

MICHIGAN'S LGBTQ+ NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993

# Between THE Lines<sup>TM</sup>

## THE HEALTH GUIDE

The Local Nurse Who Played  
a Key Role in Mitigating  
Mpox Cases

## WHEN THE TEACHER IS A DICK

Protecting Your Queer Kid  
From a Hostile School  
Environment

## BEAUTIFUL IN BLUE

New Michigan Legislature  
Introduces Bills to Add  
LGBTQ+ Protections



ani difranco

how the ann arbor folk fest headliner  
gave queer people permission  
to be themselves

By Jill A. Greenberg



BANK OF ANN ARBOR PRESENTS

HILL AUDITORIUM  
SATURDAY 6:30PM  
JANUARY 28

FORTY-SIXTH ANNUAL

# ANN ARBOR FOLK FEST 23

TICKETS ONSALE NOW @ THEARK.ORG

FRIDAY  
NIGHT  
FOLK

BANJO FEST  
@ THE ARK ON MAIN STREET  
FRIDAY 8PM, JANUARY 27

The Ark  
where music lives

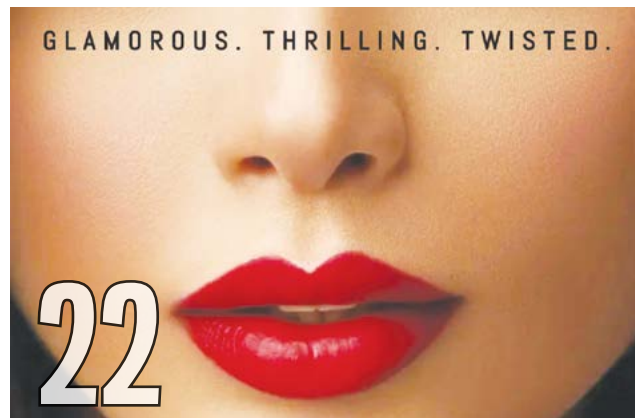
*Your wedding,  
just as you dreamed it.*

ZINGERMAN'S  
Cornman farms

Dexter, MI | 734.619.8100 | [www.shop.zingermanscornmanfarms.com](http://www.shop.zingermanscornmanfarms.com)







- 4 5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now-ish
- 6 When The Teacher Is a Dick: Protecting Your LGBTQ+ Kid From a Hostile School Environment
- 8 Practicing What He Preaches: Chase Cantrell Is This Michigan Think Tank's First Openly LGBTQ+ Chair
- 9 The Data on Funding for LGBTQ+ Causes Is Seriously Incomplete. Here's Why.
- 10 Righteous Evolution: How Folk Fest Headliner Ani DiFranco Gave Queer People Permission to Be Themselves
- 12 Sarah Huckabee Sanders Saves Arkansas Children From Racism, Equips Them to Thrive in a Racist Future
- 13 Beautiful in Blue: New Michigan Legislature Introduces Bills to Add LGBTQ+ Protections
- 14 On the Frontlines of Pox: Be Well Center's Chris Petrat on Handling the First Case in Michigan
- 16 Upcoming FDA Guidance May Finally Ease Restrictions on Blood Donation By Queer Men
- 18 Meet the Pansexual Filmmaker Showcasing Stories That Star Neurodivergent Actors
- 20 The Halls of History, But Queer-Friendly
- 22 Warm Up With These Queer Winter Reads



COVER STORY: P. 10

Photo: Daymon Gardner

Only on Pridesource.com

Find Pride Source on **YouTube** to check out all of our latest videos, including interviews with Sigourney Weaver, Tuc Watkins and Neil Patrick Harris.



**VOL. 3103 • JANUARY 19, 2023**

**ISSUE 1218**

**PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP**

www.pridesource.com  
Phone 734-263-1476

**PUBLISHERS**

Benjamin Jenkins  
benjamin@pridesource.com

**Publishers Emeritus:** Jan Stevenson & Susan Horowitz

**EDITORIAL**

**Editorial Director**

Chris Azzopardi  
chris@pridesource.com

**Assistant Editor**

Sarah Bricker Hunt

**Senior Staff Writer**

Jason A. Michael

**Writers and Columnists**

Ellen Knoppow, D'Anne Witkowski, Jon King,  
Gwendolyn Ann Smith, Dana Rudolph, Tim Retzliff,  
John Besche

**CREATIVE**

**Cartoonists**

Paul Berg

**Graphic Designer**

Sarah Wolf

**Contributing Photographers**

Andrew Potter, Andrew Cohen

**ADVERTISING & SALES**

sales@pridesource.com

**Director of Sales**

Tim Powers  
734-263-1475  
tim@pridesource.com

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

**National Advertising Representative**

Rivendell Media, 212-242-6863

**MEMBER OF**

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



**2022 AWARD WINNER**



"Pride Source"



Follow us @pridesource



@pridesourcemedia



Pride Source



Email your op-eds to  
editor@pridesource.com



Sign up online to receive our E-Digest

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

Copyright 2022



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

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

This time of year, it can be tempting to just stay inside as much as possible, and that's a perfectly viable, understandable stance. If you do decide to venture out, however, you're in luck — local events are happening all over the place, from low-key indoor adventures like an LGBTQ+ euchre tournament to the frenetic energy of a Detroit Roller Derby double header to a unique chance to meet the local authors of a crime thriller featuring a drag queen. If you need some fresh air, you're covered here, too, thanks to a special Pride-themed ice skating event.



Detroit Roller Derby. Photo: Josh Kahl

## Experience Detroit Roller Derby Badassery

With the 2023 Detroit Roller Derby season in full swing, now's your chance to experience the quirky, badass world of this eclectic sport, which features equal parts theater and athleticism. Catch a double header Jan. 21 when the Detroit Pistoffs play the Devil's Night Dames and the Grand Prix Madonnas take on the D\*Funk AllStars. Detroit Roller Derby ladies like Racer McChaseHer, Ruthless Bader-Ginsberg and Salty DeMeanHer don't mess around — expect raucous, good-natured rivalry, seriously impressive makeup and costumes, and plenty of laughs. Think you have what it takes to join the Detroit Roller Derby family? The team is always recruiting and holds regular bootcamps to get potential new members up to speed. Email [hr@detroitrollerderby.com](mailto:hr@detroitrollerderby.com) to learn more. All skill levels are welcome.

Jan. 21, 5 p.m. Masonic Temple (500 Temple St., Detroit). Tickets at [detroitrollerderby.com](http://detroitrollerderby.com).



