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Photo: Tony Lowe

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Actor Garrett Clayton, a Dearborn Native and Oakland University Alum, Marries Boyfriend Blake Knight

By D'Anne Witkowski

HRC Agrees With Dana Nessel and Fires Alphonso David

By Jason A. Michael

Nothing Minor About It: Bryan Ruby Makes History as Only Active Pro Baseball Player to Be Openly Gay

By Jason A. Michael



Photo: Instagram / @garrettclayton1

5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now

BY JACKIE JONES

COVID might've delayed Motor City Pride, but it couldn't be stopped completely. And if you're not ready to go home and put on your PJs and watch another episode of "Cooking with Paris" after Motor City Pride, don't. There's always the afterparty.

Keep the Pride Fun Going All Night Long

When a party is "about to be sickening" in the best of ways with a headliner described as "real nasty, and real raunchy," please believe it will be a night to remember. At least that's what J. Santino, local pop artist and one of the co-hosts of "Got Cake?," the official Motor City Pride afterparty, tells BTL. Underground queer rapper Cupcakke, known for her single "Depthroat," will headline. But there's lots of local talent too. "We wanted to create safe spaces for the LGBTQ+ community that don't have to be in a dangerous place," Santino says, adding that the vibe is "upscale while still maintaining the urban-esque atmosphere."

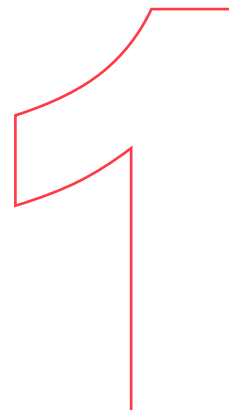


Photo courtesy of Elizabeth De La Piedra



"Ken Moody, New York City (Dancer #31)" by Lynn Davis. Photo courtesy of UMMA

Oh, Honey, Come See Some Queer Art

You know what's better than art? Queer art. Specifically, queer art on display through the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA). The exhibition, "Oh, honey...," curated by Sean Kramer, an Irving Stenn, Jr. curatorial fellow, features works by LGBTQ+ artists such as David Hockney, Lynn Davis and Bjarne Melgaard. Kramer said he grappled with whether he should include Melgaard's work, titled "Untitled," because of its use of the word "faggot." The piece, a "massive, striking, oil-on-canvas painting," features three men, a dog, monsters, two teeth and a "jarringly prominent erection." "UMMA's collection doesn't offer a fully representative view of queer lives, experiences and art practices," explains Kramer in the exhibition's statement. "It has limits — it tells certain stories while omitting others."

The exhibition, which welcomes all, runs through February 20, 2022 at UMMA.



Photo courtesy of Sugar Leaf Photo Co.



Socialize at a Cannabis Dance Party

Copper House, a neighborhood-based safe space for the cannabis community, has been showing out all summer. Their new Fall \$5 Dance Party series is no exception. For the event, they'll host various dance parties with Afrobeat, house and mix sets from September through November every Thursday. For Copper House curator Eradajere Oleita, this is part of a larger effort to "create a space for community members, especially Black folks and queer folks, to come together and be themselves." Come inhale the sweet luxury of queer bodies grooving outside. And exhale the stale heteronormative expectations of the rest of the world.

Live the queer dream from 9 p.m.-2 a.m. at Bleu. Various ticket packages are available on Eventbrite.



Photo courtesy of Joseph A. Rosen

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Soak Up Bettye LaVette's Soulful Voice at Sound Board Theater

After postponing her original 2020 show date at Sound Board at MotorCity Casino Hotel due to COVID, soul singer Bettye LaVette will take the stage at 8 p.m. Sept. 19. Celebrated for over 50 years for her brassy, smooth voice, the six-time Grammy nominee tells BTL that, while Detroit is home and she built her career when Motown took flight, she didn't feel welcome. "I was invited to an award show in LA that Motown throws every year," she tells BTL. "I said to everyone, 'I want you all to know how bad it's been being ignored by all of you all these years.'" That may be the case, but she's riding high on a new album, "Blackbirds," which came out in 2020. She says this "fifth career" looks more promising than ever.

Tickets are on sale at [Ticketmaster](#).



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Photo courtesy of Chelcea Stowers

Dance the Night Away at Lesbian Social

Hey, lesbians, Detroit's Lesbian Social Friday is about to be the place to be. Hosted and curated by Lesbian Social's Chelcea Stowers, the event will include Detroit's DJ Three Thirteen. "I feel like for years we haven't had a space where we can go that's not a hole-in-the-wall type of bar," says Stowers. "I wanted to create an atmosphere that women can feel comfortable coming to, and I've been super amazed at the crowd response, and the different types of women who have been coming out to the event."

Lesbian Social is held 10 p.m. Sept. 17 at 29 Novi. Tickets are on sale on [Eventbrite](#).



Photo: Kevin LaDuke

Conservative Midland Just Got a Little Gayer With This Very Gay Rainbow Mural

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Conservative Midland just got a little more colorful, thanks to an exciting new mural created by area native Joey Salamon and his friend Cam DeCaussin from Arizona.

“We’ve had nothing but compliments [about the mural],” says Kevin LaDuke, communication director for Midland Area Community Foundation (MACF). “People were really excited about it.”

The sprawling piece of art is located downtown on the Pere Marquette Rail Trail underneath the M-20 bridge. It’s a spot where

the entire community can view it, says LaDuke.

Salamon and DeCaussin responded to a request for proposals from the MACF and their initiative Public Arts Midland last fall. The result is a vibrant tribute to the city and its history.

“The idea is it’s kind of like a mash-up of very specific Midland-related things and then also more subtle Midland things,” Salamon told BTL. “Midland is known for a lot of good mid-century modern architecture. We used pattern work found in some of the more iconic buildings around town and just played with those in the background. It’s supposed to be a

collage of Midland-y things.”

Like most of Salamon’s work, the mural features rainbows galore. As a gay man, this is a conscious decision and a part of Salamon’s signature.

“Some of them are specifically for that, especially in pieces that I’ve made that are permanent pieces for Pride,” he said. “But other times, it’s like a mix. I like using the rainbow. But at the same time, I always love using the most colors possible. It’s a recognizable symbol. When people see it, it brings happiness, and I like that. It’s a mix of the two.”

The mural, which made its debut in July, was

completed in just two weeks.

“It was exhausting,” said Salamon. “We should have taken more days off because we definitely hurt afterward. But we did it in two weeks.”

So far, Salamon said, the mural has received nothing but praise.

“It’s been great,” he says. “It was really fun because the rail trail allows people riding their bikes to see it. People stop quite often to look at it. All the comments have been nice and positive. It’s good to hear that from the people who live in the city.”

Skeptical Sex Workers in Michigan Weigh In on OnlyFans Debacle

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Subscription-based social media platform OnlyFans has been making headlines recently after announcing an impending ban on the adult porn content that made the platform what it is today. Though the company quickly reversed course after significant backlash



from creators and subscribers alike — and after receiving assurances from its financial partners that they would continue working with the site — the OnlyFans community in Michigan remains a little shook.

OnlyFans entertainer Dominic BluTick, who lives in Detroit, has been creating content for the site for nearly two years and estimates that it represents about 30 percent of his annual income.

“OnlyFans built its popularity and status off of people performing on the platform,” he told *Between The Lines*. “So now that they’re big, they want to sell out on the community that built them. OnlyFans is one of the reasons why I can commit to my other platforms and content while making my money online. But regardless of the financial consequences, the principle that the platform isn’t acknowledging is definitely disappointing and a major step back for the progress from the stigmas and struggles of sex workers.”

BluTick has not yet released any sexually graphic material but said he’d like to in the future. Oakland County-based OnlyFans creator Popchampagne, meanwhile, has been on the site since the first of the year. He posts explicit photos and videos of himself and his boyfriend.

“I think it was premature,” Popchampagne said of the announcement of the ban. “I think they knew they would get banks interested. I think it was a marketing ploy.”

OnlyFans puts adult entertainers, or “sex workers” as the app refers to them, in control of their own content. Subscribers are charged a monthly fee, and entertainers keep 80 percent of the profits they generate. But blaming banking institutions uncomfortable with the site’s more graphic content, OnlyFans recently announced it planned to ban images and videos containing graphic sex acts starting in October. The backlash was instant, and within days OnlyFans reversed course.

“Thank you to everyone for making your

voices heard,” read a post on OnlyFan’s Twitter feed. “We have secured assurances necessary to support our diverse creator community and have suspended the planned Oct. 1 policy change. OnlyFans stands for inclusion, and we will continue to provide a home for all creators.”

Popchampagne said the recent controversy has actually been good for business: “I’m ecstatic, as it helped bump up my personal OnlyFans. I’m glad they revoked it, as it generates a nice income for me.”

Income-wise, the platform has been good to Michigan native and OnlyFans model Zaddy Tony, too. So good that after he lost his job in the restaurant industry as a result of the pandemic, Zaddy Tony’s only income has been OnlyFans. He has over 3,000 subscribers paying an average of \$7.99 a month, so when the announcement of the ban came out, Zaddy Tony, who now lives in Chicago, was terrified.

In the wake of the announcement, Zaddy Tony lost over 300 subscribers. Still, he doesn’t completely blame OnlyFans for the debacle.

“The real villain in all this that people aren’t paying attention to are the payment processors who are working behind closed doors,” he said. “They pull out, and then you can’t do any transactions on these platforms. They’re being threatened by these religious groups. So I’m sure OnlyFans was receiving a fair amount of pressure, and still is. But it lost me thousands of dollars.”

Zaddy Tony said he plans to stay on OnlyFans until he graduates college in March 2022.

“Until then, I’m just trying to stay afloat,” he says. “What I hope for the future of all sex workers, to be honest with you, is that online porn work, and even in-person services, are realized to be things people are going to seek out and purchase regardless. So, my hope is with OnlyFans being so mainstream, it will portray sex workers as real people, and hopefully there’s more job security in the future.”

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A Renewed Focus on Diversity Shakes Up the Affirmations Board of Directors

Community Center Adds Two New Board Members, Strives to Diversify Board, Staff, Programs

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Affirmations LGBTQ community center in Ferndale has recently announced the addition of two new board members. Both new members, Brandon Gleaton and Roxanne Mitchell, are African American. And that was intentional.

Affirmations has long struggled with allegations of racism and claims of a lack of diversity on its board, among its staff and in its programming. In 2008, the center formed a Multicultural Advisory Committee in recognition that Affirmations “was failing to meet the needs and wants” of the African American LGBTQ+ community. MAC was made up of volunteers as well as staff and board members that drew from a broad cross-section of the community.

David Garcia joined the center as executive director for the first time in 2011.

“I came as the MAC committee was finishing,” he recalled. “I was involved at the very end. Then when the MAC report was published we used the suggestions of that report as an entire arm of our strategic plan.”

When the report was completed, it came with action steps to make Affirmations “a



model for racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion,” he said. Garcia, himself Latino, tried to implement as many ideas from the strategic plan as he could. His first hire was Johnny Jenkins, a former executive director of Detroit Black Gay Pride and a well-known leader in Detroit’s Black LGBTQ+

community.

“We tried to make the center more welcoming than it had been in the past,” Jenkins said. “And from my standpoint, we were able to do that.”

Jenkins said the center tried to build relationships with local people of color

groups, gave them space to meet and increased POC participation in the youth program.

“There was a long history of just a lack of engagement with Detroit’s Black LGBTQ

See *Affirmations*, page 22

OutCenter Rolls Out Back-to-School Programming to Help Struggling LGBTQ+ Youth

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

There’s no denying the past school year (and-a-half) was challenging for many students. But a new report from the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights notes that LGBTQ+ youth experienced stress unique to being queer.

“The closing of K-12 [schools] ... may confine LGBTQ young persons to traumatic and possibly abusive environments,” read the report. “Many LGBTQ youths cannot be their authentic selves at home because they have not disclosed their sexual and gender identities or because they were not met with support or acceptance from their parents and families.”

That’s why the OutCenter of Southwest Michigan has created two programs to help LGBTQ+ students return to school.

The programs include the Teen Pride Summit Series, which aims to create Gender and Sexualities Alliances (GSAs) in schools, and the Brave School Collaborative, which seeks to give school staff, youth and families the tools and best practices to boost school safety for LGBTQ+ students.

“More youth are coming out as LGBTQ+ than at any other time in modern history,”

said MaryJo Schnell, OutCenter’s executive director. “The reason: they are seeing role models, athletes, performers and more coming out, and it’s amazing. But we need to understand that in small-town and rural communities, as these kids come out and live their authentic lives, not everyone is onboard and supportive — and that includes some school staff members and their peer students.”

Mina Blatt, a psychologist with the Center for Relationships and Sexual Health (CRSH), told *Between The Lines* that schools can be a safe space for many LGBTQ+ youth who don’t have one at home.

“Virtual learning took these already vulnerable students and left them at home in spaces where they may not be accepted or out, meaning their families do not know their true gender identity or attractional orientation,”



Blatt told BTL. “I know of a few unfortunate incidents with my own clients where parents took phones away in this time which just alienated our students more.”

Psychologist Susan Ruma, also with CRSH, agreed.

“During the pandemic, we definitely saw some of the negative impacts of not having [an] in-person community,” Ruma said. “Though some kids relied more on online friendships and chat apps like [Facebook] messenger and/

or Discord, most that I have talked to did not find that to be satisfactory.”

That’s often where the alliances come in.

“We need more resources like GSAs in school,” said Blatt. “They provide safe spaces where like-minded youth can come together and be themselves, and often they work to change practices in school that are unsafe for LGBTQ youth. They also provide youth with information about what they may be experiencing. There is no handbook for figuring out your identity.”

Schnell said that at OutCenter helping LGBTQ+ youth is a priority.

In addition to their two new programs, the OutCenter also offers an inclusive sex education series on their website and provides a fourth program education to help homeless LGBTQ+ youth.

“OutCenter of Southwest Michigan helps to raise the voices of LGBTQ+ youth in our area and, at the same time, partner with and educate rural and small-town school communities as [they] help create equitable, supportive schools,” said Schnell. “These kids deserve the same safe and robust educational experience that other kids take for granted.”



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Anti-Diversity Michigan Parents Against Using Preferred Pronouns Issue ‘Woke Incident Report’ Dog Whistle

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

In what appears to be the act of a small, extremist group of parents whose children attend Clarkston Community Schools (CCS), an online form is being circulated that encourages community members to “report” suspect curriculum and teachers guilty of behaviors like addressing students by their preferred pronouns.

