

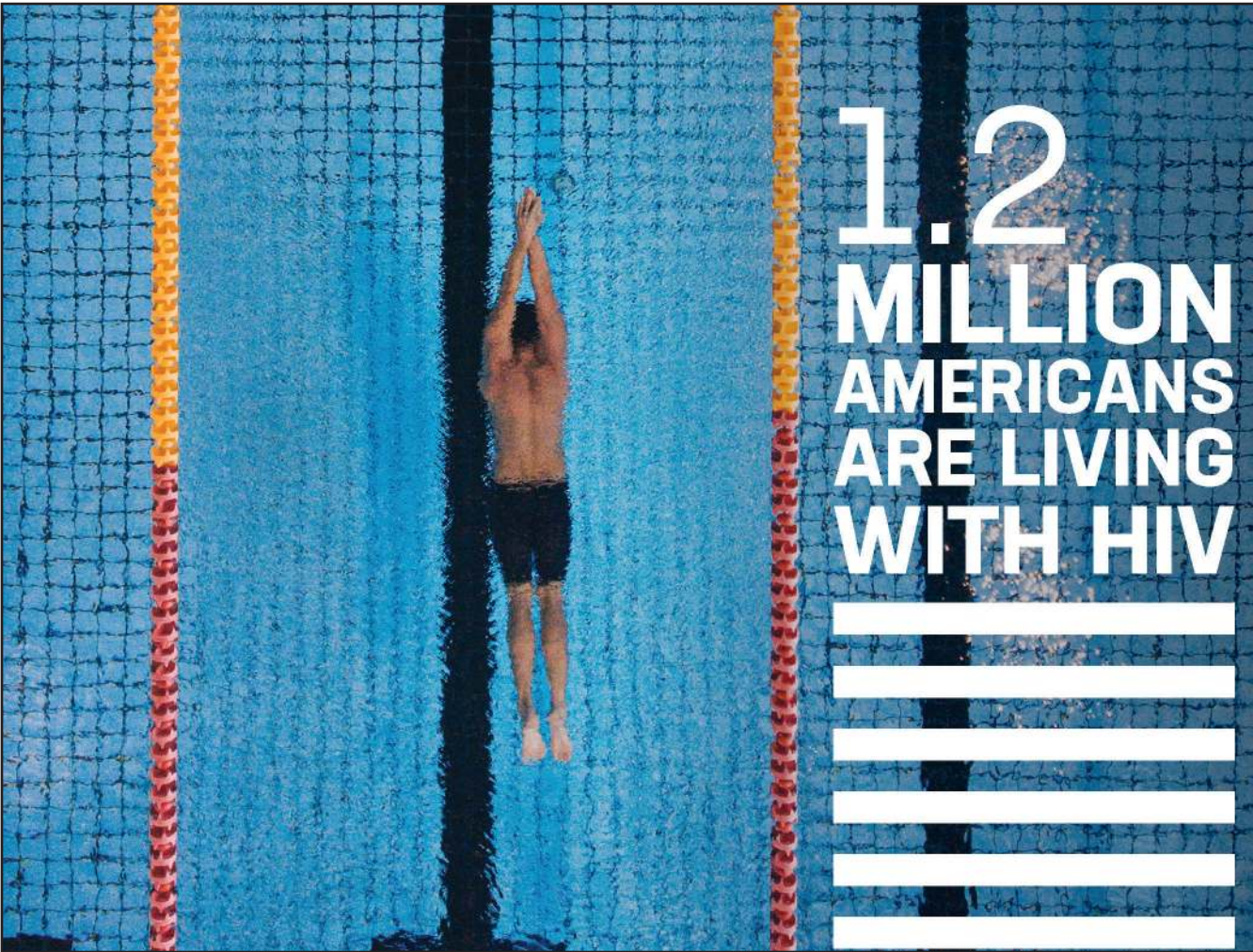
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Facing HIV in the Middle of a New Pandemic

Michigan Agencies Struggle to Reimagine Service Delivery, Support During COVID-19





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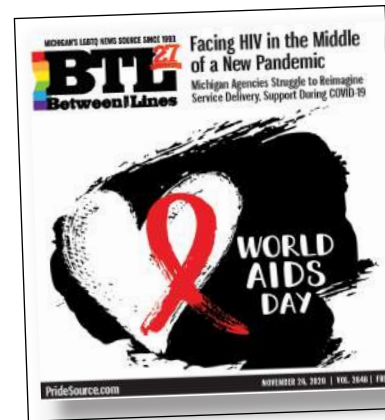
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A screenshot from the "But...I Survived" music video featuring Peppermint, Mila Jam, and Deja "The Lady Deja Davenport" Smith in honor of the National Transgender Day of Remembrance. Courtesy photo.

Here are some of our latest online-only pieces:

- First-Annual LGBTQ Pop-Up Shop to Debut Dec. 19 in Detroit
By BTL Staff
- Obituary: Jennifer Holiday Chanel
By Jason A. Michael
- Anti-Trans Ads Seeking to Win Votes for Trump Crash and Burn
By Chris Johnson
- Trans Artists Debut 'But...I Survived' Music Video on National Transgender Day of Remembrance
By Eve Kucharski

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Facing HIV in the Middle of a New Pandemic

Michigan Agencies Struggle to Reimagine Service Delivery, Support During COVID-19

BY TODD HEYWOOD

As Michigan's capital city was flooded with thousands of cars, causing backups and snarling traffic for hours in late April to protest to governor's stay-at-home order, Jake Distel was caught off guard when he recognized the a familiar sense of loss and threat.

"We saw the same things, people were dying of HIV and no one seemed to notice or care," said Distel, executive director of the Lansing Area AIDS Network. "There was a denial of the reality we were living. There was a denial of what the risk was. There was a dismissal of who was being impacted, and lost. Then, it was gay men. Now it's the elderly."

This year has brought a seachange of reality across the country and the state as the novel coronavirus pandemic has cut a swath through communities, particularly communities of color. It's forced the shutdown of normal operations of everything from medical care delivery, to office work, to retail.

The organizations working to prevent HIV and support those living with HIV have also faced off with an unprecedented series of obstacles that have left them struggling to connect with clients, to provide basic prevention services and, most importantly, to deliver the human presence and support necessary for a population usually perceived as untouchable. And all of this had to be accomplished within already overburdened and strictly regulated funding streams.

"We sort of have a built-in connection with those who already know they are positive. They are our clients. We know who they are. But the people who are at risk, who may be positive, who aren't getting tested, that's a problem."

Kevin Howley, Unified interim executive director



The Beginning of a New, Distanced Normal

To see the true impact of COVID-19 on people struggling with HIV/AIDS it's perhaps best to take a look through the eyes of the organizations working to stop the virus and their reliance on in-person care.

Earlier this year in February, the board of Unified — a nonprofit HIV health organization in Metro Detroit — felt it was important to hire a turnaround specialist in nonprofit management Kevin Howley for a short-term post as the organization's interim executive director. Howley, who has been working with nonprofits for two decades, said he expected to serve six months while the board did an unpressured search for a new, permanent leader for the agency.

Then, March 10, as returns in the presidential primary election were being tallied, Whitmer

and her team were notified of a positive COVID-19 test for an individual in Oakland county.

"All heck broke loose," Howley said in a phone interview.

Within 13 days, Whitmer had availed herself of emergency powers and ordered non-essential businesses in the state to shutter to prevent the spread of the new virus and protect overwhelmed health care facilities in Metro Detroit.

Howley, as well as Teresa Spring of Wellness AIDS Services in Flint, Distel of LAAN and Kelly Doyle of CARES, shut down their operations to comply with the orders and protect their staff and clients from the strange new respiratory virus.

The organizations, which normally rely on face-to-face communication and connection with clients and the community, found themselves in an unthinkable situation. They could not provide the needed human elements of their job — touch, smiles, being physically

present.

"We weren't having clients come in," said Ligia Romero of LAAN. "We were making calls. That's just not LAAN. It threw us for a loop. Face-to-face allowed us to discern how our clients were actually doing. They could tell us they were fine over text or by phone, but when they were there in person, we could see they weren't fine."

In Flint, Wellness leaders Springer and Stevi Atkins had been watching the progress of the virus since it was confirmed in Washington state. By March 16, just six days after the state of Michigan confirmed its first case of COVID-19, Wellness shut down its operations. Staff worked from home. The agency's popular and effective syringe exchange shifted from a weekly event to a biweekly event. That continued through the end of May. The agency ultimately shifted its operations to allow limited in-person connections, but it ran support groups, most document signing and food deliveries remotely.

LAAN, CARES and Unified all took actions early on that echoed Wellness' actions. All of the agencies invested heavily in personal protective equipment like gloves and masks. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, which distributes federal monies for the Ryan White programming and HIV prevention and care in the state, shifted rigid grant outlines of how the federal dollars could be spent, allowing agencies to invest in more food and housing supports, and to distribute PPE for their clients.

Thinking Outside the Box and Unprecedented Wrinkles

As the state saw its COVID-19 numbers drop, the organizations found themselves facing decisions about how to continue to deliver their services without placing staff or clients at risk. This drove the agencies to “think outside the box,” as Romero said.

The needs for social support and conversation that HIV often causes for people living with the virus means agencies run various support groups. LAAN, CARES and Wellness moved each of their support groups to online systems. Unified, Howley said, continued the meetings in person

“We’d hold those under a tent in the parking lot, to keep the sun off people,” he said. “Or we would set up between buildings when there was wind.”

That model, he noted, is not likely to continue as Michigan moves into winter, leaving the agency contemplating how to create accessible support programs for a client base that may not have

access to the technology to connect virtually.

COVID-19 also caused a parallel crisis, agency workers said. As the economy shut down, then slowly reopened, many people living with HIV found themselves struggling with housing and food security.

