado State Rep. Brianna Titone, running for reelection, says she has been targeted with anti-transgender attacks in Colorado.

PRESIDENTIAL RACE

This hour is both crucial and potentially crazy. Throwing Arkansas, which closes at 8:30 p.m., into the 9 o'clock mix, there are 15 states and 162 electoral votes to record. In 2016, 106 of these went to Trump, including 10 in Wisconsin, 16 in Michigan and 11 in Arizona. But this year, unlike any time in recent memory, Texas' 38 is a down-to-the-wire horse race. Over the weekend, the last polls to come in showed first a tie, then Biden with a 1-point lead, then a three-point lead. Michigan looks to be leaning strongly for Biden; Arizona and Wisconsin look sloppy. Given that Texas Gov. Greg Abbott is taking measures, backed by the state supreme court, to make as cumbersome as possible to return absentee ballots, the probable electoral vote count is Trump 238 to Biden 194.

10 p.m.

MONTANA

Secretary of State candidate Bryce Bennett has won the endorsement of some key newspapers in the state, and while his opponent has tried to paint him as a raging "liberal," the papers and many of his colleagues in the state Senate say he's got the experience and the temperament for the job. If elected, he will become the first openly LGBTQ person just to win statewide office in Montana. Keep in mind, the latest poll in Montana has given Trump a 6-point lead in the presidential race

PRESIDENTIAL RACE

Four states and 21 electoral votes are up this hour. Nevada will break for Biden. Iowa's polling results have been a bit erratic, but it will probably go with Montana and Utah for Trump, leaving the probable electoral vote count to Trump 253 and Biden 200.

11 p.m.

U.S. HOUSE

- **In California's 41st Congressional District:** Incumbent Mark Takano won more than 100,000 votes in his primary this year, compared to his Republican opponent's 58,000. He has no impediments for a fifth term.

- **In California's 53rd Congressional District:** The queer president of San Diego City Council, Georgette Gómez is hoping to win an open seat but she has been strongly outspent by another Democrat seeking the office.

- **In Washington's 10th Congressional District:** State Rep. Beth Doglio is hoping to win a vacant seat representing the Tacoma area. She's won some big-name endorsements like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. She's up against former Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland, another Democrat, and Strickland won the Seattle Times endorsement. There haven't been many polls and the race is considered close, with Strickland in the lead.

WASHINGTON STATE

Two openly LGBTQ people are running for statewide office: Marko Liias for lieutenant governor and Helen Whitener for the state supreme court. Whitener was appointed to the court vacancy in April and is running in a special election. She is the first Black woman on the court and the second openly LGBTQ person. She's won endorsement from the Seattle Times and her opponent has dropped out, though they are not off the ballot. Liias has had a strong opponent who is also a Democrat and has more endorsements.

PRESIDENTIAL RACE

This is the bottom of the ninth, bases are loaded, there are two outs and Democrats are poised to grand slam 78 electoral votes to win the game. The five states in this hour are predictable: California with 55, Washington with 12, Oregon with seven and Hawaii with four. Idaho with four will deliver for Trump, and at 1 a.m., Alaska will toss in three. The probable final electoral vote count will be Trump, 260 to Biden 278. Game over. The only question is whether the Trump team will try to file a protest after the game.



Local Sponsors Launch Multimedia Campaign to Encourage Early Voting

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

In 2016, 95 percent of votes cast by Detroiters went to Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton. However, the total number of registered Detroit voters overall who cast ballots was less than 50 percent, representing a steady decline since 2008. Two investors, along with the LGBT & Allies Caucus



Roland Leggett

of the Michigan Democratic Party, aim to change that with an innovative multimedia campaign.

It all started when local voting advocates Evan Rosin and Paul Silveri put their heads together with LGBT & Allies Caucus Chair Roland Leggett and came up with a way to encourage early voting on a mass scale in a historically underrepresented area.

“We’ve been working on what’s developed into a multimedia program that’s

Detroit-based, where we’re gonna have a few billboards around the city in strategic locations that encourage people to vote today and then provide through a text link information about how to not only register but to find your closest voting location,” Leggett said. “And we’re also doing a similar poster campaign around the city in these final two weeks highlighting early voting locations, where people can go and how they can register to vote.”

Leggett said they tapped the expertise of the ACLU, Affirmations and other like-minded organizations to determine the best language and approach. They’re using the City of Detroit’s elections website as a basis for what information people are being provided on how to vote early and vote safely, including locations of absentee ballot dropboxes across the city.

Organizers also worked closely with Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson’s office and the office of the mayor of Detroit to ensure the billboard and poster language is presented in the best way possible to get people connected to the resources they need.

“My hope is this,” Leggett said. “We have a municipal election next year, and obviously a midterm election the following year. So if we can push out to folks, ‘Hey, for a \$1,500 investment, you can have a big impact.’ I think a lot of investors would be totally into that.”

► Voting Process

Continued from p. 4

Halas urged voters to be kind to those workers, both seasoned and new.

“I just hope that when voters come into the precincts that they realize the election workers, it’s a long day for them,” Halas said. “It’s a busy day. I just hope that they are kind to the inspectors.

“And I know a lot of people have a lot of opinions about the candidates, and the workers are just there to get you your ballot and have your ballot tabulated. They’re there to help you out. And so that’s really my only concern is because it’s quite a climate we’re in right now as far as the election in general.

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Between The Lines strongly endorses these statewide and national candidates:

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U.S. Senate



Gary Peters, U.S. Senate

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Want to help? Here’s how you can get involved:

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Here are six openly LGBTQ candidates endorsed by BTL. We encourage you to support them by volunteering and donating to their campaigns:

Jon Hoadley (D) is running for the 6th Congressional District in southwest Michigan. Hoadley seeks to unseat incumbent Republican Fred Upton who is seeking his 17th term in the U.S. Congress.



David Coulter (D), Oakland County Executive seeks election to the post he was appointed to last summer after the death of longtime County Executive L. Brooks Patterson.



And these State Reps.:

Tim Sneller (D) seeks reelection to his seat in Michigan’s 50th House District.

Laurie Pohutsky (D) seeks reelection to her seat in Michigan’s 19th House District.

Jody LaMacchia (D) seeks election in Michigan’s 46th House District.

Renee Richter (D) seeks election in Michigan’s 108th House District.

Go to www.MiVoterGuide.com for your personalized Progressive Voter Guide. Just enter your ZIP Code and see all the races rated for equality that will be on your specific ballot.

That’s what I’m most concerned about.”

Fortunately, one positive byproduct of intensified interest in the election process this year is that more people stepped up to work the polls.

“I have never, in 20-plus years of working here — it’s the first time I’ve never had to say, ‘Please, we need election inspectors, we need more help,’” Halas said. “We have had an abundance of people who have applied. It’s been awesome. I’ve never seen

this before.”

Note: For those who have not yet returned their completed absentee ballots, please return them to your clerk’s office or a ballot drop box to ensure their timely arrival. For location of clerks’ offices, ballot drop boxes and more, see the Voter Information Center: mvic.sos.state.mi.us. Track your absentee ballot online here: mvic.sos.state.mi.us/Voter/Index.

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Oakland County Launches At-Home Flu Shots for Older Adults

Oakland County Health Division is launching a new program to vaccinate homebound residents 65 years and older for influenza in their homes beginning Tuesday, Oct. 27. Appointments are required. The Health Division's Nurse on Call at 800-848-5533 will start accepting appointments on Oct. 22.

"This important service will help remove barriers for our most at-risk residents to receive a flu shot this season," Oakland County Executive David Coulter said. "Getting a flu shot is more important than ever this year since both flu viruses and COVID-19 will be present in our community."

Flu and COVID-19 are both respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. Getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19, however, the flu vaccination has many other benefits:

- Helps prevent flu illness
- Reduces risk of flu-associated hospitalizations
- Has been shown to reduce severity of illness if you do get the flu
- Protects you and the people around you including those more vulnerable to the disease

Public Health Nurses will visit residents' home during a designated appointment time. Nurses can provide individuals 65 years and older a senior higher dose or regular flu shot.

"Flu vaccination is very important this year to help reduce respiratory illnesses and avoid overwhelming the health care system. Research is suggesting that the risk of death may double in those 60 years and older if they are infected with both flu and COVID-19," said Dr. Russell Faust, Oakland County Medical Director. "Wear a mask, wash your hands, and practice physical distancing not only to prevent the spread of COVID-19, but also flu."

Payment options include Medicare, Medicaid, most Blue Cross Blue Shield plans and Blue Care Network, and additional insurances. No one will be denied access to services due to lack of insurance; there is a discounted/sliding fee schedule available.

For up-to-date information, visit oakgov.com/health, follow the Health Division on Facebook and Twitter @publichealthOC, or call the Health Division's Flu Shot Hotline at 800-434-3358. Nurse on Call is also available to answer questions at 800-848-5533, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Affirmations to Host Big MASKerade Bash Oct. 31

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

A Bash Like No Other

Celebrating Halloween this year promises to be a fraught endeavor as the country continues to grapple with the novel coronavirus pandemic. However, the Affirmations LGBTQ community center has a fix for that: Leave a bucket of candy on the porch and settle in for their virtual MASKerade Bash on Oct. 31 from 7 to 9 p.m.

With live entertainment from musician Jill Jack, and the chance to win more than 100 bottles of wine, organizers hope they've cooked up a memorable evening. The live event is professionally produced by N-Media and Congress Studios and can be viewed live via Zoom, Facebook Live, Vimeo or YouTube Live. It is free to the public.

