

MICHIGAN'S LGBTQ+ NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993

**BTL**  
Between THE Lines

An Exclusive Interview With Leslie Jordan

Lee Chatfield Resigns From Southwest Michigan First

Podcast Spotlights LGBTQ+ Elders



*Celebrating Women's History Month*  
**With Trans Icon**  
**Angelica Ross**

# Supporting the Community Since Before it was Cool.

100% Local Agents. 100% Client Focused.  
Trillium Real Estate Helps People  
Make Good Decisions.



**Sandi & Linda**  
www.trilliumrealtors.com

323 Braun Ct. Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
734-302-3011



## C & N PARTY RENTALS

5140 Meijer Drive,  
Royal Oak, MI 48073



**Marquees, Canopies and Tents • Tables • Chairs • Linens  
Dinnerware • Glassware • Flatware • Silver Service  
Food Service & Cooking Equipment • Convention & Meeting Equipment**

*We have Beautiful Linens for all events and budgets!*

**248-435-3580 • 800-351-0031 • www.cnparty.com**



## NEWS

- 4 House Passes Equality Act
- 5 Anti-Trans Michigan Camp Boomerang Removed From Gay Camp Association, Campit Features Trans Week
- 8 'For the Sake of My Conscience' Lee Chatfield Resigns From Southwest Michigan First
- 13 Hotter Than July Retrospective
- 14 'Gayest Generation' Podcast From AADL Highlights Michigan's LGBTQ+ Elders

## OPINION

- 10 Parting Glances
- 10 Viewpoint: Lack of Education About the Trans Experience Causes Discrimination
- 11 Creep Of The Week

## ENTERTAINMENT

- 16 A Viral Star Is Reborn
- 18 Flaming Out, Flaming Over



## 18 COVER STORY

Photo: Joseph Rivera

## HERE ARE SOME OF OUR LATEST ONLINE-ONLY PIECES:



Jad Abumrad photo by Lizzy Johnston.

Watch an Exclusive Clip of 'Dolly Parton's America' Host Jad Abumrad in a Sit-Down with Celeb Journalist Chris Azzopardi  
By Pride Source Staff

Gay Activist Mark LaChey Reelected First Vice Chair of Michigan Democratic Party  
By Jason A. Michael

Va. School Seeks Supreme Court Review in Continued Fight Against Gavin Grimm  
By Chris Johnson

Biden: Equality Act 'A Critical Step' in Achieving American Values  
By Chris Johnson

VOL. 2910 • MARCH 4, 2021

ISSUE 1169

PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP

Phone 734-263-1476

### PUBLISHERS

Benjamin Jenkins  
benjamin@pridesource.com  
Publishers Emeritus: Jan Stevenson & Susan Horowitz

### DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Tom Wesley  
tom@pridesource.com

### EDITORIAL

**Entertainment Editor**  
Chris Azzopardi  
chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

### News & Feature Editor

Eve Kucharski  
eve@pridesource.com

### News & Feature Writers

Michelle Brown, Ellen Knoppow, Jason A. Michael,  
Drew Howard, Jonathan Thurston

### CREATIVE

**Columnists**  
Charles Alexander, Michelle E. Brown,  
Mikey Rox, D'Anne Witkowski,  
Gwendolyn Ann Smith, Dana Rudolph

### Cartoonists

Paul Berg

### Contributing Photographers

Andrew Potter, Andrew Cohen, Roxanne Frith, Tih Penfil

### ADVERTISING & SALES

**Director of Sales**  
Diane Sheldon-Ku, 734-263-1474  
diane@pridesource.com

### Sales Representatives

Ann Cox, 248-613-2513  
anncox@pridesource.com

### National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media, 212-242-6863

### MEMBER OF

Michigan Press Association  
National LGBT Media Association  
National Gay & Lesbian Chamber  
Q Syndicate



Our rate cards are available online. All material appearing in Between The Lines is protected by federal copyright law and may not be reproduced in whole or part without the permission of the publishers. Between The Lines is supported by many fine advertisers, but we cannot accept responsibility for claims made by our advertisers, nor can we accept responsibility for materials provided by advertisers or their agents.

Copyright 2021



From left, Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.), Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.), Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.), Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) attend a press conference for the Equality Act at the U.S. Capitol on Feb. 25. (Washington Blade photo by Michael Key.)

# House Passes Equality Act

BY MICHAEL LAVERS

The U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday approved a bill that would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

“This long overdue legislation will provide millions of LGBTQ Americans explicit protections from being denied medical care, fired from their jobs, or thrown out of their homes simply because of who they are,” said

U.S. Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) as he spoke in favor of the Equality Act that passed by a 224-203 vote margin. U.S. Reps. John Katko and Brian Fitzpatrick of New York and Pennsylvania are among the handful of Republicans who also backed the bill.

“We rise to tell our LGBTQIA community that not only do you matter, but you are loved and you are cared for,” said U.S. Rep. Cori Bush (D-Mo.). “And we got your back.”

Georgia Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor

Greene is among those who have expressed their strong opposition to the Equality Act. The Washington Blade earlier this week reported U.S. Rep. Chris Stewart (R-Utah) will reintroduce the Fairness for All Act that mainstream religious denominations support.

President Biden publicly supports the Equality Act.

“This is a defining moment in our nation’s political history and soon U.S. senators will decide their legacy on equality for LGBTQ

people,” said LGBTQ Victory Institute President Annise Parker in a statement. “History is not kind to those who oppose or filibuster civil rights legislation and excuses won’t pass muster with future generations.”

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



# Anti-Trans Michigan Camp Boomerang Removed From Gay Camp Association, Campit Features Trans Week

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Last month the owner of the private gay Michigan campsite Camp Boomerang, Bryan Quinn, said on social media that the camp required men to have a penis in order to purchase a membership. Boomerang has since been removed from the Gay Camp Association website and marketing group after tremendous backlash to this anti-trans policy. The Association allegedly received a significant number of emails and that prompted the decision. Though Boomerang's Facebook group page appears to have been taken down in the days since it prompted controversy, the messages previously posted there continue to reverberate throughout the community.

"Let's be real here," Quinn said in one comment. "If we let women that act like men in, and they go naked at the pool, that's when it's obvious that there's no penis. Sorry to put it bluntly. But if you don't like the rules, quietly leave."

Michael Champagne and his boyfriend, who had just bought a seasonal membership to Boomerang and a new RV to park there, are doing just that.

"We are not going to be seasonals at Boomerang," Champagne said. "My boyfriend is contacting them today to tell them and to ask for our deposit back. It is non-refundable, but it doesn't hurt to ask. We are in communication with CreekRidge Campground to see options

moving forward."

Vincent Nieves was supposed to be Camp Boomerang's events director and resident DJ when it opened. After learning of the campground's policies, Nieves resigned.

"I took some time to make the decision based on my moral standpoint and views along with self-care reasons," Nieves said. "I feel that this decision is a right decision based on my beliefs. I was super excited when this opportunity arose. I've been working day and night to create the family experience through this upcoming year's events."

Nieves has previously camped at CreekRidge, which welcomes trans men with the gender marker M on their state-issued ID, and now plans to return there this summer. Campit Resort Saugatuck, meanwhile, has no gender requirements and is open to all. In response to the Boomerang controversy, Mr. Campit Bear 2020 and trans man Nikk Cochran Selik is organizing a Trans Week at Campit from June 21 through 24.


"We had been discussing this since last year, doing a trans week," Selik said. "I brought it up to [Campit owner] Michael [O'Connor] last August. We were waiting to see what the pandemic situation was going to look like but in light of this, it sort of lit the fire so to speak."

Trans Week, despite its name, will be open to everyone regardless of gender identity.

See **Camp Boomerang**, continued on p. 9


## THE SUBARU A LOT TO LOVE<sup>®</sup> EVENT


2021 SUBARU  
**FORESTER**<sup>™</sup> MFF 15  
MANUFACTURER OFFER:  
**0% APR Financing for 48 Months**



*Hodges*  
at Hodges...

2021 SUBARU  
**OUTBACK**<sup>™</sup> MDH 21  
MANUFACTURER OFFER:  
**0% APR Financing for 63 Months**





**SUBARU**

**HODGES SUBARU**  
Metro Detroit's "Subaru-Only Dealer"

21205 Woodward Ave • Ferndale • MI • 48220  
248.547.8800 • www.hodgessubaru.com  
HOURS: TUES, WED, & FRIDAY SALES - 9 A.M.-6 P.M. SERVICE - 7:30 A.M. - 6 P.M.  
MONDAY & THURS SALES - 9 A.M. - 8 P.M. SERVICE - 7:30 A.M. - 8 P.M.  
SATURDAY SALES - 10 A.M. - 2 P.M. SERVICE - 10 A.M. - 2 P.M.

EVERYDAY!

EXCELLENT SERVICE • OUTSTANDING SELECTION • FANTASTIC PRICES....

\*Model code MDH 21 only. \$1,000 down payment. \$0 security deposit. 1st month payment due at lease signing. 1st month \$10K mileage per year. 21 cents every mile thereafter. Tax, title, and license fees not included. Subject to pre-approval through Subaru Motor Finance. \*\*Model code MFF 15 only. \$1,500 down payment. \$0 security deposit. 1st month payment due at lease signing. 30 month \$10K miles per year. 15 cents every mile thereafter. Tax, title, and license fees not included. Subject to pre-approval through Subaru Motor Finance.



**CORKTOWN**  
HEALTH CENTER

## HEALTHCARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY



**313-832-3300**  
[www.corktownhealth.org](http://www.corktownhealth.org)

- Primary Care
- Behavioral Health Services
- HIV Care
- Breast/Cervical Cancer Screening
- Hormone Therapy
- Insurance Navigation
- Fully Integrated PrEP services and more!

## IMPORTANT FACTS FOR BIKTARVY®

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

(bik-TAR-vee)

### MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BIKTARVY

**BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:**

- ▶ **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you have both HIV-1 and HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking BIKTARVY. Do not stop taking BIKTARVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

### ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults and children who weigh at least 55 pounds. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements.

**BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

**Do NOT take BIKTARVY if you also take a medicine that contains:**

- ▶ dofetilide
- ▶ rifampin
- ▶ any other medicines to treat HIV-1

### BEFORE TAKING BIKTARVY

**Tell your healthcare provider if you:**

- ▶ Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- ▶ Have any other health problems.
- ▶ Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.

**Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:**

- ▶ Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- ▶ BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all your other medicines.

### POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIKTARVY

**BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:**

- ▶ Those in the “Most Important Information About BIKTARVY” section.
- ▶ **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys. If you develop new or worse kidney problems, they may tell you to stop taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- ▶ **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (6%), and headache (5%).