## Glide Your Pride

It may be January, but Pride is just as bright in the middle of winter as it is in June. Strap on your skates and pridefully glide around The Rink at Royal Oak Jan. 21 at Pride on Ice, a cold weather festival hosted by drag queen Himalaya. Tickets include open skate, skate rental and access to a heated changing tent. After the event, stick around for the afterglow party at Pronto!, where you'll enjoy a complimentary hot chocolate bar, appetizers and a free adult beverage. Need more convincing? Detroit Staycation, the event's organizer, included this poem in its event announcement, written by a "little old lady at the coffee shop" to help entice people to attend Price on Ice: "Gray clouds are here, and spring is not quite near, but we are queer, so let's go skating, my dear." Maybe you can get a selfie with the poet herself!

Jan. 21 6-8 p.m., The Rink at Royal Oak (221 E 3rd St., Royal Oak). Tickets at <https://t.ly/c0t5>.



## Get Out Your Good Scissors for a Queerly Crafty Good Time

Get in some cozy craft time at the North Star Lounge Arctic Arts night Jan. 31, beginning at 7 p.m. Crafting supplies will be provided for fun, easy, winter-themed projects. North Star holds regular Tuesday night events catering to the LGBTQ+ crowd, including live music, bingo nights and more. Check out [nstarlounge.com](http://nstarlounge.com) for the full calendar — don't miss the upcoming Sunday brunch on Jan. 22 featuring improv jazz group Alex Anest Organ Trio.

Jan. 31., North Star Lounge (310 N. 5th St., Ann Arbor). More info at [nstarlounge.com](http://nstarlounge.com).

4



Monique Madison. Photo: Facebook

## Meet the Local Drag Queen Who Wrote a Crime Thriller

Meet the authors of one of our recommended LGBTQ+ winter reads, "Serial Showgirl," at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 26 at Ferndale Library. Local authors Monique Madison (aka Daniel Crago) and Melinda Bryce worked together on the novel, which focuses on a fabulous drag performer who moonlights as a vigilante crime fighter when his friend is attacked and left for dead. The story follows the lead character, a young gay man, as he navigates the dark details of the case while exploring his own place in the world of drag and beyond. Crago and Bryce will read from the book and answer questions about how they created the story that has been lighting up local social media.

Jan. 26 5:30 p.m., Ferndale Library (222 E Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale)



## Flex Your Euchre Skills

As Ferndale Pride rhetorically asks in its event listing, is there anything more Michigan than euchre? It's hard to imagine. Join up with your best euchre partner for a classic euchre tournament at the Ferndale Elks Lodge 1588 (no membership required) to earn prizes and raise money for Ferndale Pride. The event features a 50/50 raffle drawing, Jell-O shots and, of course, bragging rights for the big winners. Are you a euchre newbie? Come out, anyway — the event is open to all, including those who just want to grab a drink and watch the fun.

Jan. 21, 7 p.m., Ferndale Elks Lodge 1588 (22856 Woodward Ave., Ferndale). Tickets are \$21.

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

[www.PrideSource.com](http://www.PrideSource.com)

MERITHOT

CREATE  
SOMETHING  
EXTRAORDINARY.

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

Creative Marketing made with ♥ from Ann Arbor, MI

[www.merithot.com](http://www.merithot.com)

**Delivered  
Straight to  
Your Mailbox**

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

[WWW.PRIDESOURCE.COM/SUBSCRIBE](http://WWW.PRIDESOURCE.COM/SUBSCRIBE)





# When The Teacher Is a Dick

## Protecting Your LGBTQ+ Kid From a Hostile School Environment

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Supportive parent and caregivers of LGBTQ+ children often fear their kids will be bullied at school. But what if it's not the classmates but school officials who are creating hostile environments through policy-making and other behaviors?

It happens, as evidenced by a recent

uptick in reports of anti-LGBTQ+ harassment and discrimination to Equality Michigan and the ACLU of Michigan by both students and their caregivers. Increasingly, it's become important for guardians of LGBTQ+ kids to have an action plan in mind. Whether your kid's chemistry teacher claims she can't remember their preferred pronouns

or a Grinch-like superintendent removes the Pride flags from every classroom, know that you have recourse. BTL reached out to the experts on the best ways to respond.

**Take it seriously.** To an adult, being misgendered or losing a symbol of inclusion like a Pride flag might not seem like the end of the world. But

especially to a young person, it can literally be a matter of life and death. "The evidence is there," said Erin Knott, executive director of Equality Michigan, "that LGBTQ youth have a higher propensity of depression, mental illness, skipping school, lower academic success — and at the far worst end of the continuum, our kids contemplate suicide at a higher rate

than non-LGBTQ youth." Here in Michigan, an alarming 45 percent of LGBTQ+ teens seriously considered suicide in the past year. The Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health reveals that LGBTQ+ youth who found their school to be LGBTQ-affirming reported lower rates of attempting suicide.



**Know the law.** Title IX prohibits discrimination against students based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Because of these protections, schools cannot discriminate in extracurricular activities, school sports, dress codes and bathrooms or other facilities. Students have free speech rights at school, which means they can wear or display Pride gear and openly discuss LGBTQ+ issues. Under the Equal Access Act, in secondary schools, students may initiate GSAs which may not be singled out for restrictions by the school. “A school district has a legal responsibility to provide a safe, supportive learning environment,” said Jay Kaplan, staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan LGBT Project. “And when they don’t do so, and when they allow LGBTQ kids to be harassed and use ineffective mechanisms to investigate and deal with the bullying and harassment, they can be viewed as being deliberately indifferent and they can be found legally liable.” He cited a case in which the Hudson Area School District was successfully sued for not addressing the appalling harassment and bullying suffered by one student over the course of many years.

**Enlist help.** Both Knott and Kaplan suggested contacting their organizations to report school-based anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination. “I would encourage parents to reach out to our Department of Victim Services,” Knott said. They are skilled in determining when a school is rife with hostile policies or “it might be a one-off where you have a teacher that is being hostile and non-inclusive, and we can support that parent taking it up through the leadership, the appropriate channels,” she said. EQMI’s services also include coaching caregivers on speaking to school administrators and elected officials, when appropriate. Knott called Kaplan an “invaluable resource” as it relates to understanding some of the local policies. And depending on the circumstances, there might be recourse that he could help navigate should guardians file a complaint.

