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## NEWS

- 4 Communication in the Era of COVID-19  
How LGBTQ Community Orgs Adapted Services in Physical Isolation
- 6 A Look Back on 2020
- 8 HTJ Retrospective: A Cold As Hell Interview
- 12 Buttigieg Tapped to Become First Openly  
Gay Person Confirmed to Cabinet Role
- 14 Mombian: 2020 LGBTQ Parenting Year in Review

## OPINION

- 10 Parting Glances
- 10 Viewpoint: Michelle E. Brown
- 10 Creep of the Week: Donald Trump

## ENTERTAINMENT

- 16 Dolly Parton on the Other Pandemic Cure (Rhinstones!) and Her Gay Dance Album
- 20 Deep Inside Hollywood
- 21 Q Puzzle: The Queen's Gambit
- 22 Michigan Community Resources



## 4 - 7 COVER STORY

# Online @ Pridesource.com



Jody LaMacchia.

Here are some of our latest online-only pieces:

Plymouth-Canton Schools Approve Inclusive Bathroom-Usage Policy  
By Jason A. Michael

Pay Attention, Be Astonished and 'Read This for Inspiration': Ashly Perez  
Talks Creativity During 2020  
By Eve Kucharski

Jody LaMacchia Elected Chair of Oakland County Democratic Party  
By Ellen Shanna Knoppow

Bhutan Lawmakers Vote to Decriminalize Homosexuality  
By Michael Lavers

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BY EVE KUCHARSKI

As 2020 winds down, conducting meetings via Zoom or phone calls seems like an average day of work for many Michiganders. But back in March when the first stay-at-home order was put in place by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer because of the novel coronavirus pandemic, the 70-day long period was a time of intense adaptation and uncertainty. Considering how prevalent video and teleconferencing has become, it wouldn't be far-fetched to say that Zoom — and its counterparts — has both kept up the workplace status quo in some respects and ushered in a new age of working from home as the standard. Between The Lines reached out to several of Southeast Michigan's biggest LGBTQ organizations to get a sense of how Zoom has altered their standard workdays.

## Affirmations — Kyle Taylor, Development and Community Relations Manager

### 1. When did you learn that your office would be switching to primarily/partially remote work?

We made the decision to start working remotely once the first lockdown occurred back in early March as a safety precaution for our staff members.

### 2. How did that switch impact the services you provide? Did it result in fewer or adapted in-person offerings?

Our staff had to work round-the-clock to help implement our services from in-person to virtual. This included our many support and discussion groups, youth programs and counseling services. The Lettuce Help Food Program was established when many of our funders wanted to switch gears to assist with emergency services. You could say that there's been a silver lining with our programming going virtual, since, before, folks could only access our services if they came into our building. Now, folks from all over are able to access those services.

### 3. What's the biggest challenge you've had because of telecommunications work?

As a small team, it has taken us a bit to get used to the different atmosphere that comes

along with working in a virtual world. Our staff meetings were usually heavy brainstorming sessions when hosted in-person, so it took some adapting for us to become used to things like slight audio delays and other Zoom-related issues.

### 4. What's something that's been made easier or better, if anything, by shifting to this kind of work?

Again, I would say that going virtual has provided many more folks the accessibility to our services at Affirmations.

### 5. Do you feel that you'll continue using Zoom or related services even after the pandemic?

We foresee a hybrid format going forward once we are able to reopen the building.

*Affirmations is an LGBTQ community center based in Ferndale. Learn more about its offerings at [goaffirmations.org](http://goaffirmations.org).*

## LGBT Detroit — Curtis Lipscomb, Executive Director

### 1. When did you learn that your office would be switching to primarily/partially remote work?

On March 6, LGBT Detroit was initially aware of a national scare that caught our attention located in Northwest America. That date was the beginning of an awareness to switch from a primary to a partial work environment. My staff was gravely concerned, and I immediately authorized permission to leave the premises. It wasn't until my birthday on March 23 that there was a formal decision for LGBT Detroit staff to begin to work from home.

### 2. How did that switch impact the services you provide? Did it result in fewer or adapted in-person offerings?

The switch from working onsite to remotely was incredibly overwhelming and impactful. We were immediately unprepared in an understatement to this other type of emergency. Prior, we operated in an expected and traditional manner like most community centers — face-to-face engagements, direct services operations and on-site activities occurred daily.

While there was an initial shock, LGBT Detroit has, since its inception, risen to

the challenge of providing services for our movement — the pandemic was no exception. 2020 saw some of the most programming we've had in recent years, and we were able to reach an even broader audience with technology eliminating some barriers to access.

### 3. What's the biggest challenge you've had because of telecommunications work?

The biggest challenge LGBT Detroit faced was the understanding of how to respond to a new type of emergency. Adapting to change is hard ... especially during the beginning of a world crisis. LGBT+ people know this. We've been through this before. Also, learning new programs that enable us to work effectively and to communicate efficiently was the primary concerning issue this spring season. Lastly, locating unrestricted funding to purchase enough mobile technology within a short period of time was an incredibly stressful occasion.

### 4. What's something that's been made easier or better, if anything, by shifting to this kind of work?

The easiest part about the shift to this work is that many of our donors and friends understood immediately how difficult this could be for us. Because of the support of persons that understood what it meant to stay connected to the community and [that] to deliver services is [very] important to us made the stress more bearable. Also, the good news is that we were able to leverage resources and tools to be able to make the shift. It was necessary for us to communicate to the world how we were going to effectively deliver programs and services.

### 5. Do you feel that you'll continue using Zoom or related services even after the pandemic?

LGBT Detroit will continue to use Zoom and other popular social media communication platforms. We have established practices that have been successful within the year and will continue to use them. With the evolution we've undergone this year, we're excited for both the expansion in programs as well as the integration of virtual services and programs to our robust offerings of in-person resources.

*For over 20 years LGBT Detroit has been aiding the LGBTQ community in Detroit unwaveringly. Learn more about the organization online at [lgbtdetroit.org](http://lgbtdetroit.org).*

## SAGE Metro Detroit — Angie Perone, Executive Director

### 1. When did you learn that your office would be switching to primarily/partially remote work?

SAGE Metro Detroit is unique in that we operate more like a virtual community center. Before COVID-19, we already had an infrastructure in which our team all worked remotely. COVID, however, drastically changed how we engaged the LGBTQ older adults we serve.

### 2. How did that switch impact the services you provide? Did it result in fewer or adapted in-person offerings?

SAGE Metro Detroit engages in advocacy, direct services, trainings and information dissemination directly in the community. The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted much of that. We already had a robust telephone matching program that was designed to provide social support between LGBTQ older adults and volunteer callers — many of whom are also older adults. COVID-19, however, increased the demand for this program by 70% and doubled the duration of calls as participants' needs grew and became more complex. As the demand for our services grew, we adapted our services to provide food delivery, tablets and tech support, and virtual programming. We also transitioned to virtual trainings and created an interactive resource website to accompany our Rainbow Resource Guide.

### 3. What's the biggest challenge you've had because of telecommunications work?

The biggest challenge has been the inability to connect in-person to our community. Interestingly enough, our increased virtual programming has increased our outreach and the number of people we serve. However, the digital divide that exists for many of the communities we serve has posed new challenges to ensure we reach the diverse LGBTQ aging community that we serve.

### 4. What's something that's been made easier or better, if anything, by shifting to this kind of work?

Prior to COVID, we rarely used Zoom. Zoom has helped us connect with our SAGE team, community partners and the LGBTQ older adults we serve in new ways that have expanded our outreach and services. We have



also doubled or tripled our participants in our larger virtual events by using Facebook Live. However, the digital divide that exists for many of the communities we serve continues to pose challenges to reaching the diverse LGBTQ aging community that we serve.

#### 5. Do you feel that you'll continue using Zoom or related services even after the pandemic?

Yes — we will likely continue to use Zoom after the pandemic in a hybrid format to allow us to continue reaching a wide audience. Zoom's dial-in feature allows those who do not have internet to connect; although, they are unable to access some of the tools by dialing in. A hybrid format that incorporates in-person and Zoom should maximize our outreach and ability to serve a diverse service population.

*SAGE Metro Detroit is part of a national network working aid and service LGBTQ elders. Learn more about the local branch online at [sagemetrodetroit.org](http://sagemetrodetroit.org).*

## Equality Michigan — Erin Knott, Executive Director

#### 1. When did you learn that your office would be switching to primarily/partially remote work?

Equality Michigan made the decision to

suspend our DVS pop-up office hours on March 11, 2020, and we moved to remote work beginning March 16, 2020.

#### 2. How did that switch impact the services you provide? Did it result in fewer or adapted in-person offerings?

*Department of Victim Services:* The DVS team has had to adapt how they provide crisis services to LGBTQ+ people who are experiencing discrimination, harassment and violence. As previously stated, we have suspended our in-person, pop-up office hours and have had to rely on outreach and educational efforts from makeshift home offices to provide critical services to those experiencing trauma. We have also utilized Zoom and Facebook Live to promote our services and to hold virtual office hours with our partners across the state.

*Fundraising/Mission Equality:* Fundraising was also a challenge as we have had to cancel many regional house parties, our Lansing/Capitol Road Rally and move our annual reception, Mission Equality, to a virtual event. It was hard to admit that a packed room in Detroit at the Roostertail wasn't going to be possible because of the pandemic. That led to new challenges including determining what format to use virtually, how to make it fun and inclusive for our guests and how to communicate to sponsors that funding for our

programs and services are still needed even if our guests at Mission Equality will not be able to interact with sponsors the same way. I should point out the great opportunities turning virtual provided, specifically traveling to the event wasn't a barrier for our guests, and we had people from all over Michigan participating. Additionally, we were able to secure an amazing keynote speaker in Dominique Jackson.

