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# Between THE Lines™

**Q&A**

Michael Cimino and  
George Sear on End  
of 'Love, Victor'

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**END OF AN ERA**

Woodward Bar &  
Grill Destroyed by  
3-Alarm Fire

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**THE PARENT GUIDE**

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## BEHIND THE LENS

Nonbinary Photographer Quinn Kirby Discusses What Made Work On Planned Parenthood  
Gender Affirming Care Initiative So Personal



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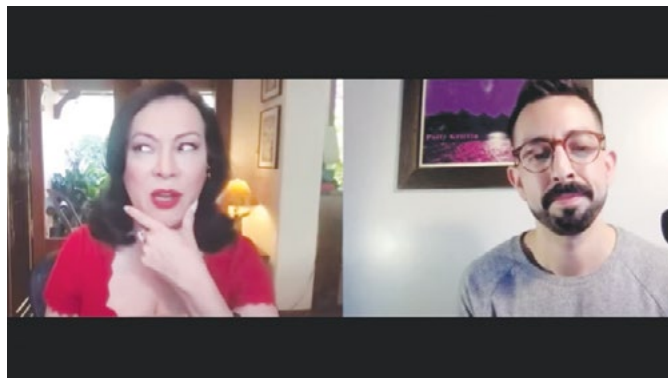
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# 5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now-ish

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

Pride month is flying by with alarming speed, but don't fret! Between the Lines will be here for you long after the last corporate logo has its rainbow filter switched off.

This edition of 5 Queer Things You can Do Right Now(ish) will help you make some unique Pride month memories, no matter how (or where) you choose to celebrate.

## Mix it up at a queer, sober nightclub.

Enjoy all the rainbow-kissed goodness with none of the hangovers at Joule's Molly House, a dry nightclub and entertainment venue in Grand Rapids! Pride Month can seem like a non-stop party, and for good reason — it's an excellent time to reflect on and celebrate LGBTQ+ history and community. If you're sober, though, or just prefer a bit of alcohol-free revelry from time to time, you might feel a bit out of sorts during the influx of so many decidedly non-sober Pride events. Head over to Michigan's left coast to find out why "Joule's is a sober place for queers to be alive," according to the venue's Facebook.

Learn more about Joule's at [facebook.com/JoulesMollyHouse](https://facebook.com/JoulesMollyHouse).



## Attend an event for older LGBTQ+ adults.

SAGE Metro Detroit invites older LGBTQ+ adults to its annual summit on June 25, themed "Stepping Into Tomorrow," which will focus on "moving forward to a new normal, celebrating our steps forward as a stronger community." The summit is one of the longest-running annual events focused on LGBTQ aging in the country. SAGE is also offering an online event on June 27 for older trans adults, "Loving Your Aging Trans Body Sexually Series, Part 2: Expansive Pleasure and Desire."

Learn more about this and other upcoming SAGE events at [facebook.com/SAGEMetroDetroit](https://facebook.com/SAGEMetroDetroit).



## Learn about Michigan's first Pride event.

Celebrating the release of "Come Out! In Detroit" nonfiction comic book at the Detroit Historical Museum through Sept. 11 Local historian and Pride Source contributor Tim Retzlaff worked with illustrator Clare Paul to create the book, which features eyewitness accounts of the "Christopher Street Detroit '72" march commemorating the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in New York City.

"We are so excited to open this exhibit just in time for Pride," said Rebecca Salminen Witt, Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer. "The artwork is spectacular and the story

is one not many people know." Salminen Witt added that the exhibit is part of a larger effort to ensure Detroiters "see themselves" in the halls and on the walls of the museum. Entrance is included with general admission to the Detroit Historical Museum at 5401 Woodward Ave in Midtown Detroit.

Visit [detroithistorical.org](https://detroithistorical.org) and [comeoutindetroit.com](https://comeoutindetroit.com) for more information.



## Rally at the Capitol

Channel your political ire into something positive June 26 at Michigan Pride's Rally at the Capitol at the Michigan State Capitol building in downtown Lansing from 12-2p.m. The event will focus on speakers, political action and community. Before you (legally, peacefully) "storm" the capital steps,

pick up some Pride gear at Lansing's Rainbow Riot, a charming outpost located in Lansing's Dark Art Market offering all the "queer art and treasures" you could ever imagine.

Rainbow Riot is located at 110 E Cesar Chavez in Lansing's Old Town district - check [facebook.com/RainbowRiotLansing](https://facebook.com/RainbowRiotLansing) for current hours.



## Catch a Streaming LGBTQ+ BIPOC or AAPI Movie

A great night in with friends is the perfect respite from all the June Pride hoopla. Consider streaming a film centered on LGBTQ+ BIPOC and/or AAPI voices. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- "Fire Island" starring Bowen Yang, Joel Kim Booster and Conrad Ricamora (Buddy Movie/Romantic Comedy, exclusive to Hulu)
- "Moonlight" starring Trevante Rhodes, André Holland, Janelle Monáe and Ashton Sanders (Drama)
- "Dear Ex" starring Roy Chiu, Hsieh Ying-xuan, Spark Chen and Joseph Huang (Drama/Romantic Comedy, exclusive to Netflix)
- "The Watermelon Woman" starring Cheryl Dunye (Drama/Romantic Comedy)



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 Photo by Marina Goldt





# Planned Parenthood of Michigan Introduces Gender Affirming Care

## Services Will Roll Out Statewide By End of Year

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Known for delivering vital health care, sex education and sexual health information to people of all ages, gender identities, national origins, races and sexual orientations, Planned Parenthood of Michigan (PPMI) now offers gender-affirming hormone therapy as well. Currently available at its Lansing and Marquette health centers, services are scheduled to roll out to centers across the state by the end of 2022.

The two Michigan locations join 41 other nationwide affiliates of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America in offering gender-affirming care.

“Gender-affirming care’ means embracing the gender identity people share with us and supporting people in expressing their most authentic selves,” said Dr. Halley Crissman, director of gender-affirming care and associate medical director at Planned Parenthood of Michigan. “This means providing excellent care to people

of all genders without judgment or cisgender assumptions; competency in specific gender-affirming medical, surgical and non-medical transition interventions; and care that acknowledges the injustices and trauma the trans community face.”

Specifically, the participating health centers can offer feminizing hormone care in the form of the testosterone-blocking medications spironolactone and finasteride, in addition to estradiol medications delivered as injections, patches and pills either swallowed or dissolved under the tongue. Progestin medications may be used, too.

Masculinizing hormone care can mean testosterone medications — injections or gels — and finasteride for scalp hair loss management. All gender-affirming care, including “microdosing,” or intermediate dose hormones, are available to individuals age 18 and older and take into account any underlying medical conditions or concerns.

Yet Planned Parenthood recognizes that each individual expresses their

gender identity uniquely. “There’s no requirement that a trans or nonbinary person receives any sort of hormone or surgical therapy in order to be trans,” Crissman said. “There are many different ways that people express and feel their gender identities.”

A mental health referral is not required by Planned Parenthood in order to access gender-affirming care. Instead, the centers implement an informed consent model of health care. Patients discuss the risks and benefits of hormone therapy with a PPMI clinician and determine the appropriate course of care.

Crissman said this is particularly significant because, historically, medical providers have practiced a form of gatekeeping that has required patients to have clearance from a mental health provider in order to receive gender-affirming care.

“We feel that this practice is largely rooted in transphobia and provides or sets up unnecessary gatekeeping where individuals essentially need to prove their transness to a mental

health provider in order to receive critical care,” Crissman said. “This practice is also rooted in a transphobic misunderstanding of trans and nonbinary identities as a pathology or a mental health condition.”

Information on what to expect from an appointment for gender-affirming care can be found on the Planned Parenthood of Michigan website, where visitors will also find a comprehensive “myth busting” section as well as FAQs. This resource, which includes links to self-injection videos for intramuscular and subcutaneous injections and how hormone prescriptions are handled at the pharmacy, was made possible with the input of a statewide community advisory board.

The comprehensive resource explains everything from the fertility implications of hormone therapy to the medical billing codes used for gender-affirming care.

“We think it’s really important that gender-affirming care centers the voices and the needs of people

who are gender diverse and is patient- and community-centered,” Crissman said. The Board is comprised of 19 individuals of various gender identities and backgrounds from across the state, the majority of whom are trans and nonbinary. The group provides input on everything from protocols to staff training, as well as the website, communications and advertising.

“That group is currently meeting monthly and is helping to keep us centered and focused on meeting the needs of the trans and nonbinary community, which is the goal,” Crissman said.

While Planned Parenthood plans to integrate gender-affirming care into the services available at all of its health centers, Lansing and Marquette were the first designated locations for a reason.

“We recognize that patients in northern and rural parts of Michigan face some of the biggest barriers in accessing gender-affirming care,” Crissman said. “One important way to do that is through offering gender-affirming hormone care via our telehealth services. And while there are still a few logistics we are working on, we’re confident that we will have gender-affirming hormone care available via our telehealth service by the end of the year.”

Most gender-affirming hormone care is provided at PPMI by advanced practice providers (physician assistants, certified nurse midwives, and nurse practitioners) and is overseen by Crissman, with whom clinicians consult as needed. PPMI accepts many insurance plans, including Michigan Medicaid. For those without insurance, services are available on an income-based sliding scale.

Crissman said she feels honored to be able to provide life-saving and affirming medical care and to support the trans and nonbinary community which continues to face discrimination, violence and politicization of their healthcare. She also acknowledged that Planned Parenthood continues to learn and grow on their journey to be more gender-affirming and a safer space for transgender and nonbinary people.

“While all health care should be affirming, for many trans and nonbinary folk, hormone care, or HRT, is an important component of care,” Crissman said. “Specifically, for many gender-diverse people gender-affirming hormone care improves gender dysphoria and supports gender euphoria by helping individuals to achieve the embodiment goals that best align with their identity.”



# A Welcoming Home to Detroit's LGBTQ+ Community For Decades, Woodward Bar & Grill Destroyed by 3-Alarm Fire

## 'Where We Gonna Go Now?' Patrons Wonder

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

It's the end of an era. The Woodward Bar & Grill, Detroit's oldest gay bar, caught fire yesterday morning around 10:30 a.m. and burned down in a 3-alarm fire. The structure still stands, but the roof caved in on itself and is gone. Authorities say the fire is a total loss.

Nearby residents, shoppers and workers were evacuated and QLine service was halted as firefighters worked to calm the blaze. The bar continued to smolder late into the afternoon.

By dusk, as crews worked to board up the building's front exterior, a crowd had assembled in the Woodward's rear parking lot. Some came simply to remember, others to pay homage and raise a glass — or a bottle — one last time at the legendary bar. A crowd of around 50 had gathered by 9 p.m.

Krissy Jackson said she had been coming to The Woodward for more than 15 years. "I came up here because this is my home, my place, my comfort zone, my happy spot," she said. "It was a place I could come and be myself with no judgment. It was just love and fun."

David Brown said he'd been coming to the bar since 1975. He said word of the fire traveled quickly not only throughout the city but the country as well. Friends were texting him from all over as they heard the news. "They sent me pics from Atlanta and California," said Brown. "I just got in my car and decided to come down here. They said people were in the lot like the bar was open. I just came down to support."

### The Woodward's 68-year history

The Woodward Bar & Grill was opened at its present location, near the corner of Woodward Avenue and Milwaukee Street in Midtown, in 1954. It did brisk business in the daytime and at happy hour thanks to being so close to the General Motors World Headquarters, then located on West Grand Blvd.

William Karagas was the original owner, and Sam and Andy, his two brothers, helped

him out. Night by night, the Woodward gradually began attracting a gay clientele. And by the end of the decade, it had become a full-time gay bar.

"We just opened it up and whichever way it went, it went," Andy Karagas said in a 1973 interview with "Gayzette." "And when it went gay all the way, we kicked out all the straights that night."

Andy Karagas soon came out as gay himself and was a regular host at the bar. He was known for, among other things, repeatedly calling out the phrase "Tonight's the night," his voicing ringing out loudly across the tiny bar.

In the '60s and even the '70s, The Woodward, like other gay bars that had begun popping up around the city, was basically segregated and served a predominantly white crowd. Black patrons would be required to present two forms of ID to enter. And if they did get in, the humiliation would often continue.

"Blacks, if served at all, had their drinking glasses broken audibly as they were leaving the bar," said longtime "Between The Lines" columnist Charles Alexander, who first started going to The Woodward in 1959 at age 23.

"That's where I first met (legendary Michigan LGBTQ+ activists) Jim Toy and John Kavanagh," Alexander recalled. "They were holding up copies of the 'Gay Liberator' newspaper."

The Woodward continued to chug along throughout the '80s as other gay bars came — and just as many went. Andy Karagas enjoyed enormous popularity in Detroit's LGBTQ+ community. He was a member of the Detroit Bar Guild and was known for having a good heart. Oftentimes, he'd go so far as to bail out a customer who'd gotten picked up by the cops on trumped up soliciting charges.

Lorraine Karagas, Andy's brother's wife, took over at the bar when Andy died in 1997. She remains a co-owner to this day.