Each of the agencies receives money through the federal Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS program, but that funding is tight. Agencies reported their needs quickly, and just as quickly overwhelmed the resources available.

While each of the mentioned Michigan agencies had a food bank at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis led to an overwhelming demand.

“That demand increase caused us to use Uber and Lyft to deliver food,” Howley said. “The clients often had no way to get to us. But that also increased our costs significantly.”

Springer said the clients in Flint received deliveries directly from staff. And Romero said the delivery of food was a wrinkle that was unexpected.

“We had to call people and tell them we were coming to deliver the food,” she said. “But it also meant

telling them that they couldn’t come out to see us. That we couldn’t see them.”

Access to Care and Prevention

Doyle, of CARES, said clients expressed reluctance about attending medical appointments. They were concerned about COVID-19 exposures and the potential added risks to their health. Some of the providers were able to accommodate these concerns by using telemedicine.

“Not all of our providers had that, though,” Doyle said.

That left clients struggling to maintain their medical care, while also preventing exposure to and potential infection with coronavirus.

Each of the interviewed agencies all noted that testing numbers are way down currently. At Wellness, Springer said they the organization went from conducting about 300 tests every three months to just 58 in the last quarter. While testing at her agency has ramped up, it requires

See **World AIDS Day**, cont. on p. 9

Two Pandemics: Parallel Racial Disparities

An estimated 18,970 Michiganders were living with HIV in 2019 — the last year for which data is available. The majority are Black, male and have gotten the virus through sex with other men — a stubborn reality of the HIV pandemic for at least two decades.

That data also reveals that only 84 percent of people who know they are HIV positive are in care, and of those in care, 89 percent have suppressed their virus with medication. Viral suppression is a key tool for the health of a person living with HIV as it prevents disease progression and has the bonus side effect of preventing a person from transmitting the virus to their sexual partners.

The racial disparity of HIV in Michigan has also been present in COVID-19 cases since March 10. Black Michiganders lead the state in infections per million residents. This glaring and crushing reality pushed Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist to institute a racial equities task force to explore the underlying causes of the COVID-19-specific disparities.

- See Related BTL Editorial, p. 16

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- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
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Find Puzzle p. 25



Panels from AIDS Memorial Quilt Featured in All 50 States in Virtual Exhibition

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The National AIDS Memorial is launching a 50-state AIDS Memorial Quilt Virtual Exhibition. The exhibition, timed in conjunction with World AIDS Day, which is Dec. 1, will go online Nov. 16. Individuals and organizations are invited to be a part of this historic initiative and organizers say they hope the power of the Quilt will help the nation heal and remember during these difficult times.

Each year on World AIDS Day, the National AIDS Memorial Quilt team works with hundreds of partners to arrange more than 1,000 in-person Quilt displays across the country to honor and remember loved ones lost to AIDS.

“World AIDS Day is taking on new meaning this year as COVID-19 has brought an enormous loss of life and grief to millions of people,” said John Cunningham, executive director of the National AIDS Memorial. “During the darkest days of the AIDS crisis, the Quilt was a source of immense comfort and inspiration and was used as a tool for social activism to open the eyes of the nation to injustice and to help survivors grieve and heal. Through this exhibition, we hope the power and the beauty of the Quilt can serve the same purpose for those who are experiencing loss and grief

due to COVID-19.”

The virtual exhibition will feature more than 10,000 Quilt panels representing all 50 states and U.S. territories. Each display host will be able to feature a selection of beautiful Quilt blocks of their choice and curate a personalized display narrative that will accompany each display. The exhibition will be free to the public and can be found at aidsmemorial.org/virtual2020. Displays will be categorized by state under the individual or organization host name and presented virtually as the first-ever 50-state exhibition of the Quilt. The exhibition will run through March 31, 2021.

Proceeds from the exhibition will be used to ensure the continued care and conservation of more than 48,000 individual panels of this national treasure. Each year, in-person Quilt displays account for more than half of the Quilt’s annual operating budget.

“Even though nothing can replace seeing our beautiful Quilt in person, this virtual exhibition allows us to still share the Quilt and its stories just as we have done for past three decades around World AIDS Day,” said Gert McMullan, a co-founder of the Quilt and quilt conservator at the National AIDS Memorial.

This year marks 40 years since the first cases of AIDS were reported in the U.S., a

pandemic that has led to nearly 700,000 lives lost and still no cure four decades later. As the nation struggles through the COVID-19 pandemic, the horrific loss of life has surpassed 200,000 in a matter of months.

On World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, the National AIDS Memorial will bring together voices from both pandemics for an important conversation about health justice, social activism, remembrance, hope and resilience. World AIDS Day 2020, a national conversation will spotlight the interconnectedness of both pandemics — the lives lost, the survivors, the activism, the heroes. Through a distinguished list of guest speakers, panelists, video storytelling and musical tributes, insights will be shared about both events and questions will be answered about how a nation responds, how it heals and what lessons must be learned to prepare for the future. More details about the National AIDS Memorial World AIDS Day program will be announced in the coming weeks.

To learn more about the National AIDS Memorial World AIDS Day commemoration and sponsorship opportunities, please send an email to ssagaser@aidsmemorial.org. To become a virtual Quilt display host visit aidsmemorial.org/virtual2020.

► World AIDS Day

Continued from p. 5

appointments, PPE and strict mask and social distancing.

“The only time there is a break in the six-foot rule is when the blood sample is collected,” Springer said.

Rapids HIV tests require a finger poke. A drop of blood is collected in a pipette and delivered to the reagent and the test system. With an airborne respiratory virus a lingering fear, each of the agencies had to reimagine the use of their space for testing. In Lansing, LAAN lost access to its Old Town testing location with the shutdown, so Prevention Director Nhoua Yang and the team developed new ways to deliver it. She instituted appointment-only “drive through” testing. That testing is arranged online and is mostly done on Tuesdays. In extreme cases, where a testing client does not have a car or transportation, the agency has been doing home testing with online support.

Other agencies shifted testing to the largest room in the facility, adding fans and air filters, and requiring strict adherence to masks and social distancing.

Howley said that while testing continues in limited ways at Unified, he is concerned about the decline in it overall.

“We sort of have a built-in connection with those who already know they are positive,” he said. “They are our clients. We know who they are. But the people who are at risk, who may be positive, who aren’t getting tested, that’s a problem.”

Complicating other testing offerings, Doyle from CARES noted that throughout the pandemic there has been a shrinking inventory of gonorrhea and chlamydia testing products, too, which has reduced the agency’s ability to screen for the bacterial STI. State officials said the shortage is the result of a diversion of production for the testing parts to production of COVID-19 testing pieces. Unfortunately, this comes at a time when Michigan has announced dramatic increases in gonorrhea rates across the state.

Financial Stress: The Unrecognized Pandemic

Unlike other nonprofits, most HIV/AIDS service organizations are boxed in with restrictive grant funding. Those funds, distributed from the federal government to the state and then to groups, come with strings that restrict how much money can be spent on administrative costs and where and how the money can be spent.

That restrictive funding stream puts organizations behind the eight ball when weathering a crisis like COVID-19. While some of the restrictions were lifted due to COVID-19 — freeing up cash for PPE, additional food and allowing additional support in housing — the reality is that as funding authorities deal with the same work-from-home restrictions, the HIV/AIDS organizations in Michigan being choked.

Howley said his agency, has \$1 million in receivables due from months ago. The agency has been able to float the money while it waits for the payments, but that has required taking out loans diminishing from the bottom line. The agency, in order to serve people who inject drugs, had to purchase a second outreach van — an expensive proposition in the middle of a second pandemic.

“That’s expensive,” he said. “The reality is that we are struggling. We do not have a deep donor base.”

He said the lack of donated dollars, which become

unrestricted dollars for the agencies, are down dramatically. And the agencies face an uphill battle in raising funds.

“HIV just isn’t an issue anyone thinks about when they do their giving,” he said.

He put the blame on a misconception, driven by the increased lifespans and health of people with HIV, as a key barrier in raising funds.

“People don’t see it as an issue,” he said. “As we come into the holiday season, the giving season, I really need people to understand that agencies need their donations now more than ever.”

“We weren’t having clients come in. We were making calls. That’s just not LAAN. It threw us for a loop. Face-to-face allowed us to discern how our clients were actually doing.”

Ligia Romero, LAAN

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Pantene Launches LGBTQ Ad Campaign in Honor of National Adoption Month

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

November is National Adoption Month and Pantene Hair Care Products has dedicated time to honoring that by launching a Family is #BeautifulLGBTQ ad campaign in its honor.

In partnership with Family Equality, the campaign, a series of online videos, seeks to tell the stories of real LGBTQ adoptive families and hair moments that help them build their family bond. The series will live on Pantene's Instagram and extend through November 2021, continuing to share the stories of diverse LGBTQ families throughout the year.

"Hair is the No. 1 expression of self-identity, and we know this is even more important for the LGBTQ community," said Bret Senior, Pantene brand director. "In our ongoing partnership with Family Equality, we learned about the special moments – and struggles – LGBTQ couples embrace when starting a family. As a haircare brand, we're proud to recognize that hair is often a part of the special moments that bring families closer. For these families, hair starts as an unfamiliar challenge that transforms into a familiar connection – whether that's learning to braid your daughter's hair so she feels her most confident, or performing a nightly hair-wrapping routine to form new traditions together."

The hair moments in the series depict real family connections and lasting memories being made. In the series' first video starring Raymond and Robbi and their daughter Ella, they share how her hair bonded them from the very beginning as they created a hair-washing ritual that gave them the time to talk and connect while also learning about her hair needs and heritage with Ella having a birth mother from India and birth father from the Caribbean.