#### 3. What's the biggest challenge you've had because of telecommunications work?

Fundraising has been especially difficult. In addition to the economic impact of the pandemic, 2020 was also an important political year. Organizations like Equality Michigan were competing for resources with candidates up and down the ballot. Additionally, we learned from other nonprofit organizations that ticket sales and sponsorships were down, which forced us to adjust our goal and expectations. It became even more obvious that fundraising would suffer as we made fundraising calls to past donors asking for their support. Several were impossible to follow up with because their offices were closed, many told us they were focusing on emergency basic needs, and some decided not to give at all because their own future was uncertain. And, while there is no doubt that this pandemic has disproportionately impacted the LGBTQ+ community, we are not the only community being affected. We also had to spend a great deal of time usually reserved

for fundraising focused on learning how to put on a virtual event.

#### 4. What's something that's been made easier or better, if anything, by shifting to this kind of work?

Expanding our reach to people who might not have been able to participate or get involved with us if we hadn't been forced to go virtual. Utilizing new technology such as tools that support text banking, which we used to talk to nearly 700,000 pro-equality voters this past election.

#### 5. Do you feel that you'll continue using Zoom or related services even after the pandemic?

Yes, Zoom and other technologies will be incorporated into our work. There have been many best practices learned, in addition to the ability to reach a wider audience in the work. This will not be the only tool used for engagement but it will still be an important avenue to connect with the greater LGBTQ+ community in the future.

*Equality Michigan is a statewide LGBTQ political advocacy organization that for 25 years has worked to stop violence against the community. Learn more about it online at [equalitymi.org](http://equalitymi.org).*

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# BTL's Look Back on 2020

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

With a week until the long, hard haul that was 2020 is over, it's hard to remember a time that the novel coronavirus pandemic and challenges to the legitimacy of the presidential election wasn't the main thing on the news. But as inundated as we've been with those reports, 2020 had a lot more to offer. Between The Lines has compiled a month-by-month look back at our issues for a review of everything that made this year what it was.



Left to right: Deidre "D.S.SENSE" Smith, Pamela Alexander, Famika Edmond, London J. Bell and Cpl. Dani Woods will each attend a panel in New York to discuss strengthening visibility for women of color. BTL Photo: Andrew Potter

## March

Unfortunately one of the first in-person events to be canceled due to COVID-19 concerns, March brought about the news that five Detroit activists sought to visit the UN to fight for women's equality and strengthen the visibility of women of color. They are Deidre "D.S.SENSE" Smith, Pamela Alexander, Famika Edmond, London J. Bell and Cpl. Dani Woods.

March also brought the community-focused efforts of the Trans Sistas of Color Project to the fore. The group began the process of creating care packages for transgender women in need due to the effects of COVID-19.

"For us, anything to do with trans women of color — to uplift them, or to create a better space for them, is part of our mission," said the project's Executive Director Lilianna Reyes.



TSOCP Executive Director Lilianna Reyes makes hand sanitizer to include in care packages.

## May

Community support efforts continued throughout the month of May, notably with Menjo's Manager Tim McKee-Zazo transforming the entertainment complex into a food pantry to aid the community members who did not have the financial resources or health to shop for groceries.

"The reason I do it is — I'm 54 years old, so I clearly remember the original AIDS epidemic," McKee-Zazo said. "This is what we used to do: gay people taking care of gay people. When there were no government services, there was none of that stuff. It was literally us taking care of each other. I used to do this back in the '80s for friends that were [HIV] positive back then or had full-blown [AIDS]."

That same month, Human Rights Campaign took steps to officially back then-presidential candidate Joe Biden.

"We reviewed his record on marginalized communities," HRC President Alphonso David said. "We reviewed his prior comments on LGBTQ issues as well as issues that affect people who bring intersectional identities to the table. As an example, I'm Black, I'm gay, I'm an immigrant. All of those issues are important for me and they happen to be for the Human Rights Campaign."



The Human Rights Campaign has endorsed Biden for president. (Washington Blade file photo by Michael Key)

May also shifted focus to unfair restrictions on LGBTQ people donating blood in the U.S. In particular, the ban affects Men who have sex with men. It's something that Dave Garcia, executive director of the Affirmations LGBTQ community center, said "didn't make sense."

"It is arbitrary. It's an archaic, asinine policy that is steeped in bigotry and prejudice and ignorance. And frankly, any time you have a ... health policy with that kind of prejudice and ignorance associated with it, [it] leads to death. People are dying because of this stupid policy," he said.

## June

By June, COVID-19 had certainly changed the landscape but for the LGBTQ community it was especially visible because of the lack of in-person Pride celebrations. However, downtown Detroit did have its fair share of organizing in light of the police brutality the resulted in the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin — among other incidents. One particular

protest had LGBTQ people of color in mind organized by Detroit Queer Activist Coalition Founder Dorian Minley.

"You hardly ever hear about a queer trans voice as far as activism is concerned unless we're dying, unless we're a statistic. So, I wanted to give people of color, especially here in the city of Detroit, [a voice]," he said. "We have a big dichotomy here in the city where it's Black half the time and then all the people that are getting credit [for activism] are white. Well, that's not what this is. White people will not be permitted to speak at this event just because this is a centered event for people of color and for queer people."

During the same period of time, LGBTQ lawmakers began to raise national public awareness of the importance of main-in ballots to prevent voter suppression and for public safety

June cont. next page



Detroit Queer Activist Coalition Founder Dorian Minley (left) with an unidentified protester. BTL Photo: Eve Kucharski



## January

Well before stay-at-home orders were on the horizon, Michigan's Episcopal Church kicked off the new year with historic plans to ordain the Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry as its 11th bishop diocesan. She became the first openly gay priest to be elected in the history of the diocese.

History was made politically, too, when a citizen-led coalition created by a group called Fair and Equal Michigan announced plans to launch a petition to finally amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act.



Photo by Charlie Simokaitis.

## February

The Fair and Equal Michigan coalition began to make waves in February with some community leaders fiercely vouching for the initiative, while others hesitated about putting LGBTQ rights up to a vote with the potential for a Republican-led legislature to either reject or conservatively amend petition language.

In the same month, Grace Bacon, founder of transgender advocacy group Crossroads and the grandmother of Kevin Bacon, who was brutally murdered over the 2019

Holiday season, sought justice for her grandson and urged that he be remembered as "a gentle soul, who people loved and he loved in return."

## April

April started off with an announcements from various nonprofit organizations that virtual service would be the new normal for the time being. At this time, many Pride-focused events were still planned for the summer or in the early stages of being postponed. Executive Director of LGBT Detroit Curtis Lipscomb summed it up well.

"We are open for business, but we're doing business differently," he said. "Consider engaging with us virtually as we believe that we can still meet our deadlines and meet our goals."



Ruth's House. Courtesy photo.



Photo courtesy of LGBT De

That optimism was shared by Ruth Ellis Center Director of Development and Advancement Mark Erwin-McCormick who put his faith in a technology-focused future.

"... I think right now it's about finding alternative ways for us to be able to somehow still bring the community together, whether that's through social media or whether that's doing peer support groups via videoconferencing — those kinds of things," he said.

Unlike the pro-equality religious reports of January, the same month brought the news of the Archdiocese of Detroit prohibiting LGBTQ-inclusive Catholic liturgies from being held anywhere on Church property.



## June cont.

during COVID-19.

“During this pandemic, we should be doing everything we can to protect people’s health and their access to the ballot box — expanding vote by mail is critical to ensuring that,” said California State Rep. Mark Takano.

## July

Notably in July, a lesbian-owned bakery in Detroit was trolled by an alt-right group that was hostile toward Pride month and LGBTQ rights. April Anderson, the co-owner of Good Cakes and Bakes, chose to write a message of positivity instead.

“We’re in Detroit, we’re in a predominantly Black city, a Black neighborhood. There is still, to this day ... some phobia within the Black community of homosexuality. I’m not gonna be naïve about that,” Anderson said. “But, again, when we take a stand — as long as we’re happy with who we are, the decisions that we make — we stand by it, we’re OK with it.”

Although normally scheduled for August, Transgender Pride in the Park was another event that ended up choosing to be virtual in 2020, showcasing that COVID-19 concerns would be here to stay for longer than

Locally, June also brought more religious news, this time with the firing of Terry Gonda, a lesbian woman who was fired from her job at St. John Fisher Chapel in Auburn Hills, where she served in the music department for 26 years — for six years as its director.



Good Cakes and Bakes Co-Owner April Anderson. Photo George Mitchell.

anticipated. Executive Director and Co-Founder of Transgender Michigan Rachel Crandall-Crocker said that it was the best option for the safety of attendees

“People are lonely and isolated, especially now. This is a great way for us to all come together without the tremendous risks [of COVID-19],” Crandall-Crocker said. “It will be a celebration of being trans, [and] because it’s online we will be able to reach out to more people.”

## September

As fall rolled around, more anti-LGBTQ sentiment sprang up in the religious community as lesbian Grand Rapids Chief Judge Sara Smolenski received news that she could no longer receive Communion at St. Stephen Catholic Church where she was a lifelong parishioner. She learned that it was because a new priest at the parish, Father Scott Nolan, discovered that she was married to a same-sex partner. Despite the difficult decision, Smolenski decided that she would not return to the parish.

“I don’t want to go back when I can’t go up for Communion,” Smolenski stated. “I feel like I’m being told I’m not good enough to be a real member — but you can visit. And that’s no way to have a faith-based group to be with.”

The same month brought a slew of unfounded and homophobic attacks against Jon Hoadley, the challenger of U.S. Rep. Fred Upton (R-Michigan). Ironically, Upton had just weeks before condemned hate-filled political attacks.



