

MICHIGAN'S LGBTQ+ NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993

Between THE LinesTM

sizzling success

Meet the Detroit
chef who went from
viral 'TikTok zaddy' to
cookbook author

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

THE HOLIDAYS ARE FOR HEROES
More Inside!

New ED Treatment will Get Your Swing Back

Sexual confidence is an essential quality of life. No one should be deprived of the pleasure!

Whether it's medical, physical, or a combination of the two, challenges with sexual health can be frustrating and confusing to tackle.

At times, it may seem the only treatment options are experimenting with medications or devices that often don't deliver satisfying results. Be Well Medical Center, specializing in sexual health since 1980, is here to help you defeat ED for good with Alma Duo. This medical procedure is speedy, simple, and painless.

Alma Duo is a non-surgical and non-invasive treatment that can strengthen and improve men's sexual function. It is also a patented technology that is FDA-approved, extremely safe, and has a minimal risk of side effects. The innovative energy-based system is an attractive option for men that is administered in our office.

Most Experienced & Knowledgeable
Established in 1980 as the first Primary Care Medical Clinic in the Detroit area specializing in LGBTQ+ care.

Board Certified in Family Practice & Designated Patient-Centered Medical Home by Blue Cross Blue Shield as a Center of Excellence.

Dr. Paul Benson's

Be Well
Medical Center

1964 Eleven Mile Rd
Berkley, MI 40872

(248) 544-9300
doctorbewell.com



A REVOLUTIONARY TREATMENT FOR

MEN

NO PAIN
NO NEEDLES
NO DOWNTIME



Living Life before
Alma Duo.

Living Life with
Alma Duo.

Kindness & Patient Care: At the Top of Our Priorities since 1980

Dr. Benson is an Associate Professor at Michigan State University providing training to our next generation of physicians. **He leads our team of professional and talented Providers:**

Paul Benson, DO



Mark Bornstein, DO



Caleb Youngblood, PA-C, AAHIV-S



Mark Rosen, PA-C



Leon Bullough, NP-F



Marna Taylor, FNP-C



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



- 4 5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now-ish
- 6 Why LGBTQ+ People Often Gravitate Toward Chosen Families During the Holidays
- 7 This Bisexual Filmmaker Wasn't Seeing Herself Represented in Christmas Movies, So She Made Her Own
- 8 Detroit Chef Cooks Up Sizzling Success
- 10 A Tale of Two LGBTQ+ Murders in Michigan
- 12 Creep of the Week: Pope Announces: 'Gays Are OK, I Guess' in a Take-What-We- Can-Get 2023
- 13 The Scroll: Rev. Roland Stringfellow Joins MiGen Team
- 14 A Conductor from Michigan Creates Safe Spaces for the Queer Musician Community in Deep Red Florida
- 16 A Community-Minded Detroiter Looks Out for Their Neighbors, Queer or Not
- 20 Bree Rowe's Hard-Won Journey to Healing and Spreading 'Queer Joy'
- 22 'Breaking Free' Changed Everything for This Once-Closeted Secret Service Agent
- 26 Local LGBTQ+ Community Members Need Your Help During the Holidays and Beyond

page 8



Photo: Johnny Miller

VOL. 3151 • DECEMBER 21, 2023

ISSUE 1244

PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP

www.pridesource.com
Phone 734-263-1476

PUBLISHERS

Benjamin Jenkins
benjamin@pridesource.com

Publishers Emeritus: Jan Stevenson & Susan Horowitz

EDITORIAL

Editorial Director

Chris Azzopardi
chris@pridesource.com

Managing Editor

Sarah Bricker Hunt
sarah@pridesource.com

Senior Staff Writers

Ellen Shanna Knoppow, Jason A. Michael

CREATIVE

Cartoonists

Paul Berg

Graphic Designer

Sarah Wolf

Contributing Photographers

Andrew Potter, Andrew Cohen

ADVERTISING & SALES

sales@pridesource.com

Carolyn Cardenas

734-263-1476

carolyn@pridesource.com

Tim Powers

734-263-1475

tim@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



2022 AWARD WINNER



"Pride Source"



Follow us @pridesource



@pridesourcemedia



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 2023

**Delivered Straight to
Your Mailbox**

Support LGBTQ+ journalism and get BTL delivered
to your door for just \$95/year or \$10/month.

WWW.PRIDESOURCE.COM/SUBSCRIBE

5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now-ish

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

You did it! Another sometimes tumultuous, whirlwind year is in the books, and here you are, triumphant and not at all tired or ready for one of those long winter's naps. Or maybe you are, and that's fine, too. When you're ready to venture out, don't miss a classic holiday event with PRISM Men's Chorus or a "holigay" dance party at Soho. You can also catch "RuPaul's Drag Race" star Latrice Royale at two events over New Year's Eve weekend, learn how to be a roller derby player and find true love at a queer speed dating event.



Latrice Royale. Courtesy photo

1 Play Drag Queen Bingo with Latrice Royale

Ease into your hopefully debauchery-filled New Year's Eve weekend with some drag queen bingo. It's the perfect way to say farewell to 2023, a year where our drag queens and kings were subjected to needless harassment and bigotry from coast to coast. "Drag Race" star Latrice Royale will host the Dec. 30 Drag Bingo for Ann Arbor Pride event at Tap Room in Ypsilanti. The restaurant will offer its regular menu to drag bingo guests. You can also catch Latrice at Tap Room on Dec. 31 for the New Year's Eve Drag Spectacular, which will support Jim Toy Community Center.

Drag Bingo: Dec. 30, 6 p.m., Tap Room (201 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti). Tickets at bit.ly/47ZhtPL. NYE Drag Spectacular: Dec. 31, 8 p.m. Tickets at bit.ly/3GKw5Xx.



2 Leave Your Holiday Angst on the Dancefloor

The holidays can be stressful. Dance it out at 215 West on Dec. 23, when the venue will transport you to the world of Tim Burton's "Nightmare Before Christmas." Is it a Halloween movie or a Christmas movie? Does it even matter as long as there are plenty of sexy Jack Skellingtons in the mix? Sponsored by Queer Dance Party and Soho, the Christmas Town Holigay Extravaganza will offer a "slay" full of holiday delights, including beats spun by DJs Tylr and Monarch and a performance by local drag queen superstar Golden O'Hara-Polo.

Dec. 23, 9 p.m., 215 West (215 W. 9 Mile, Ferndale).



3 Sing Carols with PRISM Chorus

Craving a classic Christmas moment with a festive queer twist? PRISM Men's Chorus and Christ Church Cranbrook have you covered with the Christmas Carols and Chocolate event. Set for Dec. 23, the festivities include a reading of "The Gift of the Magi," a family-friendly Christmas carol singalong and a hot chocolate and dessert bar. All are welcome. Christ Church Cranbrook will also hold several queer-inclusive Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, including an online service at christchurchcranbrook.org/church-at-home.

Dec. 23, 5-7 p.m., Christ Church Cranbrook (470 Church Road, Bloomfield Hills). No need to RSVP. Holiday services schedule available at christchurchcranbrook.org.



4

Speed Up Your Dating Life

Do your New Year's resolutions — which you are totally going to keep — include being proactive about your dating life? Great news! An LGBTQ+ speed dating event in Royal Oak on Jan. 6 has your name all over it. You'll jump into quick, timed conversations with other local LGBTQ+ folks at ImaginAte over food and drink. Organizers promise a fun, relaxed setting for this event, which just might be a quaint throwback in the modern era of trying to find quality partners amidst the dizzying, horrifying world of dating and hookup apps.

Jan. 6, 7-10 p.m., ImaginAte (401 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak). Tickets at bit.ly/3RpxEyR.

5



Join a Roller Derby League

The sport and spectacle of roller derby has been on an upswing in recent years for many reasons — the roller queens are fab, and the whole environment is charmingly kitschy, unfailingly inclusive and community-centric. You, too, could become a menace on wheels, as Michigan leagues regularly invite potential new members to get involved. Lansing Roller Derby will offer two informational boot camps starting in early January for adults and kids aged 7 to 17. Sarah Reimann, a public relations liaison for the league who plays under the name Deacon Bruise, tells BTL the sport is uniquely inclusive of all shapes, sizes and abilities. "We're excited to get more kids involved in the wonderful world of roller derby," she says. "This sport is so inclusive for boys, girls and all body types." The boot camps are 10 weeks long and start with orientation sessions on Jan. 4 and 7. Learn more at lansingrollerderby.com.

Beginning January 2024, various dates at Court One Training Center (7868 Old M-78, East Lansing). Visit lansingrollerderby.com/basic-skills-boot-camp for more details.

The
SMOKEHOUSE
@ Home

"An unlikely barbecue hotspot!"
~Detroit Metro Times

**PICK-UP & DELIVERY
NOW AVAILABLE!**

Order all your Smokehouse favorites online today.
MENU.HOLIDAY-MARKET.COM

Holiday Market 1203 S Main St., Royal Oak
248.541.1414 | holiday-market.com

Real Good BBQ
From Holiday

ORDER NOW!

Why LGBTQ+ People Often Gravitate Toward Chosen Families During the Holidays

'Tis the season for navigating the holidays with whatever family you choose



BY KRYSTINA EDWARDS

As the festive season approaches, people eagerly anticipate joyful celebrations with their loved ones. For many members of the LGBTQ+ community, however, this is not the case.

The holiday season can be a challenging time, marked by feelings of social exclusion and trauma. In my role as Community Engagement Manager at Ruth Ellis Center, which serves

access to critical resources, and to connect young people and their families to helpful programs and services. In my role, I see firsthand how they navigate this time of year and I work to alleviate some of that pain, by collecting gifts and arranging holiday dinners on our campus. Helping them learn how to navigate those feelings and to find joy and connection within the community is a big part of my job.

