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Gov. Gretchen Whitmer alongside Sens. Peters and Stabenow and other elected Democratic officials encouraged LGBTQ people to vote. BTL Photo: Eve Kucharski

Some of our latest online-only pieces:

Gov. Whitmer Urges LGBTQ Community to Vote at GOTV Event
By Eve Kucharski

Tamika Palmer, Breonna Taylor's Mom, Joins Linda Sarsour to Encourage Voting in Detroit
By Ellen Shanna Knoppow

The Legal Landmines Surrounding Surrogacy for Michigan's LGBTQ Parents
By Eve Kucharski

Supreme Court Hears Case that Could Undermine Protections for LGBTQ, Minority Faith Communities
By BTL Staff

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JOE BIDEN WINS PRESIDENCY

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

After days of thorough ballot counting, former Vice President Joe Biden emerged as the victor of the 2020 presidential election on Saturday, ousting President Trump from the White House as a one-term president.

The Associated Press called Pennsylvania, which has 20 electoral votes, in favor of Biden on Saturday at 11:25 am. That gives him 284 votes in the Electoral College, more than the 270 threshold needed for him to win the presidency.

Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), Biden's running mate, was also elected as vice president, making her both the first woman and the first woman of color elected as part of a presidential ticket.

Alphonso David, president of the Human Rights Campaign, said in a statement the victory by Biden and Harris "proves once again that equality is a winning issue."

"The Biden/Harris ticket is the most pro-equality ticket in history. President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris are not just willing to be our allies, but they are true advocates for equality," David said. "And they've done it for decades."

David name-checked numerous aspects of Biden and Harris' pro-LGBTQ record, including their early support for same-sex marriage.

"From Biden's work championing hate crimes protections in the 1980's to Harris performing some of the first marriages for LGBTQ couples after Prop 8 was overturned, these leaders have a clear vision that centers unity over division," David said. "A vision where LGBTQ people are protected from discrimination and are afforded the freedoms and rights we should all have. A vision where transgender and gender non-conforming people don't fear for their lives walking down the street. A vision where LGBTQ children are loved, embraced and protected from bullying."

The final results remained up in the air days after Election Day on Tuesday as key states, including Arizona, Georgia, Pennsylvania and Nevada, counted ballots in exceeding close races. Although Trump had a narrow path to victory, that opportunity went up in smoke Friday when Biden eked ahead in Georgia and Pennsylvania.

Trump has refused to back down and has promised a legal blitz to challenge the ballot counting the battleground states. Making a statement from the White House on Thursday, Trump made unfounded claims about widespread fraud and said illegal ballots were being counted.

Following news of Biden's win, Trump in a statement refused to concede and said he'd fight the election results in court.

"We all know why Joe Biden is rushing to falsely pose as the winner, and why his media allies are trying so hard to help him: They don't want the truth to be exposed," Trump said. "The simple fact is this election is far from over. Joe Biden has not been certified as the winner of any states, let alone any of the highly contested states headed for mandatory recounts, or states where our campaign has valid and legitimate legal challenges that could determine the ultimate victor."

Jason Harrow, executive director of Equal Citizens and former manager of SCOTUSBlog, said in a statement Trump's plan to attack the election results in court would amount to nothing.

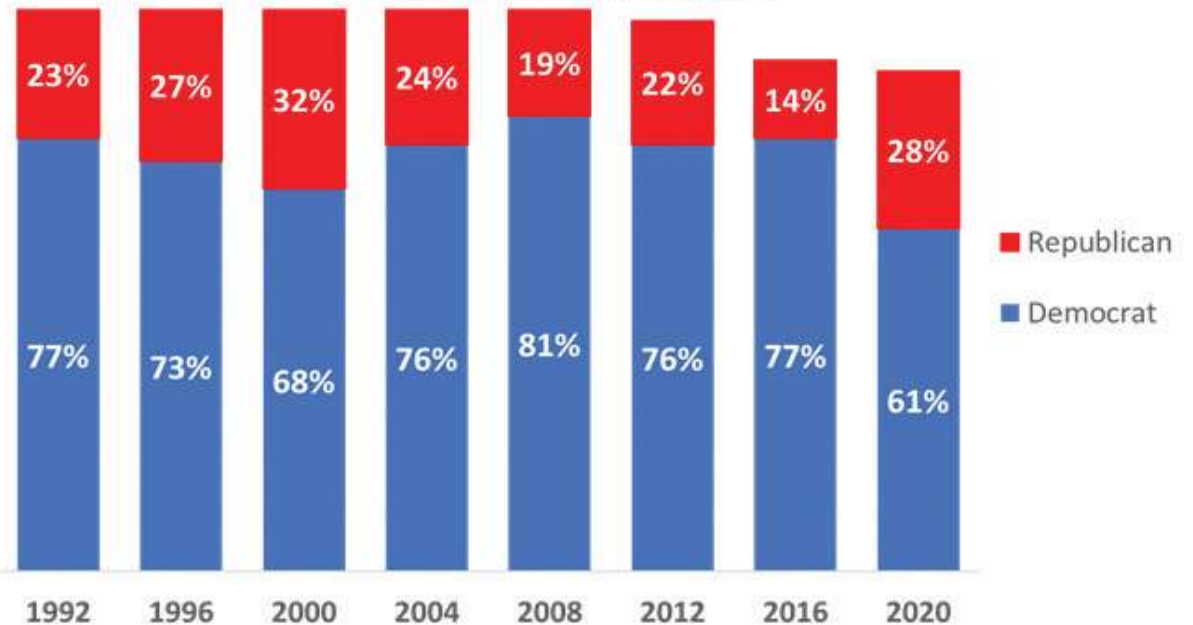
"The whirlwind of legal filings by the Trump campaign over the last few days all equal up to a sum total of nothing more than legal shenanigans that are distractions which will ultimately have zero impact on the outcome of this election," Harrow said.

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



LGBT Vote in US Presidential Elections, 1992-2020

Exit Polling Data (see sources below)



Data sources:

1992-2008, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/11/07/weekinreview/20101107-detailed-exitpolls.html>

2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2012/results/president/exit-polls.html>

2016, <https://edition.cnn.com/election/2016/results/exit-polls>

2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/exit-polls-president.html>

In 2020 Election Donald Trump Doubled his LGBTQ Vote

BY LISA KEEN

Early data from exit polls conducted with voters on Nov. 3 indicate that 2/3 of the LGBTQ vote went to Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, who appears to have been poised Friday morning to easily win enough electoral votes to secure victory.

But those same polls also indicated that incumbent Republican President Donald Trump got as much as twice as many LGBTQ votes this year as he did in 2016, when he beat Democrat Hillary Clinton for the job.

The exit polls conducted by the National Election Pool for the New York Times and major television networks found that 61 percent of voters who agreed to be surveyed and who identified as LGBTQ voted for Biden, while 28 percent voted for Trump. The LGBT data was based on approximately 1,100 self-identified voters, or 7% of 15,590 voters interviewed nationwide outside polling places, early voting sites, or by phone, to include voters by mail.

In 2016 exit poll data, 78% of LGBTQ people voted for Clinton, 14% for Trump. In 2012, 76% of LGBTQ voters supported Democratic President Barack Obama, 22% supported

Republican challenger Mitt Romney.

Nadine Smith, executive director of Equality Florida and a long-time national LGBTQ activist, reacted to the numbers.

"Being LGBTQ isn't an exemption from racism. Trump stokes white fear in an increasingly diverse America. His immigrant-bashing and persistent racist dog whistle has built him a rabid and dangerous following," Smith said. "Add red-baiting, and it is the oldest play in the GOP playbook. It isn't shocking that some slice of LGBTQ people aligns with that ideology. After all, we are everywhere, we are part of every community."

Lorri Jean, head of the nation's largest LGBTQ health and community center, the Los Angeles LGBT Center, said people have a knack for voting "against their self-interest."

"The same dynamic that enables an African American or Latinx person to support an anti-immigrant racist and a woman to support a predatory misogynist, also enables an LGBT person to support the candidate who has done more to harm LGBT people than any President in modern history," Jean said. "... But mostly, at base of this incongruous behavior is a level of self-loathing — in the case of LGBT people, internalized homophobia — that allows

a person to ignore an indisputable level of bigotry, hatred, and actual harm."

But in the presidential voting itself, Democratic former Vice President Biden appeared, on Friday morning, to have gathered the critical 270 electoral votes required to win the White House. That happened when unofficial vote tallies released in Pennsylvania gave Biden a lead in that state's popular vote count. The Pennsylvania vote count is not yet complete, but Biden also had a lead on Trump in Georgia, Arizona and Nevada Friday morning, suggesting very strongly that Biden will be the winner.

Republican incumbent Donald Trump has launched lawsuits and recount demands, but political experts do not give those efforts any realistic chance of changing the outcome of the election. Trump's openly gay ambassador to Germany, Ric Grenell, was part of the contingent of Republican campaign officials who traveled to Las Vegas Thursday afternoon to complain about voting irregularities in Nevada. Grenell told reporters there that there have been "illegal votes counted" in Nevada. When reporters pressed him for evidence, he told them to ask election

See **LGBTQ Vote**, continued on p. 8



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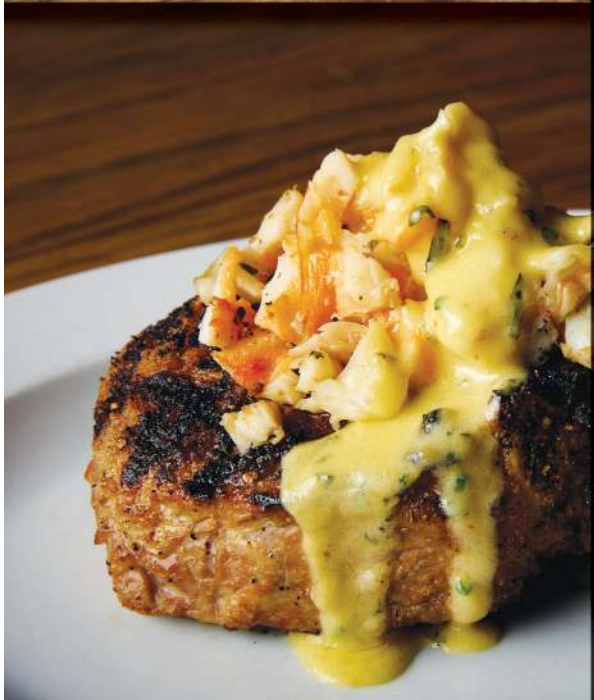
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Gary Peters Wins Michigan Senate Race Against John James

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

One of two Senate Democrats up for reelection in Michigan, a state won by Donald Trump in 2016, Sen. Gary Peters has declared victory against Republican challenger John James. In a very tight race, Peters finally earned 50% of the vote to James' 48%.

A longtime supporter of LGBTQ causes, Peters has been working as a politician since 1995, first earning his seat on the U.S. Senate

when he won against Republican Terri Lynn Land in the 2014 general election. While in office, Peters has focused on being a pro-equality candidate, and he said in a previous BTL op-ed that he intends on making further steps toward ensuring LGBTQ equality.

"I'm proud to be part of the progress toward equal rights in our country. As a former lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve, I was active in the repeal of 'don't ask, don't tell,' because no patriot should be turned away from serving their country because of

who they are," Peters said. "And I have been an advocate of marriage equality, including signing the amicus brief to support the overturning of the DOMA. But there is still so much more work to be done and that includes passing the Equality Act."