The Google Doc, titled “Woke Incident Report (CRT/DEI) CCS,” uses the shorthand “CRT/DEI” for Critical Race Theory and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. This form aligns with a trend that conflates two concepts and distills them into a dog whistle aimed to bolster an extremist right-wing base. One frequent commenter in a Clarkston parent Facebook group spelled it out in a Sept. 4 post: “DEI is a dangerous euphemism for CRT.”

Between The Lines spoke with “Beth,” a CCS parent who requested anonymity due to the sensitive nature of this topic in her community. She plans to comment at an upcoming school board meeting and explained that the dustup began with the public Facebook group, Clarkston Schools Parent Advocates, which is where she found the reporting form posted Monday, Sept. 6.

The introduction to the form reads:

“Clarkston Community Schools Superintendent Dr. [Shawn] Ryan and the CCS board members have assured Clarkston Parents United that CRT & DEI curriculum would not filter down into any classrooms of CCS. In ‘fact’ Dr. Ryan asked Clarkston Parents United members to report any proof of CRT/DEI curriculum in classrooms.”

Clarkston Parents United is a 421-member private Facebook group created last September. At a previous school board meeting, Ryan asked the group to let him know if there was evidence that CRT/DEI was being implemented in the

curriculum.

Elsewhere, Ryan states that CCS has no intention of introducing Critical Race Theory to the schools and that “we are very transparent about our process for evaluating and communicating curriculum changes in Clarkston.”

Still, the creators of the reporting form are not convinced. The form continues, “The objective of CRT/DEI curriculum is to segregate or divide students into labeled sub-groups in an effort to weaken the student body in order to better control them.”

The group instructs members to look for “pronouns,” which it describes as exploiting “personal boundaries, sexual orientation, more than two genders,” and eliminating “trust of parents and Christian values and etc.”

What follows is a list of other dangers to watch for, including “Equity” and “Social Justice Curriculum.” It also lists “Gay Pride” as an example of an extremist group.

The form and its public responses were taken down Tuesday, Sept. 7. That may have been due to backlash in the form of fake, mocking “reports.”

BTL asked Beth whether this could be someone’s idea of a prank. She assured us it is no joke.

“This wasn’t a joke form,” she said. “They were totally serious. It’s like the ‘Twilight Zone.’”

Beth described the birth of Clarkston Schools Parent Advocates. One of their core tenets is in opposition to mask mandates meant to protect children from COVID-19. They are also opposed to vaccine requirements, COVID testing for asymptomatic individuals and quarantining if in close contact with an infected person.

The “About” section of the parent group simply states, “This page was created for Clarkston School District Families who support

the return to normalcy in our districts [sic] classrooms.”

“This group first started when schools were virtual, and they would rally outside of the school board meetings, trying to get some children back into the classroom. So that’s where this group was born, and then it kind of ebbs and flows with whatever is bothering them that day.”

One issue the parent group has been up in arms about was the district’s appointment of two Diversity, Equity and Inclusion advisors.

Pronoun usage is of particular concern to the parent group, too. Beth commented that the upper classes in high school received a questionnaire that asked in part whether the student had preferred pronouns.

“That caused a big rift in our community,” Beth said. “People don’t want teachers teaching sexuality and about more than two pronouns in our school.” Beth’s child reported no problem with the content of the said questionnaire.

Some CCS parents are suspicious of their children’s teachers in general. Beth explained that because they belong to a union, the parent group assumes they are liberal and out to indoctrinate their children.

Beth knows enough about critical race theory to know it is not being taught as part of the K-12 public school curriculum. Yet, some parents aren’t convinced. “They believe that critical race theory will lead to their children feeling guilty for being white,” Beth surmised. “That’s a very simplified painting of what’s going on in Clarkston.” She hastened to add this particular group of parents don’t represent the majority.

Since attending Clarkston schools herself, Beth has seen the community come a long way. Yet, she considers this group of parent “advocates” clearly homophobic.

“Their response definitely shows that they’re homophobic, and they are so out of

touch with mainstream America where it is very common to state your pronouns before you begin a meeting or a signature in your email,” she said.

Clarkston has been a conservative area for a long time, and many are still siloed in their conservative ideology, said Beth. They see diversity, and they don’t like it.

“When I was in school, I had several friends that are now part of the LGBTQ community who could not be their authentic selves in school,” Beth recalled. “And now...we should be lifting these kids up, not making them feel like they cannot be themselves because if I was a parent of a student in that community, I would be horrified that there’s a group of parents who are against their children not being able to present themselves in the way they want.”

Beth understands that the Clarkston parents currently making noise don’t really know what critical race theory is or how it is separate from DEI training.

“They Google [CRT], and there’s a quick little paragraph in the first line. It says something about being a Marxist theory, and that’s where they lose it.” At the same time, she stressed how important DEI training continues to be for teachers in a community that remains overwhelmingly white, Christian and conservative.

Whether the originators of “Woke Incident Report” were serious or sarcastic, many of the responses were of concern to Beth. She said several of those had to do with pronoun use; others provided names of teachers.

“It really is disturbing, and it’s bad that we’re the laughingstock right now. I see other communities are sharing this and laughing at it. But it’s scary when it’s right here.”

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Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Some Say 2021. Others Say 5782.

Tuesday, September 7, marked the observance of Rosh Hashanah, the first day of the Jewish New Year, 5782.

Shanah Tovah! (Good Year!). Kenahorah! (Keep the evil eye away!)

Last year, Jewish New Years, 5702, was an auspicious traditional Jewish New Year for me, a Gentile youth with a “goyish kuph” (Gentile mindset). To a few perceptive parents, I was also a “faygola,” a “little bird.

At 13, I attended Hutchins Intermediate School, located on Woodrow Wilson and Blaine in Detroit’s strong Jewish neighborhood. I was assigned to Jefferson Intermediate School, but my

mother thought it was too rough. She successfully made the change — thankfully.

I received an excellent cursive writing, Hutchins Handbook education, learned to typewrite, speak a little Spanish and became contest editor/writer for the Hutchins Star.

Some now-remembered Jewish classmates were Lenore Abramowitz, Judith Berkowitz, Saul and Marvin Wassernen, Sarah Rosenberg and Harold Karbal. Some of my Black classmates were Ella Maxwell, Lois Carmichel and Rodney Harvey.

In 5719, another auspicious Hebraic New Year for me, I met my first partner, Ernest Gilbert. He was five years older than me, played classical piano, had ballet training and a degree in journalism from Wayne State University.

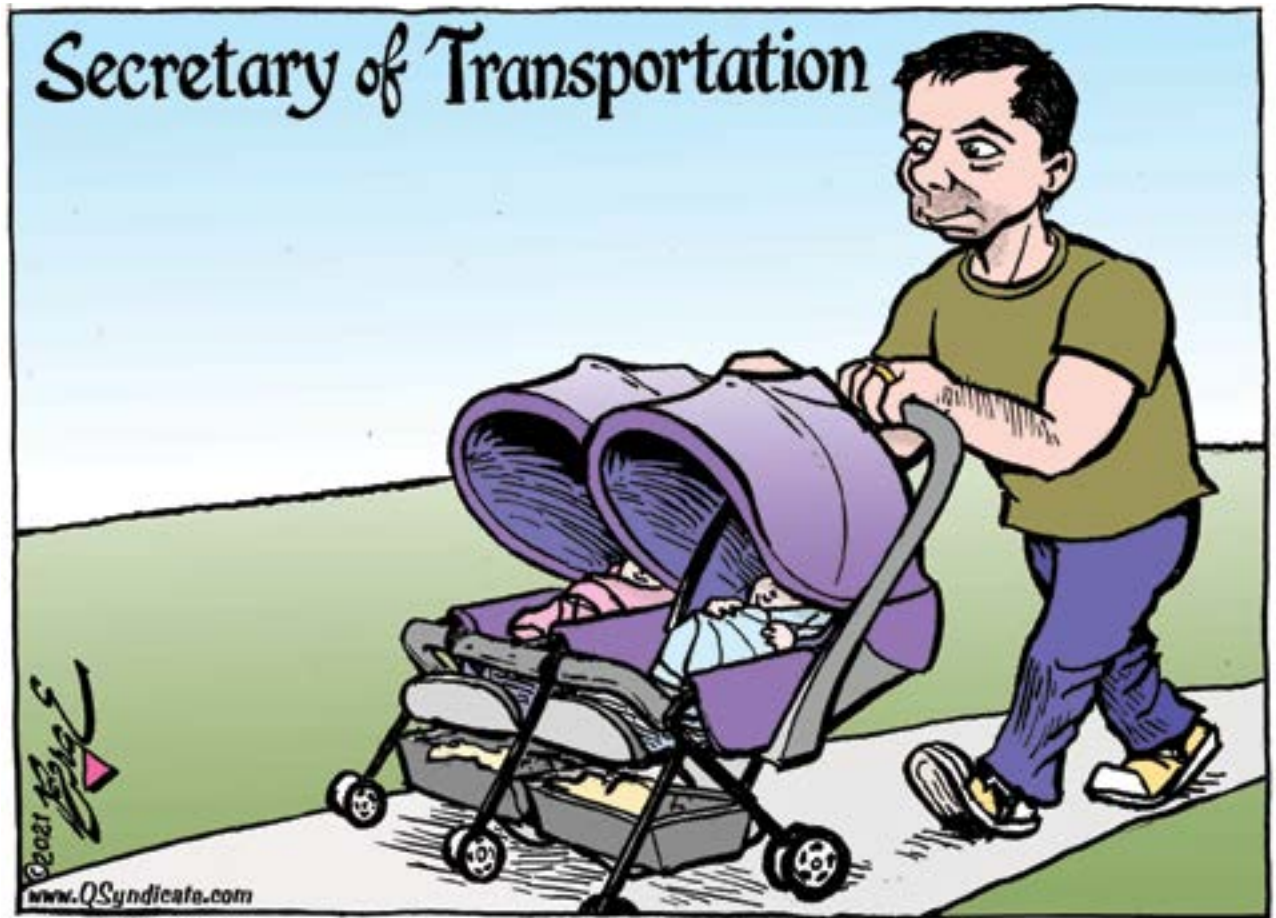
Ernie mentored my art, music, and writing talents. His parents nicknamed me “longuh lutch” (Yiddish for “long noodle”). Ernie took me to my first foreign films, introduced me to classical LPs and encouraged me to start college.

On my own, I picked up a few Yiddish humorous expressions: “Nishkuh douggah dud” (You should live so), “Kub dier I’m budh” (Saw you in the bathtub), “Goyim” (gentile), and “Shicksuh” (Female gentile).

Examples of traditional Yiddish wisdom include “If he

We’re getting used to forgetting names of friends we haven’t seen in awhile.

Continued on next page



BY JAY KAPLAN

Free to Be

“To hold that piece of paper brought tears to my eyes.”

That is how my friend and former ACLU of Michigan colleague Amy Hunter says it felt to finally obtain a birth certificate showing her true gender. A trans woman, Amy was forced to live most of her life with an essential document that didn’t reflect who she really is.

“For as far back as I can remember I’ve always known myself to be Amy,” she says. “But the name William and the male gender marker were on my birth certificate.”

Not anymore.

That’s because the director of the state’s Department of Health and Human Services requested an opinion from Attorney General Dana Nessel regarding the constitutionality of requiring transgender people to undergo gender reassignment surgery before their birth certificate could be changed.

When that request was made, we sent

the attorney general a letter, signed by nearly every LGBTQ+ organization in the state, arguing that the surgery requirement is unconstitutional because it singles out transgender people for discriminatory treatment — requiring

only them to undergo a physically invasive surgical procedure to obtain an accurate birth certificate. Nessel agreed and issued an opinion that the surgery requirement is unconstitutional based on equal protection and due process

This is a significant step forward because many people who want it can’t afford gender reassignment surgery, which is very expensive and usually not covered by insurance.

→ Parting Glances

Continued from p. 14

were twice as smart, he'd be an idiot!" "The eggs think they're smarter than the chickens." "When children are young, their parents talk about how smart they are. When parents are old, their children talk how stupid they are." "The pen stings worse than an arrow."

And, let's not forget, "Why did Adam and Eve cover their business with a leaf if there was nobody to see them?" and "Empty barrels make the most noise!"

Ernie and I were together for five years; he died at 85 about 10 years ago.

During the current COVID-19 pandemic with its forced isolation of both straight and LGBTQ+ communities alike, the time-honored, centuries-old observation "Out of sight; out of mind" has become almost a daily fact of human existence.

I've found it most helpful to keep

grounds.

This is a significant step forward because many people who want it can't afford gender reassignment surgery, which is very expensive and usually not covered by insurance. There are also trans people who don't feel it's necessary, or simply, for whatever reason, don't want to go through it.

Now, thankfully, that's no longer an issue. Because of Nessel's opinion, the Michigan Department of Vital Records no longer requires proof of surgery to change the gender marker on a birth certificate. The department has issued a new form where a transgender person can self-attest as to their gender with three options to choose from: male, female, and gender non-binary. That means many more transgender people born in Michigan are going to be able to obtain accurate birth certificates, which is pivotal to being able to live their authentic lives in accordance with their gender identity.

"This change is so important because a birth certificate is the base of the pyramid for all of our legal identity documents," says Hunter. "It forms the basis of so many things."

She is right about that. Government-issued forms of ID that rely on the information contained in birth certificates are a prime example.

a list of names, places and things so I won't forget that as a community, we are perhaps being isolated — more than a bit — right out of existence.

We're getting used to forgetting names of friends we haven't seen in awhile. We forget the bars and clubs we used to attend and LGBTQ+ organizations of the recent past. Association of Suburban People, Motor City Business Forum, Dignity, Ten Percent, Cruise Magazine, Pittman Puckett Art Gallery, Ties Like Us, The Diplomat, Ten-Eleven, Forum Foundation...

We begin to forget leaders in our common struggle. Marvin P. Marks. John L. Kavanaugh. Episcopal Father James Tripency, Dr. Henry Messer. Lola Lola. Bobby Johns. Harvey Milk...

So it goes. Make your own list. Fill in your own blanks. Make damn sure that "Outta Sight" doesn't become "Outta Mind."

Mazel tov! 5087! Or, as you may no doubt prefer it: LGBTQ+, Out and Proud: 2021!

Giving a driver's license when carded at a bar or being pulled over for a traffic violation can become, at the very least, an extremely stressful situation for trans people.

