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*The 2022*

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**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, D'Anne Witkowski, Jon King, Gwendolyn Ann Smith, Dana Rudolph, Tim Retzlöff, John Besche, Eve Kucharski

**CREATIVE**

**Cartoonists**

Paul Berg

**Graphic Designer**

Sarah Wolf

**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  
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# 5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now-ish

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

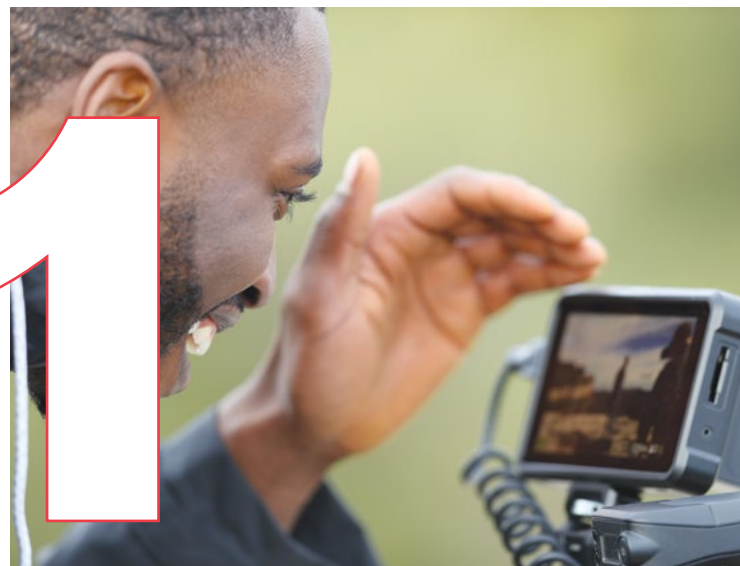
Summer might be (unofficially) over, but you know what that means: cardigans! Take a break from participating in the annual battle between Those Who Love Pumpkin Spice and Those Who Are Probably Secret Communist Spies and get to Detroit for a Black film fest or a visit to a unique creator space. It's also a great time to take in some indoor shows, including relative newcomers Sweet Petunia, a queer duo who will visit Ann Arbor later this month.

## Attend the Detroit Black Film Fest

Among the varied offerings at the third annual Detroit Black Film Fest is "The Woodstock of House," a documentary that explores the development of house music, which, in the '70s, the film's description reads, was "too Black, too Latin and too gay." The film focuses on gay nightclub Chicago DJs, deemed the Chosen Few, who helped foster the genre into what it is today — a touchstone for queer communities around the globe.

The fest features 7-10 minute films put together by Black creators across wide-ranging genres: narrative, documentary, web series, animation, student films, poetry and photography.

Sept. 21-25 at the Charles H. Wright African American Museum, the Marlene Boll Theater and The Motown Museum, all in Detroit. Learn more at [filmfreeway.com/DetroitBlackFilmFestival](http://filmfreeway.com/DetroitBlackFilmFestival).



## Create Your Hearts Out, Ladies

The Room Project is where collaboration meets creativity. A space designated for women, non-binary and trans writers and artists, the Room Project is set up to support an intersectional approach to creation. Members are asked to engage with one another in a supportive community that invites seasoned creators as well as those "whose ambitions are still evolving," according to the Room Project website.

Room Project is located at 6513 Woodward Ave. in Detroit. Learn more at [roomproject.org](http://roomproject.org).



## Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Detroit's First Pride

Last year, Michigan LGBTQ+ historian Tim Retzloff and Ypsilanti artist Isabel Clare Paul created the comic "Come Out! In Detroit," which documents the first-ever Pride celebration (the Christopher Street March) in Detroit. July marked the event's 50th anniversary. Now through Sept. 11, visit the Detroit Historical Museum for a special summer exhibition highlighting the layout, design and content of the comic. You can even pick up a free copy while you're there.

Learn more about the comic at [comeoutindetroit.com](http://comeoutindetroit.com) and visit [detroithistorical.org](http://detroithistorical.org) for details about visiting the exhibit.



### Buy Demi Lovato Tickets

If it seems like it's challenging to keep up with Demi Lovato's pronouns, it's because the pop sensation has used a few over the past couple of years. It's part of why Lovato is so relatable to her queer fans — she's always been open about figuring it all out as she goes, publicly embracing her sexual and gender fluidity. As she told Pride Source in 2017, "I love who I love."

These days, the artist prefers she/her pronouns, and we can't wait to see her take the stage Oct. 7 at the Fox Theatre in downtown Detroit when she brings her "Holy Fvck Tour" to town.

Buy tickets now at [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com).



### Catch a Queer Folk Duo at the Blind Pig

What, exactly, is a "queer freak folk duo"? It turns out, it's a spot-on self-description for the band Sweet Petunia, set to perform Sept. 20 at Ann Arbor's fabled Blind Pig. Vocalist and guitarist Mairead Guy pairs up with vocalist and ukulele player Madison Simpson to produce tight, harmonic melodies that showcase two voices you won't soon forget. Somehow, they manage to pull off both punk and folk without skipping a beat.

Check out Sweet Petunia on Bandcamp to get a taste — don't miss "Tiny Boxes," where the duo exorcises bigots while maintaining syrupy sweet vocals and asks "How was I supposed to care/When all the rules were so unfair? If a loud girl will be labeled a bitch/Then I'm a bitch and I'm proud of it!"

Listen to Sweet Petunia at [sweetpetunia.bandcamp.com](https://www.sweetpetunia.bandcamp.com) and buy tickets at [blindpigmusic.com](https://www.blindpigmusic.com).

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

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U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI13) marched with the NetxGen group in the 2019 Motor City Pride Parade in Detroit. TJ Rogers from Freedom House marched behind her advocating for asylum seekers. Photo: Andrew Cohen

# When Is a Church Not a Church?

Family Research Council Calls Self ‘Church.’ This Michigan Rep Obviously Calls Bullsh\*t.

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

In an outrageous move that strains credulity — and just plain common sense — the Family Research Council (FRC) has obtained “church” status with the IRS.

Specifically, they claim to be an “association of churches,” a category often used by organizations with member churches like the Southern Baptist Convention. In a nutshell, this means less oversight involving the financial dealings of the far-right think tank, designated a hate group by the

Southern Poverty Law Center. To be sure, with its anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-reproductive rights agenda, this is one “family” that’s hell-bent on keeping its secrets.

“A number of my colleagues became aware when groups like Family Research Council reclassified themselves as a church, even though they don’t have religious service or a congregation,” said Rashida Tlaib, who, along with about 40 other Congressional Democrats, signed a letter directed to the IRS and the Treasury Secretary asking them to

review the tax-exempt status of FRC and other prominent conservative groups that have been classifying themselves as churches.

While the practice dates back to 2020, only recently have government officials taken notice. A minimum number of specific criteria must be met to earn the “church” label and the FRC has clearly bent the rules beyond recognition. The FRC is not alone engaging in this sleight of hand.

Tlaib said they became “aware and alarmed” that not only do these groups have less oversight, but as churches,

they are tax-exempt. She pointed out that based on its church status, an organization is not required to file a Form 990, which details salaries of key staff members, among other things. There is no requirement to disclose information about donors. Further, the IRS audits churches less frequently than other entities.

“It was really important for us to make the IRS aware, but also to take a deeper dive into investigating whether or not they should be considered a so-called church just because they classify themselves as such,” Tlaib said. At the

same time, she said, the letter makes clear they understand the importance of religious institutions.

“Religious freedom is a cherished American value,” emphasized Tlaib. “However, our tax laws cannot be used to target our LGBTQ neighbors or to promote very divisive and hateful rhetoric and to hide behind these tax laws. It really does exploit our current laws and avoids accountability in a way that I think the general public would definitely not be in support of.”

See [Family Research Council](#), page 26

# Why Our First NLGJA Award Means So Much

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Just before an important panel at the NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ Journalists convention focused on telling stories related to the transgender community, I was incredibly proud to watch one of our star reporters, Ellen Shanna Knoppow, walk up to the stage to accept this year's NLGJA award for Excellence in Transgender Coverage for her well-deserving story, "How Two Detroit Ballroom Godmothers Made Sure VICE Got the Whole Story About Murdered Trans Woman Kelly Stough."

While honoring Ellen, Bethany Grace Howe, an at-large director at NLGJA, noted that this year's awards submissions included more trans-focused entries than ever before. For ours to be honored among the many submissions is, for myself and my team, a big coup, certainly. It's something that, as editorial director, I am very proud of. But more than that, I was and am heartened to know other media of every kind, from queer niche to mainstream giants, are also amplifying the voices of our underserved transgender population.

In early 2021, when I entered my

new role as editorial director at Pride Source, I didn't just want our media company to meet the moment in covering populations within our LGBTQ+ community that I think have gone neglected for too long, but to go beyond.

I wanted Pride Source and Between The Lines to cover the transgender community, especially transgender people of color, with noticeable intent, from reporting on human rights issues affecting the trans community to showcasing, simply, trans people living their daily lives, be it Toni Mui, the first openly trans woman of color to run for state legislature in Michigan, or Brian Michael Smith, the first Black trans man to be a series regular on TV.

My reasons were many, but particularly so that young trans kids could see themselves reflected in our pages. I wanted that because, when I was a gay kid, I saw myself in these pages too. And while I'm glad that NLGJA noticed, my hope is that mainstream media is noticing as well. LGBTQ+ media, after all, have historically led the way on reporting on issues affecting our community.

