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Sign Up Online and Receive the BTL 2012 Voter Guide

The Nov. 2012 elections are fast approaching. Here at Between The Lines we are researching the candidates who will be asking for your vote. The 2012 BTL Voters Guide will reflect the work of BTL research along with Equality Michigan PAC, LAHR-PAC and other regional state PACS. Sign up today and receive information about pro-LGBT candidates at the local and national level.

Sign up at http://www.pridesource.com/ticketcontest.html?seq=210

Letters
Kristine Copeland: In my opinion, It’s a fair verdict and judgment. He shows no remorse or even understanding of his behavior.
Andrea Navar: Boo-yah! Karma bites back.
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Samuel Jackson-Haan: This is a fair verdict and judgment. He shows no remorse or even understanding of his behavior.
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MAKING A DIFFAERANCE

MAC Volunteer, Michael Bartus Appointed by Gov. Snyder to Serve Aging LGBT Population

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

ANN ARBOR—The first time Michael Bartus really stopped and paid attention to Michigan AIDS Coalition (MAC) was in December when they brought Max Fisher in to do a lunchtime presentation about his journey in AIDS activism. “I came to hear him speak, but I left very impressed with MAC, seeing all the people there that cared and learning about what MAC does,” Bartus said. “So I decided to get involved.”

The 65-year-old Ann Arbor-based activist is now serving on the host committee for DIFFA’s Dining by Design Dinner on Sept. 15. And he is also celebrating another activist accomplishment — a recent appointment by Gov. Rick Snyder to the Commission on Services to the Aging.

Bartus had always been a financial supporter of charities and a hard-working advocate for the aging, but after retirement in 2001 he has more time to devote to causes that are important to him, like AIDS prevention, Alzheimer’s support, and care for the aging.

“I am honored to have been appointed by Governor Snyder to serve as a member of the Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging, the state level decision-making body that oversee the work of the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging,” says Bartus.

With Bartus’ appointment, the Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging now has two members with LGBT identities. The other is Omar Whitten, a long-time advocate in the LGBT community.

“I am honored to have been appointed by Governor Snyder to serve as a member of the Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging, the state level decision-making body that oversee the work of the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging.”

“I grew up in a neighborhood in Ann Arbor that was largely older people,” Bartus said. “My leanings were always in that kind of environment. My parents were very much engaged in giving back to the community. I remember being age four and selling Christmas wrapping paper for U of M scholarships and my father would take me on calls for donations to the Community Chest, which was like a community foundation.”

Bartus got his degree in Public Health and an undergraduate in Psychology of Aging, and he set out on a life of working on behalf of others. He previously served as director of development at the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute in New York, as director of development for the Visiting Nurse Association Inc. in Oak Park, as director of the Empowerment Zone Care Management program at the Detroit Area Agency on Aging and as a long term care consultant for the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging. He’s also done work with the Peace Corps and United Way, among other nonprofits.

The upcoming event, DIFFA’s Dining by Design Gala Dinner is another way that Bartus is using his expertise and care to help others. Saying that he was “impressed by the work of the organization,” Bartus has added MAC to the list of charities that has a place in his heart. Like many older adults in the gay community, Bartus has lost friends to the disease, which still is without a cure. MAC helps to educate people about the dangers of unprotected sex and offers testing, counseling, and other programs to assist victims of HIV and AIDS.

DIFFA is the Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS. Each year they host a series of upscale fundraisers with immaculately-designed themes to attract donations to the cause of fighting AIDS. The Detroit event will be held Saturday, Sept. 15 and will include “awe-inspiring tablescapes” that will become interactive dining areas where guests — including Bravo’s Madison Hildebrand — will enjoy a gourmet dinner prepared by Matt Prentice, A Culinary Experience. The motivational Drum Café will perform during the event’s experiential auction that will feature 100 items, including a breath-taking cruise on the Zambezi Queen (in Africa). The Motor City’s own jazz crooner Ben Sharkey will also perform while couture fashions are on display.

There is also a Cocktails by Design event on Sept. 13 which will showcase 100 original works of art curated by ArtWorks Detroit, a team of professional artists who are dedicated to the fight against HIV. Prominent Artists — including Thom Bohmert, Carl Demeulenaere, Gerhardt Knodel, Yoko Ono, Bill Rauhauser, Clinton Snider, Russell Thayer and Vagner Whitehead — will have artwork featured in thrilling live and silent auctions. Guests will also enjoy scrumptious food prepared by 25 of the hippest local restaurants, La Crema Wines, and EFFEN® Vodka specialty cocktails. Innovative designer tablescapes and room schemes created by Michigan’s foremost interior designers will be on display, including an installation created for La Crema by nationally renowned designer Marc Blackwell, and Lincoln’s installation designed by architectural giant, Rosetti. Detroit Flyhouse and DJ PowdrBlu will perform.

Tickets ($100 Cocktails By Design/Artworks Detroit Auction and $250 Dining By Design Detroit) are available by clicking on the Events tab at www.michiganaidcoalition.org. For more information, contact Shanthi Sivananda at 248-545-1435, Ext. 105.
Armstrong’s Harasser Ordered to Pay $4.5 Million in Damages

BY BENJAMIN JENKINS

A U.S. District Court jury decided Thursday evening that former Michigan Assistant Attorney General Andrew Shirvell must pay $4.5 million to gay student leader at the University of Michigan Chris Armstrong for having defamed and harassed him online and on campus.

Shirvell maintained a blog titled “Chris Armstrong Watch,” where he accused Armstrong of pushing a “radical homosexual agenda” as well as a “viciously militant homosexual activist” who “mocked Christians.”

After being identified as an anti-gay heckler (with a sign reading “Chris Armstrong = Racist LIAR,”) at a rally in support of the Ann Arbor Civic Theatre’s production of “The Laramie Project,” Shirvell and his blog received national media attention in May 2010.

Shirvell defended his actions, claiming he was acting within his First Amendment rights, even agreeing to an interview with Anderson Cooper that September.

As media attention escalated and Shirvell refused to accept culpability, Armstrong decided it was necessary to get a lawyer. He hired trial lawyer and the mother of two classmates of Armstrong’s, Deborah L. Gordon. She has specialized in employment and civil rights law for over 30 years and was eager to assist Armstrong when she heard of Shirvell’s harassment.

“Michigan has no laws protecting LGBT people in employment and discrimination, so this was the first case of this nature that I had handled,” explains Gordon. “But the minute I heard of Shirvell’s behavior I decided ‘this is not going to happen. This won’t stand.’”

Attorney General Mike Cox fired Shirvell in November 2010 claiming Shirvell used state resources in his campaign against Armstrong and lied to investigators during a disciplinary hearing.

In April 2011, Armstrong and Gordon filed a lawsuit against Shirvell, seeking damages for defamation of character and emotional distress. Armstrong said Shirvell had even followed him, showed up at his home and contacted current and future employers, including at one point calling Nancy Pelosi’s office in an attempt to have Armstrong fired from an internship.

Nearly a year and a half later, the jury awarded Armstrong with a $4.5 million civil settlement.

Gordon says the jury was made up of a diverse group of people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, but that they were of a similar mindset: This was defamation, unprotected by freedom of speech.

Currently unemployed, Shirvell told the Associated Press after the ruling, “There’s no way I could possibly ever pay such a judgment.”

“I’m just incredibly humbled by what happened today,” Armstrong told The Associated Press. “This is truly a victory, not just for myself, but for a lot of other kids out there.”

When asked if she predicts Shirvell will appeal, Gordon replied, “Oh yes. (Shirvell) is out there – thinking he is right – so yes he will be appealing and no, he will not be winning. For somebody to think that literally anything you say is protected under the First Amendment – I think somebody missed a couple of classes in law school.”

If Armstrong’s lawsuit continues to be appealed, it is possible rulings in his favor may set a precedent for future online bullying cases in Michigan; however, Gordon explains that, “for such a groundbreaking ruling, this really is an old-fashioned law in a way. Defamation is extremely old, but in this new cyber world we live in, things are happening differently and a message can be broadcast across the world. Classically daily newspapers would carefully discern free speech from defamation, but with the blogosphere in place there are no checks and balances.”

Gordon continued, “I just have to say: I think the University of Michigan was phenomenal and I think they had a wonderfully supportive network and did their very best to help Chris. So he’s come out of this okay. But think of the kids that maybe didn’t come from a place where their school or family are supportive. It could’ve been a much more unfortunate result.

“After everything that he has been through, I think this ruling has really restored Chris’ faith in people.”
BTL Editorial: Politics Gets Simple

If you have a TV set you have most likely been subjected to the barrage of political ads this summer. It is so easy to tune them out and begin thinking that Romney/Ryan and the rest of the Republicans are about the same as Obama/Biden and the Democrats. That old adage that there is “really no difference between the parties and all politicians are alike” is kicking in. But as we approach two weeks of nonstop political coverage of the two major parties’ conventions – the Republicans will gather in Tampa starting Aug. 27 and the Democrats in Charlotte the following week – the stark differences between the parties and their candidates has never been more clear – especially on LGBT issues.

On same-sex marriage for instance, the Democrats made history a few weeks ago here in Detroit when the platform committee approved same-sex marriage equality as a goal of the Democratic Party, following President Obama’s announcement of his personal support in May. In contrast, presumptive Republican nominee Mitt Romney believes in amending the U.S. Constitution to ban same-sex marriage, and his choice of running mate, Paul Ryan, twice voted in support of the failed Federal Marriage Amendment, in 2004 and 2006.

With Ryan’s selection last week, the Republican Party is suffering a widening credibility gap with LGBT voters, women and just about any minority group except that of the very rich. Ryan has voted to ban adoption by gay couples and he voted against the repeal of the military’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy. He also voted against the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr, Hate Crimes Prevention Act in 2009.