Just as important is the psychological impact.

"Getting my new birth certificate, and seeing that the legal documents going all the way back to my birth finally matched who I always knew myself to be, was a huge emotional moment for me," explains Hunter. "Without it, a piece of the puzzle was missing. And to have that last piece finally put in place was an incredible feeling. There's no longer a missing piece."

But she's not just happy for herself.

"It brings me great joy to know that everyone in Michigan can now experience that same sense of joy in holding a birth certificate that reflects who they really are without having to first go through surgery," she says.

This victory was a long time coming. Now that it has been achieved, we should take a moment to celebrate it.

Jay Kaplan is the LGBT Project staff attorney at the ACLU of Michigan. Reach him at jkaplan@aclumich.org.

Creep Of The Week

Sexually Harassing Teenagers Totally Righteous, Says God

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

If you spent this past weekend on a beach harassing teenagers for wearing "pornographic" bathing suits, it's totally OK as long as God told you to do it.

Or at least that's the reason Area Man Logan Dorn gave when he confronted a group of bikini-clad girls on a beach in Colorado.

The girls were minding their own business when Dorn decided that their bodies were something he was moved by God to comment on and condemn as "pornography."

In a TikTok video posted by Mia, one of the girls in question, Dorn is seen standing over them in a pair of black shorts and a white tank top. "Why do you dress this way?" he asks.

"I'm at the beach in my bathing suit," one of the girls says.

"That's a thong, and that's a bra," Dorn replies.

"What do you consider a bathing suit?" a girl asks.

"A one-piece," he responds, pointing toward a woman who is presumably in his group. Who is not wearing a one-piece bathing suit. "You don't need to be showing your bodies."

The girls remind him that God said "do not judge" and "if you find someone's body distracting then gouge your fucking eyes out," referring to the actual part of the Bible that says, "And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and cast it from you."

"Take young eyes into consideration. They don't need to see pornography," he says.

To be fair, the girls were very ambiguous about the attention, telling Dorn repeatedly to leave them alone, "Don't look at me," "Close your eyes," and "Get the fuck away."

With mixed messages like that, Dorn had no choice but to continue talking at them.

"Here's the thing," he says. "There's free will in America. There's freedom of speech."

But not the freedom to wear a bathing suit on a public beach, apparently.

"I just had a righteous anger come over me and also just emboldened by the Holy Spirit to go and to confront these ladies and to speak truth," Dorn said in a TikTok video responding to the incident according to Newsweek. I couldn't find the video. Dorn may have taken it down. The video I did see shows Dorn apologizing/evangelizing for the way he handled the interaction.

Note that he didn't say he was sorry for approaching the girls but that he didn't do a good enough job bringing them to Jesus.

Mia says in a follow-up TikTok video that theirs was the only all-female group, "and that's why he approached us."

Beach blanket BINGO. Funny how Dorn's "righteous anger" didn't embolden him to approach any other people on the beach about their attire. It's almost as if that "righteous anger" stems from a deeply rooted misogyny that wants to control women's bodies, combined with the power and

privilege of being a white, cis-gender, heterosexual male. Funny how that works.

And, surprise, surprise, Dorn's got a problem with transgender and gender-fluid people, too. In his first video responding to the incident, he says, according to New Civil Rights Movement, "People, you know, don't even know their gender anymore. People don't even know. You know,

they can go from, you know, if you're, if they're born a male they can be a female, if they're born a female that can be a male, you know, society is really jacked up, and I'm going to continue to stay on the word of truth."

And he'll have plenty of time to be the bathing suit police now that he's unemployed. As a result of these videos going viral, Dorn lost his job.

On Facebook, his former employer said that Dorn had been fired and that they do "not condone Logan's behavior in the videos, nor do his actions reflect our values as a company," and that they strive "to be a place of business where all are treated with utmost respect and acceptance, and actions by our employees which go against those values will not be tolerated."

Damn cancel culture and the radical liberals who run his former place of employment. Which is called "Mighty Hand Construction." A Christian construction company that states on its website, "We will do all things with trust in God, each other, and our leaders," as well as, "We will treat all people with kindness and decency," and "We will not force our beliefs but encourage when permitted."

A note for anyone who may be confused: When a group of girls tells you to leave them alone, and you keep telling them that their bodies are too sexy for children and God to see, that's not encouragement or permission. And if you can't understand that, then a little eye-gouging is the least you can do.

Note that he didn't say he was sorry for approaching the girls but that he didn't do a good enough job bringing them to Jesus.



Yep. A Lesbian Wrote Aretha's Story.

Jennifer Hudson as Aretha Franklin in "Respect." Photo: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Aretha Franklin's journey to self-discovery is seen through the lens of openly lesbian screenwriter Tracey Scott Wilson in "Respect," the biopic starring Jennifer Hudson as Detroit's own Queen of Soul. In director Liesl Tommy's film, Wilson focuses on Franklin's tumultuous path to the top, one that involved many years of fighting for personal and professional agency.

During her formative years, Aretha was bound to the controlling men in her life, namely her first husband, Ted White, and father, C.L. Franklin. That is, until she realized she didn't have to be. The movie's message — find your own voice — is one Wilson is very familiar with. After all, she's lesbian. And, like Aretha, a preacher's daughter.

From Brooklyn, the screenwriter spoke about how being part of the LGBTQ+ community influenced her script, why Aretha isn't considered a gay icon, and how she wants the Queen's song "Ain't No Way" to be reclaimed as the gay anthem she says it is.

There are so many ways to tell Aretha's story. How do you think your identity helped shape the narrative direction of the story as you chose to tell it?

That's such a great question and something that no one has ever asked me. I didn't know that Carolyn [Aretha's younger sister] was a lesbian and so, when I found that out, that was just huge. I was like, "Wow. I wonder what would've happened had I known that when I was a kid."

So, reading about Aretha's family and the

uniqueness of circumstances. And, also, my father was a minister. Obviously not as big as C.L., but I was very sort of tuned into the preacher's kid part of me because, whenever you're a preacher's kid, you have to find your own identity outside of your parents. It can be so overwhelming. So I was just thinking about Carolyn and being a preacher's kid, with a world-famous father at that. And then also, as a gay person, to decide you're going to live your truth is just remarkable. Aretha, you know, never questioned [it]. They completely accepted that.

So was Carolyn your inroad to this story?

I think that Aretha was still the inroad, but because of her and Erma [Aretha's elder sister], they were really important because I realized how much they influenced her, and vice versa. Their relationship was very

formative to her. And whenever I was thinking about Aretha, I was thinking about where her sisters were at that moment.

Of course there's gay gospel musician and Aretha collaborator James Cleveland, played by Tituss Burgess in the movie. Do you think Aretha coming out of her shell and harnessing her inner power had anything to do with the LGBTQ+ people around her like Carolyn and James?

I actually do believe that. James Cleveland would have these parties and there were just gay people there, where it was sort of unspoken. Singers in the Black churches, ministers of music...

I think that her father, from all of my research, was just never sort of judgmental about that. I mean, I think it was different when it came to his own daughter. But I do

think that seeing so many people — women, gay men — just live their truest under her father's roof really did help her later on, in terms of just declaring her own identity.

Why do you think Aretha's contemporaries, like Diana Ross and Patti LaBelle, are considered gay icons but Aretha is rarely referred to as one?

I think that the reason she hasn't traditionally fallen into that category is because of her relationship with the church. For so many gay people, the church has been a source of pain. And for Aretha, it was a source of pain, but also her greatest source of inspiration. I think that's why she wasn't a gay icon. You know, "Amazing Grace" is her best-selling album [Note: It's also the best-selling gospel album of all time, period]. Whereas Patti LaBelle grew up in the church as well, but musically she wasn't as connected to it. Same thing as Diana Ross. Diana Ross, growing up in the Motown scene, she didn't have anything to do with that. So, I think that's the unintended barrier, because she definitely had all of the other qualities these women had. The larger-than-life persona, the feminism...

And the shade. The shade was just so good.

The shade. Oh my god.

To me, a lot of things that Aretha had done in her career fall into the gay icon category: the over-the-top exuberance, the voice, the sass, the shade.

Carolyn, she wrote "Ain't No Way" to be... it's a gay anthem. When you look at those lyrics, it was so clear. You know what she's talking about.

Do you think Aretha knew?

Oh, absolutely. I think the lyrics spoke to her as well, but her singing there was also an acknowledgement of her sister. [Aretha] was very private, so she didn't talk about her life and she certainly wasn't going to talk about her sister's private life. I think if it would have been known, she would've been right up there with Cher.

I can't find a lot of examples of Aretha actually openly talking about her LGBTQ+ fanbase.

I don't think that was because of any type of shame. I just think that she was so intensely private that any opening up of that conversation would've meant talking about Carolyn. It would've meant talking about James Cleveland. It would've meant talking about her childhood. And she just didn't want to.

It sounds like Aretha's relationship with Carolyn gave you some insight into how Aretha felt about the community.

James Cleveland as well. You can see from "Amazing Grace" how close they were, growing up at the house with him. He was obviously very open about it.

Because of the movie, now I hear "Ain't No Way" in a brand new queer light. It really does sound like a gay anthem.

Yeah, it really is. I hope it gets reclaimed. Because of just time, I wasn't able to talk about Carolyn being a lesbian in the movie.

See Tracey Scott Wilson, page 18



"Respect" screenwriter Tracey Scott Wilson. Photo: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures

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(Left to right) Hailey Kilgore stars as Carolyn Franklin, Jennifer Hudson as Aretha Franklin and Saycon Sengbloh as Erma Franklin in "Respect."

→ Tracey Scott Wilson

Continued from p. 17

There were a couple of scenes where I sort of laid it out. They had conversations, but it had to be cut. But I just hope it gets reclaimed for the anthem that it is.

Can you talk about the scenes that didn't make the cut?

There's a scene where Erma and Aretha were talking with Carolyn, and Carolyn is feeling sorry about somebody she dated that was crazy. [Laughs.] It was a scene where Aretha and Erma were talking to Carolyn, and they were asking her about someone she had previously dated and Carolyn was basically saying, "Don't. Please. Don't ever mention that girl's name again." And there was another scene where she started wrestling with who she was interested in.

Maybe the follow-up you write is Carolyn's story.

Wouldn't that be something? Wouldn't it? Carolyn and James's story.

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What to Expect from Motor City Pride's In-Person Event in the COVID Age

MCP Organizers Say They're Ready for a Safe, Welcoming Return

BY JACKIE JONES

After the long COVID months and virtual Pride events, Motor City Pride is finally upon us. But planning this year's event has been, as you can imagine, a bit different than previous years.

"More stressful with great anticipation," to be exact, says Darius Wheeler, MCP's entertainment coordinator. "We thought, 'Let's give them a concert and get everyone ramped up and excited.'"

After streaming virtual events in 2020 and 2021, MCP will resume its in-person festival on Sept. 18 and 19 at Hart Plaza. While the community is brimming with excitement, there's also a new level of caution at play when in large crowds due to COVID. MCP organizers say they've carefully planned this year's festival and worked with CDC guidelines.

"We navigated by watching a lot of news," says Dave Wait, chairperson of MCP. "[We were] looking at a lot of reports and talking to folks with the [City of Detroit] about what they're doing with other events, and what they're seeing in other events. [We] also looked at the rates of [COVID] spread at other events. [This all helped] us make the decision to proceed with the festival in the safest and [most] logical way that we can."

MCP's decision to postpone the festival was made back in February due to the increased COVID numbers and low vaccination numbers.

"At that point, we knew that the city wouldn't really be ready to help support us with the festival in June," he continues. "So, we worked at getting a date in September. [We] thought it would work for all of us and give people a chance to get vaccinated."

It was a smart move on their part, considering that 92 percent of LGBTQ+ adults in the U.S. surveyed by the Human Rights Campaign have received at least one vaccination for COVID-19, according to a recent report released by the organization.

Wait says that, while they were given the extra months, those involved had to contend with a lot of moving parts.

"It seems like there was more time, but we also had to pause a lot to make sure things were right," he continues. "It wasn't like we had additional months to do things. There



were more things to check and follow up on." Those things include guidelines and rules for the attendees.

"We altered the entrance gate several times," says Wait. "So we can do what's best for our community, we're asking people to be socially distant. Everyone's going to get in, so we need to be respectful in that regard. And when you are in close spaces with other people, be extra

safe, put on a mask. Have a mask with you at the festival. So that when you're like, 'OK, this is getting kind of crowded,' [you can put on a mask]."

Wait says MCP wants everyone to be able to enjoy the festival, so they're asking unvaccinated people to wear masks to help protect themselves and the people around them.

"[We] really encourage everyone to be vaccinated, so the city's going to be vaccinating people at the festival," says Wait. "It won't help them then, but it will help society and people moving forward. So, come out and participate. And really remember, Motor City Pride is a celebration that grew out of the protests in the '50s and '60s, so as much as we're celebrating, it's also coming together to work on advocacy."

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Roxanne Mitchell and Brandon Gleaton. Photo: Affirmations

→ Affirmations

Continued from p. 10

community, and we made an attempt to address that,” said Jenkins. “We did art shows, poetry nights, open mics — all of them were multicultural occasions, and we were very intentional in how we promoted these events to make sure that the space was welcoming to everybody.”

Garcia left the center for the first time in 2014 to take a position in California with the Los Angeles LGBTQ Center. Darrious D. Hilmon, who is Black, was brought on to replace Garcia as executive director following a nationwide search. Hilmon did not stay at the center long — a mere seven months — but during his tenure, he let Jenkins go. Soon after, efforts to improve diversity within the center fell by the wayside as the board faced financial challenges that led to reducing the center’s operating hours.

Five years after leaving the first time, Garcia returned to the center and to the position of executive director and found that the work of the MAC report had never been finished.

“I guess it was just kind of put on the back burner,” he said. “Not completely. But certainly when I got back here from Los Angeles, it was evident to me that we really needed to step up our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI work as it’s called in the field.”

Today there is a DEI committee on the board, which is led by board member Jennifer Johnson. She is, thanks to the two newest appointments, one of four African Americans on the board. Demetrike Wells, who first came to the center as a youth, is the fourth.

“There was a genuine and authentic desire to achieve true diversity on the board upon my joining,” said Wells. “We understand that, in order to reach as many people as possible and positively impact the broader community, the leadership of the organization should reflect the broader community.”