These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking BIKTARVY.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.FDA.gov/medwatch](http://www.FDA.gov/medwatch) or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

**Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with BIKTARVY.**

### HOW TO TAKE BIKTARVY

Take BIKTARVY 1 time each day with or without food.

### GET MORE INFORMATION

- ▶ This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- ▶ Go to [BIKTARVY.com](http://BIKTARVY.com) or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- ▶ If you need help paying for your medicine, visit [BIKTARVY.com](http://BIKTARVY.com) for program information.



Get HIV support by downloading a free app at  
**MyDailyCharge.com**

BIKTARVY, the BIKTARVY Logo, DAILY CHARGE, the DAILY CHARGE Logo, KEEP CREATING, LOVE WHAT'S INSIDE, GILEAD, and the GILEAD Logo are trademarks of Gilead Sciences, Inc., or its related companies. Version date: February 2020  
© 2020 Gilead Sciences, Inc. All rights reserved. BVYC0218 04/20



**BIKTARVY**<sup>®</sup>

bictegravir 50mg/emtricitabine 200mg/  
tenofovir alafenamide 25mg tablets

**LOVE  
WHAT'S  
INSIDE**<sup>®</sup>



**CHAD**



LIVING WITH HIV SINCE 2018  
**REAL BIKTARVY PATIENT**

**KEEP  
CREATING.**

Because HIV doesn't change who you are.

BIKTARVY<sup>®</sup> is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in certain adults. **BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.**

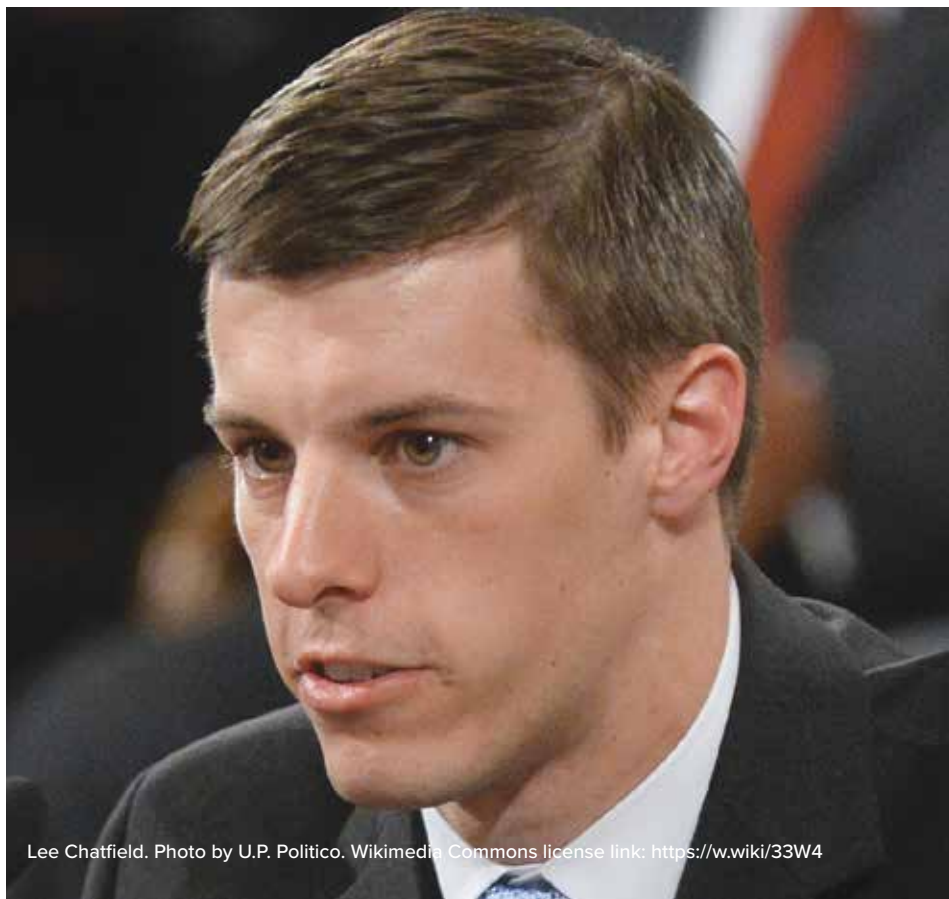
**Ask your healthcare provider if BIKTARVY is right for you.**

See Chad's story at [BIKTARVY.com](https://www.biktarvy.com).

Featured patient compensated by Gilead.

Please see Important Facts about BIKTARVY, including important warnings, on the previous page and visit [BIKTARVY.com](https://www.biktarvy.com).





Lee Chatfield. Photo by U.P. Politico. Wikimedia Commons license link: <https://w.wiki/33W4>

# 'For the Sake of My Conscience' Lee Chatfield Resigns From Southwest Michigan First

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

In what one hopes is the final chapter on a controversy that's racked the LGBTQ+ community in Michigan and their allies, as well as Kalamazoo as a whole, former House Speaker Lee Chatfield has abruptly resigned from his post as CEO of Southwest Michigan First after serving less than two weeks. The announcement came via Chatfield's Twitter account and in an email announcement by the organization. Chatfield acknowledged that his arrival in Kalamazoo has caused controversy "and for that I am truly sorry."

Last week Chatfield tweeted, "For the betterment of the Kalamazoo community, the businesses that the board of directors represent, the staff at SWMF and for the sake of my conscience, please see the letter of resignation I offered this morning. I remain grateful for having had this incredible opportunity."

In regard to amending ELCRA, Chatfield said, "I came into the Legislature with publicly-known beliefs. Since then, I have had many thoughtful and enlightening conversations and have built close friendships that, quite frankly, I did not have before I was elected in 2014. I sought out these opportunities to learn from LGBTQ+ advocates and allies to become more informed."

Chatfield goes on to express regret that "I was unable to find a compromise that all parties could agree on."

In other words, he was unwilling to budge on an exemption for religious or moral beliefs. Finally, he says he would always want to uphold the values of the organization, but that seems in conflict with his personal beliefs: "As a Christian, I believe in the Bible. I don't say that as a shield, and I certainly don't say that to use as a weapon."

Chatfield's appointment began Feb. 11. It immediately caused controversy, as he was notorious during his tenure in the House

for obstructing any forward movement on amending the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include LGBTQ+ people.

At the time, Equality Michigan Executive Director Erin Knott said, "...with his past track record ... I don't know how he's going to lead this particular organization to the challenge of recruiting businesses to come into our area."

Knott, who also serves on the Kalamazoo Commission, made a motion at a meeting Feb. 15 to break ties with the Southwest Michigan First. Previously, the city of Kalamazoo paid dues of \$10,000 per year to be a member of their Council of 100. After some discussion, there was consensus that Chatfield did not represent the values of the community and the motion passed unanimously.

From the outset, many questioned Chatfield's appointment: reportedly, a national search was conducted but Chatfield has no experience in economic development. Aside from his six years in the House, he has served as an athletic director at a Christian School. Knott decried the lack of transparency in the hiring process; certainly, Chatfield's was one that was not conducted implementing a diversity, equity and inclusion lens.

The fallout continued as the president of Kalamazoo Valley Community College resigned from the board of Southwest Michigan First over Chatfield's hiring. Former KVCC President L. Marshall Washington said in a letter, "For the past two years, I have served as a member of the Board of Directors of Southwest Michigan First. Based on the organization's governance structure, I did not participate in the recent search process or the hiring of the new chief

executive officer. The controversy caused by this decision is unfortunate and in my opinion, could have been avoided."

Since then, Southwest Michigan First issued a Statement of Values in response to the city of Kalamazoo's actions. It reads in part, "Starting today, we have updated our official handbook at Southwest Michigan First to more clearly articulate that we prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation in our hiring process. Though it has always been a practice to treat one another with an equal amount of dignity and respect free of discrimination throughout our company's existence, we are taking this important step today to make sure it is official. We have listened. We have heard. And now we are taking action."

Many were puzzled by what came next: Chatfield announced his support for amending ELCRA to include the LGBTQ+ community; still others, including representatives from the Fair and Equal Citizen's Initiative offered praise. Co-Chair Mira Jourdan said in a press release, "Kalamazoo and southwestern Michigan has long stood up for equal rights and the move to support the citizens' initiative by Southwest Michigan First and CEO Lee Chatfield should be applauded. We look forward to his active engagement on the issue as we continue to work with the Legislature to pass this initiative."

At the time, Knott sounded cautious: "I will continue to monitor this situation closely," Knott said, in a statement.





## → Camp Boomerang

Continued from p. 5



Screenshot via Facebook

“But the point is it’s really supposed to be about welcoming trans folk to Campit,” said Selik. “I’m sure maybe a lot of trans folks have never been to Campit before, so it may be a lot of people’s first time. It’s about blending the community together and showing people inside and outside the trans community that CampIt is welcoming and it’s a place for the entire LGBTQ community. We want to put that out there for everyone to see.”

Selik said he believes the controversy with Boomerang has actually been good for the community.

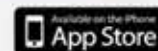
“As horrible as all of the initial policies were at Camp Boomerang, I think the outcry from everybody, even the gay cisgender community, in support of trans men and trans folks, has been overwhelmingly positive and really sort of a silver lining to everything,” Selik said. “I was telling my husband, five years ago people would have said these things and it would have been no big deal. I think it shows how far our community has progressed as a whole.”

*Bryan Quinn from Camp Boomerang did not respond to requests to comment for this story.*

## Holiday Market Carryout

THE SAME GREAT HOLIDAY MARKET TASTE WITH AN ADDED CONVENIENCE. DOWNLOAD OUR APP ON YOUR SMART PHONE FOR AN EVEN MORE PRACTICAL WAY TO GET YOUR FAVORITE HOLIDAY MARKET FOOD TO GO.

DOWNLOAD OUR APP!



HOLIDAY MARKET • 1203 S MAIN ST ROYAL OAK

248.541.1414 • HOLIDAY-MARKET.COM • CONNECT WITH US  



# Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

## Shots and Shutdown

I received my first COVID-19 vaccination shot last week. My second right-arm shot is scheduled for March 11. Among 300 seniors innoculated in a well-coordinated system at Dearborn's Henry Ford Village, I was number 13. That's the benefit, if indeed it's that, to being blessed with a last name beginning with A.

For those given to worrying about numerological superstitions, among the French and Spanish and the ancient Egyptians, the number 13 is considered a good luck number. In passing, let me say that the pharmacist sitting at table 13, who neatly gave me my shot, was pleasant to look at and briefly to chat with.

That same day I received a concerned call from an old friend Marc Channing, who I've known since he was in his early 20s. Marc, now 50-something, or, other, is living and struggling financially in Manhattan.

Marc said he hadn't heard from me in a while and wanted to know how I was doing. It turns out that he needed to vent his concerns about how the traditionally LGBTQ+ Mecca has changed and, in his opinion, not for the better. Tha was due to gay bars and restaurants closing, with Broadway theater performance closures and with high rent expectations to be met.