Of note is that the NLGJA award marks the first time ever, in its nearly

30-year run as a media outlet, that Pride Source Media Group, owners of Between The Lines, has received an award from the esteemed organization. Though it was my aim to prioritize trans stories as soon as I had the opportunity to oversee all of our editorial content at Pride Source, winning this award — and alongside major outlets such as The New York Times, USA Today and The Los Angeles Times — was never a perceived outcome during the first year of my leadership at Pride Source.

I'm honored to have even the slightest hand in Ellen's powerful and now award-winning story, from idea to conception, as an editor, along with the sharp edits of our assistant editor, Sarah Bricker Hunt. Ellen's story is rooted in the very humanity in which I want our team to continue to tell these vital stories of trans lives.

It's just one of many ways I believe Pride Source, through continuing to tell your impactful stories and documenting our history, can continue to make considerable change for a community I love and care about.



(Top) Pride Source Editorial Director Chris Azzopardi with Pride Source veteran reporter Ellen Shanna Knoppow at the NLGJA convention at The Drake in Chicago. (Left) Bethany Grace Howe, an at-large director at NLGJA, presenting Knoppow with the award.

# The Queen Is Dead — Now Please Kill the Monarchy



Queen Elizabeth II. Photo: public domain, via Washington Blade

BY KEVIN NAFF

Most of us respected, even revered, Queen Elizabeth II for her 70 years of service to her country, from World War II to the Cold War and 9/11, right through to Covid and the war in Ukraine.

Her death at 96 comes as the world seems to be falling apart, from climate change to war to growing nationalism and authoritarianism around the globe. Her staid tenure as queen was marked by stoic resolve, love of country, checked emotions and quiet determination that were sometimes

mistaken for coldness. What a contrast to today's toxic politics of crude insults, knee-jerk social media commentary and emotional public outbursts.

There's no question that Queen Elizabeth accomplished much in her unprecedented tenure as monarch, starting with rallying the British people as princess during World War II and the Blitz. On LGBTQ+ issues, Elizabeth posthumously pardoned Alan Turing, the gay World War II codebreaker and computer scientist who died by suicide two years after his 1952 conviction for "gross indecency." She gave royal assent to the Sexual Offenses Act of 1967,

which decriminalized consensual same-sex sexual relations among men in England and Wales who are at least 21. Elizabeth also gave royal assent to the marriage equality law that took effect in England and Wales in 2014. She has urged the U.K. to ban conversion therapy.

But her legacy is complicated by the monarchy's long record of racist colonialism; indeed, many anti-LGBTQ+ laws in Africa and the Caribbean can be traced to the U.K.'s homophobic colonial policies.

Now that the queen is dead, it's time for the U.K. to rethink its anachronistic

form of government. It was one thing for new prime ministers — Elizabeth anointed 15 of them in 70 years — to bow and curtsy before her, but can you imagine elected political leaders bowing before the adulterous King Charles and his "queen consort"? Please.

The queen's family is notoriously dysfunctional. Charles's adultery and cruel treatment of Princess Diana are well documented. Prince Andrew was linked to pedophile predator Jeffrey Epstein and his civil sex abuse case

See **The Queen**, page 28



Lil Nas at Detroit's Fox Theatre on Tuesday, Sept. 6. Photo: Aaron Idelson

# A Defiant Celebration of Queerness

## Lil Nas X Performed His First Show Ever in Detroit

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

**I**t didn't take me long to stop caring if Lil Nas X's show at Detroit's Fox Theatre on Sept. 6, the first show of his first tour, was going to be any good. I sometimes questioned the authenticity of his vocals — was that his real voice? The backing track? Did it matter? Was it simply enough to

witness a Black queer man live his best gay life on stage, no fucks given?

The “Long Live Montero” show started gay and ended gayer; it was a flashy, all-frills act of queer defiance and self-love, where fantasy and reality collided during quite possibly the gayest concert I've ever seen.

And it was also very, very good. There was the wristography, the queer sensuality, the embodiment of gender fluidity, that full-on voguing number set to Beyoncé's “Pure/Honey.” Nas fed that crowd an entire Thanksgiving dinner. I left full.

The “Old Town Road” performer's first full-length show ever was

specifically delivered with his intended audience in mind, the “ladies and gentleman, and nonbinaries, and bottoms,” whom he addresses in an open letter in the Playbill-style program, given out at the beginning of the show. Tops and, gasp, even straights were surely welcome, too, as the show opened with an invitation for all to escape to The Land of Naz, a “moment in your life where you somehow decided you want to see a 6-foot-2-inch homosexual perform on stage.” He goes on to describe the show as a “play about me, starring me as me, with music by me.”

Staying true to who he is, an unabashed Twitter-proclaimed power bottom badass, the spectacle celebrated queerness on a scale of which I've never seen in a live concert setting. I've been gay for a long time. Seen so much gay everything. This was still gayer. This was WeHo Pride in a packed theater, where styles and influences, from “Pose” and “The Wizard of Oz” to Marie Antoinette and gay futurism, converged in a powerful, empowering statement on individuality and doing whatever the fuck makes you happy. Want to see a life-size, blinged-out horse puppet from the future on stage?

How about a bunch of homos doing some period-era prancing in what amounts to a kind of queer revision on French Revolution glitz and glam? In this dream, you can have it all, baby.

The show's creative director, Stuart Vevers, describes “Long Live Montero” in the program as a “story of metamorphosis.” It's inspired by “the next generation,” he adds, and “how inspiring individuals like Montero are defining (and redefining) our American story for today.”

See Lil Nas X, page 32





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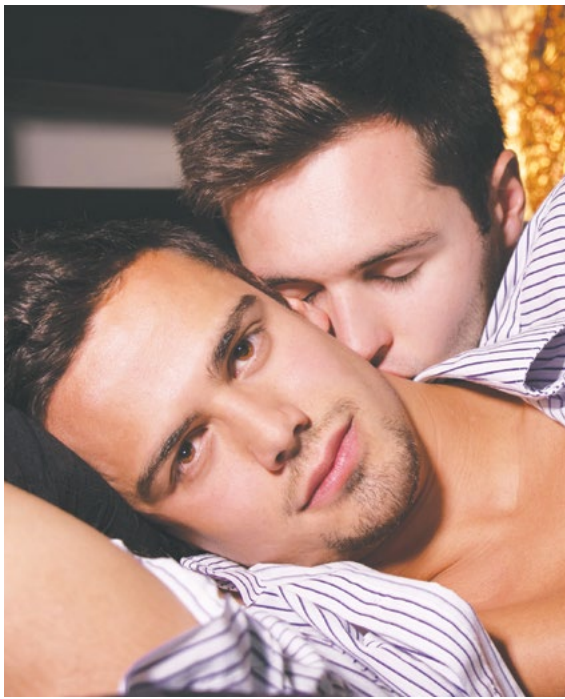
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# Monkeypox Reckoning

BY MICHAEL WEINSTEIN

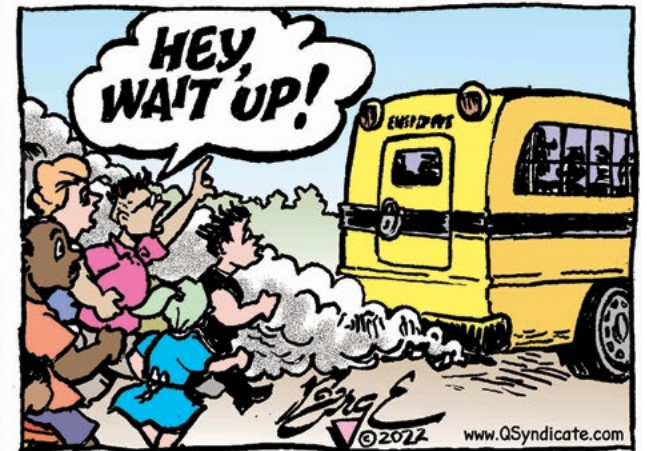
As the famous TV commercial went from the '70s – “it’s not nice to fool Mother Nature.” Mother Nature has a way of exacting her revenge.

The immediate task at hand is to educate gay and bisexual men how to avoid monkeypox and to get vaccinated. But it isn’t too early to assess what brought us to this point. In the last 10 years there has been a wholesale abandonment of safer sex promotion in favor of PrEP brought to you by Gilead. The result has been the destruction of the condom culture (which was so carefully built in the 1980s in the face of the raging AIDS epidemic), a tsunami of STDs and sustained high HIV infection rates across the U.S.

The battle lines in the gay male community over condoms and partner reduction is nothing new. It was well documented in Randy Shilts’s book “And the Band Played On” and in Larry Kramer’s play “The Normal Heart.” There has been a long-standing split between sexual freedom and prevention among gay men. There has always been a sex radical group that has defined gay liberation as absolute sexual freedom. They have denied that condoms are the primary tool in prevention or that the more partners you have the greater the risk. This reminds me of people who believe that we can continue to foul the planet because we will magically invent technical solutions that will save us. How’s that working for us?

There has been a widespread attitude that syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, etc. are no big deal — take a pill or get a shot. If we have learned anything in the last few years, it should be that diseases are not static. Rather they morph into more debilitating or deadly forms. Syphilis

See **Monkeypox Reckoning**, next page



## Why LGBTQ+ People Must Vote In The Upcoming Midterms



By Mark LaChey

We are under attack. It’s not exaggeration or hyperbole to say that there are those in America today who want to seriously harm individuals in the LGBTQ+ community. This

applies to you regardless of your age, race, financial level, if you are out or in the closet, or however you self-identify.