"LGBTQ couples are seven times more likely to adopt than non-LGBTQ couples, and they are also more likely to adopt children who have the most difficulty finding forever homes," said Denise Brogan-Kator, interim CEO and chief policy officer at Family Equality. "We are so proud to be partnering with Pantene on this campaign to show that, while LGBTQ-adoptive families may look or seem 'different,' all families have one thing in common – the love for each other built through moments shared, both big and small. That is what makes a family."

This campaign is the latest in support of Pantene's mission to represent, celebrate and make the LGBTQ community feel beautiful year-round, building off of last holiday season's Home for the Holidays campaign and Don't Hate Me Because I'm #BeautifulLGBTQ, which launched during Pride Month in 2019.

To learn more about Family is #BeautifulLGBTQ and how you can support Family Equality, please visit [FamilyEquality.org/Pantene](https://www.familyequality.org/Pantene). Pantene is also encouraging families to share a family photo using #BeautifulLGBTQ in support of family equality for all. For each photo shared, Pantene is donating \$1 to Family Equality up to \$100,000.



BTL Photos: Andrew Potter

Ruth Ellis Center Breaks Ground on Brand-New Permanent Supportive Housing Project

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

The Ruth Ellis Center and the Detroit Housing & Revitalization Department celebrated a groundbreaking on a brand-new \$15 million permanent supportive housing development on Friday. Located along Detroit's Woodward Corridor and targeted toward LGBTQ youth, the new 43-unit apartment project known as The REC Center at Clairmount will allow LGBTQ people experiencing homelessness and in need of shelter to have housing support that's not time-limited.

"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," said REC Executive Director Jerry Peterson. "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. However, despite the lack of time limit for a person's stay, 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.

Learn more about REC's upcoming projects online at [ruthelliscenter.org](https://www.ruthelliscenter.org).

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HOTTER THAN JULY RETROSPECTIVE

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House: The Musical Ka-Ween on a Hot Stage

BY KARL RIX

Music is universal. It is the one language that has the power to excite young and old alike, unite during celebration and hard times, and soothe the savage beast as it lulls baby to sleep. But could there be one style of music that captures all the possible facets of this art form's capacity for emotion? Perhaps we'll never know, but this year, I had the exciting opportunity to speak with two of Detroit's house music legends: Darryl G and DJ Tone.

These DJs have delivered us 25 years of chest-pumping, booty-shaking, heel-kicking bops via the Hotter than July stage and have been described as producing a "one-of-a-kind sound, absolutely like no other." The way this group of peers gleamed as they spoke of house music and its influence on the annual Black Gay Pride festival, certainly made a compelling argument for house to take its title as music king.

Darryl G

When asked to examine his influence on Hotter Than July's music-driven attraction, longtime disc jockey Darryl G showed impressive modesty as he contemplated his more than three-decade career and the unconventional path that led the house-focused DJ from Port Huron to Detroit. He began work for a popular radio station, WDRQ-93.1, in the late '80s, with his own radio mix segment and immersion into music culture. House music was ever present during that time he said, recalling the days when Detroit mixes would play on the radio on a Friday or Saturday night.

It seemed like this was what people loved and wanted until, one day, they didn't. Fixated on where it went and how so quickly, my curiosity was piqued, so I asked the panel of two DJs: Why did it disappear from radio? I was politely checked. As it were, the genre did not disappear. In fact, it went underground and boomed into a phenomenon.

To the majority of Hotter Than July-goers, details of the event include raucous music, vivacious dancing and laughter and showing

Pride in all that we hold dear in the LGBTQ community. Good times. Times that have become cherished. However, there was a time when the event almost did not include a repetitive four-on-the-floor beat, a tempo of a 120 beats per minute and sickening lady vocals ringing out to the gods.

Darryl G witnessed this shift. He said that through a combination of the rise of hip-hop, the media and a need to cater to the most current generation, no mainstream place was left for this music that he says "was for everyone."

"I saw it draw people in. The feel of it touched more than the gay community even," he said.

Still, in a place destined to be null of house, the genre persevered. To understand more, the DJ Tone offered his story.

DJ Tone

As a preteen of the late '80s, music for DJ Tone — then known as just Tone, a hobbyist of music and distributor of mixtapes for his family and friends — was all that he lived and breathed. Inherently, he embraced the death of the disco era and rolled the wave of a new form of underground disco called house.

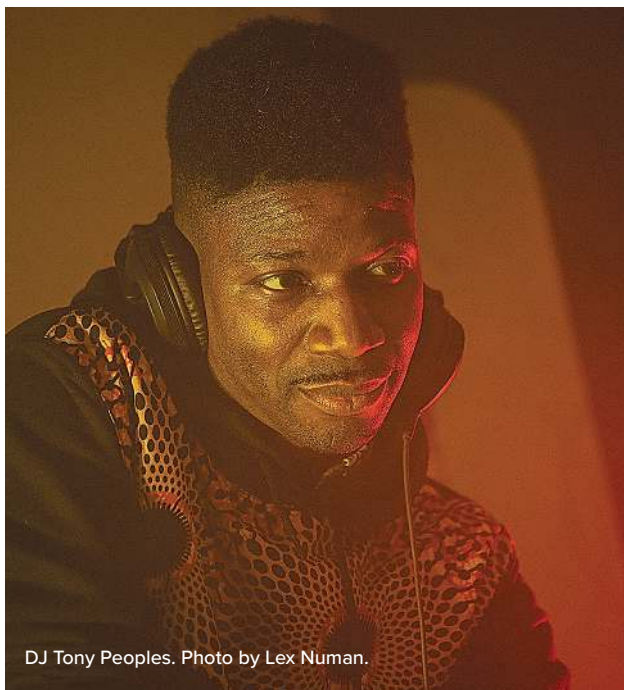
"It wasn't Top 40s," he said. "It wasn't gay music."

As Tone acquired his professional musical moniker, he began working with DJ Tony Peoples. Through his collaboration, Tone's popularity grew and requests stacked up for his appearances at house parties, ball events and clubs.

He described listening to house as "listening with all your senses."

"Every part of you wants more of the music," he said.

It was liberation from the stress of work and family life, and all one's stress went away



DJ Tony Peoples. Photo by Lex Numan.

gratification era dawned. Yet the essence of the disc jockey continues to light the flame of unadulterated experiences. Perhaps the likes of Darryl G, Tone and others took their cue from The Wizard — a pioneering DJ reaching his height of fame in the mid-to-late '80s for his techno/house set lists.

"You are probably a lot younger than us, so you won't know who The Wizard was," DJ Tone said with a laugh. "Jeff Mills. I was a kid when I would hear him playing techno, he was playing house, he was playing everything that the mainstream Black DJs were not playing on the radio. He was introducing us to a lot of stuff. And that was in '85. I was 10 years old and I was drawn to music. I've always been drawn to that music."

Musical Change at Hotter Than July

The notion that something was being overlooked at HTJ was brewing amongst these leaders because they answered an ask that was never truly verbalized. Tone revisited his memory of watching Darryl G setting up his equipment in an unofficial spot at the park at the start of HTJ one year. Hauling all his loud speakers and microphones he embodied being the change he wanted to see.

"No one asked me to do it, I chose to play music that I missed from previous Prides I attended," he said.

Bit by bit, the crowd moved closer tapping into songs he was blasting like "Extravaganza" or "The Bells." And he was delighted as the appreciation for it started to blossom within an unfamiliar generation.

The members of the panel attribute this sudden "it-factor" to the blend of other genres that started happening with the house sound.

"When I was growing up there was the Top 40 influence. I was into Madonna and other alternative stuff. I used to love a band called The Cure and they all touched on it [House]," he said. "I'd see a band upstairs at St. Andrews and I hear a remix to house music of their song downstairs at the Shelter."

This dynamic beast of house music created numerous subgenres from tropical to futuristic.

When asked how it's managed to maintain competitive relevancy, at the world's second-oldest and longest running Black Gay Pride event, DJ Tone said the answer is simple.

"You were listening to Jeff Mills and you were hearing him introduce you to all this music," DJ Tone said. "He was playing the B-52s, he was playing Prince, he was playing house music, he was playing techno, he was playing everything. And that's what's missing — why kids are so closed-minded now. When it comes to music, we were fed everything."

The Link Between LGBTQ and House

The DJs began to talk amongst themselves about changes in peoples' musical tastes, but there was still a question that bothered me about LGBTQ people and house music: Why us? Why has it been so synonymous with this specific community when it is clear that it was created for everyone? Darryl G offered his thoughts on the genre being king at the moment.

"In the beginning, when I started going to Hotter Than July, a lot of the time I didn't know these DJs. I just heard the music and came running. You had Allen Ester, you had Melvin Hill, Stacy Hale, Kelly Hand — you had all these DJs going out there and banging this incredible music. That evolved, and, at some point, I began spinning out there, Tone and Tony Peoples came later, but we were all able to get in there on the box. We all played house music. We've always all been a little different from each other. We often played some music in common — but it was all house music, like hip-hop is now, that is what house music was to us, when we were the main generation."

However it was also during that period, the mid-to-late '90s, that the music at Hotter Than July was being swayed by the increasingly popular genre of hip-hop. The DJs at the time answered this by dubbing hip-hop lyrics to house beats.

"The people of the LGBTQ community took it and ran with it," Darryl G said.

DJ Tone chimed in agreement, noting that emcees at gay bars started rephrasing the hip-hop house songs with lyrics that catered to gay culture. Catchy hooks combined with a hip-hop-flavored house beat went on to become actual records that later joined the house music arsenal. Thus, a new wave of attention was being placed on house in the gay scene.



DJ Tone. Photo by Lex Numan.

The Start of a Shift

"Club promoters wanted to eradicate it altogether," DJ Tone said.

He believes the more palatable genre of hip-hop ushered in masculine-themed narratives, placing gay bars and clubs on an equal, "less gay" playing field.

"I noticed a shift. In my opinion, the change in the music, made them want to promote something different. That shift of House music being removed and hip-hop being implanted, it was to say that house was for the flamboyantly, feminine gay male and hip-hop is to promote a DL masculine [male]."