He spoke with a certain glee about the — one can only hope — trials and well-deserved tribulations of former President Donald Trump.

In weeks earlier telephone chats with Marc, who is a highly respected mens fashion commentator and trend-setter, he mentioned that he had met Donald on two occasions. He said that in his opinion, the White House was "very gay" with all the hairdressers, dress designers and make-up artists attending to Melania's every wish and whim.

Marc, by the way, is earning his keep by grocery shopping with iPhone in hand at \$50 a trip. And designing fashion lamps for aesthetic furniture enhancement and sale. Good luck, Marc Channing!

Back to my COVID-19 shot. One might think of it as an exclamation point to an ordeal that has changed our LGBT+ lives dramatically. Emphatically. Exhaustingly. It's certainly been challenging to our rainbow community. Need we be reminded that it will be a year this March 2021 that we have had to deal with the pandemic, the Donald Trump GOP machinations, the alarming assault and storming of our capital, our failures to face up to crimes perpetrated seemingly again and again on the Black community?

The watchword for this past year has been social distancing. Practice it! Wear a mask. Stay six feet apart. Connect by virtual Zooming!

Out of sight. Out of mind. But hope for the good, better, best!

We do need to remind ourselves that protective social

See next page



"I'LL GET YOU, MY PRETTY—AND YOUR LGB POTATO, TOO!"



BY SANTIAGO MORENO

With the recent uprising of discrimination from some members of the gay community involving the ban on transgender men at a Michigan, all-male campground, I've been compelled to be a voice of change and education. My name is Santiago Moreno, and I transitioned 8 1/2 years ago and have been living as male, not a "woman that acts like a man" as the transphobes put it.

I've always prided myself in approaching every situation with an open mind and an open heart, regardless of the ignorance that may be present, and I've always done my best to relate and then educate, leaving people with food for thought. I hope that because of my words, from this day forward, you will approach trans people with a better understanding.

When the owner of Camp Boomerang, Bryan Quinn, posted this to their Facebook page:



## Viewpoint

# Lack of Education About the Trans Experience Causes Discrimination

It reminded me of all the times I've heard similar comments from transphobic people like, "Real men have a penis," and, "Real women have a vagina, uterus and bleed." To challenge that concept, I've always asked, "So, if a woman gets a hysterectomy are they no longer a woman? If you are infertile, does that rid your gender? Are people born without their lower half genderless? Are accident survivors who lose their genitals stripped of their gender? What about those born with Turner syndrome (only an X chromosome), are they just invalid to a gender?" Lets not forget about those

See Viewpoint, next page

## → Viewpoint

Continued from p. 10

who are intersex. You can't argue with this known science, as well as the science of how transgender people biologically develop.

My point here is that many people base gender on a binary spectrum of being all or nothing. This or that. I call this simple-minded, uneducated and lacking in ability to grow and learn. If you want to argue religion, just know that the science behind all of this, the biology, is valid.

I lived as a woman for 24 years of my life before I was able to transition and live as my true self. During those years I learned a lot about living as a woman in society. That's knowledge that most men will never know. I was also circled into the lesbian community and culture, which, after my transition, I quickly learned was very different from the gay male culture and scene.

Going from one community to the other was a culture shock, amongst the culture shock of male expectations in general. It made me realize the pressure and toxicity involved in the gay community and on the young gay males discovering it. Learning about the "no fats, no fems," "no transmen," "no Blacks no Latinos" culture, it all blew my mind that a community of people fighting for equality were creating their own hateful division within.

From my own experiences in life, I had never heard of that in the lesbian community, or even amongst straight people. I had heard of them having a type they were more drawn to, but not a ban on anyone outside of that.

As I continue learn more and more about the division within the LGB community against trans people, I've been made aware this same division *is* happening within the lesbian community. Specifically brought to my attention was the Windover women-only campground here in Michigan that banned trans women.

When this type of hate comes from within the community that trans, non-binary and intersex folks have been grouped into, it's a shame as well

*“This is not a losing battle. We fought hard for your rights, now join us in fighting for ours.”*

as a reminder that we don't belong to the same fight. Yet, for decades, the trans community has fought for you and alongside you for same-sex rights and change.

When I attempted to educate one of Camp Boomerang's campers who supports the ban on trans men he commented with, "Santiago you are fighting a losing battle." This same man told me he had been a part of gay protests in the '70s.

So let me remind all of you, it was a Black trans woman, Marsha "Pay it no Mind" Johnson, that played one of the biggest roles in those gay rights movements. This is not a losing battle. We fought hard for your rights, now join us in fighting for ours.

*Santiago Moreno (He/Him/They/Them) is an activist for trans, non-binary and intersex people. He is Mexican and Filipino and was born and raised in Michigan. Currently, Moreno is a nursing student, but he accepts writing inquiries via email at SantiagoMoreno.contact@gmail.com or through Instagram @santisalvaje.*

to be on our collective guard. Our LGBTQ+ community is on lockdown. Challenge yourself to see to it that we are not to be taken advantage of, politically, religiously or socially. And! Do get your COVID-19 shot. Even if your name starts with a Z (as in Zoom).

*Charles Alexander is prolific both as a BTL columnist, having contributed 700-plus columns, as a well-known LGBT community artist having shared over 1,000 pieces of art via Facebook. He is a Spirit of Detroit Award recipient and an Affirmations LGBTQ center Jan Stevenson awardee. Connect with him at charles@pridesource.com.*

## → Parting Glances

Continued from p. 10

distancing has come at a price well worth keeping in mind for our rainbow community.

In city after city, our social gathering places have been shut down. Cellphones have replaced face-to-face, living, breathing contact. Our isolation has resulted in unintentional forgetting of once familiar friends, their names, their shared interests, their goals and achievements in our collective struggle. When was the last time you gave someone a much-needed hug?

Simply put: A pandemic year later, we need

## Creep Of The Week

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

### Electing People Who Aren't Hateful Ghouls Makes All the Difference

**H**ip, hip, hooray! The U.S. House passed The Equality Act! We're all equal now! There's no more hate, no more homophobia, no more Marjorie Taylor Greene!

OK, that's a bit of an exaggeration. But the Equality Act amends the 1964 Civil Rights Act to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expands the scope of those protections. It's a major leap forward for LGBTQ+ rights in the U.S., rights that were chipped away and stomped on by the Trump Administration.

After the Democrats in the House introduced the bill, President Biden said in a statement, "I urge Congress to swiftly pass this historic legislation. Every person should be treated with dignity and respect, and this bill represents a critical step toward ensuring that America lives up to our foundational values of equality and freedom for all."

In other words: elections matter. Electing people who aren't hateful ghouls really makes a difference in the lives of oppressed people.

Speaking of hateful ghouls, only three Republican House members voted yes on the Equality Act. Meanwhile, all of the Democrats voted in favor.

Needless to say, right-wing conservatives are PISSED. Especially since the Equality Act trumps — HA! — 1993's Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which protects "religious liberty." Being able to discriminate against LGBTQ+ people without any consequences whatsoever is a bedrock principle of religion, after all. Under the Equality Act, "Jesus told me to" isn't a free pass to discriminate.

Let's be clear: if treating LGBTQ+ people like human beings offends your religious sensibilities, then maybe your religious sensibilities are trash.

Let's also be clear that the "religion" in question here is Christianity, since right-wing Christians who run the Republican Party don't care about other religions.

Case in point, the Family Research Council.

"Every Christian needs to understand and pray for the defeat of this anti-Christian legislation," they urged.

"Father, our Supreme Court erred in its ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton*," FRC prayed, referring to the 2020 Supreme Court case that ruled that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects LGBTQ+ employees against discrimination. "Some call it the *Roe v. Wade* of sexual anarchy prevailing over religious liberty."

I have literally never heard it called this. But I also do not spend much time with religious extremists who have been radicalized.

"Lord, men and women who reject your law are seeking to impose their sexual lawlessness upon those who are seeking to obey your laws," FRC's prayer continues. "They seek morally lawless legal power to punish those who can never affirm their sinful choices and maintain their fidelity to your word!"

In other words, Lord, don't make me be nice to a gay. Jesus help me if I have to call a transgender or non-binary person by their preferred pronouns. Heaven forbid I have to make a cake for a lesbian wedding.

"Intervene we pray, not only to prevent this lawless HR 5 bill to pass," their sad prayer continues, "but to set a marker that elected representatives of the American people will not yet again declare righteous what you declare unrighteous, nor provide sexual activists the tools with which to persecute religious believers."

Set a marker, huh? Like in dominoes? And there's that persecution complex again. Christians are not discriminated against in this country. Case in point: Christmas. Other cases in point: the fact that we have a major religious party that thinks that Christianity gives them the right to tell women what to do with their bodies when it comes to pregnancy, the existence and profitability of megachurches, tax-exempt status for churches, Kanye West.

It's no wonder why the Republican Party spends so much of its time trying to crush voting rights. LGBTQ+ equality is actually quite popular. The majority of this country opposes discrimination against LGBTQ+ people. So what Republicans are left with is prayer, which doesn't influence elections, and voter suppression, which is their tool to remain in power even as they and their ideas become less popular.



The Equality Act is not law yet, of course. Whether the Equality Act will pass in the U.S. Senate remains to be seen. Even Republicans considered to have a shred of moral decency, like Mitt Romney, are against it. My advice to Democrats: get rid of the goddamn filibuster that requires you to get the support of Trump-worshipping terrorist-enabling fascists of the Republican Party and pass the Equality Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act RIGHT NOW.

Or we can blink our eyes and see Mitch McConnell become Senate Majority leader again and cry about how we had a shot to make major change and we fucking blew it and now the U.S. House is filled primarily with people whose campaign slogans were, "I did crime on the Capitol for Trump!" Our choice!

You're Cordially  
Invited  
To

**Fight  
For  
Equality**

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

Not ready to ask your  
doctor for an HIV test?  
Don't want to go to the  
clinic during COVID?



**WE GOT YOU!**

HIV testing at home  
is a safe and discreet  
way to learn your  
status.

Residents of Detroit,  
Highland Park and  
Hamtramck can order  
a free kit today at  
[www.detroitmi.gov/HIVtest](http://www.detroitmi.gov/HIVtest).  
Or scan the QR code.