I am writing to not just ask you but to tell you to vote this November or sooner (early voting begins Sept. 29) and to vote for Democrats, the only party and candidates who have our backs and best interests in mind. It’s truly tragic, but I can give you countless examples of how Republicans and so-called conservatives both here in Michigan and across our country are actively working to restrict our Constitutional rights to “life, liberty and pursuit of happiness” and to impair our everyday existence to live freely as ourselves.

Of course, there’s the “Don’t Say Gay” laws that were passed in Florida, affecting LGBTQ+ students in the state’s schools, and the anti-transgender legislation passed in multiple states this year. But truly horrifying laws are being pushed through here in Michigan too, as Republicans introduced three anti-LGBTQ+ bills this session regarding secondary education targeting our transgender youth. One such bill included language focused on a “requirement that only biological males may compete for a position on and compete on a boys’ high school team in an interscholastic activity and only biological females may compete for a position on and compete on a girls’ high school team in

an interscholastic activity.”

None passed here, but our Republican-controlled Senate did successfully kill this year’s Pride Month proclamation (after having allowed it just last year) and vetoed Governor Whitmer’s appointment of two LGBTQ+ persons to state university boards. Think that this doesn’t affect you? Think again. Representation matters, whatever its form.

Michigan’s LGBTQ+ community is fortunate to have a strong ally in Gretchen Whitmer, whose daughter, Sherry, recently came out, and a resolute, openly gay attorney general, Dana Nessel. We’re also fortunate to have a pro-equality majority on our state’s Supreme Court and the likely election of our largest (seven by last count) LGBTQ+ contingent to serve in our Legislature next term. Then, of course, there’s the very promising opportunity to have pro-equality Democrats control both our state House and Senate for the first time in decades. You want sexual orientation and gender identity enshrined in our state’s civil rights law? Help elect Democrats to make this happen in our next legislative session.

But this will only happen if, first, you vote and, second, if you support pro-equality candidates with your checkbook and your time between now and election day on Nov. 8. Unfortunately, I cannot tell you the number of times that I have had to tell LGBTQ+ and pro-equality candidates here in Michigan not to count on our own community for support. If I’m being honest, we suck at supporting our own and those who have our best interests at heart. That needs to change now. Google the Democrats who are running for Congress, Michigan State House and Senate (or county commission or judge) near you,

See **Vote**, next page

## ◀ Monkeypox Reckoning

Continued from previous page

is serious. Gonorrhea is on its way to being completely drug resistant. And now we have monkeypox that jumped from animal to human and now human to human. It found its perfect petri dish in condomless sex parties and porn shoots.

I can already hear the shouts of slut shaming. If you love gay men, your first priority must be to keep them safe and healthy. It is not shaming to tell them the facts.

The facts are really simple. PrEP doesn't protect you from damaging STDs. STDs have health consequences that should not be ignored. The more sex partners you have, particularly if you don't use condoms, the more likely you are to get an STD. The tighter the circle of partners you have — such as Grindr and other hook-up apps — the greater your odds of getting an infection.

Are condoms really such a sacrifice to protect your health? Is it possible to have great sex with a condom? Do you ever get sick of getting STDs?

Gilead, the greediest of all drug companies, is pounding our community with ads promoting PrEP and is buying favor through millions in community grants. PrEP is needed for people who won't use condoms. But the CDC and local government have abandoned safer sex promotion in favor of biomedical options. Shows such as the popular Netflix show "Uncoupled" tell us that condoms

are so 1990s.

U = U, which means that Undetectable (virus) = Untransmittable (infection), is a great message if it is intended for sero-discordant couples, but if it is another way of saying condoms are unnecessary then it is a problem.

Now we have monkeypox. At this point it is irrefutable that monkeypox is an STD. If you want to protect your penis or your rectum from excruciating sores, a condom will help. The good news is that gay men are taking their foot off the gas. Polls show that sexual hookups are down. But monkeypox will subside, and chances are we will go right back to the free-for-all of the last 10 years.

Prevention is not sexy or popular. You are stigmatized as a prude or a self-hating gay or an old fuddy duddy if you promote it. But someone has to name the elephant in the room. So many of these STD surges happen among gay men because we have more partners and we are not taking precautions. For me, I would rather be the one sounding the alarm than apologizing for not having warned.

*Michael Weinstein is president of AIDS Healthcare Foundation. This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National Gay Media Association.*



## ◀ Vote

Continued from previous page

then attend an event of theirs or offer to make phone calls or knock doors on their behalf. And when you do, make sure to let them know that you are LGBTQ+. That matters because, once elected, they will respond first to those who helped them get there.

I could tell you this is the most important election of our times. I could harangue, cajole and beg you to vote — anything to get you involved in this year's election. I could try to scare you and make you uncomfortable about our collective future if anti-LGBTQ+ Republicans take control at our state and national levels.

Instead, I'll simply leave you with this: Go to <https://michigandems.com/vote> to learn about voting either

in person or absentee this fall, then make a plan to vote and fill your car with your besties and make them do the same.

The ultimate truth remains: When we vote, we win. Period.

*Mark W. LaChey has been actively involved in politics as an openly gay man for over 30 years, including seven two-year terms as a Pleasant Ridge City Commissioner in the 1990s and early 2000s. More recently, Mark is now serving in his third term as a Vice Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party and is also the first and only LGBTQ+ member of the Democratic National Committee from Michigan. Mark is a retired attorney living in Saugatuck with his partner and their two dogs and a cat.*

## CREEP OF THE WEEK

### Double, Double Toil and Trouble: Radical Right Claims Words Are Black Magic Mind Control



By D'Anne Witkowski

Words. What are they? Are they simply a collection of letters arranged in a particular way to symbolize places, things, ideas, feelings, people and the like so that people can communicate with one another?

Or are they DARK MAGIC overtaking our minds (and thus claiming our very souls)?

Well, if you're World Net Daily (and be thankful that you're not, because it's truly one of the worst places on the Internet — and that's saying something!), then it's obviously option B.

You see, "the left" has been changing the meaning of words in order to seduce Americans into accepting their ungodly ideas. As any linguist will tell you, language never changes. It is immutable and any deviation should be considered dangerous and rejected immediately. We are still speaking the exact same English language as the very first English speakers, no variation, no notes.

In an August post with the byline "WND Staff" titled, "Secret weapon to seduce, mesmerize Americans now revealed: How tyrants and lunatics are enslaving Americans by redefining everything," WND describes the completely normal way language changes over time as "the left's Orwellian redefinition of history, politics, economics, science, culture, faith and morality — in other words, of reality — by radically messing with Americans' language."

I can picture it now: Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi cutting up pages from the dictionary and then asking their grandchildren (because both of them are very old) to post their new topsy turvy word salad to the interwebs in order to seize control of Americans' brains.

What words, pray-tell, does WND — a website that celebrates racism, election misinformation, vaccine denial and Christian white heterosexual cis gender supremacy — take issue with?

"The ruling elite's wild redefinition of terms like 'racism,' 'equity,' 'justice,' 'democracy,' 'diversity,' 'illegal alien,' 'voter suppression,' 'disinformation,' 'domestic terrorist,' 'violent extremist,' 'insurrectionist,' 'marriage' and scores of other terms — including, of course, 'woman' — has turned America upside down, a condition they confidently now define as right-side up."

Well golly, who could have possibly expected those particular words would rile up the lunatics at WND?

"Thus are today's oligarchs able to change the way millions of people think — indeed, to force a new way of perceiving, believing and acting on much of the country's population," the piece continues.

I'd like you to cast your mind back to the day when

disgraced former president Donald Trump's "Access Hollywood" tape came out when he said incredibly vile shit about sexually assaulting

women, thereby introducing "grab 'em by the pussy" into the lexicon.

Did Trump's purportedly Christian backers denounce this as a step too far? Did they clutch their pearls and head for the nearest fainting couch? No, they did not. They said that he was simply engaging in "locker room talk." Perfectly normal, just the way men speak to each other in private about the women in their lives.

Except it wasn't perfectly normal. It is NOT okay to sexually assault women, brag about sexually assaulting women or speak about women in such derogatory ways. But for the Christian right, it was NBD.

Maybe since they believe language never changes, they thought Trump was talking about a literal cat. Who's to say?

The people of WND are desperately clinging to the past. They long for the days when the most a Black person could hope to be was a servant, when women had no say over their own bodies and no political power, when LGBTQ+ people were cast aside as deeply sick people in need of spiritual healing, when polio was a part of everyday life. They want this country to be dominated by white Christians, which includes a complete takeover of government.

Which is why they are pushing the election conspiracies so hard. The majority of Americans don't want to live in the Dark Ages. They don't want fascism. They don't want state sponsored religion. They don't want to see LGBTQ+ people demonized. They don't want to dismiss the concerns of BIPOC communities (even if, let's be real, many of the most progressive white people are oblivious to how they benefit from and perpetuate racism).

The ideas that WND clings to can't win in democratic elections. Their radical ideas, which have been adopted wholesale by the Republican Party, are a non-starter for the majority of people at the ballot box. Which is why they want to control elections. It doesn't matter how unpopular your ideas are if you scrap the democratic process.

And that's where we are. Election deniers who are still rehashing 2020 are running for office across the country at all levels. They are spreading their conspiracy theories using, get this, words. They see what happened on Jan. 6 not as a great stain on our nation, but as patriotism.

We've got to vote. We've got to vote for Democrats (who are not demonic lizard pedophiles who smell of sulfur, as WND would like you to believe). The stakes really couldn't be higher.