How do I advise our community to navigate holiday trauma? I encourage them to value relationships not determined

longtime friend of your mom who you have always known as your “aunt.” The people we choose as family hold great significance due to the relatable environments, common interests and random acts of kindness and support.

But why? Why do we need chosen families? And why do many LGBTQ+ folks have a stronger bond with friends and chosen families?

Social exclusion, which refers to the act of marginalizing or isolating individuals

be particularly painful during the holidays. Festive gatherings may serve as painful reminders of strained relationships or the absence of familial support, leading to heightened feelings of loneliness and exclusion. The time traditionally spent reconnecting

and reinforce feelings of exclusion and unworthiness.

The presence of chosen families is the best way to curb the triggers and negativity, but there is a lot that allies and friends can do to uplift and bring joy during a troubling time. Reach out and offer

“Let us not forget my favorite reason for changing holiday traditions—discovering discrimination and prejudice among family members during the holiday season.”



LGBTQ+ young people of color who are at risk or experiencing homelessness, the struggle of abandonment is clear for those who walk through our doors every day.

My role is to be informed on community resources, to improve

by pure coincidence and to acknowledge that the friends you made along your journey into being your authentic self are, in fact, your *real* family. A chosen family is what you make it, like your childhood friend you often introduce as your cousin or the

from social networks and activities due to their identity or differences, leads to trauma — trauma that can be associated with the holidays if abandoned by family. Many LGBTQ+ individuals face rejection or lack of acceptance from their families, which can

with family can open old wounds and be triggering to many.

When it's time to face family during the holiday season, LGBTQ+ people are often asked about or hit with feelings of heteronormative expectations. Society often emphasizes heteronormative ideals during the holidays, such as traditional family structures and gender roles. This can further alienate LGBTQ+ individuals, as their identities and relationships may not conform to these expectations. The pressure to conform can lead to feelings of inadequacy and a sense of not belonging.

Let us not forget my favorite reason for changing holiday traditions — discovering discrimination and prejudice among family members during the holiday season. Holiday events and gatherings spent with family may expose LGBTQ+ individuals to insensitive comments, microaggressions or outright discrimination. Such experiences can trigger trauma

support to your LGBTQ+ friends, co-workers and neighbors. Offer them support, a listening ear or an invitation to inclusive events. Simple gestures of inclusivity can make a significant difference. For those who wish to mend relationships with their LGBTQ+ family members and those looking to invite over their LGBTQ+ friends, colleagues and neighbors, be sure to create an inclusive space. Avoid assumptions about gender identities, relationships or family dynamics. Encourage open dialogue and respect for diverse experiences.

For those who do not have supportive networks and have yet to find a chosen family, reach out to local LGBTQ+ networks, look online and build your own family.

Small acts of kindness are what the holiday season is all about, so I encourage us to embrace that spirit and spread joy during this time. Don't be a scrooge; be a grinch and steal Christmas, but only to return it better than you received it.



Lindsay Hicks and Rivkah Reyes star in “A Holiday I Do,” directed by bisexual filmmaker Alicia Schneider. Courtesy photo

This Bisexual Filmmaker Wasn’t Seeing Herself Represented in Christmas Movies, So She Made Her Own

‘A Holiday I Do’ brims with love for Michigan

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

You might be saying “I do” to a new queer holiday film shot right here in Michigan.

Not only does the movie feature heartwarming coziness, “A Holiday I Do,” filmed over five weeks in 2022, features places like Saugatuck and the greater West Michigan area. Director Alicia Schneider, a bisexual filmmaker

from Michigan, also filmed scenes in mid-Michigan — which wasn’t without challenges, she tells BTL.

“Lansing itself was great, but once you got out of that into the more rural areas, it was tough. Once they found out what the film was, we had a couple of people back out,” Schneider says. “But we were lucky enough to find the perfect locations, and they were all very accepting.”

Schneider says she chose the Midwest as the setting for her film because many people don’t realize there are “so many wonderful accepting people here” and because growing up “as a gay person in the Midwest” is all that

she’s ever known.

“A lot of LGBTQ+ films now take place in New York or L.A. or Chicago, so I think a Midwest viewpoint has been a bit missed,” she says. “I wanted to touch on those people so that it could give them a place to feel seen.”

While there have been hundreds of made-for-TV Christmas films that lovingly nail the formula to a tee, chief among them on the Hallmark Channel, those films have been slow to incorporate queer characters into its movies in lieu of more “traditional” love stories. Perhaps because of the popular support for and marked success of other LGBTQ+

Christmas movies, Hallmark debuted “The Christmas House” in 2020 — its first holiday film featuring a gay couple — and this season, it has two new queer films, “Christmas on Cherry Lane” and “Friends & Family Christmas.”

These queer-inclusive Hallmark holiday movies come on the heels of backlash that Hallmark faced in 2019 when it pulled commercials off the air that featured lesbian brides. It was around this time that Schneider began a Christmas movie binge herself and noticed a gap in LGBTQ+ Christmas film representation. That’s when she got the idea for the queer-led film “A Holiday I Do,” which

came out this November on Tello, a streamer dedicated to programming featuring queer women.

“I just wanted to watch two women fall in love, because that was the point that I was at in my life,” Schneider says. “I just wanted to see myself represented, and I couldn’t find one [movie] anywhere.”

Schneider partnered with her husband, Paul Schneider, to make the film; together they operate the Michigan-based production company Rock Solid Creative

See **A Holiday I Do**, page 24

Detroit Chef Cooks Up *Sizzling Success*



Jon Kung. Photo: Johnny Miller

Why cookbook author Jon Kung left law to launch a successful TikTok

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

If you're one of the 1.7 million people following nonbinary chef Jon Kung on TikTok (@jonkung), you may have watched their food tutorials and felt as hungry as you did thirsty. Hungry because, recently, they made spicy beef dumplings that look mouth-wateringly great, a recipe included in their new book, "Kung Food: Chinese American Recipes from a Third-Culture Kitchen: A Cookbook." Thirsty because they sometimes enjoy their dumplings in just a swimsuit, like they have in the past on a paddle board going down the Detroit River.

In the comments on a recent video of Kung preparing soba noodles without a shirt, one fan, who was clearly there for more than the food, wrote, "I've watched this 4x in a row and still couldn't tell you any of the ingredients." (Go back far enough in their feed and you'll note that a simple gay white tank gets a lot of screen time.)

No surprise then that "TikTok zaddy" is how queer outlet INTO refers to Kung, who is 40 and describes themselves as a "Farmer Jack-era Detroiter." But that label, while inarguably true (they really did love that tank for a while), is the main course, but definitely not the full meal.

In a way you wouldn't expect, their career in food started with a prospective career in theater, which they studied at Eastern Michigan University (EMU). TikTok is theater, of course.

"If you look at some of the most popular creators, it doesn't even matter what genre — could be food, could be engineering, could be medical, could be law — it's just a matter of being effective communicators," they say about studying theater. "It helps you become effective as a communicator, and that's why they do so well in this medium."

Kung has undoubtedly done well — their impressive presence on social media, which became their full-fledged career focus just a few years ago, in 2020, eventually landed them a book deal through Clarkson Potter, a subsidiary of major publishing company Penguin Random House. In fact, you might go as far as saying that TikTok more than worked for them, and in a relatively short period.

"People who don't really understand the art think performance is lying when really it's the complete opposite," they say. "It's the expression of a truth at any given moment in time."

Kung's own truth is conveyed with dry

humor and easy-to-love authenticity — the keys to success these days — that has allowed them to carve out a space in the professional chef world, with a side of baked-in queerness that goes much deeper than queer desire. For example, in the acknowledgments portion of the book, Kung raises the bar for engagement proposals, writing to their boyfriend-of-nine-years Jonathon: “Would you perhaps consider marrying me?” (Jonathon said yes.)

But long before the outro, there is richer context on Kung’s journey in the book’s introduction, which encompasses the answer to what “third-world culture” cooking means to them. To understand how who they are influences what they cook, this is a good place to start.

“As a third-culture kid, I grew up neither fully here nor there — I didn’t feel completely accepted as American or Chinese,” they write. “Personally, I see ‘third culture’ as being something that is inclusive and full of possibility. It has had a huge influence on art, literature, fashion and design, and I would argue that it can also apply to food.”

Featuring recipes for dishes like Jerk Chow Mein, Buffalo Chicken Rangoons, and Hong Kong Chicken and Waffles, Kung’s debut cookbook is a self-proclaimed “celebration of diversity,” one that helped affirm their diasporic identity as it spotlights their roots

as a Chinese American who was born in Los Angeles and raised in Hong Kong and Toronto. They describe their culinary style as “American Chinese,” or “Third-Culture Chinese.”

“While I might not be able to express all the intricacies of my identity and culture in words, I can do my best to cook you a dish that captures my story,” Kung writes in the book.

“When I found out we had ‘Kung Food’ in as a project with Potter, I just knew I absolutely had to work on it,” says Felix Cruz, a publicist at Clarkson Potter, who says he was struck by that passage.

“Jon’s IG and TikTok videos were a big part of my pandemic routine — their voice was so soothing and the recipes

they made, told with such insightful history and context, really strengthened my belief that cooking food is a powerful and intentional method for navigating uncertain times,” he adds.

The book, however, wasn’t ever really a part of Kung’s master plan, which, long before becoming a TikTok influencer and studying theater at EMU, also involved law school. In 2011, Kung got their law degree from the University of Detroit



Jon Kung. Photo: Johnny Miller

Mercy School of Law, but after they started practicing on real cases, they realized it wasn’t for them and changed course. They returned to their creative roots, posting 60-second cooking lessons on TikTok in 2020, a quick pivot from Kung’s pandemic-spoiled plan to open a small restaurant. People were already baking sourdough at home while sheltering in place, and now they could join Kung in making some of their TikTok specialties: Lion’s Head Meatballs, a variety of tomato sandwiches and dishes based on anime characters.