For her part, new board member Mitchell had been aware of the center for the past couple of decades. About two years ago, she attended an event at the center that allowed her an opportunity to speak with a couple of current board members.

“I was thoroughly impressed with their mission to fully support all members of the LGBTQ community by providing an inclusive, culturally affirming environment,” she said, adding that she had heard of the center’s issues surrounding diversity.

“I was aware of the diversity issues plaguing the organization,” she said. “People of color did not feel it was a safe place to be themselves and feel socially accepted. People of color were forced to seek out sister organizations where they felt safe.”

But now, Mitchell said she is happy to be a part of a new era for the center.

“The progress began with the acknowledgement of the problem, then moving to rid the organization of leaders that were unwilling to recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion,” Mitchell said. “The organization is making sure that all hiring decisions are made by a diverse group.”

Gleaton came on board after learning from Wells about the work the board was doing.

“He told me about the board’s desire to have its body reflect the community’s population,” he said. “After hearing about the work of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, I knew I wanted to join.”

With a committed 12-member board that also includes a trans woman and an Asian American woman, Gleaton said he is optimistic about the center’s future.

“As with any organization, reflection and growth are essential,” Gleaton said, “and we are growing to become more diverse, more equitable, and more inclusive by changing the narrative that Affirmations is a place for Black and brown individuals to come and thrive as well.”



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PRISM Men's Chorus is among the performers at this year's MCP. Photo courtesy of PRISM Men's Chorus

Who to Expect on the Motor City Pride Stage

BY JACKIE JONES

SATURDAY, SEPT. 18

12:30 p.m. Alise King

Alise King is a future diva, for sure. A multi-award-winning R&B artist who has opened for Aretha Franklin, Chaka Khan, George Clinton and more, King will bring her vocal expertise and alluring stage presence to MCP. Attendees can expect to hear runs that will take them back to when Motor City Records took over Detroit as the powerhouse singer puts on a show to remember.

1:30 p.m. Laura Rain and the Caesars

Straight from the 3-1-3, Laura and the Caesars bring in the original yet innovative funk of Detroit. Drawing from Detroit acts like Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and Parliament-Funkadelic, lead singer Laura Rain finesses her sultry, soulful voice. Rain and her husband, George Friend, formed the group in 2012 and have since released four studio albums: "Electrified," "Closer," "Gold," and "Walk With Me." According to the group's website, they're "transforming soul."

2:30 p.m. JHARID

Following their mission "to change the world" to help people "feel again," JHARID is an act that leans on the predecessors of soul music. The artist, producer, songwriter and vocal coach will deliver singles including "Leaving" and "The Lying Truth."

3:30 p.m. Sabin

The self-proclaimed "baldheaded bitch of Detroit" will take the stage with plenty of drama. She's the longest-running host of the festival, so expect exaggerated brows, contoured features and makeup beat by the Gods because that's what she brings every single time.

6 p.m. Bright Lights

7 p.m. Logan Henderson, Garrison Briggs

See **MCP Performers**, page 38



J. Santino. Photo courtesy of Tiffadelic Media

From Homelessness to Headliner

Motor City Pride Performer J. Santino on Why He Keeps Coming Back to Detroit's Annual Pride Event

BY JACKIE JONES

When Jay-Z's grandmother says "I was served lemons, but I made lemonade" on Beyoncé's "Lemonade," she could've been talking about J. Santino, a Detroit-based Motor City Pride headliner. For years, the 23-year-old pop artist has been mixing, raging and twisting his life and long, neon 18-inch

box braids into something sweet. Before, from 2004 through 2008, Santino lived in shelters throughout Detroit with his mom, he tells BTL. Those shelters contributed greatly to his evolution as an artist and businessperson.

"Being in a shelter wasn't the worst experience ever,"

See **J. Santino**, page 26

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→ J. Santino

Continued from p. 24

Santino says. “I mean, I was young, so everything to me was rainbows and daffodils and shit. Looking back at it now, I’m like, ‘Girl, that was not the best time of your life.’ But I was grateful to experience that

youth because my expectations were affected. A lot of things don’t really affect me because of that.”

As an escape, Santino turned to music.

“I’ve been singing all of my life,” he says. “I remember singing when I was 3 in a really small apartment on Joy Road. I remember seeing Beyoncé’s ‘Me, Myself and I.’ I tried to copy every run that Beyoncé did. The backward walk and everything.”

Singing became a “big thing” to him, he says. It was a vehicle for expressing himself.

“Living with my mom, living in a shelter in Highland Park, [the] singing got me through that,” he says. “Even in high school, it helped. I remember singing Leona Lewis’ ‘Bleeding Love’ to get me away from being bullied and it worked.”

Santino says, because he favored pop music and divas when others didn’t, he felt different from his peers. One diva in particular — Mariah Carey — influenced the artist he is today.

“I was like, ‘Oh my god, I can hit this note, I can really do this,’” he explains. “That’s when my fascination with Mariah Carey started and when I really wanted to start to sing.”

Getting into the industry wasn’t easy for Santino. For four years, he put his energy into his craft, only performing outside of Detroit and in venues on Eastern Michigan University’s campus.

“I’d never done a showcase in the city [of Detroit],” he says. “I was like, ‘I do pop music. They don’t fuck with pop music here, so I’m just going to be in my own lane. I’m going to make my own little opportunities.’”

In 2019, Santino’s road led him straight to Motor City Pride’s (MCP) performance application. That summer, while working as a dishwasher, creating his EP and living at a shelter, J. Santino took the chance and applied to MCP.

He says, “I was three days late to applying for MCP, sleeping on a cot on Joy Road and writing songs on my EP every single day.”

The deadline was irrelevant to Santino. He knew what he wanted and went after it no matter the obstacles.

“I spent my last \$86 to get my Squarespace website,” he reflects. “I stayed up all night making this website because the best advice I got was to make sure everything [I] have is presentable...I put my heart

and soul into that website. When I look at that website now it was not sickening, it was not together. But it was professional enough. I used it to apply three days late for MCP, and they said, ‘We love this.’”

Santino didn’t have much music officially released at the time, so instead he showed MCP a lot of unreleased music. It worked.

“At the time I was only paid \$200 to play at the show, and at the time I didn’t even have a project out. I only had one little song. It was a pop record [the catchy bop ‘Lover’]. I was like, ‘Well, you got to figure it out now because you’re here,’” he explains, laughing, “and you signed the contract.”

And he did — on little to no budget, at that. He says he couldn’t afford expensive rehearsal spaces, so he tapped into his resources and did what he needed to do.

“We were rehearsing in classrooms and even parks trying to get this [performance] together,” he says. “It really didn’t faze me because I was like, ‘Well, shit, it could be worse.’ People were having rehearsals in these high-price areas, but I can confidently say I gave a better show because of the hard work and

ingenuity I put into my show.”

He says his first MCP performance was more than he expected.

“I performed that whole hour-long performance with no EP out and only one song recorded,” he says. “[The] next thing I know, I looked up and the entire place was packed. We did that.”

That one performance catapulted his career, he says. Now, as one of this year’s MCP headliners and co-host of their official afterparty, he is “so grateful.”

The upcoming performance will mark Santino’s second time working with MCP this year. For MCP’s virtual event in June, he performed a short set that included his single “Forever.” He says he has no intention of ending his collaborations with MCP and expects to perform there “again and again.”

“Without Motor City Pride I wouldn’t have a lot of the opportunities that I have today, he says. “MCP has given me the opportunity to be myself.”

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Photos courtesy of DJ LiXxer

DJ LiXxer Isn't Just a Playlist

She Calls Herself 'Your Favorite Damn DJ in the Land.' See Why at Motor City Pride.

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Being a DJ during a pandemic is tough. But Taylor “DJ LiXxer” Anderson has learned a few things during her decade-long DJ career. So when weddings and other events started getting canceled and clubs closed their doors, DJ LiXxer did what so many performers tried and so few managed to pull off: she took the party online.

“I was paying my bills off of Zoom parties probably for the first few months,” DJ LiXxer tells *Between The Lines*. Her success is no accident. There’s a reason she calls herself “your favorite damn DJ in the land.” She’s earned the title.

You can check out her performance yourself at Motor City Pride on Sunday, Sept. 19 at 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Emphasis on “performance.”

“You can’t be a DJ and just play music

because, at that point, you’re just a playlist,” DJ LiXxer says. “It’s about creating moments.”

She even has dancers as part of her show. “My girlfriend is a professional dancer,” she says. “She’s going to be performing with me on Sunday, so that’ll be our first time performing professionally together.”

Having DJed weddings, bar mitzvahs, festivals, clubs and more, DJ LiXxer knows that her job is to help people make memories.

“I like to perform. I like to engage. I think that’s the most important thing,” she says, “making connections and creating experiences for people.”

Part of that is being able to read an audience. “I’m the type of DJ that likes to freestyle. I like to feel the mood of the crowd,” she says. At Motor City Pride, you can expect dancehall, reggae, vogue, deep house and whatever else fuels the crowd.

DJ LiXxer especially loves a queer crowd. “One thing I appreciate about the LGBT community: We are very, very nice,” she says.

“I can tell the difference between doing a straight event and a queer event. I have the most fun doing LGBT events,” she says. “We just vibe, and we have a good time, and we’re really good people, most of us.”

Speaking of queer, though DJ LiXxer identifies as a lesbian, she isn’t big on labels. People often don’t know what to make of her when they see her: “What is she? She’s beautiful, but she’s handsome.”

She’s had people ask if she’s the stud in her relationship, to which she says, “Not really, because I like to wear makeup and nice boots once in a while.”

She doesn’t feel a need to define herself for others’ comfort. “I also wear sneakers, and I can throw on the men’s jerseys but still put on lashes.”

Oh, and the DJ name LiXxer is not what people usually assume.

“A lot of people think my name is like super gay, and it’s not that at all,” she says. My original name was DJ Lady Tay,” but she found herself in a DJ group where “it was like everybody had ‘tay’ in their name.”

So her friend, producer Mark Cooper, suggested “DJ Elixir,” since an elixir is a mixture. She misheard it as DJ Lickser and thought he was poking fun. But once she thought about it, she liked the name. And DJ LiXxer was born.

While she currently lives in Inkster, DJ LiXxer grew up in Ann Arbor. She also spent plenty of time with family members who lived in Detroit, but she always had to come to them. “For some reason, all of Detroit thinks that Ann Arbor is like driving to Chicago,” she says, laughing. Once she was old enough to drive, she’d hop on I-94 and get “in all kinds of trouble” with her cousins.

Family is vitally important to her, but coming out to her parents was not easy. Actually, she didn’t come out. “I was forced out,” she says. An aunt “went snooping on my social media.”

“My aunt found my Tumblr and Twitter

account and was like, “(gasp!) You’re gay!” She was given a choice: her aunt could tell her parents, or she could tell them herself.

“I had already packed up my clothes because I just knew,” she says. “My parents are Bible-thumping Christians.” She originally came out as bisexual. “I thought it would help.”

It didn’t.

“They didn’t kick me out, but I could tell my parents were uncomfortable with my sexuality,” she says. The pandemic changed things. “They’ve never been comfortable with it until the past year,” she says. COVID-19 hit her family especially hard. “We’ve lost so many people to the pandemic.”



This led to a conversation with her mom and dad “about reconnecting and rekindling that relationship because when I came out, that drove us kind of apart,” she says. “We hugged it out.”

Her parents live in Las Vegas now, but they’re closer than ever. “Me and my mom and my dad talk every day now,” she says. “It was more important to reconnect and re-love each other.”

And that goes for her relationship with herself, too.

“I can honestly say I think I’m the happiest I’ve been in my life, mentally for sure,” she says, attributing it to a lot of sage, cannabis (“because I gave up alcohol”) and meditation. “Learn to be nice to yourself,” she posted on Facebook recently. “Wake up with mirror manifestations, speak your sexy into existence, and be kind to others. Working on self love is one of the hardest things to do, but practicing everyday is something that is helping me become a better person, a better spirit, and even a better entertainer.”

Her philosophy of “live life and love people” comes through in her art. “I’m all about making people dance,” she says. “I just want people to have a good time.”

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Saturday, September 18, 2021

<u>Time</u>	<u>Act</u>
12:30 p.m.	Alise King
1:30 p.m.	Laura Rain and the Caesars
2:30 p.m.	JHARID
3:30 p.m.	Sabin
6:00 p.m.	Bright Lights
7:00 p.m.	Logan Henderson Garrison Briggs
8:00 p.m.	Stage Closes

Sunday, September 19, 2021

1:00 p.m.	DJ LiXxer
2:00 p.m.	PRISM Men's Chorus
3:00 p.m.	AccousticAsh
4:00 p.m.	J.Santino
5:00 p.m.	Killer Flamingos DJ LiXxer
7:00 p.m.	Stage Closes

Riverfront Dance Stage

Sponsored by MadDog Technology

Saturday, September 18, 2021

<u>Time</u>	<u>Act</u>
1:30 p.m.	DJ DigMark
3:00 p.m.	Garrison Briggs
4:30 p.m.	Ryan Skyy
6:30 p.m.	Jace M
7:30 p.m.	Stage Closes

Sunday, September 19, 2021

12:30 p.m.	DJ Marquis
2:00 p.m.	DJ Myint
3:30 p.m.	TYLR_
5:00 p.m.	DJ Disc Detroit
6:30 p.m.	Stage Closes

Schedules are subject to change. Check the website

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Pyramid Stage

Saturday, September 18, 2021

Time	Act
1:00 p.m.	Sean Robinson
2:00 p.m.	Emmanuelle Jacob
3:00 p.m.	Lucylujah
4:00 p.m.	Karley Davidson
5:00 p.m.	Hannah Francis
6:00 p.m.	Zeyy
6:45 p.m.	Jon Paul Wallace
7:25 p.m.	Rocky Wallace
8:00 p.m.	Stage Closes

Sunday, September 19, 2021

1:00 p.m.	Lin-Say
2:00 p.m.	Robert Bannon
3:00 p.m.	BayBro
4:00 p.m.	Nay Luma
4:30 p.m.	Crystal Harding
7:00 p.m.	Stage Closes

Festival Stage

Saturday, September 18, 2021

Time	Act
1:30 p.m.	Ella X
2:30 p.m.	Paytra
3:30 p.m.	The Band Mint
4:30 p.m.	Paisley Fields
5:30 p.m.	The BoyS
6:30 p.m.	Sing Out Detroit
7:30 p.m.	Stage Closes

Sunday, September 19, 2021

1:30 p.m.	Flash Clash
2:30 p.m.	Lipstick Jodi
3:30 p.m.	King Buzzard
4:30 p.m.	Jon Worthy
5:30 p.m.	Valerie the Vulture
6:30 p.m.	Stage Closes

MOTOR CITY PRIDE DETROIT **SATURDAY**

Welcome Gates Open at 1 p.m.