(Note: this column was composed using words, the exposure to which can change your mind and even your DNA.)



Justin Mendoza. Courtesy photo

# Justin Mendoza Could Become Michigan's First Latino LGBTQ+ Legislator

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Within months of losing his job and health insurance during the last recession, Justin Mendoza's late father was hospitalized with an infection in his legs. Three days later, he returned home with \$10,000 in medical debt he would never be able to repay.

Mendoza believes it didn't have to be that way, that his father might still be here had he been able to receive proper care after the initial hospitalization. But he couldn't afford health insurance on the private marketplace and he was just above the threshold for Medicaid.

"He never truly recovered," Mendoza told Pride Source. "He never really went back. He went back when something major would happen — a fall or feeling a pain somewhere, but he didn't get the regular care that someone would need, especially with circulation problems. He ended up dying in 2019 of heart failure. And when I was settling his affairs and taking care of things, that's when I found out about this debt. He was a really private guy. We didn't talk about it."

It's no wonder Mendoza has a passion for healthcare policy today, both in his work as an advocacy lead for Partners in Health, a group focused on building equitable health systems globally, and in his run for Michigan's 42nd State House District.

"In the state of Michigan, just over one in 10 Michiganders don't have health insurance right now," Mendoza pointed out. Like his father, many will fall through the cracks. As an elected official, preventing folks from falling through those cracks would be his throughline.

more broadly, fixing the state's auto no-fault reform legislation, which went into effect in 2021, is at the top of Mendoza's list. He explained how the recent changes to Michigan's car insurance, formerly among the best in the country, have left in the lurch the very people it promised to better serve. Lower rates mean less coverage in the event of a catastrophic injury. And companies that provide care are unable to stay in business because their reimbursement rate has been cut.

"That means that people are not receiving round-the-clock care when they need it," Mendoza said. "This is oftentimes folks who have been paralyzed or who might have had a traumatic brain injury. Folks who really do need someone to just help them adapt to the environment around them, pretty much all day 'round, and we've left these folks without the care and support they need because of that policy." He said he frequently hears these concerns from constituents and from healthcare providers in his district.

Lately, Mendoza said he's also hearing from constituents about the ramifications of overturning *Roe v. Wade*. He's hopeful that the Reproductive Freedom for All ballot initiative will pass and amend Michigan's constitution to enshrine the right to choose, yet he's savvy enough to know it's not a done deal.

"I'm not a doctor," Mendoza said. "I'm certainly not an expert in obstetrics and gynecology. I shouldn't be the one who decides this for you." And while he plans to vote for the ballot initiative, "If there is a majority

In addition to healthcare reform

See [Justin Mendoza](#), page 30

**Welcome to long-acting HIV treatment.**

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**Jayson**

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Attend all appointments.

### Important Facts About CABENUVA

This is only a brief summary of important information about CABENUVA and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and treatment. (kab’ en ue vah)

#### ABOUT CABENUVA

CABENUVA is a complete prescription regimen used to treat HIV-1 infection in people 12 years and older who weigh at least 77 lbs (35 kg), to replace their current HIV-1 medicines when their healthcare provider determines that they meet certain requirements.

HIV-1 is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). CABENUVA contains 2 different medicines:

- cabotegravir
- rilpivirine

It is not known if CABENUVA is safe and effective in children younger than 12 years of age or weighing less than 77 lbs (35 kg).

#### DO NOT RECEIVE CABENUVA IF YOU

- have ever had an allergic reaction to cabotegravir or rilpivirine.
- are taking the following medicines:
  - carbamazepine
  - oxcabazepine
  - phenobarbital
  - phenytoin
  - rifabutin
  - rifampin
  - rifapentine
  - dexamethasone (more than a single-dose treatment)
  - St John’s wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)

### Ask your doctor about CABENUVA

\*Undetectable means the amount of HIV in the blood is below the level that can be measured by a lab test. Results may vary. Jayson has been compensated by ViiV Healthcare.

#### BEFORE RECEIVING CABENUVA

**Tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including if you:**

- have ever had a skin rash or an allergic reaction to medicines that contain cabotegravir or rilpivirine.
- have ever had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C infection.
- have ever had mental health problems.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if CABENUVA will harm your unborn baby. CABENUVA can remain in your body for up to 12 months or longer after the last injection.

Please see additional Important Facts About CABENUVA on the following page.



**CABENUVA**

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Watch  
Jayson’s  
Story



## Important Facts About CABENUVA (cont'd) BEFORE RECEIVING CABENUVA (cont'd)

Tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including if you: (cont'd)

- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. **Do not breastfeed if you take CABENUVA.**
  - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby. It is not known if CABENUVA can pass to your baby in your breast milk.
  - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby during treatment with CABENUVA.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some medicines interact with CABENUVA. Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that interact with CABENUVA.

**Do not start taking a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider.** Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take CABENUVA with other medicines.

## POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF CABENUVA

CABENUVA may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Allergic reactions.** Call your healthcare provider right away if you develop a rash with CABENUVA. **Stop receiving CABENUVA and get medical help right away if you develop a rash with any of the following signs or symptoms:**
  - fever
  - generally ill feeling
  - tiredness
  - muscle or joint aches
  - trouble breathing
  - blisters or sores in mouth
  - blisters
  - redness or swelling of the eyes
  - swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue
- **Post-injection reactions** have happened within minutes in some people after receiving their rilpivirine injection. Most symptoms resolved within minutes after the injection. Symptoms may include:
  - trouble breathing
  - narrowing of airways
  - stomach cramps
  - sweating
  - numbness of your mouth
  - pain (e.g., back and chest)
  - feeling anxious
  - feeling warm
  - rash
  - feeling light-headed or feeling like you are going to pass out (faint)
  - blood pressure changes

## POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF CABENUVA (cont'd)

CABENUVA may cause serious side effects, including: (cont'd)

- **Liver problems.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus or people who have certain liver function test changes may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during CABENUVA treatment. Liver problems have also happened in people without history of liver problems or other risk factors. Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your liver function. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you develop any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems:**
  - your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice)
  - dark or "tea-colored" urine
  - light-colored stools (bowel movements)
  - nausea or vomiting
  - loss of appetite
  - pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side of your stomach area
  - itching
- **Depression or mood changes.** Call your healthcare provider or get emergency medical help right away if you have any of the following symptoms:
  - feeling sad or hopeless
  - feeling anxious or restless
  - have thoughts of hurting yourself (suicide) or have tried to hurt yourself

The most common side effects of CABENUVA include:

- pain, tenderness, hardened mass or lump, swelling, redness, itching, bruising, and warmth at the injection site
- fever
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle or bone pain
- nausea
- sleep problems
- dizziness
- rash

These are not all the possible side effects of CABENUVA. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

## GET MORE INFORMATION

- Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- Go to CABENUVA.com or call 1-877-844-8872, where you can also get FDA-approved labeling.

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University of Michigan Law School in Ann Arbor.

# Here's What Michigan Colleges Are Doing About Monkeypox

## Experts Urge Caution, Proactive Approach

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

College is a time for exploration and sharing, but one thing no college student wants to share is monkeypox. Michigan universities are educating incoming students about the virus, which has been diagnosed in around 22,000 people across the U.S., including 227 across the state, as of this reporting. The highest concentration of cases in Michigan have been in the Southeast corner of the state, especially the Metro Detroit area.

### University of Michigan (UM)

UM published a Q&A with two public health experts with information aimed at helping the campus community understand the virus, including how it is spread and what resources are available on campus and across the region.

Students can obtain vaccines at the main Ann Arbor campus health center, but they are available in limited quantities. The university also directs students to the local county health department for information on obtaining a vaccine (the main Ann Arbor campus is located

in Washtenaw County, while UM-Dearborn is in Wayne County and UM-Flint is in Genesee County).

Ernst, chief health officer and associate vice president of Student Life discussed MPV with UM's student newspaper, The University Record. "Our team has been working very closely with local public health officials, including the Washtenaw County Health Department, to coordinate campus evaluation and management strategies," Ernst said. "In addition to raising awareness about MPV and providing access to testing, treatment and vaccination when indicated, it's also important to understand the ways in which MPV differs from COVID-19 and why containment strategies may differ."

### Wayne State University (WSU)

Wayne State is offering monkeypox testing at the campus health centers and referring students to county resources for vaccination.

See **Monkeypox on Campus**, page 28

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BACKGROUND IMAGE: ARTWORK BY MIKE HAN



## For Ann Arborites and Detroiters, Queer Delights Are Only 45 Minutes Away

BY GEORGE ELKIND

Ann Arbor and Detroit may be close enough together to share an atmosphere, but they rarely seem to mix. Each city offers enough queer community to overflow into the other, yet somehow, a 45-minute drive or train ride between them can seem like a journey to a foreign (yet familiar) land. Whether your journey starts in Detroit or Ann Arbor, you'll soon find the 45-minute trip was well worth the trouble.

Though it is a large, diverse American city, Detroit is often overlooked as a travel destination, even by nearby Michiganders. In fact, the city is alive with inviting entertainment

and cultural resources in every direction, from legacy arts institutions to prominent (if ailing) sports teams, stadium-sized concerts and a plethora of Michigan-owned small businesses.

Ann Arbor, too, offers an exhaustive list of activities and amenities poised to lure Detroiters to the land of blue and maize. The city is a well-heeled, walkable college town featuring a robust food scene, immediate access to natural spaces, cultural resources and a progressive, queer-friendly bent.