See **Jon Kung**, page 18

*Big New Musical.
Big. Huge.*

PRETTY WOMAN **THE MUSICAL**

FEBRUARY 20-25

FISHER THEATRE / BROADWAYINDETROIT.COM

GROUPS (10+) BROADWAYINDETROITGROUPS@THEAMBASSADORS.COM (SUBJECT: PRETTY WOMEN)

WICKLIAN'S LGBTQ+ NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1980

BTL
Between! Lines

PRIDESOURCE

**Are You Ready To
Introduce Your Business
to the LGBTQ+ Community?**

PRIDESOURCE.COM/ADVERTISE



A Tale of Two LGBTQ+ Murders in Michigan

What to make of two community members whose murders have gone unsolved

BY JON KING

As 2023 draws to a close, the murders of two LGBTQ+ community members from the Detroit area officially remain unsolved, although a resolution appears closer in one of the cases than it does in the other.

Detroit neurosurgeon Dr. Devon Hoover, 53, was found shot to death in the attic of his Detroit home on April 23. Police were called there on a welfare check after he failed to show up in Indiana for a scheduled family visit.

BTL previously confirmed that Hoover was part of the LGBTQ+ community and lived alone in his 13,000-square-foot home in the city's upscale Boston-Edison neighborhood.

On June 2, the body of Ashia Davis, 34, a Black transgender woman from Detroit, was discovered in a Highland Park hotel room.

Highland Park police said they received a 911 call at about 1:30 that morning with the caller saying they noticed an open door to a room at the Woodward Inn. Davis was subsequently pronounced dead after EMS responded to the scene.

While neither case has yet to result in an arrest, Hoover's case has drawn a higher profile, including a write-up in *People* magazine, and authorities say they expect a break soon.

At the Nov. 2 meeting of the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners, Detroit Police Chief James White said he was in regular communication with Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy and was "hopeful" there would be an announcement about Hoover's case by the end of the year.

"We are confident that we should be able to bring some closure to this family very, very soon," White was quoted by the *Detroit News* as telling the board.

In contrast, not much has been said about Davis' murder. Michigan State Police's (MSP) Special Investigation Section took up that investigation at the request of Highland Park Police.

Other than releasing surveillance video of a suspect seen approaching, and then later running from Davis' room, there have been no further public statements.

At the time of the murder, Lt. Michael Shaw, the public information officer for MSP Second District Headquarters, said it was not known whether Davis had been sexually assaulted or if the murder was related to Davis being transgender.

When contacted by BTL, Shaw said that there have been no updates in the investigation since then, although they are still seeking tips at 855-MICH TIP.

However, he did confirm that despite nearly six months having elapsed since the murder, an official cause of death has yet

to be released. That's despite witnesses on the scene, including victim advocate for the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office Julisa Abad, saying Davis appeared to have died of a gunshot wound.

Abad could not be reached for comment for this article.

Shaw also said that "at this moment" they are not sure whether Davis knew her assailant.

On the other hand, police have released numerous details about Hoover's death, including that when his body was discovered, it was wrapped in a blanket and a comforter, naked but for one black sock, and that he had been shot twice in the back of the head.

Additionally, Chief White said immediately after Hoover's body was discovered that the killing was not random, and that the assailant and victim knew each other.

In fact, a person of interest was arrested but then later released.

Meanwhile, friends of Davis have been left with few answers, and even less hope, that her killer will be found.

One of those friends, Timothy Clark, started a GoFundMe campaign to help raise money for her funeral.

“Ashia Davis was taken away from us in a senseless act of violence,” he wrote on the page, which raised just over \$2,000 and is no longer accepting donations. “A beautiful soul with a heart of gold. Ashia is a part of the transgender community that is often targeted. She has a family that includes an aging mother that is just completely devastated.”

To that point, trans women like Ashia live in a reality in which their very existence places them at a higher risk for violence. According to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), Davis’ death was one of at least 25 transgender and gender non-conforming people whose lives were ended through violent means.

According to a fact sheet by Everytown Research, while just 13 percent of the trans population in the United States is estimated to be Black, 67 percent of known trans homicide victims killed with a gun were Black women.

So what are we to make of the disparity between the public statements by police in these two cases? According to Dr. David Hayes, a Michigan-based criminologist, not as much as one might think.

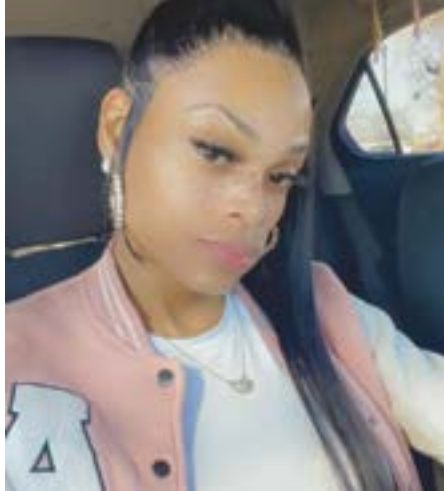
“Although communications in high-profile investigations are sometimes closely held to the vest by law enforcement, there is generally always a good deal of activity behind the scenes,” Dr. Hayes told BTL. “How that is communicated, though, is decided by each individual department and lead investigator. At its core, the two cases are incredibly dissimilar. Dr. Hoover’s death was in a familiar place and law enforcement, based on past homicides, could be reasonably well assured that the perpetrator was known to the victim. Davis, on the other hand, presents a different issue.”

Hayes says there can be no doubt that transgender women of color like Davis face a higher chance of being murdered.

“The reasoning behind that could be layered, but there are modern schools of thought...and a historical precedent, using what some call ‘castration language,’ coalesc[ing] into transgender women of color evoking murderous reactions within their communities just for existing,” he said.

Hayes adds that while not many details are publicly known about the circumstances of Davis’ murder, her chances of being the victim of a stranger would be far greater than most.

Regardless, Tori Cooper, the HRC director of community engagement for the Transgender Justice Initiative, says the



Devon Hoover (top) and Ashia Davis. Courtesy photos

personal tragedy of Davis’ death can’t be summarized in mere numbers.

“Ashia Davis was a beautiful human being who deserves at a minimum to be alive today, sharing her cheerful spirit with us,” said Cooper. “Anti-trans rhetoric and stigma perpetuate this violence. It’s beyond unacceptable that not nearly enough of those in power have spoken out against this inhumanity. We continue to call for justice — for Ashia and for all those we’ve lost without sufficient answers.”

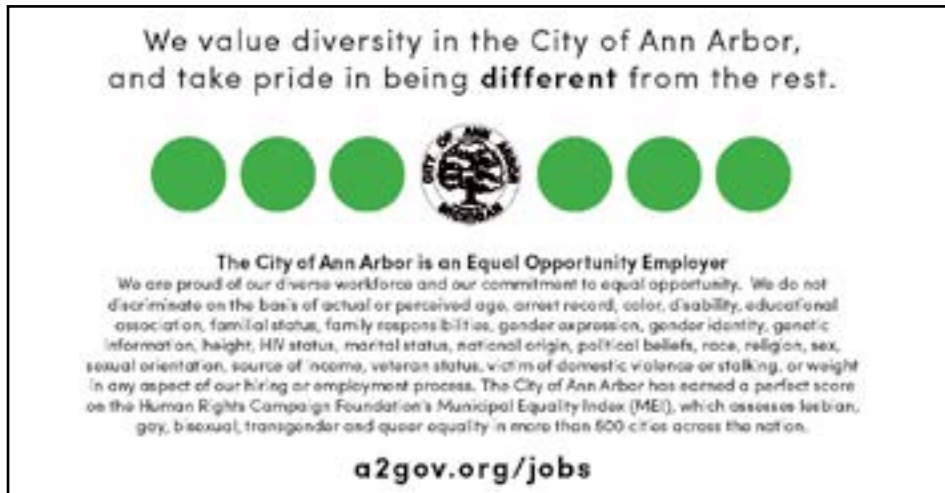
And that personal tragedy is also felt by Dr. Hoover’s friends and family.

“We, the family of Devon Hoover, wish to express our profound sadness at the loss of a beloved son, brother and uncle,” the family said in a statement, reported by WDIV. “We grieve his untimely death and will miss him greatly. We are so grateful for the many words of kindness and stories from people who were touched by his life. He was a gift from God and used his talents to bless many.”

While a break in his case appears close, Crime Stoppers of Michigan is still offering a reward of \$22,500 for any information leading to an arrest. You can submit a tip by calling 1-800-SPEAK-UP.

However, as best as can be determined, no such reward is being offered in Davis’ case.

And that is a tragedy that speaks for itself.



Pope Announces: 'Gays Are OK, I Guess' in a Take-What-We- Can-Get 2023



BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

As 2023 draws to a close, we can count on Congressional Republicans to be doing the important work of the American people.

Ha, just kidding. They are currently focused on... impeaching President Joe Biden based on zero evidence. They've got conspiracy theories, wishful thinking and a desire to avenge Donald Trump for his impeachments (twice!) for very real and actual crimes.

There are certainly things not to like about Biden and his administration, but "I just don't like the guy" isn't a great basis for impeachment. It's bullshit like this that drowns out legitimate concerns about Biden as president, which prevents any productive dialog about what the United States wants in a leader.

In other words, same shit, different day!

Democrats have recently been taking to calling Republicans "unserious." Granted, it's largely true. Republicans have shown over and over again they aren't interested

understand, but I don't think so! Same with their laser focus on dehumanizing transgender people, banning abortion, rolling back voting rights, advancing authoritarianism and making the rich richer.