Last year, Ryan joined with Rep. Todd Akin (R-Missouri) as two of the original co-sponsors of the “No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act,” a bill which, among other things, introduced the country to the bizarre term “forcible rape.” Then just this week, now U.S. Senate candidate Akin created a political firestorm by saying, “If it’s a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down,” an outrageous affront to all women and any thinking person. Even though Ryan and the rest of the Republican establishment is running from Akin’s remarks, the record is clear. A Romney/Ryan administration would eviscerate a woman’s right to choose, as would any Supreme Court justices selected by them.

On LGBT employment issues, Romney told the log Cabin Republicans in 1994 that he would sponsor ENDA if elected to the U.S. Senate. Then in 2006 he told National Journal that ENDA would “open

These Gay Republican groups have twisted themselves into rhetorical pretzels to endorse the Romney/Ryan ticket. We could waste much space and ink on their delusional positions, but instead we ask you, our readers, to use your common sense. The Republicans and Romney/Ryan do not. The choice is very simple.

And for those who may still be confused remember that Mitt Romney attended Cranbrook Academy right here in greater Detroit where he terrorized a fellow gay student. Do you really want a bully in the White House?
Why I’m gay, no doubt.

There are experiences that are alien to most people: walking on the moon, winning the $337 million Power Ball lottery, weighing 400 pounds, having implant boobs.

Because my life tends to be introspective, devoid of untoward kink, I’m curious what it’s like to experience the unusual, as long as it doesn’t ultimately involve attending 12-step codependency meetings.

A quick-read paperback, “Esquire Presents: What It Feels Like” (Three Rivers Press) is a collection of accounts of firsthand experiences, physical exceptions, trauma survivals.

After reading these fascinating anecdotes, I got to thinking about my own long-ago, life-threatening cliffhanger that I’d like to boast about because of its genuinely heroic content. It happened when I was 13. But first some “Feels Like” samplings to set the mood.

GRIZZLY ATTACK: “She grabs my left arm, tearing the muscles and tendons, and tosses me in the air. Then she attacks my head as I’m airborne. All I can see is her open mouth. Her teeth are gashing my scalp and ear. I can hear her fangs grinding on my skull. I think, the next bite will kill me.”

TORNADO TERROR: “The feel of a twister approaching is exactly the feel of a freight train approaching - that low, ever-louder howl and shuddering ground. I had gone through the trailer wall, been thrown 30 feet up into the tree, and then dropped to the ground, concussed and black and blue.”

G-SPOT GOOD FEEL: “I can have sex and orgasm. It’s functional in that way. The orgasms are different, though. The male has this orgasm and that’s basically it. For a female, it’s more of an ongoing thing during the course of intercourse, more like a whole-body experience. As opposed to men - men have sex like dogs.” (Arf!)

COMPULSIVE DISORDER: “Washing my hair would take an hour. Washing the front of my forehead, I would scrub it 60 times; it could never be 61. If I did anything an odd number, I’d have to do it all over again, despite how tired I might feel. The pressure to do it was constant and overwhelming. Like a voice saying, ‘Do not stop.’ Like a locomotive out of control.”

Lastly, ME AS HOSTAGE, at Samhat Market, where I deliver groceries: Two guys walk up to the counter, pretend to look at smokes. One thug pulls a gun, yells at grocer Jimmy, “Your money, fast! I’d hate like hell to shoot the kid.”

Grocer Moses, eating in the back, tunes in, grabs a gun, fires warning shots, yells Arabic obscenities, and I duck behind a stack of Maxwell House coffee cans. Crooks scatter. Cops arrive. Next day I tell anybody who’ll listen: I wasn’t a bit scared (just peed my pants a little).

Oh, yes: BOOBS: “My implants aren’t hard. They don’t feel like basketballs. It’s more like water balloons that aren’t completely full. When you touch them you can feel the liquid inside, too, which I guess is weird.”

In passing, but probably less weird: Bird seed-filled balloons work for enterprising (and cheap) drag queens. Arf! and chirp!

Charles@pridesource.com
BRIEFS
WASHINGTON DC

GOP Appears Poised to Codify Extremist Values in 2012 Platform

Despite the fact that a majority of Americans—including increasing numbers within the GOP—support marriage equality, reports indicate that the Republican 2012 platform will not only reject marriage equality, but will push for a federal constitutional amendment banning committed gay and lesbian couples from marrying and stripping rights from legally married same-sex couples; call for a vigorous defense of the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA); and continue to imply that, by their very nature, LGBT families are somehow less worthy of the same dignity and respect as other American families.

“The GOP’s proposed platform is blatantly out-of-step with not only the majority of our nation, but even with the rank and file of the Republican Party itself,” said HRC President Chad Griffin. “The party is poised to send a devastating message to LGBT youth—that they and the families they aspire to one day build are not worthy of the same protections as everyone else.”

Recent polling consistently indicates that a majority of Americans support marriage equality. Nationally, a recent CNN/ORC International poll shows 54 percent of Americans support marriage equality. And nearly half of all Republicans under the age of 35 support marriage equality, according to a May NBC News/Wall poll.

“The draft language extols the virtues of marriage which makes it all the more counterintuitive that it also calls for excluding an entire group of Americans from the institution,” said Griffin. “Their call for respect and dignity for all Americans should be matched with a commitment to making all families strong.”

The platform language appears to bear more resemblance to the National Organization for Marriage’s “marriage vow” than it does to the values held by mainstream Americans. Like the GOP platform, that vow—which Mitt Romney signed—requires candidates pursue a federal marriage amendment and vigorously defend DOMA.

- HRC Press Release

CHARLOTTE, N.C.
Campus Pride: UofM makes first-ever national trans-friendly college list

Campus Pride, the nation’s leading educational organization for student leaders and campus programs working to create a safe college environment for LGBT students, announced the first-ever national “Top 10 List of Trans-Friendly Colleges & Universities” on Aug. 15.

The list is the result of a partnership with The Advocate and annual data compiled since 2007 in the Campus Pride Index, which takes an in-depth look at LGBT-friendly policies, programs and practices.

The campuses included in Campus Pride’s list include (alphabetically): Ithaca College; New York University; Princeton University; University of California, Los Angeles; University of California, Riverside; University of Massachusetts, Amherst; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; University of Oregon; University of Pennsylvania; and University of Vermont.

For more information, go to CampusPrideBlog.org.

Extended briefs are available online at:
>>> www.PrideSource.com

ALEC Power: How Corporations Are Taking Over Government One Policy at a Time

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

A new study details the way ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council, is mining and dining conservative legislators while handing them model legislation to cut-and-paste into their bills. The report, ALEC in Michigan, was released last week by Progress Michigan and it looks at the 24-plus members of the highly influential nonprofit and the 20-plus bills that have been introduced in Michigan which have ALEC-like roots. ALEC also has been influential in pushing for corporate-friendly legislation all across the country, with Wisconsin and Arizona being prime examples.

The legislation aims at the end of labor rights. The financial starvation of local and state governments as a way to force consolidation and privatization. Lessened environmental regulations. Less accountability for corporate liability. Corporate control of schools, prisons and other institutions without public input and oversight. Dangerous gun laws. Barriers to voting. Campaign finance laws that give unlimited power to corporate spending.

Zack Pohl, executive director of Progress Michigan, explained the way ALEC works, calling it a “secret bill mill,” and stating that elected officials get to “travel to a big glitzy conference to meet behind closed doors.” There they are given model bills that the organization, made up of the nation’s biggest corporations, offers for free. They are given the chance to see implemented. At ALEC’s conferences and other events, corporate members and legislators mingle, campaign contributions are given by corporations to the legislators, and legislators get the model bills to bring back to their states to introduce.

Researchers were about to identify 24 Michigan lawmakers, all Republican, who are ALEC members. Two of the Representatives listed are also currently being highlighted in the Hungry4Equality movement in the “Equality Rights Hall of Shame,” Tom McMillin (R-Rochester Hills) and Dave Agema (R-Grandville).

The list of bills McMillin has introduced takes up nearly three pages in the ALEC Michigan report. Among them was HR277, which urged the Governor to withdraw Michigan from the Midwestern Greenhouse Gas Reduction Accord (which did not pass), anti-union bills HB5025 (would require annual consent to have union dues deducted from paychecks), and HB5024 (limitations on picketing). HB 4453 would prohibit government agencies from engaging in commercial activity that involves the construction or rehabilitation of public works infrastructure in competition against private enterprise. The report states that “such legislation forces more tax dollars to be spent on funding private corporations at public expense.”

Agena has six pages in the report, including HB 5221 which requires proof of citizenship to register to vote, HB 4409 which sets a 48-month limit on welfare, and HB 4305 which requires state law enforcement agencies to verify immigration status of all adults they stop, arrest or detain. It requires state agencies to verify immigration status for applications for food assistance, and would require law enforcement agents to transfer undocumented people to the custody of Federal officials. HB 5522, which did not pass, would have eliminated the minimum wage and HB 4454 would limit unions rights to organize and collectively bargain.

Two of the Representatives listed are also currently being highlighted in the Hungry4Equality movement in the “Equality Rights Hall of Shame,” Tom McMillin (R-Rochester Hills) and Dave Agema (R-Grandville).

register to vote, HB 4409 which sets a 48-month limit on welfare, and HB 4305 which requires state law enforcement agencies to verify immigration status of all adults they stop, arrest or detain. It requires state agencies to verify immigration status for applications for food assistance, and would require law enforcement agents to transfer undocumented people to the custody of Federal officials. HB 5522, which did not pass, would have eliminated the minimum wage and HB 4454 would limit unions rights to organize and collectively bargain.

The danger isn’t just the bills themselves. Investigations into ALEC reveal hundreds of model bills designed to move America in a more conservative, corporate-ruled direction, through an ever-growing machine to get their bills passed. Legislators all over the country are pushing for the same conservative bills. According to ALECExposed.org, “ALEC boasts that it has over 1,000 of these bills introduced by legislative members every year, with one in every five of them enacted into law.”

