

MICHIGAN'S LGBTQ+ NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993

Between THE Lines™

RECLAIMING AN INSULT
How a Self-Proclaimed
'Crip Crusader' Is
Changing Trans
Representation

ELECTION 2022
Early Predictions
for LGBTQ+
Voters in
Michigan

MINDING THE EARTH
Naturally, Queers Are
Leading the Way in
Eco-Fashion Too

Dragging IN THE Holidays

A Festive Chat with Jinkx Monsoon and BenDeLaCreme
Before Their Detroit Show
PLUS: Our Holigay Gift Guide

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS



No matter how you celebrate the holidays this season, make sure your home is merry & bright and fresh & clean! Whether gathering with your own family or with holiday guests, get every room Hagopian Clean from top to bottom: air ducts, furniture, rugs, carpet and more!

AIR DUCT CLEANING

\$100 OFF

State-of-the-art
Cyclone System
Air Duct Cleaning

Must present coupon. Some restrictions apply.
Not to be combined with any other
coupons/offers. Expires 12/4/2021.

CARPET CLEANING

\$99

2 Rooms + Hall
In-Home
Carpet Cleaning

Must present coupon. Up to 250 sq. ft. each
room. Not to be combined with any
other coupons/offers. Expires 12/4/2021.

RUG CLEANING

\$25 OFF

Rug Cleaning
Pick-Up & Delivery
Service

Must present coupon at time of rug
pick up. Some restrictions apply. Not to be
combined with any other coupons/offers.
Expires 12/4/2021.

THE MOST TRUSTED NAME IN CLEANING SINCE 1939

HAGOPIAN
CLEANING SERVICES



1-800-HAGOPIAN (424-6742)

HagopianClean.com

SCHEDULE ONLINE!



- 4 5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now
- 6 Election 2022: Early Predictions for LGBTQ+ Voters in Michigan
- 6 Detroit Elects State's First Latinx Out LGBTQ+ Woman to Office
- 8 Reclaiming His 'Crip Crusader' Identity
- 12 Decriminalization of Sex Work Is Good Public Health Policy
- 12 Creep of the Week
- 14 14 Ideas to Make the Season Bright
- 18 Queers, Of Course, Are Leading the Way in Eco-Fashion
- 20 An Open Letter on Voter Suppression from Michigan LGBTQ+ Orgs
- 22 8 Local and National Inspirational Transgender Leaders (Who Aren't Caitlyn Jenner)
- 28 Kal Penn Comes Out at 44: Here Are 7 Other Celebrities Who Came Out Later in Life
- 30 A Gender-Affirming Online Support Group That Helps Trans People Find Their Voices
- 32 Dragging in the Holidays: An Interview with BenDeLaCreme and Jinx Monsoon
- 36 Representation Matters: The Hollywood Film 'The Eyes of Tammy Faye' Recreates an Historic Interview with a Man Living with AIDS



32 COVER STORY

Photo: Jiji Lee

VOL. 2946 • NOVEMBER 11, 2021

ISSUE 1187

PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP

www.pridesource.com
Phone 734-263-1476

PUBLISHERS

Benjamin Jenkins
benjamin@pridesource.com

Tom Wesley
tom@pridesource.com

Publishers Emeritus: Jan Stevenson & Susan Horowitz

EDITORIAL

Editorial Director

Chris Azzopardi
chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

News and Features Editor

Jackie Jones
jackie@pridesource.com

News & Feature Writers

Lawrence Ferber, Ellen Knoppov, Jason A. Michael,
Drew Howard, Jonathan Thurston, D'Anne Witkowski,
Jill A. Greenberg, Eve Kucharski

Copy Editor

Sarah Hunt

Columnists

Charles Alexander, Michelle E. Brown,
Mikey Rox, Gwendolyn Ann Smith, Dana Rudolph

CREATIVE

Cartoonists

Paul Berg

Contributing Photographers

Andrew Potter, Andrew Cohen, Roxanne Frith, Tih Penfil

ADVERTISING & SALES

Tom Wesley, 734-263-1476
tom@pridesource.com

Ann/Andy Cox, 248-613-2513

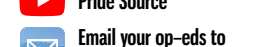
anncox@pridesource.com

National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media, 212-242-6863

MEMBER OF

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



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

Copyright 2021

MICHIGAN'S LGBTQ+ NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993

BTL
Between the Lines

**Delivered
Straight to
Your Mailbox**

WWW.PRIDESOURCE.COM/SUBSCRIBE

5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now

BY JACKIE JONES

We're in the acceptance phase of fall — the phase where we've finally come to terms with the fact that summer is officially over and it's time to get ready for the holiday season. But the good news is, you don't have to go through it alone because here are five queer activities to turn to during this transitional time.

Update Your Gender on Your Passport

From 12 to 2 p.m. on Nov. 19, the University of Michigan will hold Trans Visibility Passport Day. Lorant Peeler, program specialist for events and partnerships at UM's Spectrum Center, says this event is open to "folks needing a gender marker or name change" and for people wanting a new or renewed passport. The Center and UM's School of Social Work Office of Global Activities will be assisting students and community members. The event, held at the School of Social Work in Room 3661, is free to attend. However, the passport and application must be paid the day of via check or money order.

To register and for more information, go to [UM's Social Work Website](#).



Photo: Krakenimages.com



Photo: Zhukovvlad

Attend a Queer Crochet and Knitting Event

The weather outside is frightful, but the yarn inside is oh so delightful. So wool (we couldn't help ourselves) you like to know what we're talking about? It's a knitting and crochet group for the LGBTQ+ community. At 6 p.m. Nov. 15 and every second Friday of the month, you can attend this virtual recurring event to enjoy a night of shared LGBTQ+ company. "People who attend can bring whatever they're working on and have that time set aside to get something accomplished, to pick up a new skill, or just relax and enjoy the company," facilitator Leslie Boker told BTL.

Register in advance by emailing [Grand Rapids Pride](mailto:GrandRapidsPride@info@grpride.org) at info@grpride.org.



"Dysmorphia" by Rachel Britton. Photo courtesy of Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts

Engage in Small Talk with UICA and Rachel Britton in Grand Rapids

This in-person event takes small talk to a new level. In this season of the ongoing series "Small Talk," created by the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (UICA), 13 artists will be interviewed about their work featured in UICA's exhibit "Other World."

From 5:30 to 6:20 p.m. on Nov. 18, Michele Bosak, UICA's director of curatorial, will host an in-person discussion highlighting Grand Rapids artist Rachel Britton. "The talk will start in the galleries, highlighting the artist's featured work, and then shift over to the Living Room space for casual seating, conversation and questions," explained Jackie McLane, UICA's marketing coordinator. The event is located at 17 Pearl St. in Grand Rapids.

Find ticket information at [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).



Honor Suicide Survivors and Trans Day of Remembrance

Being affected by suicide is tough, but support groups, ceremonies and events can help grieving people feel comforted. On Nov. 20, Michigan's American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and Ferndale's Affirmations will hold the Metro Detroit LGBTQ+ International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day event at Affirmations in Ferndale. In addition

to offering support for LGBTQ+ survivors and their allies, this event will also honor Trans Day of Remembrance. Anne Perry, Michigan's AFSP area director, says this is their first time partnering with Affirmations and the LGBTQ+ community for this annual event. She says there will be various activities, including a showing of a suicide loss documentary followed by a panel of suicide loss survivors who "talk openly about their loss and how they traveled through their grief journey."

To register for the free event, visit the AFSP website.

Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue Care Network of Michigan

PHONAK

"I can easily recharge my Marvel hearing aids wherever I go."

"Grab your passport. We're beach-bound."

Phonak Audéo™ Marvel

Providing you the Very Best in Professional Hearing Care.

Audiology Services - Hearing Testing - Hearing Aids

30-Day Trial Money-Back Guarantee!

O'Connor HEARING CENTER

Visit OConnorhearing.com or call 734-994-8300

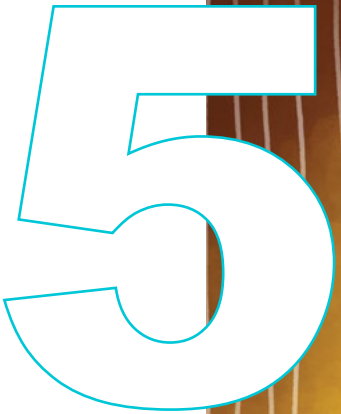


Photo courtesy of Genrietta

Attend a Non-Binary Support Group for Young Adults

For a non-binary, gender non-conforming person, finding a support group is like finding a four-leaf clover — it just doesn't happen often. But when it does, you hold on for dear life. The Stand with Trans' non-binary support group could be that crucial lifeline for young adults navigating life from a non-binary perspective. "The current facilitator [Lu Evergreen] is non-binary," says Stand with Trans' Communications Manager Cameron Parkins. "They provide a safe space for young adults to talk about any issues or life." This free online monthly event, held from 7 to 8 p.m. Nov. 17, is limited to young adults 18-24 years old.

More information can be found on Stand with Trans' website.

Plan the Perfect Holiday Party.

ZINGERMAN'S
Cornman farms

Dexter, MI | 734.619.8100 | www.zingermanscornmanfarms.com
Photo by Lola Grace Photography

Detroit Elects State's First Latinx Out LGBTQ+ Woman to Office

Gabriela Santiago-Romero to Become City Councilwoman For District 6

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Gabriela Santiago-Romero, a first-generation Mexican American from southwest Detroit, became the first Latinx out LGBTQ+ woman elected to the Detroit City Council Tuesday, Nov. 2. The win comes after Santiago-Romero spoke to BTL about her run. Before the election, Santiago-Romero expressed to us how she wanted to help advance Detroit as an LGBTQ+ woman.



"[Being LGBTQ+] is a part of me that I hope is accepted," she explained. "It is who I am."

Santiago-Romero, who will represent District 6, also now holds the distinction of being the first Latinx out LGBTQ+ woman to be elected in the entire state of Michigan, according to the Washington, DC-based LGBTQ Victory Fund.

Initial news reports, including a story in *The Advocate*, mistakenly identified Santiago-Romero as the first out LGBTQ+ person ever elected to the Council, but that distinction goes to Charles Pugh. Pugh won by over 9,000 votes over his closest competitor in 2010. Pugh's victory earned him the position of city council president for more than three years before he left the council amid scandal. Santiago-Romero has been very active in organizing her southwest Detroit community. She is currently on leave as the policy and research director for We the People Michigan, a grassroots organization. In addition, she had also worked for Sen. Stephanie Chang on the Hillary Clinton campaign and Detroit City Councilwoman Raquel Castañeda-López when she ran for re-election.

"Gabriela has shattered a lavender ceiling in Detroit and will become the city council's first LGBTQ woman to serve," said Annise Parker, president and CEO of the LGBTQ Victory Fund. "As an LGBTQ Latinx woman and immigrant, her perspective will enrich policy discussions and ensure all people in Detroit are prioritized."

According to the LGBTQ Victory Fund, there are currently just 35 out Latinx women serving as elected officials across the country. For her part, Santiago-Romero won with over 70 percent of the vote.

"We proved that progressives can run and win local elections," she said in a Facebook post. "I'm still processing my emotions and feeling overwhelmed with joy and pride. I am excited to take office in January and to fight for the opportunity our resilient community deserves. I'm ready to get to work for Detroit."

"I hope tonight shows an LGBTQ kid that our democracy is big enough for them, too."

Election 2022: Early Predictions for LGBTQ+ Voters in Michigan

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

In the world of politics, it's always election season. That said, with the 2021 elections now in the rearview mirror, it's time to gear up for 2022. BTL checked in with three political prognosticators who shared their knowledge about the races and issues LGBTQ+ voters in Michigan should have on their radar.

Our panelists include Roland Leggett, chair of the LGBT & Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party; Mark LaChey, first vice chair of the Michigan Democratic Party; and Erin Knott, executive director of Equality Michigan.

Michigan LGBTQ+ Out Candidates

So far, four openly LGBTQ+ candidates in southeast Michigan have announced their intention to run for office in 2022: incumbents state Sen. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield), state Rep. Laurie Pohutsky (D-Livonia), and newcomers Noah Arbit in West Bloomfield and Jason Morgan in Ann Arbor, both running for state representative in their respective districts. Generally speaking, incumbent candidates have an advantage. But it's early: The filing deadline is not until April 19. Ultimately, the odds of their success in 2022 rests on the way the districts are finally drawn.

Mark LaChey on Arbit: "The overall



Right to left: Roland Leggett, Erin Knott and Mark LaChey

pattern of Oakland County and much of south Michigan is turning blue or purple as people migrated further out into the suburbs and exurbs. So I'm optimistic for Noah. I think he'll be a great campaigner. He is already a great Democratic activist. The good and bad is he has youth on his side. So, there's the youthful energy, but there is perhaps some need for experience, but you pick up experience fast running for office."

Roland Leggett on Pohutsky: "I'm also the politics director of Michigan United and Michigan People's Campaign. And Laurie Pohutsky has been a very, very, very strong partner for us in relation to redistricting and a number of other issues. She brings to the table a lot of knowledge around the needs not only of our community, but a lot of other vulnerable and isolated communities. And so I think she has a very good chance and is a very talented politician."

Leggett on Moss: "Jeremy is incredibly

talented. He's an excellent senator. [But] we're under attack from the right side of politics here, and we cannot make any assumptions about...how things will go for any candidate. I for one plan on doing absolutely everything that I can to help Jeremy next year out of an abundance of caution."

LaChey on Moss: "Jeremy's biggest asset is he is one of the hardest working, diligent campaigners that I know. He loves meeting constituents and potential constituents. He's got potential leadership on his side. So those are the things voters look at and go, 'Well, what has he done in the past? And where will he be if we vote for him?' So I think all those things are [on] Jeremy's positive side."