Sara Smolenski. Courtesy photo.



Jon Hoadley was an openly LGBTQ candidate running to unseat incumbent U.S. Rep. Fred Upton (R) in Michigan’s 6th congressional district. Courtesy photo.

“The attacks against Jon are nothing more than a despicable attempt to make something out of nothing. Jon’s record is clear: he has been a voice for women and children throughout his career and will continue to be our champion when elected to Congress,” said Michigan State Rep. Kristy Pagan (D-Canton) and legislative leader on women’s rights.

## November

After days of uncertainty and thorough ballot-counting, BTL and many other news organizations felt comfortable declaring that Joe Biden won the presidency. 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.”

That same month, Pope Francis expressed support for civil union laws for same-sex couples that made DignityUSA — the organization of Catholics committed to justice, equality and full inclusion of LGBTQ people in the church and society —

cautiously optimistic. “If true, the Pope’s comments could represent an international game-changer and a major step forward for LGBTQ equality,” said Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of DignityUSA. “It would remove a key obstacle to LGBTQ inclusion in many places around the world, especially in areas where LGBTQ people are especially vulnerable to discrimination and violence.”



President-elect Joe Biden and VP-elect Kamala Harris were elected with over 80 million votes.



A 2014 pastoral visit of Pope Francis to Korea. By Jeon Han. gaybe.am/KO.



## August

Oak Park English language arts teacher Owen Bondono made the BTL cover in August after being named Michigan’s Region 9 Teacher of the year and, being an openly transgender teacher himself, making a pro-equality stance on his approach to education.

“I think that, in general, as teachers it is our job to make students safe and comfortable in our room so that they can bring whatever version of their authentic self that they’re comfortable bringing,” he said. “Because, beyond the academics, our whole purpose is to grow them into confident, successful people.”

August also brought the news of Joe Biden’s Democratic presidential primary win less than two hours after the polls closed. Nationally, the state department sided in favor of a gay couple who had had difficulty recognizing the U.S. citizenship of their children who were born abroad via surrogates.

“We are very relieved, on behalf of our daughter, on behalf of our family, and on behalf of LGBT families across this great country of ours,” said Roe Kiviti, a member of the couple.



Michigan Teacher of the Year Owen Bondono. Photo by Andrew Potter.

## October

October was a court-focused month as the world continued to reflect on the legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg who had died the month prior. Staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan’s LGBT Project Jay Kaplan summed up what many in the U.S. were feeling at the time.

“It was devastating,” Kaplan said. “Just an incredible loss to the Court, to our country and, of course, what immediately also came up was the fear — what’s going to happen next? Because I had read before that Senate Leader Mitch McConnell had told donors at several fundraisers that, ‘Should Justice Ginsburg drop dead before the election, even if it’s a week before the election, we’ll get somebody else on that court, I promise you.’”



Ruth Bader Ginsburg

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

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

## December

As World AIDS Day came on Dec. 1, 2020, it felt different than other years due to the pandemic. Across the state of Michigan, many HIV/AIDS agencies certainly felt similarities between the AIDS crisis and COVID-19 as well as the many impediments to service that it provided like in-person care.



Aimee Stephens. Photo by Andrew Potter.

Garden City, where Stephens worked for six years, also has to pay \$120,000 in legal fees to the ACLU.

“This settlement marks a closing chapter in Aimee Stephens’ remarkable fight for justice,” said Chase Strangio, deputy director for the ACLU’s LGBT & HIV Project. “We are sad that Aimee is not here to experience this moment with her wife Donna and grateful for all that Aimee, Donna, and the many trans fighters for justice and their families have done to bring us to this place. As Aimee always said, this fight is about more than just her and it will stretch far beyond this case.”

This month also marked a settlement in the historic Aimee Stephens case. Stephens, who died in May at 59 from kidney disease, did not live to see the Supreme Court rule in her favor and decide that she and other LGBTQ people were protected from discrimination under federal employment law. U.S. District Judge Sean Cox has signed off on a \$130,000 settlement, which includes \$63,724 in back pay with interest and \$66,276 in damages. The R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Home in



# HOTTER THAN JULY RETROSPECTIVE

25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
HOTTER THAN JULY 2020

## A Cold As Hell Interview

BY SMITTY (THEY/THEM)

LGBT Detroit's winter Pride celebration, Cold As Hell, is the sister event to Hotter Than July. With the birth of this event in 2020, Cold As Hell advocates for and celebrates queer sexuality, attraction, education and freedom, with a focus on the intersection of Blackness. Lastly, event founder Curtis Lipscomb envisioned an expanded safe, brave space for the exploration of kink. For more information, visit LGBT Detroit's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/lgbtdetroit/>.

I was able to chat with a few dope people who have huge roles in bringing Cold As Hell to life that will happen this year Jan. 29 through 30, 2021. The first person, Jerron Totten (he/him), is the Social Outreach Coordinator and Legislative Advocacy Specialist at LGBT Detroit and the Project Coordinator for Hotter Than July and Cold As Hell. I was interested in learning about how Cold As Hell contributed to LGBT Detroit's mission and what to expect from next month's event — geez, 2020 flew by so fast!

The two hosts for Cold As Hell 2020 — 2019 International Mr. Leather Jack Thompson (he/him) and Ironman Onyx Al J. Davis (he/him) — make an appearance. They talk about their experiences hosting together and some of their favorite moments from the events. Al Davis is also returning in 2021 to co-host Cold As Hell with Sir Oya Ra (he/him), 2020 & 2021 Mr. Maryland Leather. I asked them about what they're looking forward to for Cold As Hell 2021.

**How is Cold As Hell similar to Hotter Than July, and how is it different? What does it add to LGBT Detroit's initiatives that Hotter Than July doesn't?**

Totten: Cold As Hell is LGBT Detroit's winter pride event and fundraiser. Both event names are commensurate to the seasons in which they take place. Hotter Than July, Detroit's Black LGBT+ Pride is family-centered. Here, there is something for everyone. Cold As Hell celebrates LGBT+ sexual expression and is only for adults. Cold As Hell was piloted in January 2020, and it was hosted by Al Davis of Atlanta, Georgia, and Jack Thompson, IML of Washington, D.C.

**What are you most excited about for Cold As Hell 2021?**

Totten: This year Cold As Hell will take



place Jan. 29 through 30, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, Cold As Hell will take place in a virtual setting. Day one of Cold As Hell features instructional “How To” videos of various kinks/fetishes. Cold As Hell concludes on Jan. 30 with a panel discussion on Dynamics, Power Exchange and Negotiation, and Women in Leather. This year's event will be hosted by Al Davis and Sir Oya Ra of Washington, DC.

**[To Jack Thompson & Al Davis]: What did you enjoy most about co-hosting with each other for Cold As Hell 2020? What was able to be accomplished with you two together that you don't think you could have done on your own?**

Thompson: Co-hosting with Al was great. It was our first time meeting, and I feel like I left the weekend with a new friend. We had good chemistry and were able to share the mic well. I hope we get to host something together again someday. As for the work we were able to accomplish together, at different points of the weekend he had other responsibilities like demoing and playing. I wasn't teaching, so I was able to cover hosting while he was busy.

Davis: This is kind of a hard question because there was so much that I enjoyed. The first thing I enjoyed the most was the open panel where we got to address questions and share our knowledge with the audience new to kinks and fetishes. Secondly, the knowledge sessions we had were very informative and helped to further educate and even I was able to learn things I didn't know. Finally, the demos we did allowed people to see different kinks and fetishes as well as try them.

**[To Jack Thompson]: What is one memorable experience/lesson from Cold As Hell 2020 that you'll be taking with you in the future?**

Thompson: It takes planning, compromise and community to put on an event like Cold As Hell. I have always found the task of putting something like that on daunting. Jerron, LGBT Detroit and all the volunteers were able to put on an amazing event and take away some lessons to make the next year even better. I am inspired and will take all that I have learned to help other events and organizations in the future.

**[To Al Davis]: Jerron told me you'll be returning to co-host Cold As Hell 2021 with Sir Oya Ra. What are you looking forward to with your collaboration?**

Davis: I am looking forward to bringing the same energy we brought this year into next year's event. We learned a lot, we had fun and we helped to educate people on kinks and fetishes. We have even more planned for this year so I'm excited for that.

**[To Sir Oya Ra]: As future co-host for Cold As Hell 2021, how did your partnership with LGBT Detroit come about?**

Ra: Last year, I competed and won the honor of carrying the title, Mr. Maryland Leather 2020 [now 2021 due to COVID]; only the fourth Black Mr. Maryland Leather in 40+ years. After my win, I was seeking ways to be of service to my direct community and communities abroad. I noticed Cold As Hell,

but it was too late to participate in the way I wanted to. So, I reached out and offered to help in any way that I could. Since then I have appeared for Detroit's LGBT+ programming representing the Leather & Polyamorous communities. I also had the pleasure of providing a leather education & training intensive weekend to Cold As Hell's Project Coordinator, Jerron Totten [and] christening the founding of Mount Saint Oya Service Montessori School. In hindsight, I wonder if he was “working” the whole time and just feeling out the quality of my educational offerings [laugh]...

**What are you looking forward to most and/or hoping to add to the experience of Cold as Hell 2021?**

Ra: I am most certainly looking forward to the education! Education is major! I love to teach as I feel that teaching makes me sharper as a practitioner. I look forward to being able to share an experience that may cultivate and liberate. I want for people to be enlightened about what is their own “pleasure manifesto” as my mentee has coined it. “What gets *you* goin'?!” Leading to, “It's alright, you're not alone.” This work should spark something causing its participants to dive deeper into self and into community!