The Equality Act would allow for protections for sexual orientation and gender identity to be enshrined in U.S. law, to ensure that LGBTQ people enjoy the same rights as their fellow Americans in the realms of housing, access to services and more.



"It couldn't be more clear how much is at stake and how critical it is that we elect people who are going to fight

for the equal rights of all Americans," he said. "We have a lot of work ahead, but I know that together we can rise above the challenges to make historic change."

Michigan Supreme Court has Pro-Equality Wins with McCormack, Welch

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Bridget Mary McCormack won reelection Tuesday. She had previously said she would not consider it a victory unless Elizabeth Welch was also elected to the court and indeed she was. McCormack and Welch were the top two vote-getters in a field of six.

McCormack was first elected to the court in 2013 and became chief justice in 2019.

"My reelection to the Michigan Supreme Court is a victory for the people across the state who believe, as I do, that the courtroom is a place where being is right is more important than being popular or powerful," McCormack

said in response to her win. "I'm proud that their votes are being counted and their voices are being heard. In the coming term I will continue to fight for the court's independence and for access to justice for all Michiganders.

"I will continue to work to make Michigan a national leader in ensuring transparency, fairness and efficiency in courthouses throughout the state where millions of people go for justice every year," she continued. "To those who supported me and



Bridget Mary McCormack (left) and Elizabeth Welch. Courtesy photos.

to those who did not, the people of Michigan have my steadfast commitment that I will serve them with the utmost integrity and fairness."

For her part, Welch is an attorney with 25 years of experience. Her focus has been

on employment law, public school advocacy, conservation leadership and election protection work. With Welch elected, Democrats take a 4-3 majority on the court. McCormack and Welch will both serve eight-year terms. Welch released this statement after her win:

"After 25 years protecting Michigan small businesses, voters, students, and natural resources, I know the impact the courts can have on our great state," she said. "I am eager to join the chief justice and her colleagues in their important work of addressing challenges within our criminal justice system and their work toward ensuring everyone has equal access to our courts."

► LGBTQ Vote

Continued from p. 6

officials. But Las Vegas' Clark County registrar of voters told MSNBC and other reporters that he has not received any complaints about possible voter fraud.

Grenell and Log Cabin Republicans launched a vigorous campaign this year to rally LGBTQ support behind Trump, staging several Pride rallies in heavily LGBTQ cities — with Trump's LGBTQ daughter Tiffany speaking to some events, and populating a GetOutSpoken.com website with stories aimed at convincing LGBTQ supporters to vote Trump.

Biden's apparent victory signals a likelihood in the coming months that the new administration will undo many of the actions taken by the Trump administration that were seen as hostile to the LGBTQ community — from withdrawing Obama-era directives that supported protections for LGBTQ people in various federal agencies, supporting religious organizations' policies of discriminating against LGBTQ people, and banning transgender people from serving in the military, to name a few.

Where President Trump opposed the Equality Act, President-elect Biden has promised to

support it. And in the coming weeks and months, as Biden and Vice-President-Elect Kamala Harris work with their transition team to prepare for launching their administration Jan. 20, many LGBTQ activists expect openly LGBTQ people will be among those considered for various positions.

A Washington Post article this week mentioned openly gay presidential contender Pete Buttigieg as a possible ambassador to the United Nations and American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten as a possible Secretary of Education. Lesbian political strategist Karine Jean-Pierre, who served as a senior advisor to the Biden campaign and, eventually, chief of staff of running mate Harris, is a likely pick for some position at the Biden White House.

Meanwhile, in other election news:

U.S. Senate: At deadline, Democrats and Republicans had secured the same number of seats each: 48. Tallies in Georgia have ensured runoff elections for two U.S. Senate seats there, and results are not yet called in races in North Carolina and Alaska. With Biden in the White House, Democrats could take over the Senate by winning those two special run-off races in Georgia on Jan. 5.


U.S. House: Democrats will continue to hold a majority in the House, albeit a smaller margin: 209 to 190 — with 39 seats undecided. Openly gay Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney is still holding the lead in a race for his 18th Congressional seat from New York. Maloney has declared victory, though many absentee ballots won't be counted until next week. Openly lesbian Rep. Angie Craig has pulled ahead of her Republican challenger with a "significant lead," according to the Minneapolis Star Tribune Thursday. Assuming they win, Craig and Maloney will be part of a newly enlarged caucus of openly LGBT House members. With the addition of two newcomers — both openly gay Black men from New York — the openly LGBTQ House members will number nine.

LGBT Candidates: The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund supported 312 openly LGBT candidates for office Nov. 3, from local sheriffs to members of Congress. As of Thursday evening, the Victory Fund had results for 261 of those races, and the majority, 71%, were victories. The winners include state house and senate candidates in such unexpected states as Arkansas, Idaho, and Montana, including a gay Republican Don Zwonitzer reelected to Laramie County's state house seat in Wyoming; and vice president of the federally recognized

Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. The states boasting the largest number of openly LGBTQ candidates include California, with 54; Texas, 18; Florida, 17; Michigan, 14; and Illinois, 11.

Additionally, on Thursday evening, Trump held a press conference at the White House to say, "I easily win" the election, to claim "massive victories" in Florida, Indiana, Ohio and other states. At that moment, Trump was behind Biden by 40 electoral votes and 4 million popular votes nationally. He claimed election officials and Democrats were engaged in "a lot of shenanigans" and that he expects the election will "end up, perhaps, at the highest court in the land."

MSNBC interrupted its coverage of the remarks very quickly to note that Trump was delivering misstatements of the facts. CNN carried the 20-minute remarks in its entirety but immediately afterward, its political host Jake Tapper called the speech "pathetic." CNN political reporter Dana Bash said the remarks were "dangerous," because many of his supporters would believe him. And CNN commentator Abby Phillip said Trump is "trying to take the democratic process down with him."




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- Ka'Juan Hill, YouTube personality and HIV activist

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David Coulter is Elected First-Ever Openly Gay, Democratic Oakland County Executive

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

As of the Nov. 3 election, openly gay incumbent Democrat David Coulter has been elected to a four-year term as Oakland County Executive, the county's top official. He is the first openly gay Democrat to hold the role, and he won against his opponent Republican Mike Kowall in two races: one for a four-year term, at a margin of 54.7% to 43.5%; and one to finish the term ending on Dec. 31 of 2020, at a margin of 55.8% to 44%.

Although he was already in the role, Coulter had been appointed to finish the term of the late L. Brook Patterson, a Republican who had held the seat since 1992 and died in August

2019. Coulter was also Ferndale's mayor for nine years and a county commissioner before earning this seat. In an interview with Between The Lines, Coulter said he would prioritize equality and inclusion and combatting the novel coronavirus pandemic.

"Number one, we adopted the county's first-ever comprehensive nondiscrimination policy that covered not only our workforce, our contracting and vendors and all the ways we work as a county," Coulter said. "That had never happened, and it was long overdue. So getting that in place, I felt set the right tone for what we were trying to do, which is to make sure that we operate Oakland County in a fair and equitable manner."



David Coulter. Courtesy photo.

"Like the governor, [we] leaned into the science of it and really worked closely with public health officials to make sure that we were doing everything we could to contain the virus and protect our residents," Coulter continued. "Honestly, for me, that wasn't a hard decision to make, but we've all certainly seen parts of the state and country that did not take that perspective, and, I think, to their detriment."

Jaimie Powell Horowitz Elected Judge in Oak Park's 45th District Court

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Attorney Jaimie Powell Horowitz was elected to one of the two open judge seats in Oak Park's 45th District Court today. She beat her challenger, Brenda Richard, by earning 57% of the vote. In this role, her jurisdiction will include Oak Park, Royal Oak Township, Huntington Woods and Pleasant

Ridge. She currently works as the special prosecutor for the Fair Michigan Justice Project, a nonprofit organization created in July 2016 to prosecute hate crimes against the LGBTQ community. She said that she will prioritize inclusivity and diversity in her judgeship.

"I am proud to be elected to serve the communities of the 45th Judicial District. We are fortunate to be a district that is inclusive,

diverse and welcoming," Horowitz said via an email statement about her win. "I look forward to continuing to work to make our justice system more fair and equitable for all people."



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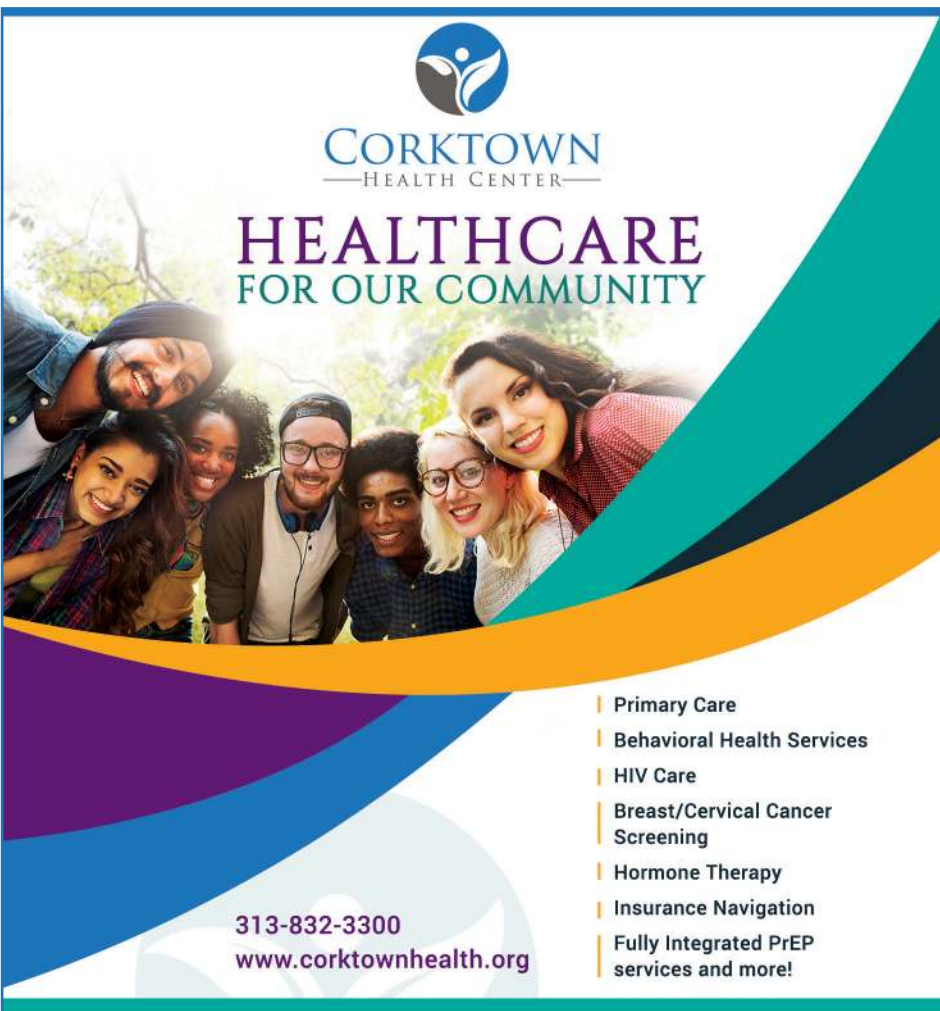
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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

T, as in Thanksgiving (not Trump)!

DRUMSTICK No. 1: If you're looking for a ploy to come out to your family this Thanksgiving, you might casually remark that according to "Biological Exuberance" by animal behavior specialist Dr. Bruce Bagemihl, the female domestic turkey often engages in same-sex courting and mounting activity before, during and after the holidays.