"Our special events have always been one of our major sources of income and we've lost them all, since COVID," Executive Director Dave Garcia explained. "We had to cancel the Spring Bash and then make it the Fall Bash — and then we had to cancel that."

The Details

Live from Affirmations Pittmann-Puckett Gallery, Garcia will host the event along with Board of Directors President Cheryl Czach and Vice President Anthony Sherman. The program will also feature an update on the center and presentation of Affirmations' 2020 award winners.

Garcia said that out of necessity, they had to plan a virtual event. They've retained the services of the production company that helped Affirmations with their successful

telethon this summer. He described the two-hour event — a variety of live and recorded segments — as professional, fun and fast-paced.

For readers unfamiliar with Jack's music, her bio describes her as a "Detroit based singer-songwriter [who] captures audiences



with her soulful voice and dynamic storytelling. Over her 20-year career in the industry, she has continually adapted and flowed through music, showcasing self-written songs in rock, folk, Americana, and jazz."

Jack will play two sets.

"There will be video segments from a bunch of community members to do the keynote instead of having someone come in and do a keynote at a black-tie event," Garcia said.

He added there will be numerous leaders of the community who participate in the pre-recorded address.

About Those 100 Bottles of Wine

Last year, and in some years past, Affirmations held a wine party in which the admission "fee" was two bottles of wine: one to share and one for a raffle. Even though an in-person event isn't possible this year, rest

assured the wine will still flow.

Garcia described how the Halloween-themed wine raffle will work.

"If you, the community, send in your best Halloween picture of all time, then you automatically get entered into the wine raffle. But other people can just buy a ticket for \$10," he said. "The wine came from the last fundraiser and many donors have given to what they thought was gonna be the next wine fundraiser but we called them and said look, we can't do that."

Multiple raffle tickets may be purchased but only one complimentary ticket per person who sends in a photo. All contributions up to \$10,000 will be matched through a community challenge gift made by members of the Affirmations Board of Directors.

At the end of the evening, one name will be drawn and the lucky winner will be the recipient of the 100 bottles. Photos of attendees' favorite Halloween costumes may be uploaded from the online invitation.

Garcia made a distinction between the upcoming Affirmations fundraiser and other fundraising events he's seen lately.

"It will be broadcast live out of Affirmations and unlike other fundraisers similar to ours, we're not selling tickets," Garcia said. "[Attendees] don't have to buy anything. They just have to tune in. If they tune in, we think they might donate."

When asked about his own Halloween costume, Garcia wasn't talking. He added that's not the only surprise viewers can expect from the show.

Affirmations' Big MASKerade Bash is on Saturday, Oct. 31, from 7 to 9 p.m. Learn more online at goaffirmations.org.

Ferndale DDA Hosts Halloween Decorating Contest Oct. 19-Nov. 1

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Just in time for the spookiest day of the year, the Ferndale Downtown Development Authority has announced a Halloween Decorating Contest, a Halloween-themed event that allows visitors to vote on which Ferndale business feature the best decorations. All visitors get to help decide, and all businesses city-wide are invited to decorate their space with ghoulish goblins, macabre masquerading monsters, shocking shadowy skeletons or maybe even zooming zombies.

"The Ferndale DDA is excited to bring a fun, safe activity to the community as we enter the holiday season," said DDA Executive Director Lena Stevens. "This is our first event of 2020. Halloween competitors



are bringing their decorating A-game to earn the bragging rights that come along with a people's choice voting for the best window. We can't wait to see visitors mask up, pop in to shop, and then get online to vote for their favorite window display around the city."

Online voting will run from Monday, Oct. 19 to Sunday, Nov. 1 at midnight. One winner

and one runner up will be selected for the Downtown Ferndale District and one winner and one runner up will be selected city-wide. The DDA asks that participants keep in mind social distancing guidelines in the wake of COVID-19 and to wear a mask and be conscious of those around you.

Those who are unable to visit the locations in person are invited to participate virtually by completing an online survey where pictures of the decorations will be posted. All businesses in the city can sign up to participate. To register or learn more, visit surveymonkey.com/r/hallowindow. And don't forget to tag @downtownferndale in your pictures and follow the DDA for more promotions coming this fall.

Halloween decorations being applied on the exterior of J's Penalty Box Sports Bar for the Ferndale Halloween window contest. Courtesy photo.

Motor City Pride Participates in Virtual Pride Stride 5K

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Motor City Pride has announced its participation in the first-ever National Pride Stride, a virtual 5K created by LA Pride to help Pride organizations across the country offset this year's novel coronavirus pandemic-related losses and raise funds for their charitable efforts. For its part, any funds MCP receives will go to the agency's annual grant program.

More than 30 Pride organizations are taking place the Pride Stride. The effort was scheduled to bring attention to National Coming Out, which was Oct. 11. The 5K was developed with the assistance of EnMotive and producers of the Allstate Hot Chocolate 15k/5k series, and participants in groups or alone can walk or run wherever they choose – even at home on their treadmill – throughout the month.

“Collectively, we’ve had to stay indoors during our Pride season thanks to the pandemic and follow safety guidelines, but we didn’t go away,” said newly appointed LA Pride President Sharon-Franklin Brown. “It’s important that we show we haven’t stopped making each and every member of our respective communities visible and matter. We’re leading the effort to get people moving and help them get out, figuratively and literally, across the country to safely show their pride in solidarity with this event.”

With most American Pride events canceled this year, organizers of the Pride Stride said they believed it was a safe, fun alternative.

“These times require us to reflect and modify the actions that we take and the programming that we develop in our fight for full freedom and equality,” said Ryan Bos, executive director of the Capital Pride Alliance in Washington,

D.C. “This event will be part of our #StillWeVote campaign, a call to action for members of the LGBTQ community and our allies. Our votes are our voices, and we have too much at stake to sit by idly. Let us acknowledge that #StillWe must run and walk to the ballot box or mailbox for this November’s general election.”

All Pride Stride participants will receive a goodie bag featuring Pride Stride-branded swag, a themed Pride Stride finishers medal and more. Registration for the inaugural Pride Stride virtual run is \$40 at Pridestride.org. For more updates or more information, follow @pridestrideofficial on Facebook and Instagram.

The unique aspect of the virtual 5k is that it allows each participant to safely walk or run solo at their own leisure, or socially distancing with a few friends without needing to worry about massive crowds or a time limit. There is no official route, nor permits required. Participants can actively promote their own sign-up, and their family members’ and friends’ involvement through social media and rally others to participate. Participants can choose the day that works best for them to run or walk their own 5K.

All proceeds directed to Motor City Pride will be granted out to local LGBTQ organizations, helping to sustain them and support the work they do for the LGBTQ community. Organizers are working with both local and national sponsors including State Farm as a premier partner of the virtual event.

“Motor City Pride is excited to have been invited to participate in Pride Stride,” said Dave Wait, chairman of MCP. “It is an excellent way for people to come together, while social distancing, to support equality and have fun.”

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Despite Changes, Palmer Park Still Place for Connection Among LGBTQ Detroiters

BY EMELL DERRA ADOLPHUS

For as long as most of Detroit can remember, Woodward Avenue has been the city's main artery of activity, funneling business and culture from the city's east and west neighborhoods to a bustling downtown. Yet no city can survive long without a heart, and for a certain crop of LGBTQ Detroiters, Detroit's heart will always be Palmer Park.

Affectionately once called "Michigan's Gayest Square Mile," Palmer Park's heyday in the '70s and '80s was a haven for LGBTQ people — at least, the way some tell it.

What Changed

At Woodward Avenue, roughly from McNichols to Seven Mile Road, there were LGBTQ-affirming bars, welcoming small-businesses and fair housing — all enveloped by the area's sprawling nature park and ever-abundant community. The remnants of which are still around today in some form or fashion, but something has changed, according to Gregory C. Piazza, a former Palmer Park resident who wrote the definitive book: "A History of Detroit's Palmer Park (Landmarks)."

"I just turned around one day and it was like everybody was gone, all my friends were gone," he told WDET in a 2016 interview on Palmer Park's gay renaissance. Piazza stayed in the neighborhood from 1974 to '91. What changed in the community is well-known and documented as the white flight to northern cities. But thanks to the area's annual Hotter

Than July celebration, Palmer Park's LGBTQ history is more than just a memory.

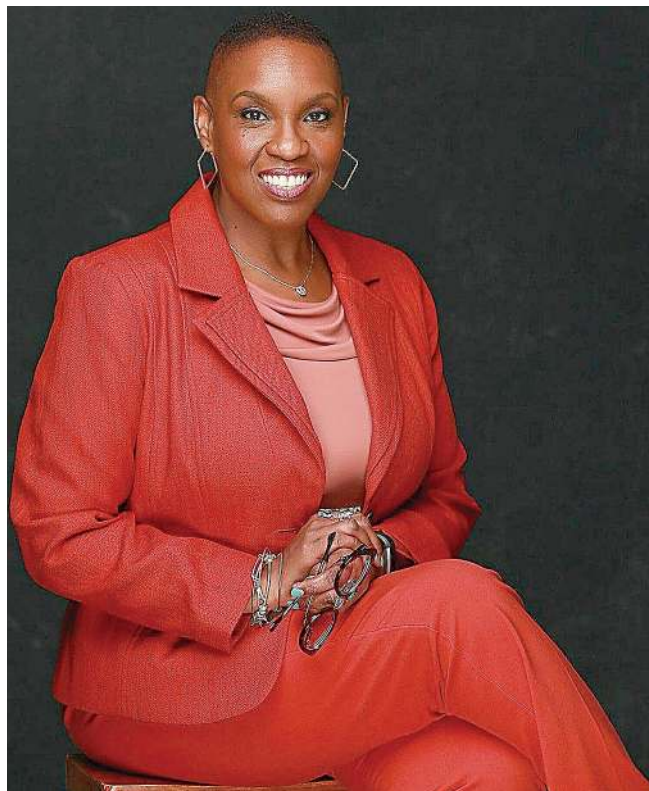
Celebrating its 25th anniversary virtually this year, Hotter Than July still calls LGBTQ Detroiters back to Palmer Park as the Midwest's oldest Black Pride celebration — and the world's longest-running one, too. Just as the Park neighborhood was thought to be "going down," the Pride celebration was picking up. And, though some still remember the Park's heyday, others are looking forward to a new day.