“The public does not want our public officials to practice their cut-and-paste skills to introduce bad legislation,” Pohl said. He also expressed dismay at those who support this practice, saying it was “hardly what the founding fathers intended.”

There are over 2,000 elected officials who are members of ALEC, and over 300 large corporations including AT&T, AOL, Pfizer, UPS, FedEx, GE, Proctor and Gamble, American Express, Exxon Mobil, Koch Companies, Enron, FrioLay, Philip Morris, RJ Reynolds, and State Farm Insurance. Of the elected officials, some paid for their membership using money from their tax-payer funded office account. Politicians not listed in the report could still be members without it being public record if they paid for their memberships out of personal funds.

Apart from a detailed 2011 series by TheNation and the release of leaked ALEC documents that are on the ALEC Exposed website, not much public attention was given to the powerful nonprofit which claims not to be involved in lobbying. But the April 2012 shooting death of Trayvon Martin by a neighborhood watchman brought attention to Florida’s “Stand Your Ground Law,” and eventually to ALEC, which created the bill. Over thirty corporations cut ties with ALEC or “temporarily suspended” their membership in the group, including Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Walmart and GM. Pohl is calling on other companies to join in the un-joining, and for politicians to give up their membership as well.

Learn more about ALEC Exposed at www.alecexposed.org. For the list of companies who are part of ALEC go to www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=ALEC_Corporations.
We must be taken seriously as a part of our communities. We need more gay people to come out and make our voices heard. I want to be heard and listened to and be accepted. You don’t have to like me, but give me my rights!

- Carolun Simmons

I support Hungry4Equality because I believe it’s time to expose the people behind the hateful policies creating a hostile environment for my family and friends.

- Johnny Jenkins

The arrogance of the Michigan legislature moved me to participate. It cost taxpayers more money when their representatives waste time trying to take rights away from LGBT people. It is wrong that representatives like McMillin are paid to be bigots. Representatives should use all of their time and money to improve this economy for everyone instead of discriminating against the LGBT community.

- Alicia Skillman

It astonishes me that people can stand by and support people like Tom McMillin. These are people who have gone entirely out of their way to make sure they are extra good at hating other people. Michigan can’t afford to keep these hateful legislators in office anymore. It’s now more important than ever to get educated and vote!

- Megh Hollowell

People like Janice Daniels and Tom McMillin are supposed to be representing their constituent bases in the communities they live, yet they continue to use their power to manipulate the legislation to their advantage - shameful.

- Laura Portrey

As a straight ally, it’s important to me to be visible about what equality actually means to me. It’s easy enough to say you support equality, but what are you actually doing about it?

- Jimmy Wright

If change is going to happen in Michigan, it’s going to take all of us. The people on the Hall of Shame have already shown us they can throw their weight around with hateful legislation. It’s about time that people who believe in equal rights start standing up for them!

- Justin Vickers
Ruth Ellis Graduates 20 Interns

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

DETROIT — For the second year in a row, the Ruth Ellis Center gave LGBT youth the opportunity to work as interns for six weeks out of the summer. The internship program is a partnership between Growing Detroit’s Young Talent (funded by DTE), Youth Employment Solutions, University of Michigan School of Public Health (funded by MAC). The program lets youth learn the inner workings of the nonprofit and lets them try their hand at many positions, such as promoting the center, doing peer outreach, and day to day stuff like answering phones and helping people who visit the center. They also work with businesspeople from participating companies to learn how to get ahead in business, and work on leadership training for the youth.

“The Ruth Ellis Center Summer Internship Program is to earn an income while building relationships, experiencing new things and spending time in a positive environment,” said youth who made a YouTube video about their experience. “To become more prepared to find, apply for and keep job by improving understanding of professionalism and expectations for the workplace environment.”

One of those youth is Toni Williams, who opened up by sharing a “Where I came from” poem with the group. “I am from someone telling me I am not worth living. I am from someone in an abusive relationship.” Williams shared plans for the future, stating, “My plans are five years from now is to have my bachelors or my masters for child care development and business.”

Tarrick Higgins also took part. “The most important thing I learned is showing up on time and bringing my best to the internship,” he said.

DeJuan LeBlanc was grateful for the training he received. “I would like to say thank you all so much because the LGBTQ community has a very very hard time. We get criticized. We get ridiculed about every single thing. So for you all to come and help us and be safe and feel comfortable around us, that was a blessing.”

Learn more about Ruth Ellis Center at www.ruthelliscenter.org. Visit pridesource.com to see a video of this event.

Future Funding of LGBT Ministry Uncertain at United Methodist

BY CRYSTAL PROXMIRE

DETROIT — For the past year George Jonte has been running the United Methodist LGBT Ministry, whose mission is to unite congregations in the region in support of full inclusion. Though progress has been made, Jonte says funding for the mission is at risk.

“This work was originally funded by a very nice grant from the Arcus Foundation which ended in 2011,” Jonte said. “In the meantime I managed to get $10,000 stopgap money to start 2012, but that money ran out some time ago. A $3,600 emergency fund, mainly through a Buck Dinner grant, is also nearly gone.

“For about three months I have been paid by the church, but there is no line item for it. It’s not in their budget, but they believe in the work I’m doing,” said Jonte.

The LGBT Ministry has been operating out of Central United Methodist in Detroit, and without grant money to support the $100,000 a year program, which included Jonte’s salary and travel expenses, the church is picking up the costs.

Jonte’s only hope right now, apart from some new support, is a potential Arcus Foundation grant that he will find out about in the spring.

“I’m not sure what happens if we don’t get the money from Arcus,” he said.

Since January 2011, the LGBT Ministry accomplished several things. First Jonte compiled a resource library, then he met with leaders from 44 churches, 14 percent of which were predominantly African American. There was a panel discussion of 20 PFLAG parents and also a 14-member advisory committee that met quarterly. Of the 44 churches, 28 agreed to be more welcoming and affirming, 10 started actively using inclusive language in their liturgy and worship, and six wrote formal welcoming statements.

However, a great obstacle stands in the way of inclusion.

In 1972 the UMC General Conference added a very damning phrase to its doctrine stating, “The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.”

Jonte explained that momentum is building for inclusion in the church. In 2008 and 2012 proposals to change the language were heard, but rejected.

“The problem is that ours is a global conference,” Jonte said. “Churches from the African continent and some from Europe are growing while we (American Churches) are declining in membership. Thus they have more representation and they tend to be more homophobic.

In addition to UMC’s efforts, religions across the board are opening up to inclusion, though some more than enthusiastically than others.

“We are losing numbers in the 18-35 age range. They have stopped going to church all together or they have moved on to denominations that are more open and affirming,” noted Jonte.

Jonte and UMC are part of the Inclusive Justice, a state-wide faith-based coalition which is inclusive of all traditions that advocates for LGBT acceptance in religious communities. To find out more about Inclusive Justice, go to http://inclusive-justice-together-in-faith.org.

Historic Gathering to Tackle ‘Sex and Justice’

International Meeting to Address Criminalization, Punishment of Sex

ANN ARBOR — The U of M Institute for Research on Women and Gender will host a conference on “Sex and Justice,” Oct. 4-6. The international conference will examine and critique ongoing domestic and international efforts to criminalize and punish sex.

A wide array of trailblazing activists, legal experts, and scholars from the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, and Cameroon who argue for policy reform on a diverse array of issues will gather for the first time during this three-day historic meeting.

Conference organizer Trevor Hoppe says he organized the event because “hundreds of thousands of people around the world have been locked up, beaten, or killed for having sex. These issues haven’t yet received the attention they deserve. Victims and their advocates have been bullied into silence for too long, fearing for our jobs and in some cases our lives. This conference will shatter that silence.”

Among the numerous issues that will be discussed is the increasing use of criminal law both in the U.S. and internationally to punish HIV-positive people. In 34 U.S. states it is a crime for HIV-positive people to have sex without disclosing their infection, whether or not they put their partners at risk. HIV is not transmitted in most cases, prompting leaders such as U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) to call for reform.

The increasing use of public sex offender registries, which have grown to include over 750,000 Americans in recent years, will also be discussed. George Mason University Prof. Roger Lancaster notes that many of those forced to register are nonviolent, first-time offenders. Like a growing number of policy experts, he believes these registries need to be reformed.

“Public registry requirements create a class of unemployable and unhouseable pariahs,” he said.

Many of those who bear the brunt of these policies are poor and black, argues Kenyon Farrow of the Praxis Project. Farrow suggests that race and racism are the most pressing issues facing advocates of policy reform. “What kind of man or woman you are; what kind of gay, lesbian, or transgender person you are; and how the state responds to you, largely is still a matter of race,” Farrow said.

International efforts to punish sex will also be highlighted. Cameroonian Alice N’Kom will discuss her efforts to fight criminalization, punishment of sex.

For a list of speakers and details on how to register for free online, visit www.sexandjustice2012.com. All events will take place on the fourth floor of the Rackham Graduate School, 915 East Washington. The event is hosted by the U-M Institute for Research on Women and Gender.
If he despises Obama, I’ll take that as a sign that the president is doing pretty pissed with Obama because of the whole marriage equality issue.

In an Aug. 15 interview with right-wing radio darling Janet Mefferd, Owens lamented that Obama had basically flipped off African Americans by not telling gay people to go to hell. Like a real Christian would, obviously.

“He’ll take up the cause of the Latinos, he’ll take up the cause of the homosexuals, but it’s like the African Americans don’t exist,” Owens lamented, pointing out that Obama likes everyone except for black people which I guess means he’s racist against himself. “And he said, ‘I’m not the president of the African Americans, I’m the president of America.’” What if the white leaders who were in office when the civil rights bill had passed, what if they had said that, “We’re the politicians for the white community?” We wouldn’t have gotten a right to vote, we wouldn’t have gotten the rights we enjoy today.”

