

MICHIGAN'S LGBTQ+ NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993

Between THE Lines TM

LEARN FROM THIS LOCAL
How to Ban Conversion
Therapy, DIY Style

MONKEYPOX VACCINE
Blame Health Authorities
for Spread, Not Queer Men

'CHOICE' IS OUR ISSUE, TOO
Is The Debate Around Abortion
Rights Transphobic?



Reshaping Broadway

Detroit Native Michael R.
Jackson Reflects on His Wildly
Successful Show 'A Strange Loop'
By Bridgette Redman

JULY
15-17



**QUALITY
ROOTS**

PROUD SPONSOR OF

**HOTTER
THAN
JULY**



**CAME
OUT
BLAZIN**



SCAN TO ORDER

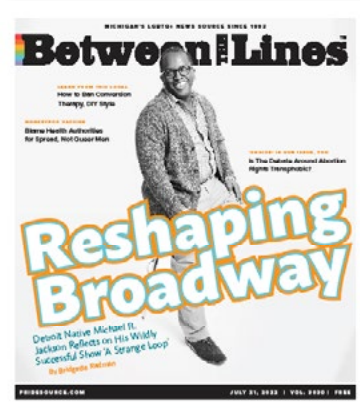
FIND US ON **walmart**

GETQUALITYROOTS.COM

[@GETQUALITYROOTS](https://www.instagram.com/GETQUALITYROOTS)



- 4 5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now-ish
- 6 Enough Already: Another Wedding Venue, This Time in Grand Rapids, Is Turning Away Same-Sex Couples
- 8 Blame Health Authorities for Monkeypox Spread, Not Queer Men
- 10 Hotter Than July, 27 Years Strong
- 11 Creep of the Week: Ted Cruz Thinks Only People Like Him Should Be the Bosses of Marriage Equality
- 12 Is The Debate Around Abortion Rights Transphobic?
- 12 It's Official! Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Husband Chasten Become Legal Michiganders
- 14 Black, Gay, Fat: Reshaping Broadway With Landmark Representation
- 16 Why Sherry Whitmer Came Out
- 22 Noah Arbit: Not Just Gay, Not Just Jewish
- 30 Dancing Through Life Anyway: An Interview with Jaida Essence Hall



14 COVER STORY

Photo: Chris Sutton

Only on Pridesource.com

Visit Pridesource.com for a full gallery of photos from Hotter Than July's first-ever concert, held July 16 at Sound Board at Motor City Casino and Hotel. Photos by Andrew Potter



VOL. 3030 • JULY 21, 2022

ISSUE 1205

PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP

www.pridesource.com
Phone 734-263-1476

PUBLISHERS

Benjamin Jenkins
benjamin@pridesource.com

Tom Wesley
tom@pridesource.com

Publishers Emeritus: Jan Stevenson & Susan Horowitz

EDITORIAL

Editorial Director

Chris Azzopardi
chris@pridesource.com

Assistant Editor

Sarah Bricker Hunt

Writers and Columnists

Ellen Knopow, Jason A. Michael, Lawrence Ferber, D'Anne Witkowski, Eve Kucharski, Jon King, Mikey Rox, Gwendolyn Ann Smith, Dana Rudolph, Bridgette Redman

CREATIVE

Cartoonists

Paul Berg

Contributing Photographers

Andrew Potter, Andrew Cohen

ADVERTISING & SALES

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

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

National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media, 212-242-6863

MEMBER OF

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



"Pride Source"

Follow us @pridesource

@pridesourcemedial

Pride Source

Email your op-eds to editor@pridesource.com

Sign up online to receive our E-Digest

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

Copyright 2022

5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now-ish

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

Ah, summer. So hot. So fast. Before you can blink, we'll be cruising right into fall. For now, there's plenty of time to dive into one (or all) of these things to do over the next couple of weeks. Enjoy scantily-clad dance parties, a super gay theater production, and dedicated "me time" at home with a new album or a sex-room show (seriously).

Laugh It Up at the Ringwald Theatre's Gay Rom-Com

Need a good laugh? Head to the Ringwald Theatre, located inside Affirmations LGBTQ+ community center, for "You've Got Male," a "gay rom-com jukebox musical parody mash-up" (say that three times fast). The adventure is sure to offer a welcome escape from the real world — in a press release, one of the show's playwrights, Matthew Arrington, said the production follows the Ringwald's tradition of "campy, big, raucous summer parodies." Vince Kelley, Arrington's co-writer, added, "Non-binary actors Al Duffy and Rashna Sarwar show a queer love story that we haven't had the opportunity to see in a mainstream rom-com — how fantastic is that?"

Through Aug. 8. Tickets at theringwald.com, \$15 to \$25. Masks and proof of vaccination required for entry. Register on Eventbrite.



Photo: The Ringwald Theatre (Facebook)



Attend a Virtual Gender Embodiment Workshop

The Ann Arbor YMCA is offering a series of virtual gender embodiment workshops focused on "freeing the voice and body for the purpose of experiencing and expressing themselves in whatever way they choose — male, female, non-binary." Elizabeth Terrel, director of Voice & Movement at Western Michigan University Department of Theatre, leads the workshops. "What matters most to me is that folks know I create a safe and supportive space while also being a true voice professional," she said in a statement. "There are so many factors that go into how our culture 'genders' voices. This exploration can be a lot of fun!"

The workshops will be held July 21 and Aug. 4 and 18. Costs vary and financial assistance is available. Learn more at annarborymca.org.

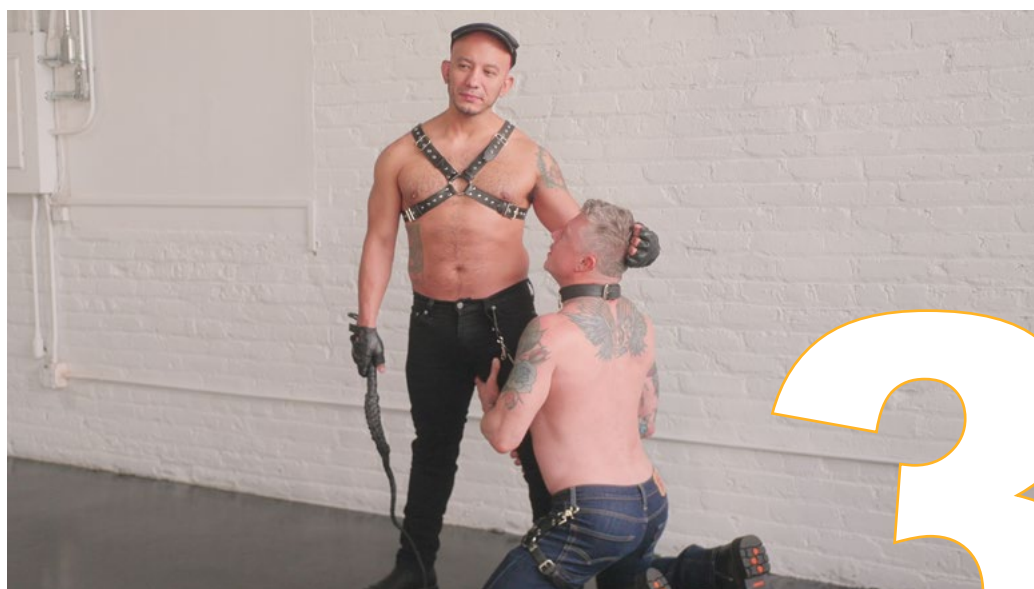


Photo: Netflix

Build a Sex Room This Summer

If shows like "Tidying Up" or "Bargain Block" motivate you to jump into home improvement projects, proceed with caution if you decide to binge Netflix's new reno show, "How to Build a Sex Room." Whips, suspension systems and sex-play cages can get pricey! Cheeky naughtiness aside, the show brings an important message about queer sex positivity into a mainstream space, exploring the freedom and pleasure of dedicating a room to, well, freedom and pleasure. Get inspired by couples and a group involved in a polyamorous relationship as they create rooms that push boundaries and embrace human sexuality in healthy, safe, exhilarating environments certain to become conversation starters at your next dinner party.

"How to Build a Sex Room" is streaming on Netflix.



From a previous ThotTea Garden Party. Photo: Thots & Prayers (Facebook)

Sexy Tea Party, Anyone?

If you haven't made it out to a Thots & Prayers' ThotTea Garden Party this summer, get to it! Each Sunday at Marble Bar, DJs Theo and Jace M host an outdoor dance party featuring current and classic circuit music, and isn't that just how you want to start your week? Each garden party focuses on a special theme, but all share a common goal of sweaty, bass-thumping good times.

ThotTea Garden Parties are held 4-10 p.m. every Sunday through August at Marble Bar (1501 Holden St. near Midtown). Follow Thots & Prayers on Facebook.



"made for them" cover art.

Hear Gender-Neutral Pop Covers

Miki Ratsula's "made for them" EP is not only, as Billboard describes, "warm" and "cozy," but the Finnish-American artist's gender-neutral covers of pop hits like Harry Styles' "She" will get you thinking: Why are so many love songs so explicitly hetero when love is universal? "made for them" features ethereal, indie-pop covers of songs from Styles, Phoebe Bridgers, One Direction, Dodie, Angus & Julia Stone. In a recent interview with everyqueer.com, Ratsula said they "want people in the LGBTQ+ community to finally have a love song they can relate to." It's an approach that is resonating with audiences. As Ratsula notes in a press release promoting the EP, "I didn't realize how much it would mean for so many of you... There's something special about feeling represented in music."

Please check event pages for the most up-to-date scheduling information.

SAT. JUL 30 DETROIT
MICHIGAN LOTTERY AMPHITHEATRE
GET TICKETS AT LIVENATION.COM **LIVE NATION**

LIVE NATION V OSS GMB SHOWS & EVENTS VH1 WORLD WONDER



Enough Already: Another Wedding Venue, This Time in Grand Rapids, Is Turning Away Same-Sex Couples

Owners Say They Can Help You Find a Venue That's Not Homophobic (Thanks?)

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Well, hateful homophobia has reared its ugly head in the state of Michigan yet again. This time it's a new wedding venue in Grand Rapids, the Broadway Avenue, who, with an anti-queer Instagram post, has announced their policy of blatantly discriminating against the LGBTQ+ community by refusing to host same-sex weddings at their recently renovated

church. This despite the fact that the United States Supreme Court ruled that marriage equality is a constitutionally protected right seven years ago, in 2015.

"Our business is the result of a lot of hard work and dedication and is a reflection of who we are, and the values and beliefs we hold from our faith in Jesus Christ," owners Nick and Hannah Natale said in their post. "As a result, we would like our business to remain true to our Christian faith and this includes marriage."

As closed-minded conservatives generally do, they went on to patronize the LGBTQ+ community by insisting they have "love and respect for all," though clearly the couple has skewed definitions for both of those terms. But all is not lost — even though they refuse to serve LGBTQ+ individuals in their establishment, they "would be happy to help you find a venue" that is not hypocritical and prejudiced. (And who says Christian charity is dead?)

The couple went on to say that their

"Christian values and beliefs" do not affect how they treat people — outside of refusing to host their events, of course — and, additionally, their antiquated response to LGBTQ+ individuals does not affect "how we welcome event guests and who we hire." Still, one would be advised not to show up to the venue in drag. (If you must, please at least wear a modest heel.)

This situation is not new to Michigan. The Rouch World Event Center in Sturgis, Michigan, filed suit against the state after the

Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) came down on them in 2019 for refusing to serve LGBTQ+ clients. Rouch World alleged in Rouch World LLC et al v MDCR et al that the MDCR had no right to interfere with their business practices, arguing that sexual orientation is not a protected class under the state's Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act.

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel argued before the state's Supreme Court in March that Elliot-Larsen does, in fact, include sexual orientation. Rather than allowing the case to take the usual route up the judicial ladder, Nessel grabbed the case before it went to the Court of Appeals and filed a bypass application with the Michigan Supreme Court. A decision is pending.

"I have long fought for equal treatment under the law," Nessel said in a statement following her appearance before the Supreme Court. "I was proud to represent our client agency [MDCR] this morning, as well as the people of our vibrant state. No one should experience barriers to employment, housing, education, or public accommodations and services because of who they are or who they love."

Grand Rapids does not appear to have a non-discrimination clause in its legal code regarding businesses discrimination on the basis of sexual or gender identity, but that hasn't stopped the LGBTQ+ community in Michigan from making themselves heard.