Historical Significance

Constructed in the late 1800s, Sen. Thomas W. Palmer donated Palmer Park to the City of Detroit. The Park today includes 296 acres of lawns and woodlands, a splash park, hiking and biking trails, tennis courts, a lake, a lighthouse, a historic log cabin and a burgeoning list of community events managed by the resident-driven People for Palmer Park nonprofit organization. Added to the National Register of Historic Places District in 1992, historians describe the neighborhood as a place where history, beauty and community combine. The same and more can be said of the LGBTQ community that still nostalgically calls the Park home.

Early on for Kalimah Johnson, now 52, Palmer Park was a home away from home where she found a family away from family. It was the '80s.

"When I was underage and couldn't get into bars, Palmer Park was the only place I could go and see people like me," said Johnson, who identifies as a bisexual, cisgender, Black woman. "It was always the hangout spot, the drive by



Early on for Kalimah Johnson, now 52, Palmer Park was a home away from home where she found a family away from family. It was the '80s.

spot; when you wash your car, you went so everybody can see that it's clean spot; the where you go to see your friends spot, where you felt safe spot."

Among "vivid memories" of hanging out and having fun, she made friendships with Black LGBTQ community leaders that would change her life. Those included lesbian activist and icon Ruth Ellis, LGBT Detroit executive director Curtis Lipscomb, Johnny Jenkins of Men of Color and Hotter Than July founders Cornelius Wilson and Robert Tate.

"So I was around during the creation of Hotter Than July," said Johnson, who is a community activist in her own right as the executive director of the Sexual Assault Services For Holistic Healing and Awareness Center. "Lots of stories behind Palmer Park; lots of my friends there. We would just go and park and hangout there. Dance. Twirl. Talk. Some of the ballroom culture would be happening out there at that very moment."

A Cultural Shift

Then another change hit the Park in the form of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and the people who brought the streets to life began to disappear. Johnson saw it all firsthand.

"Going out there to the park, hoping you see the same people every week, and it's thinning out, thinning out." Then Ruth Ellis passed away. "With her passing away, there were a number of things that changed the community. You know? Like when the matriarch dies in the family."

A cultural shift is how Johnson described it. "I think the AIDS epidemic and crack epidemic really changed the park because then it became a place where people would come and get their drugs or get high," she said. "There were just lots of people who had energy and spirit enough who could teach us and usher us into the safety of the LGBTQ world."

Detroit's LGBTQ history record shows a cultural shifts shaped by everything from World War to housing discrimination in the 1940s. By the 1950s, there was a record of men arrested in Palmer Park for sex cruising, according to research conducted by historian Dr. Tim Retzliff.

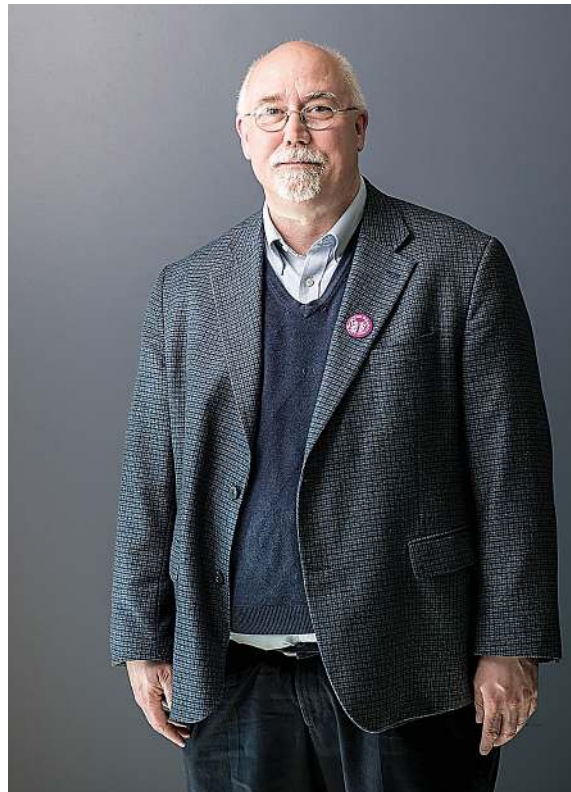
"One thing that I want to stress is that there's a lot of nostalgia about Palmer Park among a certain generation of white, gay men who lived in Detroit or Metro Detroit," said Retzliff. "They always talk about Palmer Park in the past tense. They say, 'Oh back in the day when Palmer Park was gay.' Well, there was a transition and Palmer Park changed after the mid-'80s, but it didn't really stop having a gay presence. It just stopped having a strong white, gay presence."

Retzliff, born and raised in Flint made his connection to Palmer Park while researching his dissertation on the changing bounds of gay life in Metropolitan Detroit. He also authored an LGBTQ history appendix "From Invisibility to Inclusion, Opening the Doors for Lesbians and Gay Men at the University of Michigan," which is commonly known as The Lavender Report.

"When you say Palmer Park, the kind of reference point comes to mind is the actual park, the acreage of parkland designated by

the city. Then there's the neighborhood, which would encompass the apartment district that's adjacent and across from the park," he said. "These were spaces where people bridged and sought each other out. It's really rich and complicated, and I am glossing over a lot, but this is kind of the basics."

In the majority-white neighborhood, the Park was a playground where LGBTQ people of all colors went to find themselves and each other. When white residents began to flee Detroit after the 1967 rebellion, the Park took on a new role to fit a new more diverse community.



Detroit's LGBTQ history record shows a cultural shifts shaped by everything from World War to housing discrimination in the 1940s. By the 1950s, there was a record of men arrested in Palmer Park for sex cruising, according to research conducted by historian Dr. Tim Retzloff. Photo: Josh Scott

"That is just a really crucial part of the story that a lot of white, gay men don't remember," said Retzloff. "When they moved away, there was a sense that everything stopped happening in the Park, and that is clearly not the case."

New Community Organizations, the Effects of Racism and Moving Forward

When the HIV/AIDS epidemic hit the Black LGBTQ community hard, a new crop of community organizations popped up over the

years to help guide the community through hard times, including Men of Color, the Detroit Coalition of Black Gays and Lesbians, KICK! Magazine — now LGBT Detroit — the Billionaire Boys Club and countless others. Hotter Than July brought them all together.

"There were some touch tones and some important progressive advances that happened in Detroit. Interracial dialogues that were happening. It's not just a story of segregation," said Retzloff. "There's a story of people working together and people finding each other and bridging kind the large social attitude. That was clearly going on in Detroit and played a vital role in Detroit becoming one of the earliest and largest cities to pass a human rights ordinance that included protections for sexual orientation."

He added that racism shaped the way things are now.

"The fact that there is even a Hotter Than July, which is basically another Pride celebration in July and it's sort of considered separate from the 'main' — and I say main in quotations — Pride celebrations. There's a lot of history to that, it seems and it's evolved that way for a reason."

This year's virtual celebration extended those connections beyond Palmer Park.

"With them doing Hotter Than July the way they did this year, it was an experience where I can see how it can grow from this," said Robert Tate, co-founder of Hotter Than July and founder of the Billionaire Boys Club beyond Palmer Park. "I think it's the way they are going to be recording and documenting the event. It will be better for the history and the archives so everyone can go back and see what really went on."

Tate had to be reminded of all the activities that went on during Palmer Park's heyday, such as the duck pond, the chicken fountain and the Green Beach. He spent most of his time entertaining at home as head of the BBC. But what he does remember is the feeling of freedom shared by the Park's patrons.

"I think, looking back, congregating, it brought excitement to the people to see their people, living their lives and being free. I think that's very important. We lived our lives," Tate said.

And he hopes LGBTQ people today will look back at Palmer Park, Hotter Than July and be inspired to do the same.

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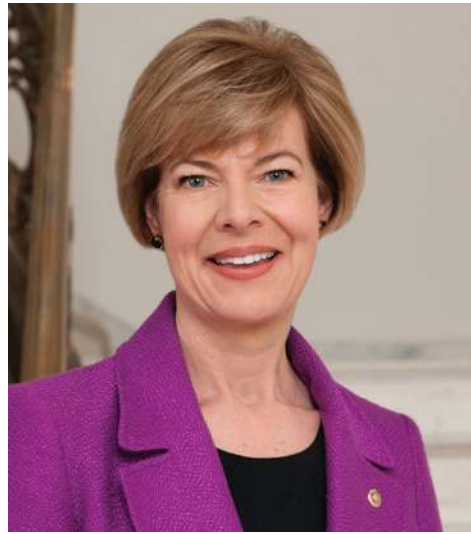
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RETROSPECTIVE

Sens. Gary Peters, Tammy Baldwin Join HRC in Pre-Election Equality Voter Push

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

As the Nov. 3 presidential election looms less than a week away, last-minute get-out-the-vote efforts are in full force. Last week, Human Rights Campaign teamed up with openly lesbian U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin from Wisconsin in a virtual rally to push for the reelection of Michigan Democratic Sen. Gary Peters, whose six-year term is slated to end on Jan. 3, 2021. Baldwin began the evening's discussion with an emphasis on why it's valuable for LGBTQ voters to see Democrats "flipping" the U.S. Senate.