By now, the bar was serving a very mixed crowd and was on its way to becoming the most popular night spot in Detroit for the city's African American LGBTQ community. Jeff Smith, a longtime employee of the bar, would come on as co-owner in the early 2000s and take over the running of the bar. Under



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See Woodward Bar, page 25

# For Nonbinary Photographer Quinn Kirby, This Assignment Was Personal

## Kirby Discusses Their Work On Planned Parenthood Gender Affirming Care



Our apologies! In the print version of *Between The Lines*, we misgendered Quinn by using she/her in place of the correct they/them pronouns. Please note Quinn's correct pronouns.

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

When Ashlea Phenicie, communications director for Planned Parenthood of Michigan (PPMI), needed a professional photographer to join a new campaign focused on gender affirming care, she knew where to look. Phenicie had been following Quinn Kirby on social media, and she asked the award-winning photographer if the assignment might be right up their alley.

Kirby's immediate response was "Heck yes." For Kirby, their interest in the project was personal.

"I came out as nonbinary very slowly," Kirby said. "And this past year, I've become more vocal about it. I've just gotten more confident in who I am, and not only did this feel like a celebration of the [PPMI] program and all of the people it's going to help, but it was also just very affirming to have somebody reach out and be like, 'Hey, I know this might mean a lot to you; do you wanna come on and help us tell the story?'"

Once Kirby submitted a proposal and was selected for the project, they discussed the details of the two photo sessions. One session was shot at the Planned Parenthood health center in Ferndale with models Phenicie had recruited from the east side of the state. "PPMI created an application and shared it widely," Phenicie said. "We had several applicants and Alexander, LaVelle and Chloe were selected to participate." She added that each model was compensated \$500 for their time.

From Grand Rapids — Kirby's hometown — they recruited Bailey Sell, owner of Transfigure Print Co., an LGBTQIA+ inclusive screen-printing business. For that shoot, "the purpose was to show trans people living their lives, enjoying their hobbies and feeling affirmed in their identities," Phenicie said. Sell's partner Arlo Van Horn became part of that session as well. The two can be seen in an apartment engaging in activities like reading in bed, cooking, playing with LEGOs — the everyday things couples do.

"[Sell] is incredibly active in the LGBTQ+ community in my hometown and just a stand-up guy," Kirby said. "And I was like, if there is one person who I can envision in this project that I'm familiar with, it's Bailey." Kirby reached

out to Sell, whom they hadn't met previously, and found he was interested.

When they're directing a shoot, Kirby tells their subjects if they're uncomfortable, it will show in the images. That's why the sessions begin with conversation.

"I really just guided genuine conversations between the models," Kirby said. "[I] had people talk about their lives; some folks were really vulnerable about it, talked about times that they had been misgendered... We made jokes, and it was just a very well-rounded discussion. I feel like I learned a lot about everybody throughout the whole process."

Kirby said they could identify with issues relating to misgendering and pronouns. "I know what it's like to have somebody recognize me as the correct gender, use my correct pronouns — and for some people, this is gonna be the first time that somebody sees them that way, sees them as who they are, and we really wanted to bring that feeling to the shoot."

Kirby, who recently moved to Pittsburgh, graduated in 2020 from Central Michigan University with a bachelor's degree in photojournalism with a minor in entrepreneurship. Soon, they realized photojournalism was not the right fit, but in the midst of the pandemic, it was hard to find the kind of work they were looking for.

The pandemic pause gave Kirby time to think. They decided to open their own business.

"I'm putting so much energy into wanting to make other people's dreams work, might as well start on mine," Kirby concluded. "And what started out as seniors and graduates [portraits] — and I still do that here and there — now I have moved into the creative personal branding and commercial space. Uplifting projects and businesses has been a really cool way to see how photography can help people see their best day."

Kirby said two of their favorite photos from the PPMI photo session with Sell are the ones where he's applying testosterone cream and one with Sell and his partner sitting on the bed gazing at one another.

"Everything worked out in this very serendipitous way," Kirby said. "And I know that that's not something that people commonly hear in production, but it was just a beautiful amalgamation of everybody coming together for one goal."

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# Legacy of Sodomy Bans Endure

## Unconstitutional, Homophobic Laws Still on the Books in Michigan

BY FINBARR TOESLAND

Nineteen years after the landmark *Lawrence v. Texas* decision, where the Supreme Court struck down laws criminalizing consensual same-sex activity, archaic sodomy bans remain on the books in a dozen states. Despite attempts by Democratic legislators in Michigan, the unconstitutional and homophobic law that outlaws sodomy in the state has not been repealed.

A sodomy ban was first introduced in the Michigan Territory in 1810, making the crime a capital offense. After many changes in the sodomy law in the following years, the combination of sex with animals and so-called ‘unnatural’ sex with people was added in 1897, where it remains to this day, despite a state penal code change in 1931.

Dr. Francine Banner, a sociology professor who also teaches women’s and gender studies at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, explains that although it is not uncommon for outdated laws to remain on the books, the presence of out-of-date laws takes on a special significance when they are discriminatory or target specific populations.

“Laws have an expressive function, meaning that the effect of having a law on the books

can range far beyond the ability to punish,” Banner says. “When legislatures vote to repeal and remove unconstitutional laws like sodomy bans, it is not just symbolic — the repeal is an important statement that all persons in the state are valued.”

Banner sees anti-sodomy laws coming from a particularly hateful place and brings up the example of one of the most notable sodomy prosecutions in Michigan, which took place in 1967.

Michigan police waited for more than an hour outside of a tent, where a lesbian couple was staying on a camping trip, before entering and accusing the women of being in “close bodily contact.” Both women were sentenced to prison.

“Persons subjected to these laws can carry lifelong burdens, having been arrested and punished for engaging in intimate, consensual acts in spaces they thought were private,” Banner adds.

### Legislative barriers

When animal abuse legislation that increased penalties for bestiality passed in the Michigan Senate in 2016, legislators

chose not to remove the anti-gay sections of the penal code. According to comments from former Republican member of the Michigan State Senate, Rick Jones, there were concerns that discussing the sodomy ban could end up scuppering the animal abuse bill.

“Nobody wants to touch it. I would rather not even bring up the topic, because I know what would happen. You’d get both sides screaming and you end up with a big fight that’s not needed because it’s unconstitutional,” Jones told *The New Civil Rights Movement*.

Outside of the animal abuse bill, legislation has been introduced to repeal Michigan’s sodomy law but, as of today, the Republican leadership in both the State House and Senate have not allowed the bills to move forward in committee.

“I don’t know why they have refused to do so,” says Jay Kaplan, staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan’s LGBT Project. “It seems that whenever there is legislation that may be viewed as treating LGBT people favorably, such legislation is not permitted to advance.”

Kaplan notes that while Michigan’s sodomy law does not specifically target same-sex sodomy, these laws have been used to define LGBTQ+ people solely on presumed sexual behavior and to provide a legal rationale

for discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community.

“The existence of Michigan’s law is a hurtful reminder of how this law was used to both vilify our community and justify the LGBT community being treated less than,” Kaplan says.

### National issue

Despite the *Lawrence v. Texas* ruling making these sodomy bans unlawful, in practice, the continuing existence of these laws has, at the least, caused confusion among some law enforcement officials and, worse, potentially emboldened those police officers who are biased to make homophobic policing decisions on the basis of the outdated law.

For example, in 2009, two men kissing at an El Paso restaurant were threatened with jail by police officers who cited the “homosexual conduct” statute. In 2013, two men were targeted by law enforcement officials in Louisiana and arrested for “crimes against nature.” In 2015, two different men were arrested for having consensual sex in Louisiana, with there being several other examples of the misuse of sodomy bans by police across the U.S.

Kyle Taylor, who works at Ferndale’s Affirmations LGBTQ+ community center, agrees that in some municipalities, there may be a risk of police forces willfully misinterpreting the law.

“Depending on what police force you’re talking about and what kind of municipality you’re living in, that could be an issue, and I could definitely see how that could play into something [negative]. Although, I don’t see that happening in somewhere like a Ferndale or a Royal Oak in Michigan,” Taylor tells BTL.

### Looming threat?

As the recent leak from the Supreme Court points to the national right to an abortion being revoked, through the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, decisions on the legality of abortion could soon return to the states, with up to half set to either ban or severely restrict abortion access.

If the Supreme Court were to perform a similar reversal of *Lawrence v. Texas*, same-sex sexual activity would potentially become illegal overnight in a dozen states, including Michigan. “It’s startling to me, especially because we’ve gone so far forward in Michigan in terms of being accepting of [LGBT rights],” says Taylor.

“It’s just a reminder that LGBT rights can be taken away so quickly in one election. Even more alarming is that those laws are still on the books, and, depending on who’s in power, they can actually make [these laws] a reality again,” he says.

“I’m sure somebody would sue at some point and take it to the Supreme Court. Who knows how far it would get?”

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SCAN ME

# Local Legal Name Change Clinics Help Trans Persons Become Their Authentic Selves

Attorney-Guided Workshops Help Trans Community Members Update IDs to Match Chosen Names



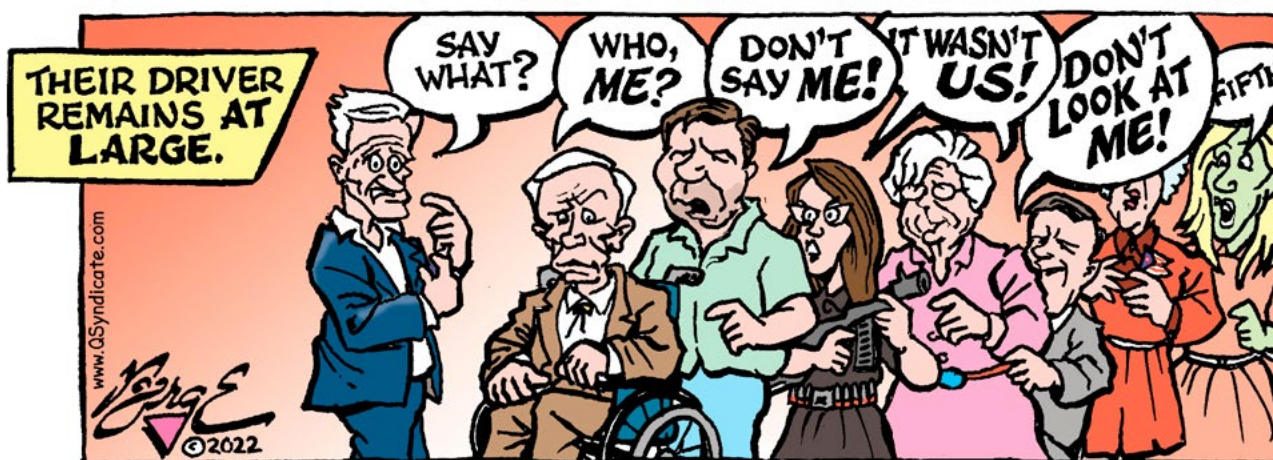
BY JASON A. MICHAEL

What's in a name? Well, if you're trans, and you've lived your life feeling trapped in the wrong body, referred to by incorrect pronouns and called something that does not align with your gender identity or sense of self, there's a whole lot in a name. Things that cisgender people never really have to consider.

Like the risk to personal safety and the possibility of harassment or physical harm when you have to show your I.D. to a police officer or a store clerk to cash a check — or to just about anyone — and they find your name does not match the gender you are presenting. Like the assurance that jobs you qualify for may be denied you because the I.D. with your deadname automatically outs you. Like the feeling of finally being your true, authentic self and having the name you've chosen for yourself finally be your real, legal name.

That's the feeling that Julisa Abad, who went through the process herself in 2018, is trying to give to members of her community. "Every single time that you're not recognized by your gender identity if you're in a public place, it brings trauma," she said. "It's triggering. When someone wants to illegitimize someone's transness, they

See [Legal Name Change](#), next page



## 'It's Quit or Die Out Here': Why I Run This Michigan Harm Reduction Support Group



By Amrit Kohli

I had a friend who smoked meth up until the day she died. Skyy was a transgender woman and a daily meth user for the entire time I knew her. When she was diagnosed with stomach cancer, she continued to use methamphetamine. In traditional recovery programs, it's not possible to be friends with people who are using, but I decided to continue being her friend.

I was one of the only friends she had left when she died. In Harm Reduction, we don't have to abandon our friends and family in need. We don't have to make being clean a prerequisite to friendship. Friendship was all Skyy needed. She didn't need me to help her get sober. She didn't need me to help her stop doing meth. At times, I would even do it with her despite her being in the late stages

of cancer — because I didn't want her to feel alone, and because I myself was using methamphetamine at that time. Since that time, my substance use goals have changed, and I am practicing abstinence from meth.

In our community, particularly here in Metro Detroit, we lack good Harm Reduction programs. These programs are vital to the survival of the people who choose to use substances. We deserve to be supported. Harm Reduction is a global movement that brings real, meaningful change to the substance use and misuse community. To call it substance abuse is counterproductive and it demeans the person.

My own personal journey through substance use and misuse has helped me understand that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to substance use, misuse and

management. Abstinence is not the only way to approach substance use goals. We believe in self-determination. This movement is not about prescribing a philosophy; it's about meeting you where you are, and asking you to decide what your goals are. Without judgment. Harm Reduction is quite simple, really. The goal is ultimately to do less harm to oneself. Less harm is useful for everyone.