“How can a man and a man be a parent to a child? By their nature, they cannot. How can a woman and a woman?”

Got that? Because Obama said that he was a president for all Americans, not just the black ones, it’s the same thing as a white politician saying he or she is only a leader for white Americans and if a white version of Obama had been in charge nearly five decades ago then forget about civil rights.

If Owens’s logic doesn’t hurt your brain then you don’t have one. Though I would like to point out that if we follow this logic then we can definitely forget about the black version of Obama ever becoming president, which would make Owens pretty happy since he has vowed that he and the CAAP are going “to take him on even more” now that Obama loves the gays (and, remember, “loves the gays” is synonymous with “hates the blacks”).

When Mefferd remarks that gay activists seem to “lack of fear of God” Owens concurs.

“I would say that’s the case,” he says. “It’s like waving your thing in God’s face and saying, ‘You don’t matter.’ That’s exactly what I think.”

Okay, wait, supporting gay rights is like waving your penis in God’s face? Is that what he means by “thing”? Because if you ask the majority of Americans, gay or straight, what “waving your thing” means, they’re going to think penis.

And why is this marriage business such a BFD to Owens? Because civilization and family and God and blah blah blah… And, of course, for the children. Because Owens cannot wrap his brain around same-sex parents.

Owens says, “How can a man and a man be a parent to a child? By their nature, they cannot. How can a woman and a woman? My little boy takes both of us, he takes the love and tenderness of a mother and he takes the love and whatever the dad gives he needs that, too. So to do different is disloyal, it’s not honorable to the child. We cannot say a marriage is right between the same sex.”

This is coming from a guy who has claimed that “Homosexuality spreads because somebody (sexually)abused children” and said there’s no difference between a same-sex couple marrying and “a man deciding he wants to have sex with a dog.” Yeah, this guy is all about being honorable. If he despises Obama, I’ll take that as a sign that the president is doing something right.

Right away political commentators viewed the Romney-Ryan ticket as a strategic shift for the GOP — away from its emphasis on what Republicans call President Barack Obama’s failed economic polices to a focus on contrasting views on the role of government and differing visions for the country’s future.

At the heart of the difference for the GOP are bedrock conservative principles, which Ryan’s selection underscores.

After all, the 42-year-old Ryan, a Roman Catholic, is best known for his political leanings.

Shortly after 9 a.m. Eastern time, Romney introduced Ryan to an enthusiastic gathering in Norfolk, Virginia, in front of the American flag-draped Navy ship USS Wisconsin, with music from the motion picture Air Force One preceding the announcement and Kid Rock music following immediately afterwards.

“Mitt Romney is a leader with the skills, the background and the character that our country needs at a crucial time in its history,” Ryan said in brief remarks that were broadcast live on national television.

“Following four years of failed leadership, the hopes of our country, which have inspired the world, are growing dim; and they need someone to revive them. Governor Romney is the man for this moment; and he and I share one commitment: we will restore the dreams and greatness of this country,” Ryan added.

“Congressman Paul Ryan is a strong choice for vice president, and his addition to the GOP ticket will help Republican candidates up and down the
His record includes votes against the repeal of 'Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell' and against a fully-inclusive hate crimes bill - both of which were signed into law by President Obama. As a so-called deficit hawk, Congressman Ryan has been in lockstep with Speaker [John] Boehner’s legal defense of DOMA...

- Drew Hammill, press secretary to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi

ballot,” said R. Clarke Cooper, Log Cabin’s executive director.

“As chairman of the House Budget Committee and author of Republican ‘Path to Prosperity’ that provided the blueprint for serious spending cuts in this Congress, nobody is more qualified to articulate a conservative economic vision to restore the American economy and stimulate job creation,” Cooper added.

Repeated attempts seeking comments from local and state gay Republicans were unsuccessful.

But local, state, and national Democrats - gay and straight alike - had plenty on their minds.

Ryan LGBT Record

“Congressman Paul Ryan’s record on LGBT issues is deeply troubling,” said Drew Hammill, press secretary to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco).

“His record includes votes against the repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ and against a fully-inclusive hate crimes bill - both of which were signed into law by President Obama. As a so-called deficit hawk, Congressman Ryan has been in lockstep with Speaker [John] Boehner’s legal defense of DOMA, which continues to burn through hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars,” Hammill explained, referring to House Republicans’ hiring of attorneys to defend the Defense of Marriage Act after the Justice Department said it would no longer defend the anti-gay law.

Based on her Capitol Hill experience, Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-Massachusetts) offered her assessment.

“Congressman Ryan and I served on the House Budget Committee together and I got a firsthand view of his very extreme views,” she said in e-mail correspondence.

“For example, Congressman Ryan voted against the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which helps women fight for equal pay for equal work. He voted against repealing the discriminatory policy of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,’ and supports writing discrimination into the Constitution by amending it to ban gay marriage,” Tsongas explained.

“While Massachusetts and a handful of states have led the way on LGBT rights, our nation is still a long way from achieving equality under the law for all Americans,” Tsongas added. “His views opposing same-sex rights, along with his budget that would undermine important domestic programs, would steer this country away from the values of tolerance and equality that I have long championed, and that are so important to our future success.”

“Just how bad - or hostile - is Paul Ryan to LGBT issues and gay rights? As one measure, the Human Rights Campaign has consistently given him very low ratings on its congressional scorecards, with four zeroes and one rating of 10 out of 100, that for his 2007 support of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which some termed “half-hearted.”

HRC’s scores come out at the end of a two-year session. Consequently, there is yet no rating available for 2011-2012. Ryan voted twice (in 2004 and 2006) for a federal marriage amendment that would have defined marriage as the union of a man and woman.

Dodging Gay Discussion

While Ryan’s voting record is one thing, Romney’s vice presidential running mate seemingly downplays his anti-gay track record by shying away even from discussing LGBT issues.

Last February, during an appearance on NBC’s Meet the Press, Ryan dodged moderator David Gregory’s pressing him about gay marriage.

“Congressman Ryan,” asked Gregory, “Do you think this is an issue that’s legitimate for the presidential campaign? Do we have to come to a point where the country reconciles different views about this and we have a consistent way of looking at same-sex marriage?”

“Actually, I came on to talk about the debt crisis we have and the budget and I think that’s really the driving issue of this, this election,” Ryan replied.

“Mm-hmm,” said Gregory.

Ryan went on to say, “I don’t know why we’re spending all this time talking about [same-sex marriage].”

As longtime Massachusetts gay rights activist and South End Don Gorton of Join the Impact observed over the telephone, “Ryan is a sort of new style Republican who grew up with homophobia and gay issues by not talking about them. He would try to bury us in silence.”

“That’s a great comment,” said Mario Guerrero, president of Stonewall Democrats of Greater Sacramento, an LGBT partisan group, affiliated with National Stonewall Democrats, when told of Gorton’s remarks.

Still, Ryan can try “to smother us in with silence when it comes to the media, but the ‘smothering silence’ is not the case with his voting record,” Guerrero added over the phone.

“I don’t know how anyone can make the case for LGBT voters” to back Romney-Ryan, said Guerrero.

“If you are not in the 1 percent,” said Gorton, “it’s a hard argument to make. Romney-Ryan would benefit millionaires.”

Log Cabin Republicans, nonetheless, persevere. In an Aug. 13 Daily Caller column, entitled “How Romney-Ryan Can Reach Gay Voters,” Cooper argued that Romney “should take a page from his running mate’s playbook and support stronger workplace non-discrimination laws.”

Cooper went on to chastise Obama for not signing an executive order that would have barred federal contractors from discriminating against LGBT people.

“By vowing to sign an executive order preventing federal contractors from firing people for being LGBT, and joining Paul Ryan in support for ENDA, Romney can draw a favorable contrast between himself and the president.”

But Doug Case, president of San Diego Democrats for Equality, an affiliate of National Stonewall Democrats, would have none of it.

“Once again the Log Cabin apologists are trying to spray perfume on a skunk,” said Case in an email correspondence, referring to “Cooper’s groveling commentary” that “touts Congressman Ryan’s one and only pro-LGBT vote [some] years ago.”

“The Log Cabin Republicans seem to have lost touch with reality,” Case added. “They certainly have lost any sense of credibility. Romney’s poor choice has made it clearer than ever that LGBT Americans must mobilize to re-elect President Obama.”

Case also took Ryan to task over his blueprint for renewal. “Ryan’s economic plan is a type of reverse-Robin Hood, embracing the failed Republican ‘trickle-down’ policies of the past,” said Case. “He wants to create tax breaks for millionaires and pay for it by cutting Head Start, reducing Pell Grants for college students, turning Medicare into a voucher system, and privatizing Social Security.”

Longtime gay-rights activist and LGBT community leader Barbara Hoffman of Boston’s South End, said, Ryan’s “intent to massacre Medicare is likely to horrify the elderly.”

“I am optimistic that he is a bad enough choos that it increases Obama’s chances for re-election,” added Hoffman who serves on Boston’s Ward Four Democratic Committee.

For his part, Jerome Davis, executive director of National Stonewall Democrats, called Cooper’s opinion piece “contemptible.”

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www.PrideSource.com
Michigan to be Nation’s First No-Kill State, Goal of Upcoming Conference

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

LANSONG - While the state of Michigan has a long way to go in some areas, we are in the forefront of becoming the first no-kill state with 11 no-kill communities, more than any other state, according to the Michigan Pet Fund Alliance.

“It’s the goal of our organization and our conference to get to that goal,” said Pet Fund board member Christie Keith about Michigan’s 2012 No-Kill Conference (www.michiganpetfund.org) to be held on Sept. 20 at the Lansing Radisson Hotel on 111 North Grand and on Sept. 21 at the Lansing Center on 333 E. Michigan Avenue.