*Smitty (they/them/theirs) is a Black, non-binary artist from Detroit, MI. They can be found on their website, [smittycommittee.com](http://smittycommittee.com).*



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## Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

### Gold, Incense, and Mirth

There are paths that by strange chances on Christmas Eve mix up in time, in space, in thought, yea verily in crazy activation. Some fact. Some fantasy. Who knows?

So it happened once upon a near but distant whimsical time in a playful universe that was hoodwinked into crisscrossing paths. Five companions on one. Three, on the other. Switching both respective destinations.

Our first group of travelers, names familiar to young and old alike – Dorothy and Toto, Tin Man, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion – were following the fabled Yellow Brick Road to Oz when the unexpected celestial switcheroo occurred.

Quite suddenly they were sideswiped by a brilliant klieg light that seemed to whisk them through December’s winter gloom. Giddy. Very, very young. Exuberantly naive at heart. They forgot all about Oz, which isn’t an easy thing to do. Ask any LGBT grown up or drag queen.

Our second regal sojourners: Caspar, Balthasa., Melchoir – bearing gifts for someone deemed eventually of high political estate – were baffled to find themselves in a poppy-infested countryside, traveling only heaven knows to where. A neon sign pointed MGM: “Much Grander Make Believe!”

Along the way, Dorothy and her rerouted friends found themselves waved at by shepherds tending flocks by night. “It seems we’re celebrities,” giggled Scarecrow, as Tin Man, Cowardly Lion and little barking Toto busied themselves (bravely to be sure) in chasing off wolves in sheep’s clothing howling too close for comfort.

Yea, verily, readers, the night was radiantly clear. And the starry light got even brighter. “No doubt!” ventured Scarecrow, with newfound mental acumen, “This star is of -1.46 magnitude. A biggie.”

Inspired by their dreamlike mood, Dorothy, who had palatial lyric gifts – she hoped someday to perform in Off-Broadway musicals – started to sing. And, belting out of the celestial blue, she sang lyrics she had never heard before but somehow knew by heart, with Tin Man, Cowardly Lion and Scarecrow crooning in. Surprise of surprise, a heavily choir of non-union angels actually hummed along.

How quickly the miles rolled and reeled by. And before they could finish their twelfth joyful rendition of “Meet Me in St. Louis, Louie,” they unexpectedly found themselves among a small crowd gathered in front of a tiny, makeshift manger. It’s bubble lights twinkled merrily.

There were shepherds, seven celebrity hi-ho! dwarfs, a newly awakened princess, her adoring prince, and in the center of it all, a smiling mom, a proud carpenter dad, a small baby wrapped in hand-me-down swaddling clothes.

And so, most probably because this was an awe-inspired, opening-night crowd applauding gaily, the little guy began to cry. Not too loudly. But authoritatively audible nonetheless. And in a moment of exquisite improv, Scarecrow pulled straw from his thump-thump-thumping, make-believe heart and blushinglly

See next page



## Viewpoint



### Building Back, and Forward, Better Together

BY MICHELLE E. BROWN

2020 was supposed to be the year we woke up from the horrible nightmare that began with the 2016 presidential election. It was supposed to be the year that our passionate cries for a return to civility, humanity and what was right about America were answered. It was a year that we were able to finally put away pink pussy hats and marching pumps, having reached our goal of grabbing them at the polls and returning the House, Senate and White House to the people.

I had even started writing my fiery remarks to deliver at the 2020 Women’s March to send my sisters — and every progressive-leaning voter they passed along the way — to the polls. It wasn’t going to be a blue wave, it was going to be a damn tsunami! But little did we know that our fall down the rabbit hole would be so deep that it would require Amazonian efforts to escape!

We had candidates, so many candidates, but we were able to — despite our differences — come together behind one. And while, like a modern-day Nero, the president tweeted

on fanning division, we marched not just for women but for young and old, from all communities for social justice, against racism, bigotry and hatred. Then in November, we did it by mail. Early and at the polls, we did it starting the process to end the orange scourge and begin the healing.

So how do we “Build Back Better”? How do we go beyond slogans to create real change? How do we stay engaged, stay “woke,” stay empowered to prevent another 45? But most importantly how do we heal the divisions in our communities with accountability? Life will never be like it was before!

Due to COVID-19, over 300,000 friends, families, co-workers and neighbors have died in this country — Leaders, change-makers, future leaders, keepers of the dream. Just because 45 is gone, the work continues. Remember almost 75 million voted for Donald J. Trump!

So how do we fix this mess?

See Viewpoint, next page



## ► Viewpoint

Continued from p. 10

Let us start by putting the final nail in the coffin of the GOP that has enabled, by action or silence, this wave of conservatism that excludes, discriminates and denies rights. Remember these tRumpsters in 2022 and send them packing. Don't get me wrong, I am not saying "vote blue, no matter who." What I am saying that there need to be viable political choices. We got behind Joe and Kamala for the win but there were some other important ideas brought forth that should not be forgotten. And let's break down the evangelical-political machine. There is a reason for the separation of church and state — IJS! There is a role for churches in the community to feed the hungry, provide refuge/shelter for those in need and promote a message of love. Stay in your lane and out of politics.

Time to ratchet back the anger! I admit I am guilty. If you had too many American Flags on your truck, I made an assumption about your politics and rolled my eyes. If you walked like a "Karen," talked like a "Karen" and looked like a "Karen," I gave you a very cold shoulder. I considered certain areas — counties, suburbs, etc. — as enemy territory. Even now when I see someone without a mask, I bristle.

Now is the time to use our words to speak up for what is truth, to find common ground, say thank you and be generous. It's also time to call out the BS and the perpetrators complicit to the crimes against our humanity not just over the past four years but in the past. Grab them at the polls! The blue tsunami may not have happened but let's keep that slow roll going to 2022!

Black lives STILL matter so don't put your T-shirts and posters away. Lift up Black voices. Keep the difficult conversations on race going in every community and march for our lives. Ending systemic racism isn't a one election fix and its not all on Black people. White folks, your T-shirt does not absolve you - do

## ► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 16

gave it to gently cradle the small kid's head.

Dorothy, with perfect on-stage presence, sang another lullaby that again popped magically into her head. "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" she sang. The baby hushed. Smiled. Gave the tinniest of — so a Macy's movie Santa years later claimed — technicolored laughs. (The baby's own over-the-rainbow-time would come another day.)

Alas! Alas! In the twinkling of an eye, Dorothy, Tin Man, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion and tail wagging Toto were suddenly whisked away, back to timeline 1939! "Well, I wonder

**So how do we "Build Back Better"? How do we go beyond slogans to create real change? How do we stay engaged, stay "woke," stay empowered to prevent another 45? But most importantly how do we heal the divisions in our communities with accountability? Life will never be like it was before!**

the work.

There's so much we need to do to move forward, to build back better. But most importantly we must remember each and every day that over 300,000 people have died from COVID-19.

They died in part because some chose politics over science, because winning and personal gain was placed over human life. They died because many ignored the wise words of Spock — refusing to wear masks, or socially distance even marching on state capitals like Lansing bearing arms protesting infringement on their personal rights — when logic clearly dictates that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.

2020 was the year we climbed out of the rabbit hole transporting us from the surreal state of the past four years. It threw everything at us including the proverbial kitchen sink. And even though we have yet to hear a concession speech, we won the battle and came out on the other side.

Our numbers are fewer, the challenges remain great, but the possibilities are limitless. We can build back, and forward, better and stronger together.

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*Michelle E. Brown is a public speaker, activist and author. Her blog radio podcast "Collections By Michelle Brown-Blog Radio" airs every Thursday at 7 p.m. Current and archived episodes can be heard on Blog Talk Radio, iTunes, Stitcher or SoundCloud. Follow her on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram*

what Auntie Em would say?" sighed Dorothy, shaking her newly halod head from side to side.

"And why in heaven's name would a shepherd be wearing Ruby Red slippers and clicking his heels? Is he funny that way?" camped the Cowardly Lion, with a roaring, "AH-men!" Plus an I-just-got-lucky wink. (And one presumes those ecumenical, lucky Wise Men got high and enlightened on the poppies.)

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

# Creep Of The Week

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

## Donald Trump

Sadly, Donald Trump remains in power and continues to do serious harm to the country every single day.

Case in point: Trump is working furiously to make it easier and legal to discriminate against LGBTQ people for "faith-based" reasons. At issue is the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and the scrubbing of protections for LGBTQ employees issued in 2014 by President Barack Obama. In short, Trump is giving federal contractors the green light to discriminate as they see fit.

Fun fact: Eugene Scalia heads the Department of Labor under Trump. Yes, that's the son of Antonin Scalia, the Supreme Court Justice who, in his dissenting opinion on *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the case that legalized marriage equality, wrote that "public debate over same-sex marriage displayed American democracy at its best."

Ah, yes. I remember those days when people debated whether or not LGBTQ people were even human or just sexual deviants who should be jailed/murdered/cured. I definitely felt like I was living in a freer America when there weren't laws that granted me civil rights and protected me from discrimination based on these hateful ideas.

Oh, wait, did I say hateful ideas? I meant deeply held religious beliefs.

According to Lambda Legal, Trump's administration isn't bothering to clearly define what a religious institution is, which "allows contractors — including large for-profit companies — to use the special treatment designed for religious organizations."

Oh, and they also aren't bothering to separate the kinds of discrimination religious organizations are welcome to engage in. While it is widely believed that the scrapping of protections is intended to harm LGBTQ folks, the net is actually much wider.

"It is hard to overstate the harm that the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs is visiting on LGBTQ people, women, religious minorities and others with the sledgehammer it is taking to federal nondiscrimination protections," Lambda Legal Director of Law and Policy Jennifer Pizer said in a Dec. 7 statement.