Maybe Jeffery Montgomery would not have died alone had we, as a community, embraced Harm Reduction. I knew Jeffery many years ago, when he was the executive director of Triangle Foundation, now Equality Michigan. My brief friendship with him left a lasting impression, and I was sad to hear of his struggles with substances at the end of his life. I admired and respected him for the leadership and contributions he made to our community by standing up for victims of sexual violence and human trafficking, among many other human rights issues. Jeffrey's story is why we, as a community, so desperately need Harm Reduction at Affirmations and more broadly

See [Support Group](#), next page

## → Legal Name Change

Continued from previous page

throw out your deadname. Or they'll try to find out what your deadname is. So, it can cause emotional issues and emotional distress and add to the dysphoria that some trans people deal with."

Abad, who chose the name her mother had planned to use had she been born biologically female, said

that it's not difficult for trans people to choose their true name.

"You just know," she said. "It's something that we know. It's not something that you have to struggle with or give a lot of thought. They most definitely know how they want to identify and what their name is."

Remembering seeing her ID with the correct name on it for the first time is a powerful memory for Abad, but it's

See **Legal Name Change**, page 36

## → Support Group

Continued from previous page

in our community.

I had heart valve replacement surgery in 2019. This surgery was a wake-up call to me, because I realized that I had caused the infection that destroyed my aortic heart valve when I was intravenously self-administering methamphetamine years earlier. I survived because I realized I had gone too far and decided to stop using this substance. I could not quit cold turkey because my depression was so severe as a result of years of continued use and misuse of that substance, that I had to slowly come off it. There is no guidebook on how to reduce meth use, and many doctors and therapists alike will tell you that it's not a substance that can be managed. And yet, I managed to stop using it progressively.

The Stonewall Project in San Francisco introduced me to Harm Reduction. I joined support groups there. This resulted in me doing less and less harm to myself. I slowed things down. I learned to drink water, or at least eat something. I learned how to safely use needles to avoid infections like the one that I had contracted.

Harm Reduction saved my life by bringing me out of my relationship with methamphetamine. I have all the respect in the world for 12-step, abstinence-based programs. But there has to be room for more than that. There are millions of people who do not fit into the AA model of sobriety. Where do we get support? Right now, there aren't many spaces for people who choose to use substances to get support. It's quit or die out here.

I choose to remember my past, but I refuse to fear substance use. Instead, I try to make better choices that don't harm me to the point where I have to be afraid of relapsing. I am not afraid of relapse, because I have created a healthy relationship with most substances. There is no shock in coming into contact with them, which makes it easier to manage relapse.

Like many, I deserve to be supported

even though I choose to use substances. That's the human response to what is ultimately a personal choice. Substance use is a choice. And how you participate in that choice is only as good as how informed you are about it. So, don't prevent education on safe IV self-administration. Don't abandon someone who might be in the midst of having a substance use crisis. And don't demand that they meet you on your terms when they're the ones who need help.

I have learned to replace methamphetamine with marijuana, magic mushrooms and other naturally occurring substances that are far less harmful than meth. And I'm satisfied with the results of this endeavor. I'm currently in a master's program for cybersecurity, and I'm a very successful software engineer.

The key to using substances responsibly is access to drug-testing kits, access to Narcan (a life-saving medication that can reverse an opioid overdose) and access to education about what substances do, how they can be lethal and how they can be used responsibly. Armed with this knowledge, it is possible to be responsible and safely use substances.

This is why I have chosen the path of less harm, over no harm.

*The Harm Reduction Clinic is every second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m., and the Harm Reduction Support Group is at 6 p.m. on the same days. He encourages anyone struggling with substance misuse who wants to change their substance use goals, or just wants to hang out with other like-minded people, to drop into the clinic and take advantage of the many services offered there and share stories. Healthy snacks and water will be provided.*

*Amrit Kohli is a volunteer at Affirmations, a community activist, singer/songwriter ([www.queerfolk.com](http://www.queerfolk.com)) and immigrant refugee from Kenya who thanks Affirmations for being willing to host a Harm Reduction clinic and support group at the center.*

## CREEP OF THE WEEK

### 31 Patriot Front Members in Riot Gear on Their Way to Disrupt Idaho Pride 'Just Tourists'



By D'Anne Witkowski

Pride Month is halfway over, and what a month it has been so far. It's awesome to see photos from the many Pride events and marches across the country and the world. It is NOT so awesome to see photos of masked right-wing terrorists who had been planning to "disrupt" a Pride event in Idaho.

According to the Idaho Statesman, 31 men from the group Patriot Front (more like "Patriot Fail," amirite?) "wearing khakis, blue shirts and coats, white balaclavas and baseball caps" had crammed themselves into a U-Haul with riot gear and paperwork "that appeared similar to a police or military operations plan" and were heading toward the Pride event.

Thankfully, someone saw these losers piling into the U-Haul in a hotel parking lot and called the police to report them, resulting in the crew getting pulled over and taken into custody.

Having just observed the six-year anniversary of the Pulse nightclub massacre on June 12, I think it's safe to say that things have not gotten better in the last six years for LGBTQ+ people in the United States. Or for anybody, really, aside from the handful of billionaires that hoard the bulk of this country's wealth and get richer no matter how shitty things get for the rest of us.

Since Pulse we have done (checks notes) FUCK ALL about gun violence in the U.S., right-wing domestic terrorists have flourished, and LGBTQ+ people have repeatedly been the target of hatred and political attacks. While most Americans see these three things as very terrible and unacceptable, the Republican Party literally sees them as three things checked off their TO DO list.

Republicans are anti-gun control of any kind, see right-wing extremists as "the good guys" and Black Americans sick and tired of being murdered by the police as the real enemies. They also continuously push legislation to punish LGBTQ+ people, whether it's charging the parents of transgender kids with child abuse, banning Drag Queen story time at public libraries, or running candidates who say all LGBTQ+ people should be executed. That's today's Republican party, y'all.

So while I would like to be shocked that a little army of angry and insecure white men were on their way to fuck up Pride, I am not. This is literally the next logical scene in the awful script this country has been writing for years. Frankly, I hate this movie. Alas, I am trapped in it.

Currently running for Congress in South Carolina is Mark Burns, who says the country should execute those who commit treason, which includes Sens

Mitch McConnell and Lindsey Graham for their support of gun control (a completely laughable assertion, as they have both made it very clear that the slaughter of elementary school students is just the cost of doing business in the United States of America) and LGBTQ+ people and anyone who supports LGBTQ+ people.

"The LGBT, transgender grooming [of] our children's minds is a national security threat because it is ultimately designed to destabilize the republic we call the United States of America," Burns says on one of the many, many right-wing shows that exist on the internet. "That's why when I'm elected, I don't want to just vote, I want to start holding people accountable for treason to the Constitution."

And what should we do with those who commit treason?

"We need to hold people for treason, start having some public hearings, and start executing people who are found guilty for their treasonous acts against the Constitution of the United States of America, just like they did back in 1776," he says.

It's a wild thing to say. Especially since Burns, who is Black, has apparently decided to ignore this country's long history of white mobs acting as judge, jury, and executioner and hanging Black people from trees. Or perhaps he believes in the "critical race theory" propaganda that his party is pushing so hard to literally whitewash U.S. history. It's a stretch, to say the least, to say that the U.S. was at its best in the late 1700s.

Burns is not the first, and he won't be the last, to publicly call for violence against LGBTQ+ people. It's just that such calls used to come from fringe elements of society, not one of the country's two major political parties. And in a county that has more guns than people, we know where this leads. People are going to die.

I want everyone to celebrate being themselves and the historic progress LGBTQ+ people have made since Stonewall.

And then, I want us all to channel our energy into ousting every single Republican we can at every level of government, from school board to city council to state races to federal. Our lives depend on it.

# Mayoral Candidate Maurice Turner Already Making Positive Impact in Highland Park

## Turner's Revitalization Efforts Started With His Own House, Help From Adopted Community

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

In Feb. 2019, when Maurice Turner and his now husband, Blake Milnes, took a leap of faith and purchased their historic home in Highland Park — a “fixer upper” if ever there was one — it's led Turner on an adventure he couldn't have planned. It's a path that includes being featured on an HGTV home rehab show, getting married in his newly landscaped backyard, co-founding a nonprofit to revitalize Highland Park and throwing his hat in the ring for mayor.

What drew Turner and Milnes to the Craftsman-style home in Highland Park was their shared love of historic architecture. Previously, the two were living in the University District in Detroit. As they considered what was available on the housing market, their future home — a mile away in Highland Park — “kept popping up,” Turner explained.

“We decided to take a look at the property,” Turner told Pride Source. “And when we walked through, the house was in pretty bad shape, but we just really felt a weird pull and attraction to this house — not only just the potential of the beauty, but the neighborhood felt right.

“I just always say that it was some kind of divine intervention or something bigger than we were that was telling us that this was the right home that we could really as a couple grow in and be able to build memories here as well,” he added.

Turner believes his home represented where the city is right now. “There's so much potential here. But it's hard to kind of see it,” Turner said. He acknowledges that people often ask, “Why Highland Park?”

“It made more sense of why fate brought us here as we started to get more involved in the community and really being purposeful with connecting with the residents,” Turner said. “And really, a lot of them wanted to connect with us. I think in communities like Highland Park, it's rare that someone makes those deliberate attempts to reach out to people. Some people keep to themselves here a lot.”

Before the couple could think of settling in (with four dogs), they worked on the house for about a year. The plan was not to renovate but to restore the home. “We took a lot of the home apart, and then we pieced it back together,” Turner said.

The next twist of fate came in the form of

HGTV personality Nicole Curtis, who was looking for unfinished home rehab projects in the Detroit area for her show, “Rehab Addict Rescue.” Turner and Milnes' house made the cut. Filming occurred in the summer of 2020, the height of the pandemic.

Along the way, Turner and Milnes opted to scale back on their wedding plans and tie the knot in the backyard. Their former diamond in the rough was transformed into a wedding venue.

Turner talked about the city in its heyday, before the auto industry left.

“People looked to Highland Park, Michigan as this idealistic city,” Turner said. “This was like a magical place with 50,000-plus residents at its peak in the 1930s and 1940s.” Today, the population stands at 9,000, a reflection on the devastation and despair that Turner notes has plagued the city over the past several decades.

But Turner isn't sitting on his hands. Instead, he's rolling up his sleeves. As he says, “teamwork makes the dream work.” And that's evident in the work he and Milnes do for the nonprofit organization they co-founded, Rehab Highland Park, where Turner serves as president.

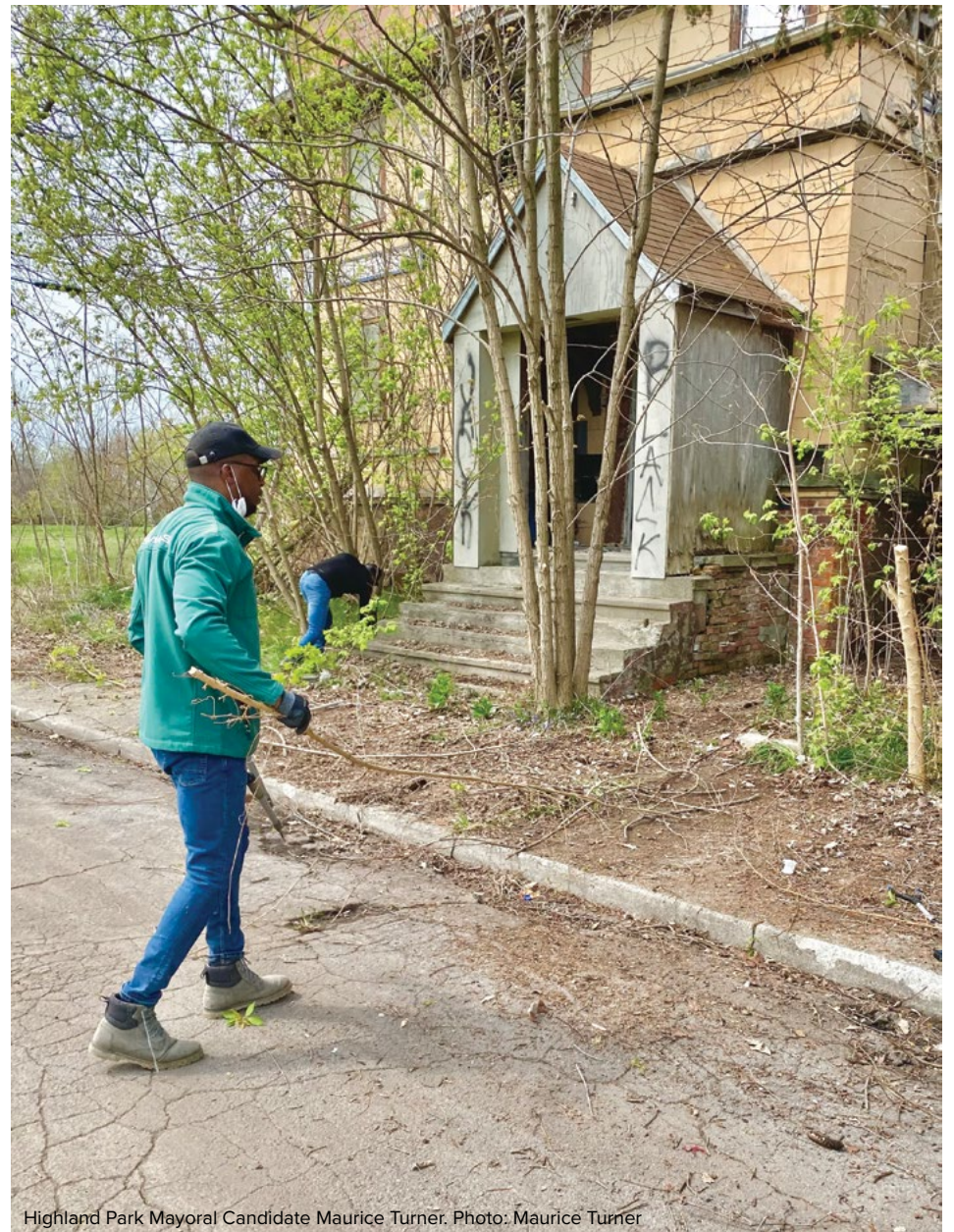
Turner said it began by helping a longtime resident who became their “Highland Park mother” with tending to areas that were overgrown or otherwise needed cleaning up. Soon, the community pitched in.