If what Democrats mean is that Republicans are hateful creeps with fascist

allowed "so long as the blessing does not resemble a wedding." So in the eyes of the Catholic Church, same-sex marriage is still a sin, but also priests should be nicer to same-sex couples. A lose-win, as they say.

According to the Associated Press (AP), "[B]lessings in question must not be tied to any specific Catholic celebration or religious service" and "cannot use set rituals or even involve the clothing and gestures that belong in a wedding."

The whole point, you see, is that "people seeking a transcendent relationship with God and looking for his love and mercy shouldn't be held up to an impossible moral standard to receive it."

I know that for some people this feels like progress, but really it just seems like we're Pope-washing making LGBTQ+ people second-class citizens.

As the AP puts it, "The Vatican holds that marriage is an indissoluble union between man and woman. As a result, it has long opposed same-sex marriage and considers homosexual acts to be 'intrinsically disordered.' Nothing [has changed] that teaching."

Still, in a year that has had a lot of bad LGBTQ+ news, I suppose we have to take what we can get. Especially since 2024 is a presidential election year, and you can bet your copy of Maia Kobabe's "Gender Queer" (which is a really good book, by the way,

and is making conservative heads explode all over the country. All the more reason to buy a copy) that LGBTQ+ issues and people will be used extensively as political cannon fodder.

It's time to put on your mental/emotional armor to protect yourself from the coming onslaught. Surround yourself with a healing ring of light, even if that means you have to take the string of lights off the nearest Christmas tree and wrap yourself in those. Whatever it takes to make it through.

We're definitely at a precipice in American politics. What happens in 2024 could well define what happens for the rest of our lives should the Republican Party re-take the White House, win a majority in the U.S. Senate and widen their majority in the House. So no matter what, you have to get involved somehow. Whether that's just voting (the bare minimum, but a very important thing!), donating to a candidate you believe in, volunteering for a campaign to make phone calls or knocking doors, organizing voters or all of the above, there is something all of us can do to save democracy.

Granted the system we have is imperfect — very much so! — but Republicans aren't proposing something better. They're proposing that they get to throw away the rules and seize power. And that does not bode well for the future of LGBTQ+ people and allies in this country.



Pope Francis XVII has given the go-ahead for priests to bless same-sex unions. That may sound like progress, but here's the kicker: Those blessings are allowed "so long as the blessing does not resemble a wedding."

in governing and DGAF about the vast majority of Americans. But I don't think it's the sick burn Democrats want it to be.

Because the things that Republicans are serious about, they are very serious! I mean, maybe their nationwide crusade to ban books about racism and LGBTQ+ issues is some kind of big joke that I'm just too dense to

aspirations then they should say as much. "Unserious" just doesn't convey how extreme and dangerous the Republican Party is right now.

In other news, Pope Francis XVII has given the go-ahead for priests to bless same-sex unions. That may sound like progress, but here's the kicker: Those blessings are

Rev. Roland Stringfellow Joins MiGen Team

A veteran advocate for the Southeast Michigan LGBTQ+ community will soon join the team at MiGen (Michigan LGBTQ+ Elders Network). Rev. Roland Stringfellow, a senior pastor at Metropolitan Community Church – Detroit (MCCD) will serve the organization as a resource coordinator for the agency’s community navigation program.

In a news release, Stringfellow said he is thrilled to join the MiGen team. “Advocating for the needs of older adults, especially those who identify as LGBTQ+, has been a passion of mine. I now get to work on the ground with older adults to make sure they have what they need to thrive.”

Rev. Stringfellow has long been a

vocal LGBTQ+ advocate, including his recent work on the Shepherd House project, an LGBTQ-inclusive housing option for seniors due to open next year. “As I get ready to celebrate my 10th year as pastor at MCDD, adding this new responsibility expands my outreach as a community leader. I am a servant-leader at heart,” he said in the release.

In his new role, Rev. Stringfellow will work with the MiGen team to help older LGBTQ+ community members navigate healthcare, social services, vaccination and other resources.

Visit migenconnect.org for more information about programs and services.



Rev. Roland Stringfellow. Courtesy photo

Pope Francis Paves the Way for Same-Sex Catholic Blessings

Catholic priests will no longer be barred from blessing same-sex relationships after a Dec. 18 announcement from the Vatican on behalf of Pope Francis. Longstanding Catholic practices have forbidden these blessings due to the church’s marriage doctrine.

Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernández said in a declaration the new guidelines do not impact the sacrament of marriage. Cardinal Fernández wrote, “... one can understand the possibility of blessing couples in irregular situations and same-sex couples without officially validating their status or changing in any way the Church’s perennial teaching on marriage.”

In the New York Times, Rev. James Martin said the news is a “major step forward in the church’s ministry to LGBTQ people and recognizes the deep desire in many Catholic same-sex couples for God’s presence in their loving relationships.”

Changes Ahead for Two Michigan Queer Bars

The future is uncertain for a long-standing gay bar in Grand Rapids, while a queer-inclusive bar that opened in Michigan earlier this year and then immediately closed has

found a new home.

Rumors, a 20-year-old queer danceclub in Grand Rapids, is on the market for nearly \$4 million after the unexpected death of owner Allen Bath. Bath’s sister has been running Rumors from out of state, according to Crain’s. The building needs significant repairs.

Meanwhile, queer dance club Flaming Embers, which opened and immediately closed earlier this year in downtown Detroit, is

reopening as a weekly pop-up every Thursday in a new venue, The Norwood, in the New Center neighborhood. As LGBTQ+ bars shutter across the country, will we see more of these innovative collaborations?

Andre Braugher Dies

“Brooklyn Nine-Nine” fans are mourning after news broke on Dec. 11 that Andre Braugher died. Braugher played Capt. Raymond Holt, one of the most memorable, nuanced queer characters to ever star on a network sitcom. Braugher’s casting was something of a surprise after many years spent in dramatic roles, including a critically acclaimed run as Detective Frank Pembleton on “Homicide: Life in the Street,” which aired from 1993 to 1999.



Photo: NBC

Cranbrook Features Queer Muralist

As BTL reported earlier this year, a show at Cranbrook Art Museum focuses on the work of queer artist LeRoy Foster, who painted the “Life and Times of Frederick Douglass” mural that hangs in the Detroit Public Library’s Douglass branch. A cohort of Ruth Ellis and other major figures, Foster was openly gay during a particularly oppressive time in American history and his work often portrayed male subjects. “LeRoy Foster: Solo Show” runs through March.



Planet Ant Casting for Queer Play

Planet Ant in Hamtramck is holding auditions for “Lovebird Jamboree” on Dec. 28, a play similar in nature to Eve Ensler’s “Vagina Monologues” but with a queer twist. “Lovebird” features heartfelt, funny monologues created from interviews of LGBTQ+ folks. Director Shelby R. Seeley is seeking actors to voice queer, trans and BIPOC stories. Visit bit.ly/4810CvY for information about the Dec. 28 audition and the play’s rehearsal schedule.



Pope Francis. Photo: Boris Stroujko

A Conductor from Michigan Creates Safe Spaces for the Queer Musician Community in Deep Red Florida

As a leader, Kevin Fitzgerald prioritizes service and advocacy

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

Chances are, if you were to close your eyes and picture an orchestra conductor, you'd likely conjure up a stereotypical image: "old, white man in a tuxedo with gray hair," says conductor Kevin Fitzgerald. "These are the images burned into our collective consciousness."

It's an image the Brighton, Michigan native, Interlochen Arts Academy alumnus and out gay associate conductor of the Jacksonville Symphony would like to see fade away. It's an image that distracts from a true evolution happening globally in the field of conducting, one he says has largely been led by women, who are increasingly stepping atop podiums in front of musical ensembles big and small around the world. "It's been really good for men, too, because I think men have been burdened a little bit by this super masculine, serious kind of traditionally authoritative figure that we all imagine," he tells BTL in a recent interview. "I think now that stereotype of what conductors have been has been shattered, essentially by women coming forward. It allows men to be more authentic."

Authenticity for Fitzgerald includes openly living the life he shares with his husband. But even living in places like Texas and now Florida, where politicians are still riding a wave of anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment that has grown in recent years across conservative pockets of the U.S., he is happy to report that he's felt affirmed and supported throughout his career. The fact is that many queer people live in red states, red corners of blue states and everywhere in between. It's another stereotype Fitzgerald would like to see fade away.

"If I were to put on some Pride gear and go to a Walmart, maybe I would get some looks in Greater Jacksonville," he acknowledges. "But in general, I feel I'm in a safe place in this part of the state." Alongside Music Director Courtney Lewis, who has been with the organization for eight years, Fitzgerald works to make sure the orchestra is an especially safe place for LGBTQ+ musicians and staff.

"It comes from the top," he says. "We have an openly proud music director, and that's very rare." While clearly there have been openly gay conductors in the past — Fitzgerald is pleased the Leonard Bernstein biopic "Maestro" doesn't shy away from the legendary conductor's relationships with men, for example — going public is almost unheard of. "Are you on the stage at the microphone during the Pride concert saying this is a safe space for everyone, including drag queens?" he asks, referencing Lewis's approach. "I don't think a lot of people are doing that. And so, I just look up to Courtney so much because he's such a great leader

and he makes it easy for me."

From childhood, Fitzgerald was drawn to music, at least in part because he was seeking a haven as a queer kid in a relatively conservative Midwestern town.

"The band room was a safe space, and I quickly found that the band people and the music people were a safe space for me," he says. "It became a community and I wanted to become a leader in that community, which fueled my ambition."