The volunteer, not-for-profit organization plans to introduce a new way of thinking and doing things at their second annual gathering. This 21st century approach includes a formula that when implemented will save 90,000 or more of Michigan’s homeless, healthy and treatable cats and dogs. The purpose of the no-kill conference is to share the formula, identify and share resources, showcase those successfully using the formula, provide opportunity for networking and resources, and speak at the conference as acknowledging many other achievements to making Michigan a no-kill state.

The volunteer, not-for-profit organization plans to introduce a new way of thinking and doing things at their second annual gathering. This 21st century approach includes a formula that when implemented will save 90,000 or more of Michigan’s homeless, healthy and treatable cats and dogs. The purpose of the no-kill conference is to share the formula, identify and share resources, showcase those successfully using the formula, provide opportunity for networking and resources, and speak at the conference as acknowledging many other achievements to making Michigan a no-kill state.

“We will be giving awards to ten of Michigan’s no-kill communities at our conference, as well as acknowledging many other achievements in the last year toward reaching that goal. We’ll also be presenting some exciting data on progress in the state at that time,” said Keith.

“The no-kill movement isn’t about individual shelters becoming ‘no-kill.’ It is about no kill communities. The definition of a no-kill community is one in which all healthy and treatable homeless pets are adopted into new homes rather than killed. For purposes of public policy, that is considered to mean that at least 90 percent of a community’s homeless pets are saved. Because that’s an ‘unspinnable’ figure – it’s simply the percentage of the total number of pets taken into a community’s shelter – it isn’t dependent on varying definitions or standards of ‘treatable’ or ‘healthy,’ and doesn’t rely on highly manipulatable terms like ‘adoptable,’” said Keith. “However, there are many communities all across the United States that save more than 90 percent, so it’s likely as we progress in our movement that figure will be revised upward.”

The term no-kill is not to be mistaken with euthanasia, which Keith said “is the merciful taking of life of a hopelessly ill pet, the kind of act a loving pet owner shows when a pet’s suffering can’t be helped anymore. Population control killing is not euthanasia, as there is nothing merciful about it. It’s a public policy failure and an illustration that the community’s sheltering organizations have not adopted the programs and policies that make it unnecessary.”

Municipal decision makers, shelter staff and volunteers, rescue organizations, veterinarians, animal control officers, and animal lovers and advocates are encouraged to attend the conference to participate in a variety of sessions, including Rescue Certification Training, Veterinarian-focused sessions, No Kill 101, How to Remove “Hard to Place” From Pit Bull Adoptions, Reducing Shelter Intake, Innovation in Animal Welfare, and Compassion Fatigue of the Animal Sheltering and Rescue Workers, among others. The No-Kill Advocacy Center’s (http://www.nokilladvocacycenter.org/shelter-reform/) founder, Nathan Winograd, will speak at the conference also.

“There is quite simply no possibility Michigan will not become a no-kill state. The only real question is how long it will take us. If we organize and unite to reach the goal, we will be the first no-kill state,” said Keith. “If we delay, we’ll be one of many. But the era of killing pets for no reason but the fact that they are homeless is over. In a recent Associated Press poll, 71 percent of Americans polled said that they believed shelters should not be allowed to kill healthy or treatable pets, and even the 29 percent who said they should be allowed to do so said it should only be ‘sometimes.’”

Whether animal lovers attend the conference or not, Keith said the most important thing they can do is demand more of their municipal agencies and private shelters alike. “Since we know that communities can save all their healthy and treatable pets, and we know how (which will be discussed more in-depth during the conference), there really is no excuse not to – although poorly managed public and private shelters seem to have no shortage of such excuses.”

Two decades ago, the concept of a No Kill community was little more than a dream, said the No-Kill Advocacy Center in a statement on their website. “Today, it is a reality in many cities and counties nationwide and the numbers continue to grow. And the first step is a decision, a commitment to reject the kill-oriented failures of the past. No-Kill starts as an act of will. The next step involves putting in place the infrastructure to save lives.”
Fur Trading Company is the New Pet Connection

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

FERNAOLED - Andrea Johns is no stranger to helping displaced animals find homes. As a former organizer for Fido Does Ferndale and a volunteer for the now dis-banded Waggs & Wishes she’s helped make dozens of pet connections. Now, in the absence of a Ferndale shelter or rescue group, she and pal Rachel Heller are making things happen with their new pet connector group, Ferndale Fur Trading Company.

“The Ferndale Fur Trading Company was started because the citizens began expressing a need for a rescue group in town,” Johns said. “We saw an opportunity to bring these folks together in a citywide effort to help pets find homes and to help citizens find pets! Because we two have so many human connections in Ferndale, and so many friends in the rescue community, we decided we could best be used to bring the two together through fun events, networking and creating visibility for the animals.

“There is also a forgotten community of individuals who take in and foster strays on their own. The Ferndale Fur Trading Company is a resource and outlet for them as well.” Johns works at Dino’s Lounge and Heller often helps her friends at the Rust Belt Market, giving them plenty of potential pet parents to network with.

Aside from the founders, FFTC has a small group of about 20 people who are lending a hand. “The beauty of the group is simplicity,” Johns said. “Volunteers can put in as much or as little time as they want, and will be given projects to help with fundraising and events, or we will get them in contact with rescue groups if they want to work directly with animals, walking, cleaning and socializing.

“Our long-term goal is to create a ‘Visibility Team,’ a core group of volunteers who can pick up dogs from shelters or fosters and walk them around Ferndale, meeting folks and socializing them. We would also like to eventually start a Petfinder page and official website to promote the animals that individuals are rescuing and fostering. Then, of course, adoption events, fundraisers for special causes and community awareness events.”

Because the group is so new, there are several things that need attention. Johns said everyone is welcomed and needed.

“Anyone with special talents… grooming, training, web and graphic design, photography, etc. will be greatly appreciated and used. Anyone who is just curious can meet with us to plan and brainstorm. Members of different rescue groups are encouraged to contact us, so we can find a way to help. This is so new, and the possibilities are endless if we gather a large enough army.”

They held a Pitt Stop Fundraiser on Aug. 19 to raise money to give the organization a good start. They raised $629.51, which will be used towards acquiring their tax ID, and the remainder will ensure that at least six dogs or cats will be spayed, neutered and vetted. The event filled the alley behind Dino’s Lounge and attracted dog owners and supporters.

Andrea Johns is co-founder of Ferndale Fur Trading Co. seen here kissing Otis. BTL photo: Crystal A. Proxmire.
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Oswald and Cadbury, Bunnies on a Mission

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

FERNDALE—Oswald and Cadbury are grey Flemish Bunnies on a mission. The super soft and extra friendly rabbits ride around the Ferndale area in a double baby carriage pushed by animal-loving activist Julie Miron of Ferndale. Miron hosts rescue bunnies, mainly from the Michigan Anti Cruelty Shelter in Detroit where she also volunteers. And she takes Oswald and Cadbury around to help introduce bunny love and proper care to the people they meet.

“We can go anywhere and it makes people smile,” Miron said. “Earlier today someone stopped us on the street and said ‘thank you, I was having a bad day and this made a difference.’”

The pair even has their own Facebook Page where fans can follow them on their adventures. And they’ve been selected to be in the Great Lakes Rabbit Sanctuary 2013 calendar.

Miron said that many rabbits that end up in rescues were purchased to be children’s pets for Easter that they didn’t want to take care of. “Rabbits are a lot of work, it’s a commitment. They can live 7-10 years and you can’t just put them in a cage outside. They require a lot of care.” She said that bunnies can easily die from either heat or cold, and that anything over 84 degrees is too much for them. “People should read a couple books and talk to rescues before they get one,” she said.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals gives information to consider before adopting a bunny, including a breakdown of the expenses and the special health concerns the creatures may have. They caution that “rabbits are physically delicate and fragile, and require specialized veterinary care. It’s true that children are naturally energetic and loving, but ‘loving’ to a small child means holding, cuddling, or carrying an animal around - precisely the things that frighten most rabbits. Rabbits can’t cry out when distressed. Instead, they may start to scratch or bite to protect themselves from well-meaning children. Thousands are abandoned at animal shelters every year for this reason. Many rabbits are also dropped accidentally by children, resulting in broken legs and backs. While a rabbit may be a great pet for your family, an adult should be the primary caretaker.”

They also have strong urges to dig, chew and bite. That’s why bunnies need plenty of toys like cardboard, old phone books or chew sticks from the pet store. If left free to roam the house, a bunny will chew on things, including electrical cords. So while they do need to be allowed to roam for exercise, they should be monitored as well.


And if you want to be friends with Oswald and Cadbury on Facebook go to https://www.facebook.com/OswaldAndCadburyBunny.
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**Aug. 25**
8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Registration fee: $25
(269) 963-1796 or jgilbert@hs-scm.org
Featured events: Dog walk (registration begins at 9 a.m.), vendor booths, dog fashion show and costume contest, microchip your pet for $20, Pet adoption

### Bark-A-Bout’s First Annual Field Day
**Aug. 25**
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
14660 23 Mile Rd. in Shelby Township
(586) 566-8900 or frontdesk@barkabout.net
Featured events: Air Dogs Dock Diving Competition, CGC and Therapy Dog Tests, Demonstrations from Leader Dog for the Blind and Macomb County Sheriff Department

### Last Day Dog Rescue Pet Extravaganza
**Aug. 25**
12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Petco
35725 Warren Rd. in Westland
ourlastdaydogs@gmail.com

### Pinckney Dogfest
**Sept. 8 (Rain date Sept. 28)**
10 a.m. (gates open at 9:30 a.m.) to 3 p.m.
11211 Dexter Pinckney Rd. in Pinckney
(734) 878-1928
$10 per vehicle or $5 with an on-site dog food donation to the Gleaners Pet Pantry.
Featured events: Disc Dogs of Michigan, Tidbit Catching Contest, Dog Singing Contest, Dog Tricks Contest, Triathlon Race, Dog Dress-Up Parade

### Drinking with Dogs
**Sept. 18**
6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Fountain Bistro
800 Woodward at Campus Martius Park in Detroit
(313) 831-3647 or visit www.caninetofivedetroit.com
Every third Tuesday, Canine to Five selects various metro Detroit establishments with outdoor seating areas to enjoy an adult beverage while socializing your loyal pooh.