LaChey on Morgan: "There's another campaigner who [like Jeremy Moss] is like the Energizer Bunny. He has done an incredible job on the Washtenaw County

See **Election Forecast**, page 20

Non-Binary Candidates Score Key Victories On Election Night

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

Non-binary candidates were among those claiming wins Nov. 2 as two contenders prevailed in local elections in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

In Massachusetts, Thu Nguyen won a race for a seat on the Worcester City Council, becoming the first non-binary person ever elected in the state. Nguyen came in fourth in a crowded race and won 10 percent of the vote, according to unofficial results, which was enough to claim one of the seats.

Nguyen's victory is also significant because of the story of their family, which sought refuge in Worcester when they were an infant after their father was captured in Vietnam and held as a prisoner of war for six

years. Nguyen now works at the Southeast Asian Coalition and addresses issues such as food insecurity, civic engagement and support for small businesses.

Annise Parker, CEO of LGBTQ Victory Fund, said in a statement Nguyen's win "shattered a rainbow ceiling" and adds to the growing number of election wins for non-binary elected officials serving across the nation.

"Their victory proves voters look beyond gender identity and will elect leaders with the qualifications and drive to improve people's lives," Parker said. "Thurs experiences – as a person of color, non-binary person and refugee – will bring a unique and critical perspective to the city council and it will lead to more inclusive legislation."

In Pennsylvania, Xander Orenstein won a race for the Allegheny County Magisterial District Court in Pennsylvania, becoming the first non-binary person elected to a judicial position in the United States. In May, Orenstein narrowly defeated an incumbent primary challenger by 40 votes and was unopposed in the general election on Tuesday.

As a result of the wins by Nguyen and Orenstein, there will now be 11 openly non-binary elected officials in total throughout the United States, according to the LGBTQ Victory Fund.

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

RON T. WILLIAMSON DDS




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

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

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



1964 W. 11 Mile Road, Suite 4,
Berkley, MI 48072
www.rontwilliamsondds.com

Find us on
 **facebook**



**SHELTON
& DEON** Law Group
Anticipate
Innovate
Advocate

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

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

612 East 4th Street, Royal Oak, MI 48067
248-494-7444 | www.sheltondeonlaw.com



Giraffe 
DESIGN BUILD
giraffedesignbuild.com 734.489.1924



A behind-the-scenes shot from Dominick Evans' music video for "Spaces." Photo courtesy of Dominick Evans

Reclaiming His 'Crip Crusader' Identity

Dominick Evans Works Toward Full Onscreen Representation For Disabled and Transgender People

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Dominick Evans has an alter ego: the Crip Crusader. He's on a mission to make sure that disabled and transgender people are represented in the media and not just by cis gender and able-bodied actors.

Evans came up with the Crip Crusader while talking with some friends.

"I really like comics and there's the Caped Crusader and we were joking about how my advocacy is like being a superhero," Evans tells BTL, explaining that "crip" is a word that he and other members of the disabled community have reclaimed.

"I hated the word when I was a kid because it made me feel different and less than," he says, noting that he embraced it in college. "It's kind of me taking back a word that was hurled at me as a kid."

Evans, who identifies as trans, non-binary,

and queer, has spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), a progressive muscle disease. But don't discount him just because there are things he is physically unable to do.

"SMA does not make you incapable of everything," he says. "I feel like as someone with SMA I'm completely dismissed as a human, but I've done all these amazing things."

Evans is a director, screenwriter, Twitch streamer, public speaker, film scholar, TV/Film consultant, partner and dad.

His latest project is the first music video ever written, directed and performed by people with disabilities. It debuted this week, on Nov. 9.

"The video was made by a group of us from the SMA community with the support of Genentech," Evans says. "We just talked about what we wanted to see in the video. The singer, James [Ian], who wrote the song, took those ideas and created a song called 'Spaces' and it's about the spaces we take up in the world. And

for me the idea was that disabled people were the world's largest marginalized group, but we're never really seen or understood."

Evans has felt this personally. "I feel like people see me and they don't understand me or don't really see the person I am," he says. "They just see my wheelchair and they make assumptions, or when they find out I'm trans they make assumptions."

The idea for "Spaces" "resonated so much, and everybody in the group really felt that," he says. "It was electrifying to me."

The video and song celebrate "how diverse we are as a community," Evans says. "How we deserve to be in whatever spaces we find ourselves in, and the spaces can be beautiful and wonderful."

Evans describes "Spaces" as a pop song that "would be a great summer bop. It's got this kind of beat that drives you."

Musician James Ian, who also has SMA, is

located in Los Angeles. Evans is located in Michigan. But that didn't stop them from collaborating.

SMA affects everybody differently. According to Evans, it can affect any muscle. Some people with SMA, like Ian, can stand, sing and play guitar and other instruments, while Evans cannot.

"I need help with everything physical," Evans says. "But I obviously can direct a music video, so I feel like it doesn't matter that I need help doing physical stuff because I'm so capable of doing so many other things."

Evans went through the process of storyboarding, "Then they brought in some other creative people who took my ideas," he says, adding that they usually found a way to make his ideas work.

"I'm really lucky," he says, "because even when they said no to me, what ended up happening was they would come back to me, and it would end up being a 'Yes.'"

During the shoot Evans had a set up at home so that he could see the cast and crew and they had a set up with a tablet so they could see him.

"I was looking out. I could see James and the stage and the set up, and on the other side, people could come talk to me," he says.

"From the conception, I was there helping to make the film," Evans says. He worked remotely with an on set director located in California. "He knew what my vision was, and he was really willing to listen to any input I had, any thoughts I had, any shots I wanted. I was really in the driver's seat the whole way."

The "Spaces" video ended up being a much bigger project than Evans initially anticipated. "They let the video grow with what we wanted," he says.

"I thought this was going to be this little indie video, and it turned out to be this really big production," he says. "It just kind of snowballed."

The experience is inspiring to Evans. "Directors don't have to be on set any more and I think this could really open up so many opportunities for disabled directors," he says. "I shot from home. I was in bed because I had chronic pain, and it was no big deal."

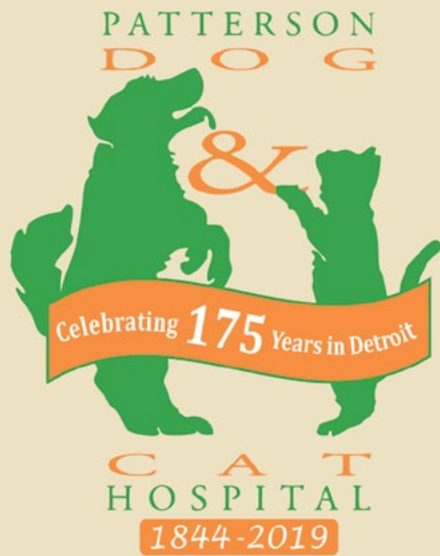
Evans hopes that this can lead to other things. "I really dream that this will lead to me being able to direct a full movie this way because it would do so much for so many people who would like to direct but have been told no," he says. "What else am I capable of, and what else are disabled people capable of?"

That's a question Evans has been exploring for many years. The answer? A lot more than many people think.

Evans began the Twitter chat #FilmDis in 2014 as a way to discuss disability representation in the media. What started as a hashtag grew to become FilmDis, a media monitoring organization Evans and his partner run. Their motto is "Nothing about us without us."

"It's kind of one of our rallying calls," he says. "You shouldn't be telling our stories without

See **Dominick Evans**, page 30



Glynes D. Graham, DVM Dr. Amanda Lee
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Doctor of Veterinary Medicine

3800 Grand River, Detroit, MI 48208-2866
 tel: 313.832.7282 fax: 313.832.4990

www.pattersondogandcat.com



GRACE BACON DAY!



MCC Detroit is honoring a phenomenal & fierce activist Grace Bacon, who has been a pioneer in advocating for Transgender rights in Michigan.

Sunday, November 14th at 11am
 Join us as we celebrate Grace's work during our service followed by a workshop on Gender Identity led by Blake Bonkowski of Oakland University.



Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit

Radically inclusive since 1972.

www.mccdetroit.org
 290 W Nine Mile, Ferndale, MI 48220 | 248.399.7741



C&N PARTY RENTALS

5140 Meijer Drive,
 Royal Oak, MI 48073



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

We have Beautiful Linens for all events and budgets!

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

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR BIKTARVY®

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

(bik-TAR-vee)

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

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

ABOUT BIKTARVY

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

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

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

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

BEFORE TAKING BIKTARVY

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

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

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

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

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

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

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

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

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

HOW TO TAKE BIKTARVY

Take BIKTARVY 1 time each day with or without food.

GET MORE INFORMATION

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



BIKTARVY[®]

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

**LOVE
WHAT'S
INSIDE**[®]

HUGO

LIVING WITH HIV SINCE 1995
REAL BIKTARVY PATIENT

KEEP CONNECTING.

Because HIV doesn't change who you are.

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

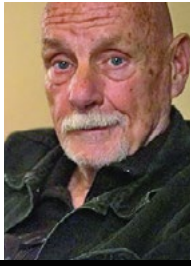
Ask your healthcare provider if BIKTARVY is right for you.

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

Featured patient compensated by Gilead.

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

 **GILEAD**



Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Creativity: One Day At A Time

I started writing my Parting Glances columns in 1990 or thereabouts. The premise was simple enough. Choose an important LGB — and occasionally T — historical event that actually changed things for us, or challenged us to speak out on behalf of our Rainbow Pride human rights, during the mid-20th Century (and many times, earlier).

The initial Parting Glances columns were 125 words in length. Many of these included my first-hand reminiscences of what it was like to be gay — but highly, highly closeted — way back then.

I came out during my senior year at Cass Technical High School in 1956. I was a commercial art major. Being creative helped, as well as daily contact with art and music students as friends.

As for my art, I estimate that I have completed about 2,000 art pieces and design images or more since my CT days. (But who's counting?)

I average a new art piece about every other month, in spite of my stroke and compromised vision. Storage is becoming a problem. Several hundred unframed pieces are in on-going storage at the Affirmations LGBTQ+ community center.

I have lived a very fortunate life. I have, because of my artistic talent and being a first-responder gay, so to speak, for more than 65 years, met many creative and gifted gay and hetero men and women in my life: musicians, dancers, artists, poets, impersonators, LGBTQ+ entertainers.

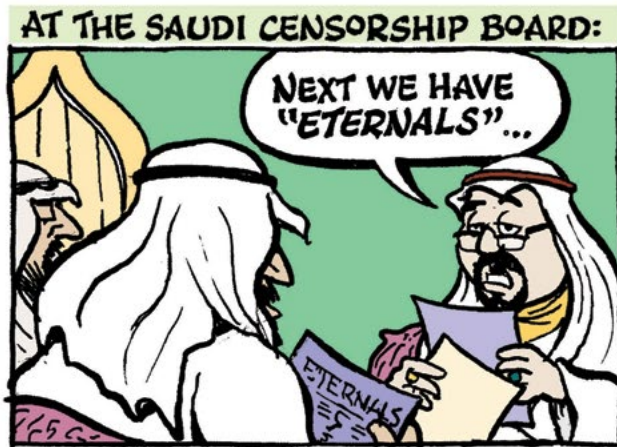
Fortunately, I had the guidance of wise mentors — one, my first partner at 19 — who stressed the importance of choosing and making a career and continuing my education at Wayne State University, where, in 1959, I started my writing career at the Wayne State University Collegian.

My professional writing and ongoing creation of art might not have happened if one life-saving event had not taken place for me: choosing sobriety.

In 1981, I came face to face with the realization that my alcohol abuse, including daily bingeing, had gotten out of control. I stood at the edge of a nightmare pit.

“My professional writing and ongoing creation of art might not have happened if one life-saving event had not taken place for me: choosing sobriety.”

See **Parting Glances**, next page



Positive Thoughts

Decriminalization of Sex Work Is Good Public Health Policy

BY SCOTT SCHOETTES

Sex work needs to be decriminalized in the United States. My desire to see this come to pass is not (completely) self-interested. It is a matter of human rights and personal autonomy, and a natural extension of Lawrence v. Texas, the landmark 2003 Supreme Court case that established the constitutional right to engage in same-sex sexual activity. Just as importantly, however, decriminalization of sex work is an HIV prevention and public health strategy.

First, criminalization drives sex work underground and impedes public health efforts to reach sex workers and their clients with HIV prevention, treatment, care and support programs. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has documented that, in large part due to the criminalization of sex work, sex workers frequently have insufficient access to adequate health services, male and female condoms,

water-based lubricants, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) following condomless sex or rape, management of STIs, drug treatment and other harm reduction services, protection from violence and abusive work conditions, and social and legal support.

Due in part to the illegal nature of the work, sex workers often face discrimination and rejection in accessing healthcare, with damaging health results. Occupational stigma of criminalized work increases vulnerability to stress and diseases, compounding health care needs while simultaneously acting as a barrier to healthcare services essential to prevention. When sex workers do seek out healthcare services, they often are regarded in ways that reinforce criminal stigma, which can deter sex workers from seeking care at all and from disclosing their occupation for fear of discrimination by their healthcare

“When criminalization prompts sex workers and their customers to move their encounters off main streets and into less trafficked areas, they are exposed to greater risk of violence, more pressure to engage in unprotected sex, and other hazards.”

provider and disclosure of their identity and activities to law enforcement. For sex workers living with HIV, these concerns are compounded.

Second, the use of condoms as

See **Positive Thoughts**, next page

→ Parting Glances

Continued from previous page

Hospitalization, rehab and group therapy made up the next year of my concentrated recovery. While in recovery at Cottage Hospital, an unexpected, ultimately rewarding door of opportunity opened.