And while this might seem to be just an obscure rule, it will actually apply to a lot of employees in this country. You may or may not know this, but a lot of people work for the federal government. Well, I should clarify: a lot of people are employed by the federal government. We've seen over these

past four years that Republicans don't work.

"There are almost 4 million employees who work for federal contractors, including another 1.6 million who work for federal grantees impacted by this rule," Lambda Legal Senior Attorney Sasha Buchert said in a statement. "Already, from 1/3 to 1/2 of the 8.1 million LGBTQ employees nationwide report facing discrimination on the job. This rule effectively allows almost any federal contractor to claim a right to fire a person, deny health benefits or take other forms of discriminatory action for marrying a same-sex partner or coming out as transgender, or who the employer or would-be employer discovers is transgender, for living in accordance with their gender identity."

It's important to remember that with the Trump Administration, the cruelty is the point. This rule isn't lifting a burden off of religious institutions, it's putting a burden on LGBTQ people.

Let's remember that "religious freedom," much like mask-wearing, has been politicized by the Republican Party in the United States. The only acceptable religion when it comes to freedom is Christianity. And the most important freedom is the ability to use Christianity to justify bigotry and hurt people who don't fall under the umbrella of Christian, white, heterosexual, and cisgender.

"This new rule uses religion to create an essentially limitless exemption allowing taxpayer-funded contractors to impose their religious beliefs on their employees without regard to the resulting harms, such as unfair job terms, invasive proselytizing and other harassment that make job settings unbearable for workers targeted on religious grounds," said Pizer.

A deeply held religious belief isn't, "Oh, I really like this part of the Bible when Jesus does the loaves and fishes and stuff." It's, "Oh, the Bible says there are only two genders so I don't have to hire transgender people, and also, too, transgender people aren't even human and are sick and disgusting I don't want them near my children and if they are faced with violence and even murder, well, they just brought that upon themselves by going against God's will." And by "God's will" that means "my personal opinion." Oh, and the Bible doesn't say anything about there only being two genders or about same-sex marriage being evil. That's an interpretation.

It's worth noting that to these folks, it is also a deeply held religious belief that Trump won the 2020 election. He didn't. Thank God.



# Buttigieg Tapped to Become First Openly Gay Person Confirmed to Cabinet Role

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

**P**ete Buttigieg, who made history in the 2020 primary before dropping out and endorsing Joe Biden, has won the nod to become the first openly gay person to take a Cabinet post that requires Senate confirmation, the Washington Blade has confirmed.

Buttigieg, who previously served as mayor of South Bend, Indiana, is set to be nominated for transportation secretary. CNN was first to report the news.

Amid media reports in Axios, CNN and the Daily Beast that Buttigieg was in contention for the job, a Democratic insider told the Blade Buttigieg was heavily lobbying the transition team for the role.

Vice President-elect Kamala Harris also “leaned in heavily” to promote Buttigieg to become transportation secretary, a Democratic insider told the Blade. The two bonded during preparations for the vice presidential debate in Salt Lake City when Buttigieg stood in for Mike Pence, the Democratic insider said.

The news comes after the Blade reported last week some in the LGBTQ community were unhappy with LGBTQ movement leaders for not being more vocal in calling for the nomination of an openly LGBTQ Cabinet secretary. After all, other minority groups, including Black and Latino leaders, were more openly pushing for Cabinet appointments and getting key appointments as a result, unlike the LGBTQ community as of last week.

At the same time, Buttigieg had been turning down roles in Biden’s Cabinet. Buttigieg told Annise Parker, CEO of the LGBTQ Victory Institute, he wouldn’t pursue the role of secretary of veterans affairs despite media speculation he was in contention for the job, according to two Democratic sources.

One Democratic insider said Buttigieg rejected the role of director of Office of Management & Budget, and said he wanted a position in the “real Cabinet” and not a “staff-level” job.

Buttigieg had previously sought the position of U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, but the nomination ended up going to Linda Thomas-Greenfield, a Foreign Service officer with years of experience.

Annise Parker, CEO of LGBTQ Victory Institute, hailed the news Buttigieg would be nominated as transportation secretary as “a new milestone in a decades-long effort to ensure LGBTQ people are represented throughout our government.”

“It distances our nation from a troubled legacy of barring out LGBTQ people from government positions and moves us closer to



Pete Buttigieg has been tapped to become transportation secretary. (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key)

the president-elect’s vision of a government that reflects America,” Parker said. “As an out LGBTQ person, Pete will bring a unique perspective that will inform and influence policy throughout the federal government. Most important, however, is that Pete will bring his intellect and energy to the Department of Transportation and our nation will be better off because of it.”

Biden following initial news reports confirmed in a statement he had nominated Buttigieg as transportation secretary, calling him “a patriot and a problem-solver who speaks to the best of who we are as a nation.”

“I am nominating him for secretary of transportation because this position stands at the nexus of so many of the interlocking challenges and opportunities ahead of us,” Biden added. “Jobs, infrastructure, equity and climate all come together at the DOT, the site of some of our most ambitious plans to build back better. I trust Mayor Pete to lead this work with focus, decency, and a bold vision — he will bring people together to get big things done.”

Despite the historic first Buttigieg is set to achieve, he won’t be the first openly gay person to serve as a Cabinet official. That distinction belongs to Richard Grenell, who was acting director of national intelligence during the Trump administration before he resigned and became the face LGBTQ outreach for the Trump campaign.

Grenell, however, never won Senate

confirmation for the acting DNI job, even though the chamber approved him for his concurrent role as U.S. ambassador to Germany. Buttigieg, therefore, will have the distinction of being the first openly gay person confirmed by the Senate for a Cabinet-level position, provided he wins Senate confirmation.

Rep. Don Beyer (D-Va.), who supported Buttigieg during the Democratic primary, hailed news the former candidate was selected to become transportation secretary as “a brilliant and historic appointment.”

“President-elect Joe Biden has again shown his commitment to diversity and made history with the first-ever nomination of an openly gay American to lead a Cabinet department,” Beyer said. “As Secretary Foxx and others have demonstrated previously, local elected leaders understand transportation from the most important perspective: That last mile to your home or business. Pete Buttigieg’s leadership and work to spark investment helped bring about a renaissance in South Bend.”

On the campaign trail, Buttigieg had expressed a desire for overhauling the nation’s infrastructure. In November 2019 during the Abby Finkenauer Fish Fry in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Buttigieg said he was genuinely surprised President Trump didn’t fulfill his campaign promise to take on infrastructure reform.

“Worse, they put out this infrastructure plan they were talking about, and the plan was for us — local and state governments — to do most

of the work, which is how it works right now,” Buttigieg said. “We cannot go on like this.”

Buttigieg said as South Bend mayor he’d get a call when there’s a hole in the road, but would only get enough funding to redo every road “every 25 years or so.”

“So, we need federal leadership to build first-rate infrastructure in the United States of America,” Buttigieg said, “including \$100 billion to help build out local transit and transportation systems, because that helps our economies locally, including leadership on roads, bridges, and rail, which is a big part of our future, including those unsexy pieces of infrastructure like wastewater and I could spend a whole hour on wastewater but I promise not to.”

Buttigieg also said digital infrastructure was a big part of the plan and called for \$80 billion “to make sure that every household in America, either by wireless or by fiber, can get high-quality internet access.”

Former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, a Republican who served in Obama’s Cabinet, said Biden’s choice of Buttigieg to lead the department is “a good pick,” according to Axios.

“It sends a loud message to mayors and to cities that they count,” LaHood is quoted as saying. “It’s where the action is on putting people to work.”

Buttigieg will face during his confirmation process a Senate that will be at best a 50-50 split or under Republican control, depending on the outcome of the upcoming run-off election in Georgia for two U.S. Senate seats.

The Blade has placed a request in with both Democrats and Republicans on the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation seeking comment on news Buttigieg would be nominated as transportation secretary.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), a member of the Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee, said in a statement Buttigieg’s experience as mayor makes him a good nominee as transportation secretary.

“A major, historic investment in our crumbling infrastructure must be a top priority for the Biden administration, and will require vision and leadership from a new transportation secretary,” Blumenthal added. “I look forward to speaking with Mayor Buttigieg about his vision for the Department of Transportation and how he plans to work with Congress to achieve it.”

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



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Puzzle Queens Gambit p. 21

# Mombian: 2020 LGBTQ Parenting Year in Review

BY DANA RUDOLPH

In a year like no other, LGBTQ families, like all others, struggled with the physical, mental and economic challenges of the pandemic. And with children of LGBTQ parents much more likely to live in poverty than those with non-LGBTQ parents, the pandemic may have hit many LGBTQ families particularly hard.

Pandemic aside, there were many political and legal challenges — and a few victories — directly related to LGBTQ parents and our children this year. Here are the highlights, good and bad.

## Trump Administration

In May, National Foster Care Month, the Trump administration stopped collecting data on the sexual orientation of youth in foster care and of foster and adoptive parents. The data is used to make decisions and track outcomes for youth in care.

The administration in June finalized a rule that says health care anti-discrimination protections do not cover discrimination based on LGBTQ identities.

In December, it finalized a rule that will allow federal contractors to cite religious or moral beliefs as a reason to discriminate against LGBTQ workers.

On the positive side, the U.S. State Department in October backed down in two cases where it had been denying the citizenship of children born abroad to married two-dad couples who were U.S. citizens. Two other similar cases are still pending.