Before house faded too far into the background, the men on my panel made a choice: they were inspired by the genre, so they chose to keep inspiring others. And that's still seen today: Darryl G's old-school pioneering and Tone's new-school way of upholding traditions has, without doubt, shaped musical memories for the Hotter Than July masses. One thing is clear: the all-encompassing sounds that make your heart sing and body move aren't going anywhere. As I continue to look forward to the HTJ in years to come, I know that the allegiance of fans of house music will save a place for it in our music kingdom as royalty.

About the author: Creativity and connectivity are my strongest suits. I have a major ability to connect people creatively either via words or fist bumps. I do it almost without thinking about it. I hear someone's need beyond what I hear them tell me. Moreover, it's my emotional intelligence that allows me to have an anticipatory momentum in most settings. I thrive in social environments and enjoy managing the vibe. I am a lover of Afro-Caribbean and Spanish-speaking cultures. Green thumb. Dog and all-around animal buff. Published author. Huge love for the outdoors, fishing, hiking and swimming. My overall goal is to build our "melanated excellence" to a thing of untouchable envy. I see myself walking the path of Berry Gordy. Promoting and producing artists, myself included, in every form from script to live performance, music and more!

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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

This is a reprint that appeared in an earlier issue of BTL.

Grinching the X in Xmas!

I hate to play the Gay Grinch Who Stole Christmas, but there's a movement afoot by the Southern Comfort Baptists to do away with all suspected gay references in Christmas carols and holiday traditions — Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Veterans Day are targeted next.

Unless we act with a united front, and a well-padded backside, "Don we now our GAY apparel" is doomed. "God rest ye, MARY gentlemen" is a goner. Gold frankincense & myrrh, along with patchouli, are out. Mince pie and sugar plum you-know-whats are things of the past.

Rainbow ribbons and wrapping paper are taboo. Red stockings for the chimney will be minus silver belles or D&G designer fur trim. Dancer, Prancer and Cupid are dead ducks. Substitute: Butch, Bouncer, Bimbo.

Yes, Christmas may never be its gay old self again. And Mr. Gailey will forever be a delete from "Miracle on 34th Street." How gay, by the way, is Kris Kringle? He even looks a bit, well, you know, suspect. And what's all this fascination with kids, anyhow? Has he ever had an authentic FBI security check?

For readers who are in the dark about the Southern Comfort Baptists — a boisterous offshoot of gay-bashing, Disney boycotting, 15-million-strong Southern Baptists — the Southern Comforters swarm like a plague of biblical locust. And they're two-fisted when it comes to minding other people's business and sampling other people's Texas Tea. Every neighborhood has one or two Southern Comforters livening things up way into the wee-wee Sabbath hours. I passed one leaning against a lamppost and singing the doxology to my neighbor's calico just the other morning. The cat has yet to return — saved or unsaved, neutered or otherwise.

Southern Comforters are headquartered in Myopic Flats, Texas, home of the world-famous batter-dipped, low-cal Gila Burger. "The burger with a bite to die for!" They broadcast over radio station T PARTY-AM, and their TV program, "The Church Key Hour" is syndicated worldwide. Sarah Palin, who likes peeking through an occasional narrow-minded keyhole, is thinking about converting. Again.

The Southern Comforters perform what they call brinkmanship baptism.

"We don't sprinkle. We dunk, count to 10 very slowly, and ask God for a miracle."

They don't smoke weed, boogie down, play bridge, skinny-dip, practice feng shui, eat kosher mayonnaise or play kissy face on the first and last date.

Their motto: "One taste of 100-proof heaven goes a long, long way."

More than likely you've seen a controversial full-page ad the Southern Comforters took out in National Expirer tabloid recently, appearing next to Lady Gaga's "candid camera cuties." SANTA: A GAY AGENDA PLOT! Homos put the X in X-Mas! Are There 'Toys' Under Your Tree? Is Your Sock 'Hung' by the

See next page



BTL Editorial

Black Lives Matter and Should Be Respected in Medical Care

Black Lives Matter.

It's time to get serious. Black Lives Matter. We've heard the mantra for months from roiling crowds taking to the streets across the country. The protests have focused on police brutality and the murder of unarmed Black men by officers of the law.

But the abuse and murder of Black people by law enforcement is but a small reflection of the systemic violence experienced by people of color in this country. And that systemic violence is killing people at a faster rate than even the most vicious, violent, racist cop could ever dream of. Black Americans are getting and dying from the novel coronavirus pandemic at greater rates than other Americans.

For over a decade, we have raised the alarm bells about the disproportionate impact of HIV on Black Americans in

particular. And we've been met with silence.

The numbers aren't changing. The increasing rates of HIV, the burden of COVID-19 and the systemic and casual violence perpetrated on the spirit, mind and body of people of color in the health care system continues unabated. COVID-19 is but another symptom of a broken and deadly system for people of color in this country.

A nationwide poll of Black Americans conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and The Undefeated, found 55 percent of black Americans don't trust the health care system in the U.S. An astonishing 70 percent of Black respondents said often or somewhat often the health care system treats people of color unfairly based on race. And 54 percent of

See BTL Editorial, next page

Black respondents said they felt Black people received inferior care to white people and that that inferior care underpins the widespread poor health outcomes for Black Americans in all health-related issues.

Half of Black Americans also reported they were less likely than white respondents to take a new vaccine. Why? They don't believe it will have been adequately tested or developed with Black bodies in mind. In fact, vaccine makers were pleading with communities of color to participate in trials for the vaccine, in part because they were required to have a sizeable number of persons of color in their vaccine trial data.

The American health care system is fraught with a history of outrageous medical exploitations. From the syphilis studies on Tuskegee airmen to Henrietta Lacks' immortal cancer cells being harvested and used for cancer treatment experiments without her receiving remuneration or credit.

Black Americans and Michiganders have every right to cast a side-eye at the medical establishment that has done little to effectively undermine the implicit bias that allows physicians to see people of color as drug addicts instead of persons suffering from legitimate medical conditions. Access to stable, effective, patient-centered, culturally appropriate care is limited due to geography, insurance coverage and an appalling lack of Black physicians to push white colleagues to provide better care.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist deserve credit for creating a task force to investigate the health disparities of

COVID-19 in Black Michiganders. While it is a small step toward finding systemic ways to end implicit and explicit racism in medical care, it is not enough.

The continued burden of HIV on Black men and women must be addressed for what it is: an emergency. A study from over a decade ago found that the cohort of Black men who have sex with men who were age 20 at the time, faced an astonishing 50 percent positivity rate by the time the cohort was age 50. Half. Half of Black men who have sex with men. That's a crisis. It's not an interesting statistical model, it's human lives forever changed by a virus we can prevent.

Even when Black Michiganders know their HIV positive status, they struggle with accessing culturally appropriate medical care. They struggle with access to life-saving and transmission preventing medicines. Hell, even people of color struggle to gain access to biomedical prevention methods like pre-exposure prophylaxis.

It is beyond time for the governor and the state to see HIV, particularly among Black men who sex with men, as the crisis that it is. It is time for a task force to root out causes and find solutions to this disparity. It's beyond time, really.

Let us make this clear again: Black. Lives. Matter. And that includes Black men who have sex with men and transgender people of color. Now is the time to demonstrate that Black lives matter by finally addressing the systemic violence against people of color in all areas of medical care.

"Be forewarned. Sitting on Santa's ample knee and telling him you're naughty or nice — when God knows you're a loathsome, rotten, stinking sinner — is an invitation to disaster and damnation. Repent before it's too late. Santa, and all he stands for, which includes same-sex marriage, is anti-American, anti-family values, anti-Republican and a GAG plot to boot. Amen."

TAGLINE PS: The less said about Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, the better. Mary Christmas, PGers! CHRISTMAS TIP: Instead of donating LGBTQ dollars to the Salvation Army this year, put a note in the little red kettle: "The Salvation Army's homophobic! No donation from me, my family, my friends. Get stuffed!"

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

► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 16

Chimney with 'Care?' Beware! The GAGs are coming.

In case you're too busy to speed-read the scandal sheets at checkout counters, Santa really got a few below-the-belt punches from these burning bush holy rollers: "It's bad enough the Gay Agenda Gang (GAG) has shoved TV's Burt & Ernie and Tinky Winky down our collective throats, but the real Trojan Horse is Old St. Nick himself!

"It's true. Santa, who wears a leather belt and boots, sports a beard and a big beer belly, is what GAGs call a card-carrying 'bear.' His red suit is color-coded to convey a deep-seated message. Years ago, gay men wore bright red ties. And, those unmentionable hankies! And while there may be a Mrs. Santa — i.e., a 'beard' of another kind — what grown man in his right mind breaks bread with elves, second-cousins to hobbits, twinks and fairies?"

Creep Of The Week

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Samuel Alito

In 2015 the Supreme Court's Obergefell v. Hodges decision changed my life. That decision meant that Michigan had to recognize my legal marriage to my wife and that as her spouse I could be covered under her health insurance. I was also able to legally "adopt" my own son. And it couldn't have come at a more crucial time for my family, seeing as I had breast cancer at the time. I'd had surgery on my 37th birthday in April and in June, when the Obergefell decision was issued, I was getting chemo. And it sucked. Do not recommend. All thumbs down. Except for the saving my life part. Worth it.

So, while my family was celebrating — I mean, as much as we could celebrate considering that I was kind of a downer at the time — one thing I neglected to ask myself was, "How does Justice Samuel Alito feel about all of this?"

Well, it turns out the answer is: not great. I mean, considering that he was one of the four justices who dissented, that's not really a surprise.

In his dissenting opinion he wrote that marriage was "inextricably linked" to making babies and that the decision would "be used to vilify Americans" who didn't support marriage equality.