"Well, while we have seen some incredible votes in the House of Representatives — including passage of the Equality Act for the first time in history — that bill and others like it have come over to the Senate just to gather dust on the desk of Mitch McConnell, the Republican leader of the Senate," she said. "We've got to change that, because there are still many regions of the country, many states in which LGBTQ people do not enjoy full legal protections against legal discrimination in many aspects of their lives and there is continual issues of bias that we have to confront, and we've got to change the world. And we're not going to be able to do that, at least as quickly as



we'd like, unless we flip the Senate and elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as the next president of the United States."

Both Peters and Baldwin worked together in the U.S. House of Representatives before becoming allies in the Senate, and Baldwin highlighted areas of progress during their terms together, citing efforts to aid LGBTQ-specific causes in areas of health care, employment and more. However, she warned not to "confuse

progress for victory." Peters agreed, and he shared that issues of equality will be among his top priorities if elected.

"Issues of equality are going to be a fundamental concept of who we are: that everybody in this country, no matter who you are, no matter where you live, no matter who you love, no matter how you identify — all of those things — we should all be treated equally," Peters said. "For me, that is the very core concept of this wonderful democratic republic that we have. But we also know that although those are the words that we express that doesn't necessarily mean that's what happens in reality, which is why we have to keep fighting."

Ongoing Priorities

During his time in office, Peters has helped to repeal "don't ask, don't tell" the Defense of Marriage Act and now pledges to fight for the Equality Act, a nationwide effort to include protections in all areas of American life for sexual orientation and gender identity.

"That shows pretty dramatically what you get when you have a Democratic majority. It's not theoretical. It's real. We will stand up and pass laws and legislation to do that. And given the numbers of what happens to folks in discrimination in employment and accommodations and all of the things that happen in our society, it's unacceptable," Peters said. "Look what's happening right now in the Judiciary Committee in the nominating of the Supreme Court nominee that President Trump is jamming through and Mitch McConnell is jamming through."

Newly sworn-in Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett has undergone intense scrutiny from LGBTQ activists, who say that her track record of conservative judgments could spell trouble for future LGBTQ rights decisions and potentially begin the undoing of decisions like *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which ensured marriage equality across the U.S., and *Roe v. Wade*, which

gave women access to abortion rights.

During the discussion, Peters was asked about what can be done to prevent the ongoing murders of transgender women, and particularly Black transgender women. Peters, who helps to oversee the Department of Homeland Security said the first steps lie with addressing domestic extremism in hate groups.

"Hate groups that hate the folks who are not like them and the insidious rise of white supremacy, anti-Semitic groups, of anti-government groups. We have to combat this two ways," he said. "One, we have to root out and focus on those groups that espouse hatred and translate that hatred into violence, and [two], we have to make sure that the Department of Homeland security actually focuses on the true threat on this country."

Baldwin echoed this sentiment and pointed to potential bright spots for reform in this matter if the Senate could be flipped.

"Brutality and violence that we're seeing against Black trans women happens at the hands of police, either by overt violence or failing to do one's job when somebody needs law enforcement help say after experiencing a hate crime," Baldwin said. "I do think if we can pass the George Floyd justice in policing act, then we can also make some strides to help us be more informed when it comes to hate crimes in the LGBTQ community and especially with Black trans women."

She then pointed to a cause for celebration, citing a bill she and Peters worked on that the president signed into law that created a three-digit hotline, 988, for suicide prevention that will provide culturally competent care for LGBTQ people.

"It's going to save lives because people need the resources and it needs to be quick and easy with no hurdles if you're going to seek the help and support in crisis," she said. "We know that several groups of Americans disproportionately have thoughts of suicide or die by suicide, and included is veterans and the LGBTQ community."

Finally, Peters finished the discussion by citing his work to create LGBTQ-specific competent care in disaster relief by adding a team to the Federal Emergency Management Agency that can aid survivors who are disproportionately affected by natural disasters.

"Clearly, COVID-19 is a natural disaster, to make sure that communities that are disproportionately affected are understood. We have to make changes in our policies," he said.

He then reminded the audience that voting absentee and early is safe and secure and expressed hope that he and LGBTQ constituents could celebrate "face-to-face together" after the election.

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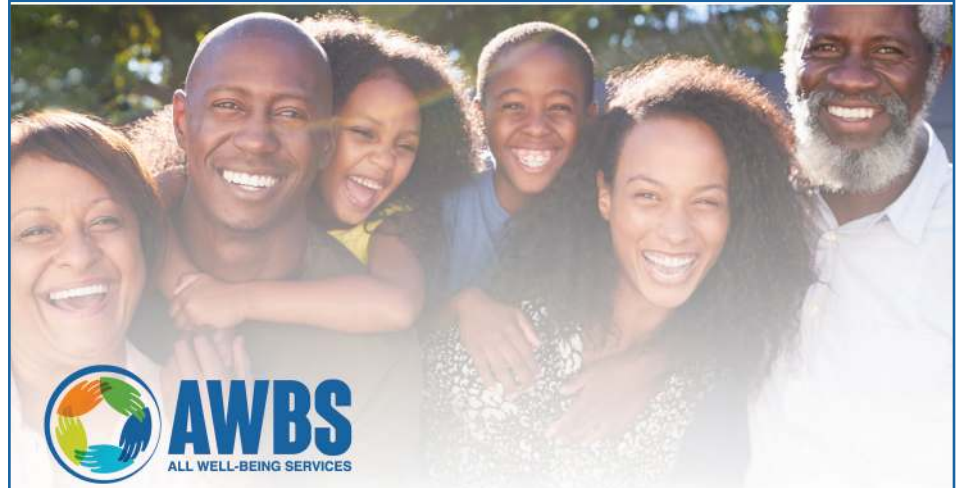
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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Band Boys I Tooted With

Mart Crowley's "Boys In the Band" opened off-Broadway 53 years ago. I bought a copy of the play in Chicago in 1968 and read tryout dialog aloud while driving back to Detroit with my then-partner, Larry.

We saw a groundbreaking local production a few years later at the long-vanished Rivera — a movie house turned legit stage — starring Wayne State University theater major Paul Pentecost.

Seeing gay life as we sometimes found ourselves living it proved fascinating: a big-city birthday party turned "truth game," with much drinking and lotsa line dancing to the sweet turn-on sounds of Burt Bacharach's "The Look of Love." A play about us!

"Boys" opened, timely, one year before New York City's liberating Stonewall Riots. That was the same year the Rev. Troy Perry started the first Gay Liberation church in Los Angeles. Change was in the air.

"Boys" was exciting on two counts. It was gay from start to finish, with camp humor put-downs. And, score one up for me, I had spent a romantic summer week with one of its off-Broadway production actors: handsome, talented Frederick Combs.

I met "Honey Combs" in a gay bar. He was appearing about 1966 in 18-year-old British playwright Shelagh Delaney's international hit, later movie, "A Taste of Honey" at the nearby Fisher Theatre.

He played Geoffrey, a gay artist. It was his big break. The cast included legendary Uta Hagen. The start of a promising career.

Freddy was staying at the Wardell Sheraton transients hotel, later The Park Shelton apartments. I later lived there for 24 years. The property was once owned by comic Gilda Radner, of "Saturday Night Live" fame.

Freddy said his two high school drama teachers believed he had talent and much star-quality promise. They paid for his ticket to New York to study acting — he also said he had been brought out by an Army sergeant when he was 16.

I followed him to Chicago during New Year's week, but I was gently told our final curtain had rung down in Detroit. I never saw him again in person, but in 1970 I had the pleasure of seeing him playing Donald when "The Boys in the Band" was made into a movie. His thespian buns are glimpsingly preserved for posterity.

Looking back at Crowley's pre-Stonewall play, given all that's happened — Gay Liberation, the AIDS crisis, Clinton's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, Ellen DeGeneres, "Brokeback Mountain," "Angels in America" — "The Boys in the Band" remains entertaining, well-crafted and compelling, if gay self-loathing.

Its characters are guys of another time and place who have yet to shake off the constricting onus placed upon them by religion, psychiatry, police, politics and even the Mafia!

You name it. Just about everyone and everything

See next page



MATCH GAME 2020

Viewpoint



BY CONGRESSMAN DAN KILDEE (MI-05)

A Call to Action: The US Senate Must Pass the Equality Act

In 2013, I had the privilege of standing on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court as the High Court announced its decision to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act, paving the way for a marriage equality decision just a few years later.

This year, one of the few bright spots came in June, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that workers could not be discriminated against because of their sexual orientation or gender identity under federal law. These historic moments represent major advancements our country has made toward equality for the LGBTQ community.

As we reflect and celebrate the progress we've made, we still have unfinished work to ensure equality for all LGBTQ Americans. Right now, there are still countless efforts to chip away at existing LGBTQ-inclusive policies.

I've been hearing growing concerns from my constituents protecting the progress we've made toward equality. This summer, I had the pleasure of meeting with a group of faith leaders, community leaders and LGBTQ Michiganders who shared with me reasons that we need to pass LGBTQ-inclusive protections at the federal level. They shared with me their stories of their LGBTQ friends and community members who have been subject to discrimination in the workplace and in housing based on their sexual orientation. Despite the Supreme Court's ruling earlier this year, I believe Congress must act to make sure that discrimination against LGBTQ Americans is banned.