**Be proactive.** Kaplan commented on the Pride flag removal in Gwinn. “What’s interesting with Gwinn is there were several comments made by school board members that, ‘You know, we don’t need a Pride flag to show that we’re supportive of our LGBTQ students,’” Kaplan said. “And in essence that could be true. But if that is the case, what is Gwinn doing to show that they provide a safe and supportive learning environment for LGBTQ students?” Does the district have a history of complaints about anti-LGBTQ discrimination? What are they doing about it? Are teachers trained to intervene when they witness harassment? Does the school district have a policy that’s LGBTQ-

inclusive? Parents/caregivers, and anyone who cares about students, should hold schools accountable. Among others, the CDC offers numerous resources for LGBTQ+ professional development that schools should be aware of. Knott suggests organizing and attending school board meetings — or running in the next election. “Make sure your voice is being heard at the table,” said Kaplan, who warned of the influence of Moms for Liberty, some of whose members won school board races in Michigan in the 2022 midterms.

**Seek support.** This applies to both caregivers and kids who are affected by the situation at school. “Our team also is very helpful as it relates to information and referrals,” Knott said. “There could be an opportunity for a youth to participate in some of the counseling services that we offer.” As well, many LGBTQ+ community centers hold regular support groups for the loved ones of queer kids. In addition, find your local PFLAG meeting or look into the parent groups held by Stand with Trans, a Michigan-based nonprofit supporting transgender youth and their families.

**One size does not fit all.** In some situations, a caregiver must intervene on behalf of a child, but in all other cases, back off if they say so. For example, a parent of two LGBTQ+ kids reported that one of them chose to pass imperceptibly through high school, while the other was outspoken in advocating on behalf of their peers.

“Every situation is unique,” Knott said.

“

*There’s common denominators, but the solution isn’t necessarily a one-size-fits-all.*

“There’s common denominators, but the solution isn’t necessarily a one-size-fits-all.” She said she’s been working with legislators on reintroducing bills that would amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include explicit protections for LGBTQ+ people (the incoming legislature announced these bills in both the Michigan House and Senate on its first day of the new legislative session Jan. 11). And while acknowledging it won’t fix all our problems, it starts by sending a strong message. “By modifying that discrimination law to include sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, it gives us actual legal recourse to attacking some of these issues that are happening at the local level,” she added.

CultureVerse PRESENTS  
CultureVerse Gallery  
309 S. Main St.  
Ann Arbor, MI

ROOT<sup>3</sup>  
CANDACE COMPTON PAPPAS  
GRACEANN WARR  
RUTH CROWE

A show of three artists (and friends), each inspired in different ways by the word 'root'

OAKLAND COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES

Monkeypox vaccine Available!

Affirmations  
290 W 9 Mile Rd, Ferndale

Updated clinic dates are available on our social media @goaffirmations

ALL DATES ARE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

- Call 1-800-848-5533
- Choose option 3
- Answer a 5 minute screener to assess eligibility
- Set your appointment
- Arrive at Affirmations at your appointment time

One dose will provide protection. To be FULLY vaccinated you must receive a second dose. Call the Oakland County Health Department to schedule your first or second dose.

AFFIRMATIONS LGBTQ+ Community Center  
All Are Welcome.





Chase Cantrell. Courtesy photo

# Practicing What He Preaches

## ‘Data Nerd’ Chase Cantrell Is This Michigan Think Tank’s First Openly LGBTQ+ Chair

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

A self-described “data nerd” with an interest in public policy, Chase Cantrell first learned of the Citizens Research Council of Michigan (CRC) around 10 years ago. It’s a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank whose goal is to secure good government for all Michiganders. Their work is known to provide a baseline for many news outlets and policymakers to get their information.

“I didn’t know that that kind of institution existed in the state of

Michigan,” said Cantrell, who was recently elected as the organization’s first openly LGBTQ+ board chair. “And for me, it’s vital, even more so 10 years later, that we have actual verified research and information that we base our decisions on.”

Cantrell, who had never held a board position, was eager to join. The mentor who introduced him to CRC told him, “We’ll figure that out one day.” Years later, when the call came, Cantrell was elated. One thing that impressed him was the organization’s independence.

“Entering the board was an interesting experience because at the time I may have been the only African American on the board,” Cantrell explained. “I rolled up my sleeves. Now, there’s much more diversity, and we’re continuing that mission to grow it even more.”

As the organization’s first openly LGBTQ+ chair, he doesn’t take that distinction lightly.

“I’ve always lived very openly, whether it was when I was 25 at the law firm or even now,” Cantrell said. Diversity is a key consideration as he

plans to build out the board, too. In addition to race and gender, they are now considering LGBTQ+ status as well as disability status.

Cantrell believes that kind of broad diversity will be reflected in the work CRC produces.

“The kinds of research agendas that we set in some ways are based on the kinds of suggestions that come from board members and the public,” Cantrell said. “We need a diverse set of people at that board table to then inform the trajectory and path of the organization itself. For me, it’s important to be able to not only be open in that way, but then invite others to feel comfortable enough to be open as well.”

Board member age is another diversity consideration. “The only way an institution can survive is if you’re continuously replenishing the talent,” said Cantrell, who, at 39, is the youngest board chair in the organization’s 106-year history. “And you need a pipeline of young people who will become the leadership as time goes on.”

While Cantrell’s path from corporate attorney to real estate developer and executive director of a nonprofit and chair of another may not have been preplanned, it followed a logical progression. His journey even took him to Europe for a year to teach English to underserved students in the suburbs of Paris. But Detroit kept calling him home.

It was 2013 and Cantrell was transitioning out of his legal career as a corporate and real estate attorney with Dykema Gossett PLLC.

“Most of the suburbs are underprivileged areas,” Cantrell said of Paris. “A lot of Black and Brown students. So it felt very familiar. It almost felt like teaching in [Detroit Public Schools]. But I have to say that even though that was an enriching experience, I really missed Detroit. And it wasn’t missing just my family and friends — it was missing the place. And I’ve had to unpack that for myself over the years.”

Until that time, Cantrell had been a transactional attorney who facilitated corporate and real estate acquisitions, sales and other complex transactions. He began his career in 2008, just when the recession hit. “Banks weren’t lending and

developers weren’t developing,” Cantrell recalled.

However, he noticed when real estate started coming back to the city, “most of the developers who were clients didn’t look like me. I’m African American, representing much of what the population looks like in the city of Detroit,” Cantrell said.

Noting the disparities in an inequitable system, Cantrell founded Building Community Value (BCV) in 2016, which he originally planned as a nonprofit real estate developer. “Essentially, it’s a three-month intensive program where you have to

“I’ve been very impressed that he’s such a Detroiters that he really wants Detroit to win, too.”