On Nov. 12 during his keynote address at the 2020 Federalist Society National Lawyers Convention, which was held virtually even though conservatives don't even believe in the novel coronavirus because is proof of their oppression, Alito made clear that he is not. Over. It.

The Federalist Society is, of course, an ultra-conservative group of attorneys from which Trump has plucked many of his judgeship appointees. They no likey the gays.

Alito told the group that "religious liberty is fast becoming a disfavored right" in America. That is completely divorced from reality. Then again, "religious liberty" doesn't mean religious freedom, because that would include Muslims and stuff and the Federalist Society is not down with that. Religious liberty means white Christian dominance and unfettered power to discriminate.

Is he mad about good Christians like the folks at Masterpiece Cakeshop being forced to make wedding cakes for gays? You betcha. Not only, Alito pointed out, did the couple in the Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission lawsuit get a free cake out of the whole thing — from another bakery — but "celebrity chefs have jumped to the couple's defense."

Whew. What a relief for every LGBTQ couple seeking cake. Apparently they get it for free! Free cake for gays from celebrity

chefs! Why am I just now hearing about this? Clearly anti-equality folks are fueled by jealousy because FREE CAKE. Obviously straight people are going to pretend to be gay just for the cake now. And who could blame them?

Alito goes on to point out that "until very recently" the "majority of Americans" thought that marriage was a union between a man and a woman. But now that's "considered bigotry."

This is true and is strictly enforced by Antifa.

"That this would happen after our decision in Obergefell should not have come as a surprise," he said.

He saw it coming all along and points to what he wrote in his dissenting opinion at the time: "I assume that those who cling to old beliefs will be able to whisper their thoughts in the recesses of their homes. But if they repeat those views in public, they will risk being labeled as bigots and treated as such by governments, employers and schools."

In other words, no one will be able to speak about one-man-one-woman marriage ever again in public. People clinging to this idea will end up committed not to a person of the opposite sex but to insane asylums. They'll all be living out their own real-life version of "The Yellow Wallpaper" — it's a short story, read it. I can't explain everything to you.

Then Alito says, "That is just what is coming to pass."

I just checked and it looks like governments, employers and schools still allow heterosexuals within their halls, in their employ and in their classrooms. The memo must not have been widely distributed. You know what they say: change takes time. Then again, there are fewer weddings happening at the moment...

Oh my God. I just realized that the reason there have been fewer weddings isn't because of COVID-19. It's because of the gays! What have we done? Will we never be happy until heterosexuality is destroyed? Is that what it all boils down to?

If only I would have known that my family's legal recognition and the safety and security that has brought us would hurt so very many people. "Obergefell!" I yell, shaking my fists at the sky.

"One of the great challenges for the Supreme Court going forward will be to protect freedom of speech," Alito said.

It turns out that freedom, just like everything else on the internet, is actually cake. Grab your free slice before Alito and the conservative majority on the Supreme Court take it away.

LGBT Detroit Puts Out the Call for Much-Needed Holiday Donations

BY BTL STAFF

Despite statewide lockdowns due to the novel coronavirus pandemic and the trend of nonprofit organizations closing their doors during this time, the staff at LGBT Detroit has remained busy in 2020.

“COVID-19 has changed the landscape and mood in which we operate, but that hasn’t stopped us,” said LGBT Detroit Executive Director Curtis Lipscomb. “Because of the ingenuity of our volunteer board of directors, LGBT Detroit hosted the monumental 25th anniversary of Hotter Than July, emotional well-being programming, voter engagement outreach, Census capturing, and a myriad of other events — virtually.”

Ingenuity, indeed. Lipscomb said that the projects the agency takes on and the way it manages them has fluctuated in this very unusual year.

“While what we do continues to evolve, there are a few constants,” he said. “The first is you. You are at the foundation of what we do. This is always a guiding principle as LGBT Detroit continues its work. Whether we’re six feet apart or meeting virtually, the goal is the same: crafting and unifying voices within the movement. We understand LGBTQ voices speak volumes to the needs of physical, emotional and financial well-

being. [This is] the heart of where our work lies.”

Like many agencies, LGBT Detroit has been hit hard financially this year, and not all of the planned fundraising for the year was possible thanks to the pandemic.

“Our partners, donors, and active community members fuel LGBT Detroit and enable us to do this work,” Lipscomb said. “For you, we are grateful, and we hope that we can continue to count on your support and that you will make a gift this year. For years to come, we hope to extend our arms to offer comfort, healing and strength in our community. Your generous tax-deductible gift of \$20, \$50, \$100, \$250 or \$500 will be the important boost we need to carry on this mission.”

And no matter what 2021 has to offer, Lipscomb said the agency is prepared to meet the challenges and continue its mission.

“LGBT Detroit hears the call to action and is here to help. As direct and indirect programs come into a new year and continue to grow, commitment to meeting the needs of the Black and Brown LGBTQ community and allied family becomes even stronger. The message is resounding — the movement deserves change, wellness and, even in its greatest challenges, prosperity.”

To make a donation to LGBT Detroit this holiday season, visit lgbtdetroit.org/give.

Michigan Data Shows 22 Percent Increase in Gonorrhea Cases, Limited Testing Capacity

BY BTL STAFF

LANSING — Recent analyses of new reports of sexually transmitted diseases by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services STD Epidemiology program has detected a significant increase in the number of reported gonorrhea infections across the state.

In 2019, Michigan reported 18,264 gonorrhea infections. This annual number has already been surpassed as of Oct. 31, pointing to a 22% increase in reported gonorrhea infections for 2020.

This increase is even more alarming as it is likely an underestimate of the actual burden of disease due to decreased testing for STDs during the pandemic. While under normal circumstances the response to such an increase would include a call for broader testing, there is a national shortage of collection kits and laboratory supplies used to test for gonorrhea.

“A shortage of testing supplies during a significant statewide increase in cases presents an alarming potential for a host of negative health outcomes for Michiganders,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health for MDHHS. “Because laboratory testing is challenging at this time, it is imperative that medical providers continue to clinically diagnose and treat suspected cases of gonorrhea to slow the spread in our state.”

In support of STD providers, public and private, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released guidance to provide recommendations on clinical

STD service challenges, including guidance on presumptive diagnosis and treatment of STDs during the pandemic. Critical to the current gonorrhea increase and supply shortage, and because of pressure on the public health system, CDC and MDHHS urge providers to evaluate and treat patients presenting with signs or symptoms of infection, regardless of laboratory confirmation.

Additionally, MDHHS has expanded the approved use of Expedited Partner Therapy to include individuals diagnosed with T. vaginalis and for men who have sex with men diagnosed with uncomplicated gonorrhea. EPT should be used broadly and include patients that are presumptively diagnosed.

The MDHHS Division of HIV and STD Programs, in partnership with the New York STD/HIV Prevention Training Center, recently conducted a webinar on presumptive diagnosis and expanded use of EPT. A recording can be viewed online.

Understanding risk, consistently and correctly using condoms, reducing the number of partners and abstaining from sex are all effective prevention strategies. Michiganders should consult a health care provider if they are sexually active and are experiencing pain when urinating, increased discharge, soreness or vaginal bleeding between periods, as these may be signs of gonorrhea or another sexually transmitted infection.

For more information, visit Michigan.gov/hivstd.

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'The Jinkx & DeLa Holiday Special' Brings a Drag Queen Christmas Home This Year

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

With all the classic elements of a televised Christmas show — spirit-possessed eggnog, chainsaws and an all-out battle for creative control — fans can expect that “The Jinkx & DeLa Holiday Special” will be making its mark on 2020’s winter festivities when it debuts on film on Dec. 1 followed by its soundtrack release on Dec. 11. Even after the success of such holiday stage tour staples as “To Jesus, Thanks for Everything” and “All I Want for Christmas Is Attention,” the Special is arguably the most ambitious creative project yet from critically acclaimed drag queens and “RuPaul’s Drag Race” veterans Jinkx Monsoon and BeDeLaCreme.

In collaboration with Monsoon, this project is the first full-length holiday film experience directed, co-written and executive produced by BenDeLaCreme under her production company, BenDeLaCreme Presents. In advance of the film’s release, Between The Lines got ahold of BenDeLaCreme herself to fill us in on the creative process behind the film, why the Special is the the perfect way to reevaluate one’s familial traditions and the ultimate lesson in it all: celebrate the holidays however you wish.

So, if I’m not mistaken, the pandemic caused this former stage show to be turned into a film?

Jinkx and I have been doing our live Christmas day show for the last two years, so that was sort of my biggest production, undertaking and producing that tour. The first year, we did it throughout the U.S. and it was kind of like, “I don’t know, let’s try this and see if it works.” And it went over so well that it sort of blew up the second year and got way bigger in the U.S. We had more cities, bigger venues and we also brought it over to the U.K. And then the third year, it just sort of kept expanding, so this third year we were really excited. It was slated to be the biggest tour yet, and then, of course, all of that got shut down. So Jinkx and I and our other producers — my good friend Kevin and my partner Gus — we all said, “OK, what are we going to do if we can’t do this major chunk of our year?” And we sort of thought about, “Well, maybe we could stream a filmed version of the live show.” But then I was like, “Eh, I don’t know. That’s really not as exciting to me.” And then we made this last-minute pivot and said, “OK, if we’re going to make a film, let’s make a film” (laughs). And we just dove fully into making a full-on movie in a much shorter timeline than would ever be advisable — I would not recommend anyone to do this in this amount of time we did. But yeah, I think it was the thing that saved Christmas for us and saved 2020 for us a bit, too, in terms of seizing control in some of the out-of-control aspects of the year.

I’ve heard we can expect a sort of push-pull between you and Jinkx, where you want to uphold tradition while she is looking to create something new.