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► Viewpoint

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At the highest levels of government, LGBTQ rights are under attack. The Trump administration has instituted a ban on transgender Americans serving openly in the U.S. military. No one who wants to serve our country should be discouraged to do so just because of their gender. This policy is purely discriminatory, not based in military strategy and makes the U.S. less safe.

The Trump administration has also continued to eliminate protections for the LGBTQ community, including recent actions to exclude trans people from discrimination protections in health care settings and homeless shelters. In the midst of a global pandemic, the administration has actively endangered the health and well-being of our trans community members.

On top of these attacks on protections, we must be realistic about the gaps in law that leave LGBTQ Americans vulnerable. Despite June's Supreme Court ruling, LGBTQ Americans still are not protected federally from discrimination in housing; in public spaces like restaurants, businesses, parks and other aspects of daily life. In my home state of Michigan, like 29 other states, we lack explicit state-level nondiscrimination protections for the LGBTQ community. We need to update our laws to increase protection for LGBTQ Americans.

Congress must pass legislation to protect all LGBTQ Americans, and it's why I am a proud co-sponsor of the Equality Act – which passed the U.S. House of Representatives in 2019 – with support of both Democrats and Republicans. This landmark legislation would

ensure that LGBTQ Americans are protected from discrimination in employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs and jury service. This bipartisan legislation has been sitting in the Senate for over a year, it is crucial the Senate and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell take action to protect LGBTQ Americans.

Finally, the novel coronavirus pandemic has highlighted existing inequality within our communities. As we work to solve the health crisis and the economic crisis, we must ensure that our LGBTQ friends and neighbors are not still able to be fired from their job, evicted from their home or denied a loan simply for being LGBTQ. Discrimination, in any form, is wrong. We cannot go backwards and accept discrimination against anyone.

It is clear that we have made significant progress toward equality for the LGBTQ community, but we still must do more. We must continue to vote for elected representatives who share our values of equality for the LGBTQ community. This will allow Congress to pass legislation to ensure that no one faces discrimination because of who they are or who they love. This year when you vote, consider what is on the line for the people we love and care about in our community.

Democrat Dan Kildee is a Flint native and has been the U.S. Representative for Michigan's 5th Congressional District since 2013. Learn more about Kildee online at dankildee.house.gov.

► Parting Glances

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straightjacketing.

Given as much, today, we either like the play for its moments of history replayed, or loath it for its obvious internalized homophobia. Nonetheless, it's courageous, especially compared to cautious to the plays dealing with homosexuality preceding it, like "The Children's Hour" from 1961 and "Tea and Sympathy" from 1956.

The boys in "Boys" are who they are in spite of a culture that demonizes them.

Frederick Combs' later career included writing, producing and directing an off-Broadway mystery play that got soundly panned, prompting him to leave New York for Los Angeles. He then appeared in TV soaps and miniseries, and, for a time, ran his own drama school. He died from AIDS-related causes in 1992. He was 57.

His acting talent, ruddy face — and rather memorable backside understudying — are available for repeated viewing on DVD. I watched the movie this week and remembered when...

And, as one of the old boys in an old band, I'm still grateful to be tootin' my horn. On or off-key. On and off stage. Front row or last row, balcony. Jim Parsons, please take note!

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

Creep Of The Week

Donald Trump

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

On Monday, Oct. 27, Donald Trump swore in his third Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett under the cloak of night. And like many things that necessitate darkness, it was a sordid affair that will leave a lasting stain.

And let's be clear: this is not an accomplishment, despite what Republicans might claim. We do not say that a bank robber's sudden windfall is an accomplishment. We do not say that a child's pack of grape Bubblicious stolen from Kroger is an accomplishment. Nor should we say that the Republican packing of the Supreme Court, not to mention so many lower courts, in the U.S. is an accomplishment. It is a fact, yes. It is an intentional action yielding their desired result. But there is nothing to be proud of here. The immorality of the Republican Party in staggering.

You'll remember, of course, that in President Barack Obama's last year in office, the Republicans, led by Mitch McConnell, refused to consider his Supreme Court nominee, Merrick Garland. They said that in an election year the people should decide who should be the next president, and the next president should get to nominate someone for the court.

And we all know how that turned out.

Note that Garland was appointed in March. MARCH. His appointment was blocked by the Republicans for over six months. It was too close to the election, McConnell said.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg died on Sept. 18. McConnell and the Republicans rammed through Coney Barrett's nomination in less than a month, because they have no principles. No morals. They care only about power.

The most corrupt and incompetent and irresponsible president in history was able to put three justices on the Supreme Court. These justices were chosen specifically because they will vote against LGBTQ rights, against reproductive freedom, against access to health care, against voting rights.

But let's not forget that there's an election happening right now. Hell, by the time you read this, election day may have come and gone.

The other day a pickup truck drove past me with two giant flags flying from the back. One was a black-and-blue American flag, the other was the traditional American flag with the words, "Trump 2020 F*UCK YOUR FEELINGS." These flags truly represent everything the Republican Party — and let's be clear that Trump is NOT separate from the Republican Party, he is the ultimate

symbol of what this party is — stands for.

First, the so-called "Blue Lives Matter" flag. It is intended to be a show of support for law enforcement in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. It is fitting that this flag is black and blue, like a bruise. Of course, if your response to the idea that Black lives should matter and that the police shouldn't be able to kill them with impunity is to say that, no, actually police officers killing Black people is fine with you, then you're probably racist. If you really want to support law enforcement, then support policies that would make them and the communities they serve safer and more secure like training in deescalation, licensing requirements, transparency, and accountability.

Secondly, the stars and stripes with "F*UCK YOUR FEELINGS" scrawled across it is the equivalent of wearing the flag as a diaper. Trump's self proclaimed patriots love to shout about respecting the flag when Black athletes are kneeling to protest police brutality, but are more than happy to use the flag as a billboard for their hatred and general assholeery.

The U.S. is a flawed country, no doubt. But we were built on ideals that are worth trying to live up to. We've moved backward under Trump.

That said, the Democrats are a flawed party. But they are the only party that thinks this country's ideals are aspirational. They are the only party with candidates who care about people. They are the only party that believes in science. They are the only party that believes that COVID-19 is real and that we must do everything we can to slow the spread and save lives.

Republicans, who consider themselves the "tough guys" because they have open disdain for caring about other people, have given up on trying to control the virus. The biggest health crisis this country has faced in my lifetime and the Republicans have said, "Nah, that's too hard."

They are losers and failures. And that should be reflected in the election results across the board.

It's not over on Nov. 3. Even if Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are elected and Trump and Pence lose as they so rightfully deserve to lose. The hatred and the violence and the false reality that have been encouraged and given legitimacy by the Fox News Administration isn't going away any time soon, and Trump is going to ramp up his trashing of the country on his way out.

Buckle up.

Pope Francis' Support of Civil Unions Makes LGBTQ Catholics 'Cautiously Optimistic'

BY BTL STAFF

Last week, a number of media outlets reported that during a documentary interview Pope Francis expressed support for civil union laws for same-sex couples to ensure that they are “legally covered.” DignityUSA, the organization of Catholics committed to



justice, equality and full inclusion of LGBTQ people in the church and society, is cautiously optimistic about this development while acknowledging that details are still changing.

“We are anxious to see the full film, the context in which Pope

Francis made these comments and whether the Vatican will make further comment on this story,” read a DignityUSA press release. “Additionally, this is not the first time Francis has signaled an openness to civil unions; he voiced support of civil unions during his time as a bishop during Argentina’s marriage equality debate.”

“If true, the Pope’s comments could represent an international game-changer and a major step forward for LGBTQ equality,” said Marianne Duddy-Burke, Executive Director of DignityUSA. “It would remove a key obstacle to LGBTQ inclusion in many places around the world, especially in areas where LGBTQ people are especially vulnerable to discrimination and violence. Civil union laws can provide essential legal protections to LGBTQ couples and their children. We hope that Catholic officials worldwide will work to provide essential legal and social protections for LGBTQ people and their families.”

Duddy-Burke went on to say that while DignityUSA is pleased by the news report, questions remain about how the Pope’s comments will fit in with existing Catholic teachings that condemn same-sex relationships as “intrinsically evil.”

“We hope that Pope Francis will take steps to enshrine support for same-sex couples, LGBTQ individuals, and our families in official Catholic teachings and will work to formally end Catholic teachings that are hurtful to LGBTQ people,” she said. “While the Catechism of the Catholic Church has long condemned ‘unjust discrimination’ against LGBTQ people, it still refers to ‘homosexual tendencies’ as ‘objectively disordered.’ This language continues to serve as the basis of so much discrimination, exclusion, violence and hate against LGBTQ people and our families.”

Duddy-Burke added that as more people around the world continue to recognize marriage equality as a fundamental human right, “we hope that this development will represent a step towards full inclusion and legal protection of same-sex couples and their families, and not a compromise that allows some legal protections, but not full equality that marriage provides.”

“Already, Catholics in many parts of the world have moved beyond the official Church, and have fully embraced LGBTQ people, their families and marriage equality in their communities,” she said. “We hope and pray that Catholic officials will follow their example.”

Senate Confirms Amy Coney Barrett to Supreme Court

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

The U.S. Senate on Monday confirmed Amy Coney Barrett to a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court by a vote of 52-48, solidifying a 6-3 conservative majority on the bench and President Trump’s lasting impact on the judiciary.

Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.), the first out lesbian elected to the Senate, joined other critics in saying Barrett’s confirmation was rushed through and said on the Senate floor “voters across America should be allowed to cast their ballots first,” but Republicans “have no interest in listening to the people.”

“That’s why they are rushing and ramming President Trump’s Supreme Court nomination forward just days before the election,” Baldwin said. “This rigged and illegitimate process is wrong, and it follows a pattern of the majority leader and Senate Republicans abusing their power to break their own standards on Supreme Court nominations.”

No Democrat voted in favor of confirming Barrett, whom President Trump selected to replace the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the Supreme Court. Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) was the only Republican to break with her caucus against confirming Barrett, which critics say was done in a rushed process.

Fears persist Barrett’s confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court would be a threat to LGBTQ rights, including same-sex marriage. Bolstering that apprehension was an unexpected statement earlier this month from U.S. Associate Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito declaring war on the 2015 Obergefell decision granting marriage rights to same-sex couples.

Sarah Kate Ellis, president of the LGBTQ media watchdog GLAAD, said in a statement Monday prior to Barrett’s confirmation the appointment “is alarming for LGBTQ people and for all Americans whose fundamental rights should never be up for debate.”

“Barrett’s time at a school that discriminated against LGBTQ families and hurt LGBTQ youth is disturbing and should disqualify her from the Court. Her stated views against marriage equality, rulings against access to abortion, and her public criticism of the Affordable Care Act are out of step with fair-minded Americans and threaten the progress our country has made to become a stronger and more equitable home for all,” Ellis said. “Her record against LGBTQ families and rights has no place in American life,



Judge Amy Coney Barrett (Photo by Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP; POOL PHOTO used with permission)

let alone the highest court in the land.”

Barrett, during her confirmation hearing last week before the Senate Judiciary Committee, said Obergefell “clearly says there is a constitutional right to same-sex marriage,” but wouldn’t budge from no comment on whether she’d vote to overturn the decision, most notably in an exchange with Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.).

“[You’re] implying that I’m poised to say I want to cast a vote to overrule Obergefell, and I assure you, I don’t have any agenda, and I’m not even expressing a view of disagreement with Obergefell,” Barrett said. “You’re pushing me to try to violate the judicial canon of ethics and to offer advisory opinions, and I won’t do that.”

But Barrett has history of deep affiliation with Catholic Church, which has long record of opposing LGBTQ rights (despite Pope Francis I coming out in favor of civil unions just last week), and has articulated personal and religious opposition to same-sex marriage.

In 2015, Barrett signed with other Catholic women a letter to bishops affirming marriage is “founded on the indissoluble commitment of a man and a woman.”

Trinity Schools, the religiously affiliated private school where Barrett served as a trustee for three years, had a hostile climate for LGBTQ teachers and effectively barred students with same-sex parents from admission, as reported by the Associated Press.

Barrett has also admitted to taking speaker fees from a legal fellowship affiliated with Alliance Defense Freedom, a group that fought against same-sex marriage and other LGBTQ rights across the board. Barrett downplayed that connection during her confirmation

hearing and during her 2017 confirmation hearing for her on the Seventh Circuit gave a total of three explanations for when she became aware of the legal group’s anti-LGBTQ work.

David Cicilline, the most senior openly gay member of the U.S. House, said in a statement prior to Barrett’s confirmation the Senate should have waited until after Election Day when a new president to sworn-in to fill the open seat on the Supreme Court.

“The American people should have a say in who gets a lifetime appointment to the Supreme Court,” Cicilline said. “Instead, just eight days before a presidential election, Republicans will vote today to confirm Judge Amy Coney Barrett, a nominee who threatens the progress our country has made over the years to expand access to health care, protect the LGBTQ+ community from discrimination, address the threat of climate change, and guarantee that women can make their own health care decisions.”

Polls have shown a bare majority of the American public backs her confirmation. A Morning Consult poll made last week found 51 percent of American voters back her confirmation, compared to 28 percent who say the Senate should reject and the 21 percent who have no opinion.

The most imminent opportunity for Barrett to adjudicate a case related to LGBTQ rights is the issue of foster care. Catholic Social Services, in the case of *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*, is arguing a First Amendment right to refuse to place children with same-sex couples — even though it had signed a contract with Philadelphia agreeing not to engage in anti-LGBTQ discrimination through its taxpayer-funded activities. The case is set for oral arguments on Nov. 4, the day after Election Day.

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Photos: Shamir

For Shamir, Success During a Pandemic Is True to Form

Alt-Rock Artist on Being Prolific During a Health Crisis and the Beyoncé Conundrum for Black Artists

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

If you want to know how musical chameleon Shamir is right now, expect the 25-year-old to answer much like he approaches making music. In both cases, he doesn't like to repeat himself. "I've done a lot of interviews, so I've been trying to vary my answers," he says, laughing.

On the day we connect by phone, he's not good, he's not bad. "I'm alive, you know."

Considering his 2020, which has been one of his most successful years yet, that's a very good thing to be. In March, just as the United States shut down due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Las Vegas-born, Philly-based musician, known for his exploratory DIY style, released "Cataclysm." It wouldn't be his only album of the year.

Six months later comes "Shamir," his first self-titled album and, it's obviously worth noting, his seventh altogether, all released

within the five years since his 2015 breakout "Ratchet" dropped on the same label as Adele and garnered him prestige in the pop music world. Shamir, who identifies as non-binary and is open to being addressed by any gender pronouns, went on to release two albums in 2017, "Hope" and "Revelations." Then came 2018's "Resolution" and 2019's "Be the Yee, Here Comes the Haw." Genre-wise, his outside-the-box work is whatever he wants it to be, from pop to punk to country-inflected indie rock.

With "Shamir," his second album of 2020 on his own label, he modernizes the lo-fi, women-led alt-pop-rock sound of the '90s. At this point, he finds a way to do what he wants, when he wants, with nothing stopping him. Not a label, not a producer. Not even a global pandemic.

Is it a weird juxtaposition to be successful amid chaos and crisis?

Definitely. But knowing the way my life works, it makes total sense.

In other words, for you, this is just another year?

Well, success in the middle of a pandemic? That's who I am. Anytime anything great happens to me, there's always a catch. If you think of my most successful era, "Ratchet," yeah, that was my most successful release but it was in a genre I didn't want to do, had no business doing, and didn't even fucking understand. (Laughs.)

Considering the artist you've evolved into, I wondered how you looked back at that era. Can you talk about the artistic journey you've been on?

It was just all natural. I completely removed myself from electronic-based pop music. I had to go back to being behind the guitar because before that record that's what I was doing. It was weird to see me sing without my guitar, and I think I kind of did the pop era as a way to prove to myself that I could step

back from behind the guitar, and I did and I did it successfully. But I realize that it didn't make me happy. And I'm happiest behind the guitar. I enjoy songwriting more that way, and I realize that, well, this is my job now, and my life now. (Laughs.) I have to do it how I want, in a way that make me the most comfortable.

With this being your first self-titled album, I wondered if the significance of that is that this is you at your purest.

It's exactly that. Not even necessarily me at my purest, but it's how I always imagined myself. It applies to every element that I love, because I do like to listen to electronic pop music and I am inspired by it, but I love playing guitar and I love grunge and I love indie rock but I also love country and I also love punk. I think this record encapsulates all of that but also makes it digestible for anyone who likes any genre of music, really.

You seem more proud of this work than any albums you've done in the past. Is the feeling that you have now about this title different from, say, the feeling you had during the "Ratchet" release?

Yeah. I feel different after every release. I think I only make records when I'm in a fairly transformative time in my life, and with every record, I can pinpoint what I was doing in that section of my life, what I was feeling, and where I was mentally and physically. I think it just varies with each release. Obviously this release is so different. Even if I wanted to kind of treat it like every other release, I can't just by virtue of releasing it in the middle of a pandemic (laughs). Everything I release is so different, and I'm in such a different mindset. I just got through this year relatively very sober – the most sober I've ever been. I mean, not necessarily on purpose but kind of. And also last month was a year since I last had a cigarette and quit smoking, so yeah, pandemic aside, I feel like a completely different person just from those two things.

It sounds like you are finding personal fulfillment by controlling what you can even if the world is falling down around you.

Yeah. This is the first record where I was *not* having a cigarette break between each vocal take. (Laughs.)

That's progress.

My last engineer would joke because I'd do maybe a few vocal takes and then be like, "OK, I need to take a break and have a cigarette." He'd call it my "vocal warm-ups." I hear a difference in my voice. I'm sure other people can't, but there's a certain clarity that I've never heard.

When it comes to making music, how did you learn to do so much on your own?

I kind of have this jack-of-all-trades personality trait, and I don't care to find out how something is made unless I feel like I can do it myself.

Did you learn anything new while making this album?

No, not necessarily. I'm such a jack of so many trades now at this point. (Laughs.)

There's nothing more to learn!

There really is nothing more to learn, (laughs) and if anything, it just kind of makes things more efficient. We made this record in only two weeks.

You've really cultivated a space for yourself in the underground pop music world, and I'm not sure the best way to ask this question, but do you feel like your white gay contemporaries get more credit?

People love to ask me that. I will say this: No one can deny that if I was white my career wouldn't look different. A perfect example is how (British musician) Scott Walker died not too long ago and I did not know about

him until he died, and I felt such kinship because his career trajectory was very similar to mine in the sense that he started off as a teen pop singer who kind of had a hit but then that wasn't his vibe so he started to do more avant-garde stuff. No time throughout my career did anyone compare me to Scott Walker, but yet a lot of people who knew Scott Walker compared me to Prince. Why were you comparing me to Prince? (Sarcastically.) I wonder why! You really have to think about that. I would be looked at completely differently if I was a white artist just in general, straight or gay or anything. Also, Black people are just expected to be exceptional because to make it anywhere as a Black person you have to be exceptional. It's kind of just expected of us. That's why sometimes ... I'm gonna say this on the record, but if you take this quote out of context, I'm gonna fight you. (Laughs.)