DRUMSTICK No. 2: Contrary to popular belief, the 102 Pilgrims who sailed on the Mayflower in 1620 did not eat Thanksgiving turkey or pumpkin pie. Flour for baking bread and pie crust was all used up during the three-month ocean crossing.

Guinea hen – whose same-sex courting and mounting status is unavailable as BTL goes to press – was the main dinner staple.

LIGHT MEAT: Pilgrims were too straightlaced to wear silver buckles, and they didn't land at Plymouth Rock. Thomas Faunce, a popular preacher, started that public relations story in 1741. He claimed his father, who arrived in this country three years after the Mayflower first dropped anchor, pointed the site out to him as a kid.

According to Harvard historian spoilsport Edward Channing — no relation to "Hello Dolly" Carol — a ship could never have landed at Plymouth Rock, given the strong direction of the surrounding currents.

New England Pilgrims – America's original "love the sinner, hate the sin" do-gooders – would be appalled if they had an inkling of the direction the current flows around P'Town these days. Especially at the Boat Dock!

DARK MEAT: In 1647, Puritans – who, it turns out, actually enjoyed only missionary position sex – outlawed the preaching of wedding sermons. Marriage for brimstone Calvinists was not a sacrament but strictly a secular matter to be conducted by civil magistrates, and so it remained well into the 1700s.

Puritans quoted Martin Luther, who cautioned, "Marriage is a secular and outward thing, having to do with wife, children, house and home and with other matters that belong to the realm of government, all of which have been completely subjected to reason." American Family Ass'n., please take note, and pass the turkey stuffing.

BREAST: From 1702 until 1708 the governor of New York, Lord Cornbury, was a cross dresser. He appeared gowned at public ceremonies, wore elaborate hairdos, let his fingernails grow long.

A favorite of Anne, Queen of England, he was a bit too, too much for the puritanical colonists who booted him – and his silver buckle – out of office.

GIZZARD: Puritans were a mean-spirited bunch. They didn't celebrate Christmas, and nobody dared work on Sunday for fear of being put in the stockade. Children's games were

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BY JAY KAPLAN

Viewpoint

Days After Election, Supreme Court Deliberates on LGBTQ Rights Case

On the morning of Nov. 4, while most Americans were focused on results still coming in from the presidential election that had occurred the previous day, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in a case that could have tremendous ramifications for LGBTQ civil rights and equality in our country.

In the case *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*, the high court will decide whether taxpayer-funded, faith-based foster care agencies have a constitutional right to discriminate against LGBTQ families because they do not conform to the agency's religious tenets.

Philadelphia contracts with foster care agencies — including faith-based agencies — to provide two kinds of services: First, to certify that prospective families are eligible to provide foster care services. This includes foster care training to families and a home study evaluating a family's fitness to foster. The second function is to actually place foster children in certified homes. As a condition of receiving a contract, Philadelphia

requires that funded agencies must comply with the city's non-discrimination policy, which includes protections on the basis of sexual orientation.

Catholic Social Services, which had contracts with the city to provide both services, has stated that it cannot and will not work with same-sex couples in the certification process, citing religious beliefs. The agency's refusal to comply with the non-discrimination policy resulted in the city not renewing CSS's contract to provide certification services. CSS then sued maintaining that it has a constitutional right to a government contract, and that its religious tenets exempt it from having to adhere to the city's non-discrimination policy. CSS maintains that it is being targeted for discrimination by the city because of its religious principles opposing same-sex marriage.

It is a case that could have far-reaching impact. That's

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► Viewpoint

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certainly true here in Michigan, where three federal lawsuits have been filed challenging the state's authority to require that foster care agencies comply with a state non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation.

I want to pause here to emphasize that it is the children in the foster care system who have the most to lose. By permitting agencies to refuse to work with same-sex couples, the pool of prospective foster care families able to provide a loving and stable home for these children, including children who identify as LGBTQ, is greatly reduced. We currently have more than 400,000 children nationwide who need foster care and permanent adoptive homes.

In essence, what the Court will be deciding in *Fulton* is whether entities can opt out of policies and laws that prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ people. Should the current Supreme Court — which now has a 6-3 conservative majority as a result of Amy Coney Barrett's appointment — decide in favor of CSS, the reach of this decision could go far beyond the foster care setting. Other government funded programs could deny LGBTQ people access to homeless shelters, food banks and other critical important services run by faith-based organizations. Government-funded employers could also cite religious beliefs as a legitimate rationale for discriminating against members of the LGBTQ community — in contradiction to the recent Supreme Court decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County* this past June.

Furthermore, establishing a constitutional right to discriminate based on religion could reach further than government services, gutting all federal, state and local laws that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the workplace, public accommodations and beyond.

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 12

deemed unbiblical, and unmarried courting couples risked public beatings if they were discovered sitting alone or holding hands unchaperoned.

Children who disobeyed their parents in colonial Connecticut got stoned — and not on pot — and those Massachusetts rakehells who were caught in adultery got the final head chop in the mid-1600s. Salem witch hunts came soon after.

PARSON'S NECK: In 1642, 17-year-old Thomas Granger was at various times seen cuddling up with “a mare, a cow, two goats, five sheep, two calves and a turkey.” But not necessarily in that poking – er,

In Michigan and across the country we have seen cake bakers, florists and wedding hall operators deny services to same-sex couples because they cited their religious beliefs. Several years ago, an Oakland County pediatrician refused to take a baby as a patient because her parents were lesbians. Recently, a northern Michigan business that provides electrolysis denied services to a transgender woman, citing religious principles.

And the implications of the *Fulton* case go beyond LGBTQ people. Recently, the state of South Carolina permitted a government funded Evangelical Protestant Christian foster care agency to refuse to work with prospective Catholic and Jewish families.

In listening to the Supreme Court arguments, it was interesting hearing attorneys for Catholic Social Services and the Trump Administration — which supports this type of an exemption — struggle to explain how *Fulton* does not have further ramifications beyond the facts of this case, and that's because they can't. Permitting an exemption to comply with civil rights laws based on religious beliefs puts all minority communities at risk for discrimination.

Our Constitution strongly protects an individual's right to religious beliefs. However, this right has never been permitted to be used as a sword to harm other people and to usurp the government's compelling interest in eradicating discrimination against marginalized groups. The *Fulton* case, especially in light of the Trump Administration's appointment of three conservative justices, has potentially placed us on a precariously slippery slope.

Jay Kaplan is a staff attorney with the ACLU of Michigan since 2001. He can be reached at jkaplan@aclumich.org

pecking – order.

For his post-pubescent bit of animal husbandry, he was hung – beg pardon: hanged – and each of the aforementioned amorous playmates was “kild” for making hey, nonny non with a minor.

Happy Holiday! Gobble your drumsticks to your heart's content, but please leave your domestic birdies behind the barn alone. And please don't pluck any political ruffled feathers in public. Turkey Trump it! (Who?)

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

Remember after the 2016 presidential election when Trump supporters reached out to Clinton supporters in an effort to understand and sympathize with our pain and fear? To better understand us so that we could remind each other that we are all Americans and we need to work together for the good of the nation?

Yeah, me neither.

I do remember seeing a lot of “suck it up, buttercup” memes and coffee mugs that read, “Liberal Tears” and shirts with, “Trump 2020: Make Liberals Cry Again” and “Grab 'Em By the Pussy Again.” I remember seeing banners and American flags with, “Trump 2020: Fuck Your Feelings.” I remember that the “lock her up” chants never went away and, in fact, expanded to include Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. I remember Trump boasting that he not only won the electoral college but that he also won the popular vote because the millions more votes Clinton got were all illegally cast. I remember Trump calling the press the enemy of the people. I remember him referring to his Democratic challengers as crooked, sleepy, nasty, crazy, brain-dead, weak, little, boring, shifty, dopey, sick, stone-cold phonies, clowns, monsters, lightweights, puppets, corrupt, phonies, flunkies, horrible, jokes, stupid, dumb, sneaky, lying and low-IQ individuals.

I remember when Donald Trump called for Hillary Clinton to be imprisoned, which is not hard to remember since he is still demanding that not only Clinton but Obama, too, should be locked up.

So forgive me that I'm not running out to find a Trump supporter to hug now that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have decisively won the 2020 presidential election. It's not that I don't know any. I have aunts who are big Trump fans. One of them posted a plea on Facebook on Nov. 4 for people to get down to Detroit to scrutinize the ballot counting going on there, the implication being, of course, that Black people were attempting to rig the election by voting and having those votes counted. Truly scandalous.

I don't need racist people in my life. I don't need folks who find it insulting to hear my wife referred to as “wife” and for what we have to be called a “marriage.” I don't need people who applaud stealing the children

of immigrants and asylum seekers as they cross the border. Who believe that vaccines are some kind of sinister plot. Who think that COVID-19 isn't a big deal and who don't think wearing masks to save lives is worth it. I don't need toxic people in my life.

And no doubt Trump supporters are scared. Clearly. They are not ready to concede this election. They are shocked that one of the most unpopular presidents in history not only didn't win but that he didn't win by a landslide.

I'd be scared, too, if I believed that Black Lives Matter is a terrorist organization rather than a declaration of a fact too long ignored in this country. I'd be scared, too, if the Democratic party was actually just a huge Satan worshipping ring of pedophiles. That is a genuinely horrifying concept made all the more horrifying by the fact that there are people who really believe it.

So while I am so relieved that Biden beat Trump, there is a lot more damage Trump could, and will, do between now and Jan. 20. People rejoicing that our long national nightmare is over are, sadly, incorrect.

So stop asking women, people of color, LGBTQ people, gender non-confirming people, immigrants, people with disabilities and every other group that has been marginalized and harmed by this administration to comfort their oppressors. You can't meet someone half way when they've already gone around the bend and believe that you aren't fully human. What these folks need isn't a little love and understanding, it's a reality check. Maybe some therapy to explore why they are so hateful and prone to con men. I'm not going to enable them by pretending that my belief that belief that public education should be fully funded is equally valid as their belief that public schools are dens of sin that teach children to be homosexuals. Or my desire to see COVID-19 under control so that we save lives is on one side of the coin, and that Gov. Whitmer's mandate that everyone in Michigan wear a mask makes her Hitler.

You won't see me drinking out of a mug that says, “I love the taste of conservative tears in the morning,” but you also won't find me trying to placate supporters of the most corrupt and hateful administration in my lifetime now that they've lost.

You will find me, however, continuing to fight so that they continue to lose.

Cover Story

Pushing Through the Pandemic

Ruth Ellis Center Expands Services While Other Nonprofits Shutter

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

As the novel coronavirus pandemic's second wave continues its resurgence in full force, sending much of Europe back into lockdown and last week recording more than 100,000 new U.S. cases in a single day, people across the U.S. have been forced to rely on nonprofits and social services to get them through the devastating recession that has arisen as a result of COVID-19. But just as Americans are flocking to them for aid, time-honored nonprofit organizations like the YMCA have been forced to shutter locations, reduce staff and lessen provided services as they themselves deal with the COVID-19's impact. But despite this pattern, one Michigan organization seems to be bucking that trend. The Ruth Ellis Center, located in Highland Park, is a nonprofit agency that serves homeless and at-risk LGBTQ youth as young as 4 and up to 30 years old. It has not only remained stable during COVID-19, it's in the middle of an unprecedented expansion.