Yeah! Essentially, the plot of this special is that it takes the form of a classic TV holiday special. So, it’s on a soundstage and it’s addressed direct-to-camera, etc. That’s how it starts. But both DeLa and Jinkx think they’re putting on very different shows. DeLa wants



BenDeLaCreme (left) and Jinkx Monsoon star in the drag-focused Christmas special: “The Jinkx & DeLa Holiday Special.” Photo by Matt Baume.

to put on this hyper-nostalgic, carrying on the traditions, sparkly and fun. And Jinkx wants to do something bawdy with dick jokes and taking the piss out of the holidays and that kind of thing. So, the disagreement between the two is where the story sort of begins and it’s this ongoing struggle for DeLa to make Jinkx see that her way of doing Christmas is the right way of doing Christmas and for Jinkx to get DeLa to take it down a notch and to realize that Christmas really isn’t so great. And, for me, it’s really based on my experience as a queer person in relationship to Christmas. It’s really not a uniquely queer experience, I think a lot of people have a really contentious relationship with the holidays. I think this film is really about figuring out how to embrace and celebrate that complexity instead of trying to ignore it.

Absolutely, so many people can relate to these exact scenarios, particularly in the LGBTQ community. This year is a little different, however, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Was your intention also to bring some Christmas joy directly to people who won’t be traveling over the holidays?

Oh, absolutely. I mean, I’ve been doing Christmas shows for 14 years. This would have been the 14th year that I would be spending Christmas Eve on stage, and that’s been a huge part of my experience of reclaiming Christmas for myself and making it into something I love and getting to make it my own tradition and sharing it with my chosen family on stage. And that, over the years, has really become a thing where even when those

been directing theater for many, many years and producing theater as well — it’s a different medium. And so, yeah, it was a ton to learn in a short period of time. Fortunately, I have a wonderful community of people within the film world as well who really came in and brought all of their various skills to make this happen. In terms of the scripting and the performance, I was very adamant early on and (laughs) aggressively not interested in taking a stage show and putting it on film. Stage shows are written for stage because there’s a certain kind of energy and just how the passage of time works and that shared experience with the audience. And as a director, I had complete control over mining every moment for maximum impact, so we really got excited when we started writing the script. One of the first things that Jinkx said was, “Isn’t it exciting that we’re going to get to whisper” (laughs)? And it was a really good point because you can use tools like quietness and stillness in a way that you cannot at a rowdy live show.

Jinkx has said before that you “thrive on stress and assuming that the world is going to end,” and I was curious about your process seeing as her style of planning is very different to yours. Now that it’s a worldwide pandemic, what was it like collaborating in the midst of something that nobody in the world saw coming?

shows started small in Seattle with only a few hundred people in the audience, it became a tradition where it was sort of a respite from the stress of the holidays and all of those sorts of things to come and feel less lonely. Because even when we’re not in quarantine, the holidays can feel really lonely if we’re not feeling like we’re having a shared experience. So, that was always the point of my live shows, and it’s been the point of my live shows with Jinkx the last couple of years. That’s the point of this film (laughs). Worst-case scenario, it’s just for my benefit, because I don’t get to spend this season with my chosen family. It’s about finding whatever way you would need to find community and love and camaraderie and family. And, yes, we’re all going to be separate, but we — especially as queer people — are always finding new ways to navigate different and difficult circumstances.

That’s a wonderful message that a lot of people need to hear at this moment. I know that you and Jinkx have done a lot of film work, but what was it like taking something that was originally written for the stage and translating it to a filmed project?

Well, certainly production for film — I’ve

Fortunately, Jinkx and I have worked together so much that even though this was a new medium, we have a strong collaborative process and relationship. Not only have we been creating work together and these huge projects for the last couple of years but we’ve been creating for a decade in various ways. And we’ve also (laughs) toured through the U.S. and U.K. together, which like airplanes every day going straight to the venue, checking the things, putting on a show, sleeping for three hours, getting back on an airplane. And that is the kind of bonding experience that either makes or breaks a relationship, so that closeness and sense of trust is a bedrock of our relationship. And she’s absolutely right. Jinkx’s approach to art-making is like an extremely talented bull in a china shop (laughs) and my approach is a meticulous artisan painting the roses on the china. I sort of brought this idea of doing a full film adaptation to her, and I said from the get-go, “I know this is our project, I know that we co-write, but I would really like to direct the thing.” And she was basically said, “You’re the only one with the anal-retentive qualities who is going to direct it into being its own thing” (laughs).

Learn more about the show and upcoming soundtrack release online at jinkxanddela.com.


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BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

She admits it took several painful years, but gay icon and Latin pop trailblazer Gloria Estefan is now in a “really good place” with her 25-year-old daughter Emily, who is openly queer. After working on their relationship in therapy, they’re continuing those conversations during the Facebook Watch series “Red Table Talk: The Estefans,” which also features Gloria’s niece, Lili Estefan.

The show comes on the heels of Gloria’s latest album, “Brazil305,” which was released in June. The legendary singer-songwriter’s first album in seven years features re-recorded, Brazilian-inspired versions of her hits, including “Conga” (redone as “Samba”), “Cuts Both Ways” and “Rhythm Is Gonna Get You.” Gloria collaborated with Emily, who graduated from Boston’s Berklee College of Music and released her debut album in 2017, on several songs for the series, including its apt theme, “Let’s Talk About It.”

It’s true that “Red Table Talk: The Estefans” gets right to the heart of the matter, with the second episode focusing on Emily’s sexuality. The episode is an emotional bloodletting. Emily confronts the icon about her reaction when Emily came out to her: “I was like, ‘Hey, I’m in love with this girl,’” Emily says to her mother about her relationship with partner Gemeny Hernandez. “The first thing you said was, ‘If you tell your grandma and she dies, her blood is on your hands.’”

During the episode, Gloria tells Emily she’s remembering the conversation “in a different way.”

“Did communications suffer for a bit there? Yeah, they did,” Gloria admits during our recent Zoom interview, where she appeared from her home library in Miami. “Then we had to give each other time and space, and still came back to the table, and back to the table, and back to the table. So I think it’s kind of fitting that we are literally at the table and sharing it with everyone.”

I have to say, with this second episode of “Red Table Talk,” there’s a lot to unpack here. You’re probably still unpacking it yourself.

Well, you only saw 30 minutes of a two-and-a-half-hour conversation. I really would’ve been happy just continuing the conversation. Emily and I have spent a lot of time going to therapy together during these years just trying to learn how to talk to each other, and dealing with the loss of my mom, her grandmother, that was brutal. I studied psychology and up till now hadn’t needed therapy, but the hole I was in was really big when I lost my mom, so it was all the same time.

I’ve been trying to look at this from the perspective of a fan, and I’ve been kind of dissecting the fact that you’ve been a gay icon for decades. And this is surprising news to anybody who has revered you as such.

But surprising why?

Well, from Emily’s perspective and what was said from you to her regarding abuela.

Oh, well, like I said, in the show she’s remembering things from her pain and perspective; I did not

tell her that. And that was definitely not said. I wanted people to listen to her music just as music, because I know how this world works and when I said that to her, what she heard was, “Hide, cover up,” and that’s why I had told her, “If you want to get on the (gay Pride) float, I’m there with you.”

Were you concerned knowing that if what Emily thought you said was made public, it could impact your relationship with the LGBTQ community?

Look, it’s always a concern when you put out your thoughts on anything, or on something personal, because there’s no way that anyone is ever going to see every conversation that Emily and I had, because that’s the only way that you can really judge.

It’s really interesting because today I saw one of my tweets – some woman saying that I was a “homophobe” – and that is the furthest thing from the truth. But when you put stuff out there, people are going to do with it what they will, and that’s just not the case. To us, it was a non-issue that Emily was gay. It was a non-issue. And the rest was me trying to protect both women that are the most important women in my life.

That’s the reason we’re having these conversations, because we know that people in their homes and families are going to put it in their own world and do with it what they will, but we decided that we were going to be honest. And you can’t fake real.

I have in my mind what I hope parents of LGBTQ kids hear and apply to their own relationships with their kids. But what do you hope that is?

I’m hoping that conversations get started. We know the importance of being supportive. I was incredibly supportive of Emily. But it’s a complex thing because our kids are going through so many things, they don’t know sometimes who they are or what they may be feeling.

I was the grand marshal of the gay Pride parade! So I’m thinking, like, “Absolutely she would tell me (she’s gay) if she were; why wouldn’t she?” I just hope they realize there’s only love here. Only acceptance. But honestly that word “acceptance” to me is rough because I don’t have to “accept” that Emily is gay.

When Emily first came out or there was talk of her being queer, my first thought was, “Oh my god, to be the child of a gay icon.”

Exactly.

I just thought, “How easy.” But after seeing this, it completely changed my perception of that because I was fascinated by what it’s like to be the queer daughter of a gay icon and how even then it’s a struggle to come out. And that’s not necessarily because of you or your husband, Emilio. What do you think it says about society that you, Gloria Estefan, longtime gay icon who did a video for the It Gets Better campaign, wasn’t the safe place her daughter needed her to be, or that her daughter didn’t perceive her to be?

It killed me, because I *was* a safe place for her. I just think that she was really in a lot of pain.



Photo: Sami Drasin

Gay Icon, Gay Daughter

Conga Queen Gloria Estefan on Why Being Accepting Is Not Enough

But listen, she felt that just because she's a celebrity's kid too. Because it's only recently that I found out that she was bullied in school, like most people I guess are, which is terrible because I was never bullied in school. And just because you're a celebrity's kid... they bully you just because of that. They want to knock you down a few pegs.

Cher struggled with Chaz being transgender, and she's been very open about that struggle. Like that relationship, your struggles with Emily really do shatter the illusion of what it's like to be the child of a celebrity.