There will be no fight, I promise you.

I don't need the Beyhive comin' for me. But I love Beyoncé. Beyoncé is honestly one of the greatest performers of all time. It is not her fault that she is one of the greatest performers of all time. I'm not trying to chastise her for being as great as she is. But a lot of people think all Black people need to be on the level of Beyoncé or they're not shit. And that's not her fault; that's structural racism. So we gotta be on the level of Beyoncé to be seen as exceptional. Beyoncé is just un-human-level exceptional. For anyone. But because she's a Black woman and because she's Black, if Black people aren't touching that, then it's just like, "Why should we care?"

It seems Beyoncé has become the go-to name for Black artists in the sense that white people I think go, "Is it really a race problem? Because look at Beyoncé. She's made it."

And in a way, it's kind of ridiculous that she's had to get to this level to get to the level of success that she's had when someone like ... I love Britney Spears. Britney Spears is great, right? But Britney Spears did not work as hard as Beyoncé. But they're seen on the same level. Yes, Britney worked a lot and everything, but the way that Beyoncé ... Beyoncé never lip synced! The mic is always on!

What other challenges have you faced in the music industry because of who you are as a non-binary Black artist?

Producers undermining my taste or what I want, just in general. Not listening to me. That's obviously really hard.

Is that one of the reasons why you sought autonomy?

That's definitely one reason. Because I really don't like confrontation. I'm the type of person who, a lot of times, would rather put my white flag up than really fight for something that feels frivolous in the grand scheme of things.

See **Shamir**, continued on p. 22



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► Shamir

Continued from p. 22



You've released seven albums in five years. How do you do it?

I write like a crazy person.

Do you write like a crazy person for any particular reason?

Because I *am* a crazy person. (Laughs.) I work so fast. It doesn't actually take up a lot of my time, and that's why I'm like, "Oh, I'm gonna start a label and work with other artists and do 50,000 other things."

How do you create so prolifically without repeating yourself?

Because I approach every record completely differently. "Ratchet" was made in a basement with one other dude, and then "Hope" was made in the middle of a manic episode in a weekend, and then "Revelations" was made after I got out of the mental hospital and had nothing to do but stay in my aunt's house because I wasn't allowed to do anything else. I just approach each one differently. I don't produce the same way each time or try to figure out what worked, what didn't. I just want to make something that sounds good and feels cohesive.

You leave a lot up to where you're at during that moment, both physically and mentally.

The outside elements, basically. Which is how life is. I think art should flow in that way too.

But you could've just made "On the Regular" over and over.

I could have, but it wouldn't fulfill me. That would've fulfilled my bank account, sure. (Laughs). And that's really important for me. I'm not a materialistic person at all, unfortunately. I wish I were because I'd be rich by now. I wish I were a materialistic, capitalistic-ass person, I really do. I don't like being this queer communist fool. Honestly, I've been bamboozled most of the time, but I can't help it. I was just raised like that, and this goes back to my jack-of-all-trades personality, but I've always felt more wealthy with the knowledge that I have, and (with) what I can do.

As editor of Q Syndicate, the 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.

One of the main reasons why I didn't work with any producers (on past albums) is because every producer that would be willing to work with me already because of "Ratchet" had a preconceived notion of the type of artist I was and really couldn't see past that. So I had to go and create this whole new world for myself to show the world and the industry what I'm becoming and kind of give them the picture of what I am doing. So I had to self-produce those records myself, and I was hoping that out of that a producer will hear that and eventually come to me. That's what happened with Kyle (Pulley) who produced five tracks, and I recorded most of it at his studio. He liked my artistry and what I was doing as opposed to being, "This person has a cool, unique voice. I want to basically use it to further my ideas."

It's a shame it took so long to find a producer to honor your vision.

Yeah, it is a shame. But, honestly, that's my life. It's sad. But I can be sad about it or I can just pick myself up by the bootstraps and just do everything. Again, the jack-of-all-trades thing, it also comes from it being kind of a necessity at this point. I would get nothing done if I waited on people to help.

There were so many times in the recording process where I would override a decision and Kyle would just be like, "OK." There was not a back and forth. I did not have to fight someone. I used to get in spats with the producer of "Ratchet," honestly, to the point where at the end of the day of recording, I just gave up. I just didn't care. I was like, "This is not my record anymore."

What was the motivation behind the aesthetics for this project?

This was the first time where I kind of really felt like everything artistically did come with intent. I knew I wanted to have purple hair for this run (laughs). That came to me just in a vision. And I have spent all of last fall perfecting the very digital vintage look with the covers and the videos and the "On My Own" video. That video is very straightforward. It's simple but it relies a lot on aesthetics, which I really loved. That was really fun for me, just styling and makeup wise. "I Wonder" was inspired by Keith Haring. So I think this of all eras was the most thought out artistic-wise.

How did you land on the blue nightgown for the "On My Own" video?

I got that last summer in Seattle at a thrift sale at a pop-up shop. I just literally had it lying around, and I'm glad I got to immortalize it.

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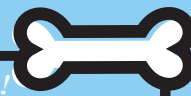


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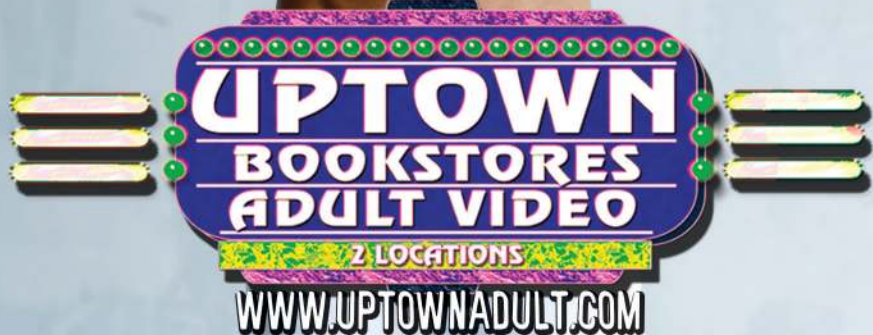
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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

'Fried Green Tomatoes,' but with lesbians – and Reba – this time?

In the early '90s, when Fannie Flagg's novel, "Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe" was adapted to the big screen as "Fried Green Tomatoes," the book's lesbian themes were dialed way down. Ladies in love became very close friends and straight audiences were allowed to feel comfortable. But that was 30 years ago, straight audiences have evolved somewhat, and now NBC has put "FGT" back in development as a weekly dramatic series. Legendary progressive creator Norman Lear is executive producing, and Reba McEntire is attached to star. The story will revolve around Idgie (McEntire) – whose relationship with a woman was the center of the novel – returning to the small town where the first story took place and dealing with the events of the past. It's early yet, and the fractured entertainment landscape makes no promises, but with TV production slowly ramping up again, then this one could see its way to screens sometime in 2021. And what nice news it could turn out to be; Primetime Lesbian Reba is absolutely something to hope for.



Adam Rippon. Photo: KathClick

star Sharon Horgan and "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" Oscar nominee Richard E. Grant co-star) who help him realize his destiny in the spotlight. And perfect timing: 20th Century Studios is set to release the film in February of 2021, in the middle of what pandemic experts are predicting will be a pretty tough winter. We're all going to need "Jamie's" queer blast of sunshine, music, dancing, and wigs by then.

Adam Rippon sitcom skates over to NBC

Good news or best news? America's gay figure skating Olympic medal scoring sweetheart, Adam Rippon, is developing a sitcom for NBC. Now, Rippon is unquestionably a world-class athlete. But if you've ever seen him on a talk show or, well, anywhere, you also know that he's simultaneously built for the world of comedy, so this was kind of a no-brainer. The as-yet-untitled series will be set in the world of figure skating, naturally, and center on a female skater who

battles injuries, her family and other skaters on the way to ice stardom. "Grace and Frankie" vet Billy Finnegan will write the series from Rippon and co-creator Susan Kittenplan's story. No cast set yet, no dates, just a great plan, and we're readier than ready.