“We started this nonprofit early on when we moved here back in 2020, and then we became a fully registered 501c3 nonprofit agency last year in 2021,” Turner said. “But we have been doing the work almost since we got here, just doing various projects, helping people and other organizations. We just started this nonprofit, Rehab Highland Park, to really make a commitment to the city.”

That commitment includes cleaning up 30 properties, streets, sidewalks and intersections; assisting homeowners with renovation questions; and basically, helping people who don't know where to look for a decent contractor. They plan to partner with other nonprofit and for-profit organizations to look into obtaining grants and do more fundraising.

Kerriem Hunter is a Rehab Highland Park board member who also participates in the volunteer projects. He emphasized Turner's positive outlook.

“I would say I was impressed by somebody who was willing to take on a challenge to



Highland Park Mayoral Candidate Maurice Turner. Photo: Maurice Turner

renovate an older home in a city like Highland Park,” Hunter said. “But he has a very good spirit about him, very positive guy. We discuss many challenges when it comes to renovating homes, and he's not afraid of any challenges.”

Turner said his philosophy in life is, “If not me, then who?”

“Who else is going to do it?” Turner asked. “Luckily, my husband Blake also has a get-things-done attitude. And so, we just made

a commitment to really do our part as new residents of the city and show our love and appreciation to the people and the city in the form of action, instead of just talking about it.”

Taking action also meant running for mayor of Highland Park, known as an “enclave city” within the city of Detroit. The decision was a natural extension from the work he was doing for the city already. A resident's roof

See **Maurice Turner**, page 38



# Michigan U.S. Sen. Gary Peters Introduces Federal Legislation Aimed at Updating Legal Definition of Marriage

## Proposal Would Impact Veteran Benefits, Underscore 2013 Obama Executive Order

BY JON KING

Bipartisan legislation is being announced today by Senator Gary Peters (D-MI) that will require the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to update the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples.

Currently, the VA defines “spouse” and “surviving spouse” as a person “of the opposite sex,” despite a 2013 Executive Order by then-President Barack Obama that directed the Executive Branch to cease enforcement of that discriminatory definition.

While the order resulted in the VA administering spousal and survivors’ benefits to same-sex married couples, the actual definition of who exactly constituted a spouse was never legally changed. That’s despite the Supreme Court’s 2015 ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that the right to marry for same-sex couples is guaranteed under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Peters, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and former Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve, is introducing the Veterans Marriage Recognition Act with Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

Additionally, the bill has the support of the Palm Center, an independent research institute that studies U.S. military personnel policy.

Peters says it would ensure federal law reflects the progress made and legal protections provided in the event the Supreme Court were to overturn *Obergefell*, noting that the Senate has never passed legislation to formally update the VA statute to reflect the ruling and recognize same-sex veteran spouses in law.

“Every veteran — no matter who they love — should be able to access the VA benefits and resources they have earned through their service,” said Sen. Peters. “I’m proud to introduce this bipartisan legislation to ensure the VA legally recognizes same-sex marriage and does not deny these veterans or their spouses their benefits. This recognition is long overdue, and I will be working to pass this commonsense legislation in the Senate.”

The *Obergefell* decision in particular is believed to be in jeopardy of being overturned if the U.S. Supreme Court rules against *Roe v. Wade*, as is expected later this month. *Roe* was a key decision establishing a constitutional right to privacy, which was also one of the tenants in *Obergefell*.

“There’s no question we’ve come a long way in

the fight for equality — but we must ensure that changing political tides or a future U.S. Supreme Court doesn’t undermine the progress we have made,” said Peters. “This legislation would make a simple update to ensure VA’s written policy matches its practice by formally recognizing same-sex marriages.”

Peters said they had taken important steps at the federal level to protect the LGBTQ+ community, including LGBTQ+ servicemembers and veterans, but that there was more work to do.

“My legislation proposes a necessary update so that the official, written policy of the VA does not discriminate against LGBTQ+ veterans and their families,” he said.

The legislation continues Peters’ strong support for equality issues, both inside and outside the military. In 2010, he voted in favor of repealing the Clinton-era “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, which prohibited military personnel from discriminating against or harassing LGBTQ+ service members or applicants as long as they did not openly acknowledge their orientation.

At the time, Peters told *Pride Source* that the policy had been a tremendous waste of resources that resulted in Americans needlessly being turned away from serving their country simply because of who they are.

“During my years in the Navy Reserve, I served with many brave, patriotic and dedicated men and women who were always ready to defend their country and its citizens,” Peters said. “I was never concerned about their sexual orientation, just their ability to serve the United States honorably.”

More recently, Peters was a cosponsor of the Equality Act — which would prohibit discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity across the board — including in education, employment, housing and the judicial system. That bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives in March, but has yet to come up for a vote in the Senate.

Additionally, Peters is a cosponsor of the Refund Equality Act, which ensures legally-married same-sex couples can file amended tax returns back to the date of their marriage. After being introduced in 2021, the bill remains in the Senate Finance Committee.

Peters said it was among his top priorities in the Senate to end what he called “these discriminatory and outdated policies in the service, particularly when they impact the ability of veterans to access their benefits, including mental health services, essential health care, resources to obtain employment and more.”



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# SAGE Metro Detroit Splits From National Organization

## Agency Rebranding, Highlighting Trans Focus

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

SAGE Metro Detroit, Detroit's only nonprofit dedicated to services and advocacy for LGBTQ+ older adults, recently announced that they will no longer be connected to the national SAGE organization. This comes as SAGE national moves away from the affiliate model and announces that only affiliates in New York and South Florida will exist after this year.

"It's really important that the message is clear that this is not a decision that we made," said Angela Gabridge, SAGE Metro Detroit's executive director for nearly a year now. "The new E.D. didn't come in and say, 'We're splitting from national.' This was very much a decision made at the national level, and we were certainly surprised by the decision."

Gabridge said that SAGE Metro Detroit is currently trying to gain a deeper understanding of what the split will mean for the agency. They have until the end of this year to rebrand and come up with a new name and logo.

"We anticipate undertaking that from July through October with the

hopes of being able to announce in November," she said.

SAGE Metro Detroit has, since its inception in 2015, been "one of the largest, if not the largest, affiliates in the country," according to Gabridge, who pointed out that the agency has its own 501c3 status, its own board and funding, unlike most SAGE affiliates.

"There is no revenue sharing," she said. "So, it's not like any of our funding has come from the national organization."

But the fact that SAGE Metro Detroit has grown so large makes it "a little bigger of a deal for us at the local level," Gabridge said. "But as we've been sharing this information with local partners, it's been met with a lot of excitement. They feel this opens up opportunities as far as partnering with them not only in southeast Michigan but as we work across the state."

{Bold The first official SAGE Metro Detroit employee}

One new change at the agency involves its employment structure. Previously, all employees were not technically employees, instead filing as independent contractors.

"I'm the first official employee," explained Gabridge. "The organization's never had employees. Everyone, including my predecessor, was an independent contractor. Now, we're trying to build a more sustaining model and we're in the process of implementing that as well."

Gabridge said SAGE Metro Detroit is now in the process of bringing several independent contractors on board as official employees, including Training and Education Manager Judy Lewis. She said she is thrilled that SAGE Metro Detroit is stepping away from SAGE national and rebranding.

"I am so excited," she said. "We are the only organization of our kind in Michigan. We are Michigan-centric. Our statistics and all of our information really focuses on our people in Michigan. So, for me, it's just lovely."

Lewis pointed out the SAGE Metro Detroit has really been doing work all across the state including in cities such as Grand Rapids, Benton Harbor and even in the Upper Peninsula. "We've made relationships with people all over the state. ... We are really placed to transition into being a full state

recognized organization."

In 2010, Lewis helped found the LGBT Older Adult Coalition with Kat LaTosch and Jay Kaplan. Because of the success of that initiative, the group was asked to become a SAGE affiliate in 2015. Now, at 75, Lewis said she spoke to her accountant who told her the switch from being an independent contractor to a regular paid employee would not affect her much. But her daughter disagreed.

"She said, 'Mom, you started this organization. Would you like to be on the outside looking in as a contractor, or do you want to be an employee of the organization you helped start?'"

Lewis chose the latter.

{Bold New trans focus}

Another change at the agency will be its focus on trans and non-binary issues. Last year, SAGE Metro Detroit received some planning grant funding from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund for a transgender aging project. They are currently developing a "Loving Your Trans Body" series as well as education and social programs designed to improve the emotional, physical and financial health of trans

and non-binary older adults.

The program will also help trans and non-binary older adults seek out affirmative health care and navigating things like insurance denials. The initial pilot phase will come to an end this summer, but the agency is attempting to secure continued funding for the program.

"We feel it's really important to improve and expand our work with the trans and non-binary communities in general," said Gabridge, who added she plans to bring on someone to focus on trans and non-binary issues soon. For now, current staff are implementing the project through its planning phase.

The agency is also looking to offer more in terms of direct services to all of its clients, whether it's social programs, food programs or their friendly caller program.

"As we are looking to the future of the organization ourselves, we're looking at where we can support existing providers as well," Gabridge said. "We're looking to deepen some partnerships that we have now. ... It's important for us to make sure that we're of value to the community."