At 16, he transferred to Interlochen Arts Academy near Traverse City, a "turning point for me, socially," he says. "But artistically, it opened my eyes to what's out there. I really had to work my butt off to kind of catch up with some of my peers."

The experience of living at the boarding school also widened his worldview. "I was suddenly surrounded by people from all over the world in all different walks of life and socioeconomic backgrounds," he says. "Some of the most privileged kids go to this school and then there are kids on scholarships or from developing countries, and we were all shoved into a little bubble in the middle of the woods. So to say that I grew exponentially as an artist and as a person is an understatement. It truly set my mind on a different trajectory for what was possible for me." After Interlochen, Fitzgerald attended the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester and



Kevin Fitzgerald. Courtesy photo

then the University of Michigan for his master's in conducting.

Soon after he finished his master's degree in 2016, the Pulse Nightclub shooting happened, leaving 49 mostly queer patrons and staff members dead and dozens more injured. As the details emerged, Fitzgerald and a group of gay friends who often sang together in a church choir felt compelled to do something musical in honor of the victims. What started as a plan for a small house concert or a quick outdoor event featuring a scaled-down version of Mozart's "Requiem" morphed into an enormous event that filled Ann Arbor's Hill Auditorium, drawing thousands of audience members.

As word spread, a community choir and orchestra with more than 200 musicians emerged. "When there's a powerful reason for doing something, magic can happen," Fitzgerald says. An interfaith group of church leaders spoke at the event, which was billed "Requiem for Orlando," as well as the Ann Arbor mayor. "One Episcopal priest said that some of these people may have been estranged from their families and might not have a funeral," he recalls. "This is

“The band room was a safe space, and I quickly found that the band people and the music people were a safe space for me. It became a community and I wanted to become a leader in that community, which fueled my ambition.”

their funeral. And in that moment, after this whirlwind of getting everything prepared, it just had such a profound impact on me.”

“It was a huge leap for me artistically as I'd never conducted a choir, but I lost myself in the message and the fact that it was just so not about me,” he says. “It was about the healing. I just remember before I gave the upbeat, I could feel the people behind me and I was just like, ‘There's no turning back. You just have to give this offering.’”

Fitzgerald is currently planning another event that draws on the collective power of the queer fine arts community — an AIDS epidemic reflection concert. “I think in the modern day gay life, we've come so far in medication and prevention and we forget that 40 years ago, it was essentially like a genocide the government just kind of let happen.”

Fitzgerald describes the impromptu “Requiem” concert as one of the most profound moments in his life. “I think it summarizes the role of the conductor — to be of service and a facilitator, and so I try to bring that kind of spirit into everything.”



Kevin Fitzgerald. Courtesy photo

Lynn Stange & Eli Moran
Full Service Realtors
Buyer's & Seller's Agents
70 W. Long Lake Rd., Troy, MI 48098

Eli Moran
(586) 291-1432
eli.dobek.reo@gmail.com

Lynn Stange
(248) 561-6967
LLStange.aol.com

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

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

Samantha's Family
Puzzle can be found on page 25

A Community-Minded Detroiter Looks Out for Their Neighbors, Queer or Not

Ash Rose co-founded Core City Strong to help stop the threat of overdevelopment

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Ash Rose's wide-ranging work — from promoting equitable development to helping launch They Beach, a queer social group — has at least one thing in common: putting Detroit and queer community first.

Over in the close-knit Detroit neighborhood known as Core City, where they have lived for several years, Rose has been working to ensure municipal development is approached “in the best interest of our neighbors and long-term residents.”

The home they initially moved into was in great disrepair, with no electricity or running water. While fixing up the house, Rose discovered not only a purpose as a new homeowner but also met another homeowner with a shared interest in historic city preservation, their neighbor Vanessa Butterworth. The two launched a group called Core City Strong.

“It's a visioning project of what everyone in the neighborhood wants,” they say. “Everyone here wants a grocery store, a school, stuff like that. That's what we're working toward.”

The four-mile square community is situated to the northwest of the Corktown and Woodbridge neighborhoods, where rents and home prices have skyrocketed in recent years. Core City seems headed in the same direction, which has concerned Rose.

“Core City is a very interesting place,” says Rose. “It was one of the harder hit areas in the history of Detroit, since [the riots of] 1967.”

Rose's neighborhood is located in an urban farming area, but the threat of development has loomed large in recent years.

“What I don't really want is a ton of luxury housing going up over here like what happened in Corktown,” Rose says. “A lot of white people who aren't from here kind of taking it over and making it

into another Corktown-type thing. I like it how it is. I know it can't stay as it is forever. But we can try to develop it correctly.”

Rose and other residents have stood strongly against a concrete-crushing plant that Bloomfield Hills-based Can-Am International Trade Crossing sought to develop on 4.7 acres of vacant land. Rose knew nothing about the proposed concrete crushing facility until they happened to see a notice that was posted on a sign in an empty field the concrete plant was planning to build on. The City denied Can-Am a permit. Currently, Core City Strong members meet monthly to talk community engagement and brainstorm their vision for the place they call home.

When Rose isn't involved with Core City Strong, they're community-building at the beach. They Beach, a social group specifically for trans and non-binary persons and their allies, gets together at the Belle Isle beach for outings during the summer and, in the fall, host bonfires.

“It's definitely a thing that trans people don't often feel safe at the beach,” says Rose, who became one of the co-leaders of the three-year old group last year. “Me, I can pass for a cisgender person. Some people might even think I'm straight. But for others, just the sexual harassment that can sometimes come along with being a member of the trans community is horrible.”

Collectively, They Beach members stake their flag in the sand at the beach and, in such a large group, said Rose, they feel safe. They have a buddy system for trips to the bathroom. For Anthony Dunkley, being in a community space with LGBTQ+ people, specifically trans people, “definitely makes me feel a lot more comfortable.”

“After having my top surgery, going to a They Beach event was my first time being shirtless in public. It felt so liberating,” Dunkley says.



Ash Rose with their dog, Clark. Courtesy photo

Rose finds They Beach to be a gratifying experience. There, their “heart just overflows with warm, fuzzy feelings.”

“I feel a lot of pride. A lot of times, people will say ‘thank you for making this happen.’ It's just so beautiful,” they say.

When Rose is on the clock, they're working as a full-time dog trainer, specializing in aggressive and hard-to-train dogs. It's work they fell into at 18, when they were visiting some friends in Philadelphia and came across a dog, Clark, tied to a fence in a park.

“This guy who was living in the park, he told me she'd been there

for three days,” recalls Rose. “So, I took her home with the intent to foster her and find a home for her.”

Rose quickly found out that would be easier said than done. “She turned out to be pretty aggressive. I worked with a number of different trainers, and a bunch of them told me to euthanize her. But I didn't want to.”

After working with and doing an apprenticeship with a few different trainers, most of whom used cruel methods such as shock-collar and choke-collar training, Rose knew they had to go out on their own. They started studying up-to-date behavior modification techniques

and created My Sidekick Dog Training. They help their neighbors take better care of their dogs, including aiding them in finding free or low-cost vet services. At the moment, Rose has four dogs — two of their own and two fosters.

“[Clark] basically got me started on a path of wanting to save dogs like her and help dogs like her,” Rose continues. “My journey with her took me to a lot of places.”

For more information on My Sidekick Dog Training, visit mysidekicktraining.com and to learn more about They Beach visit facebook.com/groups/535896814091248.



The Center for Relationship Health
Founder and Director Dr. Joe Kort



Scan for more info
or go to crsh.com



Group run by:
Gregg Johnson, LMSW
and Steven Taylor, LMSW

JOIN CRSH'S

QUEER MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Individual, Group and Couples Therapy

25600 Woodward Ave., Suite 215, Royal Oak |
248-399-7447
First Wednesday & Third Friday of Every Month

**RUTH ELLIS
CLAIRMOUNT**

LGBTQ+

- GENDER AFFIRMING CARE
- STI TESTING & TREATMENT
- HEALTH NAVIGATION
- CONTRACEPTION
- HIV TREATMENT
- PRIMARY CARE
- PREP

OPEN TO ALL AGES

313-484-5888
61 Clairmount Ave.
Detroit, MI 48202

Health & Wellness Center

Ruth Ellis Center

MDHHS
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services



HENRY FORD HEALTH

DETROIT FOR LIFE

**Got all the support
and got paid.**

**All because
I live in Detroit.**

DetroitMI.gov/DetroitForLife
Offering Limitless Opportunities



#\$100MScholarships

“Sometimes we need something beyond language,” Cruz says. “Food can be an ultimate saving grace when it comes to expressing and articulating who I am, in all the eras of my life, in those many moments when words fail. Jon’s recipes formulate an architecture of belonging for so many of us during and beyond the pandemic; in finding themselves they help us seek methods for finding our way too.”

Cruz wasn’t the only one connecting with Kung during the pandemic. In the early days of their TikTok launch, Kung’s followers grew exponentially, with surges that ranged from 10,000 to 30,000 followers, sometimes in a single day. “It was wild,” they say. “There was such a huge, crazy dopamine rush of just watching these numbers go up.”

“I started getting brand deals and major anime-based companies who had me on retainer for content,” Kung adds. “I realized within a few weeks I made more than I had made in an entire year both as a small business owner by myself and as a person who cooked on the line.”

Kung initially worked at Detroit restaurants including Standby and the now-closed Gold Cash Gold and ran Kung Food Market Studio, a private dining space in Eastern Market. Their experience as a self-taught chef at pop-ups in the city was a “complete immersion, trial-by-fire thing,” which gave them a leg up on socials. It all snowballed into something so successful even Kung can’t completely wrap their head around it.