"It's incredibly disappointing," said Meghan Cytacki-Lewis, who helped organize a protest outside of Broadway Avenue against the venue's policy, to Grand Rapids' Fox 17. "I think this is outright homophobia and discrimination."

Cytacki-Lewis is not alone in her thinking. The Natales' Instagram post has received an enormous amount of comments, most of them opposed to their hateful policy.

"I really, truly just don't understand why you would be in the wedding industry if you can't celebrate love in all forms," said Instagram user violet.flour.bakes.

A post from the account of ArrowTownDesigns, which offers handcrafted goods out of Michigan, said the company had watched the progress of the Broadway Avenue renovations with excitement and had looked forward to recommending the space. Not now, though.

"I'm so sad to see this kind of discrimination," the comment from ArrowTownDesigns read. "Reading through the comments makes me sick to my stomach as I've read your responses to many comments stating that couples could be anything outside of the Christian faith (including 'satan worshipers') but not gay. This is the kind of behavior that makes it embarrassing to be a Christian. This is not

Grand Rapids does not appear to have a non-discrimination clause in its legal code regarding businesses discrimination on the basis of sexual or gender identity, but that hasn't stopped the LGBTQ+ community in Michigan from making themselves heard.

the way."

"This is not true Christianity and it's disheartening that this is how people perceive Christ followers," ArrowTownDesigns continued.

In the meantime, other Michigan businesses focused on the wedding industry are explicitly reaching out to LGBTQ+ couples. Wild Bloom Photo Studio in Royal Oak, for instance, is offering mini photo sessions at no cost to five LGBTQ+ couples this month. Additionally, Pride Source's Yellow Pages offers many options for wedding-centric businesses that, unlike Broadway Avenue, will welcome LGBTQ+ people.

RAINBOW GETAWAYS
PREMIER LGBTQ+ TRAVEL CONCIERGE



Celebrity  Cruises®
JOURNEY WONDERFULL™

WE BELIEVE IN OPENING UP THE WORLD FOR EVERYONE






Ship Registry: Malta | Rainbow Getaways is a registered trademark of Rainbow Getaways LLC | Florida Seller of Travel No. ST43282


Food & Friendship Connections
A Comprehensive Wellness Program

For Residents of Detroit Area
55+ Living with HIV

- NUTRITION SERVICES
- HOME DELIVERED MEALS
- PEER SUPPORT GROUPS
- TRANSPORTATION
- WELLNESS CHECKS
- EDUCATION/TRAINING

To Join Contact DAAA
Peer Support Coordinator
(313) 268-1231 or Thomasf@daaa1a.org

detroit seniorsolution.org





STAY INFORMED
Visit [Pridesource.com](https://www.pridesource.com)
for vaccine updates on
monkeypox

Blame Health Authorities for Monkeypox Spread, Not Queer Men

The Disease Isn't 'Gay,' But It's Spreading Rapidly Through Our Sexual Networks



BY TREVOR HOPPE

On my way to Chicago in mid July, I had the idea to explore getting vaccinated for monkeypox while visiting the city. I knew that the virus was

spreading and that vaccines were currently being distributed across the country to state and local health departments. I also knew that, as a sexually active gay man, I was at the highest risk for contracting the disease.

First things first: The disease is not likely to be deadly. And the variant that is spreading right now in the United States is not as scary as some of the early sensational reports showing huge blisters all over a person's body. The sores most people in the U.S. are experiencing right now can sometimes look like a zit, which

certainly complicates efforts to raise awareness about the disease.

But while not deadly, monkeypox does cause painful sores all over the body that take two-to-four weeks to resolve. According to the CDC, the sores can be on "the face, inside the mouth, and on other parts of the body, like the hands, feet, chest, genitals, or anus." Other flu-like symptoms often accompany these sores, including fever, swollen lymph nodes, headache, and chills. The disease spreads through close skin-to-skin contact, which of course can include sex.

Deadly? Maybe not. But monkeypox is not a walk in the park. And since vaccines are already available and I am in the highest risk group, getting vaccinated has been top of mind since first reports of the disease spreading in the U.S. were announced.

In early July, I read on Twitter that Steamworks Chicago hosted a vaccine clinic. But there was no word on social media whether that might be repeated, only vague rumors. My friend forwarded me an email chain promising

that the sender was "94% confident" that there would be a vaccine clinic at the bathhouse. I was in luck, I thought! I waited to see if there was an official announcement on the club's Twitter. But there was radio silence.

Another Twitter post instructed readers to contact Project WISH. So I fired off an email to the listed address. No response. My husband, as it turns out, was also working the phones to try to track down a jab. He called that same clinic, got a number to text, and started exchanging messages. They gave him the cold shoulder, saying the doses they had were being reserved for those with the highest risk — without even asking him about his risk profile. They did end up adding him to a waiting list, with the proviso that there were hundreds already on it.

As we drove to Chicago, we phoned Steamworks to try to figure out if there was actually a clinic happening that night. "No," the kind receptionist informed us, adding that "apparently someone is spreading bad information on social media."

That weekend, we struck up conversations

with various gays in town about monkeypox. Everyone had a different story about where they thought vaccines might be available. "Oh I heard it's available at Rush hospital on Wednesdays, but only by appointment." Other people heard that Howard Brown Health had doses by appointment. A receptionist at a small clinic told me they thought that a Catholic clinic nearby might have them. By the end of the weekend, our search became a hilarious but tragic wild goose chase.

On my way home from Chicago, my phone buzzed with a text from my best friend in San Francisco. "I got my monkeypox vaccine bitch." Steamworks out west delivered, and online the California location is pushing out announcements about multiple upcoming clinics.

I understand that different cities and health departments are going to decide on different strategies for tackling any disease. Perhaps Chicago authorities have decided they are only

See **Monkeypox**, page 26

19th HotWorks.org
Orchard Lake Fine Art Show[®]
July 30 & 31, 2022
West Bloomfield, Michigan



www.hotworks.org [Facebook.com/HotWorksArtShows](https://www.facebook.com/HotWorksArtShows) [Instagram @HotWorksArtShows](https://www.instagram.com/HotWorksArtShows)

A. Cesar Nogueira, Sculpture

Juried Fine Art & Fine Craft Show – All Art is Original & Personally Handmade

Voted Top 100 Art Shows in America - \$2,500 Professional Awards!

Event Hours Saturday, 10am-6pm & Sunday 10am-5pm – \$5 Admission; 13 & under free

Plus Raymond James Youth Art Competition for Grades K-8 or Ages 5-13 – \$250 cash awards!

Great food, beer, wine, live entertainment

Powers & Daly Rds, S. of Maple, W. of Orchard Lake Rd ~ free parking in the last back half of the lot behind Beaumont Medical Center, 6900 Orchard Lake Rd



OAKLAND PRESS



DETROIT DESIGN



DETROIT PUBLIC TV



BRING THIS AD FOR \$2 OFF ONE ADMISSION

BTL



Hotter Than July, 27 Years Strong



BY CURTIS LIPSCOMB

Through hard work, determination, support and imagination, Hotter Than July has been a premier event for 27 years. The project is now older than some people I know. Many have shared their talents with the project through discussions,

stories and recollections. An idea that arose in a downtown Detroit one-bedroom apartment at the intersection of John R and Elizabeth Street became Hotter Than July.

HTJ has been operated by three organizations — Detroit Black Gay Pride, Inc., Black Pride Society, and currently LGBT Detroit. Although the members of these various groups had different mission statements and values, the overall focus was on ensuring event/program

efficiency, fiscal responsibility, and community engagement/involvement. These traits ensure longevity in celebrating Black and Brown LGBTQ+ culture in Michigan and midwest America.

Community members and allies give their time and talent annually to make HTJ successful. Celebrations, forums, vigils, services, fairs and other activities are initiated and cultivated by these exceptional content creators. At the end

of a magnificent experience, a beautiful project is unveiled. The core programming makes our Pride unique and different ... it's genuinely for the people, by the people.

HTJ is the world's longest and continuously operated Black LGBTQ+ Pride held in southeast Michigan. I never thought this most important event would be so transformative for me professionally and the many people served.

The COVID-19 pandemic took a toll on



Hotter Than July headliner and LGBT Detroit Executive Director Curtis Lipscomb backstage during the HTJ concert on July 16 at Sound Board at Motor City Casino and Hotel. Photos: Andrew Potter

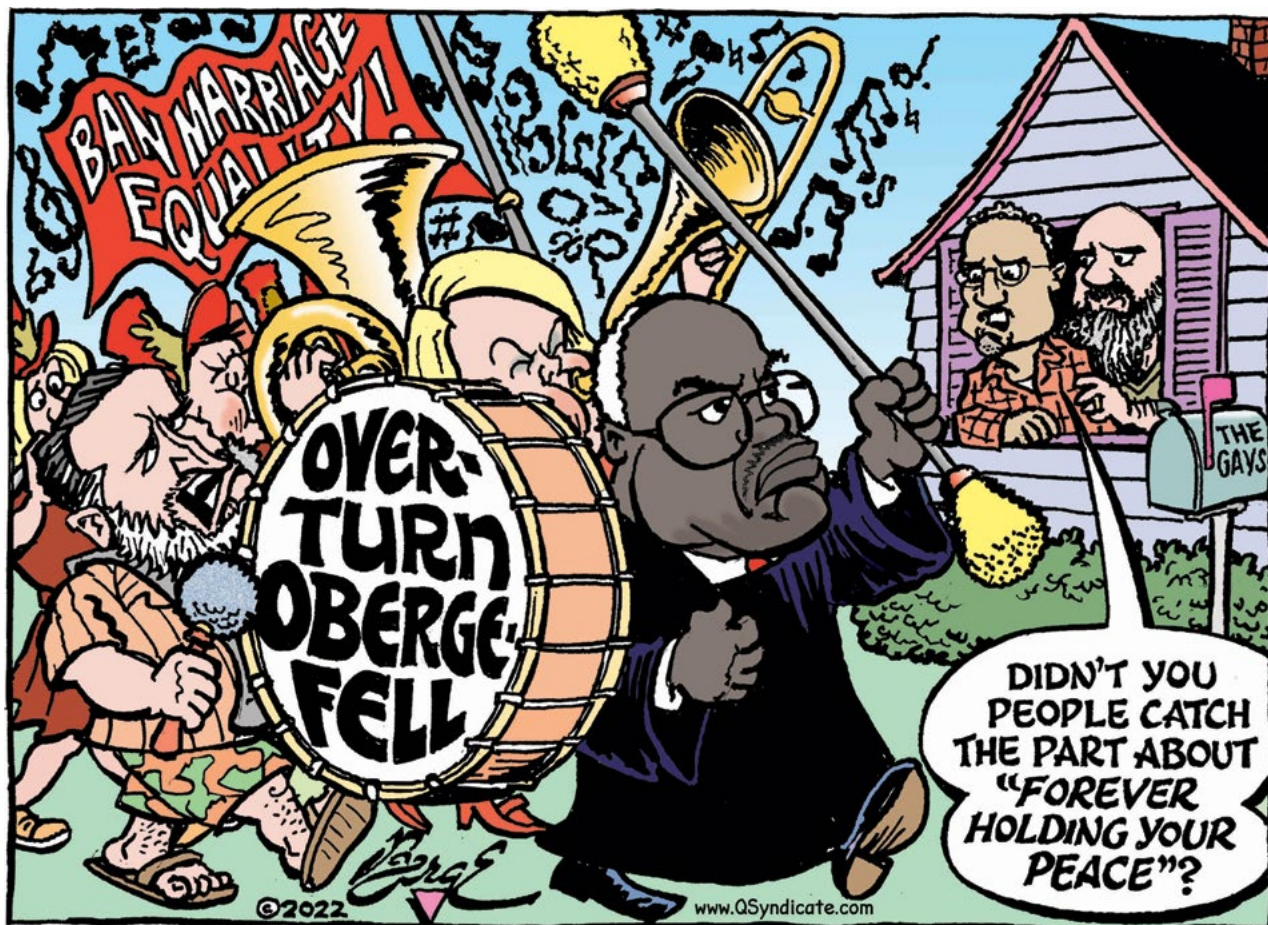
afforded us to operate a virtual Pride. This decision significantly increased outreach and donations while curtailing expenses.