- Kevin Heard, President of the Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce

be a resident of Detroit, Hamtramck or Highland Park,” Cantrell said. “We take residents through a process of learning what development is.” He emphasized it’s not a class for budding contractors. “This isn’t how to put in drywall or how to put a window in. This is, ‘How do you approach a project as a developer? How do you do the economic analysis? How do you find a bank or a community development financial institution that will fund you? How do you actually make a project happen?’”

After an op-ed about BCV published in BLAC Magazine was noticed by a University of Michigan real estate professor, BCV was offered a partnership with the University of Michigan Detroit Center to take over their real estate class.

More than 350 residents of Hamtramck, Highland Park and Detroit have attended the class. One of those individuals is Kevin Heard, an acquaintance of Cantrell and founder and president of the Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce. “I’ve been very impressed that he’s such a Detroiters that he really wants Detroit to win, too,” Heard said.

See **Chase Cantrell**, page 21





# The Data on Funding for LGBTQ+ Causes Is Seriously Incomplete. Here's Why.

BY DAWN WOLFE

When my colleague Philip Rojc mused in August about numerous claims of underfunding in the nonprofit world versus the comparative lack of data about the amount of money actually being moved to those causes, Movement Advancement Project (MAP) LGBTQ Program Director Naomi Goldberg tweeted in response about MAP's 15 years of data collection on trends in LGBTQ+ giving.

"Good data is out there, but it takes serious funding and time to collect," she said.

There are at least three entities that conduct research and issue reports on giving to LGBTQ+ causes: MAP, Funders for LGBTQ Issues and Giving USA. Candid's Foundation Directory Online and ProPublica's Nonprofit Explorer are available for researchers with the time, funding and staff to mine them. However, a close look at the available facts reveals that no one really knows how much money is being moved to LGBTQ+ causes.

Combining the best data available reveals knowledge gaps large enough to drive a bus through. And while a quick glance through the news makes clear the huge and urgent needs LGBTQ+ communities face, the best anyone has been able to do is provide an educated guess about how much money is being moved to address those needs. No one has tried to estimate how much money LGBTQ+ nonprofits need to fully serve

their missions. Attempting to answer these questions does, however, provide some important lessons in the difficulty of assessing disparities and monetary needs in the nonprofit world.

Tallies that rely on 990 data are generally at least a year behind the times and often incomplete. Giving by DAFs, LLCs and individuals can be done mostly, or even entirely, under the radar. Those issues alone make it virtually impossible to get a complete picture of support for LGBTQ+ causes — or any nonprofit cause, for that matter. But a closer examination shows that even those high hurdles are just the beginning.

## Different reports, different focuses: none of them complete

Comparing the three reports that attempt a national tally of LGBTQ+ philanthropy reveals three different approaches — none of which provides a complete picture of the giving landscape, let alone of the field as a whole.

Funders for LGBTQ Issues' 2019–2020 Resource Tracking Report (the affinity group's most recent such report) analyzed several thousand grants by U.S. foundations in both 2019 and 2020, and arrived at totals of \$201 million in 2019 and \$200 million in 2020. To produce the report,

researchers combined the results of funders' own surveys with results from keyword searches of roughly 62,000 submissions in Open990 (which has since shut down).

Known knowledge gaps in this report include researchers' decision to exclude money moved for the purpose of regranting, and the fact that many organizations don't reply to surveys — particularly smaller nonprofits that lack the time and staff to do so. Additionally, some organizations didn't have enough of a footprint for researchers to find and reach out to them, while other groups didn't collect the kinds of data included in the report.

And then there's the issue of tracking funding for intersectional groups. For example, funders and nonprofits may say they're engaged in doing or supporting Black political work even though that political work may be centered specifically around Black LGBTQ+ communities, said Alyssa Lawther, research and communications officer at Funders for LGBTQ Issues.

Groups that specifically define themselves as intersectional aren't the only complication. A look at MacKenzie Scott's recently launched website highlights the difficulty of tracking giving to LGBTQ+ work housed within larger, non-LGBTQ-focused organizations — for example, veterans' groups that have individual programs focusing on LGBTQ+ vets. A search of the Yield Giving database using the search term "sexual orientation"

delivers some obvious names in the LGBTQ+ nonprofit world, like the Pride Foundation and the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund. But it also returns funding to Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan New Jersey, Urgent Action Fund-Urgent Response Fund for Ukraine, and YWCA of Binghamton and Broome County — hardly names that first come to mind when thinking about LGBTQ+ organizations.

This database search reveals that my own recent reporting on Scott's LGBTQ+ giving — conducted before the database came online — was woefully incomplete, even after poring over the organizations listed in each of her grant announcements on Medium. That was an attempt to quantify giving by a single large donor. Multiply that by all the foundations and large donors backing LGBTQ+ causes in the U.S. alone and add in a multiverse of intersectional LGBTQ+ groups and organizations that include LGBTQ-focused work within larger missions, and the scope of the challenge quickly becomes overwhelming.

The Movement Advancement Project avoids this issue by limiting its data capture to nonprofits that have both a national impact and are engaged in advocacy-related work. It also covers several streams of giving, from foundation funding and corporate contributions to bequests and individual gifts. Of course, MAP's report excludes the universe of

nonprofits whose work isn't connected to advocacy, as well as those whose work includes but isn't exclusive to LGBTQ+ causes, and local groups with a local impact. Thirty-nine LGBTQ+ nonprofit organizations responded to MAP's request for information for its 2021 effort. Those nonprofits are among the powerhouses of the field, with a combined reported total revenue of \$398.5 million in 2020.

MAP's report, and the tally produced by Funders for LGBTQ Issues, have a specific focus on LGBTQ+ philanthropy. Giving USA, on the other hand, lumps LGBTQ+ philanthropy under its wide "public society benefit" category and, other than a one-page overview, doesn't provide LGBTQ-specific information at all.

"It would be amazing if there was a common process" to collect LGBTQ+ giving data, said Lawther of Funders for LGBTQ Issues. There isn't. Given the complexity of many of the organizations involved, it may be impossible to create one.

## Defining 'underfunded' in the world of LGBTQ nonprofits and philanthropy

Just as there isn't a single common process by which researchers collect and disseminate LGBTQ+ giving data, it's impossible to determine whether or not this sector is underfunded using even an estimated dollar amount.

Funders for LGBTQ Issues, for example, reports that just \$0.23 out of every \$100 moved by U.S. foundations supported LGBTQ-specific organizations in 2019. That figure would seem to indicate a very underfunded sector, but nonprofits don't live by grant funding alone. Consider the fact that the 39 nonprofits which participated in MAP's 2021 effort said that their total revenue (including but not limited to foundation grants) exceeded their combined expenses by \$95 million.