Detroit Health Department  
STD/HIV Prevention  
100 Mack Avenue (Third Floor)  
Detroit, MI 48201



**METRO CARE**  
COORDINATION NETWORK  
ACCESS, Matrix Human Services, OLHSA

**ARE YOU LIVING WITH HIV?  
WE HAVE ASSISTANCE FOR YOU!**

**CALL (248) 266-5545  
[MetroCareNetwork.org](http://MetroCareNetwork.org)**

# HOTTER THAN JULY RETROSPECTIVE

25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
JULY 1996-2020  
HOTTER THAN JULY

## Leading With Passion: An Interview With LGBT Detroit's Dionté Brown

BY TIEANNA BURTON

Born and raised on the west side of Detroit, Dionté Brown has always loved his hometown. Today, he gives back through his work, and he serves as the program coordinator for LGBT Detroit's Leadership Academy for Mentors and Protégés.

"It's a great opportunity for me to connect with young people and partner them with elders in the community so that they can create relationships, whether it be professionally or personally," he said. "We have a major focus on dispelling HIV stigma and educating young people about HIV and giving them the tools that they need to help advocate for their health care and wellbeing."

A year into this role, by all accounts his longtime love of people and service uniquely has prepared him for working with Detroit's Black queer population, but it didn't always start out that way. At a young age, Brown distanced himself from the vibrancy that is Black queer culture. At the time, his lack of self-awareness and misinformation about what it meant to be LGBTQ+ prevented him from engaging with peers. However, what was once a reason to distance himself became his motivation to advocate for it.

Today, it's Brown's compassion and understanding that gives him the right amount of agency to connect mentors with protégés within his role. Chief among these methods has been through The Hotter Than July Retrospective, a year-long journalism project that promotes diversity and equity in the field while strengthening community engagement by giving Black and Brown LGBTQ+ journalists the ability to tell narratives from their point of view.

Brown made time to discuss the Retrospective, his goals as the Leadership Academy's program coordinator and why it's valuable that Hotter Than July continues on even in the age of COVID-19.

### Tell us more about the Hotter Than July Retrospectives project and its significance.

A lot of times we witness our voices being stifled and we're not able to use them as Black and Brown people. The journalism project started and is a way to uplift the voices of the community, allowing them to showcase their work and have it published in a statewide newspaper. That's something they can use to put on their resume or in their portfolio. Plus, it is a paid opportunity for writers and photographers, which dates to April 2020. So, there has been a wonderful opportunity



Dionté Brown. Courtesy photo.

for the community to share in spreading messages of empowerment. And I think that it is so important.

When we're talking about Hotter than July, being able to tell the stories of Hotter than July from different people that have been here from the beginning, people that have been here for over the years, it's beautiful. Because that's something that we tend to forget about our elders who came before us who were able to endure so that we didn't have to.

### You describe its significance like oral traditions but in written form.

That's essentially what it is. It's the passing down of the traditions of this illustrious event [Hotter than July] and being able to continue to capture those stories so that they don't go away. And that's the one thing we don't want to do is forget. We don't want to forget where we've come from. And I'm a very big advocate for respecting the elders in this community because of that. Because of them, I'm able to walk outside as a Black gay man with blond hair, because of the things that they had to go through. And I think that is especially important. So, it is just a great project, and I hope we can keep going. I truly do.

### How did this partnership with Between the Lines come about?

The Retrospective is supported by The Detroit Journalism Fund at the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan for PrideSource Media and LGBT Detroit. There are a few individuals that are a part of this program, but ours specifically features Black and Brown members of the LGBTQ community. [LGBT Detroit Executive Director] Curtis [Lipscomb] wanted to essentially take part in the journalism program because he is an editor by trade. LGBT Detroit started as a publication called KICK Magazine.

There are so many different facets that we have to go through as members of this community, and being able to have an opportunity to showcase your work is nothing short of amazing — and be paid for it. My role was to connect our organization with members of the community. Before my involvement, they noticed that the same bodies were getting their work showcased, which is not a problem. You know, I think as a writer, or even as a photographer, having your work published is the goal. You want to do that. But I will say it does take away

an opportunity for other individuals to have the same opportunity. And that's what Curtis wanted to focus on with this project which allows different individuals of this community to showcase their work.

### Let's talk more about the featured stories and what they entailed.

So, this will be the last feature. There were 12 features in total, and we wanted to focus this one on me, the coordinator of the program. [So I could] talk about the program — where it's been, where it's going and, hopefully, where we can continue. We have this writing project we have piloted in April 2020. We also have the evolution of the Leadership Academy. They're all going through these transitional phases at

the moment, but it's beautiful to witness and I'm excited to be a part of it.

### What is the LGBT Detroit Leadership Academy?

The Leadership Academy has changed over the years. It started in 2012 and is focused on getting people that are a part of the movement to become future leaders in the movement. And a lot of those people who have graduated from the program as members of the community became leaders in the community. However, my area of focus is developing the mentorship program. It's an opportunity to create programming so that protégés can work with their mentors when it comes to various forms of growth such as personal growth and career development. A huge focus is on HIV prevention and dispelling stigmas surrounding gay men and HIV.

### Let's say I wanted to become a mentor. Are there certain requirements?

There's not a major requirement, it's just a matter of applying. Once you go through the application process, I go through it with my

See **LGBT Detroit**, continued on p. 15

# 'Gayest Generation' Podcast From AADL Highlights Michigan's LGBTQ+ Elders

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Generally, the broad cultural and communicational divides that exist between elders and younger generations are seen as inevitable. And while that may be true to an extent, there are lived experiences that link all people regardless of age — particularly in the LGBTQ+ community. Jacob Gorski, a gay man himself, made this realization when he attended local PFLAG meetings facilitated by his mother last year.

"I found that [these meetings weren't] so much for the parents of lesbians and gays as PFLAG usually is, but it was more a space for LGBTQ elders from the rural surrounding areas to meet and to talk with one another. And the stories that I heard from this group — I just had the feeling that somebody else should be hearing this," Gorski said.

Thus, the idea for "The Gayest Generation" podcast was born.

An employee of Ann Arbor District Library, Gorski introduced the concept of sharing the stories of local LGBTQ+ elders through a podcast at work, and he was given the go-ahead to begin a series. Since Gorski began collecting material for episodes in early 2020, "The Gayest Generation" has featured five LGBTQ+ elders from Southeast Michigan. Though his interviewees have all been local, the topics of their stories have spanned the globe and run the gamut. And Gorski is eager to expand the podcast's scope even further.

"Broadening it is the best possible thing we can do," he said. "The more stories, and diverse stories, [that we can share] that are most likely to go unheard the better."

In the midst of collecting more content, Gorski caught up with *Between The Lines* to fill us in on the process of featuring new guests, which of his guests have caught him off-guard with their tales, and the importance of sharing previously unheard narratives.

## What generation truly is the gayest generation?

Every generation is the gayest generation. There is no generation that isn't the gayest. But I thought, "We need a wordplay kind of title," and the greatest generation [comes to mind]. I knew that that was associated with elders, so I thought, "Let's call it the 'Gayest Generation.'" We ran with it, but in no way shape or form is it meant to quantify the gayness of a generation (laughs), rather it's a fun play on words. Every generation is the "gayest" one.

**Have you ever done a podcast before?**



Jacob Gorski began "The Gayest Generation" after attending a PFLAG meeting and hearing the stories of LGBTQ+ elders. Courtesy photo.

(Laughs) This will be my first project like this. My background is in education. I was a high school teacher for a short time, and I realized that a lot of the things that I do in that high school setting still [lends] itself to podcasting — especially when it comes to storytelling. It's funny how there's a little bit of crossover there, but this is my first experience being a podcaster.

## What do you think is the value of hearing the stories of LGBTQ+ elders?

The value lies in so many places. I think having these on the record so that people, in 100 years, can look back and listen to them is one of the most wonderful parts about it. I also think that recording these stories and sharing these stories has a purpose with heterosexual elders as well. It is my hope that the LGBTQ elders' counterparts listen to this and understand more about their peers' experiences. I think that a lot of elders in my life have said to me, "We didn't have that back then." And this podcast is a testament to say that, "Yes, you did." And for that reason, it's important as well. But really, it's important for

younger generations to understand how it is. And in 2021, people aren't so very interested in the facts. How do you change somebody's mind in 2021? It's through stories. Stories stick with people.

## Do you think people discount our local community's ability to be exciting and adventurous with its stories?

Absolutely. Or that, but also I think that sometimes you've just got to sit back and listen. What I hope that the podcast does is it's an example of how listening, the simple act of listening can be a political act. Or it can be an act that makes you better and makes you see the world differently. That's what I hope the podcast does, that it encourages people to listen more.

## What's the process like of finding guests?

The process isn't such that I say, "Hey, I'm going to press record and we're going to talk." We get to know each other to a certain extent before the interview because it would be unfair to the elder to go into it not knowing what we're going to discuss — which isn't

to say it's scripted. We leave room for spontaneous moments, but we work together to tell the stories that we want to tell. But every time I sit down with somebody, I learn something new. I cannot stress that enough. Every person contains multitudes. Every person. And that has changed how I perceive not only LGBTQ elders but, really, the world around me at large.

## Have you ever been surprised by your guests?

In the second episode I sit down with a man named Randy Hasso, and we had talked previously, but we were going to talk about his experience being a Peace Corps agriculture guy in the '70s in Tunisia. Halfway through the conversation, in a way only Randy can, he said, "Yeah, then I went to Morocco and I got mugged. I got stabbed and then I almost died." I said, "What?!" And then he very plainly goes on about the story and how he went to the hospital. But then they got him on a bus to Tunisia. That was a shock, to say the least.

## What are your goals for the future of the podcast?

There's only been five episodes so far, and three of those episodes are made up of people that I've met through the PFLAG organization. The other two episodes were people who had listened to the podcast and had reached out to me via email, [thegayestgeneration@aadl.org](mailto:thegayestgeneration@aadl.org) and said, "Hey, I think you might want to pursue this." It has all been personal connections. But if the goal of this podcast is to record and share the unheard stories of LGBTQ elders, then it is important for me to locate people who would like to participate outside of my personal social sphere. That's what I'm really looking to do in the upcoming months.

Learn more about AADL's "The Gayest Generation" Podcast and how to suggest topics online at <https://aadl.org/gayestgeneration>.

 "Pride Source"

 Follow us @pridesource

 @pridesourcemedia

 Pride Source

 Email your op-eds to [editor@pridesource.com](mailto:editor@pridesource.com)

 Sign up online to receive our E-Digest



Photo: Dionté Brown

## → LGBT Detroit

Continued from p. 13

executive director. We decide from there and we see if we have a protegee that's able to fit with you.

This last year has been a bit of a challenge because of COVID-19. The organization is heavily involved in the community. We're at the local spots where the community resides. We're at the parks. We're at different events throughout the city, but COVID-19 has compelled us to be more creative in our programming.

### Since becoming the Leadership Academy's Program Coordinator, what are your goals to ensure that the program continues to be successful through growth and sustainability?