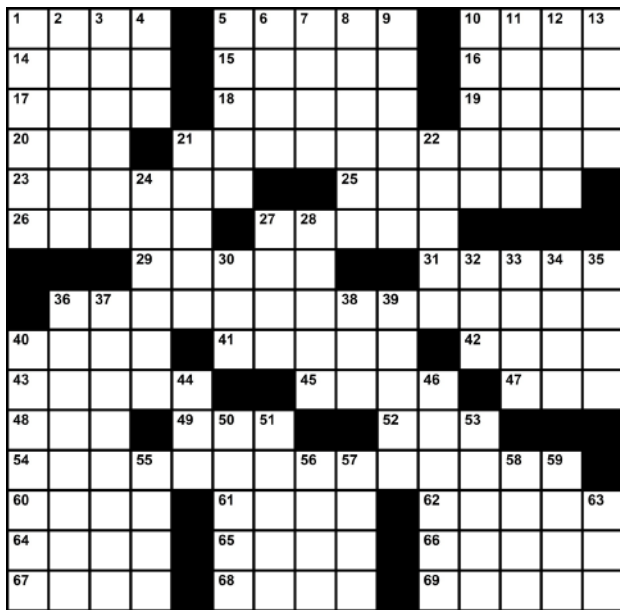
Teen drag musical 'Everybody's Talking About Jamie' will dress up 2021

One of the many cultural accomplishments of "RuPaul's Drag Race" is something that few high school guidance counselors could have predicted: the emergence of drag as a viable career path. But now we're here in a world where Trixie and Katya have had their own TV show, books and tours, and what drag-obsessed teen wouldn't consider the glamorous possibilities? Well, based on a true story, they say, comes "Everybody's Talking About Jamie," the film adaptation of the hit stage musical about a 16-year-old named Jamie (newcomer Max Harwood) who, while trying to find his place in the world, decides that drag queen stardom is his future. And because this is a musical, that happy ending is assured, thanks to supportive friends and parents ("Catastrophe"

Tegan and Sara go back to 'High School'

IMDb TV, Amazon's free streaming service, is teaming up with recording artists Tegan and Sara Quin for "High School," a coming-of-age comedy series based on the bestselling memoir the twin sisters co-wrote. Their situation was an unusual one, and reflected in the story: twin sisters growing up, discovering themselves in music as an outlet and an identity, all while coming to terms with being queer. Adding another layer of queer cred, actor-director Clea DuVall ("Happiest Season") is writing the pilot and will also direct, all for Brad Pitt's Plan B production company. And now that you know IMDb has a streaming service – admit it, you didn't until just now – you also have a reason to go there when "High School" drops there.

Romeo San Vicente is an out-of-control Zamboni on fire.



Q Puzzle

Question for a Dear

Across

- 1 Drivers get off on it
 5 Guitarist Eddie Van ___
 10 Like sex with protection
 14 Nevada neighbor
 15 Manhandle
 16 Opposed to, to Jethrene Bodine
 17 Walk-way connector

- 18 Flashy Chevy, for short
 19 Porn actor Sulik
 20 Condom, in slang
 21 Start of a question asked of 1-Down
 23 Like premature ejaculation
 25 Tickled pink
 26 Prepares for press
 27 Juicy fruits
 29 "Hoedown" composer Copland
 31 Big Lovely band singer

- 36 End of the question
 40 Corduroy rib
 41 Cheri once of SNL
 42 "Myra Breckinridge" author Vidal
 43 Woody woe
 45 Like many a "Hairspray" review
 47 Famous artist "of Finland"
 48 Golden Girl McClanahan
 49 "Modern Family" network
 52 Cause of Apr. angst
 54 What 1-Down says she has, to answer the question
 60 "Baby Doll" director Kazan
 61 Like phone sex
 62 Hung jury event
 64 Ball of film
 65 Handle a shrew, for Shakespeare
 66 "Love Affair" costar Dunne
 67 Unit of force
 68 Killed, to King James
 69 "She Bop" singer Lauper

Down

- 1 Dear ___ (advice columnist Mark Hagen)
 2 A good place to keep lube
 3 Fruity rum drink
 4 Acidity nos.
 5 Utter chaos
 6 Aid's partner
 7 Prot. denomination
 8 Look up to
 9 Andersen's "The Darning-___"
 10 Mideast peacemaker
 11 With a wide-open mouth
 12 Penalized, as a speeder
 13 Mireille of "Hanna"
 21 Cul-___
 22 Bob Marley, e.g.
 24 Maryland, and others
 27 Trent of Mississippi
 28 "What does she see ___?"
 30 Socrates' P on paper
 32 HRC, e.g.
 33 Britten's bit of tea
 34 Deli sandwich
 35 Agenda listing
 36 How to compensate for your lover's absence?
 37 Camus, by birth
 38 The Gay '90s, for one
 39 Like some war, ironically
 40 Tip of what a missile launcher may shoot off
 44 Choice marble
 46 Like many a Paul Cadmus painting
 50 Chiwetel Ejiofor's "Kinky ___"
 51 Pinkish yellow
 53 "Pardon me"
 55 Shakespeare's Hamlet, e.g.
 56 Edna, for one
 57 Used airplanes
 58 Love, to Amelie Mauresmo
 59 Material for Sylvia Beach?
 63 Island necklace

Clues p. 26

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Find Puzzle p. 25

Community Connections

Detroit Drag, Entertainment Staple Gigi's Gay Bar Gets New Ownership, New Look

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Like many LGBTQ Detroiters, husbands Luis and Joshua Mandujano met at Gigi's Gay Bar, the combo bar and cabaret that has been a hotspot for gay nightlife in the city for nearly 50 years. In fact, before the Mandujano's even began dating, they had regularly attended Gigi's for 20 years collectively. So, when the former owners made the decision to sell, Luis Mandujano was thrilled to get an offer.

"It's very near and dear to our hearts," he said. "[When] we were approached by the current owners and asked if we were interested in taking over the property we discussed it, and we knew that it would be a big challenge because of the work that it needed, but we agreed."

In the following months, Mandujano said that Gigi's has received a several-hundred thousand-dollar "rejuvenation" that he called a much-needed "facelift."

"It needed just a fresh paint job, holes in the wall that needed to be patched, leaks in the ceiling that were coming from the rooftop, faucets that didn't work, toilets that were in ill repair — just a number of those things," he said. "Now, we have what we call a five-to-10-year plan and part of that plan is to expand to an outdoor patio area."

Already, however, the duo has been hosting outdoor parking lot events. This has been a means of both socially distancing during the novel coronavirus pandemic and putting on events while waiting for the finalization of a patio permit. Currently, the Mandujano's have expanded upon Gigi's offerings and have been doing Sunday morning brunch shows that, when it's safe for customers once again, can be moved indoors.

"We'll be able to expand it and have much more variety as far as individual performers and food," Luis Mandujano said, adding that he plans to continue the outdoors shows at Gigi's as well.

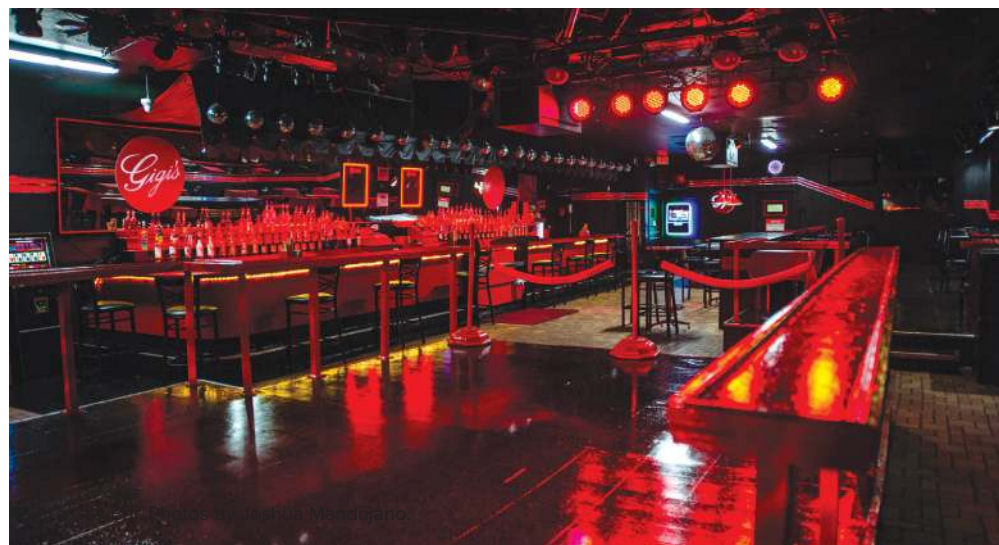
He also emphasized the safety

precautions that he and Gigi's staff members have implemented to keep patrons from catching COVID-19.

"Facemasks [are required], and if you don't have them we provide them at the door. Temperature checks are done as you enter the venue, so if you come back the following day they're done

things that we have and will continue to stay true to: a venue where a variety of performers can continue to come and express their artistic inner selves."

And regarding operations, Mandujano said that the show director for Saturday, Friday and Monday events has been kept on. A former officer in the military, Luis



again. It doesn't matter. All employees are required to check temperatures daily and we record those. We require hand-sanitizing stations throughout the bar and we have signage that explains that social distancing is required," he said. "And we have seating outdoors in the parking lot patio and it's spaced apart six-to-eight feet as is required by the executive order. And we're under a tent that doesn't have any sidewalls, so mother nature does the ventilating with the breeze that comes through."

Additionally, there are future plans to convert some of the kitchen into storage and knock some of the ceilings out to give Gigi's "the industrial look." But as many changes that have been implemented and that are planned for the future of Gigi's, Mandujano made clear that the core of the establishment will remain the same.


"This [COVID-19] environment has changed the dynamic dramatically, but one of the things that we told the individuals that were looking to offer us that venue was that we wanted to stay true to the roots of Gigi's and make sure that the community was inclusive of all individuals to include a variety of performers," he said. "... That's one of the

Mandujano emphasized that he takes a family approach to running Gigi's alongside his husband.

"Just like the military, we're a family and we need to take care of one another. And just like any other family, we'll have our disagreements and our agreements, but we all have to carry some of the requirements to continue this business to go forward," he said, adding that money isn't the driving factor behind owning and operating Gigi's.


"We want our patrons and our employees to take ownership of that business and to make sure that it grows for the sake of the community, and I want to be able to offer that in whatever way we can — whether it be by being a charitable venue, offering charity through finances or by other means," he continued. "We are a unique venue to the LGBTQ community, and we want to continue to be inclusive of all."

Find out more about Gigi's online on its Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/GigisDetroit/>.



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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

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5 Sexual Health and HIV Prevention

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

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6 Living Well Over the Age of 50

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

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