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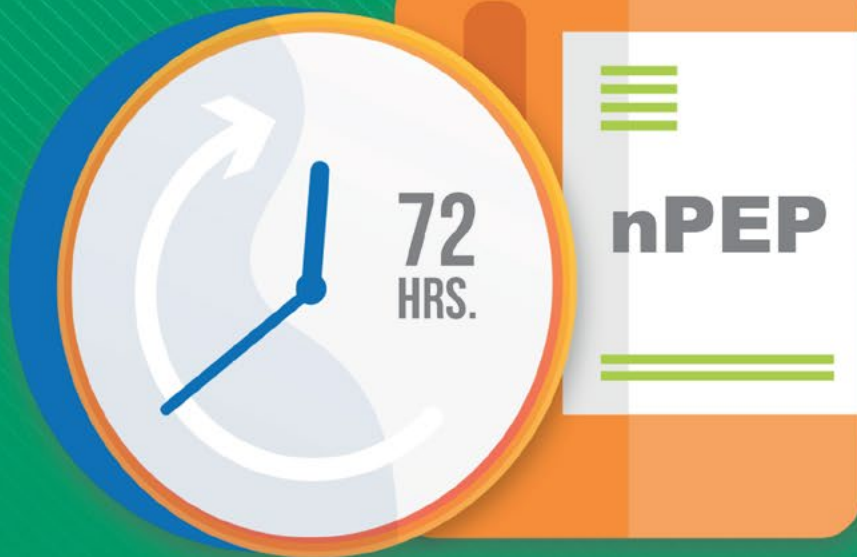
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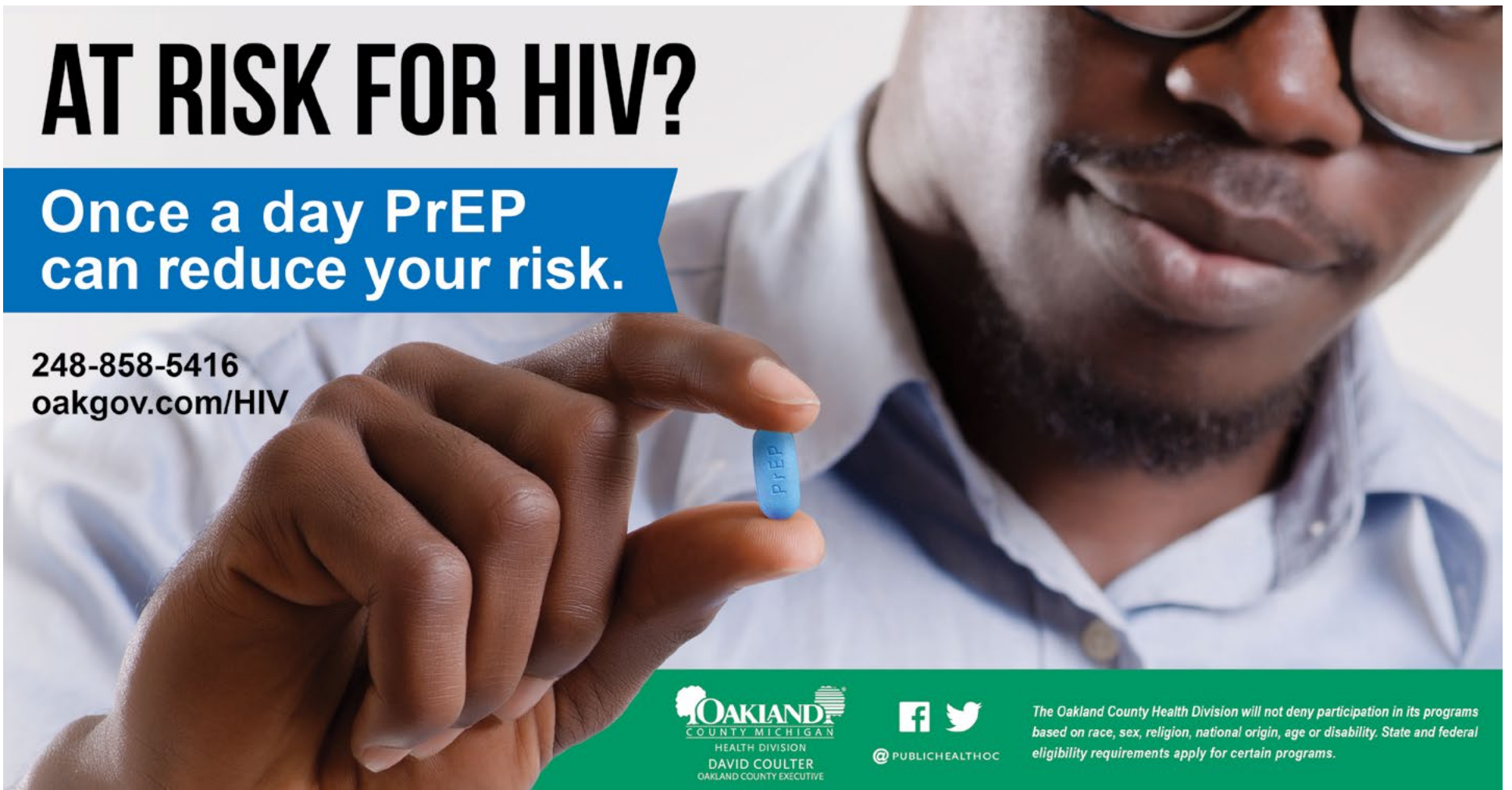


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# Your Status Is Nobody's Business But Your Own

BY JUAN MICHAEL PORTER II

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During a scene in the 2008 film “Milk,” the gay activist and politician Harvey Milk insisted that every gay person working on his campaign who had not yet disclosed their sexuality to their family do so immediately.

It’s a terrible moment wherein a well-meaning leader forces his beliefs onto a group of his followers without considering their particular consequences.

I am an advocate for HIV disclosure. Much like Milk, I divulge personal information publicly in order to fight stigma. But, unlike him, I don’t believe that anyone else should do so, unless they decide to for themselves. In fact, during one’s day-to-day life, there is rarely a reason for a person’s sexuality or HIV status to surface. For instance, it is none of your employer’s business — in fact, it is illegal for them to ask. Not even your parents are entitled to that information if you’re unprepared to discuss it with them.

I have a friend who, despite telling his mother everything about his life — including the latest dress he ruined after a messy sexual experience — refuses to speak to her about his seropositive status. This is because he fears that it is the one thing that will change her opinion of him. Whether he is incorrect about that or not, he is right to hold onto this information until he feels comfortable with sharing it.

## Soft power advocacy

Among my friends, I am known as someone who “overdiscloses.” It’s not uncommon for me to casually share my seropositive status with strangers at Christmas parties, during lectures, or while moderating panels because, as I frequently say, “I want you to know that this is how living with HIV can look — that the virus is nothing to be ashamed of and that the person in front of you, whom you hold in high esteem and are shaking hands with, is living with this infection.”

It’s unnecessary for me to do this, but I choose to put myself out there as a form of soft power advocacy. I am aware of the privilege I wield as a culture critic and as the staff writer of TheBody. As a result of that authority and influence, people are often prepared to like me as soon as they meet me.

Though disclosing my status with people who do not need to know it might commodify me as “the HIV guy” in their eyes, I believe that by doing so, I am challenging the pervasive poverty-porn portrayal of people living with HIV (PLWH) and helping those who might feel a certain type of way about our community to dispel their false — and often judgmental — notions.

Just as importantly, by sharing my experience, I am standing up as a possibility model for PLWH who may not feel so great about themselves. I once felt this way. I believed that seroconverting was something that only happened to people who didn’t plan properly. I was also not so secretly jealous of my friends who never tested positive for any major sexually transmitted infections (STIs) despite their slutty sexcapades. I was angry that I’d avoided certain types of experiences out



of fear of HIV — only to end up testing positive for it anyway.

While those feelings were real, once I acknowledged that I was still the same person and that my opportunities had not diminished, I began to accept my status and to advocate for anyone who had ever been told that they were bad because of something that had happened to them.

And let’s be clear — it doesn’t matter what led to your diagnosis with HIV. As the social culture dynamo King of Reads brilliantly states, “Nobody gave me HIV, child. Nobody gave me anything, sis. I contracted a virus that I am maintaining every day when I take my medicine.”

## Maintaining one’s health should be what matters

So, whether you seroconverted after having sex for the first or the 100th time, during a sexual assault, while using drugs recreationally, while you were in a committed relationship, or while taking raw loads in the back of your local sex club — none of us deserves HIV, nor should anyone be judged for living with it. Just as importantly, you don’t owe anyone an explanation regarding how you seroconverted unless you choose to tell them.

As King of Reads reminds us, maintaining one’s health should be what matters. However, because of backward laws that were often passed without consideration for health science, disclosing one’s HIV status is legally required in many states before engaging in sex with another person — but only for the person who is living with HIV. Yes, in violation of basic common sense and equal rights, people who are seronegative are not required to



discuss their HIV status.

In some states, this double standard for PLWH includes oral sex, even though we know that spit does not transmit. This, despite the fact that, as the HIV activist Nina Martinez puts it, “Both consenting parties to sexual activity can prevent HIV transmission, no matter what is or is not said between them.”

Given the reality that PLWH can be virally suppressed through treatment with antiretroviral therapy (ART) and therefore incapable of transmitting, that people who are seronegative can use pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent transmission from occurring, and that condoms and lube can also act as preventative measures, I don’t think that focusing on one’s HIV status should be the point of a conversation about sex. For me, that discussion has always been led with, “Do I want to have sex with this person?”

While discussing status has always been my habit, even when I was seronegative, I hate that our country forces one community of people to divulge their private information without considering how doing so will affect their lives. Because while I care about people who are seronegative, my primary concern will always be protecting people who are seropositive.

Because we are more vulnerable — and the laws that govern our status have been written in such a way as to prey upon us.

Despite this reality, it is essential that we recall that in our daily lives, our HIV status is no one’s business, and that even when it comes to dating, that information is earned — not a person’s right to know.

This will be the case even in the future when we (hopefully) reach a state where HIV is regarded in the same way as cancer — as something shitty that happens, but that doesn’t reduce one’s worth. And that is the most important thing to hold onto: Whether you never speak of your status or choose to blare it to the world with a bullhorn like I do, it does not determine how wonderful you are.

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*Juan Michael Porter II is a contributing editor for TheBody and TheBodyPro. He has been living with HIV since 2015. 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.*

## → Woodward Bar

Continued from page 9

his leadership, the bar went on to see renovations, and the comfy booths on the dance floor side were replaced by high top tables to make more room for the growing crowds.

Black promoters started working with Smith. Hotter Than July, known initially as Detroit Black Gay Pride, began holding events there. There were live drag shows and a Miss Woodward pageant was added to the mix. Hot male dancers were brought in for special occasions.

Over the years, The Woodward hosted countless birthday parties, too many memorial celebrations, karaoke nights, fundraisers and just about every type of event you can imagine. A man was shot and killed last year outside the bar’s back entrance and attendance dipped for a bit. However, as the seasons changed and the weather started heating up, the crowds were coming back.

### The Woodward’s legacy

For over 60 years, The Woodward has stood witness to the changing times and the progress the LGBTQ+ community has made toward equality. Even as the crowds changed from white to Black and the neighborhood went from being called New Center to Midtown, the bar stood the test of time and became something of an LGBTQ+ institution.

“This is where gatherings occurred for LGBTQ+ and allied people, neighbors and the working class within the heart of Detroit’s main street for decades,” said Curtis Lipscomb, executive director of LGBT Detroit and leader of Hotter Than July. “The Woodward is a staple in the community, and its destruction is a devastating blow to the social fabric.”

Cierra Dior Malone was Miss Woodward 2015. She performed at the bar weekly as part of The Diva Show right up until last week. “I feel like I just lost my best friend,” she said. “So many relationships that I made at the bar that I don’t know if I would have had if it wasn’t for The

Woodward.”

Tim Retzliff is an LGBTQ+ historian and assistant professor in the Center for Gender in Global Context at Michigan State University. When asked to speak to the bar’s significance to the community he said, “Its 68-year-legacy as a meeting place for the LGBTQ+ community in Metro Detroit shaped the lives of tens of thousands of queer folk in southeast Michigan. Its loss as an institution that provided safe space for generations before and after Stonewall is beyond measure.”

Pride Source was unable to reach Smith for comment, but he told WWJ News Radio that he was feeling “a lot of mixed emotions right now. I’m sad. I’m just trying to determine at this point what my next step will be.”

The crowd gathered outside the charred remains of The Woodward Tuesday night were pondering the same thought.

“My question is, ‘Where we gonna go now?’” said Jackson. “That been coming out of people’s mouths all day.”

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Sunny Singh, Speetie Singh and Piddu Kaur and their four children. Photo: @2momsandadad

# Raising Kids in a Big, Happy, Poly Family

## The Unique Normalness of Families with Three or More Parents

BY NAYANIKA GUHA

By now, same sex parents are relatively commonplace, but what about when those partnerships expand to include a third or fourth partner? Turns out, these arrangements aren't particularly rare, and in the day-to-day, polyamorous families are simply... families.

Journie, 40, grew up in a polyamorous household in northern Michigan, with their dad, biological mom, "Momma Jeanne," who was their dad's wife, and four siblings (Journie asked that we use only their first name and wanted to keep their specific location private). Though Journie's biological mother was often in and out of their life due to mental health and drug issues, all the parents raised the children together.

Each parent regularly had other partners as well, some longer term than others, and their mom also had

a long term girlfriend, Terri, who stepped into a motherly role for them after their mom died.

"I always had a big family and people there for me for every step in life. Even though, technically, all my siblings are half siblings or not biologically related at all, we've never thought of ourselves as anything less than siblings," they said. "And even after I lost both of my biological parents as a young adult, I still had my Momma Jeanne and my Terri as parental figures in my life." Journie notes that Terri continued many of their mom's birthday/holiday traditions for many years until she passed away a few years ago, as well.

Today, Journie is supporting their polyamorous partners in raising their own children, too.

Polyamory, or ethical non-monogamy, can take different forms, and is typically a relationship in which people have multiple partners or relationships at the same time.

Like many monogamous couples, polyamorous partners may also choose to become parents, sometimes resulting in a blended family of half and step siblings who are raised together.

While parental roles can be well-defined, often, parents in polyamorous relationships adjust to meet the fluctuating needs of an extended poly family at different points. Journie, who helps raise their polyamorous partner's child, says that they have stepped up to fill the role of a parent by staying at their house and getting them to and from school while their parents were unavailable, cooking meals, and taking them to doctors appointments, helping them learn to drive or providing emotional support during tough times. To the kids, Journie is their stepmom.

Meanwhile, Sunny Singh, Speetie Singh and Piddu Kaur, a polyamorous family from Indiana who are raising four children together, approach

parental responsibilities more fluidly. "I think we never made any rules. Each of us handles whatever we like to do," says Speetie. "We are kind of winging it as we go. We are all mom and dad to all the kids," adds Sunny.

It helps that the three often tend to be on the same page about how they want to raise the children and are pretty like-minded. But differences arise at times. "The kids enjoy that," says Sunny. "If one of us says no to something, they get to try two more times." However, the adults often work together to find common ground.

Stephanie M. Sullivan, a licensed marriage and family therapist who has her own private practice in Michigan and works primarily with LGBTQ+ individuals and polyamorous folks, emphasises the need for good communication in resolving conflict but also in just understanding the role each parent plays. "I think polyamorous relationships do add a lot more dynamics, a lot more potential for conflict. But it doesn't have to end in conflict," she says.

She explains that it comes down to how people are communicating, how they are talking about their parenting styles, and how they come to conclusions. How do they want to present as a team to their child? Having very honest conversations about what roles each partner has in the children's lives is essential.