In initial therapy, we were told to go through magazines and cut out pictures indicative of our feelings. In my alcoholic haze, I misunderstood. I created several collages. A nurse actually wanted to buy one. A year or so later I had my collages matted and framed. An artist friend

suggested I enter them in competition for the Detroit Artist Market exhibition jurying. I did. Three pieces were accepted in a 1983 showing.

I have since then been creating art and writing articles to share. One creation at a time. (Sometimes two.)

One blessed — and happily sober — day at a time. Forty years come this December.

And! I have a current art piece in Detroit's Scarab Club 108th Gold Medal Exhibition (Nov. 17 to Dec. 31). Enjoy. And thanks!

→ Positive Thoughts

Continued from previous page

evidence undermines prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, as well as other public health goals. Though a few jurisdictions have reformed their practices in recent years, many jurisdictions still view the mere possession of condoms as evidence of the intent to engage in prostitution or other prostitution-related crimes. Arresting and prosecuting people who carry condoms reduces use of an extremely effective and affordable prevention tool, particularly for people engaged in (or profiled as likely to engage in) “street level” sex work. And using condoms as evidence makes managing sexual health more difficult because it forces individuals to weigh the risk of prosecution for a prostitution-related crime against the risk of transmitting or acquiring HIV and other STIs.

Third, criminalization increases violence against sex workers. Where sex work is criminalized, there are alarmingly high rates of physical and sexual violence against sex workers by clients, individuals posing as clients, police, exploitative “pimps,” and others. Abuse is fueled when perpetrators recognize the barriers criminalized sex workers face in seeking justice, perpetuating physical and sexual violence with impunity. Furthermore, abusive intimate partners can exploit the illegality of sex work and may threaten to expose their partners to police as tactics of control.

To avoid police detection, criminalized sex workers often displace themselves to isolated (and more dangerous) settings, effectively forcing them to trade away their safety and well-being. When criminalization prompts sex workers and

their customers to move their encounters off main streets and into less trafficked areas, they are exposed to greater risk of violence, more pressure to engage in unprotected sex, and other hazards.

Violence against sex workers is often not registered as an offense by the police and in some cases is perpetrated by police. Sex workers report severe sexual violence, including forced unprotected sex by police officers, both at the time of arrest for prostitution-related crimes and while in custody on those criminal charges. And the criminalization of sex work means the violence that occurs in the context of sex work has been largely unmonitored, resulting in few to no legal protections afforded to sex workers by police and judicial systems.

In countries where sex work has been decriminalized, access to care improves, STI rates decrease, and safer sex practices increase. Though the UN has identified sex workers as a “key population” in the global fight against HIV for many years, the current National HIV/AIDS Strategy fails to include them among the “priority populations” in the United States. Here's hoping sex workers are identified as a priority population in the next iteration of the NHAS and that the barriers to prevention, care and treatment identified above are addressed while progress is made toward full decriminalization.

Scott Schoettes is an attorney and advocate who lives openly with HIV. He engages in impact litigation, public policy work, and education to protect, enhance, and advance the rights of everyone living with HIV. This column is a project of TheBody, Plus, Positively Aware, POZ and Q Syndicate, the LGBTQ+ wire service. Visit their websites – <http://thebody.com>, <http://hivplusmag.com>, <http://positivelyaware.com> and <http://poz.com> – for the latest updates on HIV/AIDS.

Creep Of The Week

Talk Show Host Wistfully Remembers How Great It Was For Gays During AIDS Epidemic

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Those who forget history, or who willfully ignore it, are doomed to repeat it, which is why it should worry you that the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capital has been dismissed by Republicans as a routine visit by some rowdy but well meaning tourists. Reshaping this history to fit a political narrative serves Republican interests since they are really into authoritarianism — a destabilized country is really a win for them.

It's in that spirit that Dennis Prager, conservative talk radio host and co-founder of the propaganda machine PragerU, has conveniently forgotten the history of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s.

Appearing on Newsmax, a propaganda program claiming to be news, Prager says that “non-vaccinated are the pariahs of America, as I have not seen in my lifetime. Any pariah group like this.”

According to Wikipedia, Prager was born in 1948. And he's never seen a group of people treated worse than today's unvaccinated? Really? What about Black Americans? This man was very much alive during the height of the civil rights movement. He surely saw Black people treated like pariahs. Even if he didn't see it with his own eyes, it was all over the news! Did this man never see or read a paper?

Of course he did. When he says that he hasn't seen any other group as mistreated and marginalized as unvaccinated people, what he really means is he hasn't seen any other group that he didn't believe deserved it.

Then he says this gaslighting bullshit: “During the AIDS crisis, can you imagine if gay men and intravenous drug users, who were the vast majority of people with AIDS, had they been pariahs the way the non-vaccinated are?”

Excuse me, what?

First of all, intravenous drug users were and still are treated like pariahs in a country that considers addiction a personal moral failing rather than as a disease. Secondly, gay men were treated like absolute garbage during the AIDS crisis. Gay men were dying and nobody cared! President Reagan wouldn't even utter the word “AIDS” and his administration's inaction made the epidemic even worse. Read “And the Band Played On” by Randy Shilts. This was NOT A GOOD TIME FOR GAYS. Not only were many people getting sick and dying, but there were little to no legal protections at all, which means that men who lost a partner could, and did, lose the home

they shared and be barred from attending the funeral by their partner's family.

But Prager says that this “would've been inconceivable. And it SHOULD have been inconceivable. They should not have been made pariahs.”

But, as Kevin Kruse pointed out on Twitter, Prager himself wanted AIDS to be stigmatized as a “gay man's disease.”

In a 2008 Town Hall piece about AIDS in the '80s, Prager writes, “Even the natural sciences are increasingly subject to being rendered a means to a ‘progressive’ end. There was the pseudo-threat of heterosexual AIDS in America — science manipulated in order to de-stigmatize AIDS as primarily a gay man's disease and to increase funding for AIDS research.”

In other words, if it had been up to Prager, AIDS would have stayed a pariah-making disease of gay men, and there certainly wouldn't have been funding to support them.

And he was still preaching this garbage in 2016, as the New Civil Rights Movement points out, when Prager was speaking about leftist “hysteria” on James Dobson's show.

“I will just give you a few examples of the hysterias of your lifetime,” Prager says. “One was heterosexual AIDS in America. Do you remember that? When we were told by Time and Newsweek and The New York Times, remember when they said AIDS doesn't discriminate? Well, that was a lie. AIDS does discriminate. It happens to attack in America — and I emphasize in America — overwhelmingly, gay men and intravenous drug users and his partners. You know the group least likely to get AIDS? Gay women. So it can't be homophobic to say the truth.”

And who could possibly consider that stunning example of homophobia homophobic? Beats me.

In case you were wondering, “But is Prager terrible in other ways?” The answer is yes. For example, he calls global warming an “idiotic, irrational, sick fear.”

“It's a different America,” he tells the Newsmax host. Indeed, it is. It's an America that is emerging from a pandemic that has already killed over 750,000 people in this country and kept millions of people from seeing the people they love or doing the things they love for more than a year. So, when someone refuses to get vaccinated based on lies and conspiracy theories? Go ahead, make them pariahs. They've earned it.

The Ultimate Holidgay Gift Guide

14 Ideas to Make the Season Bright



BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Let's face it, two things are true: most of us don't need more stuff, and it's fun to give and receive presents. So shop smart and support local artists, small businesses, LGBTQ+ non-profits and LGBTQ+ supportive campaigns this holiday season. Here's a collection of gifts sure to please both the nice and naughty people on your holiday shopping list.

That Gay Guy Candle Company

You know why people like candles? Because people like things that smell good, and people like to set things on fire. Best of both worlds! That Gay Guy Candle Co. (TGGCC) is your source for fine candles with labels that are hilarious and heartfelt. An "I Saw Mommy Kissing Mrs. Claus" candle in the limited peppermint mocha scent would make the perfect gift. TGGCC donates 5% of sales to LGBTQ organizations.

The Candle Wick Shoppe

Looking for something that's both fragrant and magical this holiday season? The Candle Wick Shoppe in Ferndale has you covered. They've got candles, they've got oils, they've got herbs, they've got sprays to make your house

smell amazing. They also have crystals and books and jewelry and basically anything you need for the witches and wizards in your life. Also, who wouldn't want Witch's Brew Evil Eye Oil for some spiritual protection?

Good Cakes and Bakes

If the way to one's heart is through their stomach, then you'll definitely want to give the people you love the gift of cake. Or cookies. Or brownies. Or cinnamon rolls. Good Cakes and Bakes makes a slew of different desserts, many of which are vegan. Their Strawberry Crunch Cake tastes as good as it looks and their cake jars are great for, say, eating cake in the car! Why not? And yes, they ship!



Gov. Gretchen Whitmer

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is the most LGBTQ+ supportive and affirming governor this state has ever had. It is imperative that she get reelected in 2022. We cannot let Michigan's Republicans, who are a bunch of right-wing Trump sycophants,



regain control of the governorship. Donate to Whitmer's campaign or get the person you love a "That Woman In Michigan" t-shirt.

Michigan Democratic Party

Not only do we need to put Whitmer back in office, but we've got to elect a Democratic majority in the Michigan House and Senate. Support the Michigan Democratic Party (MDP) by gifting one of their pretty in pink tees. Get one for everyone for the perfect holiday picture! It's especially fun to make donations to the MDP on behalf of your Trump-loving relatives.

OutFront Kalamazoo

Supporting your local LGBTQ organizations this holiday season is a gift not just for the person you're celebrating — it's a gift for you and the entire community. OutFront Kalamazoo has a great collection of merch, including Say Their Names t-shirts to commemorate Transgender Day of Remembrance, which truly deserves more than just a day. Show your support for the transgender community in Kalamazoo and beyond year 'round.

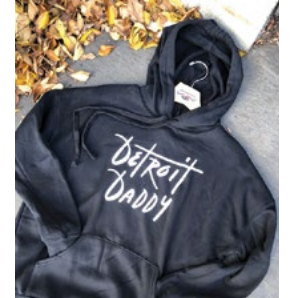
Detroit GT

Baby, it's cold outside. So warm somebody up this holiday season with Detroit GT's "Detroit Daddy" hoodie (also available as a crewneck sweatshirt, t-shirt, socks and a snapback hat). And if you want to make your message extra explicit, throw in a pair of "Detroit Cock City" undies. If you're "Gay for Detroit," then you've found your holiday shopping headquarters. Visit his booth at the Rust Belt Market in Ferndale or shop online.



The Brave Wimp

We've got pride, yes we do! We've got pride, how 'bout you? Show off your pride with a set of wood rainbow earrings, each



handpainted in the colors of your choice of Pride flags, including bisexual, lesbian, non-binary, transgender, pansexual or traditional rainbow. If you like your earrings a little more understated, they're available as studs, too. Earrings have hypoallergenic stainless steel backings and you can pick them up from the Rust Belt Market in Ferndale or shop online.



Affirmations LGBTQ+ Community Center

As we start to see the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic, people are hungry to get out for a little adventure. And you know what any good adventure needs? A good backpack. Affirmations has you covered with this OGIO Excelsior Pack. It features ergonomic padded straps, a built-in laptop sleeve, dual main compartments, and an ultra-padded air mesh back and the Affirmations logo. Inspire your loved ones to come out. Literally.



Human Rights Campaign

Is your holiday tree lacking in Pride? Does it need a punch up of color? Then what you need is the Human Rights Campaign's limited edition 2021 "Everyone" rainbow ornament. It's made of zinc alloy with an enamel front and hangs from a silver cord. It even comes in its own gift box, so you don't have to scrounge around for the right size package to

See Gift Guide, page 16

FEATURED ARTWORK BY KIM MCCLELLAND



ROYAL OAK MARKET: ART FAIR EDITION

INSIDE THE ROYAL OAK
FARMERS MARKET

PRESENTED BY

S SUBURBAN
Buick GMC of Troy

PRODUCED BY THE

GUILD
OF ARTISTS & ARTISANS

NOVEMBER 11 & 12, 2021 | THURSDAY + FRIDAY 11AM-9PM

60 ARTISTS | LIVE MUSIC | BEER & WINE

ROYALOAKARTFAIR.COM | FOLLOW US @GUILDFAIRS



LIVE TRIBUTE CONCERT

ARETHA
THE QUEEN OF SOUL



NOVEMBER 28



→ Gift Guide

Continued from p. 14

wrap it in. Also fits great in a stocking. 'Tis the season for EVERYONE.

ACLU

Let's face it: when you're out walking your dog people don't look at you. They look at your adorable furry friend. This is especially true if your canine pal is wearing clothes. So why not make your dog a poster pooch for civil liberties with the ACLU "Civil Liberties Watch Dog" t-shirt? You could even put this on your cat. I mean, it's your right, after all. This stylish dogfit doesn't discriminate. No matter what color hair your dog is shedding, it'll show up on this black and white shirt.

The Ringwald Theatre

The pandemic hit live theater venues hard. Ferndale's The Ringwald Theater is no exception, but they haven't given up. Now housed inside of Affirmations, The Ringwald has a great lineup of shows in 2021-22, including "A Very Golden Girls Christmas, vol. 2 (An Unauthorized Parody)," which runs from Nov. 26-Dec. 20, and "Booty Candy," which runs May 6-30, 2022. Buy tickets for your friends and family or make a donation on their behalf to support the Ringwald's Comeback Season.

Ben Platt

You know him and love him as the star of "Dear Evan Hansen" on Broadway. Now Ben Platt is coming to the Masonic Temple on March 13. He's also got a new album out, "Reverie," and you can buy an autographed CD from his online merch store. Why not surprise the Ben Platt fan in your life with tickets tucked inside that CD? It'll give them something to look forward to through the long, cold winter.