Investments and self-examinations are often actions that must occur both personally and professionally. Last year's assessment focused on the question, "How can we deliver services to our constituents?" Words were heard such as

how we safely engage and express ourselves. Organizers of Black LGBTQ+ Prides were challenged to rethink public gatherings to ensure social distancing requirements and other risk reduction techniques. Some led to cancellations; others went with virtual options. Detroit and Michigan had the highest recorded COVID-19 cases, and our mission was to prevent contractions and potential deaths in any way possible.

I'm proud that our LGBT Detroit Board of Directors agreed to implement safety precautions that

See **Hotter Than July**, page 18



CREEP OF THE WEEK

Ted Cruz Thinks Only People Like Him Should Be the Bosses of Marriage Equality



By **D'Anne Witkowski**

In another episode of "Elections Matter," the U.S. House of Representatives, which has a Democratic majority, voted to protect the marriages of LGBTQ+ people should the Supreme Court overturn Obergefell, the 2015 case that saw marriage equality become the law of the land.

Never mind that this move will go nowhere in the U.S. Senate, which also has a Democratic majority, though not a big enough one to escape the clutches of the filibuster. But at least the House is trying to protect those folks who live in states that would move to invalidate or refuse to recognize their marriages should Obergefell fall. And given the Supreme Court we have, it most certainly could.

And some are eager to see it go. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) said so recently. "I think that decision was clearly wrong when it was decided," Cruz said, according to CNN. "It was the court overreaching."

I, for one, do not think it was wrongly decided. But then, I directly benefited from the ruling. I've said before that in June of 2015, I was sitting in a chair in the chemo ward, poison being pumped into a port in my chest, being treated for breast cancer. My insurance was going to run out in August, and I feared that my treatment would bankrupt my family. The day after the ruling my wife called her HR department and put me on her insurance.

So I'm biased, and surely, something like this should be decided by straight, unbiased cis men who hate me, like Cruz.

"Obergefell, like Roe v. Wade, ignored two centuries of our nation's history," Cruz said,

according to CNN. "Marriage was always an issue that was left to the states."

This is untrue, and one need only to look at the Supreme Court's 1967's Loving v. Virginia ruling, which established that individual states could not bar interracial marriage.

"We saw states before Obergefell, some states were moving to allow gay marriage, other states were moving to allow civil partnerships. There were different standards that the states were adopting," Cruz said, apparently thinking this patchwork method of civil rights was working just fine.

Besides, he said, if a minority group wants civil rights, they just have to convince the majority group that is actively and intentionally oppressing them that they actually are humans deserving of rights. Easy peasy.

"The way the Constitution set up for you to advance that position is to convince your fellow citizens, and if you succeeded in convincing your fellow citizens, then your state would change the laws to reflect those views," Cruz said. "In Obergefell, the court said, 'No, we know better than you guys do, and now every state must, must sanction and permit gay marriage.'

Look, having to beg people to recognize your humanity SUCKS. Putting the civil rights of minorities to a vote is heinous. I remember living in Royal Oak, Michigan in the early 2000s when the city was trying to pass an

LGBTQ-inclusive human rights ordinance. I canvassed door to door in support of the ordinance and heard people basically say repeatedly that I did not or should not exist. The ordinance didn't pass, by the way.

Do you really think that interracial marriage would be legal if it was left up to the white majority in 1967? Hell, would it even pass NOW if put up to a popular vote? The majority of white men AND white women voted for Trump, an avowed racist, and increasingly violent white supremacist groups are grabbing power at all levels of government.

We are seeing the horrors of letting the states decide whether or not women get to have access to reproductive health care now that Roe v. Wade has been struck down. A 10-year-old girl pregnant from rape having to cross state lines to get an abortion. A woman in Wisconsin experiencing miscarriage bleeding for 10 days because the hospital turned her away. Another woman in Texas having to carry a dead fetus for two weeks before she could get the care she needed.

These aren't isolated incidents. This is the America the Christian fascists want. And if that America does not include recognizing the humanity of women and pregnant people, you can bet your ass that there's no room for LGBTQ+ equality.



Is The Debate Around Abortion Rights Transphobic?

Trans and Nonbinary People Sound Off on Language of Today's Fight for Choice

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Although the draft was leaked, many have said when *Roe v. Wade* and 50 years of precedent were unceremoniously thrown out the window, they weren't quite ready for it. And as BTL found, those within the LGBTQ+ community — who, in many ways, exist beyond our culture's idea of who's affected by the right to choose — are grieving alongside so many others. BTL spoke with six LGBTQ+ individuals in Michigan who sit outside the garden variety cisgender, heterosexual, white women norm we usually hear leading the discussion about abortion.

Lilianna Reyes Ebony
Detroit, 36

Lilianna Reyes Ebony told Pride Source if someone says something is going to happen, she's not a person who really believes it until it actually does happen. That's why she said she was "shocked" as well as saddened when *Roe v. Wade* was overturned June 24.

Reyes Ebony, who currently serves as the drop-in center director for the Ruth Ellis Center and is also executive director for the Trans Sistas of Color Project, began her career focused on LGBTQ-centric work at the Planned Parenthood health center in Battle Creek. She said she feels included in the conversation around abortion because "I make myself included."

But, at the same time, she said, "Anytime anyone's personal choice is taken away without regard for very specific nuances, it is an attack on

personal freedom."

The right to choose isn't Reyes Ebony's number one issue, but it's high on her list.

"I think it's important to uplift women of all walks of life," Reyes Ebony said, "and that includes folks who are able to have children. I think that all our civil liberties are interconnected, and so I think it's important that, when one group's civil liberty is attacked, we all rally around it."

Emily Dievendorf
Lansing, 43

Emily Dievendorf, a 2022 candidate for Michigan's 77th State House District, is bisexual and nonbinary. She sounded alarmed by the ruling.

"It was not at all what anybody who is a marginalized person would have wanted to see, of course," Dievendorf

See *Roe*, page 20

It's Official! Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Husband Chasten Become Legal Michiganders

Marriage and Twins Led to the Couple's Move to Chasten's Home State

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, his husband Chasten and the couple's twins are now official Michigan residents. The family resides in Traverse City, Chasten's hometown, and expect to vote there in the fall.

"When I married Chasten, I married into Michigan at some level to begin with," Buttigieg told *The Detroit News* recently. "But it was really the arrival of our children that cemented our relationship to Traverse City."

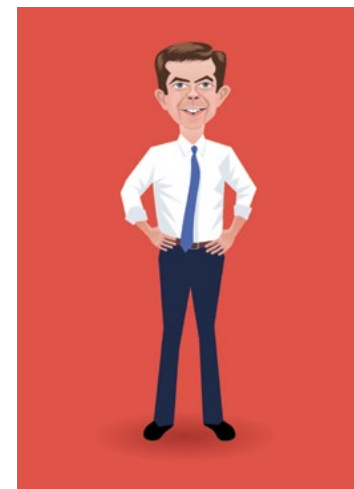
BTL previously reported that the couple bought a vacation home in Traverse City in 2020. Now that home will apparently become the couple's primary residence. They also rent a home in Washington, D.C.

In a statement, a spokesperson for the Department of Transportation said that the relocation to Traverse City will allow the couple to be closer to Chasten's parents, "which became especially important to them after they adopted their twins, often relying on Chasten's parents for help with child care."

Since purchasing their home, the two have frequently been seen around the state, often posting on Instagram from locales like Mission Point Lighthouse in Traverse City, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, and the 60-mile trail the secretary enjoys biking along in the Old Mission Point peninsula. Their move to Michigan only means more Moomer's, the Buttigiegs' favorite ice cream. Last year, a thirst trap of Pete taken right here in Michigan made the rounds on LGBTQ+ websites across the country.

In June, Pete attended the Mackinac Island Policy Conference. There, he appeared with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer at a joint press conference to talk infrastructure

"Michigan is a great place to talk transportation — it's home to many of the world's great car manufacturers and a governor who has been a nation-leader on 'fixing the damn roads,'" Pete said in a joint statement with the governor in advance of his appearance. "As we use President Biden's Bipartisan



Infrastructure Law to modernize America's roads, bridges, rail, ports, and more, we will do so in partnership with leaders in Michigan like those I'm meeting at this conference. Together we are building a transportation system that will drive American economic success for generations."

Pete was one of at least 14 people who tested positive for Covid following the conference. Whitmer, despite the time she spent with the secretary, did not test positive.

Pete previously called South Bend, Indiana, home, where he served as mayor before running for president in 2020. His move to Michigan makes him the second member of President Biden's cabinet with strong Michigan ties. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm is, of course, a former two-term governor of the state.

A pre-workday walk.
 A post-workday
 call to a friend.
 You know you need both.
We're here for it all.



Confidence comes with every card.*



At Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, we're here for you with access to care for both your physical and mental health wherever and whenever you need it. Including online visits from the privacy of your own home. Because we know that good health is whole health.



Ranked #1 in Member Satisfaction Among Commercial Health Plans in Michigan

Learn more at *HereForItAll.com*

For J.D. Power 2022 award information, visit [jdpower.com/awards](https://www.jdpower.com/awards)
 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.



**NO
 CAP!**



**HEALTH
 Department**

**PREVENT HIV WITH
 1 PILL A DAY**



To see if PrEP is right for you:

- Visit 50 E. Canfield, Detroit, MI
- Call (313) 577-9100
- Scan the QR barcode or visit bit.ly/35C7JA8





(Left to right) Jason Veasey, James Jackson, Jr., Jaquel Spivey, L Morgan Lee and Antwain Hopper in "A Strange Loop." Photo: Marc J. Franklin

Black, Gay, Fat: Reshaping Broadway With Landmark Representation

Michael R. Jackson Reflects on His Wildly Successful Broadway Show

BY BRIDGETTE REDMAN

While "A Strange Loop" — celebrated as a "Big, Black, Queer-Ass American Broadway Show" — has some similarities to its creator Michael R. Jackson's life, it's not an autobiography.

The Detroit native has seen his musical win a Pulitzer Prize for Dramatic Literature and a Tony Award for Best Musical in the past two years. He created the story, one in which a Black queer man is writing a musical about a Black queer man writing a musical about...well, you get it. And while, yes, like his character Usher, he is a Black queer man who writes musicals and attended New York University, "A Strange Loop" is a decidedly fictional,

imaginative accomplishment.

It's a work committed to representation. Because while Broadway is gay, it has not been Black, gay and fat.

"I wanted to show somebody who was Black and gay and grappling with something — not like he was going to die, but [that] he had real-life issues that he is dealing with," Jackson says. He wanted to show the journey of a person struggling with his identity who may or may not make it to the other side. Usher wouldn't be killed by the police. He wouldn't die of AIDS. And since Jackson wrote it, he got to make that call.

What Usher does have are thoughts that people wouldn't normally say aloud. It's why the background actors

on stage portray the voices — often highly critical — in his head. Sometimes they mock him for being a race traitor, sometimes they tell him his work needs to be more intersectional so white allies have something to hold on to. Meanwhile, as he tries to date more, he laments that the gay community rejects him for being too Black, too feminine, too fat and possessing too small of a dick.

"A Strange Loop," as if it weren't already apparent, is not a show that

holds back.

"I wanted somebody Black who was not totally in the mainstream of thought, who was being very honest and candid about where he's coming from," Jackson says. "I never got to see that sort of representation. I wanted to just be really solid in expression and thought and feeling [in portraying] a Black character and



Michael R. Jackson. Photo: Beowulf Sheehan

a Black, gay character."

The goal was always to introduce someone to audiences that they've

never seen in quite this way on Broadway.

"I don't think there's ever been a fat, Black character who you had to really follow and track their life and their existence through a whole play or musical before," Jackson says. "They are usually the side characters or there for comedy. I think it's important for people to see different kinds of bodies on stage."

While representation was important, so was creating a multi-dimensional individual with a singular story. Jackson wasn't trying to make Usher stand for everyone who is Black, queer and fat, so, for instance, song lyrics explore paths Usher took that were different from others who identify in a similar way to him.

"There's this emphasis on all Blackness being sort of monolithic," Jackson says. "I understand the value in that, but I'm also interested in the value of a Black individual who stands apart in some way, who you have to focus on and see things from his perspective."

Jackson grew up in Detroit, something he says has influenced both who he is as a person and his work. It has grounded him in what he calls a humble, Midwestern, middle-class background. Jackson attended Golightly Educational Center and Cass Tech where he was on the debate team. He and his family attended First Glory Baptist Missionary Church, which is where he said he first fell in love with music and singing.