Given the limitations of the reports I discussed above, the only concrete conclusions we can draw from them are that U.S. foundations are definitely neglecting this sector — and despite that neglect, the small fraction of LGBTQ+ nonprofits covered by MAP's report still had a good year. But even taken together, the two reports don't give us any idea just how well, or poorly, the sector is funded as a whole.

See **Underfunded**, page 13





ani difranco. Photo: Daymon Gardner

# righteous evolution

how folk fest headliner ani difranco gave queer people permission to be themselves

BY JILL A. GREENBERG

**M**oments before a Zoom interview with revolutionary folk-rock singer-songwriter ani difranco, my computer dies. It just absolutely flatlines. Desperation chokes my heart, and I scramble for her manager's phone number. Fortunately, professionalism trump fangirl anxiety, and I'm assured ani will be in touch.

Shortly thereafter, my cell lights up with this incoming message: **RIGHTEOUS BABE, BUFFALO, NY.**

"Hi! This is ani calling!" the voice says. Aloud, I respond: "Oh Lord." It's go time.

Right away, I take care of some general journalist housecleaning. All good reporters start out with the simplest of questions: What's your name and how do you spell it?

With a quick modification, and my tongue somewhat planted in my cheek, I ask: "Do you spell that with a lowercase or capital A?"

I know I wasn't the first writer to ask this question. Things have evolved, though, since ani difranco first established herself as an influential artist in the early 1990s.

"I always write my name lowercase, but it's not a rule or something," she tells me. "I write everything lowercase. You can do as you wish, but the rest of the world tends to capitalize my name like theirs. It doesn't matter to me, I guess."

Taking notes during the interview, I type "ani difranco" into my laptop.

It's how she writes her name. I think of k.d. lang, who often pointed to her love of poet ee cummings in her use of nonstandard punctuation. I didn't get a chance to ask ani why she doesn't push back on people who insist on capitalizing her name, but can't help thinking how societal arrogance and, perhaps, the patriarchy keeps the public from always seeing ani as she sees herself. But she's polite. I can tell she picks her battles.

And, because I've been following her since 1991, I also know she's never going to hold back.

Expect nothing less later this month when ani headlines the 46th annual Ann Arbor Folk Fest, slated for 6:30 p.m. Jan. 28 at Hill Auditorium. (The Folk Fest weekend will officially kick off Jan. 27 with the Friday Night Folk Banjofest, set for 8 p.m. at The Ark in Ann Arbor.) The festival returns this year after a two-year pandemic-related hiatus. And ani's return is a homecoming of sorts, as she has performed at the festival several times since her first appearance in the mid-1990s.

Noting the break, we both agree the last two years have allowed for a social shift.

"I feel more and more people are waking up," she says, referencing the uprising in 2020. "There is a critical mass of people who are now acknowledging the inherent inequality and entrenched oppression in our system, in our government, in our culture, in our country ... so this is thrilling."



Technological advances, including smartphones and the ability to livestream, have transformed how society accesses and absorbs information.

“I predate the smartphone, so I knew the world before,” she says, describing times when people would slip through the cracks and never make it to “your own private Idaho. But now you meet them. They are in your pocket.”

The first time I heard of ani difranco must’ve been back in 1991 when a Righteous Babe cassette made its way to Mount Pleasant, Michigan. I was a junior at Central Michigan University, and even though I wrote about my fluid orientation in a column for the student newspaper, back then there weren’t a lot of out gay role models.

During this time in college, I frequently met with a small group of queer gals. Together, we shared the latest music by powerful female musicians, turned the volume to 10 and daydreamed about which of those artists could possibly be gay. During one of these sessions, someone pulled out ani’s newly released “Not So Soft” album. “The Whole Night” was the first queer song I heard that hit me in the heart.

*We can touch*

*Touch our girl cheeks*

*And we can hold hands*

*Like paper dolls*

*We can try*

*Try each other on*

*In the privacy*

*Within new york city’s walls*

Early in her career, ani’s lyrics about attractions without borders quickly gained a strong lesbian and bisexual fanbase. Her song “In or Out” — with lyrics “Some days the line I walk turns out to be straight/ Other days the line tends to deviate” — became a bisexual anthem after its release on her 1992 album “Imperfectly.”

However, the interface of queerness and dominant culture and society has at times proven a challenge.

“For me, I’ve been consistently me. And other people can appreciate it or not,” ani says, noting a momentarily backlash when she began dating a man (she’s currently married to producer Mike Napolitano, with

whom she has two children). From the first page of her 2020 memoir “No Walls and the Recurring Dream”: “I remember once walking out in New York City to get some kind of queer award and getting booed ... for not being queer enough ... before I even reached the podium.”

This reaction proved confounding for ani, who had consistently presented her sexual orientation as fluid.

“In terms of resenting me for being me, not the me [that fans] would have prescribed me to be .... what can I even do about that?” she says, adding she realized a long time ago that she couldn’t please everyone all of the time. “Especially when there are so many in my type of work to make happy. Which of us can be what every other individual in the world expects or wants of us?”

ani recognizes the contradiction, and lives unapologetically.

“I try not to let all those pressures and judgements stop me, certainly, and I try not to let it get me down for very long,” she says. “It’s part of the gig. It’s a great, great gig.”

ani’s music label Righteous Babe Records describes her latest album “Revolutionary Love,” released in 2021, as proof of her “rare ability to give voice to our deepest frustrations and tensions, on both a personal and political level.” The 11-song collection gathers influences from myriad music genres, including blues (“Shrinking Violet”), R&B (“Bad Dream”) and jazz (“Do or Die”). And her trademark in-your-face fingerwork is front and center in the intro of folk-fusion song “Simultaneously,” which alludes to the shift of the world we live in.

*I live in two world different worlds*

*Simultaneously*

*The one where we are fractured*

*And the one where we are free*

*Freedom requires safety*

*Yeah, freedom requires trust*

*Yeah, freedom requires balance*

*In the equation of us*

Identity has served a constant thread through ani’s music, from gender to sexuality to politics.

“I look at my kids. I have a teenager, and identity is like a weight that they have to carry. It’s a job they have to do daily. It’s a performance that they have to put on, and get

right,” she says. “And especially in this new online existence, this social media living-through-screens that we are all drawn to now, it’s almost like you weaken your brand when you change. And grow.”

In this evolving culture, many people are trapped inside their own identities because of patriarchy, heterosexism and traditional culture. But new forces, ani notes, are at play too. “Ones that discourage change and fluidity and inhabit that natural state of flux that I think living things want to inhabit,” she says.