“It hasn’t really felt real, I guess, for a really long time,” they say. “Considering the fact that my time in Detroit was so... it felt really rooted. And then just transferring it to an online presence and then having everything move and progress and change so fast. I mean, I’m still trying to come to terms with it.”

Recently, Kung took the book on tour, stopping in cities like Chicago, San Francisco and New York, before returning home to Michigan, where they spoke during signings and discussions in November and early December at Literati Bookstore in Ann Arbor, Source Booksellers in Detroit and at their alma mater, EMU in Ypsilanti. More dates will be announced for next year, and Kung has their eyes on promo stops in Provincetown, Boston and Philadelphia.

It seems unlikely they’ll return to their original, pre-TikTok plan to open their own restaurant in Detroit — at least not for a while. “To open something now with uncertainty and high prices just doesn’t seem smart,” they say. Not to mention, when it comes to possibly returning to the service industry they once were a part of, “I can’t even sit through an episode of ‘The Bear.’”

“I would not mind just a little bit of coasting for a while,” they say. “With everything that I’ve done and have explored, I’m totally fine with just having one job, which is making content for a little while before exploring other avenues.”

Faygo Orange Chicken

BY JON KUNG



Marinate the chicken: Place the tangerine peel in a spice grinder and pulverize it to a powder. You should end up with 2 teaspoons — put it in a large bowl with the wine, soy sauce, ras el hanout, cumin, MSG, salt, and white pepper and mix until well combined. Add the chicken and toss to evenly coat. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to 12 hours.

Meanwhile, make the orange sauce: In a medium saucepan, combine the Faygo, vinegar, sugar, paprika, turmeric, star anise, cardamom and orange peel. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium and cook until the sauce is thick and syrupy but still pourable, about 30 minutes, depending on the strength of your burner and the size and shape of your saucepan. Set the sauce aside. (The sauce can be cooled and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a week.)

Fry the chicken: Fill a wok or Dutch oven with oil to a depth of 3 inches and heat the oil over medium-high heat to 350°F. Set a large wire rack nearby.

Combine the flour, potato starch, and 1 teaspoon salt in a large bowl. Working in batches, toss the chicken pieces in the flour mixture to coat well, then carefully add them to the hot oil (don’t overcrowd the pot). Adjust the heat to maintain a temperature between 350° and 375°F and cook just until the chicken is very light golden brown, about 3 minutes (it won’t be cooked through). Use a slotted spoon or spider to transfer the chicken to the rack to drain. Repeat with the remaining chicken pieces.

Again, working in batches, return the parcooked chicken to the hot oil and fry for 2 to 3 minutes, until it becomes a deeper golden brown — at this point, it’ll be cooked through. Transfer the fully cooked chicken back to the rack to drain, and season with salt before it fully dries. Repeat with the remaining parcooked pieces.

To serve, once the chicken is cooked, heat a wok or very large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the oil, garlic, ginger, chopped chilies, whole chilies (if using) and Szechuan peppercorns and stir for only about 10 seconds before adding the dark soy sauce and the wine. Stir in the orange sauce and heat until it is thick and bubbling, about 5 minutes, then add the fried chicken and toss to evenly coat with the sauce. Serve immediately with rice.

This recipe appears in Jon Kung’s book, “Kung Food.”

Orange chicken seems to have originated from a Hunanese dish called chen pi ji (orange peel chicken), in which pieces of chicken are flavored with orange peel and chilies. To accommodate local palates, I assume the spice was toned down and the sweetness was brought up. I wanted to bring it back to its origin story a little bit but respect the fact that — while this dish has relatives in China — orange chicken is an American icon, which is something I wanted to lean into. In a bit of a chaotic move, I decided to get the orange flavor from a Detroit local soda called Faygo (whose factory is not far down the street from the Studio). This recipe might look daunting, but it happens in stages; the chicken marinates for at least a few hours, and while that’s happening, you can make the orange sauce and refrigerate it until you finish the dish later — or even the next day.

Serves 4 to 6

Chicken and marinade

- 6 pieces dried tangerine peel, chopped
- ¼ cup Shaoxing wine
- 2 tablespoons light soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon ras el hanout
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon MSG
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons freshly ground white pepper
- 2 pounds boneless skin-on chicken thighs, cut into roughly 1-inch cubes

Orange sauce

- 3 (12-ounce) cans orange Faygo or other orange soda
- 2 tablespoons Chinese red vinegar
- ⅔ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons sweet paprika
- 2 teaspoons ground turmeric
- 3 star anise pods
- 2 black cardamom pods, cracked
- 4 pieces cup dried orange or tangerine peel, ground or minced

Frying

- Neutral oil
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 cups potato starch
- Kosher salt

Serving

- 2 tablespoons neutral oil
- 4 garlic cloves, grated
- 2 thumb-size pieces fresh ginger, peeled and minced or grated
- 2 to 4 dried Szechuan chilies, chopped
- 5 whole chilies for the drama (optional — but is it, really?)
- 2 tablespoons Szechuan peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons Shaoxing wine
- Steamed rice, for serving



Delivering Amazing Quality
since 1892.

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



LOCATIONS IN YPSILANTI & ANN ARBOR

2024 Kresge Artist Fellowships

\$40,000 Awards
in Live Arts and Film
& Music for Metro
Detroit Artists

Apply by January 18, 2024

Learn more at kresgeartsindetroit.org



CELEBRATING
15 YEARS

MERITHOT

**CREATE
SOMETHING
EXTRAORDINARY.**

Merithot helps awesome companies create remarkable brands, strategies, websites and content.

Creative Marketing made with ♥ from Ann Arbor, MI

www.merithot.com



Bree Rowe. Courtesy photo

Bree Rowe's Hard-Won Journey to Healing and Spreading 'Queer Joy'

The local queer advocate on using their lived experience to improve community outcomes

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Bree Rowe doesn't just work for a local non-profit, whose name they can't disclose, providing a desperately needed syringe service for IV drug users. They also go out at night to popular LGBTQ+ nightspots and do anonymous HIV testing. It's work they are passionate about, and Rowe considers it a mission of redemption of sorts.

In 2013, Rowe was an IV drug user — heroin was their drug of choice. After Rowe was arrested for doing drugs in front of their four children, they lost custody of them and went to prison. That was Christmas, the day Rowe was at their lowest. It's also the day they consider their sobriety date.

Rowe had lost everything but hope; their children kept them going. They were told by the authorities that they would never get their kids back, something Rowe refused to believe.

"I had a strong maternal instinct

that drove me to prove people wrong," they said. "I got my kids back on July 17, 2015. From my incarceration date until that day, I had a ferocious need to raise my children."

Despite what anyone thought about them or their past parenting, Rowe was adamant about that. "I knew that my kids' best place to be was with me. ... I refused to believe, or even manifest, that my kids were better off anywhere but with me."

Rowe was incarcerated for seven months and away from their children for almost two years.

"After 569 days of separation, my children returned home to their father and me," they said. "We are a part of the few parents that successfully reunify despite a system set up against us."

With their children, and in sobriety, Rowe found a new mission. In 2020, with seven years of sobriety under their belt, Rowe started giving back. Initially, they worked at an inpatient

“

When it came to my desires for a relationship, I would have those moments of reflection of what my life would look like in five years. And it was with a wife in queer community. I knew if I wanted to stay sober and stay well in my mental health, I needed to be authentic in that space.



Bree Rowe (right) with their children. Courtesy photo

rehab center that specialized in detoxing pregnant women.

“It was really cool to work there and be able to share my story of successfully weaning off drugs and having three children who were addicted when born and needed medical detox,” they said.

After their incarceration, Rowe, who thought they were straight, decided to divorce their husband and came out as genderqueer. “I was in a very heteronormative marriage,” they explained. “But when it came to my desires for a relationship, I would have those moments of reflection of what my life would look like in five years. And it was with a wife in queer community. I knew if I wanted to stay sober and stay well in my mental health, I needed to be authentic in that space.”

Today, between their kids, their girlfriend and two rescue pups, Rowe said they feel fulfilled.

“My girlfriend taught me this new, softer way of love that I’d never experienced before,” Rowe said. “Experiencing queer joy is something I never experienced.”

For Rowe, queer joy is “the smile I see on every queer face. When you go to a queer bar and see acceptance, see everyone laughing and dancing and the vibration of the room is completely different from anything else, that’s queer joy.”

They said they experience some of this through their work while testing for HIV at various places in metro Detroit, including Menjo’s, adding that it’s “one of the greatest experiences in my professional work of disease prevention and AIDS prevention.”

Rowe does this work through a grant with the Michigan Department of Health

and Human Services. The testing is completely confidential. “I don’t even ask your name,” they said. “I keep it as confidential as possible. Judgment, discrimination, bias ... just a lack of safety overall in the health care setting, I want none of those to exist when I’m providing services.”

Even when they have to tell someone that they tested positive, Rowe finds purpose during what can be a difficult exchange.

“I honor that space that I create with people when they’re learning something that is really life-changing,” said Rowe. “I validate that real feeling of grief, fear and really not knowing what that looks like. They hear it, and they connect it with death and fear. It’s still very difficult to get this diagnosis.”

As for their day job, Rowe is equally as passionate about the syringe service she provides. “Syringe sharing is very common, and the number one reason that Hepatitis C has been on the rise,” they said. “That contributes to HIV as well. My [daytime] work is constantly intersecting between drug use, harm reduction and making sure that people have Narcan, which is a passion of mine.”

Rowe said their job is to observe people who use drugs as they go through early recovery or mental health services. Helping them come out on the other side, like they have, is gratifying.

“I lost everything,” Rowe said. “I thought there were other ways that I could have been helped, instead of taking my children away from me and putting them in a stranger’s home. There were better options. That’s a huge part of what catapulted me into these spaces — to help people find the best options.”