"Detroit, to me, is not a city that's highfalutin," Jackson says. "It's a real-person city. That aspect of it is definitely a part of who I am and what I do as an artist because I'm very much interested in real life. The people of Detroit are very real, they're very authentic."

Jackson describes himself as being thankful that he is from Detroit because of the foundation it gave him — and he said he is always rooting for the city. Though there are currently no plans for "A Strange Loop" to play in Detroit, Jackson is "very curious" to know how those in the city will receive the work once it comes through town.

Jackson left Detroit for New York when he was 18, at the time eager to leave for a more cultural landscape, something he says he has since grown out of. Now, he says, he has a renewed appreciation for his hometown.

Jackson spent nearly a decade working on "A Strange Loop," and in the years since it premiered off-Broadway in 2019, he's been featured in such publications as *The New Yorker*, *Variety* and *Town & Country*. He and

See **Michael R. Jackson**, page 24

CLEAN NEEDLES SAVE LIVES.

Support, Not Stigma.

OCHD-HarmReduction@oakgov.com • 248-858-1729



#OCHarmReduction
#OCSyringeServices

Supporting the Community Since Before it was Cool.

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



Sandi & Linda
www.trilliumrealtors.com

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



NOW HIRING Senior Accountant

Troy CPA firm is looking to hire a senior accountant with at least three years public accounting experience preparing tax returns and financial statements.

Competitive salary, health insurance, 401(k) plan and flexible hours.
Please call Jeff Ellis: (248) 643-4545.



NOW HIRING Tax Manager

Troy CPA firm is looking to hire a senior tax manager with at least six years public accounting experience preparing and reviewing tax returns and financial statements.

Competitive salary, health insurance, 401(k) plan and flexible hours.
Please call Jeff Ellis (248) 643-4545.



Why Sherry Whitmer Came Out

Governor's Daughter Explains How Roe Was the Reason

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Still reeling from the June 24 Supreme Court decision striking down a woman's right to govern her own body, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and her daughters sat down with a Washington Post reporter July 9 to discuss the potential societal and personal fallout from that decision. All three women lamented the loss of a woman's right to choose and, of particular note to BTL readers, daughter Sherry, 20, came out as a lesbian.

On the day the Supreme Court ruling came down, Gov. Whitmer appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court to quickly determine that the state's constitution allows for a woman's right to choose. If the court disagrees, the state's draconian 1931 outlawing abortion will take effect.

This decades-old law does not, as all three Whitmers, including daughter Sydney, 18, know, make exception in cases of rape or incest. It does contain a provision granting an exception to "preserve the life" of the mother. To what end, experts are still debating.

Under the law, having an abortion would be a felony. Doctors who perform abortions and those receiving them could face up to four years in prison. Even worse, analysts say, people who use medication for self-abortions could also be charged under the law.

It all touches a little close to home for Gov. Whitmer. It was nearly a decade ago when the then state rep shared that she had been raped as a freshman at Michigan State University in 1989. The revelation came amid a heated exchange in the legislature over limits on abortion rights in the state.

Despite her sexual orientation, Sherry said she planned to start taking birth control pills. "To be fair, I was hesitant because I am gay," she told reporter Ruby Gramer while sitting with her mom and sister on the front porch of the governor's state-owned home on Mackinac Island, adding that the risk of unwanted pregnancy "is not a thing that's on my mind all the time."

But times are changing and without the right to abortion should she need one, Sherry said she sees it as a necessary precaution. "I live on a college campus," she said. "There are people out there who would force me into conceiving.



Courtesy of Whitmer campaign.

It's a scary thought, but I've made the decision."

The Washington Post interview marks the first time Sherry has publicly come out on her own, though her mother announced last month at Ferndale Pride that she had a daughter who was a part of the LGBTQ+ community. The governor went a step further at a private brunch for LGBTQ+ supporters following the Motor City Pride parade where she told the crowd that her "eldest daughter" was a lesbian.

Whitmer has long been a supporter of LGBTQ+ rights. In an interview with BTL at last year's Motor City Pride, the governor shared that she first became an ally to the LGBTQ+ community when she found out another member of her family is gay.

"It was a gay cousin who a lot of people in the family weren't quite sure how to reach, what to do," Whitmer told BTL. "It was seeing that that really made me feel like I've got to be a proactive ally, not just one that wishes others well. I want to be a part of making it better."

Gov. Whitmer also told the Post that she had made peace with the fact that should abortion become illegal in Michigan, and should the Supreme Court overturn marriage equality, which according to a 2004 state constitutional amendment would immediately make it illegal in Michigan, her daughters might settle outside the state.

"I want to be here with you," said Sherry to her mom. "I would really be sad if I couldn't. If I would have to make that choice."

If she did, the governor said she would understand. "As a parent — not as a governor — I would encourage them to go where they can live their fullest, truest lives."



NEED HELP WITH HIV SERVICES?

LINK-UP OAKLAND CAN HELP

248.858.5416

OakGov.com/Health | @PUBLICHEALTHOC

OAKLAND COUNTY
MICHIGAN
HEALTH DIVISION
DAVID COULTER
OAKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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



HTJ's first-ever concert was sold out. Photos by Andrew Potter

→ Hotter Than July

Continued from page 11

“Leveling Up,” “Something Different,” and “Increasing Nightlife Activities.” HTJ delivered on those requests, and the participation was well received.

HTJ took a significant risk and examined how we could increase the visibility of LGBT+ people and this part of American residency. Every year, donors ask, “How can you improve on what you’ve done?” That request has always pondered the following year’s planning.

Thoughts and ideas seem to gel around the possibilities. This year a new activity was created. A risk was taken. The Hotter Than July Concert held at Sound Board at MotorCity Casino and Hotel, with rap legend and reality star Da Brat as the headliner, was a sold-out success.

This and our anchored activities such as our Candlelight Vigil, Endorsed Candidate Forum, Testing Zone at Palmer Park, Art Show, Worship Service and Sunday Brunch had tied together a reflection of the community from many points of view. Da Brat highlighted a financial commitment and promised elevation

of what it is to live in intersections. A historic moment was powerfully made by headlining an all-Black female cast — Dames Brown and Deidre “DS Sense” Smith.

Led by Jerron Totten, the planning committee who created this year’s stellar event is predominantly young, LGBTQ+, gifted, and Black and Brown. This energetic and epic group of people has proven to not only manage and develop the most invested project to date but also has the strength, stamina and imagination to push it forward.

To ensure success and sustainability, HTJ requires an increasing need for capacity. We

have a small group of folks to operate this event, but it is not enough. The project is community-driven and needs time and talent commitments from everyone to make a continued investment — including “unhealthy critics,” “wallflowers” and “unbelievers.”

One of my favorite pearls of wisdom is, “Don’t talk about it; act on it. Don’t say what’s wrong; show what’s right. Don’t promise what you can’t deliver.” HTJ documents past successes and uses these opportunities to learn. Reflecting on the most massive and meaningful project I have ever led, I’m elated with what has been achieved. Its future is bright and abundant.



MCC Detroit's 50th Church Anniversary Party & Praise Celebration

Join us for our
50th Anniversary Garden Party
Saturday, September 17th, 4pm - 10pm
Motor City Eagles, 24401 Five Mile Rd, Redford Township
\$40 ticket includes dinner, dancing,
and a silent auction

Tickets available for purchase at
www.mccdetroit.com or before & after service.

and join us for worship Sundays at 11am
at Affirmations featuring guest preachers:



September 11th
Rev. Kevin Kinsel
Old Catholic
Church International



September 18th
Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson,
Former Moderator
of UFMCC
& MCC Detroit



September 25th
Rev. Elder Carolyn
Mobley Bowie
Breath of Life
Spiritual Center



October 3rd
Rev. Deana Dudley
MCC Toronto

**"AN ELECTRIFYING,
THRILL-A-MINUTE NEW MUSICAL."**

PETER MARKS, THE WASHINGTON POST

ain't too proud

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE TEMPTATIONS



PHOTO: SAINT

AUGUST 9-28 • DETROIT OPERA HOUSE
BroadwayInDetroit.com | 800-982-2787 | Fisher Box Office

Groups (10+) broadwayindetroitgroups@theambassadors.com (subject: Ain't Too Proud) OC - August 14 - 7:30PM



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

EXPOSED TO HIV?

nPEP can prevent HIV if given within

72 hrs.



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



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



Your Personal Advocate



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

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



Michigan's Largest Real Estate Company



Where queer and kinky people can be, and find themselves

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

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



(248) 399-7447
 Royal Oak | crsh.com

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H | A | I | L | S | L | I | M | J | E | N | A | | | |
| E | D | N | A | H | A | D | A | S | E | L | E | S | | |
| M | A | T | T | D | A | M | O | N | I | R | I | S | H | |
| I | G | O | E | M | I | L | E | L | E | A | S | E | | |
| N | E | W | S | M | A | N | A | H | E | M | | | | |
| | | | H | O | N | G | T | I | N | Y | T | I | M | |
| R | E | H | A | B | T | E | R | T | I | A | R | I | A | R |
| U | S | E | R | L | O | R | R | E | R | O | A | R | | |
| P | A | S | O | L | I | N | I | B | O | S | S | A | | |
| P | I | A | N | I | S | T | P | L | A | N | | | | |
| | | S | E | T | H | R | U | S | S | I | A | N | | |
| B | E | E | T | S | E | L | I | T | E | N | C | O | | |
| A | L | L | O | T | J | U | D | I | D | E | N | C | H | |
| R | H | I | N | O | O | R | E | S | N | E | R | O | | |
| R | I | S | E | B | E | S | T | D | R | A | W | | | |

Gay Antagonists of the Screen

→ Roe

Continued from page 12

said, “both because of what could come and also because of how it can and will immediately impact those of us who are already needing to access sexual health resources [and] reproductive rights resources right now. And as somebody who has had an abortion in the past, is an LGBT rights activist, it was devastating and is a clear sign of the power of the Court and the harm the Court can do when it has its own agenda.”

Dievendorf said she only recently decided to publicly disclose, on a campaign video, that she had had an abortion.

As a community activist, Dievendorf is keenly aware that LGBTQ+ people have historically been left out or forgotten when considering reproductive rights.

“I don’t think that LGBT people are usually included,” Dievendorf said. “I think that the conversation is getting better. I think that Planned Parenthood is very good these days at mentioning how important reproductive rights are to LGBT people and sexual health is to everybody. And Planned Parenthood has always been essential to LGBT people, has always been a safe haven to us. So Planned Parenthood as an organization being under attack is a problem for LGBT folks, but talking about abortion as a cis issue has always been a problem.”

Yet Dievendorf is not only concerned with the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. When she attended the first Women’s March, she was touched that her mother made her a pink “pussy hat” and she believes in its intent to show solidarity, “but I also think that it is essential that we recognize that so many identities and different bodies are both creating families and choosing not to, and need the right to abortion,” she said.

Jey’nce Poindexter

Clinton Township, 38

Jey’nce Poindexter is acutely aware of the need for reproductive justice for the Black community. She called the Roe decision “bone chilling” and “gut wrenching.” She pointed out that it also affects the LGBTQ+ community in that there are many individuals who can, and want to, form families.

As she unpacked the ruling, Poindexter called out Justice Clarence Thomas.

“He made it very clear,” Poindexter began, “that he has intention to revisit LGBTQ protections, particularly relating to same-sex marriages and also same-sex consensual sex in the home or behind closed doors. And so not only are they literally attacking rights and liberties, but they’re also whistle calling and letting us know that [the LGBTQ+ community is] next. And so it was very concerning. It still is.”



(Clockwise, left to right) Lilianna Reyes Ebony, Jey’nce Poindexter, Alexandra Beninda, Emme Zanotti, Percy Brown and Emily Dievendorf.

Referring to the Reproductive Freedom For All ballot initiative, Poindexter said, “Of course I signed the petition.”

As a sister, aunt and cousin, Poindexter said she has a vested interest in protecting the reproductive rights of her family members. She also has friends, neighbors and other members of the LGBTQ+ community that she’s looking out for.

“Let’s be very clear,” she said. “When you think about infant mortality, mothers dying in childbirth, all of that negatively impacts and affects, historically, women of color and particularly Black women. And so my mom is a Black woman, my sisters, my nieces, my cousins — and so therein lies my interest and my vantage point from their lived experiences.”