Michigan LGBTQ+ Orgs

We have a lot of great organizations in Michigan working on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community. A donation to such organizations is a great thing to do and highly recommended. Here are a few options: Ruth Ellis Center, Equality Michigan, Battle Creek Pride, LGBT Detroit, Transgender Michigan, SAGE Metro Detroit.

Marie OSMOND
A Symphonic Christmas

SPECIAL GUESTS

DAVID OSMOND DANIEL EMMET

DECEMBER 20

SOUND BOARD *MotorCity CASINO HOTEL*

ticketmaster[®]
SOUNDBOARDDETROIT.COM

MotorCity Casino Hotel and MotorCity Casino Hotel design are trademarks of Detroit Entertainment, L.L.C. ©2021 Detroit Entertainment, L.L.C. All rights reserved.

MDHHS Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
If you bet more than you can afford to lose, you've got a problem. Call 1-800-270-7117 for free, confidential help.


50% OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV WILL EXPERIENCE COGNITIVE DECLINE AS THEY AGE

Would you like to talk to a professional about memory changes related to HIV and Alzheimer's? Need up-to-date resources, such as a physician referral, support groups, or other information?

Contact the HIV Supportive Services Program

- Kate Pierce at kpierce@alz.org or 248-996-1036
- Alzheimer's Association 24/7 helpline at helplinegmc@alz.org or 800-272-3900





What the Constitution Means to Me

A Play by **Heidi Schreck**
 Directed by **Oliver Butler**

Starring **Cassie Beck**

ON SALE NOW • DEC 14 - JAN 2, 2022 • FISHER THEATRE
 BROADWAYINDETROIT.COM | TICKETMASTER.COM | BOX OFFICE

Groups (10+) BroadwayInDetroitGroups@theambassadors.com (subject: Constitution)
 OC open-caption performance December 19 at 7:30PM



A Gift for Them, Cash Back for You



The MSUFCU Visa Signature® Credit Card is perfect for holiday shopping because you receive more cash back with every purchase. Plus, redeem your cash back at any time, for any amount.

msufcu.org/visasignature • 517-333-2424



Visit msufcu.org/visasignature for full details.

UPCOMING: FALL SPECIALS

Atelier

SCHOOL OF ART

LADIES NIGHTS! Gather your girlfriends, your favorite beverages and snacks, and enjoy a creative night out! Have a great time and leave with a finished piece of art! No experience necessary. Materials included.



Illustration Nov. 13th, 6-9pm	Watercolor Dec. 4th, 6-9pm	Printmaking Jan. 22nd, 6-9pm
----------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------

FUNDAMENTALS OF COLOR MIXING



This all levels workshop will equip students with the practical knowledge to handle color effectively and beautifully in their paintings.

Instructed by: *Ken Hershenson*
 Nov. 13th and 14th • 10am-4pm

SMARTPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY

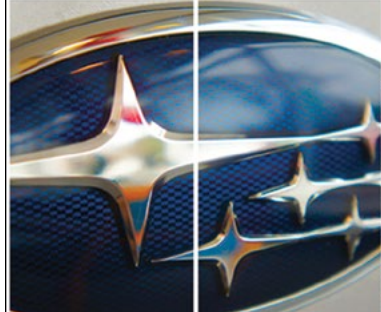



This fun, twice a month class is a great way to learn about design and making art using the camera you always have with you. Great for beginning students as well as experienced artists.


Instructed by: *Armin Mersmann*
 Meets: Every-other week

Painting • Photography • Drawing • Studio Rental • Youth Classes


 407 E 4th Street, Royal Oak • 248.951.4400
www.AtelierSchoolofArt.com

at Hodges...



2022 SUBARU
OUTBACK® NDI 22
 MANUFACTURER OFFER:
1.9% APR Financing for 48 Months With Tier 1 Credit



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

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

EVERYDAY!

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

*Model code: NDI-22 only. \$1,999 down payment. \$0 security deposit. 1st month payment due at lease signing. 36 months/10K miles per year. .35 cents every mile thereafter. Tax, title, and license fees not included. Subject to first-lease credit approval through Subaru Motors Finance.



At Laser Giftware, we make it PERSONAL! Whether you want a custom logo, monogram, or your own catchy little phrase, we're here to help. Our thermal drinkware stays hot or cold for hours and can be personalized in a variety of fonts. Gifts like leatherette flasks, coasters, wine bags and more can really brighten up a party or special occasion.

Visit us at www.lasergiftware.com and check out the:

- Barware
- Glassware
- Drinkware
- Special Occasion



(313) 319-2285 lasergiftware@gmail.com

No more writing your name on a Red Solo Cup!



An original Raffa piece made entirely from leftover canvas scraps. Photo courtesy of Raffa Reuther

OUT NOW
**The 2021
 Pride Source Magazine**

950+ LGBTQ+ FRIENDLY
 EQUALITY VENDORS



Queers, Of Course, Are Leading the Way in Eco-Fashion

Local Brand Owners on Being a Part of an Earth-Saving Movement

BY JACKIE JONES

Close your eyes for a second and imagine a world that cares about sustainability. While there, you can aimlessly walk through a clothing aisle and see where and how material goods are produced. You can even wear a jacket knowing that its creation didn't deplete the environment or a person of its natural

resources. It sounds nice, right? What a place to be.

While it may seem far-fetched, an ethically sourced and sustainable way of fashion is possible. It's currently happening — at least in the LGBTQ+ community. And, yes, of course, we're leading the way because our community has always pioneered new trends.

In an effort to support sustainability,

we lean on thrift shops, clothing swaps and sometimes the closets of our support group to find garments that fit our identity expressions. For the LGBTQ+ community, the sustainability trend serves a dual purpose: contributing to the causes of sustainability and sourcing affordable fashion. It's a must for many in the community.

See **Sustainability**, page 24

www.PrideSource.com

NOIR LEATHER
 WHERE THE CALL FOR BOOTY IS OUR PATRIOTIC DUTY!
Veterans Day Sale
 Thurs Nov 11th!

ALL Servicemembers & Vets Receive
20% OFF PURCHASE
 with Military ID!
CUM IN UNIFORM
 FOR 30% OFF!

Veteran Owned!
 Daily Military Discounts!

124 W 4TH ST ROYAL OAK 248-541-3979
 SUN-WEDS 12-6 THURS-SAT 12-2 INSTAGRAM.COM/NOIRLEATHER
 #MODEL -NATE ELIHER #HAIR STYLING-CLP PHOTO-TEJAN GAYNAR

DETROIT'S BEST FLORIST SINCE 1977

BLOSSOMS
 FULL SERVICE FLORIST

Best of Detroit Home
BEST OF HOUR
 MICHIGAN
 WEDDINGWIRE COUPLES' CHOICE AWARDS 2020

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

blossomsbirmingham.com

"AN EPIC CELEBRATION of music, togetherness and hope!"
 —Forbes

HADESTOWN
 THE TONY-WINNING BEST MUSICAL
 BY ANAÏS MITCHELL DIRECTED BY RACHEL CHAVKIN

FISHER THEATRE • NOVEMBER 23-DECEMBER 5 • ON SALE NOW

BROADWAYINDETROIT.COM | TICKETMASTER.COM | BOX OFFICE

AMY GRANT MICHAEL W SMITH
CHRISTMAS

PRESENTED BY
 BALSAM HILL

DECEMBER 9

Tickets at 313presents.com and Ticketmaster • Groups 10+ save by calling 313-471-3099

FOX THEATRE
 PROUD PARTNER
 Comerica

JERSEY BOYS

DECEMBER 12-18 • MUSIC HALL
 BROADWAYINDETROIT.COM • TICKETMASTER.COM • 800-982-2787
 GROUPS (10+) BROADWAYINDETROITGROUPS@THEAMBASSADORS.COM (SUBJECT: JERSEY BOYS)
 OC DECEMBER 17

An Open Letter on Voter Suppression from Michigan LGBTQ+ Orgs

Across the Country Anti-Voter Initiatives Are Attacking the LGBTQ+ Community

We are organizations across the State of Michigan that serve members of the LGBTQ+ community and we write this statement in opposition to the so-called “Secure Michigan Vote” petition drive. We believe that such initiative, instead of making voting in Michigan more secure, suppresses voter participation and disenfranchises already marginalized communities in our State. We urge residents of Michigan to decline to sign this petition for the following reasons:

Voting rights is an LGBTQ+ issue. The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy and the fundamental right upon which all our civil liberties arise. Voter suppression tactics are often used to silence some of the most vulnerable members of our LGBTQ+ community, most notably transgender people who already have challenges obtaining accurate identity documents to show at their polling place. We have built our fight for equality on the back of free and fair elections. All the pro-LGBTQ+ laws and policies that we have locally, statewide and nationally were passed because we were able to elect LGBTQ+ allies and LGBTQ+ people to political office. We were allowed to cast our votes for the candidates that we believed in. If we hadn't been allowed to vote, or if voting had been so difficult that we could not participate, it's likely we would not have non-discrimination laws, marriage equality, or hate crime laws protecting our communities.

The LGBTQ+ community is a diverse community with many intersectionalities. People of color and people under 30 are more likely to identify as LGBTQ+. LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be part of the disability community than their heterosexual counterparts. In addition, LGBTQ+ community members are more likely to be lower income and living below the poverty line. In fact, 40 percent of homeless youth served by street outreach and housing programs identify as LGBTQ+. These demographics make LGBTQ+ more vulnerable to voter suppression schemes.

The proposed initiative threatens to make voting more difficult, especially for communities that already experience additional barriers when casting their ballots. These efforts are an anathema to what social change is about.

This petition drive eliminates the ability of voters who are without an ID or forget theirs to cast a ballot if they sign an affidavit, or statement of identity, under penalty of perjury. Instead, they would have to cast a provisional ballot that will only be counted if they return to the local clerk's office with a valid ID within six days of voting.

In the 2016 General Election more than 18,000 voters in Michigan relied on signing an affidavit in order to vote, without any evidence of voter fraud. In a study of the 2016 Election by Dr. Daniel Smith of the University of Florida, half of the affidavit ballots cast in Michigan were done in precincts with disproportionately Black voters. Voters living in 100 percent Black districts were 16 times more likely to sign an affidavit to cast their ballot than voters in precincts with no Black voters. Voters of color were five times more likely to lack access to ID than white voters. In addition, a majority of those voters who signed an

See **Open Letter**, page 21

→ Election Forecast

Continued from p. 6

Commission. I think his district again — although the exact borders aren't drawn — will be a safe Democratic district. It's hard to imagine a district in Ann Arbor that isn't a safe Democratic district. He has gone out and done everything right so far in terms of securing endorsements, raising money, kind of blocking out the whole Democratic side of the field for himself, and that is an incredibly smart strategy.”

At the top of the ticket are pro-equality elected officials Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, Attorney General Dana Nessel and Sec. of State Jocelyn Benson. Our panelists stressed how critical it is to re-elect them.

LaChey on Nessel, Whitmer and Benson: “Dana [Nessel] has done an incredible job as our attorney general. And in my mind, that is more important, or certainly as important, as her being our first elected LGBT statewide office holder. She is a beacon for a lot of people. I see her working day in and day out to be a true attorney general for all the people of Michigan in the model of Frank Kelley.”

LaChey on all three top officeholders: “I suspect that this will be a good year for Democrats across the board. [Further,] Republicans within the state of Michigan are not putting up candidates that would stand a chance against, I don't think, any of our statewides.”

Leggett on Nessel, Whitmer and Benson: “[Dana Nessel] has a really unique understanding of the needs of the community. And I'm not going to call her an advocate — I'm going to call her a warrior because I want a warrior on my team, and that is exactly who she is. Governor Whitmer...is not an ally in name only. She has been really doing a great job of examining what policies need to be enacted or changed on the state level and figuring out the best way to do that. And she's making those decisions based off of feedback, which she's getting from the community and that's invaluable. [Jocelyn Benson] has been one of the most popular and respected secretaries of state in the country. We cannot afford to lose the access to the ballot and the progress that we've made over these last few years. So it's imperative that we support her.”

Erin Knott on top statewide races: “What's at stake in 2022 is our top three statewide elected officials. That is the utmost importance to protect, if you will, for our community. And that's evident by [their] pro-equality work [and] track record to date for passing policy or protecting the LGBTQ+ community.”

School Board Races

Until recently, school board races didn't attract much attention. Now it's commonplace for angry parents and others to disrupt school board meetings with manufactured hysteria over critical race theory (CRT) and diversity, equity and inclusion policies (DEI). No matter that public schools do not teach CRT or that the extremists whipping up this frenzy often can't explain what CRT or DEI is.

Knott: “Whether it's about DEI policy or some of the attacks that they have on LGBTQ+ kids, we're seeing [this] in [both] suburban and rural communities. Attacks on GSAs [Gay-Straight Alliances] [are] an example. Whether it's the mask mandates or drilling down to very specific policy that harms LGBTQ+ kids, school board elections are going to be hugely important to our community for a variety of reasons, including making sure that schools are safe and welcoming to LGBTQ+ youth.”

LaChey: “You can discern pretty quickly who are Democrats and who are Republicans if you listen to the positions and you listen to them speak. We have to pay attention to school boards for two reasons: one, they are the gatekeepers for curriculum among other things, and we want to continue to have open and inclusive classrooms for our LGBT kids [and] LGBT-questioning kids. And we want to promote a curriculum that provides information and support. Separately, school boards have historically been the breeding ground for future candidates for higher office.”

Amending the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA)

For 38 years, there has been no movement in the state Legislature as it relates to amending ELCRA to include protections for LGBTQ+ people in Michigan. And with the recent failure of Fair and Equal Michigan's citizen's initiative, another door has been closed.

Knott: “We have a Michigan state Supreme Court that is going to be taking a look at the Rouch World decision in the near future. I'm optimistic that the court is going to give us a win on this matter, but that doesn't mean [we should] dismiss the need for the Legislature to ultimately pass into law explicit protections.”