Since the program has pivoted its focus from community leaders to the mentorship and protégée relationship. My biggest goal is developing voices in the community and pairing them with leaders, so that they can become leaders in the community, too. Prior, it was, "Let me help you or guide you in ways so that you can be a leader in the community." Now it's, "Let's pair you with somebody who can guide you to get to where you want to be within different aspects of your life." Our goal is to partner young people with elders in the community to help them navigate queer life. A lot of times when I was growing up and coming to terms with my sexuality, I didn't have anybody to talk to about it. That's why I do think mentoring is important because it gets them to have somebody in their corner.

From there, we continue to sustain that programming so that our mentors and our protégés want to continue to work with us. We are successful because of those relationships.

### Beyond celebrating 25 years of Hotter than July, why was it important to maintain an event like this with everything going on?

Considering the history of Pride, Black gay Pride, this is of the biggest Black gay Pride celebrations in the country — centered here in the city of Detroit — and a lot of people don't know that. When people think Pride, they think Atlanta, they think D.C. They don't think about Detroit. They don't think about something that's been around for over 20 years. 2021 will mark 26 years ... and it's important so that this generation understands the history of where we've been, where we are and where we're continuing to go. So, it was essential for us to continue to do this programming and figure out those creative ways to keep it going — COVID-19 or not.

*Tieanna Burton (she/her/hers) is a lover of all things queer and Detroit. She is a conceptual designer who is passionate about social impact and equitable community programming. Her writing fuses narrativity and research-based criticism from a Black feminist lens to explore gender, sexuality and the human experience as a radical form of healing and expression.*

**Prism of Possibilities**  
**Psychotherapy**  
**Christine Cantrell, PhD**  
**Fully Licensed Psychologist**

Give yourself an extreme self makeover ...

- ▼ Speak Your Truth
- ▼ Discover What You Want
- ▼ Create Your True Self
- ▼ Heal Old Hurts, Find Wholeness

Located in Royal Oak  
[www.christinecantrell.com](http://www.christinecantrell.com)  
[christinecantrellphd@gmail.com](mailto:christinecantrellphd@gmail.com)

**CALL NOW! 248-591-2888**

**Posterity Gallery**  
**Framing & Printing**  
 17005 Kercheval Ave., Grosse Pointe, MI 48230 313 884-8105



Please visit us for your Custom Framing, Art and Photo Printing and Engraving Projects

**20% CUSTOM FRAMING FOR MARCH**

Choose the REALTOR® who has the experience of more than 600 personal closings.



**Gerry Banister**  
**REALTOR®**  
 248.521.4407  
[gerrybanister@aol.com](mailto:gerrybanister@aol.com)  
[gerrybanister.com](http://gerrybanister.com)  
**RE/MAX NEXUS**  
 248.541.4900  
Each office independently owned & operated.

**Real Estate One**  
**Don Chisholm, REALTOR®**  
 (248) 425-4366  
[DChisholm@RealEstateOne.com](mailto:DChisholm@RealEstateOne.com)  
[www.DonChisholmRealtor.com](http://www.DonChisholmRealtor.com)  
 NAR/REB MEMBER

**Your Personal Advocate**

- Friendly, Professional Service
- Empowering You Through Education
- Serving the Woodward Corridor and Beyond!

**DC**  
 Real Estate One  
 26236 Woodward Ave.  
 Royal Oak, MI 48067

**Michigan's Largest Real Estate Company**

A	B	I	T	B	O	O	T	S	S	A	S	H		
L	O	N	E	E	L	C	A	R	O	L	L	A		
M	Y	F	R	E	E	D	O	M	I	S	Y	O	U	R
A	D	O	R	N	I	M	P	E	B	E	R	T		
				A	G	R	E	E	A	B	L	E		
F	E	S	C	U	E			A	D	A	P	T	S	
R	E	W	E	L	D	S		I	R	O	N	O	R	E
A	R	A		F	R	E	E	D	O	M		D	U	E
M	I	L	K		Y	E	M	E	N		R	I	N	D
E	E	L	E	R		M	U	D		L	E	A	K	Y
				O	N	I	T			G	O	V	T	
N	E	W	Y	O	R	K		L	I	B	E	R	T	Y
A	R	I	A		U	N	Z	I	P		N	I	R	O
C	O	N	N		M	E	S	A	S		U	S	E	R
L	O	G	S		P	E	A	R	Y		E	T	T	E

**Layshia on Top Surgery p. 21**



Photo: Miller Mobley

# A Viral Star Is REBORN

## Thanks to Leslie Jordan's Quarantine Videos, the World Now Knows Him for Exactly Who He Is

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

"Where should I be looking? There? Or there?"

His face smothering the camera as he wonders where his eyes should be, Leslie Jordan is settling into our video interview like it could be a comic routine about somebody trying to use Zoom for the first time. Puckered together in a kind of duck-face pout are his elastic lips. A delicate smile curls into formation.

Then Jordan scoots so low that only his forehead is visible. More duck face. A big eyes-squished grin. A peculiar sound that may or may not be a fart. And finally a tickled laugh when I tell him I recognize that he's in the same room that made him a viral sensation.

"It's the only room I've got!" he chuckles, noting that he's on video from his bedroom in West Hollywood. "I've got everything set up. And there's my bed!"

Sure enough, that *is* his bed. Throughout the pandemic as he's documented his quarantine experiences, that same bed has been seen all over his Instagram feed. There, as a COVID respite, Jordan has delivered lighthearted frivolity and cheeky humor to those he calls his "fellow hunker-downers," in, of course, his signature Southern drawl. In one clip, he listens to a Katy Perry song that is "so lit," while another finds him curious about Lizzo's definition of "her juice." Internet virality might be new for Jordan, but, at least in the LGBTQ+ community, he's always been a star.

Jordan's three-decade career has, most iconically, seen the 65-year-old actor in the Emmy-winning role of Beverley Leslie, a rival of Megan Mullally's Karen Walker, in "Will & Grace." But his career in TV and film goes back to the '80s, in guest appearances in a variety of major shows: "Murphy Brown," "Star Trek: Voyager," "Pee-wee's Playhouse," "Reba" and "Caroline in

the City." More recently, Jordan starred in several seasons of Ryan Murphy's "American Horror Story," and this year he stars alongside Mayim Bialik and fellow out actor Cheyenne Jackson in the Fox sitcom "Call Me Kat."

When a friend told him he had gone viral while Jordan was quarantining with his mom in Tennessee in mid-March of last year, Jordan told that friend that, no, he was fine. He didn't have coronavirus. But the kind of "viral" his friend was referring to was related to Instagram, where he has gone from just thousands of followers to, currently, around 5.6 million. He's been called the "Quarantine Comedian" and "Social Media Mister Rogers." To all his new fans and even those who know him from "Will & Grace" and in other bit parts, though, he's most thrilled to be known now as simply Leslie Jordan.

**Congratulations, first of all, on surviving *and* thriving in a pandemic.**

Give me a good pandemic — I just flourish! Ha! I don't know why that is or how that happened, but I think people were looking for just some laughter. I started that Instagram — I was in Tennessee with my mom, and I didn't have a lot to do. So I just started being funny. I had three rules that I realized I had and didn't know I had: nothing about religion, nothing about politics, and no products. I'm kind of wanting to rethink that "no products" part. Ha!

**You could really be making some bank right now.**

Ha! I'd be set for life!

**I mean, all the free swag!**

Well, I get that. That comes in the mail. It's weird. It scares me. 'Cause they have my home



address. I don't know how. But things come every day.

#### What's the coolest thing you got recently?

I got these shoes that you tap. You tap and roller skates come out. I don't know where I'll wear them.

#### I see you're back in your place after the meltdown you had the other day in your car, which you sat in until the cleaning lady was done. I'm glad to see you're back in a comfortable place. Are you OK?

I am! I don't know if I said cleaning lady; it's not even a cleaning lady. I have a friend that started working for me a long, long time ago named Bart Stevens. He's a great, big, beautiful muscle boy. He's huge. We're just friends. We've always just been friends. But he's huge. Besides lifting weights and running and everything, he loves to clean. And also iron! He irons everything in the house. It's so funny to see him — he'll put that ironing board up and iron my sheets.

#### What is he wearing during all this? I mean, if anything.

He just wears his gym clothes. I make him put on a little French maid costume — no, ha!

#### I had a conversation with my housemate recently about being aging gays and how I look to you as inspiration because you are 65 and in your prime, I would say. And so people telling me that, for gay people who get older, there's nothing left for us after a certain age, you have completely turned that upside down.

Oh, that's so kind to say. Because I remember my 50s were tough. As you get older, you walk down the street and people don't even look at you. It's weird the way we treat people that are older, and especially in West Hollywood, where everybody wants to be young and beautiful.

I think we're past that as a gay community. I hope. You know, I think that also had a lot to do with the bar scene, which has been curtailed. But even before that, back in my day — I got here (to California) in '82 — all you had were the bars; you'd go to the bars. That's just where you went to see other gay people and meet other gay people. Now I think, "My gosh, we have everything. We have choirs. And we have gay camping. We have gay this, we have gay that." There's a lot of ways, plus the internet, where you can meet people.

My generation, we went through so much. I remember I walked up to these young kids holding hands in Kitchen 24 (in West Hollywood) and I just said, "You have no idea what we went through so you guys could..." — and then all of a sudden it hit me: Oh my god, I don't want to be that, like your granddad who would say, "You kids have no idea what we went through!" I thought, "Oh my god! It's the same thing!" They were like, "Yeah, uh-huh, go on, Pop-Pop."

#### Does it feel like right now is kind of a new beginning for you? Or just *the* beginning in a lot of ways?

As you said, I'm 65. I have achieved everything I came to Hollywood to achieve. I've done Broadway, I've done film, I've done a lot of television. And I have this series now on the air ("Call Me Kat") and it looks like it's pulling some numbers. It may stay around for a little while, which is a wonderful thing to know as an actor. I have a job!

#### People think that you're rich, you've said.

And I'm not. Listen, she works hard for the money! I think what it feels like is that I have achieved everything. And also, I'm more comfortable with myself. I'm perfectly comfortable. I got sober 22 years ago. I had a little drinking problem, and I might've done a tiny bit of crystal meth. I got clean and sober and realized that I was just riddled with internal homophobia.

(I was) 42 years old and here I was the life of the party, this and that, but all of a sudden I'm faced with that. And my journey into my sobriety, which has been the last 22 years, has also been a real good journey into my queerness. It was a lot of therapy. You go to your meetings, and then I had to go to a recovery program because I had too many meetings. I was going to so many meetings, I thought, "I'm addicted to meetings!" Ha! No, I'm teasing.

I sit here (now) so comfortable with myself, with who I am and what I am. And that's a wonderful place to be. So everything from here on out is just gravy. It really is just living life one day at a time and having a really good time.