## The Biden Administration

The Biden administration has promised to push for Congress to pass the Equality Act during his first 100 days in office, and to reverse Trump's anti-LGBTQ actions. Additionally, two lesbian moms of color in November were named to Joe Biden's all-women White House communications team. Karine Jean-Pierre, who was senior advisor to President-Elect Biden and chief of staff to Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris during the campaign, will become principal deputy press secretary. Pili Tobar, who was the communications director for coalitions on the campaign, will become deputy White House communications director.

## The U.S. Supreme Court

The U.S. Supreme Court surprised

many in June with a landmark 6-3 ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, written by Trump appointee Neil Gorsuch, stating that people cannot be fired from their



jobs because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Supreme Court in December refused to hear an appeal in *Box v. Henderson*, in which Indiana was trying to deny nonbiological mothers in married same-sex couples the right to be put on their children's birth certificates. A 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision in January said the state must allow nonbiological mothers to be on the birth certificates; the Supreme Court's refusal to hear the case means that decision stands.

In July, the court upheld the Trump administration's desire to allow almost any employer, even for-profit ones, to cite religious or moral beliefs as a reason to refuse to cover birth control for its employees. This is a queer issue because many LGBTQ people do have sex that can result in pregnancy and because birth control is sometimes used in fertility procedures even for same-sex couples — as was the case for myself and my spouse.

The court in November heard *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*, a case to determine whether taxpayer-funded foster care and adoption agencies—and possibly any provider of government-contracted services—can cite religious beliefs as a reason to discriminate against LGBTQ people and others.

The court in December declined an appeal from Oregon parents who sought to prevent transgender students from using bathrooms and locker rooms aligned with their gender identities.

## State Happenings

New Jersey in January enacted a law allowing married and civil-unioned LGBTQ couples using assisted reproduction to avoid the intrusive, expensive second-parent adoption process and simply file a few documents in order

to get a court judgment confirming the nonbiological parent's legal parentage.

In July, New Hampshire enacted a law clarifying that LGBTQ couples have access to second-parent adoptions but do not need home studies; expanding access to adoption by unmarried couples; and updating the state's parentage laws in gender-neutral and inclusive terms.

The same month, Rhode Island also updated its parentage laws to provide stronger, more equitable protections for families formed via assisted reproduction. Among other things, parents using assisted reproduction can now establish legal parentage for the nonbiological or nongestational parent simply by filling out a simple, free Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage form.

A South Carolina law banning any discussion of same-sex relationships in public school health classes — except in the context of sexually transmitted diseases — is unconstitutional, a federal district court said in March.

The State of New York passed the Child-Parent Security Act in April, legalizing gestational surrogacy and simplifying and strengthening the laws recognizing nonbiological parents and single parents in all families formed through reproductive technologies.

The Kansas Supreme Court ruled in November that nonbiological mothers may be recognized as parents simply by acknowledging maternity at the time a child is born and showing that the birth mother consented to shared parenting.

## Systemic Racism

The widespread attention to addressing systemic racism, sparked by the tragic killing of George Floyd in May, is as much an issue for LGBTQ families as for any others. Not only do we come in all colors, but Black and Latino same-sex couples are roughly twice as likely as white same-sex couples to be raising a child, according to UCLA's Williams Institute. And 50 percent of children under 18 living with same-sex couples are non-white compared to 41 percent of children living with different-sex couples. Statistics were not available for other LGBTQ identities, but the numbers underscore just how many LGBTQ families are impacted by ongoing racism in our country and why actively working to stop it remains a task for us all in the coming year.

*Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian — mombian.com — a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.*



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# The Light Queen

## Dolly Parton on the Other Pandemic Cure (Rhinestones!) and Her Gay Dance Album

Stacie Hukeba Courtesy of Butterfly Records LLC

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

**D**olly Parton's been everywhere this year, and everywhere she's gone – virtually, that is – she's brought good, gay tidings to *all*.

Dolly's contributions to both science and Christmas amidst our collective existential pandemic panic have been rays of light and literal life-savers. Considering the remarkable timing of Dolly's \$1 million donation made to coronavirus research at Vanderbilt University, which helped fund Moderna's COVID vaccine, it's only fitting that one of the most beloved, iconic figures in pop culture is also playing a fictional angel in the Netflix musical movie "Christmas on the Square." In real life, Dolly is the only person you might imagine haloed in glowing light with a pair of white angel wings.

Five decades into her career, Dolly, at 74, remains an unstoppable cultural force – even in lockdown, even during one of the worst years in our lifetime. Just when we need her most, like the patron saint she is, here she comes with the confectionary campiness of "Christmas on the Square." And a Christmas album, "A Holly Dolly Christmas," her 47th solo studio album (and first Christmas record since 1990). And a coffee table book, "Songteller: My Life in Lyrics," a deep dive into 175 songs that she has written. And just for good measure: a 19-DVD box set of her performances through the years, a baking line for Williams-Sonoma, and virtual Christmas specials for CBS and Amazon Music. We've evolved from the pandemic bread-baking phase to the "fill every empty moment

with everything Dolly" phase, and no one's complaining.

Dolly also, at the pandemic's onset, held a virtual series in which she reads bedtime stories; it was meant for kids, but who could blame you for wanting Dolly to send you off to sleep with "The Little Engine That Could"?

I met up with Dolly over Zoom on two separate occasions: in October, with her "Christmas on the Square" co-star Christine Baranski, and solo on the morning of November 4, the day after Election Day. I was asked to avoid political and election questions, a request that brought to mind Dolly's own savvy way of blurring political and apolitical lines. Her bipartisan credentials and subtextual political statements led to her being deemed the "great unifier" in 2019's New York Public Radio series "Dolly Parton's America." Dolly's politics are signaled almost solely through voicing her core values – inclusivity, love, kindness and compassion for all – and then abiding by all of them. With Dolly, it's always been action over lip service. When she does speak, it's with sincerity and conviction. And, of course, a whip-smart quip. In August, Dolly spoke up about the Black Lives Matter movement, telling Billboard, "Of course Black lives matter. Do we think our little white asses are the only ones that matter? No!"

On the morning of our one-on-one interview, Dolly appeared on video, still in the process of getting mic'd. She made small-talk as we waited for the greenlight, wisecracking that, "It takes a village to get all this stuff goin'!" Once ready, she spoke about how healing others heals

her, recording more uplifting dance music for her LGBTQ fans, recording music with Leslie Jordan and how no one is exempt from the light of her love. Gifts for everyone.

**I don't know how you stay so upbeat, positive and chill during a time that feels so heavy, dark and dreadful. At times, I think to myself, "Can I take whatever Dolly's taking?" Also, what are you taking?**

Ha! Well, I'm taking my time trying to process everything! I just always try to go inside myself and try to find all the goodness in there. I try to look right inside everybody else and see all the goodness in there, and try to weave that into something special and into some light rather than just dwelling on the darkness. It's easy to do that; it's easy to get depressed when things are bad. But I refuse to do that. I like to be productive, and I just try to think that everything will be better all the time. I always think no matter what's going on things are gonna get better.

**Today I woke up remembering that during the beginning of the pandemic every morning I woke up to your song "Light of a Clear Blue Morning" for days, for weeks, and I'd cry. That song, featured in your new book "Songteller," felt like the hug I needed every morning to get out of my funk and move on with my day.**

Sometimes I'll sing that song too. I think that's a really good song. Yesterday somebody played me a version of "Light of a Clear Blue Morning" and I said, "You know, somebody

oughta put that out," like a record now. It was kind of my song of deliverance when I had been going through some personal darkness. When I wrote it, it just kind of delivered me, brought me into the light. So it is a song of deliverance; it is a song of light and hope.

**Aside from that song, what's a song of yours that still brings you comfort like "Light of a Clear Blue Morning" has brought me this year?**

I actually write a lot of stuff. In fact, when the COVID pandemic started, I started writing songs. I don't know if you ever heard a song called "When Life Gets Good Again" (released in May, which instructs others to "Be safe, be respectful, wear your mask, lead with love"), but I tend to do more writing than I do finding songs to make me feel better. It makes me feel better to be able to write those kinds of songs, to uplift somebody else, and in turn, by teaching, I am taught; by helping, I am helped. So it helps me to kind of do the thing that I know that people need, and I'm able to do it, and so I try to write things like that. So I've written a few songs about the times.

**In October, you and everyone's favorite pocket gay, Leslie Jordan, met for the first time. And Leslie can sing too. So I'm just gonna put this out here: I wouldn't mind hearing you and Leslie collaborate on "Just a Wee Bit Gay" from that gay dance album you keep teasing us about.**

Ha! You know, I never did put that song out! I wrote a song called "Just a Wee Bit Gay" and it's really, really a cute song and he would be perfect. But you know what's funny? He's

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actually going to do an album of some music and I'm going to be singing with him on it, along with some other big celebrities. I'll leave it to him to announce what it is and when it is. But anyway, when he came, I (was like), I have seen him so many times, backstage, and I just felt like I knew him because I relate to him so much and they make jokes about, "He's me in drag," and all that. But when we met the other day, it was the sweetest, funnest day. We were practicing safe-distancing and had our masks and everything. But it was fun, just to be around him. He's crazy as he can be! And I just love him.

**Did you let him wear one of your wigs?**

Well, he didn't have a wig on that day, but I've seen him dressed in Dolly drag!

**And I don't want to sound greedy because you have given us a lot this year that I'm very thankful for, but that dance album... maybe 2021?**

Well, I am gonna do that. I have a lot of good songs, and because there's so much going on, I think all of my gay following, they love my attitude in my songs and I'm really wanting to do a lot of faith-based or just uplifting inspirational-type things. I might actually incorporate some of that into a dance album where everybody can get out and dance and rejoice. So yeah, I'm still hoping to do that dance album one of these days.

**Now feels like a good time. I think everybody sort of wants to let loose, right?**

I think you're right. I'm sure you have heard "Faith" (with Galantis, released in October 2019).