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Featured events: Disc Dogs of Michigan, Tidbit Catching Contest, Dog Singing Contest, Dog Tricks Contest, Triathlon Race, Dog Dress-Up Parade

### Bully Splash Bash
**Sept. 16**
11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Currey’s Family Pet Care
6261 Hannan Rd. in Romulus
(313) 943-2697 or lthomas@dearbornanimals.org to register
Featured events: Dock Diving, Weight Pulling, K9 Fun Run, Agility, and Canine Good Citizen Testing

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**Sept. 18**
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Every third Tuesday, Canine to Five selects various metro Detroit establishments with outdoor seating areas to enjoy an adult beverage while socializing your loyal pooh.

### 9th Annual All American Pet Expo and Mega Pet Adoption
**Sept. 21**
11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Sept. 22
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Sept. 23

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**See Pet Events, page 23**
Several pooches took part in the doggie kissing booth, while some just spent the evening lounging about or sniffing out other dogs while their owners sipped adult beverages in the alleyway dining area.

Yvette Beausoleil is a Ferndale resident who understands the passion that goes into rescue work and animal care. She found her dog, Sir Silly, five years ago on a cold night wandering around the lawn of Ferndale High School.

“It was about 1:30 in the morning and my friend and I were coming home from an evening out when we saw this sad dog out in the cold. And you know, dogs pick you. He came over to the truck and looked up at me, turning his head back and forth because of all the hair that was shaggy over his eyes, and I knew. It was no thought about getting him into the truck,” Beausoleil said.

She took the dog home to keep on the enclosed porch for the night, except that she and her friend were a little lively still from their night of drinking. So they brought the dog in the back yard and giggled over what to name him. The dog played along with them, happy to have found a home. And finally their laughter and goofy name contest got so loud that the Ferndale Police showed up saying a neighbor had complained.

“Everything about this dog and this night was so silly, that the name just stuck. We called him Sir Silly because of it,” she said. The next day she called the City of Warren, where the dog’s tag was registered, and she called the owner several times. It took three months for the owner to call her back, admitting that Sir Silly was supposed to have been training to be a hunting dog but he got away. He told her that he was “over it,” and that she could keep him if she wanted. And she did.

“I know how much work and money it takes to care for animals, and how when you love an animal you’ll sacrifice anything to care for it. That’s why I love what Andrea and Rachel are doing, and why I came out to support,” Beausoleil said.

Blake Scheer of Ferndale with Olive.
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Frenchie Speaks Out

‘Voice’ Finalist Gets Serious About Her Sexuality, Talks Upcoming Album

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

E verything happens for a reason in the life of Frenchie Davis.

Ten years after getting disqualified from “American Idol” for her Internet porn past, she became a finalist on “The Voice,” sang with Christina Aguilera and releases her debut album later this year.

In our interview, she put it all out there again: Davis addressed the stigma of being bisexual and black, how she doesn’t regret the “Idol” ordeal and why her upcoming album – and entire solo career – almost didn’t happen.

Before you came out publicly in a recent interview, how were you in your own life?

I first told my mom that I was attracted to boys and girls when I was 16 years old. A lot of my friends and family weren’t really surprised to hear that I had “come out,” because all I did was answer a question honestly in an interview and it ended up becoming a headline.

I didn’t plan to come out. I fell in love with someone who I think I could be with forever, and we never really talked about it until he met my father right away. I think he definitely knew because he came to visit my dorm room and was like, “Wow, you’ve got a lot of pictures of half-naked girls on your wall.” (Laughs)

You were just idolizing those girls … right?

Yeah, just idolizing them – sure. And thinking they were hot. My dad read so much into it, and it’s been really interesting seeing my dad embrace all of this – that has been the most heartwarming part of it. I mean, my father and I never really talked about it. My mother knew; she met whatever girls and guys I dated in high school. But with my dad, we never really talked about it until he met my partner and was like, “You look happy. I like her.”

My dad is super conservative and Republican. Black Republican, I know. Don’t even get me started. He was the one I was afraid to tell. He was afraid that me being open and honest about who I am would affect my career negatively or negatively affect the way people look at me.

Moments like that have reminded me that it indeed does get better. There were times where it was hard, like in high school. And not even having to do with being bisexual, but being a big girl, too. People called me fat; they called me a dyke and all those things. I know what it feels like to not fit into the mold of what society thinks you’re supposed to be.

Bisexuality in the gay community is looked at as taboo or “just a phase.” Have you felt stigmatized because of it?

It absolutely is something I’ve had to fight. For a long time that’s why I dated mostly men, because when I would meet a woman that I was into – a lesbian – she would be turned off by the fact that I was bisexual.

And men aren’t so much turned off by that.

(Laughs) Men are totally opposite! For a long time I felt like it was just easier to identify with being straight; it seemed easier to date guys because lesbians seemed so turned off by the bisexual thing. So I’ve experienced criticism and people looking down on it in the straight community and in the gay community.

I didn’t plan to come out, but I’m really thankful that everything unfolded the way it did because no, I’m not straight; none of the guys I’ve been with made me straight, just like being madly in love with my partner right now doesn’t make me a lesbian. I’m a bisexual woman and it is what it is. I have enjoyed men thoroughly, and I can say the same thing about women. People who don’t think that it’s real, maybe that’s the reality in which they exist, but that’s not my reality.

How does being black and bisexual change things?

I honestly thought that we were a lot farther, and then I did an interview with the Tom Joyner Morning Show and was completely taken aback by the way that went. The interview ended

See Frenchie Davis, page 26
with a guy shouting, “Let a man into the bedroom!” That’s how disrespectful it was. It was bad. It really broke my heart, because I know what it’s like to be black in America and I know what it’s like to be a woman in America, and to be treated with disdain and disrespect by members of my own community was hurtful. It hurt me to the core.

You know, at the end of the day when the stage lights are turned off and the audiences go home, you have to be able to look at yourself in the mirror. When I leave this earth, I want to know that I was on the right side of history. Things won’t change unless people like me say, “No, I’m not going to allow society to bully me into lying about who I am.”

Christina Aguilera’s diva behavior makes a lot of headlines. What is she really like, and what surprised you most about working with her on “The Voice”?

(Hesitates) I’m never going to bad talk her, publicly. I’m just never gonna do it. But I will say this: I was pleasantly surprised by how amazing her ear is. Her ear is on point. Even when she’s not trying, that instrument is right. She definitely is a pop diva for a reason.

She has a reason to be a little catty, is what you’re saying.

No! I’m not saying that! That’s what you got out of that? (Laughs)

What do you remember most from performing at drag clubs and gay bars?

All the makeup tips I picked up. All the wardrobe tricks I’ve learned. My friends from back then. I don’t miss the struggling part! (Laughs) But even then maybe – those days of being in that grind and me and my college friends not being able to afford to fly home for the holidays, so we all put our money together to go grocery shopping and I cooked a big holiday dinner for everyone. Then it was, “Well, let me go sing with the gay boys tonight so I can make a couple of dollars” – because you know the gay boys tip at the drag bar! (Laughs)

You were among a bunch of other drag queens. Did anyone ever mistake you for one?

They didn’t. I think that’s why I made so many tips, because I was the only real girl and I was the only performer not lip-syncing. So I’m really thankful for that. I still keep in touch with a lot of drag queens in D.C. The gay community in D.C. is really what started this whole performing at gay Prides and all that. It’s been an amazing journey.

After performing on reality shows and doing “Rent” on Broadway, how does it feel to be releasing your debut single and album?

It’s amazing how the universe works. There was a time when I just thought, “I don’t want to feel unfulfilled and bitter, so maybe I should give up on the recording thing and be really thankful that I’m a Broadway star and just do the theater thing.” There was a moment where I had given up on this, and then I’m singing at a gay club and the casting director for “The Voice” is in the audience having drinks and then I’m on “The Voice” and this whole other window of opportunity opens up that I never even expected.

What can we expect from the upcoming album and your debut single?

It’s gonna be dance-pop and the first single is called “Love’s Got a Hold on Me,” and it was written by Janice Robinson and I’m really excited about it. I shot a video for it with Brian Friedman as the co-director and choreographer. A lot of people know Brian from his work with Britney Spears and he’s a creative director for “X Factor.” Brian jumped on board because he believed in me enough to be like, “Yeah, I’m gonna bring in the dancers and make it fierce for you.”

Is there pressure to stay in the closet on shows like “American Idol” or “The Voice”?

Not at all. I didn’t feel any pressure to not be out when I was on those shows. In all honesty, some of the people who’ve been most successful on those shows have been members of the LGBT community. Look at Adam Lambert – and America loved Beverly (McClellan) and loved Vicci (Martinez), so I didn’t feel any pressure at all. I can’t really speak for “Idol” because I didn’t stay on the show long enough to really have a fair comparison between “Idol” and “The Voice,” but I can speak from my experience on “The Voice,” and I can say that they were very welcoming to LGBT contestants. I don’t think anyone there felt pressure to not be open about who they are. And that was an amazing experience. Who would’ve thought 10 years after being on “Idol” that I’d be singing “Lady Marmalade” on national TV with Christina Aguilera?

So you’re glad things worked out the way they did? No hard feelings against “Idol”?