While Poindexter speaks freely and passionately about reproductive justice for all, as someone who is not a white, cisgender heterosexual woman, and as someone who does not always feel included in the discussion, she believes what’s vital is that we take action.

“There is not a lot of inclusion,” Poindexter said plainly. “I’ll be really honest. But also there’s so much work to be done that now is not the time to, ‘Oh, what about us? What about us?’ It is time for all hands on deck, organizing, mobilizing.”

Alexandra Beninda

Hazel Park, 67

Alexandra Beninda remembers the early days of the reproductive rights movement in the ’60s and early ’70s. Today, Beninda said, “I identify fully as a woman,” but back in those days, she legally identified as male. “However, I always felt that laws designed to target what a human being could do or not do was up to the individual person, not politicians.”

Beninda added that she feels included in the abortion discussion.

“It would be quite impossible for me to get

pregnant, whether it is my lack of a uterus or the fact that I am now 67 years old,” Beninda said, though she added that can empathize with any woman not having the right to decide for themselves. She believes the decision should be made “with the assistance from their doctor, such a critical issue as the right to carry a fetus to birth or not.”

Beninda is just one of many women today who lived to see abortion legalized in 1973, only for the decision to be overturned last month. Although she said she was prepared for the ruling because of the leak, and while knowing that all along SCOTUS had planned to reverse 50 years of precedent, “I had to hang my head over this news and whatever might be next such as same-sex marriage, which is still quite possible,” she said.

Percy Brown

Clinton Township, 22

Percy Brown is a young transgender man who said it was hard to go to work the day he learned that Roe v. Wade had been overturned. He was terrified and remains on edge.

“I’m scared, and I’m on hormonal birth control,” Brown said, “and I’m terrified that’s gonna get challenged next. But I’m doing everything in my power so that it doesn’t get challenged, and so that everyone can access the healthcare they need.” At the same time, he’s afraid that if something were to happen accidentally, he would be too afraid to seek out medical help.

Within his social circles, Brown feels part of the discussion on reproductive health. In general, he sees things improving.

“People have definitely been better about being aware that it’s not just women who can get pregnant and need access to abortion, which is nice,” Brown said. “It wasn’t intentional, but it was more transphobic in the past. But it’s gotten a lot better.”

What’s been especially important to Brown right now is having a supportive

partner, though his partner is not directly affected by the Roe decision.

“They’ve been super supportive in maintaining safety during intimacy,” Brown said about his partner. “But also still giving me peace of mind: We can still get a procedure done if we need to. It’s not illegal yet in Michigan? And they’re also reminding me to take care of myself.”

Emme Zanotti

Royal Oak, 33

When the Roe decision was announced, community activist Emme Zanotti said her reaction was somewhere between shock and being shocked at how shocked she was.

Like other members of the LGBTQ+ community, Zanotti, who is also vice chair of the Michigan Democratic Party’s LGBT & Allies Caucus, was particularly struck by Clarence Thomas’ opinion about re-litigating other SCOTUS precedents that could affect the civil liberties of the LGBTQ+ community.

Zanotti considers the modern reproductive justice movement more inclusive of trans, queer and nonbinary folks prior to the Dobbs decision, because they, along with activists from communities of color and other progressive activists, had been fighting collectively for civil liberties for a long time. However, things changed.

“That space has quickly become a space full of a lot more cisgender, hetero, white women,” Zanotti said. “Inherently, it’s not a bad thing to have to share space with more folks, but I do think there needs to be more intentionality from this group of folks who have sat on the sideline for a long duration of time, and I think they need to be more inclusive in their approach.”

As a woman without a uterus, and therefore unable to bear children, Zanotti said that doesn’t figure into why “choice” is an important issue to her. She said she knows what it’s like to have limitations or societal expectations forced upon her body and she knows what it’s like to feel she doesn’t have autonomy over her body. Trans women, trans men, nonbinary folks bring an element of diversity to the table when discussing abortion, said Zanotti, echoing many others.

What’s most concerning for Zanotti, though, is that those who have the least amount of privilege will be hit the hardest: the queer community, communities of color, lower income communities and any intersection of those communities.

Zanotti said she doesn’t wish to shame or guilt cisgender, heterosexual white women. Instead, she is issuing a call to action.

“I say these things and offer this as a plea from my community to a different community,” Zanotti said. “I think there’s a real high potential here that we actually have an opportunity to make something good out of what has been a disastrous situation.”



Your trusted source for
LAB GROWN DIAMONDS



FEEL CONFIDENT SHOWING YOUR LOVE AND
COMMITMENT WITH OUR LARGE SELECTION OF SUPERIOR QUALITY
AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SAFE LAB GROWN DIAMONDS.

Value

MORE AFFORDABLE THAN
NATURAL DIAMONDS OF
SAME COLOR AND QUALITY

Quality

SAME FIRE AND BRILLIANCE
AS NATURAL DIAMONDS.
ALL LABORATORY GRADED

Sustainability

KNOWN ORIGIN AND
GUARANTEED CONFLICT FREE.
ETHICALLY SOURCED



ASTREIN'S

248.644.1651 • 120 WEST MAPLE • DOWNTOWN BIRMINGHAM
ASTREINS.COM • WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY 10:00 TO 4:30 OR BY APPOINTMENT

ALLEGRIA VILLAGE

Formerly Henry Ford Village

Introducing new Age 55+ apartment lifestyle and pricing option!



Included in our new rental price option:

TOP-NOTCH AMENITIES

- Fitness Center
- All-Season Swimming Pool
- Bocce Ball Court
- 9 Hole Putting Green
- Comerica Bank
- Convenience Store
- Library
- Climate-Controlled Walkways

PEACE OF MIND

- SAGECare Platinum Certified Community
- 24/7 Security
- Onsite Medical Center

AFFORDABILITY

- Monthly Leases & Affordable Rents
- Rents starting at \$1,500
- Utilities Included (excluding phone and cable)
- Wi-Fi Included
- No Buy-Ins or Entrance Fees



Schedule a tour and see for yourself. | 15101 Ford Rd., Dearborn, MI, 48126
call 313-584-1000. | allegriavillage.com



Photo courtesy of Noah Arbit

Not Just Gay, Not Just Jewish

Michigan State Rep. Candidate Noah Arbit on How His Identity Guides His Democratic Values

BY JON KING

Noah Arbit, who is seeking the Democratic nomination to represent Michigan's 20th State House District, may be gay and Jewish, but he says he's much more than that.

Not that Arbit isn't fiercely proud of being both. In fact, he said the Hebrew phrase "tzedek, tzedek tirdof," a passage from Deuteronomy that means "justice, justice shall you pursue," is in many ways what guides him.

"My identity is incredibly important to me," Arbit told BTL. "It's also incredibly important to my community. I am running in the most Jewish district in Michigan. I think that's really important.

It's also important to me to be a force multiplier in terms of the already stellar representation that we have for the LGBTQ+ community."

The newly drawn district, which includes West Bloomfield, eastern Commerce Township, Orchard Lake, Keego Harbor and Sylvan Lake, has been represented by Republicans for the last 20 years, something Arbit hopes to see change in 2022.

If elected, the 26-year-old Arbit would also be the youngest-ever LGBTQ+ person elected to the state legislature (Toni Mua, 25, a transgender woman, is also running as a state representative). However, he's managed to establish a sizable resume of accomplishments that go well beyond his sexual identity or religious affiliation.

He cut his teeth in politics working on Hillary Clinton's campaign in 2016 and then served as a staffer on Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's 2018 campaign. Whitmer, he said, is "genuine. She's strong, but she's also kind, and that's the kind of leader that I believe in." He was also director of communications for Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald.

Following the October 2018 Tree of Life Synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, the deadliest attack on the Jewish

community inside the U.S., Arbit founded the Michigan Democratic Jewish Caucus, which seeks to combat the rising tide of antisemitism and elevate Jewish voices within the Michigan Democratic Party.

In fact, Arbit said the two most disorienting days of his life were the Pittsburgh shooting and the 2016 Pulse Nightclub massacre in Orlando.

"To feel that as I walk through this world as a gay Jewish man, that there is a target on my back for a lot of different reasons, is something that, especially now with the Supreme Court being the way it is, feels vulnerable for me," said Arbit.

Arbit said the recent decision to overturn Roe v. Wade has made it clearer than ever that all of our rights are interconnected.

"If we're not fighting for women's rights, then we can't fight for gay rights," said Arbit. "If we're not fighting for gay rights, then we can't fight for the rights of Black kids. All of these things are so connected. And I think my number one criticism of the Democratic Party is that one day we're talking about abortion, the next day we're talking about guns and the next day we're talking about gays. The fact is that we have to do a much better job

See **Noah Arbit**, page 28

www.PrideSource.com



Project RISE: **Reducing Substance Use Disorders and HIV by Increasing Support and Engagement**



Groups: Trauma Recovery Empowerment Model (TREM), Whole Health Action Management (WHAM), Seeking Safety, Smoking Cessation, Anger Management

Services: Substance Use Disorder Services, Individual & Group Therapy Sessions, Case Management Services, Peer Support Services, Free HIV & Hepatitis C Testing, Free Hepatitis A & B Vaccinations, HIV Prevention Services, Primary Medical Care

Who Qualifies For The Program:

Individuals seeking help for substance use and mental illness, and who identify as: African American and Latino Men who have Sex with Men (MSM), Bisexual men, African American heterosexual females and males, Transgender males and females. However, AWBS will not deny anyone services.

Project RISE is a program of All Well Being Services



1423 Field St, Detroit MI 48214 | 313-825-2416 | mpratt@awbs.org | www.awbs.org

BRINGING WELLNESS TO LIFE

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

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



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

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

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

Contact the HIV Supportive Services Program

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



→ Michael R. Jackson

Continued from page 14

the off-Broadway cast performed a "Tiny Desk (Home)" concert on NPR, and he's done the late-night circuit. While the pandemic delayed the show's Broadway debut until 2022, people have been eager to share with him what the show has meant.

"The most gratifying stories for me are the many people who have come up to me and told me that they felt seen or affirmed," Jackson says. "There was a gentleman who came up to me and told me he had a hard time with his family accepting him as gay and that he invited some of his family members to the show, and the show started a dialogue in their family."

Now that "A Strange Loop" has launched, Jackson's invested time in working on another musical that is currently being workshopped. He is also prepping for another production, a project he's written that goes back to his childhood love — soap operas, Lifetime movies and melodrama. The show, called "White Girl in Danger" is, according to Playbill, a musical that follows a young woman, Keesha, living in the "Blackground" of a town called Allwhite who wants to become Allwhite's leading heroine. She does so by appropriating the storylines of her three main rivals: Meagan, Maegan and Megan. Her newfound power puts her in danger, however, when she attracts the Allwhite Killer.

"When I first moved to New York, my dream

was to be a soap-opera writer," says Jackson, who had a 12-week marketing internship at ABC for "All My Children" and then interviewed for a job at CBS Daytime while applying to the graduate musical theater writing program at NYU. "If I had gotten the soap-opera job, I wouldn't be writing musicals today."

And his parents, who still live in Detroit, couldn't be any happier about the direction his life has taken. He said they loved the show and were proud of the show he had created.

"[People] assume when they see the show that I must have this tortured relationship with my parents or that my parents are bad people," Jackson says. "That just isn't true. I tell that to people, and sometimes they sound like they're disappointed. My parents were at opening night of both the off-Broadway and Broadway versions of my show. They came to the Tonys with me. Things are working with my mom and dad."

They had "some questions about some parts of it, or they wondered if parts of it were about them," Jackson says, "but they also saw that it was a piece of fiction."

He added that, by the end of the production, "They were really quite proud."

As for those awards: It's hard to compare with the excitement of winning both a Pulitzer and a Tony. The first came as a total surprise, while the second he was able to anticipate because nominations are made public.

"They were different kinds of excitement," he says. "One was like Christmas, and the other was like hoping for a snow day."



Crown Pharmacy

Specializing in providing world class HIV pharmaceutical care



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



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



Low Cost Pet Prescriptions

CultureVerse

Here's to the creators & keepers of art, culture, and knowledge.

CultureVerse provides technology, training, consultation, and other resources in order to create equitable and sustainable opportunities for artists, educators, students, and preservationists.

LEARN MORE AT WWW.CULTUREVERSE.ORG
BACKGROUND IMAGE: ARTWORK BY MIKE HAN



ADULT TOYS
JJ MALIBU
ANDREW CHRISTIAN
LATEX FETISHWEAR
NOIR T-SHIRTS
CHAPS & LEATHERS
VINTAGE CLOTHES
PRIDE MERCH

shenanigans @ Noir Leather!