If two people are nesting partners, and they each have external relationships, it needs to be clear how involved external partners will be in the children's lives — each situation can be very unique in this respect. "So it really comes down to just communicating, making sure everyone's on board and understands what their different roles are," she says. "And if they're not happy in their role, communicating about how to change that," Sullivan adds.

Ultimately, relationship experts say, the impact of a polyamorous relationship on children is directly related to people's parenting rather than their polyamorous status. How people are parenting, how they're communicating, how they're modeling to their children, has a larger impact on their children than whether they have two parents or more.

For Journie, who refers to her partner's children as her "podlings," she has a rule about not getting involved in resolving conflicts

between her podling and their parents. "I don't get involved in resolving their conflict but will often give feedback later," she says. "My podling has come and stayed with me a few times throughout the years when there was conflict at home with their parents; my partners trusted that I would care for them as best as I could."

For the children in the house, having multiple people to rely on who can model healthy relationships can be a big benefit. And for Speetie, Sunny, and Piddu's four children, having two mothers and a father is the most normal thing in the world. "Our kids have managed to handle it well, and they actually brag about it. The oldest one, she reframes the whole thing and makes it so that it's something to be proud of. She's got a great handle on this," says Sunny.

"I think what they mostly met up with was a lot of curiosity. A little bit from the other kids, but the other kids would normalize it pretty quick. It would be more from other parents who would be curious and ask their kids to find out for them," he adds. However, they consider themselves blessed that they have really not faced much harassment or bullying. Their children have accepted their family as normal, and this is the only way that the younger ones have known things to be.

Polyamorous partnerships can also help children understand the value of family. Journie has always had a big family, and people who were there for them every step of the way. "When I talk to people about my family and how I was raised, many people are shocked at first, but I don't think there's anything shocking about it; my parents were part of the 'free love movement,' and it wasn't deviant at all," they say. "It was like being raised in a household with extended family members — they just happened to share a bedroom instead of being aunts, uncles, grandparents and so on." =

In the end, Journie believes their podling is learning valuable relationship skills and how to negotiate relationship agreements while advocating for their needs. What's most important, Journie says, is that they are being raised in a home with lots of love and have learned that love can be expressed in many ways, two achievements that bring them pride every day.

# Mombian: In the Wake of Tragedy, Again



BY DANA RUDOLPH

This was going to be a very different column. Then 19 children and two adults were shot and killed by a gunman at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas.

As I started composing this column in my head, something about those two sentences made me pause. I then realized they were nearly identical to what I'd written almost a decade ago when 20 children and six adults were killed by a gunman at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut. Have we learned nothing as a nation about protecting our children since then? Apparently not.

The unconscionable shooting at the mostly Latinx Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, comes just weeks after 10 Black people died in a shooting in Buffalo. And while the victims of any shooting are someone's children, when the victims are young children, their deaths hit me—and I'm sure many others — like a gut punch. School shootings have been one of my main fears as a parent and remain so, even though my son is grown. My heart breaks for the families of the victims and for the children who survived but will have to grapple with ongoing fear and trauma.

In 2022 so far, there have been at least 77 incidents of gunfire on school grounds in the U.S. (six in Texas), resulting in 14 deaths and 45 injuries, reports Everytown for Gun Safety, the largest gun violence prevention organization in the country. The first half of the 2021-2022 school year was the deadliest in recent history, they say. “Deadly” and “school year” in the same sentence — consider how horrifying that is.

As a society, we give much lip service to doing things “in the best interests of the children.” Repeated mass murders of children, over decades, are as far from their best interests as one can get. The right-wing, which has done nothing to further gun control, nevertheless has wielded a “best interests of the children” argument against LGBTQ parents and LGBTQ kids (particularly transgender ones). It claims to care about the lives of fetuses but will do nothing to protect children from gun violence after they are born. There is something deeply wrong with that ideology.

A country has failed its citizens when it cares less about protecting them and more about allowing them access to firearms — particularly semi-automatic weapons like those used in Newtown, Buffalo, Uvalde, and many other mass shootings. Gun control is only part of the solution — the Buffalo shooting, for example, underscored the continuing need for increased action against White supremacy and racism — but it is a key step. We need stronger background checks and bans on the sale of semi-automatic rifles and high-capacity magazines, among other restrictions. (And no, armed guards, much less armed teachers,

in schools is not an alternate solution. Studies have shown this is not effective and there are high risks of hitting a child rather than an attacker during a chaotic and stressful situation. See Valerie Strauss' piece in the Washington Post, 5/25/2022.)

I write this on the cusp of Pride Month — the original subject of this column. Pride has come to be a time of celebration — but this year, it feels wise to remember its roots as a protest. LGBTQ equality is facing some of its biggest challenges since the marriage equality battle, with a surge of anti-LGBTQ, particularly anti-trans, legislation around the country. Reproductive rights are under attack, impacting both queer and non-queer people. And gun violence continues to rise. No one is immune from gun violence in the U.S., but for those of us in marginalized communities that have been targeted by such violence because of our identities — LGBTQ+ people, people of color, and Jews, among others—the fear and the need for change may feel even more pressing, bound up with our other work towards social justice.


I therefore hope you'll consider joining one of the “March for Our Lives” protests across the country on June 11 in support of stricter gun control. (See marchforourlives.com.) Please also call or write to your elected officials about this issue, and make gun control a factor when you vote. Support organizations working for gun control; donate if you can and help elevate their messages regardless.

For those looking for ways to help young children process their feelings around this latest shooting or around ongoing active shooter drills in their schools, I recommend Sesame Street's resources — visit [sesamestreetincommunities.org](http://sesamestreetincommunities.org) and search for “gun violence.” Additionally, publisher A Kids Company About is making their “A Kids Book About School Shootings” downloadable free at [akidsco.com](http://akidsco.com). Written by a survivor of the 1999 Columbine High School shooting, it is aimed at ages 5 to 9.

And for people who need it, the Disaster Distress Helpline, 1.800.985.5990, is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline with immediate crisis counseling for people experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster.

I'd like to say I have hope that things will change, but I said the same after Columbine, and after Newtown, and after all the other shootings. In the absence of much hope that we will see change anytime soon, I find myself turning for strength to a saying from my Jewish tradition, “You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.” We must resist, persist, and not desist. We owe it to our children.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian ([mombian.com](http://mombian.com)), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory, with a searchable database of 1000+ LGBTQ family books, media, and more.



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# 12 Age-Appropriate Books to Read With Your Queer or Questioning Child

BY NAYANIKA GUHA

What better way is there to answer questions your kids have about gender and sexuality than to find some books to read together or recommend to them? Be it books that include targeted educational messages or fictional stories with LGBTQ+ characters, your little ones may see themselves represented in them, encouraging them to be more honest and forthcoming to themselves and to you! Check out our curated list of must-read LGBTQ+ books for kids, organized by age.

## FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

Your child is never too young to start understanding gender and sexuality. They may not understand complicated terms or the exact words for different identities, but they sure can learn to love and accept different kinds of people. Here are some books appropriate for a young audience:



**Julián Is a Mermaid**  
Jessica Love, Candlewick Press

“Julián Is a Mermaid” follows Julián’s journey of discovering himself. On his way from the pool with his abuela, Julián sees three women with brightly coloured hair, wearing dresses that end in tails! He decides that he wants to be just like them and dress up as a mermaid. Though he fears his abuela’s reaction, she comes across as a supportive and accepting caregiver. This story truly exemplifies intergenerational love and acceptance.

### Prince & Knight

Daniel Haack, Scholastic, Inc.

In his pursuit to find a bride, a prince unexpectedly joins up with a knight, determined to protect the kingdom against a fearful dragon. They fight the monster, and in the process, they end up falling in love. A queer spin on a classic fairytale, this one is bound to keep you and your little ones hooked until the end.

### In Our Mothers’ House

Patricia Palacco, Philomel Books

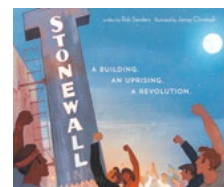
Marmee and Meema are a



same-sex couple raising their three children in sunny California. The book tells of their everyday life — stories about planning for Halloween, cooking together, having dance parties, catching the flu, and more! While some people outside the household are not understanding of their family, the mothers teach the kids to accept and celebrate differences and to understand that love is the most important thing.

### Stonewall: A Building, An Uprising. A Revolution.

Rob Sanders, Penguin Random House



This moving, colorful picture book tells the story of the Stonewall Inn and the revolution that started there, through the voice of the Inn. It allows young readers to understand its rich history and its role in the LGBTQ+ movement. It tells of how the police raided the Inn, and how members of the LGBTQ+ community got together to protest and demand their rights. A must read for little activists in the making!

## FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL CHILDREN

By this age, children are starting to better understand themselves and their place in the world around them. Many may be questioning their own gender or sexuality, or have friends who have come out as trans, bisexual, queer or any of the other identifiers that fall under the LGBTQ+ umbrella. It’s important to equip your middle schooler with the right information as they navigate this phase of life.

### Gracefully Grayson

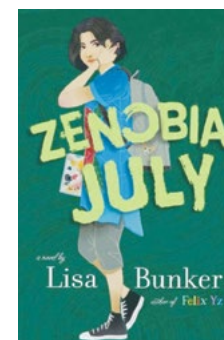
Ami Polonsky, Little, Brown Books for Young Readers



12-year-old Grayson is a thoughtful, imaginative child, but he’s shy and likes to hide in the corners at school. Grayson’s secret makes it even harder to make friends authentically. “He” is a girl who feels stuck in the wrong body. Grayson wants to share this with people, but fears rejection and bullying. An unexpected friendship and the support of a teacher allows Grayson to be who they truly are and not have to hide any more. This novel truly captures Grayson’s strength and the power of friendship.

### Zenobia July

Lisa Bunker, Viking Books for Young Readers



Zenobia’s life has seen some major changes. She’s moved to Maine to live with her aunts, started a new school, is making new friends and finally living openly as the girl she always knew she was. So when someone starts anonymously posting hateful messages on their school website, Zenobia, being the skillful coder and hacker that she is, knows that



From “Prince & Knight.” Photo: Scholastic, Inc.

See **Books**, page 30



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→ Books

Continued from page 28

she is the only one who can solve this mystery. Zenobia juggles all of this while working on fitting in and finding family. It is a story about finding yourself and finding a place to call home.



**Small Town Pride**

Phil Stamper, HarperCollins

A coming of age story about Jake, the first openly gay student at his school, this book navigates both the good and the bad parts about coming out. While his friends and family are supportive, overt displays of Pride at his house compel neighbors to complain and worry that there might be a local Pride Parade, which is unacceptable to them. Jake sets out trying to get permission to actually make this happen, and the Mayor's son seems to be very interested in helping him...



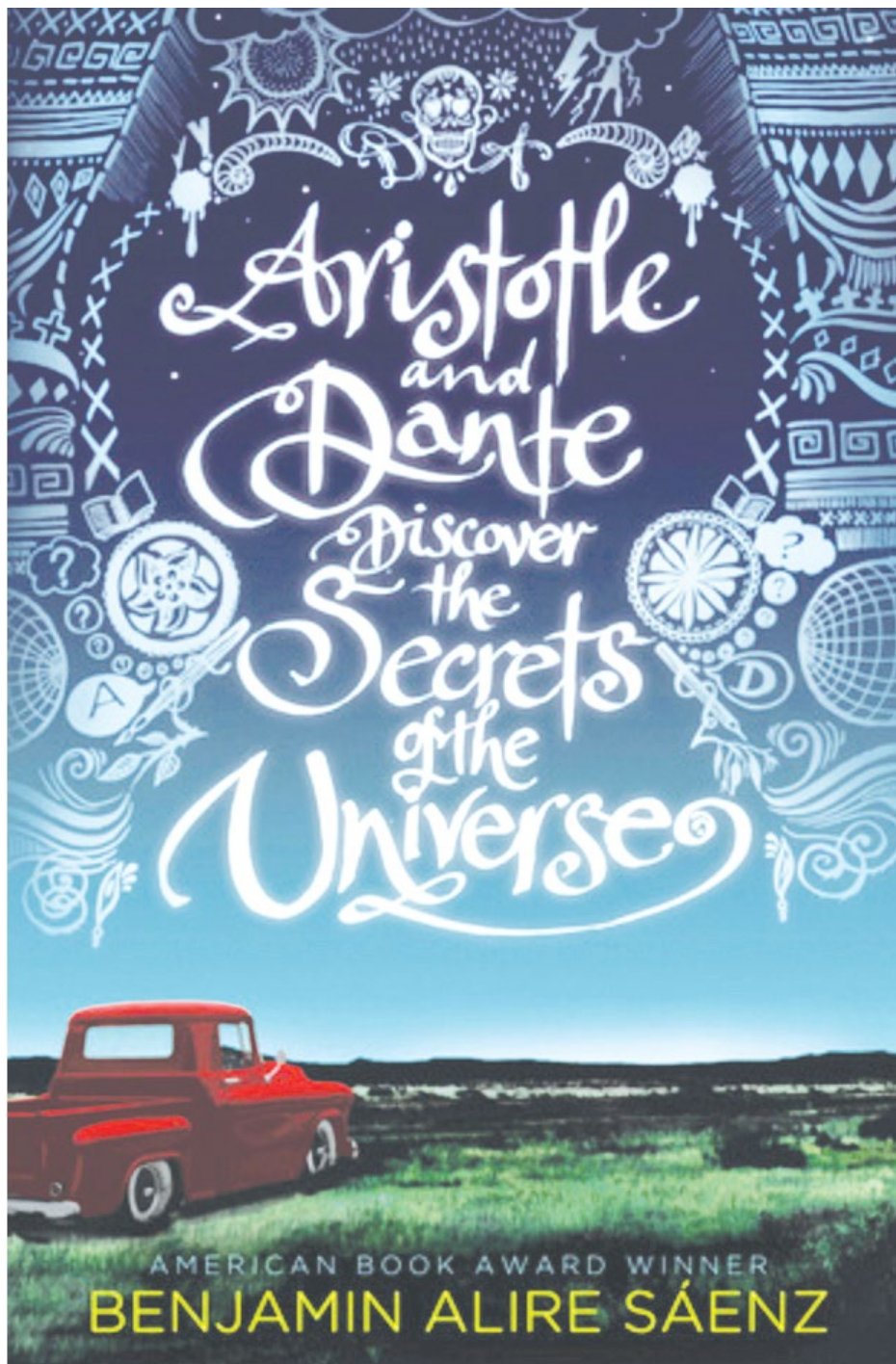
**The Deepest Breath**

Meg Grehan, Little Island

This coming out story will pull at your heartstrings. The novel follows the life of Stevie, a curious teenager who wants answers to just about everything. However, when she realizes that she is falling for a girl, she's not sure what to even ask to help her find the answers to what she is feeling. A supportive librarian comes to the rescue, helping her navigate her feelings, but Stevie needs to find a way to come out to her mom, which is no easy task.