Despite all the noteworthy features of both places, the two queer-friendly cities can feel isolated from one another: an issue that may come down to taste. Each city — and each city's

LGBTQ+ people — have plenty to offer. It's just a matter of mingling the two populations more often in the welcoming, uniquely Michigan spaces to be found in both locales.

After all, there's too much good in both these places for a 45-minute drive to seem too far.

### For Ann Arborites visiting Detroit

#### Days and nights out

Detroit's lost many of its gay bars over the

last few years, with spaces like the Woodward and Briggs lost to culprits like fires and redevelopment. But aside from its far-flung standbys (such as Menjo's, Gigi's and the Hayloft Saloon), Detroit has a healthy ecosystem of queer-friendly drinking spots within a few miles of its downtown core.

For wine drinkers, there's the Royce right in Detroit's downtown: an intimate queer-owned space with ample atmosphere and a monthly LGBTQ+ wine party on top. Not too far away in Corktown, there's also Motor City Wine, which offers live music, a sprawling patio and shareable bites at a modest price alongside a hefty selection of wines.



But Detroit's also host to plenty of breweries and well-curated beer spots. There's the ever-popular Batch Brewing in Corktown, which features a rotating stable of food pop-ups alongside its beers, as well as Eastern Market Brewing Co, which offers a convivial indoor-outdoor space surrounded by shops and restaurants. Just across Gratiot is Collect, a personal favorite nestled between shops that opens up first to an impeccably kept interior with a rotating array of drafts, bottles and cans as well as deeply knowledgeable, helpful staff. They offer a wine selection, too, and permit outside food. But go on higher and the space opens to a never-too-crowded rooftop patio with fantastic views of the market, city, and Lafayette Park nearby. Not far from Collect is Faisan Brewing (another favorite): a relaxed and spacious spot on a calm street that specializes in Belgian brews — a welcome thing in the Midwest — but that does all sorts of beers well.

For cocktails lovers, it's easy to recommend Standby, an intimate, dimly-lit bar in the always popular Shinola Annex. Offering a menu of original drinks with brief, smart descriptions and even their glass shapes, it's a specialized space at what always seems a fair price. Further north in Milwaukee Junction is Kiesling, which offers an inviting interior and a small back patio. For drinks of any stripe and dinner, too, Corktown's Supergeil offers great indoor-outdoor spaces alongside house-made drinks and shareable plates.

### A local market day

One of Detroit's great treasures is Eastern Market, as valuable for its produce (depending on the vendor it might be store-bought), crafts or flowers as it is for bringing together Metro Detroiters from every possible walk of life. But if you're making a morning of this, you'll probably want coffee options — and it's hard to do better than the offerings at stylish and open-concept Anthology nearby. Trinosophes, which boasts a gallery, an impressive book selection, and an eclectic, sating menu is a short walk from the market, too. That said, Madcap — on the northern edge of downtown — provides a refined sort of coffee experience

that's comfortably on the same tier.

For pastries and caffeinated drinks, there's Midtown's Warda Patisserie; once quartered in the Trinosophes space, the James Beard-winning shop that incorporates Algerian, French and Asian influences into dazzling cakes and desserts. But venture further on the East side for coffee and bites, and Sister Pie and Rose's Fine Food and Wines each provide great food in intimate settings — and neither's too far from Detroit's best parks. Be warned, though: Sister Pie often sells out its most popular items, especially on the weekends.

### Getting outside

Though less known for its parks than Ann Arbor, Detroit boasts a terrific one in Belle Isle, which now operates as a state park. Featuring beaches that have played host to any number of queer events, it's perfect for kayaking, too, whether in the open river or snaking through



Macarons at Zingerman's in Ann Arbor. Photo: Zingerman's

its labyrinth of narrow waterways. And for indoor activities (great in winter) it offers a conservatory, a historic aquarium and even the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, focused heavily on boating history in the region.

Cyclists will find the park rich enough, but it's not far, either, from the Dequindre Cut, an uncommonly car-free bike and walking

See A2 to Detroit, page 22

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# Michigan Stuns Thanks to These Fetching Queer Murals

## Behold These Works of Public Art!



“The Key to Ending the HIV Epidemic” unveiling at Detroit Public Health’s STD Clinic. Photo: J.A. Tover, Frozen Lake Photography

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

Public art murals serve many purposes. They can beautify neighborhoods, serve as political or social commentary and create visible touchstones that have the power to unite and represent the local community. Eventually, most public art in the form of murals fades over time, making way for new representations to fill the spaces left behind.

Throughout Michigan, public art murals can be found in large cities and rural areas alike, including these five public artworks featuring LGBTQ+ themes. Road trip, anyone?

### Detroit

A new mural at Detroit Public Health’s STD Clinic features bright colors and promotes a positive vibe. “The Key to Ending the HIV Epidemic” is the end result of a



“Rainbow Road” in Grand Rapids. Courtesy photo

vision imagined by artist Demetruis Green, Jr., who works as the PrEP coordinator at the center.

Green hopes that the mural and its focus on natural elements like flowers, fruit and greenery, combined with symbols of progress — including

the Detroit skyline, gears and scientific tools — will feel inviting and welcoming to clinic visitors. He took care to incorporate elements that symbolize some of the clinic team in the

piece, as well.

Approximately 1.2 million people in the U.S. are living with HIV and 13% don’t know their status, according to the CDC. Green says ending the HIV epidemic by 2030 is possible, but only through increased access to HIV prevention, treatment and support services such as those offered through the Detroit Public Health STD Clinic.

*“The Key to Ending the HIV Epidemic” can be viewed at 50 East Canfield Street in Detroit.*

especially transgender women of color. The prominent rainbow in the background represents the queer community.

The Ruth Ellis mural was painted by local artist Ijanía Cortez and London-based artist Richard Wilson, who painted the mural of Stevie Wonder inside Detroit’s Music Hall center.

*The Ruth Ellis Clairmount Center mural is located at the corner of Woodward Avenue and Clairmount Street in Detroit’s Piety Hill neighborhood.*

### Grand Rapids

“Rainbow Road” in Grand Rapids is the city’s first street art installation. It was created by Joey Salamon in 2019 as a permanent street mural commemorating Pride Month and the 50th anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall Riots.

Salamon’s art can be found throughout Michigan in public spaces in cities like Ann Arbor, Midland and Detroit. Visit [joey.salamon.art](http://joey.salamon.art) for a full list.

*“Rainbow Road” can be viewed at 22 Sheldon Boulevard in Grand Rapids.*



Ruth Ellis mural at the Ruth Ellis Clairmount Center. Courtesy photo

Also in Detroit is the recently-revealed Ruth Ellis mural, which features a huge portrait of the LGBTQ+ icon and activist at the corner of Woodward and Clairmount on the side of the new Ruth Ellis Clairmount Center for at-risk LGBTQ youth. The facility provides 43 housing units for young people facing chronic homelessness —

### Thompsonville

After his colorful public art installation at the Iron Fish distillery in rural Thompsonville, 30 miles south of Traverse City, was unveiled in 2021, Salamon told Interlochen Public Radio that he is drawn to creating LGBTQ+ visibility in rural areas similar to the one where he grew up. “Growing up as a gay kid in this kinda landscape,” Salamon said, “there was nothing. And so, just the fact that there is something here for anyone to see or recognize, that’s huge.”

*“UP North Pride” can be viewed at 14234 Dzuibane Road in Thompsonville.*



"UP North Pride" by Joey Salamon. Photo: joeysalamon.art

## Flint

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Pride Month and the five-year anniversary of the legalization of same-sex marriage, Flint Public Art Project painted 10 Pride hearts throughout the city in 2020.

Find the Flint Public Art Project Pride hearts throughout the city. Download the PixelStix app and search #fpap\_pride for specific locations. At each stop, the app allows visitors to access videos about the history, evolution and people who have influenced the Pride movement.

## Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti

The Embracing Our Differences (EOD) Michigan organization uses the "transformative power of art" to celebrate diversity, according to the EOD website. The main exhibit in Ann Arbor's Gallup Park includes 60 billboard-size images created by artists,



"Diversity and Inclusion to the World," by James Johnson, Zerrick Lindsey, Raneem Saleh, Nerrance Conner, Katrina Fortenberry, Ypsilanti, Michigan. Photo: Embracing our Differences website

writers and students from the local area and beyond, each featuring reflections on the theme "enriching our lives through diversity." Many of the exhibits include LGBTQ+ messaging and imagery, as well as a wide array of reflections on other types of human diversity.

The exhibits can be viewed at Gallup Park in Ann Arbor, Leslie Science & Nature Center in Ann Arbor and Riverside Park in Ypsilanti.



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Mackinac Island's premier Pride event takes place Sept. 22-25.

# First Mackinac Island Pride Promises Quaint Queerness And, Naturally, Some Horses

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

One notoriously quiet corner of the Great Lakes State is about to get a lot louder (and prouder), when Mackinac Island — recently named “World’s Best Island” by Travel + Leisure — hosts its first ever Pride Festival Sept. 22-25.

The tiny island, accessible only by ferry (on foot or bicycle) will be awash in color as Pridegoers enjoy a wide range of activities, from some tried-and-true Pride mainstays to uniquely old-fashioned events with a classic Mackinac Island spin.

Behind the scenes, there are plenty of tasks keeping the planners at Straits Pride busy ahead of the big

event. Mackinac Pride will feature a full calendar of activities that stretch across the weekend. There will be more traditional Pride fare, of course, including drag queen bingo, queer brunch, queer prom and a drag show headlined by Lansing’s Bentley James and Ann Arbor’s Emma Sapphire, who was named Miss Michigan Best Professional Drag Queen 2022. But attendees will also get a chance to revel in Pride in classic Mackinac Island style.