Right now in its 21st year, REC is announcing three brand-new projects: a new 43-unit apartment building to provide permanent supportive housing called The REC Center at Clairmount, a rapid re-housing project that partners with local landlords to house people in immediate need and the Kelly Stough Project, which will aid survivors of sex trafficking and exploitation who lack stable shelter. These steps forward will also signify the end of Ruth's House, REC's existing residential foster care facility. REC Executive Director Jerry Peterson said that removing Ruth's House Services will free up resources from managing the only nine-bed facility to allow for more effective, specialized care.

Project Development

The REC at Clairmount

Though each of the three projects is being announced simultaneously, they all have gone through unique planning processes and will start services independently. Arguably the most ambitious is The REC Center at Clairmount, which will allow LGBTQ people experiencing homelessness and in need of shelter to have housing support that's not time-limited. REC is set to break ground on the year-long construction project, located in Detroit's North End neighborhood, this month. REC Executive Director Jerry Peterson



An architectural image of the design of the upcoming REC at Clairmount building, which is a permanent supportive housing structure for LGBTQ people in Detroit. Courtesy photo.

said that planning for this \$16 million project began five years ago when he had discussions with the McGregor Fund — a Detroit-based philanthropic organization dedicated to, among other causes, aiding housing needs.

“We have been at this since then. The next layer was doing a lot of focus groups with young people. And from the very beginning [the approach] has been, ‘If we build a project that builds on the assets of the family network and lived experience of trans women of color in building this project, [it can function] in a way that really takes their family and social networks as an asset in stabilizing their lives and helping them move forward as they choose,’” Peterson said.

Targeted toward, but not limited to, aiding transgender women of color, the Clairmount location will provide 43 units of housing, a ground-level cafe and beauty bar for skills training and integrated services, case management services, neighborhood engagement projects, a behavioral health and primary care center and serve as the new permanent location of the Ruth Ellis Institute, which provides research-based content and training for foster care providers and workers in

the juvenile justice system. Residents will also have access to an in-house peer-leader and mental health therapist.

“There will be two full-time case managers in the building, there will be a full-time mental health therapist and there will be a full-time peer support who will actually live in the building,” he said. “So there will be a team of four people who will be present all the time and available to the residents, working intensively with them in terms of social supports, job supports and then, of course, in the building we’re working toward youth entrepreneurial projects where people can live and potentially work in the building.”

Though still called “youth” entrepreneurial projects, Peterson said that there will be no upper age limits on anything that the Clairmount location provides and that the length of time residents can stay is indefinite. However, the units are intentionally constructed to be small, to both maximize the number of people who can be helped at any given moment and to encourage residents to “aspire to” different housing when moving on. Luke Hassevoort, a licensed social worker at REC and the person spearheading the Center’s rapid

re-housing projects, summed up the purpose of Clairmount well.

“Programs like the Clairmount Center exist to say that there’s not a time limit on how long you can access the support,” Hassevoort said. “If you need to live here for five years, you can do that; if you need to live here for 60 years, you can do that. We’re not putting a time limit on how long you can access this resource.”

The bulk of this center will be funded by The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit or LIHTC. Through this system, federal tax credits have been allocated to state housing finance agencies who have worked with Ruth Ellis to allocate LIHTC funding for affordable housing.

“Then, Bank of America and the City of Detroit are also providing some grant funding for the build. I definitely want to give a shoutout to McGregor Fund, because they have completely funded the supportive services for the building for the first two years of the project. And then, beyond that, Full Circle, which is a non-profit developer partner, 75 percent of net proceeds on the project, they will bank and make available to us and reimburse us for supportive services over the course of 15 years that we’re guaranteed to provide services at that location — that’s another major funding source as well.”

Medicaid and private insurance will also provide the final income streams to help make Clairmount possible.

Rapid Re-Housing and the Kelly Stough Project

Just as Clairmount exists to provide long-term housing support, both the Kelly Stough and rapid re-housing are “scattered site” projects that, via partnerships with landlords, can provide up to 24 months of rental support at both short-term and intermediate lengths for residents across Detroit and the Metro area.

“[They] are set up for folks who are more likely to need to get back on their feet with short-term assistance until they can take over things on their own,” Hassevoort said.

Set to start in January of 2021, rapid re-housing is made possible via \$530,000 in funding via the city of Detroit through an Emergency Solutions Grant, which is part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. Unlike the Stough project, rapid re-housing will also assist qualified residents with up to six months of rental arrears to provide a “clean slate” for those in need. The Kelly Stough project is available now for victims of human trafficking



REC Executive Director Jerry Peterson. Courtesy photo.

to use, and it was made possible through a three-year \$500,000 Department of Justice Housing Assistance Grant.

“We don’t expect that everybody will stay in for the full 24 months, we’ll provide support as long as they need and depending on how long folks stay in the programs. If we have a bunch of people who are in the program for eight to 10 months, that just means that we’ll be able to serve more people,” Hassevoort said. “Based on the total budget we were given, we only have a certain amount of funds for a certain amount of units for a certain amount of time. So, if someone needs rental assistance for less time, that’s just assistance that we can then pass along to somebody else.”

For both projects, participating youth will be the primary name on the lease with the landlord and Ruth Ellis will sign on as a third-party payee to ensure that landlords get payments in full and on time — something Hassevoort calls a “huge benefit” for landlords looking for reliable renters during COVID-19.

And while this relief is designed to be short-term, a study by The Trevor Project shows that because of potential family rejection, LGBTQ youth represent as much as 40% of the homeless youth population in the entire U.S. Hassevoort said that in addition to providing a safe place for housing, both rapid re-housing and the Kelly Stough Project will ensure that all residents have case management services to help ensure their ongoing goals.

“Whether it might be related to finishing up high school or a GED program or college or a trade school or another sort of vocational program or looking for employment. Those are common long-term goals that folks are also working toward and short-term, maybe getting an ID or they need different copies of vital documents like birth certificates or school records. Maybe they would like assistance getting connected to financial resources like a bridge card, or SSI, or SSDI or health insurance,” he said. “Really, all of those sorts of things are things that we’ll provide case management support around.”

And if REC is not able to provide help directly

to youth involved in either of these programs, Hassevoort said that steps will be taken to partner with agencies equipped to do so. The ideal outcome for both of these projects, he said, will be for participating youth to take on the lease requirements on their own at the end of their partnership with REC.

“And we’ll be able to provide support to folks even after financial assistance has stopped and we can continue to provide case management support,” he said.

To qualify for either of the three programs provided by REC, youth must go through Detroit’s Coordinated Access Model that assigns people experiencing homelessness with resources that are available and specific to their needs. Hassevoort encourages anyone in the LGBTQ community in need of help to reach out to REC directly to learn about eligibility requirements and to be walked through the process.

When asked why REC has developed such varied approaches to aiding the local LGBTQ community through these programs, Hassevoort was clear: “We know that different residents have different needs, and we are looking to support as many people in as many different ways as we can.”

“A lot of times in our culture, we place a value judgment on self-sufficiency, and we say that people who are responsible are self-sufficient and people who are irresponsible aren’t self-sufficient. So, I just want to be really clear and articulate the best way that I can that we have no moral judgment around the support that somebody needs to achieve personal health and well-being,” he said. “There are a lot of systemic oppressive factors that the folks that we’re serving have experienced throughout their life that are far beyond their control and we really view these programs of advancing housing justice and economic justice.”

The Keys to Growth Despite COVID-19

When asked why he believes that REC has been able to not only survive during a global pandemic but thrive, Peterson said that it all comes down to “the absolute tenacity and positive belief that whatever these young people believe they need, they should have, and that it’s our job to find the resources.”

Additionally, Peterson said that while REC is no longer the grassroots organization that it once was — its revenue will be just over \$3 million at the end of the 2020 fiscal year — it largely functions like one, carrying with it the spirit and legacy of its own namesake: lesbian activist Ruth Ellis.

“There is a legacy here of Ruth. Even though most of us who worked here didn’t know Ruth, we feel as if we do. ... She is very alive in this work and that spirit,” he said. “The other thing that I will say is that it also takes a community who recognizes all of the unfair ways in which the young people served by the Ruth Ellis Center have been oppressed and marginalized and donors and other stakeholders and funders recognize the unique stressors and traumas that these young

See **Pushing Through Pandemic**, continued on p. 16

The Strains of COVID-19: REC Staff on Dealing With a Pandemic

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

At the best of times, LGBTQ youth often find themselves in precarious housing situations, making up roughly 40 percent of the homeless population of those aged 12 to 17 in the U.S. According to youth.gov — a working group composed of 21 federal agencies working to provide healthy outcomes for the nation’s youth — four key reasons are to blame: family rejection resulting from sexual orientation or gender identity; physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; aging out of the foster care system; and financial and emotional neglect. Now, as the novel coronavirus continues to make an impact on the U.S., agencies like the Ruth Ellis Center in Highland Park that provide services to youth who are both at-risk and experiencing homelessness have found themselves in an unprecedented situation: more necessary than ever, but limited to the amount of in-person care available.

Unlike many nonprofits, however, REC has been able to pool its resources and even undergo an expansion during the age of COVID-19. Between The Lines caught up with both longtime staff and newer hires at REC to get a sense for how the organization is tackling its day-to-day requirements during a worldwide pandemic.

COVID-19’s Overall Mental Health Impact

Dr. Kofi Adoma was a founding member of the Center and began serving as REC’s lead therapist in the behavioral health clinic this year. While she hasn’t been at REC in a full-time capacity for long, she said that there’s been a palpable difference in the stress levels of youth since the pandemic started. Unfortunately, it seems to be growing in the areas of anxiety, depression and trauma.

“All of this is stressful, but things have been stressful for these youth for longer than COVID. It just created more of an awareness, perhaps, of the struggle of LGBT youth who are at high risk or are experiencing homelessness,” Adoma said. “... The number one challenges, in my opinion, that faces a lot of these young people includes: anxiety, panic attacks, depression, low self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, self-harming behaviors, negative

thinking, and what us therapists call self-defeating thoughts or catastrophic kinds of thoughts.”

Increased substance abuse, mood regulation and problems with family and interpersonal communication have also been issues. Notably, Adoma said that she’s been placing “more emphasis” on the family preservation program, which works to strengthen bonds between REC’s clients and their relatives during this time because of the increased proximity to potentially unsupportive family members. She added that a proactive, psychoeducation-focused approach has been key to educating



Dr. Kofi Adoma is founding member of the Center and began serving as REC’s lead therapist in the behavioral health clinic this year. Courtesy photo.

both youth and families on why certain emotions might be heightened during this time.

“We’re here to help provide support for how they can cope with their emotional needs during a crisis situation. Our youth ... are in constant crisis on a daily basis,” Adoma said. “It could be very frightening and triggering to not be in control and this is a situation in which all of us may be feeling very vulnerable. And so, I try to help support them so that they can figure out direction and guidance around that.”

Adoma gave an example of three tools that could be a help to anyone during this time: self-care, creating a routine and rethinking vulnerability as a strength, not a weakness.

See **COVID Strain**, continued on p. 16

► COVID Strain

Continued from p. 15

Providing Care at a Distance

Because of social distancing requirements, one of the first elements in the REC staff's toolbelt has been telehealth. It has been imperative to ensuring that those receiving care can maintain their contact with REC employees without exposing themselves to COVID-19 infection.

"Largely, we've moved our case management services to a telehealth model — providing services via video call, telephone, text messaging and all of those sorts of things. And it really was a necessary transition," Adoma said. "I know a lot of organizations that provide these sorts of services that made the same sort of transitions during COVID."

Nazarina Mwakasege Minaya is a senior development associate at REC. She highlighted social media as a great tool to reach youth and to fill them in about all of the Center's offerings.