LaChey: “I do not see [ELCRA] being amended if the Republicans retain control of either of the houses of the [state] Legislature. So within the four corners of Michigan, step one is for us to control the governor's

office, the state House and the state Senate separately. And [I am] a proponent of believing that perhaps our best path forward is the adoption of the Equality Act in the U.S. Congress which would, I believe, subsume our Elliott-Larsen.”

Leggett: “If we are able to flip the state House, which is possible, I believe that [amending ELCRA] could absolutely happen. We need to make sure that these elected officials and candidates make our issues top of mind and top priorities. Amending Elliott-Larsen is one of the governor's top priorities. So it's about making sure that the Legislature reflects the will of the people and the will of the executive branch and I'd even say the will of the Supreme Court here in Michigan.”

What About Redistricting?

Redistricting is the process by which district maps at various levels of government are redrawn every 10 years based on U.S. Census data. Despite some bumps along the road with Michigan's newly formed independent redistricting commission, established by Proposal 2 in 2018, redistricting is well underway and nearly finalized. While it's premature to forecast the outcome of races in districts where official boundaries are still being determined, our panelists were able to provide a forecast based on trends they've observed.

Leggett: “I believe that the Census undercount is one of the things that is most challenging related to redistricting. And the fact that we haven't had as coordinated a response to the districting commission as a community as I would like us to have had creates challenges, too. There's still time and there's a lot of work to do.”

LaChey: “First of all, Michigan is not one of those states and Detroit is not necessarily one of those...metro areas that has a quote-unquote 'gay ghetto.' So, the primary concern with redistricting, with respect to the LGBT community, typically is ensuring communities of interest are kept together and not necessarily divided whether it be state House, state Senate or Congress.”

Knott: “However the lines shake out, it's going to give us some opportunities to potentially pick up one chamber, whether that's the [state] House or the Senate. So I am optimistic that it's going to be fair for folks that care about pro-equality policy and pro-equality candidates.”

→ Open Letter

Continued from p. 20

affidavit had incomes that would be classified as lower income and below the poverty level. In other words, eliminating the option to vote by signing an affidavit disenfranchises communities of color and lower-income voters at staggering and disproportionate rates.

As Republican Ottawa County Clerk Justin Roebuck was quoted in Bridge Magazine, the state's existing voter ID policy "is a great one, so what is the problem we are trying to solve? There's so little, I mean like none, evidence of voter fraud by impersonation, so that's where I struggle. It will be an inconvenience for our voters."

This anti-voter initiative would require voters requesting absentee ballots to write their state ID number or the last four digits of their social security number on the application. If they fail to do so, they would be provided with a provisional ballot which will not be counted unless they present an ID in person at their clerk's office within six days of the election. Michigan does not currently require an ID or ID number for absentee ballot applications. Instead, clerks match signatures on the application against signatures they have on file for each voter, who previously provided an ID to register to vote.

The initiative also prohibits the Secretary of State, local election officials, or any of their employees from "sending or providing access to" an application for an absentee ballot unless its first requested by a voter. The fact that political parties, special interest groups, and advocacy groups are permitted to send out applications for absentee ballots, is a strong indicator that the proponents behind this initiative are not as interested in possible voter fraud as reducing the number of voters participating in elections.

Having the government initiate the process of voting ensures all voters have equal access to the ballot regardless of party or zip code. It improves participation in our elections and builds trust. Making it more difficult for registered voters to submit an absent voter ballot application will not make the absentee voting process

more secure. There are already safeguards in place, and more than 250 audits showed the 2020 Election was secure, to ensure people do not obtain ballots they are not entitled to through signature verification processes and other security features.

The initiative's restrictions on how a Michigan voter may receive an absent voter ballot application raises concerns under the Michigan Constitution. Proposal 3 of 2018, supported by over two-thirds of voters in 2018, granted Michigan voters a constitutional right "to vote an absentee voter ballot without giving a reason," and requires that the provision's text "be liberally construed in favor of voters' rights in order to effectuate its purposes." The Michigan Court of Appeals agreed last year that proactively providing absent voter applications to registered Michigan voters is consistent with the Secretary of State's "constitutional obligation" to effectuate the Constitution's purpose.

The initiative bars state and local election clerks from accepting any private money, including grants or in-kind donations from outside groups to help them conduct elections. Election officials can only use funds that are available and appropriated by the State government for all election related matters, including equipment purchases, voter registration and informational mail about elections.

The effects of this provision which may be the most dangerous and damaging of the initiative, is that it will surely undermine the ability of election officials to administer elections and serve the needs of voters. Under this provision the following would be prohibited:

- Federal government election funding to cities and townships
- Places of worship, nursing homes and extended stay homes donating space for polling places
- Clerks applying for grants to fund absentee ballot drop boxes and needed technology upgrades
- The loaning of personnel and equipment between communities
- The ability of citizens to volunteer their time to assist with the election

Such restrictions will surely impact the ability of resource-challenged local governments to provide efficient and reliable access to voting, including maintaining the availability of secure ballot drop boxes. And there are many people in the LGBTQ+ community who have to wait in line several hours to vote.

Additionally, if the anti-voter group collects 340,000 valid signatures for this petition drive, the measure will go directly to the legislature where a majority of lawmakers can vote it into law without it going to the ballot and without the voters' say — and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer would not be able to use her veto power. This is a shady tactic we've seen used before on controversial ballot initiatives passed by the legislature.

This ballot initiative is being pushed by the same people who fostered doubts in the last election, by stoking the "Big Lie." Republicans in the Michigan Senate in their 54-page investigation into the 2020 Election released earlier this year, declared that lies about 2020 election fraud were unfounded.

United and together, we encourage members of the LGBTQ+ community and our allies to decline to sign and to resist this anti-voter effort that attempts to undo all the progress that Michiganders have made to modernize our elections so that every eligible voter can cast their vote. The progress we have made on LGBTQ+ rights depends on the ability of every eligible member of our community to have their voice heard at the ballot box.

Signed by:

American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan, Affirmations Community Center, Corktown Health Center, Equality Michigan, Gender Identity Network Alliance, Human Rights Campaign, Inclusive Justice, LGBT Community Council, LGBT Detroit, Michigan Unitarian Universalist, Social Justice Network, Out Center, OutFront Kalamazoo, Pride at Work, SAGE Metro Detroit, Stand with Trans, Trans Sistas of Color, Transcend the Binary

You're Cordially
Invited
To

**Fight
For
Equality**

Become an ACLU member
at ACLUmich.org

ACLU
AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
OF MICHIGAN

STD/HIV CLINIC
"The Risk is Not Knowing,
Know Your Status! Get Educated! Get Tested!"

Services Provided:

- Risk Assessment Counseling
- Free Condoms
- HIV Counseling
- Linkage to HIV Care Services
- Covid-19 Testing Referrals
- PrEP Referrals

Testing and Treatment:
Confidential, Appointment Only, Persons 12 and Older
Minors (under 18 years of age) do not need parental consent

- Syphilis
- Gonorrhea/Chlamydia
- Trichomoniasis
- Non-Gonococcal Urethritis (NGU)
- Pubic Lice
- Scabies
- Rapid HIV Testing
- Hepatitis C Testing

"We take pride in taking care of our residents"

To schedule an appointment
CALL 586-465-9217
Monday-Friday 9:00-5:00
27690 Van Dyke Ave., Suite B, Warren, MI, 48093



Lilianna Angel Reyes. Photo courtesy of Lilianna Angel Reyes



Brayden Misiolek. Photo courtesy of Transcend the Binary



Jey'nce Poindexter Mizrahi. Photo courtesy of Instagram



Amy Hunter. Photo courtesy of OutFront Kalamazoo

8 Local and National Inspirational Transgender Leaders (Who Aren't Caitlyn Jenner)

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

With Caitlyn Jenner busy upholding the bashing of trans folk by comedian Dave Chappelle, BTL took a look at some kinder, gentler but still kick-ass trans individuals whose activism inspires us. We asked four Michiganders why they do the work they do, and also spotlight four trans leaders from across the country.

Michiganders

Lilianna Angel Reyes

Reyes is the executive director of the Trans Sistas of Color Project and the director of the Ruth Ellis Center's youth drop-in center.

"I do what I do for my community because when I transitioned at 17 in Saginaw there was nothing or nobody I could look to for guidance or help. Although there were some trans groups hours away, nobody looked like me, no trans women of color. I wanted to create something so that people like me could at least feel included somewhere. I wanted little Black and brown girls to feel like they could be something and live their wildest dreams and transitioning didn't stop them."

Brayden Misiolek

Misiolek is the co-founder and executive director of Transcend the Binary, an agency aimed at supporting trans and gender diverse folks and their families in developing a pathway to achieve their health and wellness goals.

"I advocate for our community largely because of my late friend and Transcend the Binary co-founder, Darnell Jones. He supported me on my journey as I sought hormone treatment, and on that path taught me so much about empowerment. We shared the belief that change for any community — especially the trans and non-binary community — must be driven by its people. He helped me realize my own skills and capability, just as I came to understand our fragmented healthcare system, its impact on people like me, and why a holistic view of wellness is necessary for change."

Jey'nce Poindexter Mizrahi

Mizrahi is a case manager and head of the housing department for the Ruth Ellis Center. She is also vice president of the Trans Sistas of Color Project.

"Many people wander through and navigate life either searching for their purpose or doing things by trial and error. I, on the other hand, have received my instructions and assignments directly from God. He has laid out my path to serve his people, all of his people, and I'm committed to do just that. My Bishop informed me that I would save people through fulfilling my professional duties and responsibilities while simultaneously saving and allowing those who have been harmed by churches to be reconnected to God by the way in which I handle them."

Amy Hunter

Hunter is the executive director of OutFront Kalamazoo.

"I do what I do because if I have privilege, I

am morally bound to use it for the good of my community. It is a moral imperative to help those who do not live with the privilege I am fortunate to have."

Across the Country

Mara Keisling

Washington, DC

Keisling is the founder and executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) in Washington. She has made appearances on CNN, MSNBC, C-SPAN and even Fox News as her profile increases. In an interview with Mashable, she spoke on her role in the community and how NCTE has helped in her personal mission:

"I am so fortunate that I've gotten to be part of this really effective, fast-moving trans policy movement. I hope I've done my share. But it's all really been joint efforts — I mean, I guess I'm the founder of NCTE, that's probably my biggest accomplishment. I think without NCTE there would not have been such a solid LGBTQ [political] movement. It could've been a gay rights movement with trans people trying to get in."

Rachel Levine

Washington, DC

Levine, a four-star admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, is a senior government official who is currently serving as the assistant secretary for health (ASH) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She is the first out transgender person to be confirmed to federal office by the U.S. Senate.

Upon her swearing-in she said the following:

"I stand on the shoulders of those LGBTQ+ individuals who came before me, both known and unknown. May this appointment today be the first of many more to come and create a diverse and more inclusive future...The time is now for our community to move the bar forward toward diversity, and I am proud to wear this uniform and answer that call."

Gavin Grimm

Gloucester, Virginia

When Grimm came out as a transgender boy to his school, the Gloucester County School District school board adopted a discriminatory rule that prohibited boys and girls with "gender identity issues" from using common restrooms. Instead, Grimm and similar students were directed to an alternative "appropriate private facility." Grimm decided to fight his case in court and took it all the way to the Supreme Court. He won.

Sarah McBride

Washington, DC

McBride is the national press secretary for the Human Rights Campaign. Her appearance at the 2016 Democratic National Convention marked the first time a transgender person spoke at a major party convention. Her history-making career created more headlines when she won Delaware's state Senate race, becoming the highest-ranking openly transgender state legislator in U.S. history. After winning, she reflected on the significance of her influence in a tweet, writing, "I hope tonight shows an LGBTQ kid that our democracy is big enough for them, too."

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

WE GOT YOU!



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

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



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

BIDWELL TOVAREZ PLLC

PROVIDING BANKRUPTCY SOLUTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES



For a Fresh Start and
A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

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

What clients say about Bidwell Tovarez:

"Most trustworthy and experienced"

"Outstanding representation"

"Services with a personal touch"



Bidwell Tovarez PLLC

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

www.bidwelltovarez.com

david@bidwelltovarez.com

Call 248-270-3333

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



HEALTHCARE
FOR OUR
Community

LGBTQ+ Focused
Primary Care
Behavioral Health
Services
Gender Affirming
Care
HIV Care &
Support Services

PrEP
STI Testing &
Treatment
Insurance
Navigation
Telehealth



**CORKTOWN
HEALTH**

WWW.CORKTOWNHEALTH.ORG 1726 HOWARD ST, DETROIT



**live
well**

Do you know your HIV status?
Know your status and need help?
Let Wellness Services help.

*get tested.
get in care.
stay in care.*

**Wellness
Services**
wellnessaids.org | 810.232.0888

TRIANGLE CHIROPRACTIC



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

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

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



JOHN TSAKOS, DC

MOST INSURANCES
ACCEPTED

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

Chicago Fans p. 37

Serving the Real Estate Needs of Michigan's
LGBT Community for 30 Years!

Lynn L. Stange
Full Service Realtor
Buyer's & Listing Agent
70 W. Long Lake Rd., Troy, MI 48098




"There really is a difference!"

Phone: 248-561-6967
Email: LLStange.aol.com



Dy-min Johnson tinkering with one of their embroidering machines. Photo: Andrew Potter

→ Sustainability

Continued from p. 18

According to a 2021 report conducted by the Institute for Research on Poverty, "people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) have higher rates of poverty compared to cisgender (cis) heterosexual people, about 22% to 16% respectively."