They put that on themselves also. Just as a musician – forget as a gay person – Emily didn't even sing until she was 18, even though she is the most amazing singer. She didn't want to go there, because at 2 years old she was with me on tour and saw me doing what I did – and she was an amazing drummer, guitarist, everything else – but she wouldn't touch it with a 10-foot pole because she thought, “Oh god, people are going to expect (me) to sound like (her), to look like her.” There were a lot of expectations that she really had a rough time just being herself and all I would tell her was, “Mama, just be yourself.”

As parents, you hope to think you know your kids, but sometimes, like when I did the It Gets Better campaign, so many kids that committed suicide, the first reaction was, “The last person we thought would do that was them,” because of the way they presented to the world, where inside they had all these things going on. That's why, to us, it's important to start these conversations because we don't really know unless we talk about it, unless we ask, and unless we're willing to take the risk of putting who we are out there.

You know, I hope that the LGBTQ community understands it for the way that it's intended. And I didn't have to “accept” Emily because Emily is my daughter. I love her.

I'm interested in exploring this dichotomy of what it was like to feel all this love from the LGBTQ community but not from your daughter when you were experiencing so much tension with her, and a lot of it was regarding her sexuality.

Well, for me, it was just hard to understand. And that was the main reason that we went into therapy, because I kept saying, “But I don't understand what the issue is.” We opened our arms to Gem and to Gem's family. But every human being is a world unto themselves, and even through therapy when I would try to communicate my feelings, I think she had prepared herself for battle. It was hard for both of us to correctly find a way around the emotion. That was the hard thing. And on top of that, we're Cuban. So that's even harder. Because oh my god, for Cubans to get around an emotion is very tough. (Laughs.)

You've been surrounded by the LGBTQ community for decades, but have you learned

anything new about the queer experience through Emily?

I learned what I already knew: that regardless of how things change and how it may be legal to get married, it's still difficult for our kids because there's pressure, there's bullying, and now the web and social media. People spew hatred so easily behind an anonymous name. So even though society has become more open and more accepting about everything, now there's a whole other angle where people can get to you and spew their hatred right at you. That kills me. I mean, she takes it better than I do. I see someone comment on her page, and she goes, “Mom, chill out,” and I'll, like, answer them or get upset and she goes, “Mom, relax.” I go, “But mama, block them!”

I'm interested in knowing what the music that you've worked on with Emily sounds like, and what that kind of collaborative process is like working with her?

You mean the theme song that we wrote together?

And you also perform some songs during the show.

Oh yeah, that was so incredibly special. To me, any time I can sing anything with Emily, it's incredible. Funny enough, when we were in the studio listening to the takes, sometimes we ourselves couldn't tell who was singing what line because when we sing together (the) textures of our voices are very similar, even though she's got – I wish on a good day I could do 10 percent of what she can do musically. But it was wonderful, and we chose songs that went with the subject matter of the episodes.

We only did three in this first series of eight, but for me to sing with my daughter, you gotta realize I have a piano in my house and the song that she wrote for “On Your Feet!” (the jukebox musical based on Gloria's life), her and I wrote it together. But listen to how it came about: She wrote that song when she was a freshman in high school. She said, “Mom, I have a homework assignment that I have to do, and I have to write a pop song and I wrote this and I want you to tell me what you think.” So she plays me the song and I said, “You wrote a hit song, that's a hit song.”

Cut to senior year in high school: I'm elbow-deep in the letters from my fans after the accident (Gloria was injured in a 1990 bus crash) in the warehouse trying to put (them) together for Alex Dinclaris, who wrote the book, and he calls me and he said, “I've got the scene that's gonna be the original song.” He tells me what the scene is and all I could hear in my head was a song Emily played me twice three years before. So I texted her and I go, “Mama, when you come home today, we're gonna write this song.” She came home, and within 15, 20 minutes we wrote this song (“If I Never Got to Tell You”).

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



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Pictured: Emily, Lili and Gloria Estefan. Photo: Aysia Marotta

► Gloria

Continued from p. 21

To end, I'd like to ask you something completely unrelated to "Red Table Talk." I'm curious about something that has recently resurfaced after Mariah Carey wrote about it in her new memoir. And Carole King has talked about this too: how Celine Dion moved to the front of the stage to sing "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" with Aretha Franklin during the inaugural "VH1 Divas Live" in 1998. And in Mariah's recent memoir, she wrote about "one diva's" attempt to "come for the queen a little bit during the song." What's your version of the story?

Listen, I was with these people who have chops from hell. The funny thing that I was noticing was that we all knew Carole was supposed to start the song, and Aretha started it. Maybe just out of sheer habit (laughs) because it was her hit that she had done and had taken to this amazing level that Carole had written. I think she just came in and - boom! - she started. But Carole was supposed to start it off, so I was already thinking, "Uh-oh, are things going to change now?" I was thinking technically about how we were going to sort the parts if all of a sudden someone switched parts at the top of the song. If you look at "Divas Live," you see Carole going for the mic to start singing and the cameras there because that's what's supposed to happen.

And everybody stood in the back, but Celine was like, "OK, I'm gonna come forward and I'm gonna see if I can have it out with Aretha."

She was definitely the Queen of Soul. You know what, though? Celine, that's not her personality. Celine sings amazingly well and beautifully and all of them are amazing. But she's a very down to earth and chill person. I didn't feel that, honestly.

I think she probably was just feeling the song.

Yeah! Listen, she was excited. We were all

super excited. I was more excited to be sitting at the piano with my idol Carole King because that woman got me through my teenage years. I wore out I don't know how many copies of "Tapestry," and I was in awe to be singing with the legendary singer-songwriter Carole King because I'm a songwriter, so that to me was like, "Oh my god, it's Carole, this woman that I pored over every liner note, every credit, every piece, wondering who the cat was on the cover of the album." I was just thrilled to be there. And also my scarf got stuck on my heel in my performance.

Did that make it on tape? I don't remember seeing that.

Oh yeah, it did. And you know the funny part is: I don't like a lot of paraphernalia and stuff, but the stylists are always, "Oh, it's gonna be fabulous, you gotta wear this scarf! And come out with the scarf!" And I go, "Something's gonna happen, I'm telling you." I go out and my shoes were brand new, so the scarf was long and it got hooked on the heel of my shoe and then it was like, "How do I take this damn scarf off my shoe?!" And I think I finally threw it at some point during the performance. I think I had to pull it off my shoe! So there you go. All the things that happened behind the scenes.

And then they cut me out of the People magazine picture! They put all the divas in except me. I remember because I was hosting "The Rosie Show" and I did a whole song, a little parody about it, to "I'm a Believer." I did, "I'm not a diva, I couldn't be one if I tried."

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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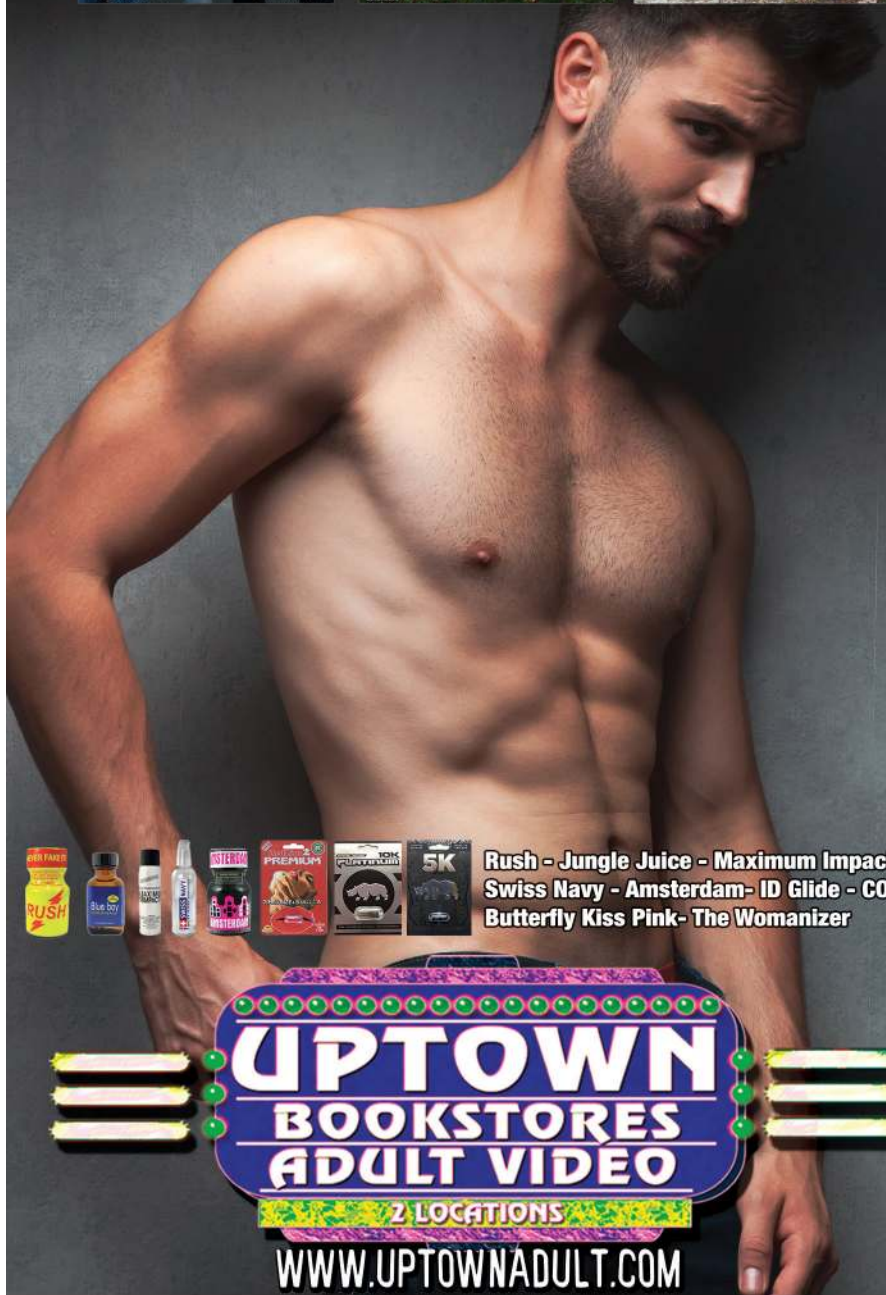


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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

The queer Christmas movies are heating up

We told you about the Kristen Stewart/Mackenzie Davis holiday rom-com "Happiest Season" (dropping on Hulu as we speak); and how the two big cable holiday movie factories – Hallmark and Lifetime – are also offering "The Christmas House" and "The Christmas Setup," respectively. But now, out of the blue, comes "Dashing in December" from Paramount, starring Peter Porte ("The Young and the Restless") and Juan Pablo Di Pace ("Fuller House," but gays are really going to remember him best as the Aerobics Class Guy in Eric Prydz "Call On Me" video). Like all holiday TV movies, the premise is simple: two men meet on a ranch in the Midwest as Christmas approaches and one of them tries to convince ranch owner Andie MacDowell to sell the property. Short version: the holidays and rugged rural hot dudes = gingerbread-based romance and a happily ever after. It drops on the Paramount Network December 13. Get that boozy cocoa ready for the Zoom watch party.