Pride Ride will take bike riders on a trip around the perimeter of the island (along the route, riders can stop at places like iconic Cannonball Oasis for fried pickles and ice cream), and it’s hard to imagine anything

more quaint than a horse-drawn hay ride (the “Dray Ride”). Organizers even made sure to showcase the area’s natural beauty by boat with a Pride Cruise.

Straits Pride has taken a detail-oriented approach to managing every aspect of the event, planning for contingencies and sorting out aspects of each activity. In many ways, holding a big event on the island is not dissimilar to events held anywhere — like many Pride celebrations, there will be vendor booths, tables for people to eat and drink, and coordination with local businesses.

When it comes to Mackinac Island, however, there’s one detail

event planners can’t take for granted: ground transportation. Getting stuff from Point A to Point B can become a logistically complex, time-consuming endeavor. Luckily, the Straits Pride board is staffed with members familiar with every inch of this well-loved vacation destination.

So, how do organizers set up for an event like Pride in a place where the only vehicles on the island include emergency vehicles? If you’re Kyrsten Cavazos, vice president of Straits Pride, there’s a good chance you know a guy. With a horse (or two).

Yes, even the carriage horses have garnered special attention. “This is outside the normal horse work schedule,” she explains. “You can’t just

grab a carriage or make horses work overtime. We made sure the horses had time off before and after their work — we’re getting it done right.”

Cavazos, who has been a year-round resident of the island for 10 years, explains that while the logistics can get complicated, veteran Mackinac Islanders are well-versed in getting where they need to go. “Everybody has learned how to drive their bikes with a huge cart behind them,” she says, which comes in handy for hauling around Pride Festival must-haves like audio equipment. Organizers can manage larger cargo by calling on one of the

See **Mackinac Pride**, page 24

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Necto nightclub in Ann Arbor. Photo: Necto

### → A2 to Detroit

Continued from page 17

trail that cuts north from the river downtown. With its flat layout, wide streets and diminished population numbers making for less cars than there might be, Detroit is a great cycling city, even in spite of its patchy roads.

But winter often hits Michigan hard, so it's good to have some active indoor options. While I can't claim expertise on most gyms, the city has its own climbing spot in Eastern Market's DYNO, well-located for plenty you can do after you power up those rock walls. There's skating, too, in Detroit's downtown — as well as the Velodrome, a singular indoor bike rink that lets cyclists practice at wild, uninterrupted speeds in a constant loop. Funnily enough, there's a bar in the middle of the action. For anyone looking to break a sweat without moving too much, Detroit's North End also has the Schvitz, a historic bathhouse with a revolving dining menu, steam rooms and cold pools. Unofficially, there is an LGBTQ+ meetup that takes place at the Schvitz monthly.

### Arts and culture

Detroit's not the size it used to be, but it still plays host to a healthy array of museums, live music venues, and arts institutions. While most visitors will know the DIA, less have probably visited MOCAD, the city's contemporary art museum just a bit south on Woodward. Quarters at the DIA, too, is the Detroit Film Theatre, which shows an evolving, thoughtful spread of revival and new releases in what feels like a movie palace. Like in opulence but increasingly contemporary, Detroit Opera offers a range of visiting and home-made productions, too, all shepherded by its openly queer artistic director, Yuval Sharon.

For institutions more "neighborhood" than they are legacy, there's Islandview's very queer-

friendly Spotlight, which features a range of music, spaces, records, and drinks — and always has a different energy in every room. Likewise inviting is Marble Bar, which offers indoor and outdoor space to dance and catch a range of shows, and UFO Factory, which provides funky drinks, hot dogs, as well as the "Cloud Deck," a rooftop space that's gorgeous on a sunny day. Splitting the difference between as a local institution is the landmark John King Books, an old five-story glove factory that's long acted as the area's best bookstore to lose an afternoon in.

Though it's a different flavor, some may like checking out Detroit City Football Club (technically in Hamtramck), which attracts packed crowds at Keyworth Stadium for both men's and women's games. Whether there to sample the food trucks, drink heartily, chant or ogle the players (as I've seen more than a few friends do), the games always provide the kind of anchoring event you could easily build a day around.

### For Detroiters visiting Ann Arbor

#### Days and nights out

Though certainly inflected by the university, Ann Arbor has its own distinct nightlife: one defined in large part by its concentration around a walkable commercial district downtown. Since COVID-19, many of these spaces have taken over the streets and sidewalks, contributing to a walking culture that's hard to find in Detroit outside of festivals, Shinola Annex or Eastern Market.

One key example of this is downtown's Grizzly Peak, which offers a traditional bar menu alongside their spread of American beers. If you're comfortable mingling with the local student population, the Grotto is a sprawling, typically bustling spot downtown that's a fun

space for people-watching. Bill's Beer Garden offers a less traditional atmosphere; only open seasonally, they prioritize locally made craft beers. But perhaps the most distinct is HOMES, whose original brewpub is west of downtown. The brewery offers a range of (sometimes experimental) options that incorporate bright fruit profiles without sacrificing heft; new releases draw long lines, making each new can or draft feel like real events. For mead fans, there's Blom Meadworks, too, featuring local meads and ciders.

Wine drinkers will find no shortage of options, especially downtown. At SPENCER, a varied food menu meets a curated collection of small-batch wines and bottles. Indoor-outdoor Vinology features a comparable local emphasis, highlighting work done by wine producers nearby. A bit further west, YORK offers a plaza-style space with a modern interior, meshing great coffee and food trucks with its own broad spread of wine options

For cocktails, Nightcap offers light spins on traditional offerings, deftly throwing wrenches (fruit, chocolate) into mainstay drinks you might be used to. The Last Word nearby offers beer, wine and cocktails with a vast menu of original offerings. For not just drinks but liquors that are locally made, Ann Arbor Distilling Company provides a more straightforward menu of unadorned, classic drinks that shows off their own handiwork.

### A local market day

The Ann Arbor Farmers Market is quartered in Kerrytown, a dense, downtown-adjacent neighborhood with a rich array of local businesses and terrific food and drink options. For one, it's across the street from Zingerman's: a famous, good (but pricey) deli that's long been an area favorite. Credible sources have told me that better sandwiches can be found at Maize and Blue Delicatessen, though — a spot a bit deeper into downtown.

For coffee, Ann Arbor has Hyperion, an Ypsi-based roaster's cafe, and (not in Kerrytown) York, an excellent spot mentioned for its wine and patio above. Additionally, there's TeaHAUS, a charming tea shop with an impressive selection of leaves and gifts. A short walk away is the veg-friendly Lunch Room Bakery & Cafe, an outpost of the bygone Lunch Room (RIP). The same owners have the Detroit Street Filling Station, too, a relaxed lunch and dinner option close by.

### Getting outside

There's no shortage of hiking near Ann Arbor, but you can do well enough right in town — with an abundance of trails and rivers facilitating all sorts of pursuits. Perhaps most prominent is the University's Nichols Arboretum, which features popular trails in a nicely wooded space devoted to conserving woods and prairies. A bit quieter and easy to get lost in is Bird Hills Nature Area, whose tangled webs of hills and trails could make for a

good day of nature on its own. That's true, too, of the boating options in Gallup Park, which offer both placid and quicker-paced canoe and kayak options.

Offering comparably varied topography is the Ann Arbor Bluffs Nature Area, which has an abundance of trails itself. For something more leisurely, Ann Arbor has the Matthei Botanical Gardens, too. And for anyone keen on indoor climbing year-round, the city has its own Planet Rock.

### Arts and culture

Ann Arbor has no shortage of cultural treasures supported by both the university and the broader community. There are the big institutions — like the Michigan and State Theaters, which play all sorts of movies, hosting talks (like the Penny Stamps speaker series) and queer-inclusive festivals (Ann Arbor Film Fest, etc.), too, that would be hard to come by in Detroit. The Hill Auditorium, too, hosts events and has long been celebrated for its acoustics.

But there's also more locally-grown musical fare. There's the



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Ark, an intimate nonprofit venue that attracts great acts (many of whom are LGBTQ+) for a fair price, and the Blue Llama Jazz Club, a longtime local standby. And for anyone seeking more of a dance club vibe, Pride Fridays at Necto is still, after many years, a big draw.

For something quieter — maybe to go with one of the tea and coffee options floated here — Ann Arbor's fortunate to have plenty of well-loved bookshops, many within walking distance of one another downtown. West Side Book Shop, Literati, Dawn Treader, and Mott & Bailey each provide their own flavor and curatorial style.

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### Sulu Before an Election

Puzzle on page 33



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Mackinac Island Community Hall. Photo: Straits Pride

➔ **Mackinac Pride**

Continued from page 20



A previous Straits Pride event. Photo: Straits Pride

local horse and carriage drivers. “Someone on the board will have a guy who can manage any task that comes up,” she says.

Cavazos says the Straits Pride team wanted to make sure there was something for everyone. Ticketed events, like its queer prom event and the Pride Cruise, for example, are mixed in with free events. Attendees will find sober activities if they aren’t there to drink and lots of family-friendly entertainment. “We really wanted to focus on being able to include everybody who was interested in this weekend and making sure that anybody, at any income level, in any lifestyle, any work style, could attend something for this weekend,” she says.