#### And you can say that now because you have finally met Dolly Parton.

That's it. Now all I ask myself is, "What would Dolly do?" She's a sterling human being. Oh my gosh.



Courtesy of Leslie Jordan

See **Leslie Jordan**, continued on p. 19

# UNIFIED Prevention Services

## Free STI Testing

HIV • Hep C • Gonorrhea • Syphilis • Chlamydia

HIV and Hep C test results will be delivered on the day of your visit. Gonorrhea, syphilis and chlamydia test results will take about a week to be processed. Visit us at **MIUNIFIED.ORG** for eligibility, scheduling appointments and additional information.

#### Testing Locations

Detroit	Ypsilanti
3968 Mt Elliott St	2287 Ellsworth Road Suite B
Detroit, MI 48207	Ypsilanti, MI 48197

## Free HIV Self Testing Now Available

## PrEP Clinic

Get connected with PrEP services at UNIFIED Detroit.

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is medicine people at risk for HIV take to prevent getting HIV from sex or injection drug use. When taken as prescribed, PrEP is highly effective for preventing HIV.

Appointments only.

Visit us at **MIUNIFIED.ORG** for eligibility, scheduling appointments and additional information or contact us at:

**UNIFIED Detroit**  
3968 Mt. Elliott  
Detroit, MI 48207  
313-446-9800

**WWW.MIUNIFIED.ORG**



Photo: Joseph Rivera

# Flaming Out, Flaming Over

## Activist-Actress Angelica Ross Has a Simple Reason to Celebrate Trans Women During Women's History Month

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

For Angelica Ross, her short time on “Pose” wasn’t an end — it was a beginning.

After famously portraying Candy Ferocity on the FX series, which depicts New York City ball culture, Ross starred in another Ryan Murphy production, “American Horror Story: 1984,” making her the first trans woman

to have two series-regular roles.

Today one of the most prominent trans names in Hollywood, Ross uses her spotlight to bring attention to pressing issues that affect the trans community. Last year, she signed a TV development deal with the production company Pigeon to develop and co-produce scripted and non-scripted content. She also serves as a consultant who has a hand in shaping trans narratives. And since 2014, she’s

been running her own business, TransTech Social Enterprises, which helps trans people secure jobs in the workforce. In 2019, Ross became the first trans person to host a presidential forum when she moderated the first-of-its-kind event, with candidates Joe Biden, Pete Buttigieg and Elizabeth Warren debating LGBTQ+ issues.

Now on a new song with dance pop diva Ultra Naté and trans activist and performer Mila Jam, Ross brings her signature sense of empowerment and resilience to help put an end to the epidemic of violence against trans women of color. “Fierce” is an electro-pop anthem that also serves as a charitable release with the mission of enlightening, educating and celebrating the trans community. The proceeds benefit the GLAAD Transgender Media Program, The Sylvia Rivera Law Project and The Marsha P. Johnson Institute.

During a recent Zoom interview, Ross talked about the single’s origins, celebrating our trans foremothers during Women’s History Month and what *else* needs to be talked about when it comes to trans women in Hollywood.

**I was gonna ask how fierce you feel. Because you look fierce.**

Thank you! I feel very, very fierce today. I had some great makeup done today. I’m feeling great. Lately things have been kicking into high gear because I’m promoting a song, I’m going back to work on “American Horror Story.” There’s just a lot. I’m producing television shows. Like, there’s a lot on my plate right now. If I can put on a face at the beginning of the day, then it can take me throughout all my meetings.

**How did “Fierce” come together?**

It’s pretty amazing: Anthony Preston, from A2 (Productions), contacted me. He had this song he had been working on with Ultra Naté, and she has been on the dance charts for just a while rocking the dance charts as a Black woman. Anthony being a Black queer man, her being someone in the dance genre who’s been around LGBTQ folks and who’s been an ally for so long — they wanted this to be like a rally cry, an inclusive one, to not just include all women but also bring light to the issues that trans women (are) facing. So they brought on Mila Jam; she ended up singing the second verse to the song. And so (Anthony) played the song for me and I was like, “Um, Anthony, I need to be on this song. You need to put me on this song.” So I ended up singing the hook to the song: “Be legendary, be necessary, be extraordinary.” And I guess the rest is history from there. But now it’s got two trans women and a cis woman standing in solidarity, really calling everyone to the dance floor to celebrate themselves.

**I’m curious what the word “fierce” means to you and when in your life you first felt fierce.**

I have been a fierce queen for a very *long* time. And for me, fierce comes out of this resistance and this resilience that really bucks up against

the system that would rather have you cower down or dim your light for people, but instead I’m gonna burn brighter than I ever have and I’m gonna be fierce about everything that I do.

And I think I’ve been doing that since, you know, probably grade school. So to finally have an opportunity at this level to have an accumulation of fierceness — at this point, I’m flaming out. I’m flaming over. I’m boiling out. It’s just so much fierceness going on it can’t even be contained. So we had to put it in a song, so you can put it on repeat and put it in rotation and play it again, and again, and again.

**If ever there was a moment to feel fierce, I feel like it’s now, right?**

You have to. Right now is a time where there’s so much being thrown at us and so much trying to take our energy and to get us to give up, or to want to *not* fight back against the system. But again, now more than ever, we need to be fierce about who we are.

**The proceeds from “Fierce” are being donated to a variety of trans organizations working to end violence against trans women. What else can those who want to get involved do?**

Well, here’s the deal: I want to encourage folks to realize that we are in the year 2021 and that most of us who are a little older thought that we’d be flying on skateboards by now or doing a lot of things by now. But actually we’re still fighting for some of the same rights that we were fighting for during the ’60s and the ’50s, and even before.

So what I want folks to realize is that when we talk about trans equality or racial equality none of these conversations are new. They are just new to *you*. Which means there’s so much information out there for you to get on your own. There’s no need to use the labor of a Black trans woman who’s already burdened by society. There’s no need to ask a Black woman to give you the inside on Black Lives Matter when you can hit play on so many of the accounts from organizations to individual activists who are telling you exactly what the issues are.

So what I would say is easily open up the Google browser and just say, “Trans rights.” Go there. “LGBTQ rights.” “Racial justice.” These are just keywords that you can Google. But then understand that I don’t care whether you are white, Black, Latino, Asian — I don’t care what ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation (you are). Whoever you are, I want you to recognize that you have power to change the world, which means you have power to change the things that are going on right now.

The violence against trans women — how? By learning how to speak up from your own perspective, in your own circles and in your own workplaces and in your own homes. Know that there is always an opportunity. And from my Buddhist practice, I learned this

See **Angelica Ross**, continued on p. 22

## → Leslie Jordan

Continued from p. 17

### What was the first thing that you said to Dolly when you met her last year?

I was in Nashville recording. I have a gospel album coming out that I'm not gonna talk a whole lot about because everybody's not set. But anyway, we were recording and she was at a studio near us and she said, "Drop by." I just felt like I'd known her forever.

### What can you say about the song that you have in the works?

It's an old, old, old hymn. It's one that she said to me, "I sang that in church growing up, I sang that hymn over and over and over again." When I hear her singing this song with me, I'll wet my pants.

### How did the gospel album come about?

My friend Travis Howard and his producing partner in Nashville, Danny Myrick, we would record Sunday hymns and just put them on the internet, just the two of us, and it was so popular on Instagram and people said, "You should do an album." I thought, "Well, I'm not a singer, really. I've got the kind of voice that's good for a hymn, but I'm not a singer." The response was just unbelievable (from) people who said, "I'll be on that album with you."

### What's your earliest memory of singing?

Church, of course. We'd sing, "Who's come to Sunday school? Leslie, Leslie! Who's come to Sunday school? Le-e-e-slie!"

### You also have a book called "How Y'all Doing?" coming out in April. What are we going to learn about you from the book that we don't already know?

I don't know that you'll really learn anything because I want to make sure that it wasn't — you know, in "My Trip Down the Pink Carpet," I covered everything. (For this), what I decided to do was to take all my best dinner party stories. So I've got 12 stories that are just fun, just things that have happened to me, lessons that I have learned. A little bit but not much about me, just life in general.

My favorite of all of them is when I got to throw the first pitch out for the Washington Nationals, having never thrown a baseball in my life. And it's the craziest story, and it involved Pulse nightclub. Because it was part of my one-man show, I got to tell it to Mrs. Obama. She was in the audience. Michelle Obama came to see me! I got to tell that story. It's in the book. It ends the book.

### Will any tea be spilled?

Well, I don't think so. Certainly not about



Photo: Fox

anybody else. I made sure. I don't like that, when people talk ugly about other people. That's my New Year's resolution: to be really, really sweet and nice and not ever talk ugly. I'm gonna try to stop cussing. I don't know how I'm gonna do that. Ha! I cuss — not a lot, but I just don't want to cuss at all.

### What's gonna be the hardest cuss word for you to give up?

Probably the "f" word. I say that a lot. Ha! Also, shit. I use that so much: "Well shiiiiit, how y'all doin'?" That's not really a bad word. I guess it is. I'll say, "Well, shoot!"

### Or: "Well, crap!"

I read the other day ... you're not going to believe this: You know where "crap" came from? The toilet was invented by Mr. Crapper. It's a true story! Thomas Crapper. And that's how it started. The crapper to sit, to take a crap. It was his name! He invented the first flushing toilet or somethin'.

### With "Call Me Kat," there's an episode where the cake shop is misperceived as homophobic. Because of that, you gay it up, of course, with flags and rainbow balloons, and there's even a cat named Neil "Catrick" Harris. That seems like a pretty gay day on set.

Ha! The show is so gay friendly. It's a job in which I really look forward to coming to work. I love the people, I love the writing. Darlene Hunt, our writer, is just hilarious. She's from Louisville, Kentucky, so I'm kind of the real Southern voice. I'm the one who really puts out, "Hey, hey, hey, we're in Louisville."

And so she loves writing for me. She loves to write me monologues, and they came to me the other day and she said, "Are you having trouble memorizing these?" I said, "Yes! I'm having big trouble!" "Would you like cue cards?" I said, "Well, no, it hadn't reached that yet."

### Do you have any tricks for memorizing your lines?

Someone told me a long time ago that if you do it right before you fall asleep — if you read those lines right when you're just about to fall asleep — you'll remember them. And I said, "Bull hockey! That ain't workin' at all!"

### For this new generation of fans you have who've discovered you on Instagram, what is something about your career you would like them to know?