For many people within our community, staying within a budget and finding sustainable ways of living is essential. So, clothes or materials with short shelf lives are not always viable options for our pockets. Simply put: sustainability within the LGBTQ+ community was established out of necessity.

As co-founders of upcycled, eco-friendly Ferndale shop Not Sorry Goods, Dy-min Johnson and Jess Minnick, both queer, know this reality all too well. Their brand focuses on eco-friendly production. The duo launched their brand after meeting in 2016 at a kickboxing class and bonding over their mutual interests in style and design.

Initially, Johnson and Minnick took a "cut and sew" approach that relied on a local manufacturer to cut and sew all products. Unfortunately, they began to notice a trend among their customers: "They liked the designs, but they weren't really crazy about the high prices of a cut and sew," explains Minnick.

As a result, they moved on to an economical alternative. Instead of outsourcing, they pivoted to thrifting, a natural switch for both owners.

Johnson, who's Black, and Minnick, a Cuban-American, said their cultures inform the way they approach sustainably. Minnick says eco-friendly living was always around them. Their family's move from Cuba to America was the driving force. When the family moved, it became customary to share resources with the larger Cuban community.

Johnson, who's from Detroit, relates to Minnick. She, too, relied on sustainable options. However, thrifting and reusing within the Black community perpetuated a negative stereotype. "Coming from a Black family and Black culture, we were always doing these things," Johnson explains. "But they were seen as ghetto, or just not common, or just something poor people did."

The negative connotations didn't stop Johnson from thrifting. She made a career out of it.

The business partners took the feedback from their customers and their heritage and forged ahead in the sustainable market, learning as much as they could. Minnick says their research uncovered the fashion industry's contribution to world pollution.

They said the findings were enough for them "to completely pivot over."

Pollution within the fashion industry is a problem, but it's often easily overlooked. Lack of concern mostly has to do with the fact that you can't see emissions from a garment like you can from a car or an airplane. But, unfortunately, ignorance paired with the industry's head-in-the-sand response to its part in environmental issues makes it even worse.

In reality, "fashion production makes up 10% of humanity's carbon emissions, dries up water sources, and pollutes rivers and streams," according to a World Economic Forum (WEF) report.

But it's not only production that's to blame for the devastating environmental impact fashion manufacturing can create. It's the disposal process. The report further explains that "85% of all textiles go to the dump each year" and that "...one garbage truck full of clothes is burned or dumped" every second in a landfill big enough to fill the Sydney harbor annually.

WEF also references an International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) study on the industry's effects on marine life. The WEF report revealed that 35% of all microplastics — very small pieces of plastic that never biodegrade — in the ocean came from the laundering of synthetic textiles like polyester.

Driven by the grim statistics around mainstream fashion manufacturing, Johnson and Minnick made the decision to move away from destructive processes. What's better, in addition to reducing their own waste, they're also decreasing possible harmful practices by customizing clothes in-store.

At the back of their Woodward Avenue store is a production studio where they do all their embroidering, screen printing and production work. As a patron, you can also have apparel customized: simply choose the thread color and text, and you'll have a custom-made upcycled, ethically-sourced look.



Upcycled linen quilt that became a tee. Photo courtesy of Raffa Reuther

See **Sustainability**, page 26

AT RISK FOR HIV?

Once a day PrEP
can reduce your risk.

248-858-5416
oakgov.com/HIV



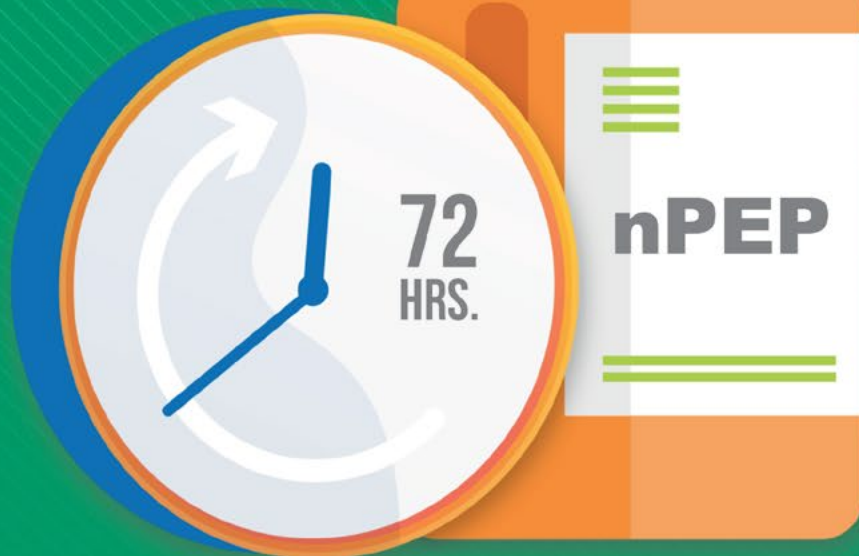
The Oakland County Health Division will not deny participation in its programs based on race, sex, religion, national origin, age or disability. State and federal eligibility requirements apply for certain programs.

OAKLAND
COUNTY MICHIGAN
HEALTH DIVISION
DAVID COULTER
OAKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE
248-214-2246
oakgov.com/HIV

EXPOSED TO HIV?

nPEP can
prevent HIV if
given within

72 hrs.



The Oakland County Health Division will not deny participation in its programs based on race, sex, religion, national origin, age or disability. State and federal eligibility requirements apply for certain programs.



Crown Pharmacy

Specializing in providing world class HIV pharmaceutical care

866-575-3784 (toll free)
www.crownpharmacy.com

24401 Plymouth Rd., Redford, MI 48239
313-532-DRUG (3784) 313-532-3718 (fax)
crownpharmacy1@aol.com
HOURS: M-F 10 am - 6 pm Weds 10am-5pm
Closed Weekends and Holidays



Low Cost Pet Prescriptions



Shop LGBTQ+

PRIDESOURCE.COM

COLD YET?

WE'RE HIRING IN SOUTH FLORIDA

We specialize in providing male caregivers in South Florida - no certification necessary!

Apply online at:
EMERALDELITECARE.COM
/WORK-WITH-US



EMERALD ELITE
SENIOR HOME CARE
License #30211589

LGBTSENIORCARE
License #30212087
License #30212239

OPPORTUNITIES IN PALM BEACH, BROWARD, AND MIAMI-DADE COUNTIES



Jess Minnick (left) and Dy-min Johnson (right) in their production studio. Photo: Andrew Potter

→ Sustainability

Continued from p. 24

“As we’ve grown, we’ve changed our name from Not Sorry Apparel to Not Sorry Goods... because for us, sustainability is not just about eco-friendly products; it’s about doing good in your community and keeping dollars in your community,” Minnick says.

Raffa Reuther, a non-binary and self-identifying dyke, is an interdisciplinary artist and designer who has a similar take on sustainability. Their brand, Raffa, uses locally sourced or hand-dyed fabrics to produce their gender-neutral “wearables.”

“I make mostly things out of canvas, and I work with a small family out of Chicago,” they explain. “Otherwise, I’m getting stuff from Art and Scraps in Detroit. They have a fun fabric section, so if I’m working on patchwork or a commission piece, I go there.”

Reuther further added that they try to reduce their carbon footprint by not buying products from overseas companies or corporate fabric stores like Jo-Ann Stores.

This is all done in an attempt to not “contribute to the world ending so quickly.”

A scroll through Raffa’s Instagram feed or website shows some of their reused work and patched apparel. Some pieces were commissioned and tailored to fit their clients’

bodies, while Reuther made others, but all highlight the idea of a gender-neutral body.

Not Sorry Goods considers gender identity, as well. In their store, you won’t find gendered sections because they don’t believe in the conformities and restrictions of gender roles. “We want people to feel comfortable shopping all the racks and wearing whatever they want,” Minnick says.

While the fashion industry has a long way to go regarding sustainability, the efforts of Not Sorry Goods and Raffa are a step in the right direction. They’re not only taking



Not Sorry Goods’ display of their “Detroit Not Sorry” shirt line. Photo: Andrew Potter

responsibility for their own waste, but they’re vocal about locally sourcing materials and reusing products.

“I would say the queer community and communities of color have always been focused on sustainability,” Johnson adds. “So, it’s nice to see that it’s catching on in a bigger way.”



YOU
HAVE THE COMPASSION. **WE** **HAVE THE MISSION.**

THE DETROIT ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S MISSION IS TO:

- Demonstrate leadership in wildlife conservation and animal welfare
- Provide a broad audience with outstanding and unique educational opportunities that lead to the appreciation and stewardship of nature
- Inspire our community with engaging, meaningful and memorable experiences
- Provide innovative zoological facilities that contribute to the region's economic vitality
- Demonstrate organizational excellence consistent with a commitment to outstanding service, progressive resource management and environmental leadership

DETROIT ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY



DETROIT ZOO • BELLE ISLE NATURE CENTER

Visit dzoo.org/compassion

Kal Penn Comes Out at 44: Here Are 7 Other Celebrities Who Came Out Later in Life

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

“Harold & Kumar” actor Kal Penn, also a former White House staff member during the Obama administration, came out as gay recently, and we’re more than excited. He announced his engagement to his partner, Josh, while promoting his new autobiography “You Can’t Be Serious.” Penn, 44, revealed to People magazine that he and Josh had been together for over a decade.

“I’ve always been very public with everybody I’ve personally

interacted with,” he told People. “Whether it’s somebody that I meet at a bar if Josh and I are out, or we’re talking to friends. I’m really excited to share our relationship with readers. But Josh, my partner, my parents and my brother — four people who I’m closest to in the family — are fairly quiet. They don’t love attention and shy away from the limelight.”

Though coming out is a personal decision and everyone must decide when is the right time for them, Penn felt he came out later than most people do. The actor said that “people figure their shit out at different times in their lives” and that he’s glad he did when he did.

Penn is right. Several notable figures came out later in life. In fact, here’s a look at seven other celebrities who did exactly that:

Cassandra Peterson

As BTL reported last month, Cassandra Peterson, known for her character Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, also came out like Penn via a new book. In “Yours Cruelly, Elvira: Memoirs of the Mistress of the Dark,” Peterson revealed she has been in a committed relationship with another woman nearly 20 years.

Like Penn, the reaction to Peterson’s news has been positive.

“I am just so glad that so many people are interested, you know?” she told BTL’s editorial director, Chris Azzopardi.

Anderson Cooper

Anderson Cooper, the famous CNN anchor-reporter and son of fashion icon Gloria Vanderbilt,



Cassandra Peterson. Photo courtesy of Cassandra Peterson



Photo: KathClick

came out in 2012 at 45. At that time, Cooper acknowledged his sexual orientation to former Daily Beast blogger Andrew Sullivan after years of staying mum on the subject.

“I’ve begun to consider whether the unintended outcomes of maintaining my privacy outweigh personal and professional principles,” Cooper said in an email to Sullivan. “It’s become clear to me that by remaining silent on certain aspects of my personal life for so long, I have given some the mistaken impression that I am trying to hide something — something that makes me uncomfortable, ashamed or even afraid. This is distressing because it is simply not true. ... The fact is, I’m gay, always have been, always will be, and I couldn’t be any more happy, comfortable with myself, and proud.”

Wanda Sykes

Actress and comedian Wanda Sykes was married to a man, record producer Dave “Jam” Hall, for seven years in the ’90s. However, she didn’t officially come out as a lesbian until 2008, when she spoke at a same-sex marriage rally in Las Vegas. That same year, Sykes married her wife, Alex Niedbalski.

In a 2019 interview with BTL’s Jason A. Michael, Sykes said coming out was difficult.

“When I came out to my parents, it wasn’t well-received at all,” Sykes said. “We basically stopped talking. And it was immediate. And at 40 years old, I felt abandoned. These are the people who brought me into the world.”

Marsha Warfield

Like Sykes, actress and comedian Marsha Warfield’s coming out was not easy. In fact, her mother made her keep it a secret until she died. She told BTL about her coming out journey in a recent interview.

“[My mom] telling me she didn’t want me to come out while she was alive in the environment that we were living in didn’t hurt at the time,”



Alex and Wanda Sykes. Photo: KathClick



“Harold & Kumar” actor Kal Penn recently came out at age 44.

See **Coming Out**, page 38



EQUALITY MICHIGAN IS HERE FOR YOU.

**WE SPECIALIZE IN PROVIDING INDIVIDUALIZED
SUPPORT SERVICES TO LGBTQ+ INDIVIDUALS
EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION
AND HARASSMENT.**

***VISIT* EqualityMI.org/Victim-Services
CALL (313) 537-7000**

A Gender-Affirming Online Support Group That Helps Trans People Find Their Voices

Oakland County Speech Pathologist on the Challenging, Sometimes Stressful Process of Changing Voices



BY TOM WESLEY

A new online support community is helping transgender individuals find their (literal) voices. BTL reached out to the group's founder, Dr. Ramya Konnai, a speech pathologist in Oakland County who has been working with trans clients for two decades.

Konnai said she noticed that there was “very limited social support” for her clients to practice their new voices outside the therapy setting. Using a new speaking voice created anxiety for some clients, especially in new environments. That's why, she said, she created the Trans-Voice Virtual Support Group. “I really felt that we needed to develop a community to help build

confidence, help transition and connect people better to practice their new voices,” she said.

While the group is not one-on-one voice therapy, Dr. Konnai believes it will help people help each other. So far, almost 30 participants have signed up for the bi-weekly online meetings from all over the country. “I am really hoping folks find friendships for their mental, social and emotional wellbeing,” she said. “After all, voice is very important to identity.”

Konnai's focus on voice — how it's produced and how people experience it holistically — is a critical part of gender-affirming care for trans individuals. It's hard work on both sides of the sessions, but she said many voice therapy clients are surprised to learn how much their voice can change.