"We have channels that are specifically for youth and they know how to utilize those avenues to utilize any information they need to get connected. ... I also have the great fortune of answering some of the emails that come from our young people and the ways that they find us are just terrific, 'I heard about you through a friend, through another friend, cousin,'" Minaya said.

Currently, REC has general information pages on platforms like Facebook, but also ones aimed specifically for youth to use.

"We also have another one for our supporters

and donors and people who are just trying to learn more. We have a Twitter account, which is sort of a blend of the two populations, but they know if they need some quick info — a phone number, a flier about an event that's going on, it's often posted there. And to get really in touch with the young people, we also have an Instagram account," she said with a laugh. "It is run by my counterpart I'Sha [Schultz-Spradlin], and she's amazing at getting info out to our young people but also working in a way to ensure that they know how the community is supporting them."

Minaya and Schultz-Spradlin have also collaborated to reach clients and community members via the brand-new "Voices of REC" podcast that highlights REC's work and priorities.

Safety Nets and In-Person Care

However, as effective as technology-focused services can be, they're not always ideal. In some cases, Community-Based Therapist Mitch Paradise said that telehealth can feel like a double-edged sword.

"It creates increased access for some folks, but it in some ways can be a real hindrance," they said, noting that many youth attempting to access REC have unreliable internet connections and access to devices like phones.

Sometimes, Paradise said, there is no replacement for in-person care.

"I recently met with a family for the first time in their home, which was a unique experience given COVID, and it was really interesting to be welcomed into their home and given all these safety precautions. But it felt really good to be able to still offer help while making sure that

everyone is safe and healthy."

Fellow Behavioral Health Specialist Joyya Pettus agrees. In some ways, she said, COVID-19 has helped to shed light on why safety nets like REC are important.

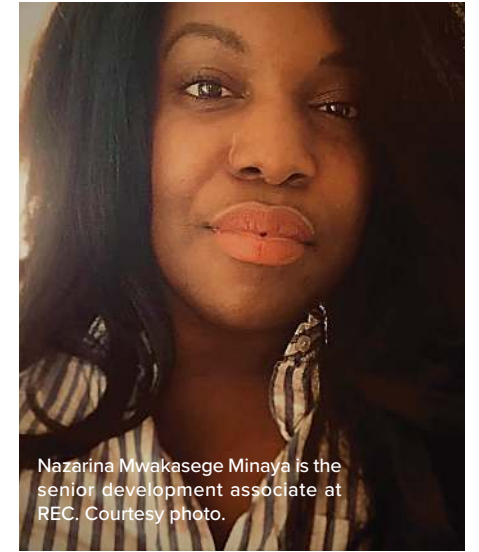
"I think because COVID has brought it to light, and because so many other people's housing dynamics were changed due to COVID, there are some people that maybe were higher- or lower-income and have lost jobs completely. Even though they had unemployment [benefits], there were still so many issues with it, like I know folks that personally didn't get unemployment for six months," she said. "Some were able to sustain themselves, but some became homeless, so they have the empathy now that this could happen to anyone — not just because you're a certain person or gender. This can happen to anyone."

In fact, the need has been so dire, that Pettus' caseload has more than doubled from its normal level of roughly 10-15 to 32.

"Some don't need as much as others, but those who need it? Their mental health has gotten worse. Relationships and domestic violence has gotten worse during COVID time because they're so isolated and it's just a different world right now," she said. "I'm trying to encourage our youth right now that even though it is, we still need to take care of ourselves."

That's why, in addition to overall mental health efforts, aid like food resource distribution has become a large part of what makes the center tick these days. While public donations have been curbed to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19, youth are still able to access food resources by calling the center to schedule a pick-up time.

"COVID-19's exposed that a lot of folks are



Nazarina Mwakasege Minaya is the senior development associate at REC. Courtesy photo.

on a razor's edge in terms of resources and their access to a potential crisis if something suddenly were to happen if somebody loses a job or their income suddenly changes. ... So, I view a lot of the services that we provide as trying to add to that buffer," said Licensed Social Worker Luke Hassevoort. "Whether it's the food pantry through the drop-in center, using emergency funds, we've had an emergency grant during COVID where we were able to turn around and distribute gift cards to people for emergency needs."

When asked why he does what he does, Hassevoort summed it up well.

"In this specific area that I work in, I do view this as a human right, that people have a right to housing and that everybody in our community should have housing," he said. "We shouldn't give up until people have a safe place to sleep at night."

► Pushing Through Pandemic

Continued from p. 15

people experience, not by virtue of anything that they have done but because of who they are."

In fact, Dr. Kofi Adoma, currently the lead therapist of REC's behavioral health clinic and one of the organization's founding board members, said that she had a sobering moment several months ago when looking through some of REC's old documents.

"I stumbled upon some old board member meeting minutes and just comparing then to now was overwhelming — but nothing more overwhelming than when Mark showed me and [another founding member] John Allen an archival document of our board's strategic plan. It was mind-blowing," Adoma said. "It was a list of what he had envisioned first at meetings, and John and I looked at the list, and then looked at each other and we were beyond words. There, on that list, were programs that the center actually has now and many more that surpass those. We just couldn't believe it. I was elated when I saw that and John and I had no idea that we'd get this far. In fact, we

didn't even realize that we would see satellite locations, but we dreamed big and we got big!"

Future Goals

Today, beyond its main 77 Victor St. location in Highland Park, REC is on its way to hosting four locations across the city. When asked about future goals for the organization, Peterson said with a laugh, "We aren't doing anything new!" Development Director Mark Erwin-McCormick then chimed in, summing up REC's ongoing commitment to the people it serves well.

"As we continue to add these new programs, it's important to us at Ruth Ellis Center that we're not just adding programs to add programs, we're adding programs that are going to have a significant impact here in Detroit and in the lives of the young people that we're working with, and the only way that you can do that is by honing in and really getting good at what we do," Erwin-McCormick said. "And these are new programs for us, so there's going to be a period of time where we are working with young people to identify what is the best way to deliver this and support in this area."

Dr. Adoma expressed that while she enjoys

her line of work, one day, she hopes that REC's services will not be needed because of ongoing activism work for acceptance of LGBTQ youth. Peterson said he shares that view, but knows that there's still a lot of work to be done before it's possible to get to that point.



Mark Erwin-McCormick is the director of development and advancement at REC. Courtesy photo.

"Unfortunately, because of the intersecting oppressions and lived experience, we're not just talking about acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities, we're talking about Black and Brown people who've been [oppressed] for centuries and centuries," Peterson said. "So I absolutely agree and I hold that same view, and I think it's embedded in our work. But there's still some more work to do."

He did add, however, that REC has actively been shifting its priorities over time to become what he calls a "leadership pipeline" for both the people being served by REC and for those working there.

"[We've been working] with the intent of building a pipeline that we might recruit both nonprofit and for-profit partners who really want to employ young people who go through the experience at Ruth Ellis for soft skills and all the other supports that they can get here and move on into jobs," he said. "That's part of what I mean by deepening and expanding the quality and intentionality of something that we're already doing. This just goes to another level in terms of ultimate impact."

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A Better Version of Brandy

R&B Icon Talks Loyal LGBTQ Fans, Gratitude and Overcoming Self-Doubt

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

The light falling on R&B queen Brandy is casting tiny rainbows that dance above her head. She's looking up at them, telling me what she sees. Little rainbows everywhere.

On an ordinary day, sure, this would be special. But on this particular day, as I speak with a confident and ruminative Brandy on Zoom, in depth, about her eagerness to get

back to performing at Pride and the loyalty of her LGBTQ fans, it's impossible not to read into this extraordinarily timed meteorological phenomenon as some kind of gay magic. In case you didn't know how much mad love there is between Brandy and the LGBTQ community, well, here are some rainbows haloing Brandy's head while she's addressing that very love, it seems to say.

From her iconic sing-off with Monica on "The Boy Is Mine" and on through her remake

of "Cinderella" with Whitney and her TV series "Moesha," Brandy's biggest LGBTQ fans have stood by her, their devotion never waning. In July, nearly 30 years after her self-titled debut made her an R&B star in 1993, she dropped "B7," her seventh studio album, on her own record label, Brand Nu Inc. Now that Brandy is more in control of her identity and artistry, that bond has never been stronger.

Promoting "B7" in the middle of a pandemic on Zoom – what has that experience been like?

It's not like how it normally is, of course. I'm a people person; I love to interact, meet new fans, meet fans that have been with me for such a long time. But I am thankful for technology because we could just be on the phone and I wouldn't be able to meet you like this. So (I'm) thankful in that way. But (I) definitely wish I could really be out there and

socialize and hug people and shake hands, that kind of thing.

I'm sending you a virtual hug.

I'm sending you one too.

I've been a fan since I was a kid. We're about the same age, but the difference is that I've watched you grow up.

It's beautiful to meet people who have followed me and supported me all this time, so I appreciate you jumping on the Brandy board and being a part of my journey. And even in you being interested in talking to me.

Just to see you blossom into this independent woman where you get to make the calls, where you have autonomy, where you are a co-producer and co-writer. It's extraordinary to see. Can you talk about how you got to that place?

I felt inspired this time around. I just wanted to follow the creativity, the flow, that was in me, that was inspiring me to use my music to tell a lot of the stories that I had gone through, my challenges with love and my mentality and where I stood with myself, and also just trying to find this new sound and this new way of approaching music.

It took me a minute, but I'm so glad that I was able to really dig deep and pull the real feelings, the real emotion for this project. Real lyrics that are coming from my heart, from my own journal, from my own spirit. It just feels a little bit different when most of the music is coming from you. It feels good to be in this place. And I want to, of course, continue to collaborate with other writers and other producers, but it feels good to have a center where I can go to and pull from, that I feel confident with.

When you have such a loyal fan base, do you get to a point where you can trust that they'll go on any journey with you creatively?

I would have to say I feel like my fans have been loyal from day one, especially the diehard fans; they've been very supportive from my first album, to me moving into television and me being able to step outside of music and do things that I never saw myself doing or imagined myself doing.

I feel like people have grown up with me, and that started at the very beginning. But I could really also tell with the new project, just the anticipation, people wanting me to put out music and always asking, "When are we going to get new music?" When people still want to hear from you after you've been gone for eight years, that feels amazing. That people still have a yearning, have a want, have that feeling that they want to hear *something* from me... even if it's "Happy Birthday"! (Laughs.) That feels amazing to have a loyal fan base like that.

These lyrics are some of the most real lyrics of your career. And you go deep. I have friends who are experiencing their own mental health issues and saying this album has really

connected with them because you're so open and vulnerable. Are you hearing that from fans?

I do. I know we have struggles, and we go through things that we wish we could change our behavior on, and things we have to face about ourselves, and I wanted to be one of the people to come forward and say that I've struggled in a lot of areas with my mentality, with my sanity, just with the kind of life that I've had to lead. A lot of trauma. A lot of PTSD that I've had to battle and face.

But there is light at the end of the tunnel because there's work that you can do. You can talk to someone, you can journal. You can change the inner dialogue with yourself. It takes practice to get yourself on track, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. I wanted to show people that no matter what you go through, you're always bigger than your circumstance, and you can always work on your mental issues. Always.

That's such a thing that I think we all need to hear right now, Brandy. We're all going through something we've never experienced before, so the PTSD, the anxiety, the depression is intense. How are you working through this current moment?

I just have this deep empathy for everyone. My prayers for the world have increased. I've always prayed for world peace and togetherness, for us to be equal and unified, but my prayers have gotten longer and more frequent with what's going on. But I just try to think maybe this whole entire moment is shifting us to a different level of awareness, a different level of consciousness. And maybe this thing that looks like a catastrophe is really the universe cleaning our mess up and helping us get to a better place.