FESTIVAL EVENTS 1 - 8 p.m.

Four Stages of Entertainment
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1 - 5 p.m. Family Area with youth activities and games (see page 11)

7 p.m. Festival Entrance Closes (the entrance is to stay after hours)

8 p.m. Festival Closes

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MOTOR CITY PRIDE DETROIT **SUNDAY**

Welcome Gates Open at 12:30 p.m.

FESTIVAL EVENTS 12:30 - 7 p.m.

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Noon 2021 Motor City Pride Parade Sponsored by Jeep (see page 11)

1 - 5 p.m. Family Area with youth activities and games (see page 11)

6 p.m. Festival Entrance Closes (the entrance is to stay after hours)

7 p.m. Festival Closes

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Motor City Pride COVID-19 Mitigation Strategy

The following procedures have been developed to assist with ensuring a safe festival for all attendees.

We would like everyone attending the festival to be fully vaccinated. You must show your vaccination card or another record proving that you have been vaccinated when you arrive at the festival.

If you are not fully vaccinated, you will be required to wear a facemask while attending the festival. Facemasks protect the wearer and members of our community, participating family and friends.

Individuals who are not fully vaccinated will also be invited to visit the Vaccination Station set up inside Spirit Plaza. We believe that by offering a Vaccination Station we can enable accessibility for those who are not currently vaccinated and contribute to a greater societal good.

Other mitigation activities include:

- Additional hand wash and hand sanitizer stations will be at the festival.
- Additional facemasks will be available at the festival.
- Physical reminders to socially distance.
- Physical reminders to wear a facemask in crowded areas (even if you are vaccinated).

Attending the festival is a personal decision that each person interested in attending must make using the information available. Motor City Pride nor the City of Detroit are legally responsible for an attendee contracting COVID-19 while attending the festival.

The most important recommendation that we can make is to be vaccinated. If you are uncertain about whether vaccination is for you, we suggest researching vaccines at: <https://ivaccinate.org/>

Individuals that have not yet received their COVID-19 Vaccination are encouraged to schedule it prior to the festival using one of the links below. Vaccinations given on the day of the festival will not protect you at the festival but will start you on your way towards becoming fully vaccinated to protect yourself, your family and your friends.

Detroit Residents can schedule their vaccination at: vaccinatedetroit.com/

Michigan Residents can schedule their vaccination at: www.michigan.gov/coronavirus

The information above is as of August 28, 2021. It may be revised as we receive additional guidance from the Detroit, Wayne County or State of Michigan Health Departments.

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Photo: Tony Lowe

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SABIN

Motor City Pride's Veteran Host on the Power of Pride and Hugs

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Never underestimate the power of a hug. It just might save your life. Tyler T. Cooper, best known as Detroit's beautiful, bald and bold drag queen Sabin, knows this all too well.

See, Cooper was supposed to be a dancer. Was a dancer, in fact. An accomplished one.

His journey began after a dance studio owner who saw Cooper in a summer theater program invited him to take classes. His mom said they couldn't afford it. But, seeing his potential, the

woman offered to teach him for free.

"It wasn't even a spark; it was like an inferno was ignited in me," Cooper says. "Dance became my passion."

After studying dance at Grand Valley State, Cooper found himself traveling the world: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Berlin, Paris. For a kid who grew up without much money in Ithaca, Michigan, "it was mind-blowing for me," Cooper tells *Between The Lines*.

And then he blew out his knee during a performance. The injury "destroyed any possibility of being a professional dancer again,"

he says. "My career as a performer kind of ended in that moment."

Then came the depression.

After a failed knee surgery, Cooper found himself stuck at home, alone much of the time. A friend came over every day to check on him.

One day she was in a hurry, essentially opening the door and hollering into the house to ask if he was OK.

"I said, 'Yeah, I'm good.'" But he wasn't. In fact, he'd made a plan to end his life.

"She left, and I went upstairs, and I took a deep breath, and I did what I did," Cooper says.

"About 10 seconds later, she came in my room and said, 'I just realized I didn't give you a hug.'"

He'd just cut his inner thigh aiming for his femoral artery.

"She took a belt, and she tied off my leg," he remembers, and she managed to get him into her car and to the hospital. "It was all because she didn't give me my hug."

Needless to say, hugs are very important to Cooper, and Sabin, despite her sharp-witted ability to read someone for filth, is a big hugger.

"That was one of the hardest things for me with the pandemic," Cooper says. "You learn

so much about someone with a hug.”

Not all hugs are created equal.

“Some people, it’s like hugging a triangle,” he says. Cold and inflexible. “There are some people where it just feels like an envelope, where you are welcomed in. That’s my mom’s best gift. [Her hugs are] like envelopes, and that’s what I look forward to when I see my mom. It’s an embrace that you look forward to.”

When he looks at his leg now, he sees “scars of strength.”

“I used to call them scars of stupidity, but now I call them scars of strength,” he says. “They empower me now.”

He’s covered his scars with a tattoo that says “Bird Set Free,” the title of his favorite Sia song.

“Sia gives me breath when I don’t want to breathe. I’ve never connected with an artist like I have with Sia,” he says. “I purposely placed it over those scars for that reason. Because of what the song means and how far I’ve come. And it’s a reminder that while wings get broken, it doesn’t mean you still can’t fly again.”

And flown he has. Sabin is one of the most well recognized and celebrated drag queens in Michigan with a long-standing gig as part of Drag Queen Bingo and Drag Queen Trivia at Five15 in Royal Oak that recently put Sabin in the same room with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

“She was amazing,” Cooper remembers. “She was very welcoming, very warm. She came to trivia with several of her constituents and fellow professionals and state representatives.”

Cooper continues, “Just to be in that moment and to see someone with so much — I hate to use the word power — responsibility.

And to have her embrace us as a community, for her to be there and accepting of the community and the art that we portray was a humbling moment.”

Cooper is well aware of the kind of platform Sabin’s been given, and he’s not wasting it.

“I always say I’m going to use my platform to speak for those that sometimes don’t get spoken for, and that’s why I’m such an ambassador for mental health,” he says. “I know what it’s like to feel lonely and to feel unimportant and even sometimes standing on stage in front of how many thousands of people at Pride there are times when I feel completely invisible.”

“I know what it’s like to feel lonely and to feel unimportant and even sometimes standing on stage in front of how many thousands of people at Pride there are times when I feel completely invisible.”

Cooper/Sabin is also outspoken about support for LGBTQ+ rights and the Black Lives Matter movement with an emphasis on Black trans lives. “I champion them, and I speak when I can about what I’m passionate about.”

It should be noted, however, that Cooper and Sabin are, in many ways, very different.

“Tyler, for the most part, is a very reserved person unless I’m around people I’m really comfortable with,” he says. “I’m a homebody. I like to be at home with my dogs.” He prefers playing cards or watching a movie with friends to going clubbing.

“I think it’s because I’m so much on the go that I treasure those nights in,” he says. “Not that I don’t appreciate being on stage, it’s my favorite place to be, [but] I look forward to those moments when I don’t have to be a comedian and a host and an ambassador.”

Sabin is “literally the polar opposite,” Cooper

See **Sabin**, page 36



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Coming Out, to Rachel p. 57

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Photo: Tony Lowe

→ Sabin

Continued from p. 35

says. "I wouldn't do what I do if I didn't want to be the center of attention."

But Sabin isn't all biting comments, sharp jabs and rhinestones. ("No sequins," Cooper makes clear. "Sequins are the cheap man's rhinestones. I spend a lot of money on rhinestones because I like to sparkle.")

Sabin isn't just a larger-than-life character. "I also like to be a safe space, and I want everyone to know that even though I am a person, I am a safe space," Cooper says. "Because I know what it's like to be that kid in the back of the room who doesn't know who they are because I've been that person."

When Cooper was growing up in Ithaca, he says, "I was a very angry young man. And they always say you hurt the ones you love, and that was ultimately true. I lashed out at my family most because I was trying to figure out who I was."

Going away to Grand Valley State was a turning point for him. "I was able to start living my truth," he says, "starting to explore nightlife and seeing that I wasn't the only one."

Sabin, however, is one of a kind.

"I've always just said I'm kind of me," Cooper says. "It's kind of 'club kid meets pageant queen meets circuit queen.' I take inspiration from everything."

Cooper continues, "I don't consider myself a comedy queen even though I do comedy, and I don't consider myself a stunt queen even though I do stunts, and I don't consider myself a pageant queen even though I do pageants. I don't consider myself to be a beauty queen even though I am my own kind of beautiful."

In Sabin, Cooper says, "You have somebody that knows what you're going through. That's always been my biggest message. To spread love and to make people feel welcome."

Revelers at Motor City Pride can witness the gospel of Sabin on Saturday, Sept. 18.

"I'm very honored that I will be the host MC for all of the Saturday festivities as well as show director of the main stage drag show," Cooper says. Sabin is Motor City Pride's longest-running host.

"Pride to me is the epitome of love," Cooper says. "It's a labor of love and a celebration of where we have come from, but also a realization of how much further we still have to go. While we remain resilient, we still need to remain vigilant in our fight because we still have fight to go."

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SUNDAY, SEPT. 19

1 p.m. DJ LiXxer

Recognized throughout the city of Detroit as the producer to know, DJ LiXxer has been making moves since she first heard Notorious B.I.G.'s sample of Mtume's "Juicy Fruit" on his hit "Juicy." She's from Ann Arbor, but Detroit is where she creates alongside a long list of local talents. She DJs for multiple artists, including fellow MCP headliner J. Santino.

2 p.m. PRISM Men's Chorus

PRISM Men's Chorus will take this year's stage with poised regality. Since the Detroit-based group started in 2016 with only a dream and four friends, they've expanded to an entire ensemble. They've performed at Pride festivals before, but this is the chorus' first show with MCP. The chorus focuses on "changing lives one note at a time," so attendees can be assured the hymns are going to be soul-shaking.

3 p.m. AcousticAsh

Hailing from the United Kingdom, AcousticAsh will take the stage to show off her soothing voice reminiscent of the sounds of the folky '70s. The singer is inspired by artists such as Tracy Chapman, John Lennon and Bob Dylan. Since moving to Detroit in 2015, she has expanded her foray into songwriting.

4 p.m. J. Santino

Santino has been performing for MCP since 2019. A local pop artist, he has forged his own path within Detroit's busy music scene and his dreamy image conjures the likes of Mariah Carey, Beyoncé and other pop music divas.

5 p.m. Killer Flamingos

Killer Flamingos is a Dearborn-based band that fuses pop, rock and electronica. They'll take this year's stage to show off their almost-20 years in the music industry. Considering they call themselves "Detroit's most popular party band," attendees can expect a show full of energy. Be prepared to party.

'100 Years of LGBTQ History' Exhibit Details Surprisingly Controversial History Between Saugatuck and Douglas

BY CHENE KOPPITZ

When work began on "A Century of Progress – 100 Years of LGBTQ History in Saugatuck-Douglas," now on exhibit at the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center's (SDHC) Old School House Gallery, curator and executive director Eric Gollanek and director John Kerr knew that perceptions about the area would be upended in surprising ways.

While Saugatuck is well known as a queer-inclusive oasis — travel fare aggregator Orbitz listed the city among places like Tokyo, Las Vegas and Guadalajara in its "10 Hottest Gay Destinations" in 2019 — it's Saugatuck's neighbor Douglas that's proven to be the more embracing of the two municipalities.

Kerr is quick to note that the location of The Douglas Dunes Resort, established in 1981 by Carl Jennings and his business partner and husband Larry Gammons, is across the river from Saugatuck. That's because Saugatuck city officials would not sell property to the couple, quashing their original Lake Street bed-and-breakfast plans. "They didn't want 'those people' in Saugatuck," Kerr said.

On their way out of town, however, they saw the 22-room Amity Motel for sale in the adjacent city, which had fewer qualms about two partnered men owning a business. As the decades progressed, Douglas would remain the more inclusive city, a fact that Kerr and Gollanek hope vacationers and locals alike will find surprising.

Citing Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, which continues to leave out protections for queer and tran citizens at the state level, Kerr said the Village of Douglas passed its ordinance prohibiting "house discrimination based on sexual orientation" in the late 1990s. A similar ordinance in Saugatuck passed in 2008. In Kerr's mind, that 11-year gap exists because those in Saugatuck thought they "didn't need it."

It's the ongoing struggle for "civil rights, human rights" — the ability to buy a house, rent a hotel room, congregate and marry — that Gollanek feels are at the heart of "A Century of Progress," which will likely stir controversy in the lakeside communities.

"Being in a small town, everyone gets along. You don't go to battle with the neighbors... and Saugatuck likes to see itself as welcoming," Gollanek told BTL.

"But Saugatuck didn't allow the Pride Flag to be hung until 2020," said Kerr. "In Douglas, anyone could hang a flag — any flag."

Noting that "all events have place," Gollanek, who grew up in Detroit and holds a Ph.D. in art history, said, "Discrimination against queer people at the local, state and national level has all happened well within



MARSHA P. JOHNSON

David Lee Csicsko

living memory. This is our recent past."

While planning for the exhibition began in earnest in 2019, "A Century of Progress" was built on the longstanding work of "The Gay History Project," a collection of audio and video stories, photographs and other ephemera originated in 2006 by Dr. Jim Schmiechen, Professor Emeritus, Central Michigan University and the SDHC.


Schmiechen, one of the center's founding members, started compiling archival materials and oral histories in the mid-2000s and later collaborated with the Grand Valley State University (GVSU) Kutsche Office of Local History for "Stories of Summer." The GVSU partnership yielded an additional 40 hours of interviews and helped digitize 2,000 documents and photos.

Two 2019 events, one national, one closer to home, served as the impetus to draw on nearly 15 years of research into what Gollanek calls "a first draft of LGBT history on the Lakeshore":

the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in June and the death of local queer pioneer Carl Jennings in February. The exhibition's timeline integrates local people, places and events in the context of regional and national queer history. Gollanek and Kerr hope that seeing Saugatuck-Douglas stories on parallel tracks with U.S. and Michigan narratives will encourage others to share their anecdotes and artifacts so that this inaugural exhibition grows into larger, successive exhibitions encompassing even more histories.