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**It's Not Like It's a Secret**

Misa Sugiura, HarperTeen

Sana Kiyohara has a lot of secrets. She hates not being invited to parties, her father might be having an affair, and most scandalous of all, she might be attracted to her best friend! When Sana moves to California, she decides it's time to be honest, especially when she

meets Jamie Ramirez. However, both Sana and Jamie's friends disapprove, and Sana must navigate unwanted male attention from classmate Caleb.

**Simon vs. The Homo Sapiens Agenda**

Becky Albertalli, Balzer + Bray



The novel that would become the

first film by a major Hollywood studio focused on a gay teen romance ("Love, Simon") focuses on Simon, a not-so-openly gay sixteen year old who leads a simple, drama-free life. However, when a personal email of his falls into the wrong hands, he is left with a mess. Faced with the difficult choice of whether he should protect his own privacy or his anonymous pen pal's, he is forced to enter a world way out of his comfort zone. As he tries to juggle his friendships and growing relationship with a boy he has yet to meet, he realizes that his junior year has become a complicated web of secrets.

**Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe**

Benjamin Alire Sáenz, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

Dante is confident, articulate and loves poetry. Ari is timid and often lost in thoughts of his older brother in prison. The pair are as different as they can be and so, when they make each other's acquaintance, it is surprising that they develop a special bond.

When Dante leaves for Chicago, they promise to remain friends, but their relationship becomes complicated when Dante makes it increasingly clear that he is in love with Ari, who does not seem to feel the same way. This coming-of-age story follows the pair as they grow up and are forced to deal with the judgements that society has put on gender roles and sexuality.

**Act Cool**

Tobly McSmith, Quill Tree Books



August Greene is an aspiring actor who has just landed a spot at the coveted School of Performing Arts in New York. His dream finally seems to be falling into place except for one major roadblock: His parents won't accept that he's transgender. The only way he can move to New York and chase the life of a star is if he promises his parents that he won't transition. While this seems like a bargain he can live with in the beginning, things get complicated when he makes new friends and plays new roles which push him to think more closely about his own identity.

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# Loving Victor For the Last Time

## Michael Cimino and George Sear on End of 'Love, Victor'

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

For now, at least, it's the end of the couple we know as "Venji." Many watched Victor (Michael Cimino) and Benji (George Sear), the romantic heart of "Love, Victor," to find a much-needed love rush amid pandemic weirdness. The series launched on Hulu in 2020, just months into lockdown when we were

all looking for some lighthearted teen romance (for some, to see themselves; for others, to revel in nostalgia), and now, after three seasons, the spinoff of the 2018 film "Love, Simon" is stepping off the Ferris wheel. That is, until the very fans who made it the gay talk of Twitter inevitably insist on a Venji film.

In a recent chat, Cimino and Sear talked about their next possible collaboration (could we finally get

a recorded song?), what mementos they kept from the set and whether they'll continue to represent the LGBTQ+ community in future roles.

**I don't know how many tears you shed during the shooting of this, but based on the face you're making right now, Michael, it looks like you shed some.**

**Michael Cimino:** Yeah, I definitely

cried quite a bit. I love this show, and I love this cast. It's been such an amazing experience. And yeah, it was emotional, dude. I love these people. So even though it's not a goodbye, it definitely felt that way, especially in the moment. And it was a goodbye to Victor, and that in itself was really hard, just [saying] goodbye to Victor. I loved playing Victor.

**George Sear:** It's such a big part

of your life, you know? It was emotional. Especially as a Brit, like us being much more [transparent] with our emotions. That final night everybody was just so... there was just so much love there. Yeah, a lot of tears.

**What was your first impression of each other when you met, and how**

See *Loving Victor*, page 34



# Some Motor City Pride Attendees Waited Hours to Get Inside. What Happened?

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Long lines to get into Motor City Pride (MCP) in Hart Plaza in Detroit on Saturday and Sunday marred the experience for many Pridegoers. In fact, organizers, fearing they were reaching capacity in the plaza, had to shut down the single entrance gate early.

Kevin Pike drove from Macomb County and had trouble getting in on the first day. “We tried for Saturday but got there around 4 or 4:30,” he wrote in a Facebook comment on the official MCP page. “The line was INSANE. By 6:45 we were by the Hart Plaza sign and gave up [because the doors were closing at 7].”

Pike and friends got in Sunday, though, and despite the long wait to get in he said he’d definitely go back. “This was my first Pride event and it was great,” he posted. “We will definitely be back next year, too.”

On Sunday, there were problems as the parade, bigger this year than ever according to organizers, started to end. Organizers estimated more than 40,000 people attended this year’s MCP. The sheer volume of attendees apparently overwhelmed volunteers as some reported waiting hours to get in. Others chose not to wait at all, leaving without ever making it inside the gates.

Carl Chamberlain of Clarkson posted on MCP’s Facebook page that it took him and his boyfriend over two hours to get in Sunday. “The crowd wasn’t as friendly as we would expect at a Pride festival, and we had a couple of negative encounters and no memorable good ones,” Chamberlain’s post read in part. He still admitted to having fun once he made it in, but said his future attendance at MCP is questionable. “All things considered, I really don’t know if my boyfriend and I will be returning next year,” he said. “One suggestion: If the wait is 2+ hours again next year, have someone handing out free bottled water. Better yet, find a way to speed up the entry process.”

A tweet from the official MCP Twitter page on Saturday evening appeared to show some remorse from organizers. “We apologize for the long lines as the turnout exceeded the allowed capacity forcing us to close lines early,” the post read. “We look forward to seeing everyone tomorrow.”

Zack Fredericks, who lives in downtown Detroit, only had to walk mere minutes to get to Hart Plaza. Then he saw the lines. According to Fredericks’ comments on FB, the lines were “unacceptable.”

On MCP’s Facebook page, Pridegoers suggested selling advance tickets next year and moving Pride to a larger location in the city among others to speed up the entrance



Motor City Pride 2022 saw record attendance. Photo: Between the Lines

process.

But it wasn’t only entry to MCP that was a problem. According to some attendees, they also had trouble getting out, citing, again, long lines and narrow exits.

“Add people with strollers and barricades not open wide enough, and you have a bottleneck and a longer line of people wanting to leave,” said RoRo Mcerocks on Facebook. “That could potentially be a safety hazard if there was a need to exit quickly. Please, Detroit. Do Better.”

Dave Wait, head of MCP, said the problem was the sheer number of attendees who came out to attend Pride and ruled out any security threats or other issues.

“It was a sad thing,” he said. “We never dreamed we’d do double of what we were in September [2021].”

Wait said that when they had to close the gates early on Saturday, he walked the line and offered tickets to anyone planning to come back Sunday so they would not have to pay to get in. Wait also said he had trouble believing that anyone waited for two hours to get in.

“I don’t think anybody waited that long,” he said. “We were asking people all the time how long they were in line and the longest people told us was about 50 minutes.”

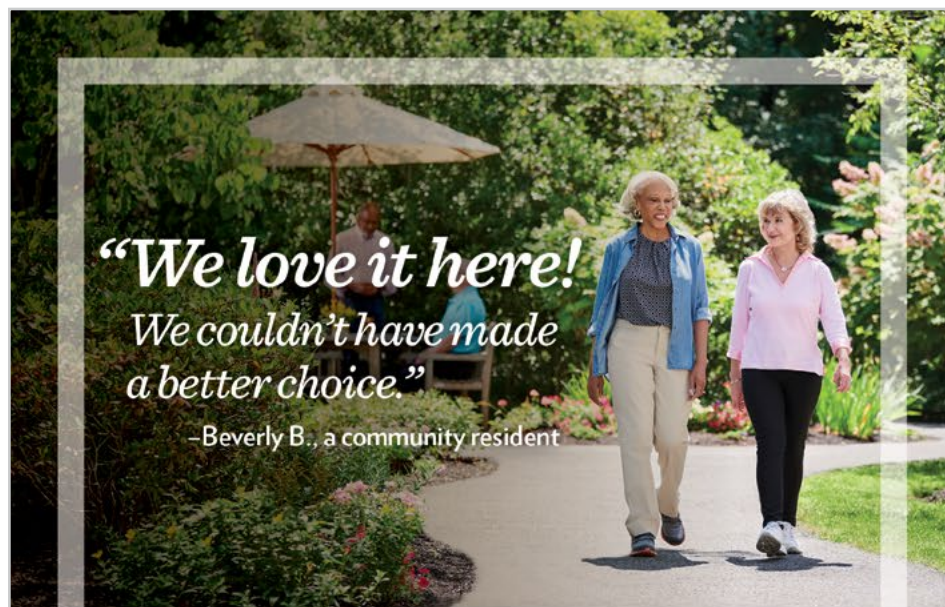
Wait said that MCP was considering all options for next year.

“I don’t believe we’ve outgrown Hart Plaza yet,” he said. “But we’re going to look at options.”

Wait said they are talking to the police about opening a second gate but that could possibly cause line confusion. “The challenge with a second gate is that you have two lines that are merging,” he said. “The one thing we’re pretty sure about next year is we’re going to have advance ticket sales.”

In the end, Wait said he has mixed emotions. He just produced the biggest MCP on record, but not everyone was able to get in and be a part of it.

“We were grateful for the folks who came out to support the festival, and we were sorry the lines were so long,” he said.



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## → Loving Victor

Continued from page 32

### has your relationship changed from the first shoot to the last?

**Cimino:** The first time I met George was in the cam read, and I knew that George was the guy. Immediately I was like, "This is our guy, for sure." Our relationship has just grown since then, and I would consider George one of my really good friends, one of my closest friends, and I know I can call George and chat to him about anything.

**Sear:** A hundred percent.

**Cimino:** I don't think that you get that often, to be honest. Sometimes you become part of a cast, and you're not really vibing with everyone, but with this cast, I love everyone so much.

**Sear:** Yeah, honestly. From the get-go there was definitely, like you said... it felt really right. So I was really grateful that I got to be a part of this experience. Everybody was lovely, but Michael was just so genuine and wanted everybody to feel good on set and brought such good energy. I do feel like our friendship really has evolved from Season 1 till now, and through jamming together. So much growth in this time, and sharing that with you bonded us.

**Cimino:** You can't really describe it. George would call me when his car broke down, and we had to push it...

**Sear:** A hundred percent. And he lent me his

truck for, like, over a month.

### You mentioned music, George, and you're both musically inclined, and fans are really hungry for a collaboration between the two of you, a recording that we can just enjoy for the rest of our lives. Is that something you talk about?

**Cimino:** Yeah, actually, I don't know why we haven't talked about it.

**Sear:** That's something we definitely should [do]. We have played music together before. We used to host these jam sessions where everyone would switch instruments, and it was very fun. Maybe we can have a go at writing a little something. Funny that we both have our guitars, like, next to us [right now]. Let's do it now. What key?

### You've spent three years with these characters. What have you learned about yourself by playing them?

**Cimino:** Dude, I feel like Victor's inspired me so much just to be brave, and I know I keep saying this, but [that's] because it's true. Victor has inspired me to just be who I am. And he has this big speech at the end about bravery, and that has been a really incredible inspiration [to] me for how I navigate life.

**Sear:** There's been so much that I've taken away from Benji: his confidence, and this season learning that he wasn't always confident, and he had these struggles, and he was doing a lot of work on himself. It was kind of cathartic to play that, because there's just parallels between things I've gone

through. But then, other things, like the love of coffee. They gave me barista training and now I'm obsessed with that. When they got me in the studio to do that, a song in Season 2, and that just was so fun.