Cavazos says Straits Pride has been on the receiving end of a few complaints since the organization was established in 2018 (mostly from people who live outside the area), but by and large, the community and the Mackinac Island governing body have fully supported the group’s efforts.

Ultimately, the event is not for (or even spite of) the naysayers — Mackinac Island Pride is

for the queer community and its allies. “That’s who we serve, and we want people to feel safe on the island,” she says. “We’d like to change the narrative to show people that though it is rural and it is up north, that, contrary to reputations over the years and what the media sometimes makes it seem like at times, this area is very open to the LGBT community — it can be very progressive and welcoming.”

“What we really want people who attend these events to experience over the whole weekend is just feeling loved and welcomed and wanted both on Mackinac Island and within the LGBT community.”

Visit [StraitsPride.org](http://StraitsPride.org) to buy a t-shirt or to purchase tickets to Drag Brunch, Pride Cruise and the Dray Ride hayride. The Mackinac Island Pride Festival takes place Sept. 22-25.





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## → Family Research Council

Continued from page 6

"If you're an organization that supports targeting and harming LGBTQI and you're against a certain policy or access to healthcare, then exist as is," she added, issuing a challenge to come clean. "But don't hide behind saying that you're a religious institution when you don't have church services nor do you have an actual church facility or a congregation."

Jay Kaplan is the staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan's LGBT Project. He, too, is alarmed.

"I think it's in the public interest to know who's providing the financial support for organizations," Kaplan said, "and on both sides of the spectrum.

And might there be corporate interests that are funding some of the work that an organization like the Family Research Council is doing, just so people know? Information is always power."

As an example, Kaplan cited the American Family Association. The organization had changed their status with the IRS, while continuing to engage in political activity.

"To me, personally, it sounds like you don't want to play by the rules," Kaplan said, in reference to FRC and others. There's certain reporting requirements under the IRS and to try to skirt around that, I find disingenuous."

Separately, the question of when to call an institution a church — and when to call BS — figures prominently in a very different way in west Michigan, where some say Kalamazoo's Radiant Church is playing fast and loose with the tax code. That's according to Erin Knott, executive director of Equality Michigan and a former Kalamazoo city commissioner.

In that case, a nondenominational megachurch that grew out of campuses in the Kalamazoo suburbs of Richland and Portage opened a location in downtown Kalamazoo, in what used to be a building that housed a restaurant and condominiums. Now, 4,000-member Radiant has expanded its footprint to include a music label and a coffee shop that is billed as the "front porch" of the church and is located on the Kalamazoo Mall.

"We want this to be the kind of place where people can come, feel very comfortable, get an amazing cup of coffee and hopefully it will lead to new things being birthed out of it," Radiant Church executive pastor Rick Burmeister told MLive last year. As a nonprofit, the coffee

shop boasts that they give back to the local community — partners include the anti-choice Alternatives of Kalamazoo and Kalamazoo Youth for Christ, which explicitly states they don't discriminate in their proselytizing.

The affiliated businesses pay no property taxes, because they exist under the "umbrella" of Radiant. For practical purposes, this is critical because Kalamazoo's tax base is lopsided in that the majority of properties in the city are nonprofits.

"It's a little unclear to me if there are eight, 10 or 12 parcels," Knott said. "But this church has gobbled up this building. As a former city commissioner and a taxpayer here in Kalamazoo, the impact of the Radiant takeover is alarming because it is located in the heart of downtown Kalamazoo in an area where our community has experienced a real challenge post-Covid as we're emerging out of the pandemic situation where restaurants have boarded up, businesses have gone under."

"It has also impacted the quality of life for LGBTQ+ individuals who no longer deem it safe to shop or go out to eat or to go to the art museum or to check out a show in downtown Kalamazoo because of the presence of this church," she added.

The solution, Knott said, is for the current city commission to ask

or demand the city's assessor audit "every last square inch of the space," because if they're not doing business directly with the church, their tax status is in question. The next step would be to take the complaint to the IRS.

As a cautionary tale, Knott cited Redding, California. The membership of Bethel Church, established there in the 1950s, now exceeds more than 10 percent of the city's population of 90,000 residents. The church publicly opposes bills that would ban conversion therapy and a church leader came out against the Equality Act.

Back in Kalamazoo, Knott said supporters of the LGBTQ+ community recently vandalized Radiant. And stickers that say "Stop the colonization of downtown Kalamazoo by Radiant" have appeared around town.

"I think that there are more effective ways in which to express concern and public outcry," Knott said. Still, the extreme measures got people talking.

Tlaib stressed that any organization has the right to exist in this country. But she has a warning for FRC and others like them: "Don't hide behind tax laws," she said. "Don't hide behind those laws so that you don't have oversight. We want to protect true religious freedom in our country."

*Separately, the question of when to call an institution a church — and when to call BS — figures prominently in a very different way in west Michigan, where some say Kalamazoo's Radiant Church is playing fast and loose with the tax code.*

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## → Monkeypox on Campus

Continued from page 15

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WSU has created a webpage (<https://health.wayne.edu/monkeypox/>) with detailed information about monkeypox.

## Eastern Michigan University (EMU)

EMU has a comprehensive website (<https://www.emich.edu/emusafe/monkeypox/index.php>) where the community can find a host of monkeypox information. Links to county, state and federal resources, including details about vaccination, can be found there. While the university has not changed or canceled specific events related to monkeypox, the administration has urged caution and awareness to the EMU community by email.

## Michigan State University (MSU)

MSU administrators sent an email to students and parents indicating the school is “closely monitoring the virus.” And, in an “Ask the Expert” column on the university’s website in August, Peter Gulick, a professor of medicine in the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine and an infectious disease expert, said, “We need to educate the public about what this is, and how to prevent the spread. In addition, as more vaccines become available, all high-risk people should start

getting vaccinated.”

Linda Vail, Inghman County health officer, stresses that it’s important to remember that the virus can be transmitted during any close physical contact — not just sex. High-risk activities can include dancing in a crowded bar, kissing and hugging and sharing clothes, bedsheets and towels with someone who has open sores.

While none of the university communities we researched indicate that they’ve canceled events, all are taking a proactive approach. Each of the campus communities surveyed referred to CDC guidelines on preventing the spread of the virus, including:

- Those exposed to someone with MPV or who have a rash they think might be MPV, should contact their health care provider as soon as possible.
- Those with a suspicious rash should stay away from others, cover all of the lesions and wear a mask until they can see their health care provider.
- Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially before eating or touching one’s face and after using the bathroom.
- Avoid direct, skin-to-skin contact with people who have MPV lesions or rashes that look like they may be MPV.
- Talk to the people with whom you have come in direct contact, including intimate and sexual contact, about their general health and any other recent rashes or sores.
- Avoid contact with any objects, fabrics or materials, such as bedding, clothing and towels, that have been in contact with an infected person.

## → The Queen

Continued from page 7

was settled out of court in New York, sparing the queen yet another public humiliation at the hands of her sometimes sordid family. Her grandchildren haven’t fared much better, with William and Harry not speaking after the latter’s leaving royal duties to cut lucrative Netflix deals and grant endless interviews along with his wife begging for privacy.

Enough already. Elizabeth was one of a kind, a selfless public servant whose likes Britain will never see again. And with her death, the monarchy should end.

Australia is expected to vote for an independent republic in the wake of the queen’s death; the current prime minister supports such a move and Greens Party leaders immediately called for it upon Elizabeth’s passing. Greens Sen. Mehreen Faruqi went even further, saying she “cannot mourn the leader of a racist empire.” At least six Caribbean commonwealth countries indicated earlier this year their intent to leave the

commonwealth, following the exit of Barbados in 2021.

It’s odd to read social media posts from Americans this week, declaring “long live the king,” considering we rebelled against the monarchy and are supposed to disdain such arrangements. We can respect Elizabeth’s life’s work without endorsing the outmoded, racist construct that is the British monarchy. There isn’t much left of the commonwealth and Charles is mostly “playacting,” as Hayes Brown wrote for MSNBC. “The crown and scepter will be costuming, allowing him to uphold the illusion that the monarchy still has a role to play in a modern constitutional republic.”

Charles will serve as a placeholder for King William, who in all likelihood will be Britain’s last king and preside over its inevitable and much-needed dissolution.

Kevin Naff is editor of the Blade. Reach him at [knaff@washblade.com](mailto:knaff@washblade.com). This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National Gay Media Association.

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## → Justin Mendoza

Continued from page 12

of staunchly anti-choice politicians in office — like my opponent — then we will lose some concessions even on this afterwards. I don't want to predict too much, but I know that they'll come after it in some way, shape or form."

Among Mendoza's other top priorities as a state representative would be amending the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. He believes it's not enough that the Michigan Supreme Court recently ruled "sex" discrimination also includes discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. "We've just learned from the Dobbs decision that establishing precedent isn't the end of the line," Mendoza said, clear-eyed. He was likening it to the Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, which many fear has opened the door to reevaluating other precedents, such as marriage equality.

These and other issues, like common sense

gun reform, workers' rights and quality public education, are what Mendoza hears are on the minds of the voters in his district that he talks with every day. It's an area in the southwest part of the state, outside the city of Kalamazoo, and includes several communities where Mendoza was raised.

"I grew up in Otsego," Mendoza said. "My parents divorced when I was young, so I bounced around from Otsego to Plainwell to Cooper Township." After studying biology at Central Michigan University and receiving a Master's degree in public health from Yale, Mendoza followed his career to D.C. and Boston. In response to the pandemic, as a coalition builder, Mendoza was able to win language in the American Rescue Plan that secured billions of dollars in public health investments for marginalized groups.