With the inclusion of "History Book: LGBTQ Portraits" on display in the SDHC's second-floor gallery, that hope is being realized immediately. Featuring bright, bold representations of folks from Saugatuck-Douglas and beyond, noted Chicago artist David Lee Csicsko and historian/author Owen Keehen create an exhibition filled

See Saugatuck, page 56


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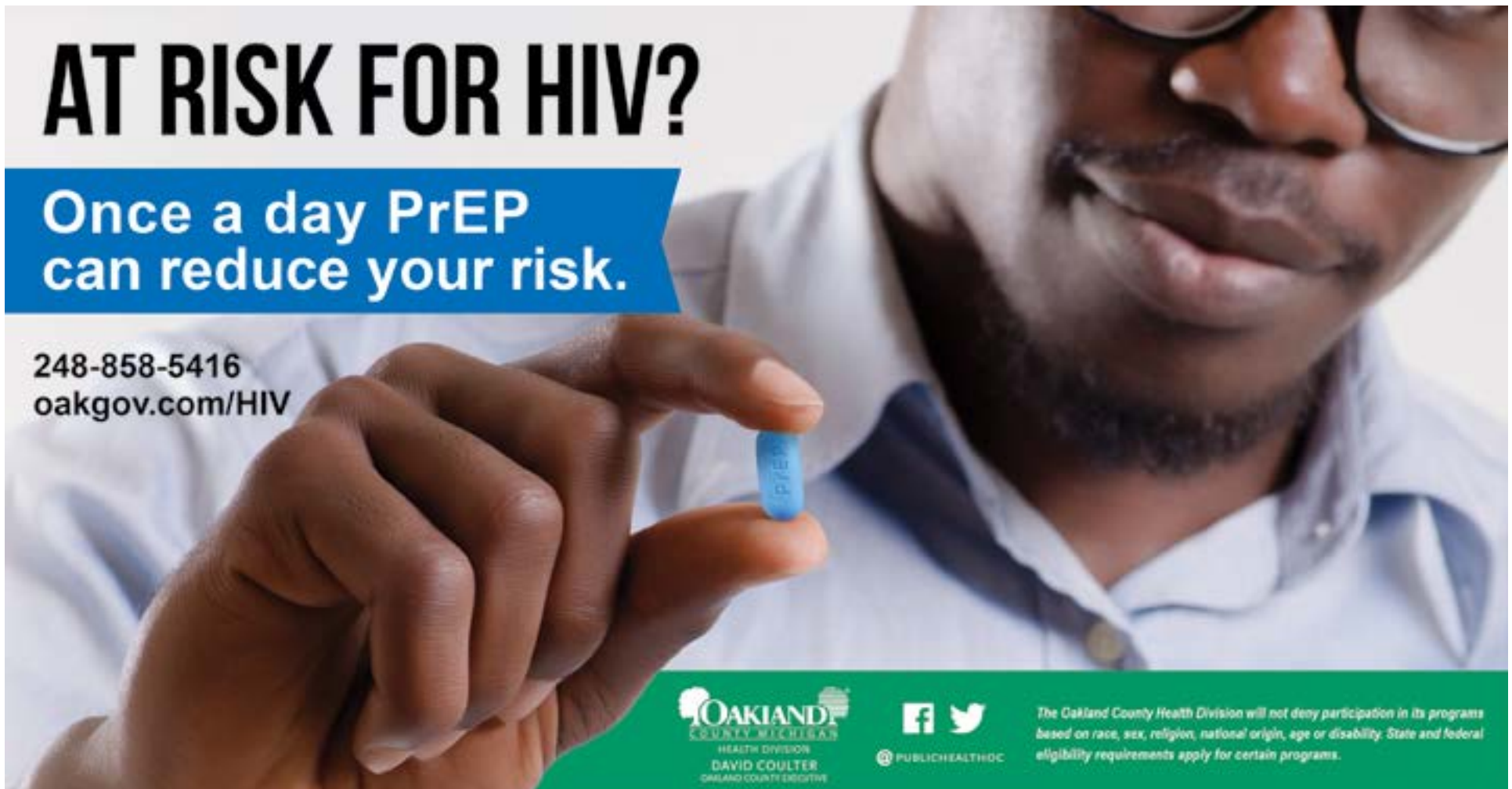


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WHERE'S THE PARADE?

Divergent Pride Celebration Approaches

2022 Hamtramck Pride Planners Focusing on Community Over Commercialization

BY GEORGE ELKIND

While Pride — as a hashtag, a month, a day — can feel synonymous with large-scale parades and marches common to big cities like New York, Chicago and San Francisco, there are many places where organizers find success with less extravagant approaches. As a member of the Pride subcommittee for Hamtramck, a small, densely packed and growing city in the middle of Detroit, I've explored the making of many of these smaller, but equally fabulous, celebrations.

Living in a small, ideologically diverse city in which queer identities aren't always accepted (much less embraced) by many of my neighbors, I saw Pride events as a way to cultivate understanding among the community. When they are done well, they make residents feel safe, welcome and connected to one another. They also provide space to those who are not at liberty to live openly queer.

Hamtramck celebrated its first ever

Pride this year. We focused on distributing resources, raising a flag, and ensuring the city commemorated Pride Month in a memorable way. Finding a way to approach Pride that suits our unique community has proved challenging. We could look to some of the most visible models of Pride celebrations for inspiration, but in many ways, these more grandiose displays aren't the best fit for Hamtramck.

Both the existence and value of smaller Pride events tend to go unnoticed in national narratives, which often prioritize larger-scale, metropolitan events. According to Christopher Conner, who's spent years volunteering in, researching and studying queer communities as a sociologist, these smaller events can preserve a "communal aspect" that's often lost in big celebrations, along with any political focus. The larger Pride events get, he observed, the further they can drift from an emphasis on community.

"Pride is not a political event; it's a music festival," Conner recalls one big-city Pride director saying. "And so their whole mentality

[in larger Pride events] is on: 'It's a music festival. It's here to make money. We need to book the best talent and draw the most people and get the most cash.'"

By contrast, Conner points to more community-driven and volunteer-run Pride events in places like Kansas City, Missouri, Columbia, Missouri and Indianapolis: festivals which he says have done a good job resisting commodification and fulfilling the needs of their respective communities.

While an emphasis on spending and scale — often with accompanying sponsorships which critics have denounced as compromising — has indeed ballooned at many Pride events, a focus on spectacle and large-scale demonstration didn't appear out of thin air. "When you're looking at the gay liberation movement and the post-Stonewall era, it makes sense that public protest would take that form in cities," says Colin Johnson, an author and researcher on queer rural life.

John says Stonewall had really been about, in

many regards, "the taking back of public space and the refusal to be harassed in public space; the several days of resistance that followed were really about pouring out into the streets and kind of refusing to be anonymous and invisible anymore." This made the claiming of public space in early Pride marches a confrontational, political and heavily symbolic act, albeit a celebratory and joyous one. It was something Johnson says that demonstrators, in appearing visible in public, indisputably identifying themselves in large numbers as queer, "weren't supposed to do."

In American cities today, the context around Pride and visibility has changed. Multinationals shower large scale Prides with sponsorships. Images of queer couples likewise prove ubiquitous on subway ads, billboards and tourism brochures.

Outside big urban spaces, such representations are rarer, and acceptance may not be such a default.

In Hamtramck, a majority-Muslim city with a

population that expresses a broad spectrum of attitudes toward queerness, our efforts to raise a Pride flag at City Hall barely gained approval. In cities like mine, where queer visibility is more likely to be contested and many residents — especially kids — may not feel comfortable being out, there's an urgency to negotiate Pride that recalls the events' earlier history. But finding the best and most effective approach to build understanding can prove a challenge, as can resisting the pull of sponsorship for tightly-budgeted events. Johnson says smaller Pride events can help to address community tensions that might be exacerbated by a parade. By operating more like festivals or street fairs, they can provide community benefits through a less confrontational approach.

"Rather than tromping down Main Street, the [smaller Pride events] that I'm aware of have tended to take the form of 'We're setting up in a park in a kind of fixed position.' And we're going to have a series of activities and people are going to speak, and there will be fun and games and all this other stuff. And if you want to be involved in that, you come to us; you know where we are, and you come to us."

Part of what shapes these trends, Johnson suggests, is a concern for the safety of those involved.

"In a fixed location, you can more closely monitor and guarantee the safety of people. Whereas if you're putting yourself out and seizing public space, you run more of a risk of meeting counter-protesters or people on the side of the street where you assemble who might not be aware of the fact that [the event is happening], and who may actually be fairly hostile to the display"

This less prominent, more stationary approach, according to Johnson, also reduces barriers between participants — the people who, in a parade or march, would be considered demonstrators — and attendees. The result, in many cases, allows those present to engage with the queer community at their own pace and on their own terms rather than simply watching it pass by them. For Johnson, this reflects a finessed approach to navigating gender and sexual differences that have often been historically prevalent in smaller communities, which lack the element of large city anonymity.

"Rather than loud, visible, highly politicized

assertions of one's rights to be seen and to be equal, there's a far more nuanced negotiation that happens between people who know a lot about one another and don't always say everything."

But the results, according to Conner, can in some ways be more expressive, varied or inclusive than what he's witnessed at bigger festivals. He says smaller festivals can be surprising and spectacular in their own ways.

"One of the interesting things about these Pride Fests in what's usually called 'flyover country' is that you actually see a lot more diverse forms [of presentation]," Conner says. "You see everything from leathermen to guys in cowboy boots, you see young people and old people. In terms of age diversity, I'd say you actually see a broader age range."

At some events, he says, country music, sex slings and church booths can all co-mingle in close proximity. Some even take place on church grounds, as in Galesburg, Illinois, where Knox College is based.

While sex is at times on display at smaller Pride Fests, in many rural and conservative-leaning communities it can also be regarded as a "disruptive force" and approached more subtly. This more measured approach, Johnson suggests, is informed by the firsthand experience of queer people in particular contexts, and sometimes an approach to identity less centered around sex. "A lot of this [decision-making] is circumstantial, and the people with the most at stake have the knowledge base and the greatest impetus to try to be nuanced about it," says Johnson. "Oftentimes, you can't just look at what's been done successfully in one context, whether it's a major metropolitan context or a smaller community and apply it to your own context. Because the politics are different, the interests are different."

In Hamtramck — like any city — the context and culture are distinct and present their own host of challenges. But the need to advocate, provide for, and celebrate queer people is greater for them, as is true in so many places. As we work to plan our first in-person events with a nuanced, effective and smaller-scale approach, it's fests in places like Galesburg and Kansas City more than New York or Chicago that may provide our best guide.

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What's in a (Queer) Name?



Chasten Changed His. Maddow Kept Hers. Here's How Less-Famous Locals Pick Post-Nuptial Nomenclature.

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Keep it or change it? Hyphenate or blend it? For LGBTQ+ couples planning to marry, deciding what to do with one's last name is but one of countless tasks on every pre-wedding to-do list. And whether keeping with

tradition or breaking the mold, the reasons for and ramifications of that choice are as unique and varied as the couples themselves.

Candice Coschino and Renee Coschino have been together 11 years and married for six. They live in Clinton Township and represent one of 980,000 same-sex households reported in 2019 in the U.S., 58 percent of whom were married. Candice, 37, felt strongly about keeping her last name when she and Renee, 45, married.

Proud to have a name that's one of a kind, Candice wanted to retain that distinction.

"It's one family bloodline," Candice explained. "And so I feel like that's kind of unique. In other words, there's only one Candice Coschino in the whole world."

Entering into the marriage, Renee's situation was quite different from her wife-to-be. Previously married, she had been

using that name instead of reverting back to her maiden name, which she hadn't used for 20 years.

"I was used to being a Smith, but it was just a new chapter in my life," Renee recalled. "I wanted to show [Candice] that I was committed to her, too. And I offered to take her name right away. It was just like it was no thought whatsoever."

Though Renee has children from her previous marriage, they already had a different, established name. Some couples do consider their current or future kids when deciding what to do about family surnames, sometimes choosing to use the same last name for everyone.

The logistics of legally changing a name is another factor, one that can be daunting for anyone, LGBTQ+ or not. Renee called it "a pain," saying, "You don't realize how many things you have to change until you're actually presented with it." That sentiment was shared by others interviewed for this article. It's also worth noting it can be a pricey undertaking.

Tim Lantzy, 57, said that the decision he and his husband made about their names was an easy one, too. He and his husband of five years, Jim Scott, 53, decided to each keep their name.

Lantzy said, for him, changing one's name brought to mind a time when wives were subordinate to their husbands.

The Ferndale-based couple has been together 20 years, and when it came to a name change, "Neither one of us wanted to," Lantzy said. "We both

had our own identities. We brought different things to the marriage, and it just wasn't an option for either of us."

The couple's decision to forego having children factored in, too.

"Neither one of us had ever really grown up thinking of being a parent or having children,"

"I wanted to show [Candice] that I was committed to her, too. And I offered to take her name right away."

See **Queer Name**, page 46



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How to Make Your Wedding Extra Queer



BY JACKIE JONES

Traditional wedding ceremonies are a drag — especially Western wedding traditions. They consist of the same routine: the words of welcome, the vows, the ring exchange, the kiss, the closing remarks. It's all expected at this point. So boring. So heteronormative. It's

about time we drop those dead traditions and welcome in something new, fresh and gay.

So, as a gift to our colorful queers, here are some alt wedding ideas to make your wedding more reflective of you:

Celebrate the day with wedding tattoos

For many, exchanging rings is a symbol of

love. But what about exchanging tattoos? This alternative will leave a mark for many. Try hiring a tattooer to seal your wedding day, not only for yourselves but for extended guests. Gift everyone in attendance with an opportunity to leave your union with a new adornment.

According to Robert Fiore, owner of The Wedding Tattooer website, "there is no greater

reason to adorn one's flesh with a marking than to celebrate the love between two people and the tribes they come from." he says. "It's a ritual as old as time."

Walk through it together

If you're tired of seeing only one person walk down the aisle, walk together. This option does more than crush the patriarchy. It shows that you both are ready to unite your love. Moreso, it displays equality in your relationship. As a response, your guests will be in awe of your union.

Invite some drag queens

Come on. You've got to admit this seems fun. The glam, drama and attitude will keep the energy going throughout the ceremony or reception. Whether you hire a drag entertainment group (consider Michigan-based drag production company Beauty Beyond Drag!), or ask your guests to dress in drag, you can't go wrong.