You can’t waste your time on regrets, because they’re just the past crippling you in the present. If there was a button we could push to change the past then that would be a different conversation, but that button doesn’t exist so you have to walk away with all the lessons that you could’ve possibly learned and move forward and try to be better in the future. I wouldn’t change a thing. I’m really thankful for the woman that I’m evolving into, and I’m really thankful for all the good in my life. Had something back then happened differently, who knows where I would’ve been today.
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15 Earhart, for one
16 “Serpico” author Peter
17 Ghostbusters role
18 Able to bend over
19 Large earthenware jar
20 Groundbreaking sitcom of the ‘70s
23 Removes, as a foreskin
24 Just make, with “out”
25 Mail order abbr.
27 Former NFL player Tuafolo
28 Make a blunder
30 Witherspoon of “Legally Blonde 2”
32 “Y” wearer
33 One you may see in a shower
34 Spinoff of 20-Across
39 One with a gifted tongue
40 Fleur-de-___
41 Jacobi of “I, Claudius”
42 Low boggy land
43 Religious pamphlet
48 Sonny, to Chaz
49 Stud site
51 Club head?
52 He played George in 20-Across and 34-Across
56 In two parts
57 Like a Peru native at a public lavatory?
58 Dark greenish blue
59 They’re performing, in “Fame”
60 Traps for suckers
61 “Render therefore ___ Caesar ...”
62 High place with a flat top
63 Hung beast of a simile
64 Use a keyhole, perhaps

Down
1 Tickle pink
2 Two under scores for Sheehan
3 Become men, perhaps
4 Poet Sidney
5 Fog’s footwear
6 Cole Porter’s “Ridin’ ___”
7 What you could get caught in
8 Swinger who tries to put it in the hole with few strokes
9 Prime piece of meat
10 Mine, in Montreal
11 Hammer that requires testicles for its user?
12 Belafonte tunes
13 9-digit ID org.

Solution on pg 32
Horoscopes

Turn up the charm, Gemini!

BY JACK FERTIG

The Sun entering Virgo and Mars coming home to Scorpio push us to work. Both aspect Neptune so focus may be hard to achieve. Mediation helps. Venus, Mercury and Jupiter offer opportunity through conviviality. Mix work with pleasure and you can get way ahead.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Life has been too intense lately and nobody who knows would blame you for letting off steam, but most don’t know. Try to pour that energy into work or exercise. Puttering around your home will also help keep your mouth out of trouble.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): Share good news unless it involves money. Friends are too likely to exploit your good nature. Stash that cash where it will be safe and collect a bit of interest. Your own charms should be enough to hold your pals’ interest.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): Flirtation (in the right places), affability and your best manners will open doors for you. Turn up the charm. Think ahead about what doors you want open. Social temptations can be a real distraction from big opportunities.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Daydreams can be a serious diversion from work that needs to be done. That would just fuel your worries and undermine your health. No, you can’t do everything so do what’s most important.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Keep your energy from being wasted through your mouth and you can accomplish a lot. Prioritize home, family and community in that order. If there’s a more economical way to do anything you can find it.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Trust your instincts to do and say the right thing. You can hardly go wrong. Friends and authority figures will prove helpful. Don’t waste this gift but be very mindful of your long-range goals, professional and otherwise.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Friends can help promote you, but be clear about what you want. Being too nice can encourage disastrous dysfunction. Opportunities for advancement and the chance to quietly accomplish a lot may pull you in different directions. Balancing both could take some juggling.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): Your ruler Mars, coming home to your sign, boosts your energy. It may be hard to focus at first. Accept guidance, even criticism from your friends. Blowing off some steam in the bedroom can actually help.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Take a chance on love, or even just sex. New opportunities await for a grand romance, or new thrills with your old love. Breaking appointments with platonic friends can cause trouble. Reschedule with respect.

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): With recent pressures abating you may feel a bit adrift. Your partner can help provide direction and focus. Your natural instinct for work and accomplishment will also point you in the right direction.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): New ideas may show where you need to step back a bit, take a broader view and find opportunity. New connections at work can prove helpful. Balancing cooperation with subtle individual initiatives can challenge your integrity and new friendships. Some wit is necessary; too much is disastrous.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Nobody lives up to your ideals, but neither do you. Don’t blame them for not keeping your universe perfect. Your helpful suggestions are taken more as annoying criticism. Keep the focus on quiet, meditative self-improvement and you will be much admired.
**Happenings**

**Thursday, Aug. 23**

**Civic Engagement Committee** 1 p.m. Fourth Thursdays, May 24, 9PM at the OutCenter. Empowering people to advocate and speak out for themselves and the LGBT community is key to creating effective change. Our Civic Engagement committee organizes to educate and resource our community members to make a difference in our community. E-mail to learn more. OutCenter, 132 Water St., Benton Harbor. CivicEngagement@OutCenter.org OutCenter.org

**Euchre Tournament - Benefit for Out Loud Chorus** 7 p.m. Entry: $10. Cash prizes awarded. No partner necessary, all levels of ability welcome. Food and beverage service available. Out Loud Chorus, 1950 S. Industrial Hwy, Ann Arbor. 734-652-0801. OutLoudChorus@gmail.com OutLoudChorus.com Online.eventbrite.com

**Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer activity, per vote. Kalamazoo Gay and house. Goes out every other week or looking for an excuse to get out of the weekend. Designed for those 50 and better Friday, Aug. 24

**Happenings**

**PhoenixChurch.org**

**Lesbian Resource Center Youth Group helps young people, ages 13 to 18, who are trying to come to terms with their sexuality in a sometimes-unaccepting society. Meets every Thursday from 7-9 p.m. at a confidential location. To attend, call or e-mail the resource center. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer, Kalamazoo. 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

**Speak Out** 7 p.m. Offers a welcoming environment for LGBT people to improve their public speaking and leadership skills. Meets the first and fourth Thursday of every month. Jim Top Comfort Center, 319 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. 734-995-8867. Crystal@jimtocomfortcenter.org

**Friday, Aug. 24**

**50 and Better Friday Group** 7 p.m. Designed for those 50 and better looking for an excuse to get out of the house. Goes out every other week or so for miniature golf, a movie, or other activity, per your approval. Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., Kalamazoo. 269-349-4234. PhoenixChurch.org

**Saturday, Aug. 25**

**French Tea Luncheon** 1 p.m. Admission: $32. The tea company will be holding a tea in the lush atrium of Henry Ford Hospital. The food for this particular luncheon will be very refined and extremely authentic many of the recipes are from French cookbooks directly from Paris. Great Lakes Tea and Spice Luncheon, 6777 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. 248-798-0052. Saly@gltkiosk.com GLTKiosk.com

**ALIVE Youth Group Meeting** 2 p.m. All LGBT and allied youth 14-20 encouraged to join. 4th Saturday of every month is Social Justice Saturday. As some meetings are held around town, contact ALIVE prior to attending meetings. ALIVE Youth Group, 132 Water St., Benton Harbor. Youthgroup@outcenter.org OutCenter.org

**Sunday, Aug. 26**

**Good Ol’ BBQ Cookout** 2 p.m. Food, fellowship, and fun. Stop by and get a carry-out plate if you can’t stay. Donations: $25. Checks made payable to “Ruth Ellis Center.” Kalimah Johnson is performing spoken word and there will be other surprises. Dress casual and cool. Kofi Adoma, 255 Worcester Pl., Detroit.

**The Conversation Station** 5 p.m. Weekly discussion group for LGBTQA+ 25 and over. Week’s topic: Is torture a moral evil? Is it wrong to torture someone to get information that would save lives? Get Out And Live!, 714 S. Washington St., Royal Oak. 248-981-4227. MarcWilliamsk@yahoo.com GetOutAndLive.me

**Monday, Aug. 27**

**Mysterious, Marvelous Monday** 6 p.m. Mysterious, Marvelous Monday is the metamorphosis of Wild Wednesday. Youth group for ages 15-18. Fostering a kind and supportive environment. Youn group for ages 13-18. Fostering a kind and supportive environment. Wild Wednesday will be other surprises. Dress casual and cool. Kofi Adoma, 255 Worcester Pl., Detroit.

**Lansingout KickOff Rehearsal** 6:30 p.m. A weekly anonymous 12 step opportunity for an informal voice check with the Artistic Director. Lansingout Gay Men’s Chorus. 310 W. Olds Ave., Lansing. 517-490-1746. Info@lansingout.org Lansingout.org

**Transgender Life Support Group** 7 p.m. Offering support, education, resources and a social structure for Transgender individuals. Facilitated by Arlene Kish, Lorraine Brown, Jessica Manke, Tracy Hoover, Marty Howland and Coll F. Milsacc. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. TransgenderlifeSupport.org

**Women’s Group** 7 p.m. This group focuses on networking, socializing, and discussion of issues relevant to lesbian and bisexual women. Additional activities occasionally planned. The Lesbian and Gay Community Network of West MI, 343 Atlas Ave. SE, Grand Rapids. 616-458-3511. Thenetwork@grlgbt.org GRlgbt.org

**Wednesday, Aug. 29**

**Senior Koffee Klatch** 5 p.m. A lively discussion and social group for LGBT adults over 45. Group covers topics pertainting to aging and outside speakers. Polluck diners at members homes, lunches out and holiday parties. Meets every Wednesday on the upper level of the Affirmations building. Senior Koffee Klatch, 290 W. Road Mile Road, Ferndale. 586-371-8932. Grlgbt.org

**Newly Single Support Group** 6:30 p.m. Group for all dealing with the end of a relationship and want to talk - or 

**Editor’s Pick**

Visitors of the University of Michigan Museum of Art encountering Danish artist Jesper Just’s “This Nameless Spectacle” will find themselves captivated in stages, as the experience of viewing it unfolds over time. Just works exclusively in film, shooting on a variety of stock including 8 mm and 35 mm and working closely with different musicians to create prominent soundtracks for each film.

In this breathtaking film installation, as in much of his work, Just situates the viewer in his signature landscape of beauty, provocation and a general uneasiness that is as seductive as it is ominous. The storyline is set in the 1930’s, a time of beauty, corruption and an upcoming war, in a neighborhood in the outskirts of Paris to her apartment, while a young male character appears to be a kind and supportive environment.