Konnai advises people who want to work on their voice to seek professional care from a speech or voice professional. She said that often, people who try to train their voices on



Dr. Ramya Konnai

their own find that they can only get so far or that their voices crack and their throats hurt. Professional voice therapists can help people change their voices without developing throat issues or faulty voice production, she said.

Changing one's voice takes time and is different for every individual. Dr. Konnai shared that it's best to start working on one's voice early in their transition. “The sooner you start, the more you learn

about your voice, and that will improve your motivation,” she said. Still, she added in regards to the group, “No matter where you are in your transition, you are welcome.”

The Trans-Voice Virtual Support Group is open to individuals 13 years of age and up who identify as transgender and/or non-binary. To register, visit <https://www.henryford.com/transvoice>. The group meets at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month.

→ Dominick Evans

Continued from p. 8

involving us in the process.”

FilmDis does an annual study of representation and is working on number three. Evans says he examines representation through an intersectional lens. He breaks things down, cataloging by categories like disability, gender and sexual orientation.

“So I have all the stats on how many disabled LGBTQ people there are on television and let me tell you, it's abysmal,” he says.

When there are representative roles, “They don't want to give us more than one marginalization,” he says, noting that the state of disability on television is “predominantly white, cis and male.”

“I see this in the LGBT community, too. We kind of ignore that disability is often a normal part of LGBTQIA people's lives,” which sometimes leaves Evans feeling like “I'm too disabled to be trans and too trans to be disabled. Or that's how I'm treated in both communities.”

That's why the “Spaces” video is so important to him. “We're not seeing many trans directors or disabled directors,” he says. “I want to



Dominick Evans.

represent both communities.”

Representation is essential. “When we don't see ourselves, it makes us feel like we're not OK, and maybe we shouldn't be here,” he says. “Not seeing myself made me feel really alone. I grew up hating myself because I was disabled.

I didn't really understand I was trans until I was in my early 20s, and I didn't come out as queer until I was 16. I knew I was different from other disabled people, but I couldn't explain the difference. Having words for that really helped me.”

Not feeling like he belonged in the world caused a great deal of pain for Evans. “[I would think] it would be better for everyone if I was gone. That's the sad truth. I hate that that's true,” he says. “I struggled with suicidal ideation from the age of 5 until I was in my early 20s, and that was really when I started accepting myself as a disabled person.”

As an adult he has a lot of compassion for his younger self. “I just want to hug little me because I just hated myself so much, and I really, really hope that the disabled kids and the queer kids and the trans kids see this video and see, ‘That person is like me and they made it through 40 years.’”

Living past 40 was not a given for Evans. “Being disabled, being trans, I didn't think I would make it to 40,” he says. Growing up he was told, “You're gonna die, you're not going to have a future, you're not going to go to college. This video is so important because it breaks that.”

“Spaces” sends the message that “we're allowed to be,” says Evans. “There's so many kids that grow up like me thinking they just don't belong here and their life is not worth living, and that couldn't be further from the truth.”



Solidarity & Unity

WORLD AIDS DAY 2021

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

10:00 am -4:00 pm

Marygrove College (Madame Cadillac Hall)

Detroit, MI

Limited Transportation Provided (Call 313-577-3954)

Free Food, Raffles and Fun

Please register Via Eventbrite or by phone

<https://worldaidsday2021detroit.eventbrite.com>

or call 313-577-3988

For more information and sponsorship

opportunities

please email :

rondoecs@yahoo.com





Dragging in the Holidays

BenDeLaCreme and Jinkx Monsoon will perform in Detroit on Dec. 10. Photo: Jiji Lee

Jinkx Monsoon and BenDeLaCreme on Taking Their Holiday Show Back on the Road

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

No, Jinkx Monsoon and BenDeLaCreme aren't roommates. But the "RuPaul's Drag Race" alums get that you might think so. After all, during our recent Zoom call, they *were* sharing a physical space.

"We're just together right now," DeLa says,

before kidding that "every time we're getting ready for the holiday show, I kidnap Jinkx and hold her captive in my basement until the show is done. That's our writing process."

What does Jinkx have to say about all this? "I develop Stockholm Syndrome," she says, "and have to be deprogrammed." She adds that this is "how we create the illusion of sisterhood and

togetherness on stage."

Just the opposite is true, of course. There's no illusion. Or basement. (We think.)

Instead, these two are drag sisters through and through, even if they love to feign the dramatic frenemy tension that makes, for example, their holiday shows an irresistibly catty treat. Though last year the pandemic got

in the way of their live show — instead, they made the movie "The Jinkx & DeLa Holiday Special" — they're back on the road again this year for "The Jinkx & DeLa Holiday Show." They'll make a stop in Detroit at The Majestic Theatre on Dec. 10.

I hope that you're getting fed in that basement,

Jinkx:

Jinkx Monsoon: Yeah. I gotta say one thing: As a producer, DeLa makes sure I am fed and fed well.

BenDeLaCreme: Foie gras goose. Just a straw down the gullet, and just pile it in. Gotta keep my little cash cow goin'.

How do you plan on topping "The Jinkx & DeLa Holiday Special"?

DeLa: Topping! Get it?

Jinkx: Yeah, we're gonna top it consensually and with plenty of lube. Every year we have to ask ourselves: How are we gonna top last year's show? And it just so happens that last year's show was a film, so it's a whole new list of obstacles and questions we must answer. But I think we'll attack it the same way we do every year, which is to focus on: What is the message we want to send this year, specifically? What are the shared experiences our audiences can relate to this year? And how are we going to examine those themes and tropes and queries in a new and exciting way that no one's ever done before. So just that.

DeLa: And fortunately, it seems to be a bottomless well of, um, topping jokes.

I would expect nothing less. Is there anything related to the pandemic?

DeLa: Of course. We're in this rare moment where we've been through this collective trauma and now we're going through this collective sort of joy that is also a trauma of beginning to reenter, so I think that it would be impossible for us not to address that. Our thesis is always about really trying to hold all the complexities of how joyous and how difficult the holiday season can be, and this year there's just a lot of layers on top of that.

Jinkx: I'm very much someone who takes what happens in my life, I form a story around it, and just tell you stories from my life. Whereas DeLa takes experiences from her life and then pushes it through a whole Play-Doh factory of synthesis and artifice and stylization. Our writing style together has become a marriage of those two ways of going about it. This year, because of the extenuating circumstances of the last two years, I think we're leaning more into reality than in the past, but still maintaining that stylized [sense of] "How do we comment on reality [as] fictional drag queens?"

DeLa: The characters have been through everything that we collectively have been through, but we're always gonna abstract it by having it be like a talking peppermint that's gonna help us resolve our feelings, you know?

Jinkx: It's not gonna be like group therapy; it's gonna be like watching two crazy ladies.

DeLa: Because people wanna feel seen in their experience, but they also want a break, right? We need to experience some joy right now. So our hope is to bring all of those things.

Jinkx: Yeah. Live vicariously through us as we process trauma in an entertaining way. [Laughs.] You get drunk and sit back, and we'll do the work.

You had a naked man in the TV special. Will you bring a naked man with you on stage for the live show?

DeLa: If only the Delta baggage limit would allow for a carry-on that heavy.

I'm sure you can find a man in every town willing to get naked.

Jinkx: We'll put it in our rider.

DeLa: You know what? Shockingly, the man in each town you haven't met that's willing to get on stage naked is generally not the person you want on stage with you.

Jinkx: [Laughs.] I mean, if I had it my way, there'd be full-frontal nudity in everything that I do, but that's just a perfect example of certain things you can pull off in a movie that you can't necessarily do on stage.

DeLa: All right, I'm getting the hint. I will be fully nude for this entire tour.

What are you most looking forward to when it comes to getting back on the road and being in front of a live audience?

Jinkx: Uh, how do I say all of it without it sounding like a cop-out answer?

DeLa: But it's the actual answer. I mean, the actual relationship with the audience, the live energetic exchange, the exchange that we get to have with each other as like a threeway with the audience [laughs], for lack of a better way to speak about it. But I mean, I'm even looking forward to the stuff that usually is the hardest stuff. I'm looking forward to, you know, trying to sleep on an airplane unsuccessfully and then going straight to tech and having to do a show again. I just... I can't wait to live life as a performer again.

Jinkx: Yeah, honestly, if I could take my cat on tour with us then I'd have it all. Oh, and my husband. [Laughs.]

Is there something about Christmas that gives you a different kind of permission to be completely outrageous?

DeLa: I mean, we've never needed much permission. But what I do think is that generally it gives a lot of other people permission, which is why I think it's such a successful marriage between drag and the holidays: because it's a time of year where I think so many people indulge in that kind of excess.


Jinkx: Yes! Straight people have three points in the year to dress up like us. They have Halloween, Christmas and the Kentucky Derby, for some reason. [Laughs.]

What part of getting into drag really makes you feel the Christmas fantasy?

DeLa: You know, I love being in drag much more than I enjoy getting into drag at this stage of my career. [Laughs.]

Jinkx: Yeah, if I had a button that I could just push that would put me into drag immediately, I'd give almost anything for that.

DeLa: That Judy Jetson helmet from the opening credits of "The Jetsons" that she just puts on, and then she's gorgeous.



AWBS
ALL WELL-BEING SERVICES

BRINGING WELLNESS TO LIFE

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

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

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

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

ASPIRE to Excellence
carf
INTERNATIONAL

65
ANNIVERSARY

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR APPOINTMENT
CALL (313) 924-7860 | www.awbs.org



All Are Welcome Hear

Inman Audiology
(248) 839-5429
www.inmanaudiology.com
1651 W Big Beaver Rd.
Troy, MI 48084



Inman Audiology



Photos: Jiji Lee

Jinkx: But I think it's all gonna feel new again, now that I'm reentering the world like a hairless, pink little baby. [Laughs.]

The last live show in 2019 was called "All I Want for Christmas Is Attention." What's all you both want this year?

DeLa: Attention. [Laughs.] Turns out that I spoke too soon. I need it more now.

Jinkx: Yeah, with a heavy side of validation. And if there's time, the dismantling of the patriarchy.

DeLa: Yes, the fall of capitalism and also for people to collectively take Covid safety and vaccines seriously enough for us to be able to go on tour without the constant fear that the rug could be pulled out at any moment. [Laughs.]

Jinkx: Yeah. It feels like Michael Myers is stalking slowly behind us.

DeLa: But at least six feet away at all times.

Besides each other of course, who is your favorite queen that does something totally different from what you do?

DeLa: Totally different? But I like the queens who are like me!

Jinkx: Two of my other best drag sisters are Alaska and then Bob the Drag Queen. I feel like Bob the Drag Queen and I have very different styles but a shared central passion for what we do and a shared respect for the art form.

DeLa: I guess I was picturing that I had to think of something that was a far cry from what I do. I mean, they're definitely different from you, but there's definitely a world of theatricality within that. I would say there's a lot of drag queens who have really inspired me over the years. This performer doesn't even really identify as a drag queen, but Dina Martina, who is also a storyteller and theatrical chanteuse, is one of the most brilliant performers out there.



If both of you returned to "RuPaul's Drag Race" and did Snatch Game as a duo, which legendary iconic duo would you be?

Jinkx: The answer that's right in front of us would be Ren and Stimpy.

DeLa: I don't know that it's the most interesting choice but Lucy and Ethel feel like maybe the most obvious choice. I would be really into doing Laurel and Hardy just because I'd like to see us in those looks.

Jinkx: Oh, I know my answer! Bette Davis and Joan Crawford.

Getting back to the holidays, what's a holiday tradition that you wish would just die?

DeLa: I think we've killed most of the ones we don't like already, but let's see. I have to think back. I will say I do not enjoy gift giving. I like gift giving as a general practice, but at the holidays it seems transactional. Like, I wanna give a gift because I found a thing, and it made me think of somebody. In my

family growing up, it was all very much like, "Here is this gift, but what do I get in return?" So that's not something I enjoy. I prefer the experiences and the togetherness.

Jinkx: I'm trying really hard to think, and I just can't. Like there's plenty of traditions that I'm like, "What's that all about?" But then there's always a way to make 'em fun.

DeLa: What about going to church in the middle of the night? I wanna let go of that one.

Jinkx: Yeah, anything that's too religious-y. [Laughs.]

DeLa: So Christmas?

Jinkx: [Laughs.]

DeLa: What Jinkx would do away with is Christmas.

Jinkx: [Laughs.] Yeah, I'd take us back to solstice, you know. Take us all the way back. You know, people are talking about how we go back to those old-timey Christmases of yore. I'm like, go all the way back.

SERVICES

● = Detroit ● = Jackson ● = Ypsilanti ⊕ = All

- Clothing Closet ●
- Food Pantry ●●
- Hepatitis C Testing ●●
- HIV Prevention and Education ⊕
- HIV Related Trainings and Presentations ⊕
- HIV Testing ●●
- Housing Assistance ⊕
- Hypertension & Obesity Programs & Education ●●
- Linkage To Care ●
- Medical Transportation Assistance ⊕
- Medication Adherence Counseling ⊕
- Overdose Prevention ●●
- PrEP Clinic ●
- Prisoner Reentry Services ●
- STI Testing ●●
- Support Groups ⊕
- Syringe Access ●●
- Tobacco Reduction ⊕

LOCATIONS

Detroit
3968 Mt. Elliott St.
Detroit, MI 48207
P: 313-446-9800
F: 313-446-9839

Jackson
211 West Ganson Street
Suite 110
Jackson, MI 49201
P: 517-780-3262
F: 517-780-0936

Ypsilanti
2287 Ellsworth Road
Suite B
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
P: 734-572-9355
F: 734-572-0554



800-872-2437 • www.miunified.org



**WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP:
IN-PERSON AT AFFIRMATIONS
COMMUNITY CENTER**

TOPICS WILL VARY FROM LIGHTEARTED SUBJECTS TO IN-DEPTH DISCUSSIONS LIKE COMING OUT STORIES AND STRUGGLES, ASSUMPTIONS OF SEXUALITY, BEING A BI OR LESBIAN WOMAN IN THE WORKPLACE - AND MUCH MORE!