"A wedding reception with drag after the non-partiers go home is magical," Bradley Haas, co-director of BBD, tells BTL. "The host chosen by the newlyweds takes the stage with a few performances, hangs out with the crowd after, and serves up a couple drinks behind the bar." If you've ever seen "Drag Me Down the Aisle," then you know that you and your partner will feel comfortable being as outrageous as possible.

Flip it at a skatepark

Grab your board, blades or scooter, and head on over to the skatepark. Instead of planning a wedding inside of a church or hall, look for the nearest skatepark. A skatepark inspires freedom and playfulness, so your guests are guaranteed to enjoy the surroundings, while you and your partner are also bound to have a blast. Be sure to remind your guests to bring some knee pads and a bit of Neosporin for any

See *Alt Weddings*, page 48

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→ Queer Name

Continued from p. 42

Lantzy said. “So when that was the case, there didn’t seem to be any reason or any purpose behind going ahead and either combining names or maybe taking his name or him taking mine.”

“We talked about it when we first agreed to get married,” he continued. “After he proposed...[we] both agreed right off the bat. It was probably just a three- or four-minute conversation.”

Keeping one’s name is far and away the most common choice among men in heterosexual marriages, too. One 2015 survey shows just three percent of straight men reportedly taking their wife’s name. By contrast, more than 70 percent of women said they took their husband’s name.

Lantzy noted that, more and more, he’s seeing couples of all sexual orientations choosing to keep their birth names as they enter into partnerships.

Like Lantzy and Scott, 33-year-olds Melissa Beaver and Jacqueline Kandt each kept their last names when they got married two years ago. Beaver cited three reasons for keeping her name. “We were proud of where we came from and didn’t want to lose that,” Beaver said. “Also, the entire process of changing

Over 60 years ago, that was the choice of life-long gay rights activist Axel Lundahl-Madsen and his partner, Eigil Eskildsen, who blended their first names in the ‘50s to become Axel Axgil and Eigil Axgil. They did so as a show of defiance while in prison on pornography charges.

everything over to a new name is daunting.”

“And also, my last name is Beaver!” she added. “[Jacqueline] didn’t want to be a lesbian couple with that as her permanent last name. I’ve been teased all my life and feel too proud to change it.”

Unlike the other couples interviewed, Christopher and Richard Stauffer-Kipp decided to hyphenate their names. Neither felt strongly about keeping his own as is. Ages 50 and 39, they live in Mt. Clemens and have been married eight years — or at least, Christopher hopes so. “I’m hoping I get this right,” Christopher said, pausing to recall how long it had been. “Otherwise, I’m

going to get some really evil looks.”

For the Stauffer-Kipps, hyphenating was the best of both worlds: keeping their birth names and adding their spouse’s name.

“We didn’t know what to go with,” Richard recalled. “We thought about combining names in some random fashion. But then in the end, phonetically, we just chose to go with Stauffer-Kipp.” He said they gave it a lot of thought and decided they preferred “Stauffer-Kipp” to “Kipp-Stauffer.”

Richard reported their idea to combine their names came from their friends in Ohio, a female couple whose birth names were Williams and Schakett. Upon getting married,

they chose Schwilliams as a last name.

“I kind of wish that we had gone with a creative blending of our names,” Richard said. “But we just were so stressed about the wedding planning itself that coming up with an agreeable name was just kind of overwhelming. So, in the end, we hyphenated.”

Though it’s rarer for married LGBTQ+ couples to opt for a blended surname, it’s not a new idea. Over 60 years ago, that was the choice of life-long gay rights activist Axel Lundahl-Madsen and his partner, Eigil Eskildsen, who blended their first names in the ‘50s to become Axel Axgil and Eigil Axgil. They did so as a show of defiance while in prison on pornography charges.

In Denmark in 1989, these name-changing trailblazers became one of the world’s first same-sex couples whose marriage was legally recognized.

Lantzy stresses that the decision about married last names is unique to each couple.

“It’s not always required...where you’re going to take my name [or] I’m going to take your name, and we’re going to live as one going forward,” he said. “You find what’s comfortable for you and the relationship you’re in, and you make that happen.”

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→ Alt Weddings

Continued from p. 44

unlanded tricks.

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Gender is a social construct, as we know. It doesn't exist, and it shouldn't determine the entirety of your wedding. So, for your wedding, forget about gender roles. Instead, allow your guest to wear whatever they want, however they want. If you or your partner is non-binary or gender non-conforming, this alternative would be an excellent way for your guests to feel included. Nurturing a space of inclusivity makes everyone feel comfortable.

Put on a festival

Your wedding festival may not be as epic as Beychella or Burning Man, but it will still give off those laid-back vibes (depending on your choice of festival "treats"). Set up some tents, rent a yurt or deck out your backyard to plan a festival for all your friends and family members to enjoy. Include music, food and games that set the mood.

Include your guests

This wedding alternative creates a similar ceremony for the guests and the couple. Strategically place your guests seating around

you and your partner as you wed. Essentially, allow them to be immersed in the intimate looks, crying and laughs.

Plan an adventure

This one'll get your blood pumping. If you and your partner are into action, why not carry that spirit of adventure over to your wedding? Show off your daredevil ways, freefall through the sky with skydiving, float among the clouds while paragliding or brave the waves in a whitewater rafting excursion with some adventurous guests. Michigan is home to some of the best whitewater rafting opportunities around, like Northwoods Adventures. Whatever you and your partner decide, you'll find plenty of options for a lively, memorable celebration.

Forget all the stress and elope

This is the "you know what, forget it" alternative, perfect for those who don't want the fuss of all the wedding planning. Instead, plan a trip and tie the knot. Sometimes, a ceremony is unnecessary. The advantages of this alternative? Lower costs, less stress and more intimacy. If you're in love with your partner, that's all that matters. A vast, grand wedding doesn't always express a couple's relationship. Sometimes, all you need is to make each other feel special.



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Photo: Monarchy Enterprises

Richard E. Grant Puts His Best Heel Forward

The Veteran Actor on Playing a Gay Warrior Queen in ‘Everybody’s Talking About Jamie’

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

On the heels of his Oscar-nominated role as Jack Hock in “Can You Ever Forgive Me?” alongside Melissa McCarthy, actor Richard E. Grant takes on another aging gay man who embodies AIDS-era homosexuality. This time, though, the British actor’s character, Hugo Battersby, is literally in heels.

In “Everybody’s Talking About Jamie,” adapted from the coming-of-age British stage musical, Grant’s Hugo moonlights as Loco Chanelle, one of the most popular drag queens on the scene during a major turning point in the gay liberation movement, when AIDS devastated the LGBTQ+ community

and forever changed the men, like Hugo, who lived through it.

He wasn’t just a drag queen — he was a warrior queen. Just the kind of figure Jamie (Max Harwood), the film’s titular character, needs as he navigates his young queer life as an aspiring queen whose bullies and school administration stand in the way of him being his true self.

Grant, also known for his roles in “Bram Stoker’s Dracula,” “Spice World” and “Gosford Park,” spoke about the role days before the heartbreaking passing of his wife, veteran Hollywood voice and dialect coach Joan Washington. In our interview, Grant talked about the major differences between Jack and Hugo, how bingeing 11 seasons of “RuPaul’s

Drag Race” was his crash course in drag, and the unforeseen problem of being in costume and having to pee.

You look good in drag, Richard. It makes me think that, perhaps, you had a past in drag. Is that something that we should talk about?

Chris, this is entirely due to the amazing artwork of Guy Common, the makeup designer and applier; Nadia Stacey for the statue-like wig; and Guy Speranza, for his amazing costume of the double-D bra. That’s all their work. I can take no credit for this, whatsoever. They provided the armor for this.

Was it the double-D bra that really helped you get into character as Loco?

And six inch heels, leopard-skin tights and being 6’8” and having to bend through doorways. That does something to your psyche. [Laughs.]

Did playing Loco have you considering your own drag name if, say, you were to compete on “RuPaul’s Drag Race”?

I think it would have to be Regina D’Lumpciuous.

I look forward to the national tour.

Oh my god. I watched 11 series of “RuPaul’s Drag Race” in three weeks. I’ve never seen drag before, so I thought this was the best way of trying to immerse myself into the vulnerability and sheer steely determination

that you have to have to live that life.

How did your crash course in drag prepare you to play Loco?

The vulnerability, on the one hand, and the incredible nerve that it takes, and then throwing shade and sass, and that every single drag artist had some prejudice to overcome, either within their own family or in society. So I thought that the courage that they have is absolutely extraordinary. They may be crying backstage or having a meltdown or some tragedy has happened, and yet, they go onstage in all this gear and just deliver. And I felt that was really key to Hugo/Loco. These two sides, it's so extreme.

Hugo's story is one of resilience — he lives through the AIDS epidemic, lost a lot of friends to the virus, including his partner — and Jamie recognizes that.

He's kind of an emotional anchor and [there's] the historical overview too, because Jamie is out happily at the age of 16. His real struggle is convincing the school to accept him in drag, which is a very different journey from what Hugo has gone through with Stonewall, the hedonism of the '70s and the legalization of homosexuality, certainly, in the UK in 1967, which is a historical blink away. Then followed by this scourge of AIDS in the '80s and '90s, where you know generations of people were wiped out. It's such a different struggle than what Jamie knows and is going through. And I thought that being done in a montage with a song called "This Was Me" was a very smart way of bringing that historical context into the movie.

How do you know so much LGBTQ+ history?

Where I grew up in this tiny country in Southeast Africa, I don't recall ever meeting anybody that I knew was gay. But certainly, when I went to drama college and university and going into the theater, there are many gay people. So, I suppose by osmosis and accumulation of people that you are surrounded by. So many designers and makeup artists and costume designers in my career experience have been gay. I think that informs you. People who had the best parties or the best clothes or the best music choices, they were the people that, in my experience, were gay.

So it seemed like the chosen people compared to the rest of us, who were wearing slouchy clothes or not having good taste, which I know is playing to a complete cliché. I was also friends with an actor

called Ian Charleson, who played the lead in "Chariots of Fire" in the early '80s. He died of AIDS in 1990. I've worked with him a couple of times. So he was really the inspiration for how I approached playing Jack Hock in "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" Then I went to RuPaul's school on TV to try and learn how to play Hugo Battersby/Loco Chanelle. So I think that you can't work in show business and not be educated by gay people. You'd have to be in a universe of only doing action movies with hyper-machismo people to not be aware.

A couple of years ago, you said it was "unjustifiable" when straight actors play gay roles, which has obviously been an ongoing conversation in the business. But you're gay in this movie.

It's the first thing I said to [director] Jonathan Butterell when he offered me this part. I said, "You should cast a drag artist or an openly gay actor to play this part because you and I are gonna get into trouble for doing this." And he said, "The creative team are all gay, and we have decided you have sad eyes, and we think that you're right for this part." So I said, "Well, you know, if it comes down on your head or mine that you should have cast a gay actor, be warned." But he was very determined.

Do you think Jack and Hugo would be friends if they met on the street?

I think that Jack is such a gregarious huckster, and chances are that he never saw himself as a failure. Whereas, I think that Hugo knows that he's a failure. And he's lost his partner. Jack had lost his partner, as well, but there

See **Richard E. Grant**, page 54



Max Harwood, as Jamie, and Richard E. Grant, as Loco Chanelle, in "Everybody's Talking About Jamie." Photo: Monarchy Enterprises

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Bi and By: A Bisexual Reading List

“Bi: Notes for a Bisexual Revolution,” Shiri Eisner (2013, Seal Press)

Bisexuality isn't just about who someone is attracted to; it's about busting the many binaries that constrain not only sexuality and gender identity, but also so many other areas of our lives. Shiri Eisner makes clear that tearing down the patriarchy is a vital political act and that bi visibility is essential to reshaping society for the better.

“Life Isn't Binary: On Being Both, Beyond, and In-Between,” Alex Iantaffi and Meg-John Barker (2019, Jessica Kingsley Publishers)

Binary is boring. And harmful. From the publisher: “Much of society's thinking operates in a highly rigid and binary manner; something is good or bad, right or wrong, a success or a failure, and so on. Challenging this limited way of thinking, this groundbreaking book looks at how non-binary methods of thought can be applied to all aspects of life, and offer new and greater ways of understanding ourselves and how we relate to others.”

“Vanishing Twins: A Marriage,” Leah Dieterich (2018, Soft Skull Press)

Marriage is tough. Pledging “til death do us part” opens up a lot of questions about identity and self. What does it mean to be part of a permanent pair you've been told your whole life to seek out? For Leah Dieterich, marrying her husband, Eric, leaves her looking for answers about her identity and sexuality, leading the couple to decide to have an open marriage. According to Lambda Literary, “Dieterich describes that messy process with a level of intimacy that often amounts to bravery.”

“Star-Crossed,” Barbara Dee (2017 Aladdin)

Middle school is tough. And very dramatic. This book for tweens features Mattie, an 8th grader cast as Romeo in the school's production of “Romeo & Juliet.” Playing Juliet is Gemma, the new girl at school. Mattie finds herself with a crush on Gemma, which leaves her to wonder if it's possible to like both boys AND girls and to worry what her friends will think.