**YOU ALREADY KNOW
YOU’RE GONNA LOVE IT!**

BENNY ANDERSSON & BJÖRN ULVAEUS’

MAMMA MIA!

25TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

THE SMASH HIT MUSICAL BASED ON THE SONGS OF ABBA®

APRIL 23-28 • FISHER THEATRE
BROADWAYINDETROIT.COM

Groups (10+) BroadwayInDetroitGroups@theambassadors.com
(subject: Mamma Mia)

WISHING YOU

Queer Cheer!

We are immensely grateful for your support – it allows us to drive our mission forward and meet the needs of our community.

We wish you a holiday season full of love, joy, prosperity, and acceptance.

248.398.7105
 290 W. 9 Mile Rd, Ferndale
 info@goaffirmations.org
 www.goaffirmations.org

‘Breaking Free’ Changed Everything for This Once-Closeted Secret Service Agent

Living his truth has allowed Cory Allen to become the role model he needed growing up

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

Growing up, Cory Allen found inspiration for what his adult life would become in an unexpected place: the police officers who frequently visited his childhood home in rural Pennsylvania to resolve domestic disputes between his mother and stepfather. “Due to the frequent interactions with the sheriff’s office, I grew to admire what they did, and I realized that I wanted to make a difference for victims like they did for us,” he recalls in his new memoir, “Breaking Free: A Saga of Self-Discovery,” available now.

Allen’s career in law enforcement and the Air Force would eventually lead him to a Secret Service detail protecting Michelle Obama for two years starting in 2016. In the book, Allen focuses on his path from a sometimes tumultuous childhood to his early experiences in law enforcement, when he kept his homosexuality hidden while in the Secret Service, which he described to BTL as a “front seat to history” in a recent interview.

Allen detailed Michelle Obama toward the end of President Obama’s second term through her book tour in 2018. “To be able to experience things like the Supreme Court cases that had such a big impact on the fight for LGBTQ+ progress, to know that jubilation and immediate impact on my life — it was incredible,” he recalls. “To see the Obamas come out of office and become so much more after that, especially when I was with Michelle on her ‘Becoming’ book tour, I got to see firsthand how that positive impact affected people.”

While Allen speaks highly of his time as an active Secret Service agent, he says that after Trump’s 2016 win, the mood shifted. “It’s been heartbreaking at times for so many of us — really, it’s been a recalibration for me personally,” he says. “It’s been quite the journey to watch all that take place, like Obama getting on Air Force One for the last time; to literally be there to watch

that was surreal and humbling.”

Today, Allen has planted roots in California, where he still works with the Secret Service as a supervisory special agent and is planning his wedding to fiancé Johnny, a physician. At some point, he envisions becoming a father. It’s hard to imagine that it was only a few years ago when Allen came out as gay in the professional setting. For many years, he kept his homosexuality under wraps, including a stretch when, as a police officer, he got married and divorced a few years later.

Working in law enforcement might seem like an unlikely fit for a queer person, but Allen says an argument can be made that it’s actually relatively common for LGBTQ+ people who grew up in conservative areas that are neither safe nor affirming. “We tend to steer hard to the right, career-wise,” he explains. “A lot of us end up in the military or law enforcement because we’re trying to fight our true identity and present the most active, masculine vision of ourselves to the world.”

For Allen, the choice to steer right led to an ideal path. “I thrived in it,” he says. “Law enforcement had such a critical impact on my life as a kid, so that kind of came full circle when I went in to work for that very same agency we used to call on for help at home.”

Still, living “two separate lives” took its toll at times, Allen recalls. “I was deeply closeted, growing up outside Richmond, Virginia, which is deeply conservative. I didn’t have role models. I didn’t have visible LGBT people I could relate to or connect with. I just had to forge ahead and figure it out on my own.”

For a long time, Allen dated women. “I was 26 or 27 before I had my first experience with a man,” he says. “But... it was the light bulb: ‘This is what it should be and this is what feels normal and natural.’” Like so many LGBTQ+ people before him, once he began living life in a more honest, authentic way, there





Cory Allen on the job as a Secret Service agent. Courtesy photo

was no going back.

In “Breaking Free,” Allen details several times when he has been discriminated against. For example, in the Secret Service, he was assigned to the airport squad outside the main office and other agents because the supervisor “didn’t want that faggot” in the office. Later, when he became the first Secret Service agent to demand benefits for his then-husband after the 2013 Supreme Court ruling overturning the federal benefits section of Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), he got pushback. “We don’t have a policy for that,” he was told. Microaggressions were a daily occurrence at times, and the pressure and intense feelings of shame could have easily led Allen to retreat from a career where he’s under constant scrutiny and continuing risk of harassment. Instead, he’s become the role model for others that he never found as a kid.

As a supervisory agent, Allen often consults with fellow law enforcement officers and agents in a mentorship role, which includes giving talks about vulnerability, authenticity and leadership. At a class a few months ago, he says, “I talked about my vulnerability and my fear in being in this position as a gay man, about the struggles I’ve had. And the outpouring of support was admittedly unexpected, and then that night one of the agents in the class came out to me at dinner, someone who’s been in the career for 18 years and still doesn’t feel safe.”

Allen has found that being authentic in public can open the door for other people living in the closet, even outside law enforcement. During a recent stop on his

book tour, his conversation with the crowd seemingly inspired a worker there to come out to her manager. “She’s probably 21,” he recalls. “And she raises her hand and asks what it looked like when I came out — what resource did I use to help me become comfortable in my own skin. And it turned into this beautiful moment where she’s in her place of employment and in front

“I talked about my vulnerability and my fear in being in this position as a gay man, about the struggles I’ve had. And the outpouring of support was admittedly unexpected, and then that night one of the agents in the class came out to me at dinner, someone who’s been in the career for 18 years and still doesn’t feel safe.”

of her manager. Eventually, everybody just starts supporting her and offering suggestions and support. Just beautiful.” A few days later, the manager emailed Allen to thank him and mentioned how much of a change she’s seen in the employee.

Recently, Allen says, a US Navy mom sent him a DM and called him her “new hero.” “She said, ‘My son is a naval officer, and he’s able to live his life out and proud because you had the courage to share your story,’ and it’s moments like that are... wow. This is a win no matter what, at the end of the day. If this all ends right now, I’ve had an impact on somebody’s else’s life.”

Everybody's Church
First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham

You are not alone
You are chosen
You are loved
You are seen

Come See Us! Everybody's Church!
Join us for worship on Sundays
at 8:30 AM & 10:00 AM (Livestream)

You Tube
everybodyschurch.org

BIDWELL TOVAREZ PLLC
PROVIDING BANKRUPTCY SOLUTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

For a Fresh Start and A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

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

What clients say about Bidwell Tovarez:
“Most trustworthy and experienced”
“Outstanding representation”
“Services with a personal touch”

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

www.bidwelltovarez.com
david@bidwelltovarez.com

Call 248-270-3333

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

THE FINEST IN ADULT ENTERTAINMENT AT THE BEST PRICES!

SHANE SEAN
\$5.95

HOUSE PARTY
\$5.95

SWISS NAVY
\$5.95

PRIVATE MOMENTS
\$10.95

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

◀ A Holiday I Do

Continued from page 7

Studios. From the get-go, Schneider was clear that whatever the story was about, she didn't want to make the focus a coming out story.

"I wanted it to be exactly like a heterosexual Hallmark film where it just happened to be two women who fell in love at the end, because it should be that simple," she says. "It shouldn't have to be this big, blown-up coming out story. It should just be, 'Hey, I love this person. Here we are.'"

"A Holiday I Do" follows Jane, played by Lindsay Hicks, who is raising her 10-year-old daughter and, after the death of her father, takes over managing her family's Michigan horse farm. Still good friends with her ex-husband, she agrees to fulfill the duties of best (wo)man for his upcoming Christmas wedding. Rainbow sparks fly when she meets wedding planner Sue, played by Rivkah Reyes. The film also stars openly gay "Night Court" actress Marsha Warfield, playing a banker who has a hand in saving the family farm.

To achieve both equity and authenticity, Schneider insisted that "every gay person in the film was actually played by a real-life LGBTQ person."

For the story, Schneider was also inspired by her own life, including her relationship to Paul, who she married in 2010. The two enlisted the help of Michigan-based writer Melinda Bryce to secure a screenplay.

"It's been a journey; our relationship is very different now, and I think that a lot of that is reflected in the film, too," Schneider says. "I have gone through such a spiritual journey over the last few years, and our first film we did was actually a Christian film because my partner and I grew up in the Christian community. Once we left the church and had a little film in between, that was a gateway from the Christian genre into the more secular genre. I said, 'Let's just go for it. Let's do a film about what represents us as people now,' and that's what 'A Holiday I Do' is."

Schneider adds that because the story is partially autobiographical, she felt the casting process was seamless, especially since she had a clear picture of how the film should look. When casting interviews began, she knew she wanted to feature Reyes and was thrilled when she learned that they were interested in the role.

"I had never seen Lindsay Hicks, who played Jane, but as soon as she popped up on my Zoom screen I said, 'That's our Jane.' The fact that we got Marsha Warfield, that would have never been something that I would have even thought was possible," Schneider says. "And when she wanted to come on to the project I was like, 'OK, we've got something really, really magical here.'"

Hicks says she was thrilled to play the part of Jane because she loved the idea of providing a new take on a well-loved format and because she related to many aspects of Jane's character.

One was "leaving a relationship because you aren't quite sure who you are and you have to go figure that out for yourself and it ends up being the right decision," Hicks says.