And, of course, my heart goes out to the people that we have lost in these tragic times, but I feel like I have to believe that everything works for the higher good. At some point we will be better from this because a lot of light has been shed on a lot of the things that this world has had to face. Even though we've seen a lot of division, we've all seen a lot of unity in this time. We have to think on those things, and I think when we focus on those kinds of things – and being grateful for the smallest thing; like, I'm grateful for the pillow that I have to sleep on at night – you start to appreciate the smallest of the smallest things in life. I think we're moving into a better space for ourselves, and I just pray that that's the case. I really do.

What are you grateful for today?

Today I'm grateful that I'm able to speak with you about life and to share what I just shared with you today. I'm grateful for my family that I saw this morning. I'm grateful for the breakfast that I was able to eat this morning. I'm just grateful for oxygen. I'm grateful for these, like, rainbows that I see on my wall right now. Little rainbows on my wall. I'm

See **Brandy**, continued on p. 20

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Puzzle p. 29

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► Brandy

Continued from p. 19

just grateful for life and to have a purpose in life. To be here and not to feel like you have a purpose, that's not a good place to be. And I want everybody to know that: If you're alive, you have a purpose here.

God, you're gonna make me cry.

Don't you cry, Chris. (Laughs.)

I'm a big fan of "Lucid Dreams" from "B7"; it seems to detail a very personal story of you losing yourself. And I think we're all at risk of that right now. Can you talk about that song and how you were able to get back to you and the work that it took to get there?

There was a time in my life where I felt like I needed another person to complete me, and that is not the ultimate truth. The ultimate truth is that we are whole. We are a whole person, and when you become whole – and when you realize that – you share your wholeness with another whole person.

"Lucid Dreams" is really about me losing myself in a relationship because I feel like I'm nothing without this person. So I'm addicted to sleep, chasing this recurring dream because in my dreams we're together, but in reality, in the waking state, we had broken up, and that was a very, very hard time for me. And heartbreaks and hard times make for good songs, so I said, "Let me just go on and write about it and be honest about it." If you listen to it, I'm making all of these healing sounds because I was using the song to heal a part of the leftover pain that I was feeling from that particular time in my life. But I'm completely over it, I'm free from that, which is great. I did the work to do it, and when you do the work, you do get results.

I'm about to pay you to be my therapist. An hour a week – how much?

(Laughs.) You know what, no one's ever said that. Ev'rybody trying to send me to therapy! I'm kidding. (Laughs.) I love that, thank you. That's a compliment.

You're a regular Pride performer, and Pride was not the same this year. You didn't get to perform at Pride. What do you feel you missed out on?

I absolutely love performing at Pride. The energy is just unmatched. And you can just tell the love for my music in the LGBTQ community is real. You feel like, "OK, they have my back. When I come on stage, they're gonna give me that love I need. They're gonna want me to do well. They're gonna want me." It feels like family. And I'm just so blessed to have the LGBTQ community to support me in such a way that I just... it feels awesome. And I miss that. I didn't get to do anything for Pride. But count me in when it's safe and ready to go, because I absolutely love it. I absolutely love performing at Pride.

It was nice to see you on a stage, on the Billboard stage, to be exact, where you blew it up. What's it like performing in that kind of environment, in a pandemic, without a crowd?

It's different. Because you feed off a crowd. And the applause. And the singing along. And the rooting you on. That is something that I definitely miss in terms of being on stage. But there's also a focus that happens when there isn't a crowd, where I'm only thinking of what I'm doing. But I would prefer a crowd over just being completely in my zone. I can get in my zone with a crowd, but it's easier when the crowd isn't there. But I miss the crowd.

You don't have that instant feedback, right? It's hard to know, "Am I

doing OK, everyone?"

Yeah. And then the people that are there, that are working, they don't act like a crowd, they don't act like an audience. The 10 people that are separated doing camera shots, they're not going to clap for you at the end.

They're not like your gay fans. They don't know every word to "Have You Ever," "The Boy Is Mine," "Almost Doesn't Count," "Sittin' Up in My Room."

Right! And the unreleased stuff. Your gay fans know your unreleased (stuff); that's when you know you're a real fan.

When in your career did you feel the most creatively stifled, like you couldn't be who you wanted to be creatively?

I would have to say after the "Full Moon" album I kind of lost my way. And I say this in the most humble way, but so many artists started to approach music the way that I did. I started to hear a lot of my sound with so many different artists; I heard a lot of songs that sounded like the work that I had done, and so a part of me felt like, "Where's my place? Do I have a place? Because everybody is starting to sound a little bit like me. And I don't know what I can do now, like, 'Do I take it to another place? Do I try not to sound like myself? What do I do?'" So I was a little bit confused as to the direction that I should go in. Or if I was even needed, if my music was even needed. But that was nonsense, that was negative thinking, that was just me having a moment of just not knowing my place.

I got through that, and I was able to make more music after that, and I'm going to continue to make music, and I'm in a place where I'm stronger mentally in terms of just learning to trust my creative flow. And if I trust my creative flow, I don't have to think about anything else but that. And if I'm true to that, then I'm true to my fans and I'm true to my purpose and my work, and that's what's important.

Do you think we'll have to wait another eight years for the next one?

No, no! It's not gonna be another eight years. It was eight years for a reason; it was for a lot of different reasons. I'm in a really great place, musically, creatively. And I have so many great opportunities. I'm a free spirit. I have my own label, I am writing my own songs; it's just a different version of myself. It's a better version of myself.

Of course I want to do other things outside of music, but I don't think it's fair to wait another eight years to put out music when the studio is right down the street. (Laughs.) People need music, people need music, and people that have the talent to share music should be doing music and that's how I feel: It's my responsibility. So I don't want to wait eight more years. And I won't. That's a promise.

It sounds like you're in a place where nothing is holding you back right now.

Nothing. Nothing is holding me back. And I have such great supporters. Like you today. Your energy is beautiful. You represent a whole community of people that love me, and you're speaking for them to let me know that I'm loved out here and that feels... that's an amazing feeling. So I owe you. I owe the LGBTQ community. I owe my fans music. And it's a beautiful place, to be loved.

This interview was lightly edited and condensed for clarity.

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.

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Miz Cracker Brings the Good News (and Latkes)

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

If 2020 embodied a physical vessel, it's not unlikely that it would be a dumpster fire. At least, that's certainly how it's felt for most of the year. But for drag queen Miz Cracker, she's taking the opportunity to reflect, and share a little joy with the world through her brand-new podcast "She's a Woman," which will debut on Dec. 7. On each episode, she'll introduce a guest and make sure to add a little positivity to listeners' days.



Photo: Joshua Going

But she's not stopping there, the musical drag sensation of "She's a Woman" fame — which topped 1 million YouTube views — is on track to release "salty new Jewish holiday bangers" right in time for Hanukkah, appear on the Hulu show "Eater's Guide to the World," and announce a summer tour for 2021. Amidst a packed holiday schedule, Miz Cracker carved out some time for a phone call with Between The Lines to talk more about upcoming projects, the importance of positivity and why latkes are the best holiday food.

What are the best late-night food spots the world needs to know about?

I did Empanada Mama's for "Eater's Guide to the World," and it's just a place that for all drag queens it's a home. And it has been since before it burned down the first time (laughs), so it's such a joy, especially because I've been on the road so much, to come home and bring my family of New York queens there and celebrate it with "Eater's Guide." It was so great.

And speaking of food, as a non-Jewish Eastern European person, I find it fantastic that one of the first things that pops up on YouTube when you search up Miz Cracker is a video of you making latkes.

Don't latkes make you feel like family and like home?

They're the best! We have them at every family gathering.

Are you Polish?

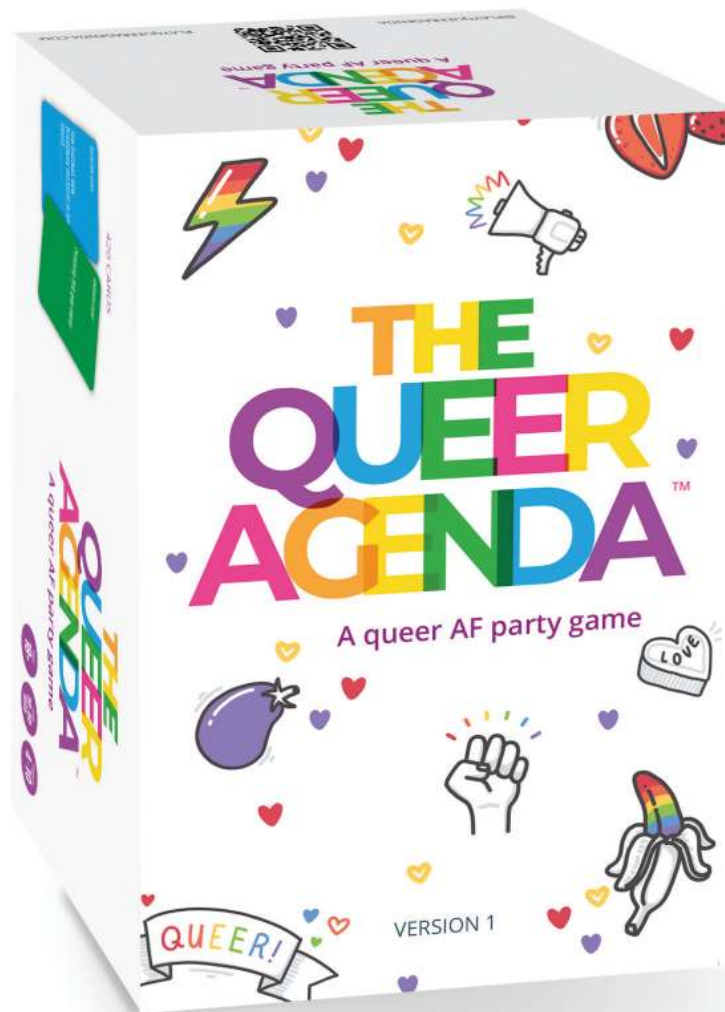
Very much so (laughs).

I'm 98% Russian blood and that last tiny bit is Polish (laughs), so I'm Eastern European to the bone.

And speaking of holiday food, you're set to release some "Jewish holiday bangers" for Hanukkah. Is there a food theme there?

How could I not include a food theme in my holiday bangers? Our album cover might involve some food. I don't want to give anything away, but there's definitely going to be some kugel, some latkes, there's going to be

See **Miz Cracker**, continued on p. 25



The Ultimate Guide to Gay Gift Giving 2020

BY MIKEY ROX

In a year filled with more craziness than any of us ever expected, at least we have the holidays. What will they look like this year? Bright, beautiful and back to basics. Treat yourself and your loved ones to these come-on-be-happy presents hand-picked for LGBTQ+ friends and family.