**This year, that was the song that I'd play in the middle of the day and it kept me going.**

Actually that one lifted me up a lot too. So I'd like to do more things like that, that you can dance to, move to, and really feel good about. Yeah, I've got some good things in mind for that.

**With everything that is happening right now in the world, are you finding it difficult to get into the Christmas spirit? Because I'm over here like, "Lord, it's like a hard candy Christmas."**

Ha! It is! It is kind of like a hard candy Christmas this year, ain't it? It's just hard times for a lot of people. But I just refuse to let this dampen my joy. Although we are going to have to do it different. You can't get out and do *all* the things you'd like to. You can't even go shopping as much as you'd like to.

But I do think that I will manage to have my Christmas and have my little nieces and nephews and have as much of my family around as we can safely. I won't let that stop me from rejoicing in my own way and decorating my houses. I have a lakehouse and different things that I do. And I have to have all that gaud, and all that glitter, and all that food and all the stuff to go with it! Nothing's gonna stop me from doing that.

**Rhinestones are your therapy.**

Yeah, they are! Ha! Rhinestones are my medicine. If I don't wear 'em, I'll take 'em! Shine from the inside out!

**With "Christmas on the Square," were you aware that what you were making had a gay sensibility? I mean, there's actually vogueing in that movie.**

(Sarcastically) What?! Ha! I have a huge gay following, but some of our dancers and a lot of the cast that were there, we had a lot of gay people (in) the (movie). We love it. You know me, I love my gay following. Anything I can do to make them happy is always good.

But I think when we were doing the movie, we were just concentrating on the little town, the village, this mean old woman that Christine (Baranski) played trying to steal our town, and I'm playing an angel coming in trying to save her. Hopefully it's going to appeal to everybody! It's gonna be a good, happy, joyful, magical Christmas, hopefully, that we have brought during a dark time right now, don't you think?

**I think so. Dolly, I'm watching this and I'm thinking: to be a spirit of yours, what would it take? Would I have to wear rhinestones? How do I become one of Dolly's spirits?**

You wouldn't have to, but I have a feeling you'd like to! Ha! Along with one of my dresses, maybe some of my wings, whaddya think? And maybe one of my wigs! So I could dress you up like an angel and you could have your little rhinestones. I could watch you twirl!

**If you could send an angel to any past character of yours, maybe they need some of that Dolly angel truth-telling, what character would you send that angel to?**

If I send an angel to like a Doralee in "9 to 5," I would just give her a little extra strength to kick Mr. Hart's butt a little harder!

**What do you hope the message of this movie is in terms of change in this country? Because this movie calls for literal change.**

Well, it does. I really think that people are going to relate to this movie, as I mentioned, because it is about family, a village, a town where all the people have their little lives and they're trying to salvage everything they can, they're trying to keep their lives together and live their lives and they don't want to be scattered like we have been this whole year. The whole world has kind of been like that little town now, kind of uprooted and thrown around and in doubt and in fear. (But) they all became better people because of it.

**On "Christmas Is," a song from your new album "A Holly Dolly Christmas," you sing about the true meaning of Christmas – kindness, love and compassion – with your goddaughter, Miley Cyrus. What about that song made you think to ask Miley to sing it with you?**

Well, that song actually is one of the songs

See *Dolly*, continued on p. 18



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## ► Dolly

Continued from p. 17

from the Netflix movie that I did, the musical, and I wanted to also bring it into the album because we're probably not going to have a soundtrack from that musical as of yet. So I wanted to bring that over. I wanted Miley and Billy Ray (Cyrus) to be on this album because it's been 30 years since I had an album out and you usually don't do but one or two Christmas albums in your whole career, and I figured this would probably be the last one. Since Miley and Billy Ray are like family to me, I told 'em both, "You can't even say no. I'm not having it! You both have to be on this album with me forever! So when we're all dead and gone or old, we'll say, 'OK, here we are with family.'"

But Miley, she's always been great. I love her to death. She's like my own. And so she said, "Yeah, I can't put it out as a single because I got a new project." And I said, "I didn't ask you to put it out as a single! I asked you to sing on it!" So she said, "Well, of course I'll sing it." So we did. And that was wonderful.

**During this divisive year, I was thinking about how you're seen as the "great unifier." And there are not many people who can say that about themselves. But you are the kind of person who's able to bring mountain people and drag queens together in one room. What does it mean to you to know that even though there is such division in this country that you are able to reach people across the spectrum of religion, race, politics, gay, straight...?**

Well, I just love people. I love everybody. I love that God light and that God core that is in every single one of us. I do not judge or criticize or condemn; I think we're supposed to love each other. And I love all the different people in this world. I'm fascinated by everybody's personality; I want to know who they are. So I'm out to kind of pull people in, not separate people. So I just love people and people seem to love me and that makes me feel really good. So hopefully that's what God wants us to do. At least that's what I'm thinkin' he wants me to do, so I'm going to continue to do that.

**Does it hurt you to know that there are people who are not like you in the world?**

Well, yeah, it does hurt me that anybody cannot open their heart to love people in the way they should. It does hurt. But all you can do is to try to make the best of your world, try to have enough love to reach out if you can, try to kind of calm things down if you see there are problems going on. I just pray for God to lead me every day and uplift people and glorify him.

**Your book "Songteller" acknowledges a song that I just recently discovered called "Family."**

Aww. I love that song too, where it talks about "some are preachers, some are gay, some are addicts, some are strays, but not a one is turned away, when it's family." And that, to me, is not just your own family; it's the family of man. It's like, we're all family. People just don't seem to get that. But if you could just look at everybody like a member of your own family, you'd have a lot more tolerance. You may not still like 'em, but you can still love 'em. Tolerate them. But anyways, I'm glad you like that song. I wrote that with my friend Carl Perkins; he's the famous one that (wrote) "Blue Suede Shoes" back in the olden days.

**The book acknowledges that the song, which was released in 1991, is possibly the first country song to mention the word "gay." How did country fans react to the word "gay" in that song at the time?**

Actually, I don't remember anybody saying anything, because I really do believe whether you accept 'em or not, we all have gays and lesbians and transgenders in our family or in our family of friends. There's so many people that won't just accept people for who they are, which is really, really sad for the people that feel like they have to be different because they're different than what somebody else says they should be.

I don't remember at that time anybody saying things because the way that I said "some are preachers, some are gays... and not a one is turned away," because to me that's how I feel about it. So that song really says a whole lot about a whole lot of things. Oh, I've had pokes at me for saying certain things, but it never stopped me. I'm going to always let my love light shine – on everybody.

## WATCH ONLINE



Head on over to the digital version of this article at [PrideSource.com](http://PrideSource.com) to see BTL's Chris Azzopardi interview Dolly on Zoom. And while you're there, watch more of our interviews with celebs like Kristen Stewart, Gloria Estefan and Brandy!



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# Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

## Selena Gomez is going to climb every 'Mountain'

One of this year's TV pleasures has been watching a homebound Selena Gomez earnestly trying to learn to cook via Zoom calls with various famous chefs on her HBO Max series "Selena + Chef." We had no idea that in between mastering the mechanics of a proper French omelette she was negotiating new deals for herself, but coming soon(ish) she'll take on the role of real-life lesbian mountain climber Silvia Vásquez-Lavado. Writer-director Elgin James ("Little Birds") will adapt Vásquez-Lavado's memoir, "In the Shadow of the Mountain," as a starring vehicle of Gomez (whose casting got a nod of approval from the queer Peruvian climber herself). Vásquez-Lavado not only climbed Mount Everest but became the first out lesbian to climb the highest mountain on each continent, a challenge known as the Seven Summits. No production or release dates are known yet, but this is already Appointment Cinema.



Selena Gomez. Photo: Starfrenzy

is due to return for a third season sometime in 2021, but in the meantime he's going to command the ball to drop in New York City's Times Square on December 31. That's when he'll join Ryan Seacrest and "Pretty Little Liars" star Lucy Hale as a co-host of "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve with Ryan Seacrest 2020." The broadcast will be officially closed to the public

this year due to COVID-19 (of course, an official closing didn't stop crowds from gathering on sidewalks for the "Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade," but there's no telling people anything these days), and it's assumed that the three hosts will be separated in various locations, introducing musical acts as well as other celebrities. But despite what's sure to be an unusual production process for this year's event, count on the Tony-and-Emmy-winning Porter to show up ready for

performance in one (or several) of his bold signature looks. After all, it's not like you're tuning in to see what Seacrest is going to do, say, or wear. Porter will make it worth staying up to witness.

## 'Guardians of The Galaxy' hero Star-Lord is bisexual and polyamorous. Now what?

## Guess what pandemic 'The Second Wave' will be about

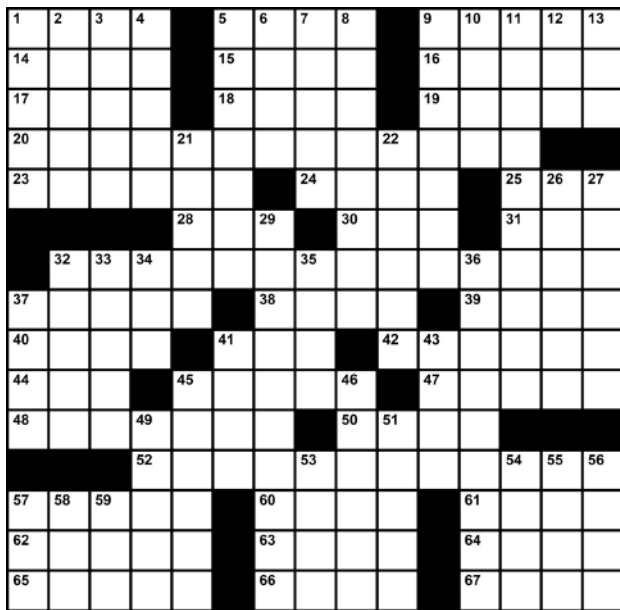
Queer screen darling Taylor Schilling ("Orange is The New Black") is back for an upcoming limited series from Michelle and Robert King ("The Good Wife," "The Good Fight"). It's called "The Second Wave," and it's about two neighbors, played by Schilling and Audra McDonald, who find themselves locked down again in New York City when an unexpected second wave of the coronavirus breaks out. The women are forced to handle their lives and jobs from the confined space of their apartments, while contending with an even more deadly version of the virus, one that may spell the end of humanity itself. The six-episode series will co-star Leslie Uggams ("Deadpool"), Steven Pasquale ("The Good Wife") and "Hamilton's" Phillipa Soo, and with vaccines currently rolling out, maybe by the time this series hits your TV screen, it'll have the retro feeling of scary science fiction that can't possibly happen again. Fingers crossed!