JULY 12TH
RIGGER ALYSSA JADE & RIGGER ATREYU
DIRTY TWISTER & MORE

AUG 13TH
ROYAL OAK PRIDE!
PERFORMANCE BY **SECOND SALEM**
RIGGER FLYNN
STREET DOMS & MORE



124 W 4TH ST ROYAL OAK 248-541-3979
WEDS-THURS 12-9 FRI 12-10 SAT 12-11 SUN MON 12-8 CLOSED TUES
MOBILE: JOA IG: @MILKNECOSMETICS STYLING: VIV GARNALL PHOTO: SEAN GARNALL

**GET A \$50
VISA GIFT CARD**

WWW.CHAGDETROIT.ORG

**ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES DETROIT. WHEN
YOU GET VACCINATED, YOU GET PAID.**

COVID
ends here

**GET YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE
OR BOOSTER – AT CHAG OR
ANYWHERE IN THE COMMUNI-
TY – AND GET A \$50 VISA
GIFT CARD.**

Ages 16 and up. Individuals are not
eligible if they have been vaccinated
prior to the last 30 days.



Call 313-963-3434

**HIV and STI Testing
Primary Care and Treatment
PrEP Clinical Services
Support Groups
Case Management**



CHAG
COMMUNITY HEALTH AWARENESS GROUP

This COVID Ends Here project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$1,000,000 with 0 percentage financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit HRSA.gov

**1300 W. FORT ST.
DETROIT 48226**



SCAN ME



at *Hodges*...



PRD-15 **CROSSTREK**

Special Order Your
Special Edition



This year, sharing the love is more important than ever. Over the last 15 years, through the Subaru Share the Love Event, Subaru of America Inc. and its participating retailers have donated more than \$200 million to charity, with customers choosing between four national charities and over 1,610 hometown charities. In this, our 14th year, we are

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

21205 Woodward Ave • Ferndale • MI • 48220
248.547.8800 • www.hodgessubaru.com
HOURS: **MONDAY** - 9:00A.M. - 7:00P.M.
TUESDAY - FRIDAY - 9:00A.M. - 6:00P.M.
SATURDAY - 10:00A.M. - 2:00P.M.

EVERYDAY!

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

*Model code: PRD-15 only. \$1,000 down payment. \$0 security deposit. 1st month payment due at lease signing. 36 month/10K miles per year. 15 cents every mile thereafter. Tax, title, and license fees not included. Subject to full credit approval through Subaru Motors Finance.

→ Monkeypox

Continued from page 8

going to vaccinate people who they know were exposed through contact tracing. But why the solo pop-up clinic at Steamworks? That created buzz on social media and the expectation that there will be more, similar events.

Health authorities in every state across the country, including Michigan where monkeypox was recently diagnosed in an LGBTQ+ patient, must provide clear, authoritative information yesterday about plans to vaccinate. Tell us when, tell us where, tell us priorities. Set expectations. Otherwise you are opening the door to the clusterfuck that is currently going on in Chicago, where everyone seems to have heard a different rumor about where and when you might be lucky enough to be vaccinated.

This disease is spreading like wildfire. Although the CDC is reporting over 1,800 diagnosed cases in the U.S. (at the time this was published, anyway), the truth is that we are testing almost nobody for the disease. With reports out of Belgium recently that the disease can be asymptomatic and still transmissible, American health authorities' complete failure to ramp up testing is especially alarming. It is extremely likely that the actual number of cases right now is much higher.

I don't blame the gays on Twitter spreading faulty information or Steamworks in Chicago, really. I put the blame squarely where it belongs: on health authorities. They hold the power

to stop this disease in its tracks. And they knew it was coming: reports about its global spread started in May, well in advance of global LGBTQ+ Pride celebrations.

As it was for so many epidemics before this one, it seems like queer men are left holding the bag to fend for ourselves. And to be clear, nearly everyone contracting monkeypox right now is gay, bisexual, or a man who has sex with men (MSM). A recent report out of England showed that 151 out of 152 of the men interviewed with the disease were MSM. That doesn't mean that the disease is "gay" or even that it is sexually transmitted — it means that the disease is spreading rapidly through our sexual networks.

What can we do as queer men to protect ourselves while health authorities are out to lunch? I found one compilation of vaccine clinic reports from various U.S. cities compiled by a Twitter gay (nothing, as of July 19, on Detroit or any other Michigan cities).

So get vaccinated, if you can. Raise hell on Twitter if you can't. If you're sexually active, maintain vigilance when it comes to you and your partner's (or partners') body. Unexplained zit? Watch it closely. If it looks unusual or is in a place you don't usually see sores like that, call your doctor. Get tested if you can.

Trevor Hoppe, PhD, is the author of the Lambda Award-winning book, "Punishing Disease: HIV and the Criminalization of Sickness." He is assistant professor of sociology at UNC Greensboro where he teaches about law, social control, and sexuality.



Norton's
FLOWERS & GIFTS

Delivering Amazing Quality
since 1892.

800-862-8667 | www.nortonsflowers.com
We Deliver the **WOW!**



LOCATIONS IN YPSILANTI & ANN ARBOR

MASCO CORPORATION PROUDLY PRESENTS AFFIRMATIONS'

Big Bash 2022
(FINALLY) TOGETHER AGAIN



Tickets on Sale Now

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2022 | 7:30 PM - THE DEARBORN INN

TICKETS/INFO: GoAffirmations.org/bigbash
QUESTIONS: info@goaffirmations.org or 248-398-7105



All Are Welcome.



THIS IS A **SAFER** PLACE

We are committed to provide quality health care and to serve our patients without regard to race, nationality, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, political preferences, or sexual orientation.

It is our intention not to discriminate, be judgmental, or have bias towards anyone. These are not simply published words, but are practices we strive and train for to do our best each and every day. We must all be respectful and put our commonalities first. **Our priority is your good health.**

We are here to help you and want each and every one of our patrons to feel comfortable in our patient-centered medical home. It is this essence of equality that defines who we are. Please join us in this endeavor.

- Most Insurances accepted
- **HIV Prevention** (PrEP), Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), STI testing & treatment
- **Hormone Affirming Therapy** for HIV positive and negative transgender individuals
- **Evening Clinic Hours** Monday-Thursday, most Saturdays, and **Same Day Appointments**
- **Plus:** Ryan White Provider, Medcart Pharmacy on Premises, Tele-Medical Visits, Covid 19 testing and treatments

New Locations Meet Community Needs

Be Well Medical Center is proud to partner with Wellness Services of Flint and CHAG:

Living Well Medical Clinic of Flint 810-257-3131
311 E. Court Street, Flint, MI 48502 • www.wellnessaids.org

Community Health Awareness Group (CHAG)

Living Well Clinic of Detroit 313-963-3434
1300 W. Fort Street, Detroit, MI 48226 • www.chagdetroit.org

Dr. Paul Benson's

Be Well
Medical Center

1964 Eleven Mile Rd
Berkley, MI 40872

(248) 544-9300
doctorbewell.com



3 DAYS OF LGBTQ BUSINESS SUCCESS
NEARLY 2,000 ATTENDEES FROM AROUND THE WORLD
400+ INCLUSIVE CORPORATIONS EAGER TO MEET YOU
OUTSTANDING KEYNOTE SPEAKERS & SURPRISE GUESTS
INCREDIBLE NETWORKING & BIZ DEV
THE BEST BUSINESS DECISION YOU WILL MAKE ALL YEAR

VISIT NGLCC.ORG/NGLCC22 TO LEARN MORE



→ Noah Arbit

Continued from page 22

of telling a story to voters.”

The story that Arbit believes needs to be told is one that he said is grounded in reality, not one exclusively about any single issue.

“It’s not about guns,” he said. “It’s not about gay people. It’s not about any of this. It is about one thing: This is a shared project of the radical right, which wants one thing, and one thing only. They want the foundation of our laws to emanate from a 2,000-year-old book. They want, basically, to institute theocracy in this country. That is what they want, and I think we have to share that story and not be afraid of sharing it.”

Arbit said he is in a good position to tell that story because whether the assault is on abortion rights or gay rights, it’s an attack on his religious freedom, noting that Jewish law stipulates that abortion is not only permissible but required in certain circumstances.

“It’s freedom of religion and from religion,” Arbit said, although he was quick to add he is not anti-faith.

“I believe that faith is something that grounds so many people,” he added. “It impacts how they move through life and navigate through this world, and it’s just sort of the foundation of their existence. For me, it provides a foundation for my service and my desire to be involved in advocacy.”

Arbit believes that the combination of faith and politics has had a bad rap, especially on the left, because of the way Republicans use faith in politics as a cudgel against other people.

“What I am trying to do is put a new face on faith and politics, and try to get people to see, especially Democrats and progressives, that if we’re not speaking to people of faith, then we’re leaving a large piece of our coalition out of the picture that could be with us on so many things,” he said.

While advocacy is an essential part of his character, Arbit said providing critically needed representation to marginalized groups is equally important. He notes that he didn’t come out as gay until February of 2021, just months before he made the decision to run for office.

“As difficult as I had it, gay kids and trans kids now have an entire political party that is basically telling them that they don’t belong and that they don’t deserve to exist, and they should be ostracized and marginalized,” said Arbit. “I think being a candidate has actually helped me affirm my LGBT identity because I don’t really have the luxury to just be a quiet gay candidate.”

Arbit said the Republican candidate he anticipates will win the August primary, Diana Mohyi, is giving voice to the very hate he is determined to stand against.

“Her top issue is defending women’s sports from extinction at the hands of transgender youth,” he said. “That’s exactly how she puts it, in those words, and I think that is just unconscionable. These sort of attacks on a vulnerable, already marginalized community



are just reprehensible.” (When asked to comment in her own words, Mohyi told BTL that, “It is important for biological women to have fair opportunities to compete in sports so that they can earn scholarship and use sports as a vehicle to get out of poverty. Requiring biological women to compete against biological men fails to ensure that.”)

Arbit said his pursuit of justice was also informed by the fact that when he was barely 18 years old, he testified against a sexual predator who had assaulted him and others.

“I kept thinking, looking at the jury and looking at their faces, ‘What if they knew I was gay?’” he said. “Then maybe they would give the defense argument that it was consensual more credibility. I always think about that because, even if you’re not gay, everyone knows what it’s like to have their identity be in some way a vulnerability for them.”

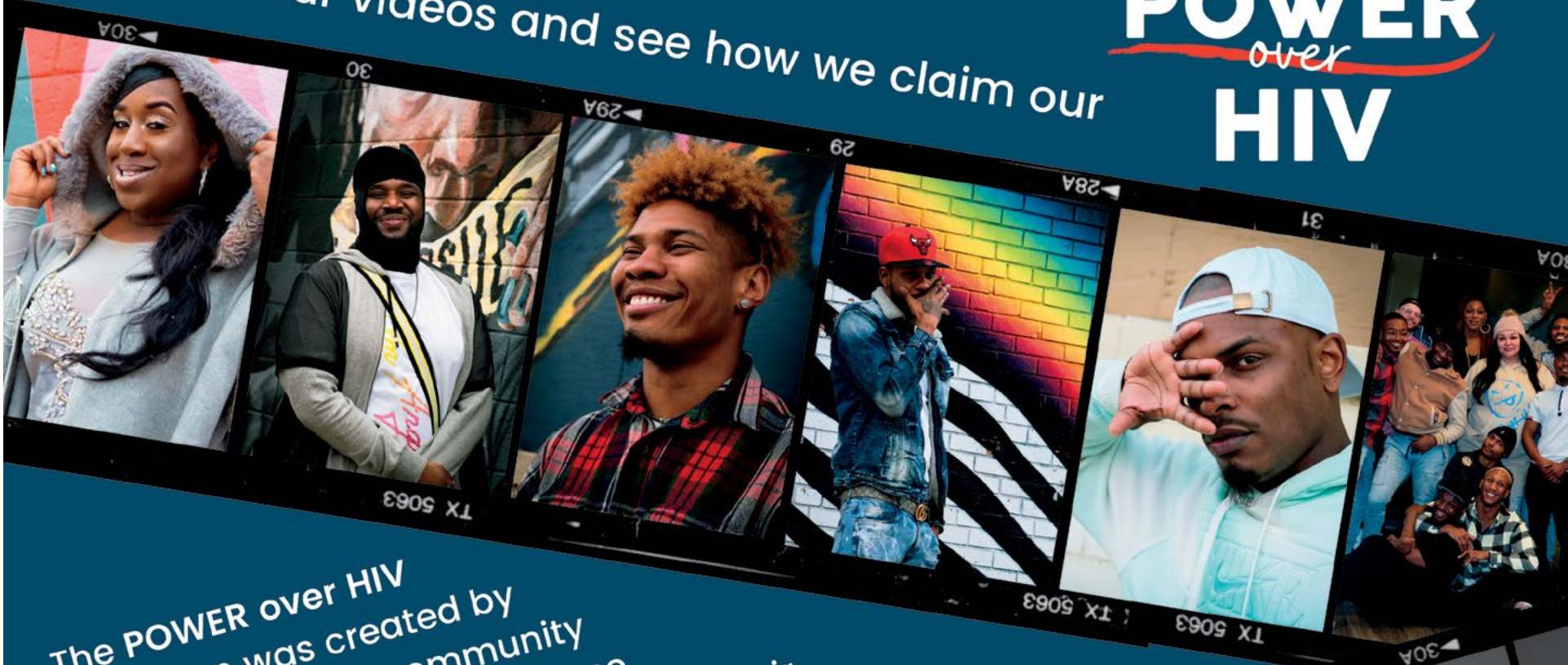
Arbit said that while he didn’t recognize it at the time, that experience is really what propelled him into politics. The experience required him to advocate for himself, but also to help make sure the perpetrator couldn’t hurt other people in the community. “I’m exactly, right here right now, where I’m supposed to be,” he said.