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There wasn't much glitter or glam in The Year That Wasn't, but you can change that. One-hundred percent of proceeds from Pharoun's 22k gold, rainbow-edged We Are Beautiful cocktail ring (also available in sterling silver) will benefit civil-rights organization Southerners on New Ground. \$115-\$145; pharaoun.com

Therapeutic Journal

Stressed? Join the club — if clubs were a thing right now. Until then, try the Write Here & Tear therapeutic journal, which encourages users to jot down their troubles then tear 'em up. Journaling and paper tearing have proven results, too, with 55 percent of survey respondents reporting relief, and another 35 percent relaxation. \$20; shop.nicolerrussell.com

Queer Agenda Card Game

Made by and for the LGBTQ+ community, the Queer Agenda

card game prompts players to participate in rowdy dares and answer inappropriate questions — because you're goddamn right it should. \$25; fitzgames.com

Embossed Rolling Pin

Imprint whimsical holiday scenes — including detailed snowflakes, trees and reindeer — onto sugar cookies, piecrusts, and even pastas from solid beech wood rolling pins that'll give Martha a run for her baking-maven money. \$35; embossedco.com



See **Gift Guide**, continued on p. 24



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► Gift Guide

Continued from p. 22

Rainbow Safety Razor

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Heated Towel Rack

Spas and bathhouses were but a memory this year, but you can bask in hot hugs from the comfort of your own home. This heated towel rack keeps your fluffy terrys dry and 90 percent more hygienic between washes – an appreciated feature during a Covid-19 Christmas. \$500+; bathroombutleronline.com

Holiday Icon Dessert Set

Set your socially distanced dessert table in style with Molly Hatch's modern heirloom ceramic plates and mugs featuring matching icon prints of candy canes, Christmas trees, gingerbread folx, holly, ice skates, and snowflakes. \$16-\$18 each; mollyhatch.com



Sustainable Swabs and Tissues

LastSwab and LastTissue replace single-use Q-Tips and Kleenex for convenient, washable, good-for-you-and-the-environment stocking stuffers. Because there is no Planet B. \$12-\$24; lastobject.com

Pot for Pot Kit

Pot for Pot DIY cannabis growing kits produce up to eight ounces of ganj in 80 days so you can turn your kitchen, patio or desk with natural or artificial light into a money-saving personal dispensary. Ships to all 50 states – and states of mind. \$100; apotforpot.com

See **Gift Guide**, continued on p. 26

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► Miz Cracker

Continued from p. 22

some gefilte fish, some Manischewitz in the music videos and in the videos, so don't worry. There will be plenty of audio snacks!

I'm also curious about your podcast. What inspired the name, "She's a Woman"?

I used to look in the mirror when I was getting ready, and when I felt like I had achieved a drag moment I would say, "Oh, she's a woman!" And one of my friends came up to me and pointed out, "Now I say it in my mirror when I'm going out." So, it changed from something I said about my drag to a rallying cry (laughs) for me and for women. That's where it comes from, but the podcast itself is a celebration of women of all kinds and it comes out of me realizing that almost all of my fans and followers are women, and I owe them so much and this podcast is my way of giving back everything that they've given me.

What really struck me about the trailer is that you'll include in each episode a positive news segment. Why did you choose to put that in there?

Well, I am addicted to reading The New York Times and listening to the Times' podcast, and so I'm constantly inundated with bad news and I was like, "How do I counterbalance this? Why do I keep reading the newspaper if there's so much negativity?" And I realized it was because there was a kernel of good news every day that helped me



Photo: Adam Ouahmane

get through the day every day. So I said, "I want that in my podcast." If you're in the middle of 2020 and it's a dumpster fire, you can have one little segment per week that gives you a good feeling.

Can you reveal any guests that you'll have on?

One of ours is Kimberly Drew; she is an art curator and a writer. We're going to have Carla Lalli Music, who I've worked with before as a chef. We have Jeannine Cook, who is a bookstore owner. One of my favorite things about this podcast is that it's about everyday incredible people, and we're not looking to do what a lot of podcasts do, which is reach for the celeb that is getting Twitter mentions right now. We're like, "Who has an incredible story?" No matter how known or unknown they are, it's about story.

What's a good piece of news that you heard recently?

A lot of times when you make a friend in the entertainment industry you lose them right away because it's such a cutthroat world, and a friendship that I forged with Juju on "All Stars 5" has carried through, and we have supported each other through all of this. Through both of us losing our tours and both of us losing our dream, we both were saying to each other, "We're going to buy a house after all of this is done!" And we've sort of seen that dream go away. So, the good news is that despite everything 2020 has tried to do, she can't kill true friendship.

To learn more about Miz Cracker and her upcoming projects, visit mizcracker.com. Read the full story online at pridesource.com.



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► Gift Guide

Continued from p. 24



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#FakeFacts Game

No, this card game isn't based on Donald Trump's presidency – not entirely, at least – but it will provide hours of fun trying to identify and fools others with bizarre, surprising, and unpredictable trivia. Easy to play virtually over Zoom, too. \$15; thegamecrafter.com

Craft Caribbean Rum

You can file the bright and radiant Don Q Reserve 7 aged Puerto Rican rum under "Fucking Necessary," and serve it on the rocks at this year's six-feet-from-insanity holiday party. \$25, donq.com

Spongebob Pride Pop!

Pride celebrations were largely cancelled this year – because what wasn't – but you can shine on anytime of year, queer, with a Funko Pop! Pride stocking stuffer in the form of verified gay-con SpongeBob SquarePants. \$11; funko.com

Robot Vacuum

Yeedi's K650 automated vacuum – boasting bigger suction, less noise, high-efficiency filtration, and made of durable anti-scratch tempered glass – lessens the Cinderell-y workload while you work from home. \$220; amazon.com

Evil Eye Earrings

Fourteen-karat-gold evil-eye earrings encrusted with .08 carats of diamonds will provide cheeky edge to a New Year's Eve look that's not lookin' back. 2021 or bust, baby! \$260; styletypology.com

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

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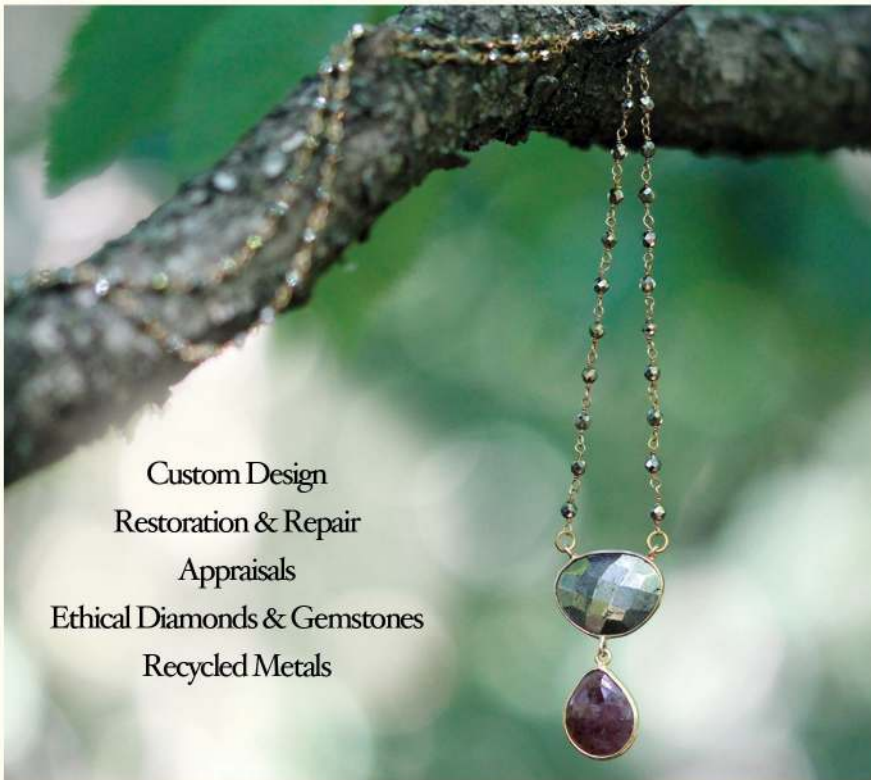
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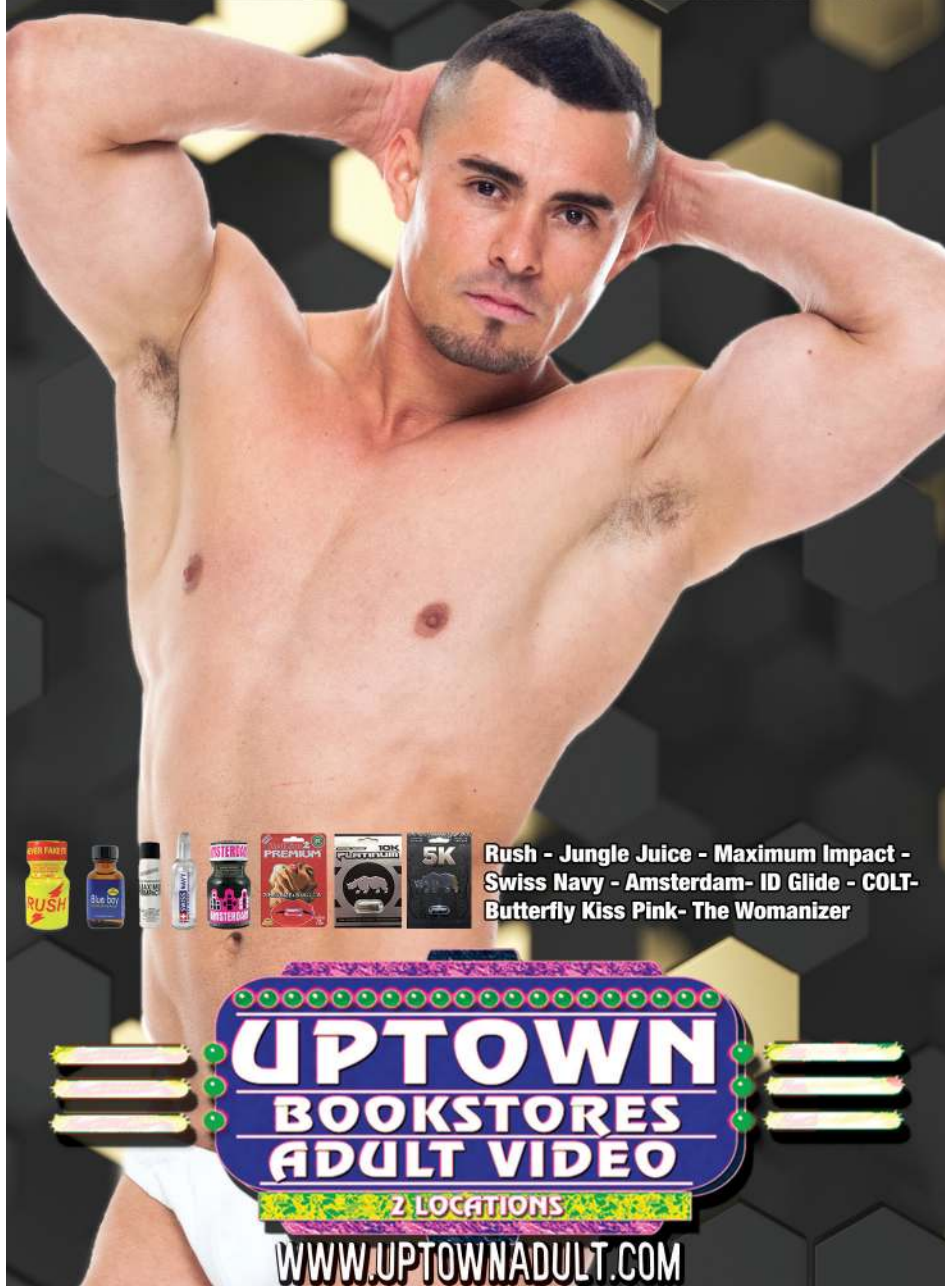
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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Clive Barker comes home to 'Hellraiser'

Much like The Babadook, we've long assumed Pinhead from "Hellraiser" to be queer like us. Just a vibe we got, really, but we believe our stanning is sound because the man who created him, Clive Barker, is also queer like us. And now Barker has signed on to participate in the production of an in-development HBO series starring our favorite elder monster. "Hellraiser" the series will explore the story of the Cenobites (former humans turned monsters) and will be written by Mark Verheiden ("Battlestar Galactica," and he'll also serve as showrunner) and Michael Dougherty ("Trick r' Treat"), with David Gordon Green committed to directing early episodes. There's no cast yet, and no release date set from HBO (everyone keeps saying 2021 but in reality it might be more like 2022), but it's certainly something creepy and cool to look forward to. And with Barker now serving as an executive producer, we're hopeful that it'll all turn out as weird as we want it to be.