During the summer of 1996, I spent time on a tree farm in Poughkeepsie, New York, owned by “Sexual Politics” author and feminist pioneer Kate Millett, who coined the phrase “The personal is political.” The Farm, as it was called, was created as a lesbian collective that offered artist space in exchange for trimming the trees or updating structures on the property.

While painting The Farm’s Blue Barn, Natalie (a gal from Nova Scotia whom I was sweet on) slipped “Imperfectly” into a battered tape player. We played that tape over and over, allowing the words of “What If No One’s Watching” to define that sliver in time.

*If my life were a movie*

*I would light a cigarette*

*And the smoke would curl around my face*

*Everything I do would be interesting*

*I’d play the good guy*

*In every scene*

*But I always feel I have to*

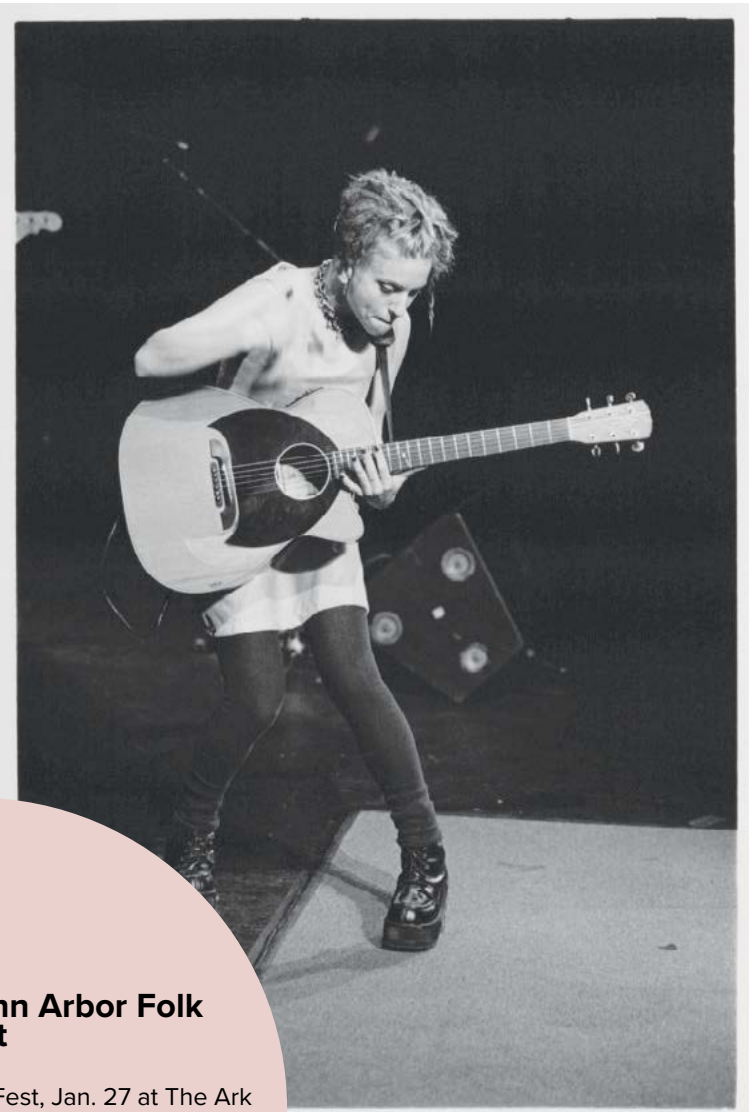
*Take a stand*

After the sun set and fireflies lit up around us, Natalie and I talked about walking the line of unpopularity. And we recognized the rage in our bellies as ani’s music fueled the late-night discussion.

valve. In my music and in my songs. Most of my rage gets turned on myself, most of it turns into sadness and tears.”

ani oftentimes found she makes great sacrifices to care for people around her. “I’m really like many, many, many other women. I’m going to generalize and say women, because I think generality has a deep truth to it.”

ani writes these stories because



ani difranco at the Boston Orpheum in 1996. Photo: Susan Alzner

## 46th annual Ann Arbor Folk Fest

**Friday Night Folk:** BanjoFest, Jan. 27 at The Ark

**Ann Arbor Folk Fest:** Jan. 28 at Hill Auditorium

[theark.org/folk-festival](http://theark.org/folk-festival)

she struggles in the exact same way.

“So, sometimes it seems bitterly ironic that I should be able to liberate so many and not necessarily myself. But in other ways, it seems like that’s exactly...,” she says, drifting mid-thought. “I hope I’m in line somewhere. I’m gonna get to me any day now.”

The music industry has completely revolutionized during ani’s lifetime, and yet it hasn’t changed at all. Giggling as a teen, ani shopped homemade demo tapes to coffeehouses and bars to land stage

See **ani difranco**, page 26



# Sarah Huckabee Sanders Saves Arkansas Children From Racism, Equips Them to Thrive in a Racist Future



BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Following in her father's footsteps, Sarah Huckabee Sanders is the new governor of Arkansas. Which really

sucks for the people of Arkansas and isn't good for the rest of the country, either.

You'll remember that her dad, Mike Huckabee, was Arkansas governor from 1996-2007. He also ran for president a couple of times. He had a reputation, for quite a long time, that he was a cool and nice guy, a hipper, less hateful politician. More than once I read an article in which he was referred to as just so darn nice.

And maybe he was. For a time. He's since become a right-wing media staple and a Ron DeSantis sycophant producing indoctrination materials for children. So, gross.

But being nice has nothing to do with being a bigot. There are a lot of nice bigots out there.

Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who does not share her father's affability, is not one of them. She's a bigot, sure, but she's not known for being nice. She is most well known for being Donald Trump's press secretary, standing in front of TV cameras giving a master class in outright lies and obfuscation.

So, yeah, definitely, perfectly qualified to run a whole state!

And she's off to a great start! One of her first orders of business was to accomplish VERY IMPORTANT THINGS like "banning the teaching of CRT in schools, the use of the term 'Latinx' in government, and dismantling five committees created by her GOP predecessor to advise on managing the COVID-19 pandemic," according to The New Civil Rights

Movement (NCRM).

NCRM also points out that Arkansas "has the sixth-highest per-capita COVID death rate and the fifteenth-highest per-capita COVID case rate."