Hicks adds that "A Holiday I Do" is especially important to her because Jane never has to defend her queerness to



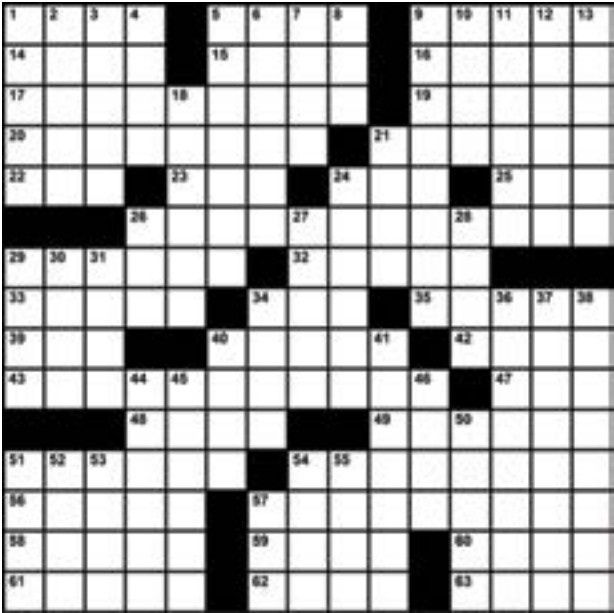
Paul and Alicia Schneider at the premiere of "A Holiday I Do." Courtesy photo

anyone. "It's not up for question that Jane is queer and nobody questions that Sue might be queer," Hicks says. "They can just be gay, which is what the world should be: If you're gay, just be gay!"

Hicks agrees that visibility was a key reason she was interested in the project, noting the value of the queer-inclusive Christmas movies because the winter holiday season is a time when LGBTQ+ people "often feel alienated" from holiday traditions.

"[The film] may seem like a drop in the bucket or something small that doesn't matter," she says, "but I think that every little thing that we can do that normalizes being a queer person anywhere in the world is so unbelievably valuable."

Rent or buy "A Holiday I Do" now at Tello Films.



Samantha's Family

Across

- 1 Sweaty guys get pinned to them
- 5 Guy that goes either way?
- 9 Makes more bearable
- 14 Melville "Moby Dick" sequel
- 15 "The ___ in Winter"
- 16 Lott of Mississippi
- 17 He played Samantha's Uncle

- Arthur
19 "Anything You ___" ("Annie Get Your Gun")
20 Put on a pedestal
21 Alive once more
22 Inflated doll leak sound
23 I.O, for one
24 Get hard
25 Regret bitterly
26 He played Samantha's father
29 Enjoys a good hard workout
32 Eminem mentor
33 Nonoral Marx
34 Arena for GLSEN

- 35 Chance to get a hit
- 39 "Just ___ thought"
- 40 Baryshnikov's jetes, e.g.
- 42 Killed, to King James
- 43 He played Samantha's husband
- 47 Club where you can dance with a sailor
- 48 Terse turndown
- 49 Little hooters
- 51 Amelia Earhart, and others
- 54 Band of Kahlo's land
- 56 Singing Mann
- 57 TV show of Samantha's family
- 58 A stamp lick does this later
- 59 Rimbaud's zip
- 60 Box with a tail
- 61 German Surrealist Max
- 62 Blood type, briefly
- 63 Went lickety-split

Down

- 1 Needs some cheering up
- 2 Come together
- 3 Track tipsters
- 4 Foot bottom
- 5 Home of the Greek gods
- 6 Musical ineptitude
- 7 Sondheim's Sweeney
- 8 Queen's "Another ___ Bites the Dust"
- 9 "The King and I" mantra
- 10 Spirited horse
- 11 Woman of La Mancha
- 12 Evasive maneuver by a bottom?
- 13 Hail units

- 18 Flowing, for Bernstein
- 21 Robert of "The Defenders"
- 24 Remove barnacles, e.g.
- 26 AAA handout
- 27 Where to see Tom, Dick, or Harry
- 28 They put thermometers in your boxers
- 29 Swimmer you can eat
- 30 "What ___ thinking?"
- 31 McCormack of a rebooted series
- 34 Debussy's daddy
- 36 Low-risk investment
- 37 Frasier or Niles
- 38 Like a Lincoln penny
- 40 Drinks like a pussycat
- 41 Making noise in bed
- 44 Gets on one's knees
- 45 Most in need of BenGay
- 46 Boob, to a Brit
- 50 Doesn't have
- 51 "___! I'm going to live forever"
- 52 Story teller
- 53 Top's betting phrase?
- 54 Lo follower
- 55 ___ bit (slightly)
- 57 Newt, to Candace

See p. 15 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

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

TRILLIUM
REAL ESTATE

Local LGBTQ+ Community Members Need Your Help During the Holidays and Beyond

Your support matters, no matter your budget

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

The holiday season is a welcome time of year for non-profits that rely on donations and other acts of giving to drive their charitable missions. Financial donations and volunteer efforts tend to pick up around the holidays, including LGBTQ-focused charities and advocacy organizations right here in Michigan.

The state has emerged as something of a haven within a country where thousands of LGBTQ+ people are at risk of losing various protections, rights and reliable access to critical medical care. It may seem as though the work in Michigan is done, but as any local LGBTQ+ advocate will tell you, that's just not the case.

Even in Michigan, young queer people

are kicked out of their homes by non-supportive family members, Black trans women are disproportionately impacted by violence and lack of access to basic services and steady income, and many LGBTQ+ folks benefit from a wide array of community support initiatives including legal help, resources for older community members, support groups, addiction resources and more.

When you reach out to a local queer advocacy organization to offer your time or resources, you're helping not only the local community but chipping away at the national, coordinated effort aimed at queer and trans erasure. Here are the leading LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations providing outreach and advocacy in the Southeast Michigan area:

- Affirmations** GoAffirmations.org
- Equality Michigan** EqualityMI.org
- Fair Michigan** FairMichigan.org
- Jim Toy Community Center** JimToyCenter.org



- LGBT Detroit** lgbtdetroit.org
- MiGen** formerly SAGE Metro Detroit — MiGenConnect.org
- PFLAG-Detroit** PLFAGDetroit.org
- Ruth Ellis Center** RuthEllisCenter.org
- Spectrum Center** SpectrumCenter.umich.edu
- Stand with Trans** StandWithTrans.org
- Transgender Michigan** TransgenderMichigan.org
- Unity Fund** UnityFundMI.com

Don't forget to support your local LGBTQ-affirming library or a local high school GSA, too!

Another way to support local non-profits benefiting the queer community is by donating to or attending events produced by arts organizations, including:

- Express Your Yes Foundation** ExpressYourYes.org
- OutLoud Chorus** OLConline.org
- Planet Ant Theatre** PlanetAnt.com
- PRISM Men's Chorus** Prism-Chorus.org
- The Ringwald Theatre** TheRingwald.com

You Don't Have to Open Your Wallet to Give

- One of the most direct ways to help in the community this holiday season (and beyond) is by simply jumping in where you're needed. For example, you could

organize a meal train for people in your queer community who have mobility or access issues (or who could just use a reminder that their chosen family cares about them).

- There's also value to be found in the smallest acts of kindness:
- Help someone who seems lost in your regular grocery store or walking in the neighborhood.
- Give a sincere compliment to a kind service worker or friendly fellow customer.
- Be vocally supportive of the LGBTQ+ kids in your life. 2023 has been extra rough for our young friends.
- Send that text you've been meaning to send to someone you care about.
- Reach out to your online neighborhood group to offer help with outdoor chores or pet care during the holidays (or just to express your appreciation for good neighbors).
- Listen more. Pay attention when someone in your circle "jokes" about being lonely or out of sorts and figure out a way to be in their life more.

No doubt you're already a thoughtful community member. Still, think of the holiday season as an opportunity to be even more intentional about how you treat other people. Your kindness has the potential to be more impactful than you might realize, especially during a time of year that doesn't always land gently for everyone.



Makes the perfect gift!

RACKHAM CHOIR

TOO HOT TO HANDEL

THE JAZZ GOSPEL MESSIAH

Sponsored by **RAIICO**

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 2024
DETROIT OPERA HOUSE
BUY AT **DETROITOPERA.ORG**
OR SCAN THE QR CODE




The Michigan HIV/STI Hotline Is Now Online!
VISIT US AT
MISEXUALHEALTHINFO.COM

 **MICHIGAN HIV/STI HOTLINE**
800-872-2437



BANK OF ANN ARBOR PRESENTS

47TH ANNUAL ANN ARBOR

FOLK FEST 2024

HILL AUDITORIUM | 7PM

FRIDAY, JAN. 26

Old Crow Medicine Show
Devon Gilfillian • Bailen • Darren Kiely
Sons of Mistro • Emcee Jeff Daniels

SATURDAY, JAN. 27

Emmylou Harris
Michigan Rattlers • Steve Poltz
Lizzie No • The Sea The Sea
Emcee Jeff Daniels

TICKETS ON SALE NOW @THEARK.ORG
Program Subject to Change



Christmas AT



CHRIST CHURCH
CRANBROOK

Christmas Eve Services

Music begins a half hour before each service.

Jazz Service

Dec. 24 | 1 PM

Family Service

Dec. 24 | 4 PM

Chorale Service

Dec. 24 | 7 PM

Orchestral Service

Dec. 24 | 10 PM

Christmas Day Service

December. 25 | 10 AM

CHRISTMAS
Carols and
Chocolate

Featuring.
PRISM
MEN'S CHORUS

CHRISTMAS CAROLS & CHOCOLATE

Dec. 23 | 5 PM

Grab your friends and family to carol together before Christmas Eve with PRISM Gay Men and Allies Chorus of Metro Detroit! This interactive event includes a reading of The Gift of the Magi. Make your own spirited drink at our hot chocolate bar and grab sweets to enjoy!

ALL are welcome, bring your family & friends!