This isn't an announcement, really, even though it is. And it hasn't made an official impact on the films that draw inspiration from Marvel Comics canon. But "Guardians of the Galaxy" protagonist Star-Lord has been revealed to be both bisexual and polyamorous in the ongoing comic book series. This is both a very significant development and, annoyingly, possibly not going to matter at all when it comes to the film adaptations. That's because Star-Lord is played in the films by Chris Pratt, an actor who has always been quietly friendly to the LGBTQ+ community, but whose recent surge of public religious devotion has made the prospect of him playing a bisexual space hero somewhat unlikely, given his association with an anti-queer church. The "Guardians" film franchise continues, of course, and not everything canon in the source material finds its way into comic book-based films, but if queer fans were to consider lobbying hard for a little inclusion, now would be the time to start. And while we're waiting for some official Pratt reaction, here's what we'd like for starters: some cuddling with Drax. We're pretty certain that the perpetually shirtless Dave Bautista would be up for that.

## Billy Porter will rock your New Year's Eve

Billy Porter loves to work. We recently reported that he'll be directing the high school trans coming-of-age film "What If?," and "Pose"





## Q Puzzle The Queen's Gambit

### Across

- 1 "All's Well That \_\_\_ Well"
- 5 Bitch
- 9 Cut leaves of grass by the sidewalk
- 14 Draw a cross over
- 15 Shape of an office that will soon lose a homophobe
- 16 Island near Sicily

- 17 Land of Sinead O'Connor
- 18 Kelly once of "All My Children"
- 19 Section for Bernstein
- 20 Start of a quote about chessmaster Beth Harmon from "The Queen's Gambit"
- 23 Delivery by Rev. Perry
- 24 Gay activist, e.g.
- 25 I, to Rilke
- 28 They may be civil (abbr.)
- 30 Worn-out horse

- 31 Home state of J. Nabors
- 32 More of the quote
- 37 Market bear's fear
- 38 It may be cold and hard
- 39 Yellow-brick way
- 40 Lanford Wilson's room renter
- 41 AC unit
- 42 Turn sharply
- 44 E. Lynn Harris' "\_\_\_ Way the Wind Blows"
- 45 Title role for Salma
- 47 Photographer Adams
- 48 Stamp of "Valkyrie"
- 50 Military cross-dresser Jeanne \_\_\_
- 52 End of the quote
- 57 Well-worn
- 60 Home paper
- 61 Ms., to Mauresmo
- 62 '80s tennis star Ivan
- 63 Hebrides language
- 64 Genie portrayer Barbara
- 65 Strand in a drag queen's wig
- 67 Suffix for "bi"?

### Down

- 1 Boardroom VIPs
- 2 Black to Rimbaud
- 3 German engraver Albrecht
- 4 Put a head on cappuccino
- 5 Greek city of old
- 6 Month in the land of the cut
- 7 Part of REM

- 8 Like an asexual relationship
- 9 Ban on commercial intercourse
- 10 Disney's "That \_\_\_ Cat!"
- 11 "Spartacus" extras
- 12 UFO pilots
- 13 Yeses of Nuryev
- 21 "\_\_\_ Song Trilogy"
- 22 They help bakers get it up
- 26 Cut
- 27 "Messiah" composer
- 29 Screwball
- 32 Taking it lying down
- 33 Lech of Greek lore
- 34 Big initials in fashion
- 35 Bellow in the library?
- 36 Cole Porter's fifty million
- 37 Converse at Zoosk, e.g.
- 41 You may play him on your organ
- 43 Shoot off a flare, e.g.
- 45 Small hills
- 46 Most queer
- 49 "Holy crow!"
- 51 Baldwin staffers
- 53 Wolfe of fiction
- 54 Alan of "And the Band Played On"
- 55 Glenn Burke, formerly
- 56 Say, "We never actually kissed..." perhaps
- 57 Lunch-counter order
- 58 Atmospheric prefix
- 59 Opposite of SSW

Clues p. 14

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## Fight For Equality

Become an ACLU member at [ACLUmich.org](http://ACLUmich.org)



# Community Connections

Find over 300 Non-Profit Listings Serving Michigan's LGBTQ Online @ [pridesource.com](http://pridesource.com)

## AIDS/HIV

There are dozens of AIDS/HIV organizations and resources listed at [www.PrideSource.com](http://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](http://Metrocarenetwork.org)

### UNIFIED - HIV Health & Beyond

3968 Mt. Elliott St.  
Detroit MI 48207-1841  
313-446-9800  
[www.miunified.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.accesscommunity.org)

## Advocacy

### Equality Michigan

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

## Campus

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

### U-M Ann Arbor

Spectrum Center  
[Spectrumcenter@umich.edu](mailto:Spectrumcenter@umich.edu)  
<http://spectrumcenter.umich.edu>  
734-763-4186

### Oakland University Gender & Sexuality Center

[gsc@oakland.edu](mailto:gsc@oakland.edu)  
[www.oakland.edu/gsc](http://www.oakland.edu/gsc)  
248-370-4336

### Eastern Michigan University

LGBT Resource Center  
[emich.edu/lgbtrc](mailto:emich.edu/lgbtrc)  
734-487-4149

### The Lawrence Tech LGBT Resource Center

[ltu.edu/student\\_affairs/lgbt.asp](http://ltu.edu/student_affairs/lgbt.asp)  
**Wayne State JIGSAW**  
[Facebook.com/groups/WayneStateJIGSAW](https://www.facebook.com/groups/WayneStateJIGSAW)  
[wsujigsaw@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.jimtoycenter.org)  
[www.facebook.com/jimtoycenter](https://www.facebook.com/jimtoycenter)  
or follow them on Twitter @JimToyCenter.  
319 Braun Court  
Ann Arbor, MI  
734-995-9867

### LGBT Detroit

Detroit  
[www.lgbtdetroit.org](http://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/](https://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](http://www.aclumich.org)  
313-578-6800

### Fair Michigan

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

### Know Your Rights Project

Outlaws U-M student group  
[outlawslegal@gmail.com](mailto:outlawslegal@gmail.com)  
734-995-9867

## Older Adults

### SAGE Metro Detroit

290 W. Nine Mile Rd. Ferndale, MI  
313-578-6812  
[sagemetrodetroit.org](http://sagemetrodetroit.org)  
Facebook: SAGE Metro Detroit

## Political

### The LGBT and Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party

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

## Professional Groups

### Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 32446  
Detroit, MI 48232  
[detroitlgbtchamber.com](http://detroitlgbtchamber.com)  
1-800-DET-LGBT

### Ties Like Me

Professional networking events  
third Weds. 5:30 - 8 p.m.  
[TiesLikeMe.org](http://TiesLikeMe.org)  
Suits And The City  
Lansing, MI  
[suitsandthecity@gmail.com](mailto:suitsandthecity@gmail.com)  
[www.suitsandthecity.org](http://www.suitsandthecity.org)

## Transgender

### FtM Detroit

<https://www.facebook.com/FtMDetroit/>  
[ftmdetroit@gmail.com](mailto:ftmdetroit@gmail.com)

## Get Listed, Promote Your Events

You can add or update any listing by going to [www.PrideSource.com](http://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](http://www.PrideSource.com) and clicking on Calendar, then "Add Event." Send any press releases and announcements to [editor@pridesource.com](mailto:editor@pridesource.com)



## Find a digital version of PrideSource Magazine online under Our LGBT Yellow Pages

### FtM A2 Ypsi

[ftmannarborypsilanti@gmail.com](mailto:ftmannarborypsilanti@gmail.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/ftma2ypsi/>

### Transgender Michigan

23211 Woodward Ave.  
Ferndale, MI  
[info@transgendermichigan.org](mailto:info@transgendermichigan.org)  
[www.transgendermichigan.org](http://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](mailto:info@tscopdetroit.org)  
[www.facebook.com/TSCOPD/](https://www.facebook.com/TSCOPD/)

## Youth

### Ruth Ellis Center

77 Victor Street, Highland Park, MI 48203  
[info@ruthelliscenter.org](mailto: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](http://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
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- Social/Community Organizations
- Sports
- Substance Abuse
- Transgender Groups/Services
- Women's Health
- Youth Services



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Keith Hughes at [khughes@miunified.org](mailto:khughes@miunified.org)

[WWW.MIUNIFIED.ORG](http://WWW.MIUNIFIED.ORG)



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SERVICES

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the Quit Tobacco Program, contact:

Sheila Anderson: [shanderson@matrixhs.org](mailto:shanderson@matrixhs.org) OR Nikia Mackey: [nmackey@matrixhs.org](mailto:nmackey@matrixhs.org)  
(313) 614-9505 (313) 234-3757

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