My first job ever was (the '80s TV series) "The Fall Guy" with Lee Majors and I played

See Leslie Jordan, continued on p. 20

**WE ARE HIRING**

For a full list of jobs visit [OakGov.com/Jobs](http://OakGov.com/Jobs)

OAKLAND COUNTY MICHIGAN

DETROIT'S BEST FLORIST SINCE 1977

**BLOSSOMS**

FULL SERVICE FLORIST

In Birmingham  
33866 Woodward Ave. 48009  
(248) 644-4411

[blossomsbirmingham.com](http://blossomsbirmingham.com)

**RON T. WILLIAMSON DDS**

Dedicated to make our community brighter  
**One Smile At A Time**  
**248-399-4455**

**Uninsured?  
No Problem.  
Significant Savings  
with our Smile Club**

Nitrous Oxide (relaxing air)  
Proud participants in the Ryan White Program  
No charges for emergency examinations and consultations.

Care Credit  
MasterCard VISA

1964 W. 11 Mile Road, Suite 4,  
Berkley, MI 48072  
[www.rontwilliamsondds.com](http://www.rontwilliamsondds.com)

Find us on **facebook**

**THE FINEST IN ADULT ENTERTAINMENT AT THE BEST PRICES!**

BUY ADULT DVD'S STARTING AT \$5.95

EVERY TUES & FRIDAY NEW RELEASE DAY

ALL XXX DVD RENTALS AS LOW AS \$1.25 EVERY DAY!

Rush - Jungle Juice - Maximum Impact - Swiss Navy - Amsterdam - ID Glide - COLT - Butterfly Kiss Pink - The Womanizer

**UPTOWN BOOKSTORES ADULT VIDEO**

2 LOCATIONS

WWW.UPTOWNADULT.COM

16541 Woodward Ave. at McNichols next to "Deja Vu" Highland Park 313.869.9477

16401 W. 8 Mile Between Greenfield & Southfield Detroit 313.836.0647

Hours: Mon-Sat 10am - 9pm Sun 12 - 6pm



Photo: Fox

## → Leslie Jordan

Continued from p. 19

a killer. I did six episodes. “Murphy Brown” came around about that time. What interests me (about) my Instagram, which has just jumped to about 5.6 million, is how many people discovered me there that didn’t know me. I think: “I’ve been around forever! Foreveeeeer I’ve been doing this!”

But I like the fact that I mistakenly thought that people would know me from my roles. So they would think, “Oh, Beverley Leslie on ‘Will & Grace’ and, you know, (my line) ‘Well, well, well. Karen Walker.’” But my new fans know me as me. I think that’s kind of nice that people are responding to *me*, not some character that I play.

### Some actors end up regretting a role they played that became the only thing they were known for.

Like Tanya Roberts who just died. I thought, “My god, bless her heart. To go to your grave with Sheena: Queen of the (Jungle).” Ha! And she did other things, but you’re exactly right: You’re remembered for whatever that was. I can’t think of anything I’m ashamed of, or something I wish I hadn’t done.

### What do you want to be remembered for?

I want to be remembered like a Dolly Parton — that nobody had a bad word (about). “He was a nice guy.” And the fact that I’m fairly talented in this and that, that’s OK. But I just want people to know he was good. He was a nice guy. He was a good guy. I think that’s most important. And that I was raised right. I want to say to these kids now: “Who raised you? Who raised you!”

### Was your Southern accent and what you’ve called your “gay voice” always embraced like it is now?

I got to Hollywood and there was a casting director that told me, “You’re such a character actor already, and if you could lose your

Southern accent... .” And I tried, and I couldn’t. The day that I decided, “Well, this is just a marketable package here” was the day that I started working. But I worried more, I think, because of my internal homophobia about my gay accent. I would listen to myself and think, “Oh, girl, you’ve gotta calm down a little bit.”

I don’t think that I ever lost a job (because of it). I was on “Star Trek” and they hired a linguist to teach me how to say the words and she got so exasperated she said, “Mr. Jordan, ‘feather’ doesn’t have four syllables!” I don’t think I’ll ever be like Robert De Niro or Meryl Streep. I’ll never just disappear into a role. I just do what I do and various forms of it and it’s worked thus far, and kept me afloat.

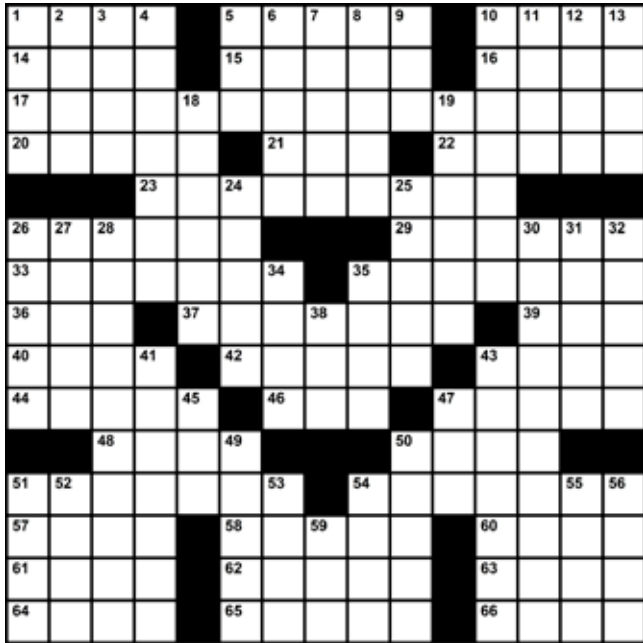
### I think next for you is a pony farm.

That’s it. I’m not looking yet. I want a four-stall barn. Probably somewhere near Nashville. That to me would just be heaven. I’m riding already. I go out to the L.A. Equestrian Center. I’m doing pretty good! I fell off the other day. Everybody freaked out. It was not the horse’s fault. The watering truck went by and Jeb was just as steady as could be — just freaked — and he ducked sideways. I landed on my feet but everybody said, “You be careful!”

### We gotta protect you at all costs.

Wrap me in bubble wrap!

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



## Layshia on Top Surgery

## Q Puzzle

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 What's in the stallion's mouth                          | 20 Hairspray name                          |
| 5 Chiwetel Ejiofor's "Kinky ____"                         | 21 Shakespeare's Puck, e.g.                |
| 10 IML winner's accessory                                 | 22 "Your Movie Sucks" author               |
| 14 "M. Butterfly" star John                               | 23 To one's liking                         |
| 15 Dana of "MacGyver"                                     | 26 Type of leaves of grass                 |
| 16 Heterogeneous mixture                                  | 29 Changes "Rent" for the big screen, e.g. |
| 17 With 37-Across, Layshia Clarendon's comment on her top | 33 Fuses again                             |

- 35 Hard shaft material  
 36 Constellation over Rio  
 37 See 17-Across  
 39 Expected to come soon  
 40 Biopic about Harvey  
 42 "You guys" of old  
 43 Fruit cover  
 44 Lurer of phallic fish  
 46 Strong joe  
 47 Like a condom gone bad  
 48 Like a top  
 50 Poli sci subj.  
 51 With 54-Across, Clarendon's team (appropriate to her quote)  
 54 See 51-Across  
 57 "La Traviata" solo  
 58 Prepare to pull it out  
 60 Robert De \_\_\_\_  
 61 Neighbor of NY  
 62 High places with flat tops  
 63 Friendly opening  
 64 Cabin material for Republicans  
 65 Fruity explorer?  
 66 Cock ending

## Down

- 1 Soprano Gluck  
 2 "Gay Priest" author Malcolm  
 3 The 411  
 4 Apartment balcony  
 5 Spelling contest  
 6 Any song by Johnny Mathis  
 7 Carol's opening

- 8 Florida gay film festival city  
 9 Bombay title  
 10 Meat substitute  
 11 Personal lubricant ingredient  
 12 Homophobic word, e.g.  
 13 Poet Crane  
 18 Swallow up  
 19 Hardly ever  
 24 Wipe over  
 25 Corvo's title  
 26 Set up  
 27 Bone-chilling  
 28 Spitting alternative  
 30 Professional with a foot fetish?  
 31 Torso of Mapplethorpe pics  
 32 Like a nocturnal emission?  
 34 Appear to be  
 35 Fingered  
 38 Bird from down under  
 41 Nairobi residents  
 43 Money coming in  
 45 Carnival resort  
 47 High arcing shot  
 49 Disgraced former president  
 50 Itinerant laborer  
 51 Chemist's condiment  
 52 Ending with switch  
 53 You may go down on one  
 54 Iago, notably  
 55 Singer Fure  
 56 Long-ago time, to Shakespeare  
 59 Half of a Hollywood name

See p. 15 for answers

**TRIANGLE CHIROPRACTIC**

**JOHN TSAKOS, DC**  
MOST INSURANCES ACCEPTED

INTEGRATE MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT  
VIA NATURE AND CHIROPRACTIC  
MASSAGE AND NUTRITION

GROSSE POINTE OFFICE PLAZA  
1-94 SERVICE DRIVE AT ALLARD EXIT

OPEN MONDAY - SATURDAY  
313-885-9496  
WWW.TRIANGLECLINIC.COM

# MESSAGE FOR MEN

Safe-Discrete, good prices.  
Royal Oak Area. 15 yrs. Experience.

## CALL LEE 248-548-6516

# PrEP Clinic

**Now Open Tuesdays**  
**10:00am-3:00pm**

**3011 West Grand Blvd**  
**Suite 230**  
**Detroit, MI 48202**  
**313-446-9800**

**UNIFIED**  
hiv health and beyond  
**LIFE CONTINUES. LIVE HEALTHY.**

**In partnership with**  
**Sinai Grace Hospital**

For more information about PrEP and prevention services please contact our Lead Prevention Specialist Keith Hughes at khughes@miunified.org

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

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a way to help prevent HIV by taking a pill every day

PrEP must be taken every day to be most effective

- ✓ HIV Testing
- ✓ PrEP Assessment
- ✓ Insurance & Payment Guidance.
- ✓ PrEP Education

When taken consistently, PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection in people who are at high risk by more than 90%.

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

**MATRIX HUMAN SERVICES**

**COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS.**

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**HOT LINE**  
**(877) 931-3248**

**MATRIX COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM & SERVICE OFFERINGS**

- MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
- HIV/AIDS PRIMARY CARE
- HOME HEALTH CARE
- CASE MANAGEMENT
- EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

**QUIT TOBACCO PROGRAM**

Assisting people living with HIV to reduce illness, disability, and death related to the use of tobacco products and second-hand smoke. For information on the Quit Tobacco Program, contact:

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

The mission of the Matrix Community Health HIV/AIDS family of programs is to combat the AIDS epidemic through assisting individuals in determining their HIV positive/negative status, and in providing compassionate services and care to empower people living with HIV/AIDS to live healthy and independent lives.

TIME TO KNOW DETROIT.COM



During the pandemic, stress can be high, and maintaining your mental health can be difficult. Affirmations LGBTQ+ Community Center offers virtual counseling for a sliding fee scale.

We help anyone that is 18+ explore important issues such as healthy relationships, sexual orientation, gender identity, self-esteem, confidence, personal growth, and much more!