### Have you delved into Venji fan fiction? I mean, it would be hard not to; there's a lot of it on the internet.

**Sear:** I see a lot of memes and things like that on Twitter.

**Cimino:** Yeah, I haven't dived into the fan fiction. We should actually, George. We could do a day where we link up, and we just read fan fiction online.

**Sear:** We should actually. We need some direct links.

### So a very shameless fan had this question for Michael, which is: Out of all the people that Victor has kissed, who is Michael's favorite kisser? }

**Cimino:** You know, listen... I think...

**Sear:** Don't be shy.

**Cimino:** Yep, tread carefully. Um, I think everyone's great in their own regard. And I feel like that's all I can say 'cause any way that I answer this question, I'm so screwed.

**Sear:** But there is an answer!

### Do you think that you have interest in playing other LGBTQ+ characters in the future?

**Cimino:** Yes, for sure.

**Sear:** Definitely, yeah.

**Cimino:** I've had some interest in some stuff that is LGBTQ-skewing. I'm never going to shy away from a role because it's LGBTQ-skewing. I think that's really dumb. It's a part of our world, and people that are part of the LGBTQ+ community need to be seen.

**Sear:** I'm kind of back to the drawing board, auditioning quite a bit. And if a good part is a good part, and it's a good character, then yeah. Of course. Absolutely.

### What did you take from the set as a memento? And by "take," I mean borrow, not steal.

**Cimino:** Yeah. I didn't steal anything.

**Sear:** You got away with something quite hefty, didn't you?

**Cimino:** No, no! I don't know what you're talking about! I took some stuff from Victor's room that I felt like I needed to have.

**Sear:** I got this bracelet that I love, and it's sort of a memento of the character. And I also got the... I'm just looking at it over here. It's the tamper, for the espresso, where [Benji's] tamping the coffee. I got the tamper for that. So, I use that every day 'cause I make coffee at home every day.

### If a "Love, Victor" movie comes your way, would you say yes to it?

**Cimino:** Yeah.

**Sear:** Definitely. Yeah, yeah. A hundred percent. Love to work with Michael again, and everybody else.

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## → Legal Name Change

Continued from page 15

“not only looking at it yourself. When you do little things that people take for granted — like you go buy cigarettes and they card you. Or you go to a bar, and women are free before 11 p.m., and they separate you in line by gender. Your comfort level, your mental health, navigating and getting through society and being able to have the same opportunities that others have is at risk.”

Abad, as part of her job with the Fair Michigan Justice Project and in collaboration with such partners as Ford Motor Company and Dykema law firm, began putting on name change clinics for low income trans men and women to get assistance from an attorney while filling out their legal name change forms for free. The attorney will continue on to represent their client throughout the process until and including the final hearing, when the name change request will be granted.

On Tuesday, June 14 at Corktown Health Center, Abad put on her fourth name change clinic. To date, she has helped guide 125 people through the process. By day’s end, with the help of 14 volunteer attorneys, she will have helped 20 more.

“I wanted to spearhead this program because what it means to my community is lifesaving,” Abad said. “People don’t realize that Michigan is an at-will state. We can be denied housing, medical services, at shelters, employment — just because of how we identify. It’s little things like that, that people take for granted.”

Not having proper ID that matches your gender identity and presentation can put trans persons in an “unsafe position,” said Abad, who pointed out that when presented with an ID that does not match, “now people who didn’t have a bias, have a bias. It makes it uncomfortable for my community. You can’t even use the bathroom or go to certain spaces because you don’t know how people are going to react.”

The first hour of the clinic takes place

before those changing their names even arrive. The volunteer attorneys undergo cultural competency training led by Abad, Jay Kaplan, the ACLU of Michigan’s LGBT Project staff attorney and Dykema attorney Heidi Naasko. Naasko said that “normalizing this process for this community is really important.”

Ford attorney Kim Ray said that her company works with “access to justice issues” and that “this is certainly a case where the process is actually fairly simple. But we’re working with clients who are breaking down barriers constantly and, for us, to be able to remove one and make this last barrier so much easier for them is why we do it.”

Ford “believes that people should have the freedom to move and pursue their dreams,” Ray went on. “When you meet and talk to these clients, they’ve just faced so much that doesn’t allow them that freedom of movement, that freedom to enjoy their lives and live as their authentic selves.”

Greg Burns is another attorney from Ford. He said he felt that as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, “there’s really no better sort of use of my skills, you know. I had the desire to really just give back. ... The trans community is a marginalized community within a marginalized community. So when you’re sitting with a client and she’s telling you, ‘This is my name,’ I mean, that’s powerful to me.”

Of the 20 trans persons who came to the clinic, only one said they felt comfortable enough to speak with — and share their name with — Pride Source. Jasmine Watts works for Corktown Health Center. She said her first name was given to her by an old boyfriend and it just stuck.

“It means a lot to me [to have an ID that matches my chosen name] because now I feel more comfortable,” she said. “I just started my hormones last year and now this. I don’t have to go into public areas and be addressed by my deadname.”

“And to be honest,” Watts continued, “my dad and I shared the same name, but, you know, I know that my dad would want me to be happy and live my life.”

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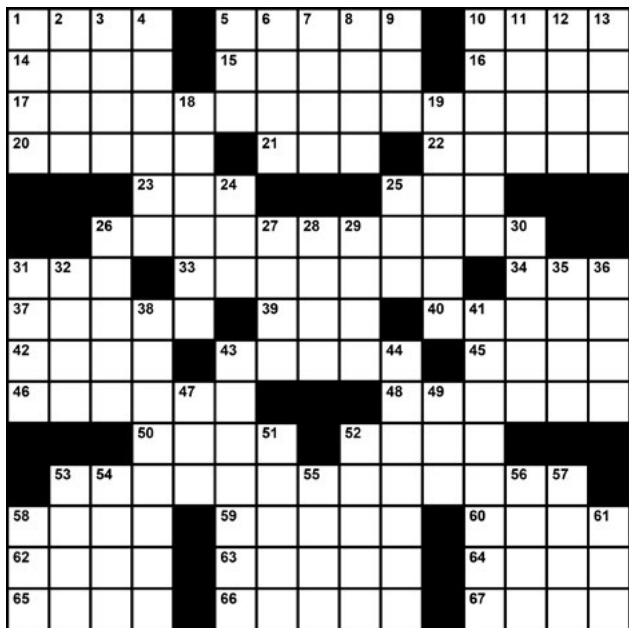
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- 40 Spock portrayed Leonard  
 42 Humorist Bombeck  
 43 End of Choice #2  
 45 Mark with a branding iron  
 46 "Milk" actor James  
 48 Bearse of "Married ... with Children"  
 50 "\_\_\_ On Down the Road"  
 52 Sourpuss  
 53 Netflix gay coming-of-age series  
 58 Mapplethorpe's "Man in Polyester \_\_\_"  
 59 Compensate  
 60 Hot stuff  
 62 Fairy tale bad guy  
 63 Send, as to a specialist  
 64 Nathan of "Modern Family"  
 65 "Fer \_\_\_!"  
 66 "The Cat in the Hat" author  
 67 "\_\_\_ of Seventeen"

- 13 "Quills" subject  
 18 They're way out  
 19 Cartoonist David  
 24 West of Hollywood  
 25 Cigarette pkg.  
 26 Hayek of "Frida"  
 27 "Firebird" composer Stravinsky  
 28 Richard Simmons, to fitness  
 29 Serpent's sound  
 30 Aden is its capital  
 31 Nick Malgieri, for one  
 32 "Cabaret"'s "Mein \_\_\_"  
 35 Dryer batch  
 36 Vidal's Breckinridge  
 38 Hall & Oates song about a fellator?  
 41 Allie on "Weeds"  
 43 Rock and Doris, frequently  
 44 Literary mag for nags?  
 47 The Batmobile, e.g.  
 49 AAA handout  
 51 Lauded makeup maker Lauder  
 52 Dairy Queen stack  
 53 Bonneville of "Downton Abbey"  
 54 Land of Sinead O'Connor  
 55 It's a curd in the kitchen  
 56 Yellow-brick way  
 57 Carol, for example  
 58 Signal that goes either way  
 61 Supporter of Spencer-Devlin

**Down**

- 1 Singer Feliciano  
 2 Shaft output  
 3 Minute parts, briefly  
 4 Most in need of BenGay  
 5 Homophobe Robertson  
 6 Inventive Goldberg  
 7 Club for Sheehan  
 8 Calendar boxes  
 9 Keebler cookie maker  
 10 Tracy Turnblad has a big one  
 11 On an Atlantis cruise  
 12 Pink lady liquors

**Two Choices**

**Across**

- 1 Buffy creator Whedon  
 5 Group of openly gay lions?  
 10 Fag \_\_\_ (women with gay friends)  
 14 Milk go-with  
 15 Like phone sex  
 16 Area east of the Urals  
 17 Choice #1, on 53-Across  
 20 Flynn role opposite Davis

- 21 Officer in the navy (abbr.)  
 22 Use a rubber  
 23 It may be tidy  
 25 Mouthful, for the bull  
 26 Start of Choice #2 on 53-Across  
 31 Chinese tea  
 33 Dance in a Cole Porter title  
 34 Tree on a shady street  
 37 Big wheels at sea  
 39 Areas for Dr. Kerry Weaver

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See p. 24 for answers

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## → Maurice Turner

Continued from page 16

replacement sealed the deal.

“One of the biggest things that we just were able to accomplish and bring some positive press and attention to the city was getting one of the local residents here who was in desperate emergency need for a new roof,” Turner said. With some of the materials and labor donated, the estimated \$40,000 to \$50,000 cost was reduced to \$10,000.

Soon, they were inundated with requests for help and resources.

“The need is great here in the city of Highland Park for assistance and resources and grant funding, and really doing a lot of this has led me to really want to get involved in government here and take a look at how we could re-structure ourselves as a city, as a government, to be more functional.

“I want our government to have more impact — positive impact — on our city and more so on our residents, because the people are really crying out for help here. And we need more people to step up to the plate and specifically our government in order to meet the needs of the population here in Highland Park.”

Catherine Perkins has lived in Highland Park for 56 of her 68 years, 14 years in her present home. She met Turner at a neighborhood block club party.

“When I talked to him, he told me about his plan for the city and how he would like to move

the city forward for development, for schools — and that’s what we need,” Perkins told Pride Source. “I knew then Maurice had a vision and I was very impressed by that.”

Perkins was so impressed she’s pitching in to help with Turner’s campaign. As the former senior coordinator of Highland Park, Perkins is introducing Turner to seniors and helping make connections to others in the community.

When Perkins first met Turner, he made a good first impression. But she says those “currently in positions” don’t know him well enough to accept or reject him, and they may feel threatened.

“They know that he does have a vision, and he’s showing that he’s involved,” Perkins said. “He’s reached out to help where help was needed. He’s done a lot of things in the community to show people that he does care, to show that he does have passion, genuinely, to help. And he was doing that even before running for mayor.”

Turner’s plans as mayor extend beyond revitalization, though that’s a major part. He wants to cut spending and see where the city can stretch dollars. Even more, he feels they’ve

missed out on grants for which a dedicated grant team should be researching and applying. He’s also eager to reach out and connect with neighboring municipalities. In addition, he’d like to see greater government transparency and accountability through regular engagement among those who lead, live in or own businesses in Highland Park.

Because of Covid, Turner missed a filing deadline related to his residency. As a result, he is running as a write-in candidate. There are three other candidates for Highland Park mayor: two are write-ins who were removed from the official ballot because of technicalities. Thus, for this office, there will only be a race in the general election: one official candidate and

three write-in candidates, of whom Turner is one.

{Bold The journey from a Michigan farming community to revitalizing urban Detroit}

Born and raised in the farming community of Cassopolis, Michigan, Turner grew up in a family of five children including twin brother Marcus, with whom he attended Michigan State University. In 2005, Turner moved to the Detroit area and has lived there since. In

his day job, Turner assists clients nationwide with credit counseling and education, with a focus on the Black and Latinx communities.

Growing up, Turner described Cassopolis as a religious community where he didn’t hear much about LGBTQ+ people. It wasn’t until adulthood that Turner came out.

“Being an out, gay Black man in an interracial marriage — all the things — we’ve never really felt any discrimination,” Turner said, “but I think a lot of people still may not be as comfortable as others that are in our LGBTQIA community here in Highland Park. They might not feel as comfortable being just who they are and being proud about it. But I hope to make a little bit of that change here as well.”

Turner would like to see greater diversity in the city overall, and looked to the past as a hint to what might be in store for Highland Park’s future.

“We have to identify who we are now as a city and where we’re going, what that looks like, and how we can attract the diversity that was here, even back in the 1930s and ‘40s,” Turner said. “It’s always been a diverse city here, with all people from all over the world coming here to Highland Park for work specifically.

“But I think we can really look at our history of that diversity and really provide that as an attraction here to the city of Highland Park to grow our population, grow our business and grow our tax base so that we can become the city that we really want it to be.”



Highland Park Mayoral Candidate Maurice Turner. Photo: Maurice Turner



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