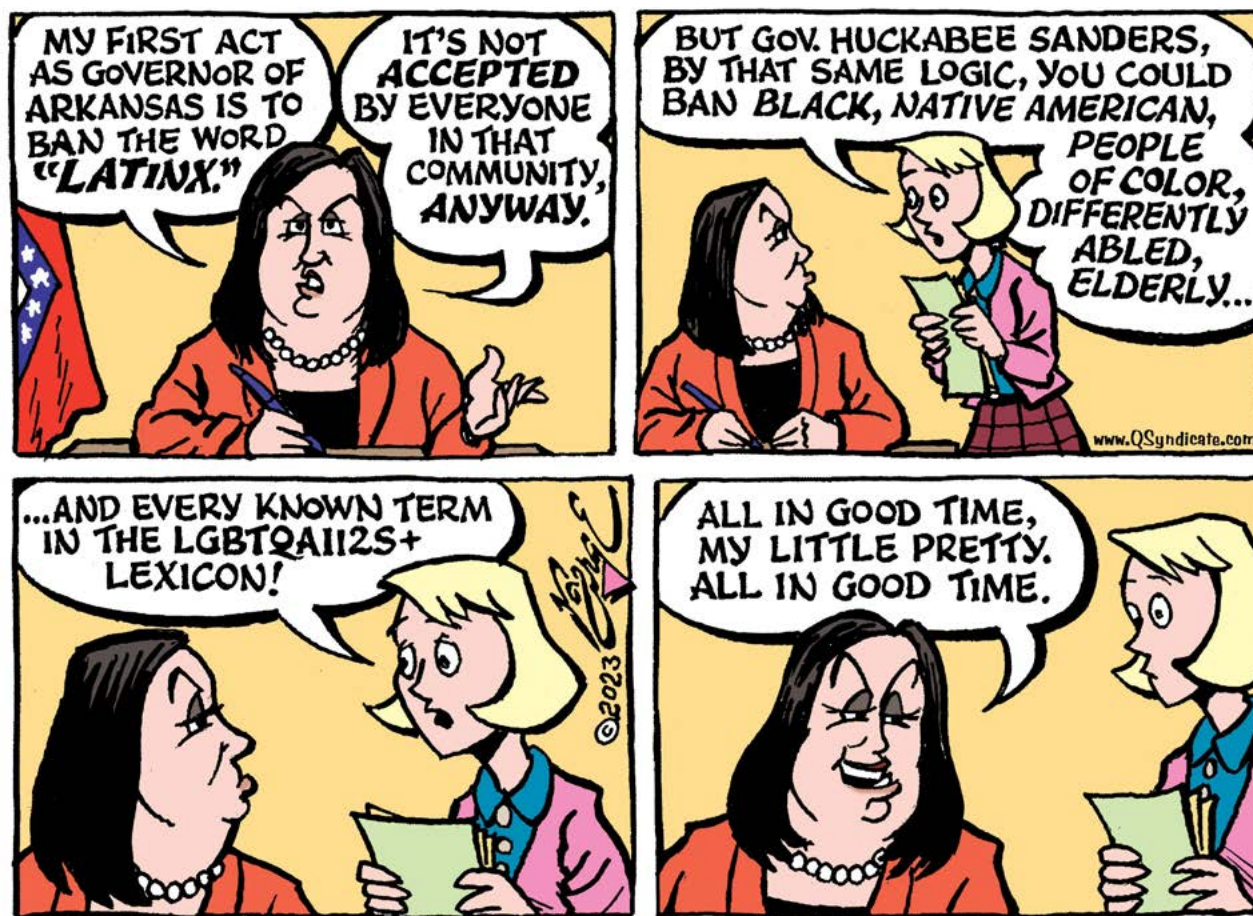
Now that's what I call pro-life!

As for banning CRT (something that is not taught in American grade schools but has come to be an umbrella term for anything that acknowledges racism in our country), well, you've got to protect the children, she says.

"It's incredibly important that we do things to protect the students in our state," Huckabee Sanders says in an interview with Fox News' Shannon Bream. "We have to make sure that we are not indoctrinating our kids and that these policies and these ideas never see the light of day. We should never teach our kids to hate America or that America is a racist and evil country. In fact, it should be the exact opposite."

If only the exact opposite were true! But it isn't. The United States was built on slavery and continues to systemically oppress BIPOC people. It isn't evil to teach about, say, slavery or the violent opposition to the Civil Rights Act. It's evil not to. It lets racism win.

But Huckabee Sanders and conservatives like her believe that white children are just too fragile and must be protected from the truth.



“

*Huckabee Sanders and conservatives like her believe that white children are just too fragile and must be protected from the truth.*

These are same people who called us snowflakes and wore "fuck your feelings" shirts because we were "triggered" by Trump's complete and utter disrespect and disdain for, well, everyone, and his rampant lawlessness. Which Huckabee Sanders was tasked with spinning for the public.

"As long as I am governor, our schools will focus on the skills our children need to get ahead in the modern world, not brainwashing our children with a left-wing political agenda," she said during her inaugural address.

That left-wing political agenda includes LGBTQ+ people, too. There is already legislation that I bet Huckabee Sanders would be all too thrilled to support

pending in the legislature that would basically criminalize drag shows.

"Laws like SB43 are a red herring and more broadly attempt to erase LGBTQ people from public life by forcing gender norms onto private businesses and individuals," read a statement from the American Civil Liberties Union of Arkansas and other groups opposing the law.

Hatred and bigotry are not "the skills our children need to get ahead in the modern world." They are what will leave them behind.



# Beautiful in Blue

## New Michigan Legislature Introduces Bills to Add LGBTQ+ Protections to State Civil Rights Act on First Day of New Session

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

It's a brand new era in the Michigan Statehouse, where the newly flipped, Democratic-led legislature charged out of the gate on Jan. 11, promising on the first day of the new 2023 legislative session to start working right away on amending the state's civil rights act to include LGBTQ+ protections.

The Michigan House of Representatives and the Michigan Senate introduced bills that would amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA) to include sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression as protected classes. While the state's Supreme Court ruled in 2022 that the ELCRA does, in fact, extend to provide these protections, the new ELCRA amendment would help shield those protections from future legal maneuvers aimed at reversing the Court's decision.

The new legislature also took quick aim at Michigan's 1931 abortion law with bills that would finally repeal the law, which stands in opposition to the Reproductive Freedom for All Amendment, ratified into the state's constitution in December.

That amendment, approved by Michigan voters, guarantees the right to abortion in Michigan.

Michigan leaders seem energized by the news.

In a statement, Jay Kaplan, staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan's LGBTQ+ project, said, "Thank you to Michigan lawmakers who recognize it is time that Michigan civil rights law explicitly protect all people in Michigan from discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. This amendment to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act would cement equality into the law for LGBTQ+ people in Michigan, including in employment, housing, education, public accommodations, public services, and other aspects of daily life. Everyone has the right to live their authentic lives safely and freely in Michigan and beyond."