At that time, because he had the opportunity to work remotely, Mendoza was eager to return to his southwest Michigan roots. Today, he

lives in Parchment, a small town in Kalamazoo County with a population of just under 2,000, with his wife Izzy and two dogs.

In contrast, Mendoza's Republican opponent moved to the district within a couple days of the deadline as a registered elector. Keep in mind there is no requirement that he actually live in the apartment he's renting there.

"Parchment has this just wonderful community feeling to it, where folks are welcoming," Mendoza said about why he loves where he lives. "It seems like the entire community, or at least most of the younger families, come out to all of these events and enjoy hot chocolate and wassailing in the winter time and summer concert series right here in our park. I just fell in love with it when I was in middle school and was reminded of how much I loved it when I moved back here." He added that the area, and especially Parchment, is unique politically in that neighbors tend not to be rude to one another over their political

differences. The focus is on what's happening in their own community.

To illustrate the welcoming nature of his district, Mendoza told Pride Source he hasn't experienced any hate during the campaign related to his Latino heritage or his sexual orientation. "Not yet," he said. "It's almost been surprising, but I also think we sometimes hear the worst stories."

If elected, Mendoza, who is bisexual, would be the first Latino LGBTQ+ person in the Michigan State Legislature. He said representation is critical.

"When I think back to growing up in southwest Michigan, and even my own coming out story, I didn't talk about my sexual orientation until in my 20s," said Mendoza, who is 31. I didn't really come to terms with or figure it out until later." Growing up in the '90s and early '00s, Mendoza said he didn't see elected officials or community leaders who were openly LGBTQ+. As it's been said, you can't be

what you don't see.

Representation is also important for what that demonstrates to the general public. Seeing people who are out in positions of authority puts a face on an abstract group of people. Interacting with queer individuals leads to breaking down barriers and helps humanize the community. "Ultimately, in the end, we're all just humans trying to survive, trying to build our lives and trying to do the best we can for our communities," Mendoza said.

"Growing up, I didn't have very many leaders in the U.S. to look at who had a last name like Mendoza," he said. "I think that now we've got a lot more across the country, which is really great. There's a Hispanic and Latino caucus at the Michigan Democratic Party. It's great to see folks representing the community and coming up into it."

"For me, I occupied this kind of weird half space where my father is from the Dominican Republic and my mother's family is from Kentucky, Michigan — and it's kind of this mixed multi-generational perspective, but I also think that's important because that's a lot of America. There's so many of us who have multiple heritages that come together."

*Michigan's 42nd State House District encompasses townships in Allegan and Kalamazoo counties surrounding the cities of Kalamazoo and Portage on the north, south, and east side, and ending on the western border of Kalamazoo County. Additionally, it extends into Otsego, Gun Plain, and Ross Townships. Learn more about Justin Medoza's campaign at [justin4mi.com](http://justin4mi.com). Election Day is Nov. 8. Early voting begins Sept. 29.*



Justin and Izzy Mendoza. Courtesy photo

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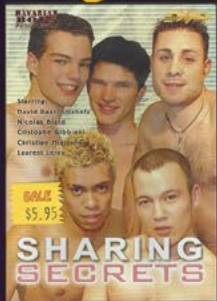
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Lil Nas at Detroit's Fox Theatre. Photo: Aaron Idelson

→ Lil Nas X

Continued from page 8

It's a conceptual three-act creation, beginning with our introduction to The Wizard of Naz, a Black female-presenting cyborg who narrates the story of Montero (Nas's real name is Montero Lamar Hill), who, as the show moves from dark to light, gets his literal butterfly wings during "Call Me By Your Name." He is saved, but saved by himself. By his side: eight dancers who worked the stage with deft, loose-legged fluidity — Nas's tightly choreographed family of queers.

In nearly 70 minutes, the rapper took a theater full of gays, allies and twerkers to homophobic hell and then to gay heaven, places he seems to know on a personal level. While reliving his journey to being openly gay himself, he lambasted religion's troubling impact on him as a child, as he navigated his sexuality. He, through action but also directly through speech, gave his followers permission to "be a bitch sometimes." He charted his own trajectory from oppressed Black queer "industry baby" to sexually empowered Black queer music powerhouse, sex positivity radiating through every gyration, phallic use of his mic and his ab-baring, rhinestone-encrusted costumes. And I don't have to tell you that he made out with one of his dancers. If you know Nas, you know

there was probably tongue, too.

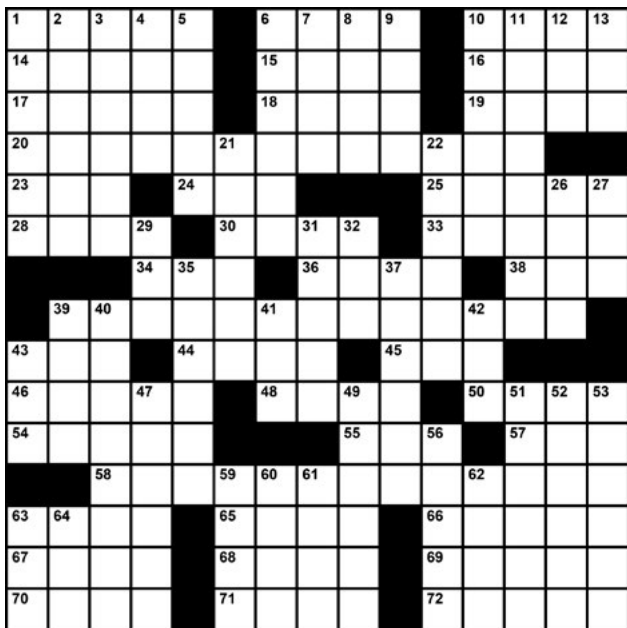
Throughout, Nas strutted on and off stage like he was experiencing the same sense of euphoria as the crowd. At one point, he even seemed emotional watching thousands of admirers

*The rapper took a theater full of gays, allies and twerkers to homophobic hell and then to gay heaven.*

show him so much love. After he closed Act Three with a confetti explosion, he returned to debut a new song, "Star Walkin'" and threw himself into the pit of fans in front of the stage.

By the end of his exhilarating set, Nas was the hero in his own stage story, the underdog who rose to the top, the defier of odds. And the show's glitter-drenched core message was simple, profound and beautifully expressed through every gay inch of its life: That, honey, you can be too.





- 39 See 20-Across  
 43 Solidly behind  
 44 He wore Superman's clothes  
 45 Corporate VIP  
 46 "Monster" star Christina  
 48 Taylor of "I Shot Andy Warhol"  
 50 Cherry variety  
 54 Annoy during a blow job?  
 55 QB's misfire  
 57 Yokohama drama  
 58 With 68-Across, the continuation of the saying  
 63 Mostel of "The Producers"  
 65 Soon, to Shakespeare  
 66 City Porter loved in song  
 67 Closely confined  
 68 See 58-Across  
 69 Ready for action, for guys  
 70 Program with Chris Colfer  
 71 Auction web site  
 72 Boneheads
- 10 "The German Officer's Boy" writer Harlan  
 11 It's a long story, in slang  
 12 Bambi character that wasn't horny?  
 13 Beauty of "Roseanne"  
 21 Put a new label on  
 22 Kind of car for tots  
 26 "Take a crack \_\_\_\_"  
 27 Orange veggie  
 29 Ann Bannon's "\_\_\_ Girl Out"  
 31 Mapplethorpe subject Smith  
 32 California's Big \_\_\_\_  
 35 La Femme of espionage  
 37 Shoestrings  
 39 Opera queen's delight  
 40 Pensive piano piece by Barber, perhaps  
 41 Show with C. Kattan  
 42 Sailor, slangily  
 43 Start of mature ejaculation  
 47 "Tru" story subject  
 49 Laura of "Tales of the City"  
 51 Accustoms  
 52 Become aware of  
 53 Hamlet's father, and more  
 56 Aggressive sort  
 59 Bargain sign at Barneys  
 60 Attachment often found on drawers  
 61 I of Lesbos  
 62 They move your dinghy  
 63 Census goal helped by gay sex (abbr.)  
 64 Sushi selection

### Sulu Before an Election

### Q Puzzle

#### Across

- 1 Bette, who feuded with Joan  
 6 Highsmith title condiment  
 10 Cops under Hoover  
 14 Beethoven's "F\_r \_\_\_\_"  
 15 "East of Eden" director Kazan  
 16 Actor Auberjonois  
 17 Insertion indicator  
 18 Tear apart  
 19 Synonym for Gomer's "Shazam!"

- 20 With 39-Across, the start of a saying by Sulu's portrayer  
 23 Whoop-de-\_\_\_\_  
 24 Born, to Bonheur  
 25 Decorative work  
 28 Canadian oil company  
 30 Small swallows at Hung Jury  
 33 Greek triangle  
 34 Crime lab stuff  
 36 Barrie's getting on in years  
 38 Prepare to shoot off

#### Down

- 1 Choose a singer on "American Idol." e.g.  
 2 Los \_\_\_\_, of A-bomb fame  
 3 Chaste people born after Leos?  
 4 Frasier's response to a client  
 5 \_\_\_\_ Hall University  
 6 Filmmaker Eisenstein  
 7 Toward shelter  
 8 Navel fetish accessory?  
 9 "Here it is!"

See p. 23 for answers

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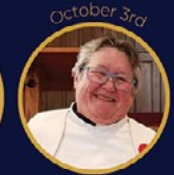
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 Church International



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