For more information, please visit:  
[GoAffirmations.Org/Health-And-Wellness/](http://GoAffirmations.Org/Health-And-Wellness/)



290 West Nine Mile | Ferndale | MI 48220 | 248-398-7105 | [www.goaffirmations.org](http://www.goaffirmations.org)



*A full service law firm for businesses, families and individual LGBT people  
 Your same-sex divorce and custody specialists*

**The Shelton & Deon Law Group** provides clients the quality and depth of experience that is expected of a large firm with the flexibility and individual attention only a small law firm can offer.

**612 East 4th Street, Royal Oak, MI 48067  
 248-494-7444 | [www.sheltondeonlaw.com](http://www.sheltondeonlaw.com)**

## → Angelica Ross

Continued from p. 18

acronym “NOW.” When you want to know when is the time I should speak up or say something: NOW. No Opportunity Wasted. Even if you don’t feel that person can fully take on what you are going to say, you can at least drop a seed now that will blossom later.

**While we’re on the topic of shedding light on the danger trans men and women experience on a daily basis, your role on “Pose” did just that. When you look back at your time on “Pose,” what do you hope is the lasting legacy of your role?**

You know for me it was never about the awards, although it would have been nice to be recognized for the performance and the contribution you’re giving. But also, there’s always been this conversation around trans actors and saying that folks like Jared Leto or these cis men are more qualified to play trans women when I just played Candy Ferocity and the world listened and the world cried.

I know this because they tagged me in all of their videos. And I don’t mean that in a light way. I mean that I felt the wave of love from the audience because they tagged me in it on Twitter, on Facebook, on TikTok, on Instagram, on every platform to let me know that they get it now and that they watched it with their family and their family gets it now. So, for me, that’s all the reward that I need: knowing that the world is changing from something that I helped put out into the world.

**You’re the first trans woman to have two series regular roles, with “Pose” and “American Horror Story.” On “American Horror Story,” your character didn’t identify as trans, though Candy does. Is it important to you that trans actors are not just seen as people who can only play trans characters?**

I think we’re finally getting to the point here. The point is: an actor is an actor is an actor. Sometimes people want to say actress, but in reality most of us who are on the feminist vibe, we still say “actor” because an actor is an actor. And at the end of the day, I can play a trans woman if I’m the best person for the part. And I can play a cis person or not — just a person in the script — if I’m the best person for the part. But you (are) not going to tell me that Ving Rhames is going to play a better trans woman than myself. I mean, that was cute in “Holiday Heart.” That was fine for the time and he did his best with that, let me tell you.

But you know, now you can see these pieces of art will stand next to each other when you compare the performances of (Mj Rodriguez as) Blanca (on “Pose”) and Indya Moore and Hailie Sahar and Dominique (Jackson) and Shakina (Nayfack) from “Difficult People,” Alexandra Grey, Alexandra Billings, Laverne Cox, Trace Lysette. There are so many trans actors out there who are proving the

point that we can represent ourselves better than anybody else can but also we can play everyday roles. Because why? Trans people exist in everyday society.

**I was thinking of “Disclosure,” the Netflix documentary about trans depiction in the media that you were a part of. There have been many conversations around what it’s like being trans in Hollywood. But what is not talked about when it comes to being trans in this business that needs to be talked about?**

I love that “Disclosure” talked a lot about how trans representation in media has been throughout our history, but I’m now a consulting producer on a show that is coming up — can I say something? I think so (laughs). But I’m a consulting producer for something for network television that is going to be coming out that is going to talk about what it’s like as actors, actually, in the industry. So I think we haven’t actually talked about what our experience is in the casting room: dealing with casting directors, being on set as a trans person and the challenges that we face.

So definitely look forward to that conversation during Pride Month in June on network television on E! But yeah, honestly, as someone who works in front of the camera as well as behind the camera, I’m going to continue to look to how we can tell these stories from different angles and be even more inclusive.

**In honor of March being Women’s History Month, why is it important that, when we celebrate Women’s History Month, we also make sure we celebrate trans women?**

It’s just as simple as this: trans women are women. So if we’re going to celebrate — truly celebrate — the beautiful, diverse spectrum of womanhood then we need to celebrate Black women, that includes Black trans women, Latinx women, women who have been struggling with fertility in this world. So many times when we talk about racial justice movements, women are just left out of the narrative when it’s many times women who are *leading* that narrative. And many times trans women who are in those spaces (are) leading that narrative. And I will go forward even to say when we talk about men’s issues that we talk and include trans men as well because trans men are men.

**Who is the most influential trans woman you know?**

For me, I feel like Marsha P. Johnson is one of the most influential trans women because her name is finally echoing throughout this movement to understand who we should be focusing on. But also voices like Janet Mock, who, even though she’s younger than I am, is someone who is really pioneering this industry and opening up many doors for many of us to walk through, including myself.

*This interview has been lightly edited and condensed for clarity.*

# New in-office procedures

## Don't Suffer in Silence!

Now offering FemTouch™ Vaginal rejuvenation treatments.

Do you suffer from any of these symptoms?

- Painful intercourse / Vaginal dryness?
- Difficulty with bladder control?
- Urinary incontinence?
- Itching or burning sensation?

**NO DOWNTIME.  
NO HORMONES.  
NO SURGERY.**

**Bring your life back to life!**  
with FemTouch™



GianClair Medical Spa offers a wide variety of new cosmetic services

- Botox
- Fillers
- Dysport
- Peels
- PRP - Platelet-Rich Plasma For Facial and Hair Rejuvenation

PRP Facial, combines plasma and platelets from your blood with other rejuvenation techniques.

PRP hair treatment is a promising treatment option for patients with thinning hair.



Watch our new video series to learn more about FemTouch, PRP, Midwives and our practice!

**PartridgeCreek**  
Obstetrics & Gynecology

Call today **586-247-8609**

19991 Hall Road, Suite 105 Macomb, MI 48044  
partridgecreekobgyn.com



Rhonda L. Kobold, DO, FACOG

## BIDWELL TOVAREZ PLLC

PROVIDING BANKRUPTCY SOLUTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES



For a Fresh Start and  
**A BRIGHTER TOMORROW**

Providing personal and compassionate assistance with financial problems including Chapter 7 and 13 bankruptcies, foreclosure, garnishments and elimination of second mortgages.

What clients say about Bidwell Tovarez:

- "Most trustworthy and experienced"
- "Outstanding representation"
- "Services with a personal touch"

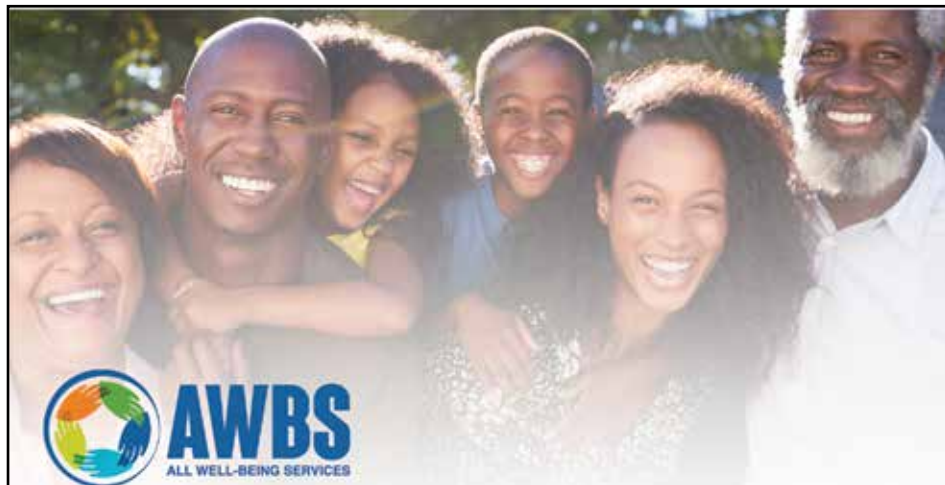
### Bidwell Tovarez PLLC

333 W 7th St., Ste. 140    432 N. Saginaw, Suite 800  
Royal Oak, MI 48067    Flint, MI 48502  
248-270-3333    810-222-6422

www.bidwelltovarez.com  
david@bidwelltovarez.com

**Call 248-270-3333**

We are a debt relief agency. We help people file for bankruptcy relief under the Bankruptcy code.



## BRINGING WELLNESS TO LIFE

**AWBS MISSION:** To meet the needs of individuals, families and the community by providing integrated health services which foster well-being and self-sufficiency.

AWBS offers a variety of services to all members to function at their greatest potential by using trained professionals and best practices.

**SERVICES OFFERED:** Mental Health Services, Substance Use Disorder, Prevention & Treatment, HIV Prevention, STDs Testing, Primary Care, Health Workshops, Intellectual Development Disabilities Services, Skill Building, Family Support and more.

**TRAUMA INFORMED GROUPS:** Anger Management • Dialectical Behavior Therapy • Recovery • Smoking Cessation • Trans Trauma (T-TREM)



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR APPOINTMENT  
CALL **(313) 924-7860** | [www.awbs.org](http://www.awbs.org)

SAVE THE DATE:

## Souls a' Fire 7

A National Gathering on Black Queer Theology

**13-14  
March  
2021**

Come listen and reflect on the presentations from the next generation of thought-leaders at the intersection of the Black Church and Black Queer/LGBTQ+/Same-gender Loving identities. Souls a'Fire promises to be a time of inspiration through ritual, praise, and worship. CEUs are available. People of every color are welcome!

[www.soulsafire.org](http://www.soulsafire.org)



## Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit

A diverse, inclusive Christian church serving the LGBTQ and ally community since 1972.

[www.mccdetroit.org](http://www.mccdetroit.org)

205 N. Main St, Clawson, MI 48017 | 248.399.7741



# Wear Your Mask!



Dr. Paul Benson's

**Be Well**  
**Medical Center**

Est. 1980

*We wish you a peaceful, healthy and prosperous New Year. May 2021 bring hope, happiness, equality and good health to all. Dr. Benson and the Be Well team are here for all your healthcare needs.*

Since 1980 Dr. Paul Benson's Be Well Medical Center has been an inclusive family medical center that celebrates diversity. We take pride in our history of creating a safe, sensitive and welcoming space for people of all backgrounds. The care and attention we provide to those who frequently have been neglected by the healthcare industry is something that sets our practice apart from others.

Postponing your healthcare is no longer recommended. We have vigorous protocols to keep you safe. Telemedical visits are available when appropriate. We offer the Rapid 15-minute COVID-19 test and opportunities to participate in COVID-19 therapeutic trials.



1964 Eleven Mile Rd • Berkley, MI 40872

@bewellmedicalcenter



(248) 544-9300 • [doctorbewell.com](http://doctorbewell.com)