SOCIALIZE, VENT, AND BUILD COMMUNITY IN A SAFE SPACE FOR WOMEN (LESBIAN, BI, TRANS, ETC).

MEETINGS ARE THE FIRST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH, AT 6:30 PM, INSIDE THE BOARD ROOM AND THE LAST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH, 10:30 AM, IN ROOM 204, STARTING IN DECEMBER.

FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF GROUPS, PLEASE VISIT GOAFFIRMATIONS.ORG/SUPPORT-AND-DISCUSSION-GROUPS/ OR SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW!



290 W 9 Mile, Ferndale, MI 48220 | 248-398-7105 | GoAffirmations.org

**Supporting the
Community Since
Before it was Cool.**

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



Sandi & Linda
www.trilliumrealtors.com

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





A still from "The Eyes of Tammy Faye." Photo: Searchlight Pictures

Representation Matters

The Hollywood Film 'The Eyes of Tammy Faye' Recreates an Historic Interview with a Man Living with AIDS

BY MARK S. KING

At the height of their 1980s popularity, Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker were television evangelist royalty, hosting multiple shows and raking in cash from their on-air collection plates. Tammy Faye, however, also had an expansive view of love and acceptance, despite her conservative Christian roots.

She proved it in 1985 when she had a gay man living with AIDS, Steve Pieters, as a guest on her show, "Tammy's House Party." The interview is recreated in the new film "The Eyes of Tammy Faye," about the rise and fall of the Bakkers. Available now on Blu-ray and digital, it stars Jessica Chastain as Tammy Faye and Andrew Garfield as Jim.

Pieters spoke about the original interview, which is available on YouTube, and the new film.

It's amazing that of all the events in Tammy Faye's life, the filmmakers chose to include her interview with you.

I'm thrilled that they did. I'm touched and honored.

It's ironic that the gay man they found was also a theologian and pastor.

Yes. I was a pastor at the time with [the LGBTQ-affirming] Metropolitan Community Church [MCC], and I had been speaking about living with AIDS for two years or more. I made sure

the interview went out live so they couldn't edit it. It was a kick.

But it was a conservative environment. When did you realize it was friendly ground?

Tammy's producer had been very friendly. She reassured me that Tammy was proud and excited to be the first to give an affirming interview to a gay man with AIDS.

You also kept bringing the topic back to your faith. When she asked you if you had given women "a chance," you said God loves you the way you are.

I did that quite deliberately. She had said [before we went on air] that "we don't talk about Jesus" on this show. And then, of course, we ended up talking about Jesus a lot.

It's also surprising, frankly, that the person living with AIDS who did that interview in 1985 is still alive to talk about it.

I know! I got sick in 1982 and was diagnosed with GRID [gay-related immunodeficiency, a diagnosis used prior to the discovery of HIV]. They told me I had eight months left to live.

There's no rhyme or reason to it, is there? Who was empowered, who fought hard, who lived,

who died, in those early years.

Yes, absolutely. When I think about all those amazing people who were killed...

What was the initial response from folks to your interview?

Not much. It wasn't until 1987, when the Reverend Troy Perry played the interview at a general conference for MCC and 1,000 people stood up and cheered, that I got much of a response. I was so shocked. After that, I traveled for 12 years all over the world, and they always wanted me to show that interview at church events. Everyone wanted to see it.

The trailer for "The Eyes of Tammy Faye" gives viewers the impression that she was really going rogue with her interview with you. It didn't please the conservatives in power. She wasn't sticking to the political script of homosexuals being a threat to Christianity and democracy.

Absolutely. I don't know if it was because she had a good heart or because she wanted to be known as someone who did something radical. I don't know. But I'm told this was not the first time she had talked to a gay man.



Scott Pieters

The new film explores the mystery of Tammy Faye, meaning whether she was just playing a role or whether she was, in fact, an innocent who loved the Lord. If her constant cheerfulness and loving attitude was a persona, she never, ever dropped it.

I know she treated me like a real human being. She was very compassionate. It seemed very sincere. Her son, Jay Bakker, and I have talked the last couple of years, and he tells me that my interview changed her, and it changed the whole family. After that interview, she decided that she had a calling to minister to the LGBT community. She started taking her kids to MCC services and to Pride parades and to hospices to meet people with AIDS who were sick and dying. Jay said it completely changed their attitudes and her direction in ministry.

Was Jim Bakker involved in any of this?

Jay Bakker tells me that his father was all for having the interview done. They did decide, though, that it should be broadcast on Tammy's House Party, rather than on their flagship show, The PTL Club [PTL stood for "praise the Lord"]. They thought it would go better if it were on her show.

Now, all of these decades later, the notoriety of doing this interview is all going to come up again. There's an actor, Randy Havens, playing you in a major Hollywood film. How does that make you feel?

I'm thrilled about it. I got a note from the producer saying that her interview with me figures very prominently in the plot.

Did the producers of the film approach you beforehand to ask your thoughts, then and now, about the interview? Did you even know that the film was happening?

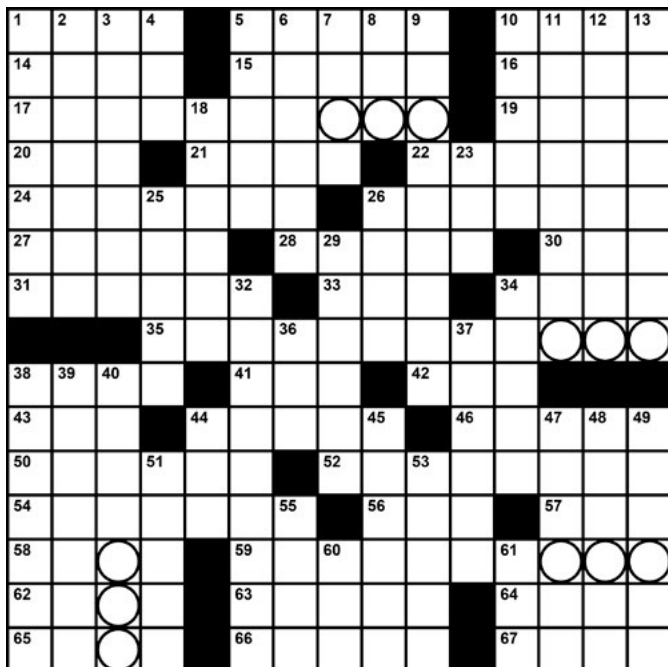
No. I was on Jay Bakker's podcast, "Loosen The Bible Belt," and he told me about the movie. He said that the actress Jessica Chastain, who plays Tammy Faye, told him that the interview was central to the plot. Jessica decided to do the film because of that interview in the plot. The producers apparently thought that I was no longer living. Because the interview is on YouTube, I'm considered to be a historic figure, so they don't have to ask my permission to do it. I wasn't even aware of it until after the film was in the can.

What are your apprehensions?

There is a little bit of fear in me that this is what's going to be the lead in my obituary.

This interview and now this film is what I'm going to be remembered for, not that I survived AIDS or was a director of AIDS ministries but that I was that gay pastor with AIDS who did that interview. Which is OK. I could be remembered for a lot worse.

Mark S. King is an HIV/AIDS advocate and writer for POZ magazine, where this interview originally appeared.



- 28 Carpet layer's calculations
 30 Mai ___ cocktail
 31 Porcine features
 33 Tolkien beast
 34 Woody valley
 35 "Pathétique Symphony" composer
 38 Concerning
 41 Pirates' drink
 42 '70s abductors
 43 Sticky seed case
 44 "Pirates of Penzance" heroine
 46 Pulls out one's shooter
 50 Just kiss on the first date
 52 Transfer of computer info
 54 Where Roxane Gay works?
 56 Wheel tooth
 57 Constellation over Rio
 58 Young miss
 59 "Crime and Punishment" author
 62 Peeling fruits for soldiers, e.g.
 63 In the dark
 64 "I Cain't Say No" singer
 65 Willie of Glenn Burke's sport
 66 Intimidate, with "out"
 67 Fairy godmother's stick
- 4 Age of Aquarius, perhaps
 5 Subway token taker
 6 Chanted word
 7 Britney Spears' "___ Curious"
 8 Rd. where they toll you so
 9 Frequent Monet subjects
 10 Homophobia, to the enlightened
 11 Comes out
 12 Perez Hilton's job, in a way
 13 How a queen may walk
 18 A man's man, and others
 23 USA alternative
 25 Olive Oyl pursuer
 26 Roz portrayer on "Frasier"
 29 Emulated Kerouac's "On the Road"
 32 Gathered with difficulty
 34 Disney's Dopey, for one
 36 Dupont Circle of D.C., e.g.
 37 "Ripe" stage of life
 38 Faulkner title, when doubled
 39 Kind of grape
 40 Geoffrey Rush, in "Frida"
 44 Elton John's mother
 45 Milk acid
 47 State of polar bears
 48 Arrange a time for
 49 Convinced to wear suede?
 51 Thin puffs
 53 Zipper piece
 55 "Our ___" (movie about AIDS)
 60 Cunning
 61 Nonvulgar swearing

See p. 24 for answers

Chicago Fans

Across

- 1 Ill will, or lack of grace
 5 Bessie of the blues
 10 Short term employee
 14 "You want the light ___ off?"
 15 Florida gay film festival city
 16 Nat. counterpart in MLB
- 17 "The Firebird" composer
 19 Adriatic seaport
 20 Big load
 21 One kind of opera queen
 22 Balls
 24 Addiction accomplice
 26 Kennedy's 109, and others
 27 Come slowly closer

Down

- 1 Company that made the Twinkies
 Defense possible?
 2 Justice Scalia
 3 "Wizard of Oz" storm

Prism of Possibilities
Psychotherapy
Christine Cantrell, PhD
Fully Licensed Psychologist

Give yourself an extreme self makeover ...

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

Located in Royal Oak
www.christinecantrell.com
christinecantrellphd@gmail.com

CALL NOW! 248-591-2888



Find a location near you.

Instagram icon InstaTerrapin





Don Chisholm, REALTOR®
 (248) 425-4366
 DChisholm@RealEstateOne.com
 www.DonChisholmRealtor.com



Your Personal Advocate



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

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



Michigan's Largest Real Estate Company



Where queer and kinky people can be, and find themselves

The spectrum of sexual and gender identities is wide and there are a variety of ways to find pleasure and satisfaction in consensual sexual relationships. Our therapists can help with issues including:

- Relationship Issues
- LGBTQ Affirmative Therapy
- Non-Monogamy
- Kink and Fetish Affirmative Therapy
- Coming Out
- Internalized oppression

(248) 399-7447

Royal Oak | crsh.com
 Dr. Joe Kort, clinical director



MASSAGE FOR MEN

Safe, discrete, good price.
 Royal Oak area. 15 years experience.

CALL LEE
248-548-6516



Marsha Warfield. Photo: YouTube

→ Coming Out

Continued from p.28

said the star of the classic '80s sitcom "Night Court" and, more recently, Fox's hit series "9-1-1." "It hurt later. You get older and you realize just how suppressed you've been and how much you've missed."

Warfield now has a "boo" named Angie, and she's hoping that they get married soon.



David Hyde Pierce. Photo: Debby Wong

David Hyde Pierce

David Hyde Pierce, star of the NBC series "Frasier," came out when he was 48 during an acceptance speech at the Tony Awards in 2007. After winning his best actor in a musical award for "Curtains," Pierce said he wished to thank "my partner Brian because it's 24 years of listening to your damn notes — that's why I'm up here tonight."

Pierce and his partner, television writer, director and producer Brian Hargrove, married the following year.



Robin Roberts. Photo: KathClick

Robin Roberts

"Good Morning America" anchor Robin Roberts is a survivor. She battled breast cancer and underwent a bone marrow transplant in front of the world. Roberts came out in 2013 at age 53 through a Facebook post thanking her girlfriend, massage therapist Amber Laign, for all her support during Roberts' illness.

In 2015, she was named one of 31 Icons of the 2015 LGBT History Month by Equality Forum.

George Takei

Legendary "Star Trek" actor George Takei waited until the age of 68 to come out. In an interview with Frontiers magazine in 2005, Takei said he felt compelled to come out after then California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's veto of a same-sex marriage bill.

"It's not really coming out, which suggests opening a door and stepping through," Takei told the magazine of his announcement. "It's more like a long, long walk through what began as a narrow corridor that starts to widen."

Takei has become very popular on social media since coming out. He has been married to his partner Brad Altman since 2008.



George Takei. Photo: KathClick

DTW DETROIT. TRAVEL THE WORLD. NONSTOP.



Reconnecting
you to the world.

Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW) is here to help you reconnect to the world. With more than 120 nonstop destinations on three continents, DTW is the gateway to your next journey. Enjoy our convenient parking options, unique shops and popular restaurants. Our team is known for delivering an award-winning customer experience and we're ready to welcome you to DTW.

[#DTWnonstop](#)



DETROIT METRO • WILLOW RUN
WAYNE COUNTY AIRPORT AUTHORITY

www.metroairport.com



Dr. Paul Benson's
Be Well Medical Center

Investigational Injectable PrEP Medication Study

If you're over 18 years old,
have NOT been tested for
HIV in the past 3 months or
more, are currently
sexually active, having
receptive anal sex, and
don't always use condoms,
you may be eligible!

Taking hormones? You can
continue to take them
during the study!

**LOOKING TO
INCLUDE PEOPLE OF
COLOR AND
TRANSGENDER
INDIVIDUALS**

Call (248) 544 - 9300 and
select extension 7 today
to see if you qualify!