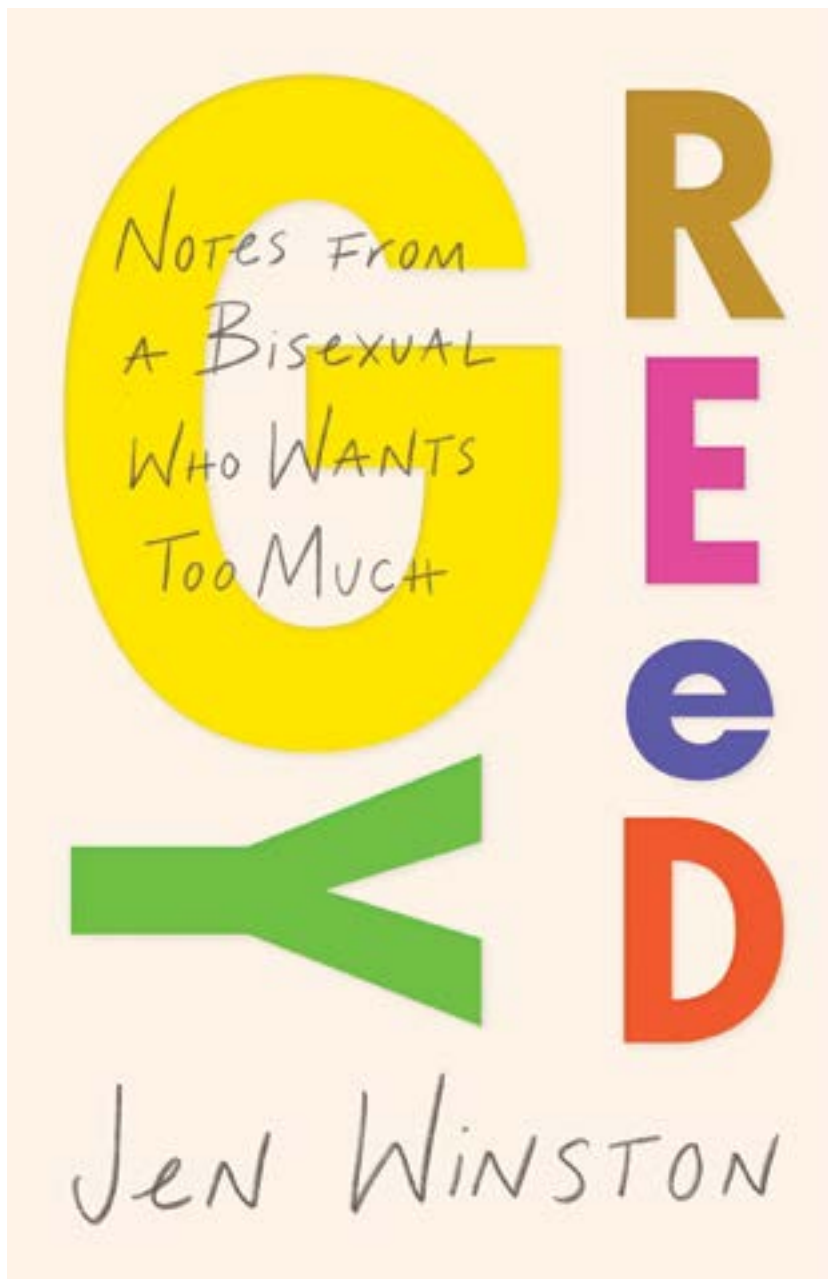
“Another Country,” James Baldwin (first published in 1962)

You should read everything by James Baldwin, but this is his most famous novel with a bisexual character. Described by the publisher as “a novel of passions — sexual, racial, political, artistic — that [depicts] men and women, Blacks and whites, stripped of their masks of gender and race by love and hatred at the most elemental and sublime.”

“Not My Father's Son,” Alan Cumming (2015, HarperCollins)

While this book isn't explicitly about the actor's bisexuality, Alan Cumming is still outspoken about being bisexual even though he is married to a man. “I still define myself as a bisexual even though I have chosen to be with Grant,” he told Larry King in 2013. “I'm sexually attracted to the female form even though I am with a man, and I just feel that bisexuals have a bad rap.” Listen to the audiobook to get the full Alan Cumming experience.

— by D'Anne Witkowski



New Book Aims to Spark a Bisexual Revolution

Author Jen Winston on Why it's OK to Be 'Greedy'

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Being bisexual is a little like being colorblind: no one would notice just by looking at you. If you don't tell people, they won't know. Unlike color blindness, however, bisexuality is weighed down by stereotypes, misconceptions and denial.

According to Jen Winston, author of “Greedy: Notes from a Bisexual Who Wants Too Much,” to be bisexual is to be told that you're asking for too much and that you don't exist, which is a difficult place to navigate.

This is, in fact, why Winston titled her book “Greedy.” There's an idea that being bisexual means you want it all; that by not limiting yourself to either men or women, you're some kind of sexual glutton.

“I don't think that that's a myth,” Winston tells *Between The Lines* from her home office in Brooklyn. “I think that's true for some bisexuals, which is fine.”

It's a radical idea inspired by Shiri Eisner's writing about bi stereotypes, which Winston quotes in her book: “If

we're saying, ‘No, we're not confused; no, we're not promiscuous; no, we're not greedy,’ then we accept that it's wrong to be confused, it's wrong to be greedy, it's wrong to be promiscuous. And I want to ask, why do we have to work by their rules?”

Spoiler alert: we don't.

Winston's book is more than just an account of her personal journey toward identifying as bisexual and grappling with all of the stereotypes and misconceptions that come with it. Winston presents bisexuality as “a lens through which to reimagine our world.”

Unfortunately, bisexuality is “a hyper-sexualized identity because of the stigma around it,” Winston says. “Because of the way conversations about bisexuality have become entwined with conversations about monogamy.”

As Winston points out in her book, if you're worried that a bisexual won't be faithful to you, your issue is with monogamy, not bisexuality. The two are not mutually exclusive.

Bisexuality also suffers from what Winston calls “the illusion of acceptance,” which creates the idea that being bi isn't a big deal.

This is perhaps why some view bisexuality as “a gateway” identity — a place for gays and lesbians to hang out until they're comfortable acknowledging who they really are. Coming out as bisexual may seem easier because it reassures people that “at least you're not fully gay,” Winston says, but there's “tons of homophobia” behind this assumption. Anti-bisexualism also comes from the lesbians and gays who think bisexuals need to just pick a side.

On the other hand, this illusion of acceptance can also make it seem like being bisexual isn't worthy of acknowledging at all, especially if said bi person is in a committed relationship.

Winston stresses that bisexual relationships are queer relationships, which is not something she's always been aware of. She uses her relationship with a person named Ben as an example. “We were both bi,” she says. “This [relationship] had two queer people in it, and because of our gender presentation, it didn't even occur to me.”

This scenario is not uncommon. “I recently posted about bisexual people in straight passing relationships,” Winston says. “So many people reported saying they didn't feel like they needed to come out.”

This could stem from a desire to take the path of least resistance — after all, it's a lot easier to have people project a heteronormative view of you and your

See **Bisexual Revolution**, page 54

Final season of Love

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→ Bisexual Revolution

Continued from p. 52

relationship — or impostor syndrome, which is something Winston has struggled with herself.

“The majority of my interesting sexual stories involve men,” she says. “And I was like, can I even write this book? But then I was like, that’s the whole point, Jen.”

Winston writes about her dating and sexual history and the period of her life when she didn’t feel like she could call herself bisexual because she hadn’t had any sexual experiences with women. But she’s finally come to the realization that bisexuality isn’t just something you do; it’s something you are.

She believes that coming out as bisexual is important. “My whole life is about coming out as bisexual,” she says. “For us, it is a big deal, and it was really hard.”

That said, Winston does not presume to speak for all bisexuals. “My experiences speak more to bi people, specifically fem-presenting people, who have had the majority of their relationships with cis men.”

Winston, who lives with her partner who exclusively uses they/them pronouns, maintains her identity as a bisexual rather than queer or pansexual because she does not believe bisexual identity is trans-exclusionary. “Part of coming into my bisexuality for me was realizing that it wasn’t binary, and it actually meant questioning everything and being comfortable exiting in a state of flux,” she says. “The word allowed me to escape straight culture.”

She hopes that people reading her book will realize that “coming out as bi is freeing whether or not you have a desire to act on it. It’s still freeing and valid to feel like you are truly yourself.”

Above all else, she says, “If you’re bi, that’s awesome, and I’m proud of you.”



Photo Jen Winston. Photo: Landon Speers



Melissa McCarthy and Richard E. Grant in “Can You Ever Forgive Me?” Photo: Fox Searchlight

→ Richard E. Grant

Continued from p. 51

is something innately optimistic about him, about Jack Hock, that is what makes him ludicrous and funny and vulnerable. Whereas Hugo is until he meets Jamie, who really ignites his love of drag and gives him a kind of brief second act in his life.

I think that Jack Hock would probably think that Hugo was a sad, old has-been [laughs] and not worth bothering with. And certainly, because he had no money. Jack was entirely obsessed with anybody who was gonna give him

a drug deal or a free meal or a sofa. Hugo doesn’t have anything to offer. He would just think he was a sad, old queen. [Laughs.] He would have no time for him, definitely.

“When you’re in drag to go and have a wee is so monumental that you have to develop the thinking and the physicality of a camel’s bladder.”

to develop the thinking and the physicality of a camel’s bladder.

It doesn’t sound like a very pleasant experience when you describe it like that.

It’s extremely uncomfortable.

Is this the first time that you’ve walked in heels that high?

Yeah, first time I’ve been in drag.

Well, I mean, you can still walk in heels without being in drag, Richard.

True. I’m a teenager of the ’70s so I had platform heels, but not as high as these were.

How tall were those?

Oh, four inches.

Did you manage to stay up on them? No accidents?

Oh yeah, because the wedges of those ones, in the ’70s, were like two inches square. These drag shoes were stiletto heels. Torture chambers. Have you been in drag?

Not full-on drag.

Well, there’s always tonight.

This interview has been condensed and edited for clarity.

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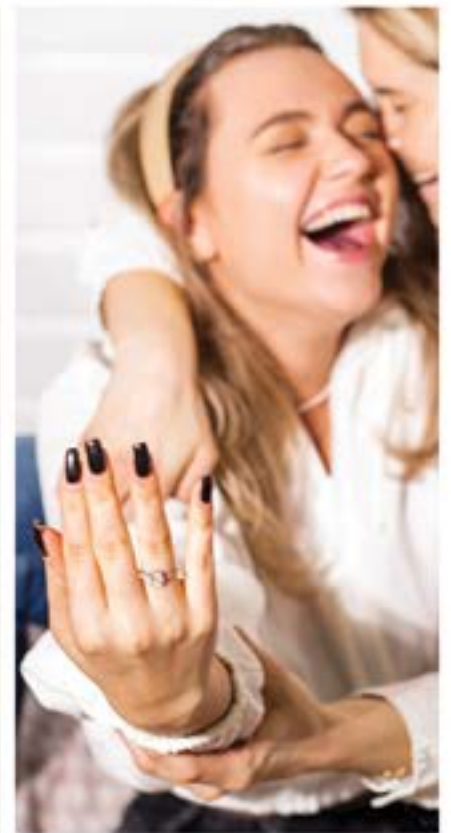
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Photo: Lara Parent Photography

→ Saugatuck

Continued from p. 38

Made possible, in part, by a Michigan Humanities grant, Gollanek sees “A Century of Progress” as just that — part of the progression of LGBTQ+ people in the world — but he emphasizes that history, queer and otherwise, stretches beyond the places, people and events of now.

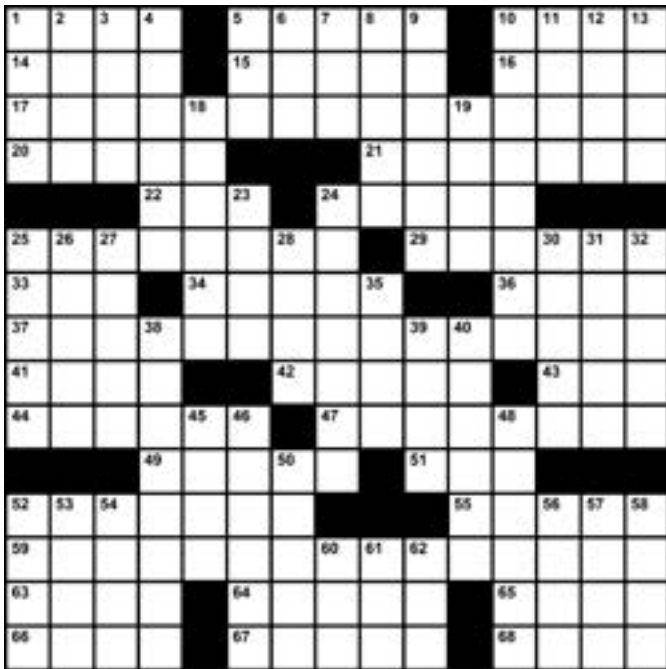
with exceptional people, many of whom may be unfamiliar but are nonetheless fascinating. Local figures include out-and-proud trailblazers like Jennings and his husband Gammons and pioneering puppeteer and television creator Burr Tillstrom. Tillstrom created Kukla, Fran and Ollie and mentored Shari Lewis and Muppets mastermind Jim Henson, but never publicly identified as gay while alive.

Made possible, in part, by a Michigan Humanities grant, Gollanek sees “A Century

of Progress” as just that — part of the progression of LGBTQ+ people in the world — but he emphasizes that history, queer and otherwise, stretches beyond the places, people and events of now. “The timeline does show progress, he said, “but it also reveals that queer people don’t have full protection against discrimination in our country.”

Gollanek, along with Kerr, Csicsko and Keehen, encourages visitors to interact with the exhibit, whether by responding to questions about the area’s LGBTQ+ history, contributing their own stories or by inviting other community members to attend. “This (exhibition) legitimizes LGBTQ history and stories,” Gollanek said. “Hopefully, people can see themselves in it and realize that things they might not think matter do warrant being preserved.”

“A Century of Progress: 100 Years of LGBTQ History in Saugatuck-Douglas” is now on exhibit at the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center, 130 W. Center Street, Douglas. SDHC is open Friday-Sunday, 12- 4 p.m. Admission to the exhibit and the exhibition “History Book: LGBTQ Portraits” is free, and all members of the public are welcome.



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 36 DeGeneres voice role
 37 More of the best thing
 41 Takei's "Star Trek" role
 42 Riyadh resident
 43 Summer along the Seine
 44 Wraps for female impersonators
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 49 One of Caesar's stones
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 63 Old Dodge
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 68 End of the best thing

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 4 "Miss ____" (pal of Pee-Wee)
 5 Sexual ending
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- 12 Trunk without a bellybutton
 13 Withdraws, with "out"
 18 Bear the expense of
 19 Neighbor of Belg.
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 24 Places on ocean bottoms
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 26 Tony winner "Take ____"
 27 Actor Winfield, to Brazilians
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 35 Arc on a Samuel Barber score
 38 Kind of board
 39 Put the finger on
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 45 "Hair_'s " ____ to Be Hard"
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 53 Words of woe, to the Bard
 54 Lucci in "All My Children"
 56 Enjoy some ladyfingers, e.g.
 57 Tennis champ Nastase
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Coming Out, to Rachel

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 5 Hayes of "South Park"
 10 WNBA star Rebecca
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 15 Scroll at Beth Chayim Chadashim
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- 17 Start of the best thing about coming out of the closet, per Rachel Maddow
 20 Sty dwellers
 21 Female impersonator's garb
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