“And I think that’s what I need to be doing. It’s not about what we build. It’s about the lives we touch and making sure that my efforts are trained on how I can help others and how I can be of service to others and how I can be part of pursuing justice in my own community.”

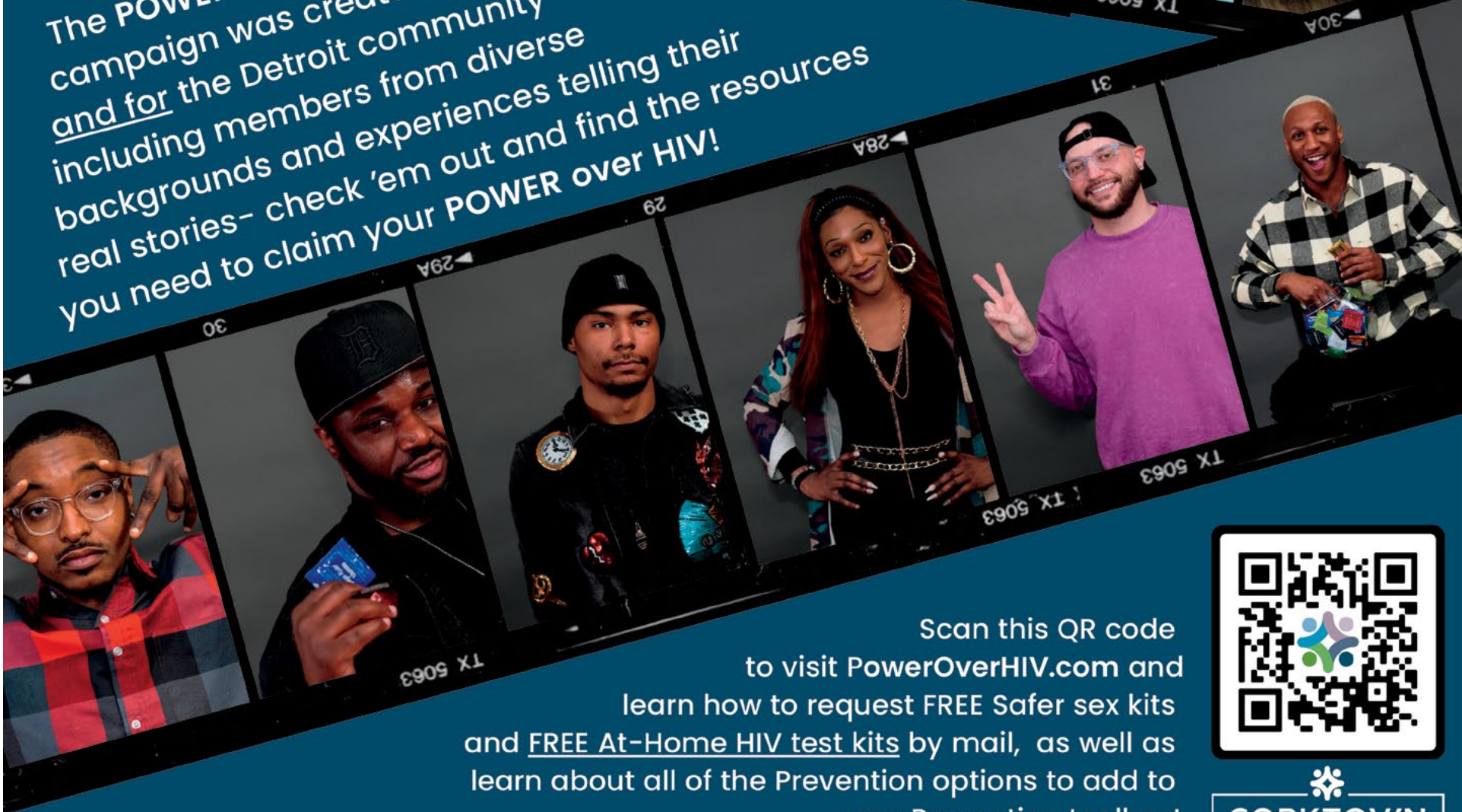
Learn more about Arbit’s campaign at noahformi.com. Early voting has begun. Election Day is Aug. 2.

Watch our videos and see how we claim our

POWER *over* HIV



The **POWER** over HIV campaign was created by and for the Detroit community including members from diverse backgrounds and experiences telling their real stories- check 'em out and find the resources you need to claim your **POWER** over HIV!



Scan this QR code to visit PowerOverHIV.com and learn how to request **FREE** Safer sex kits and **FREE** At-Home HIV test kits by mail, as well as learn about all of the Prevention options to add to your Prevention toolbox!



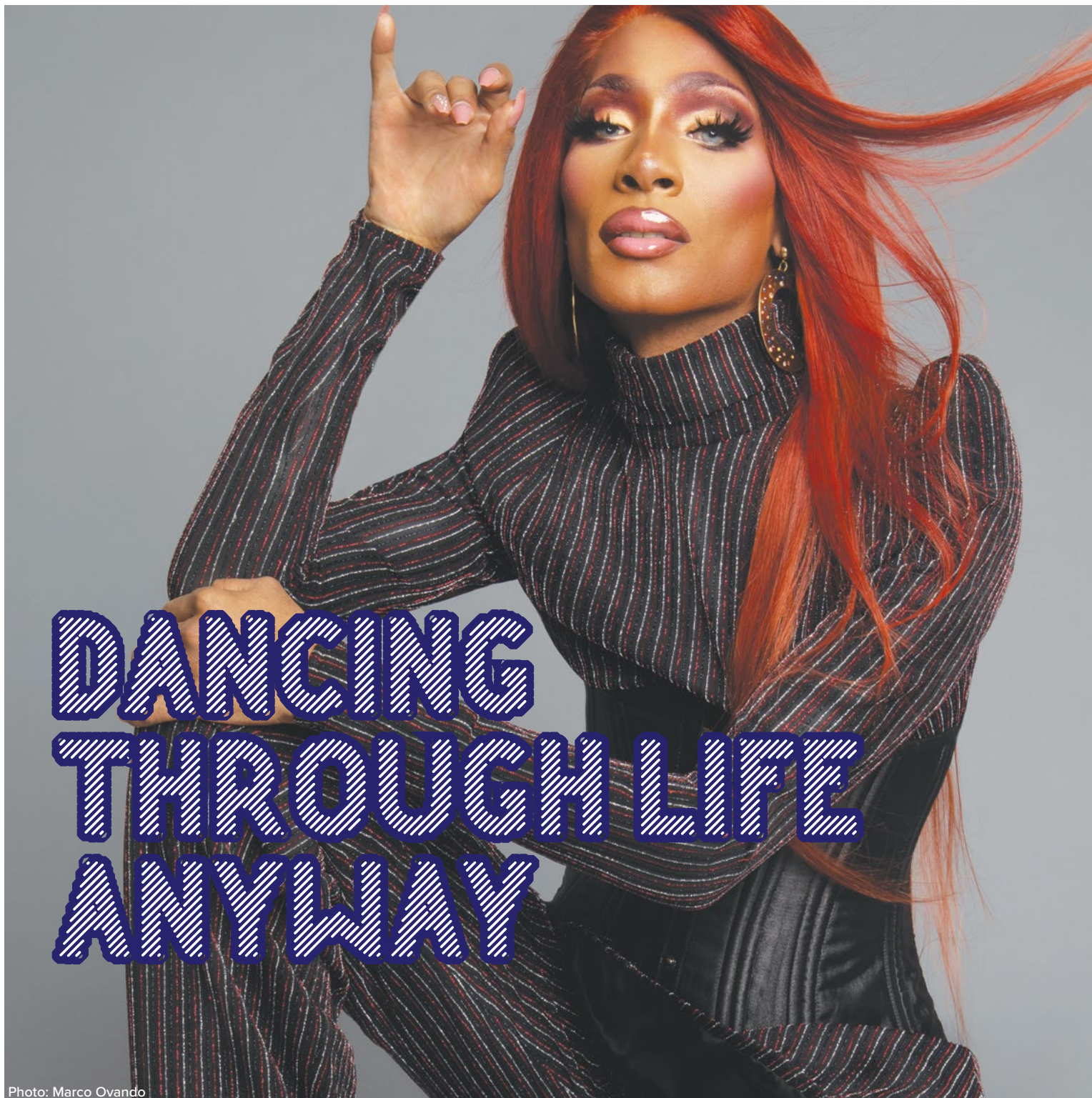


Photo: Marco Ovando

DANCING THROUGH LIFE ANYWAY

Jaida Essence Hall Thinks She Might Finally Experience Detroit Thanks to Werq the World Tour

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

When Jaida Essence Hall gets to Michigan for the Werq the World tour, which stops July 31 at the Michigan Lottery Amphitheatre in Sterling Heights, her visit will mark the first time she's been anywhere in the state outside Detroit Metro Airport.

"I can finally touch down and actually touch down," says Hall, who won "RuPaul's Drag Race" Season 12

and has been killing it on "All Stars." The Milwaukee native called just as she was joining the tour, which brings together a troupe of queens for the official "RuPaul's Drag Race" show July 30 at the Michigan Lottery Amphitheater in Sterling Heights. Those girls, all contestants on the show, include Daya Betty, Angeria Paris VanMicheals, Vanessa Vanjie Mateo, Kameron Michaels, Rosé, Jorgeous and Asia O'Hara.

And while it might be Hall's

longest visit to Detroit, it's unlikely you'll see her working the dance floor at Menjo's. As you might imagine, the tour's Covid precautions are strict — or "very cute," as she puts it. (No clubbing, for instance.) But, even though she just joined and has only experienced rehearsal, the tour has "already been the best time."

Here, Hall talks about learning confidence from trans women, inspiring Black queer youth, and how she's ready to win on a real,

non-virtual stage.

What would you like to explore while you're in Detroit?

Motown, for sure.

The Motown Museum, maybe?

Yeah, of course! I think that would be so iconic, especially considering there's this really cute Diana Ross tribute on the "RuPaul" runway recently, a Diana Ross tribute. So I feel like that would be so fun to go

and see where all the magic started.

When we land in a city, most often we try to make sure we force ourselves to get up and go out and explore the city and see everything that's there and just have a good time and try to take in as much as we can. But even then, I always feel like when we have to [do a] meet and greet, we have opportunities to talk to people from the city. I feel like that's the best way to know a city, [rather] than just to see the buildings. The people are the insight to what's happening in the city, and if the city is good or not.

Are all the girls traveling by bus?

Today will be the first day we get to board. We got to go run and pick out our bunks.

Where's yours?

My bunk, thus far, is at the top in the back. We kind of had to rush it, but I'm super glad for the bunk that I have because, you know, I love a top bunk. [Laughs.]