Adam Rippon. Photo: KathClick

'Charmed' reboot adds transgender actor J.J. Hawkins for season 3

One of the more heartening developments in scripted narrative TV in the past few years has been the mini-wave of transgender and non-binary actors being cast in shows as both trans and cis characters. It's just starting but the ranks keep growing. And you can add newcomer J.J. Hawkins to that mix. Hawkins, a gender-nonconforming trans-masculine actor, is joining the cast of the "Charmed" reboot on the CW network. Entering season three after a 2018 start, the supernatural drama that stars Madeleine Mantock, Melonie Diaz and Sarah Jeffery will add Hawkins to the mix, where they'll be the series' first transgender character, a college student named Kevin. (Hawkins also uses pronouns he/him interchangeably). Hawkins' career to this point has been spent playing supporting roles as non-binary characters on series such as "The Red Line" and the CBS legal drama "All Rise." The new season hits the air January 24, 2021, to brighten up your post-holidays malaise.

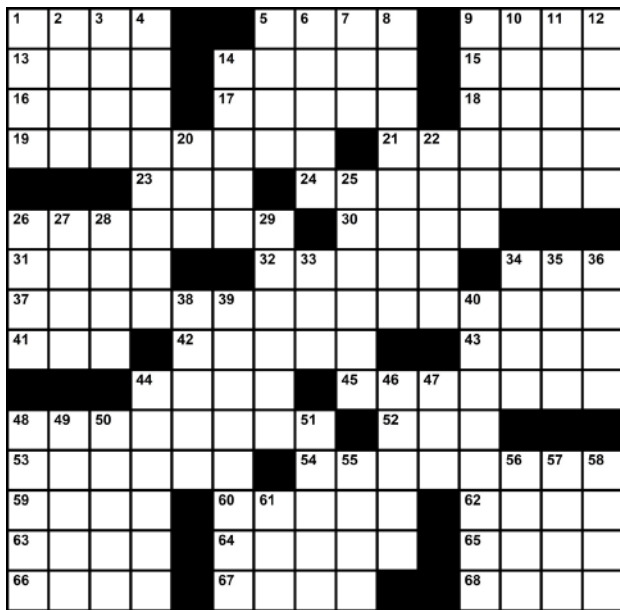
'Falling' finds Viggo Mortensen behind the camera

The queer child having to deal with conservative parents is, at this point, a cliché in LGBTQ+ dramas about family conflict, but Viggo Mortensen's new film, "Falling," will put its own spin on the familiar narrative trope. Mortensen writes, directs and stars in the film as the gay son who chooses to care for his aging, conservative father (Lance Henriksen), transplanting Dad from a rural area to a new life in Los Angeles. We're going to assume a sort of mutual understanding develops between these characters, the reconciliation so many queer people long for from reactionary family members. "Ozark" star Laura Linney and Hannah Gross ("Tesla") round out the cast of the heartfelt drama. It premiered in January at the Sundance Film Festival – which now seems like a decade ago – and drops in the UK in December. A U.S. release is forthcoming, probably in the new year, and maybe you'll be able to convince your right-wing parents to watch it. Wouldn't that be nice?

'Waiting to Exhale': the TV series

A recent Twitter game: name something that isn't queer, but actually *is* queer. The usual responses of iced coffee, Carly Rae Jepsen and "Selling Sunset" were to be expected. But now that we've heard that a "Waiting to Exhale" series is in development at ABC, we'd like to play along. Naturally Lee Daniels is behind it, because he's seemingly behind everything, and it comes with some excellent behind-the-scenes talent with a pilot from sisters Attica Locke ("When They See Us") and Tembi Lock ("Never Have I Ever"), to be directed by Anthony Hemingway ("Genius: Aretha"). Terry McMillan, who authored the original book about four women navigating romance and friendship on which the 1995 Loretta Devine-, Whitney Houston-, Lela Rochon-, Angela Bassett-starring film was based, will act as consulting producer. There's no cast yet but we have high hopes for this one. Stay tuned.

Romeo San Vicente has never set a bad ex's clothes on fire. He stole them instead.



- 32 Steinem's "___ Playboy Bunny"
 34 Charlotte of "Facts of Life"
 37 Kelly's song about self-sufficiency
 41 AOL, e.g.
 42 Bearing
 43 Give a lot of mouth
 44 Successful pitch
 45 Novelist Brown
 48 Kelly's song about the negative side
 52 Wheel tooth
 53 AARP concern
 54 Kelly of Kellyoke
 59 Kopay's team
 60 One who screws around
 62 Sophie B. Hawkins' "As ___ Me Down"
 63 LA Dodger, for one
 64 Style some hair, in "Hairspray"
 65 Re or so
 66 They have boughs for bows
 67 Match parts, to Navratilova
 68 Tale of adventure
- 10 Subtle sarcasm
 11 Dog from Down Under
 12 "...farewell, auf Wiedersehen, ___"
 14 About one percent of air
 20 U-turn from SSW
 22 Phantom's Opera instrument
 25 Cloth merchant
 26 Sweet opening?
 27 Hertz competitor
 28 Sound like Harvey Fierstein
 29 Made neat
 33 Bentley of "American Beauty"
 34 Paper amount
 35 "Tales of the City"'s Madrigal
 36 Novel conclusion
 38 Successful cross-dresser's boast?
 39 "Wide open"
 40 Impersonator of males
 44 They go down
 46 Empathetic phrase
 47 Hard top?
 48 Kaye of "Hans Christian Anderson"
 49 Able to bend over
 50 Continue to get "The Advocate"
 51 Ostentatious display
 55 More, to a minimalist
 56 Fruit flavor for gin
 57 Stallion's supper
 58 No, in Moscow
 61 Sandra, in a "Grease" song

Q Puzzle

Kellyoke

Across

- 1 Shakespeare's foot, but not his
 12 inches
 5 Old Queens location
 9 "Livin' La ___ Loca"
 13 It's sold in bars
 14 Loads
 15 Dry as a bone
 16 Like a Peter Lorre film

- 17 Incur, as debts
 18 "WKRP" actress Anderson
 19 Kelly's song about "what doesn't kill you..."
 21 Airport area
 23 Game with "Skip" cards
 24 Kelly's song about "There's a wolf that preys..."
 26 "Bewitched" actor Dick
 30 Floor covering
 31 "Well, Did You ___"

Down

- 1 Charged particles
 2 Loads
 3 Golda of Israel
 4 Queens and others
 5 Andrew of "Melrose Place"
 6 Painter Matisse
 7 La mer, essentially
 8 Appreciation display on Broadway
 9 "Addams Family ___"

Clues p. 26

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Community Connections

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

AIDS/HIV

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

Metro Care Coordination Network

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

UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond

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

Matrix MAC Health

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

Macomb County STD Clinic

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

Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency (OLSHA)

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

Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Service (ACCESS)

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

Advocacy

Equality Michigan

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

Campus

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

U-M Ann Arbor

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

Oakland University Gender & Sexuality Center

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

Eastern Michigan University

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

The Lawrence Tech LGBT Resource Center

ltu.edu/student_affairs/lgbt.asp

Wayne State JIGSAW

[Facebook.com/groups/WayneStateJIGSAW](https://www.facebook.com/groups/WayneStateJIGSAW)
wsujigsaw@gmail.com

Community Centers

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

Jim Toy Community Center

Ann Arbor
www.jimtoycenter.org
www.facebook.com/jimtoycenter
or follow them on Twitter @JimToyCenter.
319 Braun Court
Ann Arbor, MI
734-995-9867

LGBT Detroit

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

Affirmations

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

Legal

American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan

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

Fair Michigan

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

Know Your Rights Project

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

Older Adults

SAGE Metro Detroit

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

Political

The LGBT and Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party

[Facebook.com/TheLGBTACaucusoftheMDP](https://www.facebook.com/TheLGBTACaucusoftheMDP)
Stonewall for Revolution
www.facebook.com/stonewall4revolution

Professional Groups

Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce

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

Ties Like Me

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

Transgender

FtM Detroit

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

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You can add or update any listing by going to www.PrideSource.com and clicking on Yellow Pages. Once you submit your listing, our staff will contact you to confirm your information. You can add your event to the Pride Source Calendar online and in print by going to www.PrideSource.com and clicking on Calendar, then "Add Event." Send any press releases and announcements to editor@pridesource.com



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

Transgender Michigan

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

Trans Sistas of Color Project

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

Youth

Ruth Ellis Center

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

Ozone House


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

Stand With Trans

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


Find these resources online

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



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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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