Ellen Page is game for '1UP'

Academy Award nominee Ellen Page (hope you didn't forget about that "Juno" Best Actress nomination) and Paris Berelc ("Hubie Halloween," Disney's "Lab Rats: Elite Force") are teaming up for "1UP," a gaming comedy feature film for BuzzFeed Studios. Berelc will play a gamer who quits her college e-sports team because of the misogyny of her male teammates, and then assembles an all-female team with the help of a gaming coach (Page) with some scandal in her past. Written by actor/writer Julia Yorks ("Jack Reacher," "The Adventures of Puss in Boots"), and directed by Kyle Newman ("Fanboys"), it'll be the second time Page has been associated with gaming: she was part of 2013's "Beyond: Two Souls," an interactive drama/Sony PlayStation game that also featured Willem Dafoe. And here you were thinking "Inception" was the strangest thing she'd done in her career.



Ellen Page. Photo: KathClick

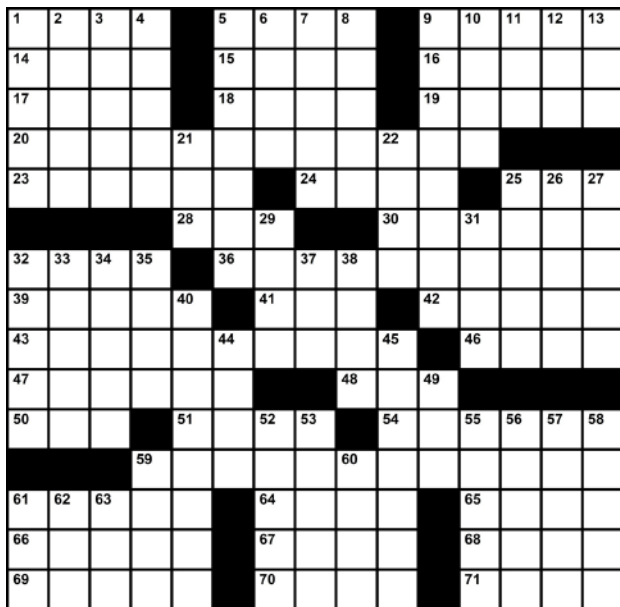
Lady Bunny and Bianca Del Rio are 'Hateful Hags'

"Enough with COVID and politics," says legendary drag queen Lady Bunny. "It's time for something really important... back-stabbing drag queens!" And while COVID and politics are sort of inescapable right now, she has a point, which is why she and queen Bianca Del Rio are launching "HHN: Hateful Hags Network" on Vimeo as we speak. The pair of hosts will bring audiences news from the drag world, roast other queens as often as possible, and then do a little musical number from time to time. Sounds simple enough, and that's about all we have energy for at the moment anyway. And besides, if Trixie and Katya (and, obviously, RuPaul) have taught us anything, it's that drag queens can slap together a show for 35 cents and make it werq. We're ready for the wigs, the shade, and the reads. It's the holidays, after all.

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'Kids in The Hall,' no longer kids, back in the hall

You may worship at the altar of "SCTV" and currently get your laughs from "Schitt's Creek" and "Letterkenny," but never forget the legendary "Kids in the Hall," Canada's comedy lifeline to LGBTQ television audiences during the late 1980s and early '90s. The trail blazed by Dave Foley, Mark McKinney, Scott Thompson, Kevin McDonald and Bruce McCulloch made queer comedy history, and now they're back. Thirty-two years after the original series arrived on Canada's CBC, the gang is returning for eight new episodes on Amazon Prime Video. Original producer Lorne Michaels will step back in, as well, and this will be the first new content from the sketch comedy team since 2010's CBC limited series. And now a message to young people: this is your opportunity to go watch the queenly majesty of Scott Thompson as Buddy Cole on a barstool making sexy jokes about Johnny Mathis. And while you're at it go learn about Johnny Mathis, too.



- 36 More of the quip
- 39 Cager Shaq
- 41 Shoe store spec
- 42 Make a pass at
- 43 He plays Michael in "The Boys in the Band"
- 46 "M. Butterfly" star John
- 47 Military position
- 48 Photographer Corinne
- 50 Dorothy's home st.
- 51 Sauna bath sites
- 54 Enjoys orally at a gay bar
- 59 End of the quip
- 61 Triangle-shaped peninsula
- 64 "Bus Stop" playwright
- 65 Karen Carpenter, for one
- 66 Hard woody nut
- 67 Drumbeat succession
- 68 Type of job
- 69 Joltin' Joe
- 70 Fruity drinks
- 71 Cleo told them "Bite me!"

Down

- 1 Emma Stone's beard movie
- 2 "___ Aquarius"
- 3 Happen again
- 4 Joe who played gay in "JFK"
- 5 City hue in Oz
- 6 Gold layer
- 7 ___ once (suddenly)
- 8 Ferro's "The Family of Max ___"
- 9 "Lifeboat" actress Bankhead
- 10 Big name in oil
- 11 Kind of man, in Oz
- 12 Jock org. for FSU
- 13 Jason of "Chasing Amy"
- 21 Prefix for system
- 22 Enjoy some ladyfingers, e.g.
- 25 Take care of
- 26 "The Jungle" novelist Sinclair
- 27 "What ___ to do?"
- 29 Lesbian couples in "Bambi"?
- 31 Lev Raphael's "Little Miss ___"
- 32 Lollipop cop
- 33 Drag queen Mann
- 34 Macho dudes
- 35 Western wine valley
- 37 Character for Keanu
- 38 Where Boy Scouts sleep together
- 40 Using a Wonder Woman accessory
- 44 Debtor's car, maybe
- 45 "Scarlett," and others
- 49 Where to find It.
- 52 "The Seven Samurai" director Kurosawa
- 53 Ecclesiastical gathering
- 55 Addis ___, Ethiopia
- 56 Chops down
- 57 Mapplethorpe's opening size
- 58 Packs away
- 59 Byron poem
- 60 Look up and down
- 61 McCullers' "Ballad of the ___ Care"
- 62 Here, to Colette
- 63 Marseilles moniker

The Boys in the Band

Across

- 1 Lawman who shot off at O.K. Corral
- 5 "How queer!"
- 9 The whole shebang
- 14 Former Time film critic
- 15 Denver elevation,

Q Puzzle

- roughly
- 16 Toklas of expats
- 17 Dry wines for lovemaking?
- 18 Wings for Julia Morgan
- 19 Bass formerly of NSYNC
- 20 Start of a quip about the advantage
- of masturbation, according to Michael
- 23 Meryl Streep's "Out of ___"
- 24 Pants dropped
- 25 ___ generis
- 28 Like lace with arsenic
- 30 Beds, with "with"
- 32 Actress Madeline

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Solution pg. 20




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<http://www.matrixhumanservices.org/programs/matrix-mac-health/>

Macomb County STD Clinic

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586-465-8440
<http://health.macombgov.org/Health-Programs-HPDC-HIVAIDSCounselingTesting>

Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency (OLSHA)

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

Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Service (ACCESS)

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

Advocacy

Equality Michigan

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

Campus

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

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<http://spectrumcenter.umich.edu>
734-763-4186

Oakland University Gender & Sexuality Center

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

Eastern Michigan University

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

The Lawrence Tech LGBT Resource Center

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

Community Centers

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

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fairmichigan.org
[Facebook.com/fairmichigan2016](https://www.facebook.com/fairmichigan2016)

Know Your Rights Project

Outlaws U-M student group
outlawslegal@gmail.com
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sagemetrodetroit.org
Facebook: SAGE Metro Detroit

Political

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

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detroitlgbtchamber.com
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TiesLikeMe.org
Suits And The City
Lansing, MI
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www.suitsandthecity.org

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ftmdetroit@gmail.com

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www.transgendermichigan.org
800-842-2954

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

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77 Victor Street, Highland Park, MI 48203
info@ruthelliscenter.org
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313-252-1950

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734-662-2222

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www.standwithtrans.org
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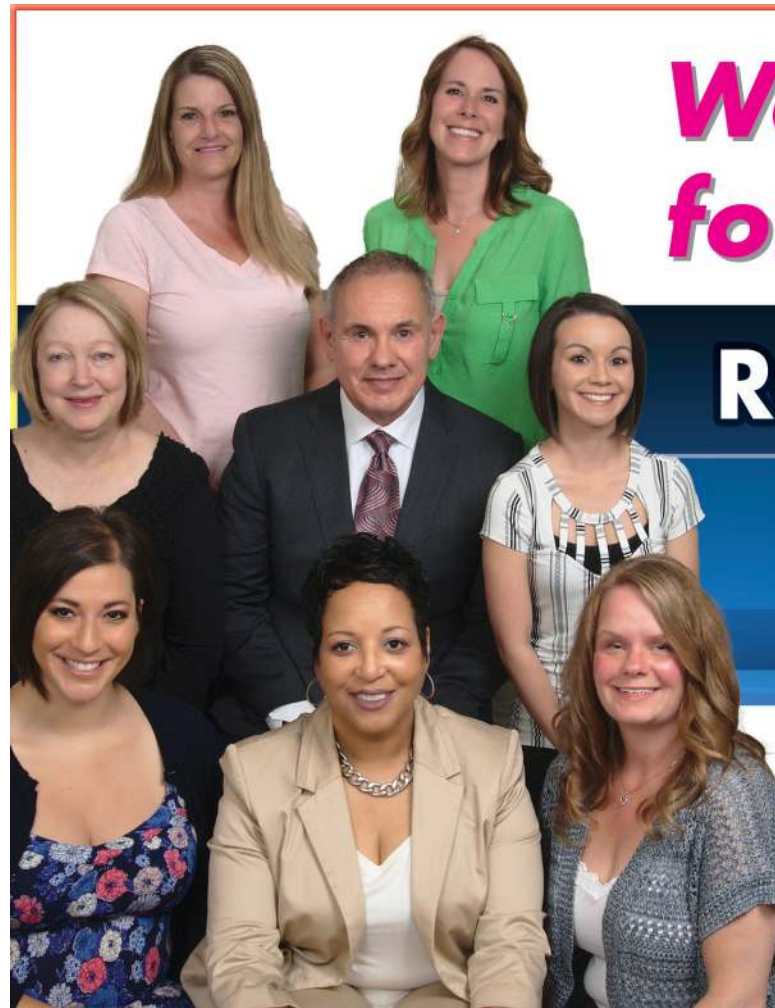
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On the Edge of Primary Care PODCASTS with Dr. Paul Benson



Dr. Benson is launching a new podcast series for 2020!

Use your cell phone to capture the QR code above, or visit our website, Spotify, Apple, or Google for access.

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



1 Why We Sleep? (Dr. Benson) Release: **1/2/2020**

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

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

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

3 On the Edge: Transcending the Standard of Care

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

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

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

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

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

5 Sexual Health and HIV Prevention

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

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

6 Living Well Over the Age of 50

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

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



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