So are these bedazzled bunks?

They're actually just standard, almost like a fluffy cot. It's a fluffy cot situation.

How did you end up joining the tour?

I was asked to be part of the tour. And so I'm just glad that I get to live my dream every day. I think when I first started drag, it was when I first heard of Werq the World, and the tour is so amazing. To be able to travel the world and [for] so many people to see what you can do and where your skillset is — I've always just dreamed for that to happen. I worked with Boss Events [when] we did this Pride Castle event during the pandemic where we had to go to this remote castle and take five billion Covid tests so we could be around each other. It was this weird experience, but I rolled through that, and then we kind of fell into doing the Drive 'N Drag shows. We were doing shows where people had to drive in cars just so that we were working and people were also able to still get entertainment.

Is it wild to think that so much of your triumphs, from your win in Season 12 and now, with this tour, have all been within the span of a global pandemic?

All within the span of one pandemic! But back in the day they had the bubonic plague and that lasted for, I don't know, I'm not a scientist, but I think maybe a hundred years. And

if they could do it, so can I.

When you think back on your Season 12 win, what was it like to take the crown virtually during the beginning of the pandemic?

It was weird because it's a lot to do: shut the laptop and then sit there and look crazy. Everything happens for a reason, and maybe the reason I didn't win on a big stage and I had to win from my home during Season 12 is because I'm supposed to win on a big stage now.

It seems there's some time travel happening in this show. What's your role in all of that?

Asia is trying to get back to season 10 so that she can finally win her season. [Laughs.] And as she's traveling, she's finding herself in a lot of trouble, and she just stops throughout time. For each different time period that the machine stops at, we all do something different. For me, I'm this spy from the '60s gone rogue. It's so fun to do these things that I've imagined in my head that get to play out on stage.

What's next for you after the tour?

Right now I'm excited for potentially more television work. I'm also very excited to continue to work with my podcast with my Season 12 castmate, Heidi [N Closet], to see where the podcast goes and how it grows from this point.

I recall you acknowledging that transgender women were the women who helped you become Jaida. What's the most important thing you learned from trans women?

I feel one of the main things that I learned from trans women is how to be confident in who you are because, oftentimes for trans women, people have opinions about them, and they look at them and they judge them. Every single day, no matter where they are in transition, even if they have hard days, you might not always be able to see it, [but] they walk with such pride in who they are, in the way that they live their lives. So sometimes when I'm on the runway and I'm walking with this confidence, it's that same air that I picked up from them.

Gun violence, Black people killed by police, the pandemic we're still living through — what's your motivation for getting on stage through it all?

The world is oftentimes an ugly place and not everything that happens in the world is going to be a good thing, but it's important for us to remember that you still have to live. And as much as you have to be an activist and you

have to make sure that you're using your voice to speak about those things, you still have certain people that, every day of our lives, this is the craziness of the world that they live in. We literally cannot live our lives every single day afraid, and you still kind of have to move forward.

Right now, we don't really know politically, what is the answer to fix [this]? We kind of know what the answer is, but we can't change it ourselves. But what we can do is speak about what we don't want to see in the world. And then we have to live our lives to the best [of our] ability because literally, in these times, we really never know if it could be our last day.

I'm thinking about all the young, Black LGBTQ+ kids who have watched you and been inspired by what you do. How you normalize queer people of



color being able to triumph in this world that so often wants to hold them back. What does that mean to you knowing that? Do you have young queer Black kids who tell you this?

Yeah, sometimes I do "Drag Race" shows, and anytime that I do see people of color at the shows, I always want to tell them, "Thank you for supporting us at the show." But then specifically, often they say they see themselves in me. It makes me super emotional because when I was growing up, I always wished that there was somebody that I could look at and see myself in, and to be that person for somebody else is just the most beautiful thing in the world.



The Tiny Wedding at Cornman farms

Beautifully Designed | Expertly Planned | Affordably Priced
thetinywedding.com | July 2022

ZINGERMAN'S
Cornman farms

Dexter, MI | 734.819.8100 | www.shop.zingermanscornmanfarms.com
Photo by Marina Goldt

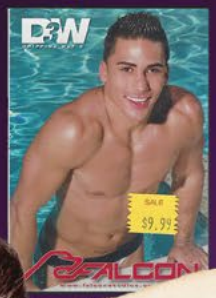
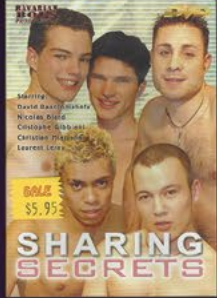


THE FINEST IN ADULT ENTERTAINMENT AT THE BEST PRICES!

BUY
ADULT DVD'S
STARTING AT
\$5.95

UPTOWN SPECIAL
XXX DVD'S
3/\$9.99
WHILE THEY LAST
MAY 26TH -
MAY 30TH 2021

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



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

UPTOWN
BOOKSTORES
ADULT VIDEO
2 LOCATIONS
WWW.UPTOWNADULT.COM

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

16401 W. 8 Mile
Between Greenfield & Southfield
Detroit
313.836.0647

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

MIUNIFIED.ORG

Sexual Health Screenings

STI TESTING
HIV TESTING
SUPPORT SERVICES

UNIFIED
hiv health and beyond
LIFE CONTINUES. LIVE HEALTHY.

Access Care and
Prevention Services.
Start at MIUNIFIED.ORG



MICHIGAN HIV/STD HOTLINE
800-872-2437

Find Additional Sexual
Health Resources.

ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVE AND GET PROTECTED!

COVID-19 Vaccinations and Testing at

AFFIRMATIONS
LGBTQ+ Community Center

All Are Welcome.

08/03/2022 (10AM-2PM) – Vaccinations/Testing

PLEASE NOTE: Vaccines for children under
5 years old will be available at this event.

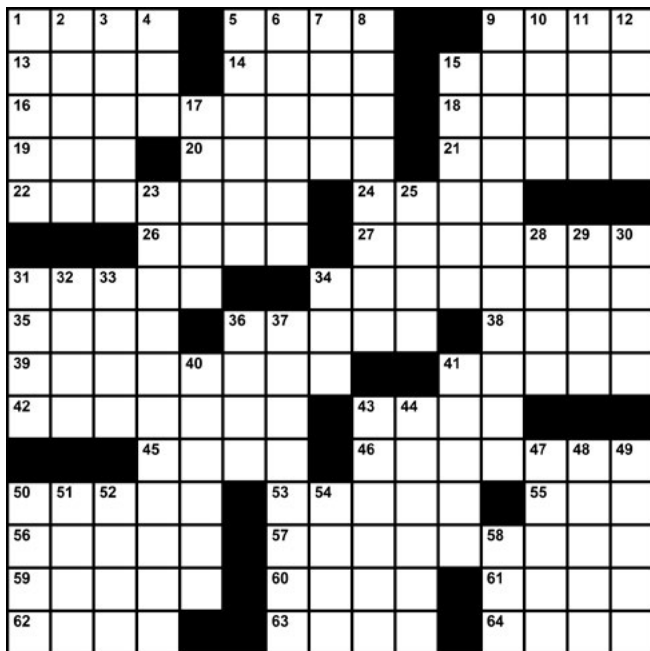
Provided though cooperation with:



WAYNE
HEALTH



SCAN
TO
REGISTER



- 34 Third in rank
 35 Friendly opening
 36 Peter of "The Maltese Falcon"
 38 Jungle warning
 39 "Mamma Roma" director
 41 "Blame It on the ___ Nova"
 42 Peter Nero, for one
 43 Figure out in your head
 45 Green of "Buffy" fame
 46 Tchaikovsky or Nureyev
 50 Sugar sources
 53 Creme de la creme
 55 Gomer's Sgt. Carter, for one
 56 Mete out
 57 She played a lesbian high school teacher in "Notes on a Scandal"
 59 Sometime label of Dusty Springfield
 60 Unrefined metals
 61 Educator Charles
 62 Distance from crotch to waist
 63 Vidal's "The ___ Man"
 64 Pull out your shooter
- 10 Kazan, whose desire was a streetcar
 11 Untouchable head
 12 Tennis stadium in Queens
 15 Etheridge's "___ Legacy"
 17 Discharge gay soldiers, e.g.
 23 She played a bisexual serial killer in "Basic Instinct"
 25 Put on the staff
 28 New Mexico art colony
 29 Gershwin with a nest egg?
 30 Vidal's Breckinridge
 31 Kentucky arena namesake
 32 Morales of "La Bamba"
 33 "___ Lady" (cross-dressers' show of old)
 34 Cycle beginning
 36 Santa's got a long one
 37 At work
 40 Misleads with the tongue
 41 Headquartered
 43 Groups in "The Lion King"
 44 Musician of old
 47 Boyd's "Gay Priest: an ___ Journey"
 48 Capital of Ghana
 49 Gomer's not at all
 50 Roseanne, before and after Tom Arnold
 51 K-12
 52 David Hyde Pierce and peers
 54 Seduce
 58 Top or bottom

Gay Antagonists of the Screen Q Puzzle

Across

- 1 Word with Mary
 5 Like a Muscle Mary who works out
 9 Malone of "Life as a House"
 13 First name among lesbian poets
 14 "If I Only ___ Brain"
 15 She beat Navratilova in the '91 US Open finals
 16 He played the title role in "The

- Talented Mr. Ripley"
 18 Like Emma Donoghue
 19 Parting words, old style
 20 Nellie-lover in "South Pacific"
 21 Rent
 22 Ted Casablanca, for one
 24 "Beg pardon ..."
 26 ___ Kong
 27 Poorly endowed Dickens character?
 31 Go straight

Down

- 1 Cut off from escape
 2 "Rainbows Reign!" e.g.
 3 Coming up behind
 4 Caesar's lang.
 5 Medicine man
 6 Causing a limp
 7 Madonna, to many gays
 8 Hall & Oates song about a fellator?
 9 He did the voice of Scar in "The Lion King"

See p. 20 for answers

Prism of Possibilities Psychotherapy

Christine Cantrell, PhD Fully Licensed Psychologist



Give yourself an extreme self makeover ...

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

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

CALL NOW! 248-591-2888

AT RISK FOR HIV?

Once a day PrEP
 can reduce your risk.

248-858-5416
oakgov.com/HIV



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

Did you know over 600 Michigan residents test positive for HIV every year? Matrix Human Services operates one of the largest HIV Prevention and Treatment programs in the city of Detroit, providing a full range of services to those in need.



GET YOUR FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL HIV TEST TODAY



Anonymous Testing | At-Home Test Kits | Free Condoms and Lube | PrEP + PEP Services



877-931-3248



TimeToKnowDetroit.org



Individualized Health Education + Peer Support

TESTING POSITIVE FOR STDs CAN MEAN A HIGHER RISK OF HIV. WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU WERE TESTED? PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS WITH A FREE HIV TEST.

FRESH LOOK FOR FRESH FLOWER

SAY HELLO TO NEW STRAIN-SPECIFIC BAGS WITH MORE PERSONALITY AND LESS PACKAGING.



TerrapinCareStation.com

@InstaTerrapin

AURORA | BOULDER | DENVER | LONGMONT

Performances By:



RuPaul's Drag DJ
Honey Davenport



Jazz, Pop, R&B
Ben Sharkey



Pop, Soul Husbands
One Up Duo



Disco Icon
Donna Summer Tribute



Metro Detroit
Drag Showcase



Direct from Market Days
Hello Weekend

...and so much more!



More Info @
RoyalOakPride.com



Film, Stage, Dance Icon
Deborah Cox



Stage Screen Author & Drag Superstar
Nina West

ROYAL OAK PRIDE

August 12-13

Brought to you by:
Beaumont

Royal Oak DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

pronto!
-LOUNGE & SHOWBAR-



Tanqueray

SMIRNOFF

ROCKET
PRINTING & SUPPLIES • TRAINING
ONE STOP OFFICE

MIAMI'S LEGENDARY NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993
BTL
Between Lines

OP OUT POST

OUR CREDIT UNION

WAVE 15

MOTOR CITY CASINO HOTEL

HORNITOS

METRA! MAGAZINE

JIM BEAM

TRULY HARD SELTZER

CHANNEL 955
DETROIT'S #1 RHYTHM STATION

HYATT PLACE

GENISYS CREDIT UNION

360-event productions

guitar iii-fi
INSTRUMENTS • ACCESSORIES • EQUIPMENT

OAK HOUSE DELI