Jesper Just: This Nameless Spectacle is on display until Dec. 9 at the University of Michigan Museum of Art, 515 S. State St., in Ann Arbor. For more information, go to UMMA.umich.edu. Support for this exhibition is provided by the University of Michigan Office of the Provost.
**Editor's Pick**

The Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit will host the Stephen Gottlieb Festival of the Arts Aug. 28–Sept. 2, with a program of concerts, lectures, hands-on art projects, family events, exhibits and films.

**Bebe Neuwirth** will star in “Stories with Piano” at 8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 1 at The Berman. In this one-woman masterpiece, Neuwirth will perform music by some of the greatest songwriters of all time, including Kurt Weill-Brecht and Stephen Sondheim. She is known for her Tony Award-winning performances in “Sweet Charity” and “Chicago,” as well as playing Dr. Lilli Sternin on the television series “Cheers” and “Frasier.” Tickets are $46 for JCC members and $56 for non-members.

On Sunday, Sept. 2 at 7 p.m. the Festival hosts Broadway in HD, a film presentation of Stephen Sondheim’s “Company,” at The Berman. The all-star cast includes Neil Patrick Harris, Patti LuPone and Stephen Colbert.

For tickets, call 248-661-1900. The Berman is located at 6600 W. Maple Road in West Bloomfield.

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**ART ‘N’ AROUND**

**Ann Arbor Art Center** “Five to Nine: An Exhibition of Creative Work From Creative Young Professionals” Along with a large collection of new drawings and paintings from New Orleans, Detroit-area photographer Daniel Riber brings imagery from the wilder parts of northern Michigan, while local legend Tucker Myers shares sharp insights from his regular adventures in Mexico. Ann Arbor Art Center, 117 W. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Aug. 27 - Sept. 2, 734-995-8004. annarborartcenter.org

**Kalamazoo Institute of Arts** “Elliot Ewell: Dog Days” This exhibition leaves little question about Ewell’s love of man’s best friend. Ewell proves that our close relationship with dogs is due to mutual resemble and emotion. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo, July 7 - Sept. 23, 269-349-7775. krists.org

**Lawrence Street Gallery** “All Girls, No Boys!” A group of women artists who meet regularly to upkeep each others’ works, organize art shows, and, above all, support each other in their artistic endeavors. Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave. Suite A, Ferndale. Sept. 1 - Sept. 30. 248-544-0394. lawrencestreetgalleries.com

**Michigan State University Museum** “Echoes of Silent Spring: 50 Years of Environmental Awareness” The MSU Museum revisits the publication of Rachel Carson’s groundbreaking book “Silent Spring” by these individuals and communicated by these individuals and communicated by these individuals and communicated by these individuals and communicated by these individuals and communicated by these individuals.

**Pittsburgh Cultural Trust** “Nameless Spectacle” This will find themselves captivated in stages, as the experience of viewing it unfold.

**University of Michigan Museum of Art** “Drawn by the Light” Visitors of the University of Michigan Museum of Art have been invited to submit drawings that will be displayed throughout the museum.

**University of Michigan Museum of Art** “Jesper Just: ‘Nameless Spectacle”’ Visitors of the University of Michigan Museum of Art have been invited to submit drawings that will be displayed throughout the museum.

**University of Michigan Museum of Art** “Jesper Just: “Visitors of the University of Michigan Museum of Art have been invited to submit drawings that will be displayed throughout the museum.

**University of Michigan Museum of Art** “Home Grown: Plays from the Ground” The Purple Rose Theatre Company has received many honors and awards, and recently won the prestigious award for Best of the Best at the Detroit Theatre Festival.

**University of Michigan Museum of Art** “Echoes of Silent Spring: 50 Years of Environmental Awareness” The MSU Museum revisits the publication of Rachel Carson’s groundbreaking book “Silent Spring” by these individuals and communicated by these individuals and communicated by these individuals and communicated by these individuals and communicated by these individuals and communicated by these individuals.

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Classifieds

101-ANNOUNCEMENTS
LGBT AA MEETINGS

Ann Arbor-Friday
7:30 pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church Gay AA, 306 N. Division St. Closed/Discussion.

Bloomfield Hills-
Thursday
7:00 pm, Sobriety In The Hills Gay AA, Kirk in The Hills Church, 1340 W. Long Lake Rd. Closed/Discussion.

Detroit-Tuesday / Friday
8:00 pm, Downtown Gay AA, Fort Street Presbyterian Church, 631 W. Fort St. Closed/Discussion (Open 1st Friday of every month).

Farmington Hills-
Monday
8:00 pm, Suburban West Gay AA, Universalist Unitarian Church, 25301 Halstead (Between 10 & 11 Mile Roads) Closed/Discussion.

Ferndale-Monday / Wednesday / Friday
8 p.m., Diversity Wednesday Gay AA, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, 240 W. Lewiston @ Livernois. Closed/Discussion.
8 p.m. Go After Your Sobriety Gay AA, Drayton Ave Presbyterian Church, 2441 Pinecrest. Closed/Discussion.

Livonia-Friday
8 p.m., West Side Story’s Gay AA, Providence Medical Center, 7 Mile & Newburgh. Closed/Discussion.

Pontiac-Tuesday / Thursday / Sunday

Warren-Monday

112 ANNOUNCEMENTS - VOLUNTEERING
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR DIFFA: DINING BY DESIGN & ArtWorks Detroit
Detroit’s most original event, involving members of our fabulous design community Cocktails by Design/Artworks for Life - Thursday, Sept. 13, 2012 Dining by Design - Saturday, Sept. 15, 2012 DIFFA: Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS Benefits Michigan AIDS Coalition www.michiganaidscollection.org - click on DIFFA Dining by Design Located at Joe Dumar’s Field House, Detroit (in State Fair Grounds) For information, contact Monica Mills at (248) 545-1435, ext. 117, or mmills@michiganaidscollection.org

303 EMPLOYMENT - SALES

SALES
SUBARU Sales
Sales Person needed. We pay base salary + commission. Must be computer literate. Apply in person at Hodges Subaru at 23100 Woodward Avenue in FERNADE.

GROUP MASSAGE
For Gay and Bisexual Men. Learn some massage techniques and meet others in a safe and caring environment. Tuesdays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. Thursdays at 2 p.m. $10 per session. 209 West Kingsley in downtown Ann Arbor. (734) 662-6282 or email Massage4@aol.com. http://www.trymassage.com

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Jodie Foster gets married to the mob

The next time you see Jodie Foster in front of the camera it’ll be in “District 9” director Neill Blomkamp’s 2013 sci-fi epic “Elysium” with Matt Damon. And though her own directorial career has hit its share of potholes lately with the disastrously received (and, frankly, fairly underrated) “The Beaver,” Foster has a new direction: television. She will executive produce and direct a female-fronted mafia drama for Showtime titled “Angie’s Body.” Written by Rob Fresco (“Heroes,” “Jericho”), all the available information indicates that this is “The Sopranos” if they were run by Carmela instead of Tony. Now, that may sound gimmicky, but in a post-“Sopranos” world, we need something entertainingly mafia-based and right now the best we’ve got is “Mob Wives.” Now if Foster will just tell us for sure if she’s the star of the show and we’ll be all in.

Hugh Jackman joins Lee Daniels MLK drama

“Precious” director Lee Daniels had a couple of period Civil Rights Movement dramas in the hopper, “Selma” and “The Butler,” as his follow-up to the Oscar-winning film. But then he made “The Paperboy” with Zac Efron and Nicole Kidman instead. (The one where, yes, really, she urinates on him and apparently it’s completely unhinged and they hated it at Cannes – coming soon to a theater near you.) So now it’s back to the drawing board of the 1960s, this time with a different story called “Orders to Kill,” starring Hugh Jackman as controversial attorney William Pepper, a man who argued for decades that James Earl Ray, the convicted assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wasn’t the man behind the crime (his belief: the United States government did it). Hopefully it’ll all come together and be received enthusiastically in the wake of “The Paperboy”’s eventual success. Lee Daniels did not just pay us to say that. Promise.

Finally, a David Sedaris movie

David Sedaris has, over the past 20 years, turned into one of America’s most beloved humorists (though he’s spent most of that time living in Europe – look, the food really is a lot better in France). So you’d think that in all that time somebody somewhere could have gotten one of the author’s hilarious, first-person stories shaped into a decent script with some funding. This, however, has not taken place, mostly because the author himself is legendary for saying no. Until now. “C.O.G.,” based on a story from Sedaris’s best-selling collection “Naked” (about his time working as an apple-picker in Oregon), will begin production in October with young filmmaker Kyle Patrick Alvarez behind the camera. Alvarez already won the “Someone To Watch” Independent Spirit Award for his 2009 film “Easier With Practice” and his dogged determination to win over the reluctant author paid off with Sedaris’s blessing and cooperation. Now, who’ll play his sister Amy?

‘Such Good People’ casts such a lot of gay people

This might sound more like the casting of the latest round of “Hollywood Squares,” the all-homosexual version, but it’s not. It’s something a little more mysterious than that. It’s a film called “Such Good People” and it’s being billed as “a gay screwball comedy.” It has its own Facebook page and Twitter account, both of which just went up this month. And it has a cast of almost exclusively lesbian and gay names: Michael Urie (“Ugly Betty”), Lance Bass, Sandra Bernhard, Bree Turner (“Grimm”), stand-up comic Alec Mapa, Jon Polito (“The Big Lebowski”), Drew Droege (aka the internet’s own “Chloe Sevigny”), Mitch Silpa (“Flight Attendant Steve” from “Bridesmaids”) and Randy Harrison (“Queer as Folk”). What else is it about? Nobody knows; that’s why it’s kind of mysterious. So if you want to pretend you’re the Sherlock Holmes of film production and spy on the process unfolding in real time, just go link up to the movie on social media. You’ll know everything before the official press releases get underway.

Romeo San Vicente's whole life is a gay screwball comedy. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.
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