Openly lesbian Michigan Attorney



General Dana Nessel, who argued before the Michigan Supreme Court last year in the ELCRA case, tweeted, "I applaud the introduction of legislation by Sen Jeremy Moss & Rep Jason Hoskins that will codify into law protections for the LGBTQ+ community against discrimination, enshrine them for future generations and provide dignity for hundreds of thousands of Michiganders."

Nessel's office released a statement that read in part, "Given the current state of our country's judiciary, where high courts have succumbed

to political pressure and overturned long-standing and even court-tested decisions like *Roe v. Wade*, it is imperative that these rights are enshrined in Michigan law to help them withstand future legal attacks."

"When adopted by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Whitmer, ELCRA will clearly define and recognize the rights of Michigan's LGBTQ+ community, and I applaud the 102nd

Legislature for introducing bills on the very first day of session that will do just that. Our residents deserve to live in a state that recognizes their value, protects their dignity, and welcomes all."

Gov. Whitmer also tweeted about the historical significance of the 102nd Michigan legislative session. "It's the first day of work for Michigan's 102nd Legislature! Doesn't matter if you've got an R or a D by your name, we're going to work together to get things done for

Michiganders and put our state on a path to a bright future," she wrote. In a second tweet, Whitmer added, "... but we're also making some history today! Michigan's 102nd legislature includes: The first African American speaker of the House. The first woman majority leader. The first LGBT person serving as Senate president pro tempore. Welcome, all. Let's get it done for Michigan!"

Equality Michigan Executive Director Erin Knott wrote in a statement about the importance of codifying the ELCRA Michigan Supreme Court decision that "... legislative action will solidify these groundbreaking pro-equality victories."

"At the same time," she continued, "many LGBTQ+ people still face harassment and mistreatment in many other areas of life. LGBTQ+ people of color — particularly Black transgender women — face even high rates of discrimination and violence. This is why we must amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity. Today's action by legislators sends a clear message that discrimination has no home in our state."

### Underfunded

Continued from page 9

Then there's the question of estimating how much money LGBTQ+ organizations need to truly succeed in their work. There are some distinct factors to consider when it comes to LGBTQ+ philanthropy, but that's also a challenge for any group of organizations serving marginalized communities.

For one thing, LGBTQ+ communities' needs have a tendency to shift both quickly and radically. When an atrocity like the mass shooting in Colorado Springs occurs, for example, security and healing from trauma shoot to the top of the to-do list. As another example, same-sex couples

may have won the right to marry in 2015, but back then, LGBTQ-serving nonprofits had to contend not just with existing laws discriminating against such couples, but a whole raft of new reactionary actions — from "religious freedom" proposals to at least a few county clerks who refused to issue marriage licenses.

Comparing the money moved to extremist anti-LGBTQ+ organizations with the amount directed to LGBTQ+ equality groups is inadequate to establish a ballpark figure, according to Goldberg of MAP. She knows — MAP used to do that. One problem with this approach is that anti-LGBTQ+ groups like the Heritage Foundation themselves aren't focused on a single issue. "It's not entirely fair to say that all

of their budget should be matched by funding for us," Goldberg said.

Ultimately, trying to come up with a magic figure that constitutes "enough" funding for LGBTQ+ causes may be as unnecessary as it is difficult. On one hand, yes, the need is huge and a lot of work needs to be done. On the other hand, as Goldberg pointed out, there are more ways, and possibly more valuable ways, to measure the health of nonprofits than tallying up how much money funders are moving in their direction. Those measurements include things like the average tenure of nonprofits' leadership, staffing levels and pay, and the amount that groups have in their reserve fund — all factors that MAP's research, to its credit, tries to uncover.

The bottom line is that it's impossible to prove that the LGBTQ+ sector is underfunded by any definition of "prove" that includes an accurate figure of the money being moved measured against an equally informed estimate of the total need. The best that may be possible is to get a better handle on the amount moved to LGBTQ-specific nonprofits alone. As Goldberg said, there is data out there; what's lacking is the time, money and staff to create a more complete picture. And the same factors that make it so difficult to evaluate the sufficiency of funding to LGBTQ+ causes also apply to many other, if not most, areas of the nonprofit universe.

At the same time, the needs confronting LGBTQ+ and related

nonprofit sectors are obvious, real and critical. Rather than worrying about whether or not LGBTQ+ causes — and causes like voting rights, racial equity and reproductive rights — are "underfunded," advocates may be better off continuing to push a MacKenzie Scott approach. That is, find effective nonprofits, move large (and preferably ongoing) streams of money to them, and get out of their way.

*This story originally appeared on Inside Philanthropy, which covers how foundations and major donors are giving away their money — and why.*





Chris Petrat. Photo: Andrew Potter

# ***ON THE FRONTLINES OF MPOX***

## **Be Well Center's Chris Petrat on Handling the First Case in Michigan**

**BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT**

**W**hen monkeypox (now officially termed “mpox” by the World Health Organization) first arrived in Michigan, Chris Petrat, clinical manager and nurse at Be Well Medical Center in Berkley, was prepared for whatever might be coming this way.

After all, he'd already been at the forefront of the state's response to the Covid pandemic. Before the first mpox case hit the clinic, which was the first official case in Michigan, he was working on how he'd help to get the word out to the community, line up vaccinations for the local population and had already tapped his extensive public health connection network.

In the end, Petrat's role was integral to Michigan's robust response to the influx of mpox across the MSM (men who have sex with men) community in Southeast Michigan. While we can't know for sure, it seems likely, given the rapidity and reach of the response, that without Petrat and other people on the ground and proactive help from local health departments, the numbers might

have pointed to a much more dire outcome.

Covid might have been fresh on the mind of Petrat and the Be Well Center, but it was an earlier epidemic that came to mind as the news started trickling in, mostly focused on mpox cases among the MSM community. “Given what happened in the late '70s, early '80s, with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, we didn't really want that

to be a repeat,” he says. “Right away, we went in hard and heavy with the state, with local health directors of the health department.”

Petrat noticed a common early media narrative around mpox that framed the virus almost exclusively as an STI primarily impacting the LGBTQ+ community (and in particular, the gay and bisexual male community). “It was kind of a



double-edged sword, in my opinion,” he says. “They brought awareness to the issue, but by generalizing it as though it’s an STI, now there’s more stigma. Anyone with skin can get this. It doesn’t matter your age, sexual orientation, gender identity. Skin is skin.”

Petrat says Be Well sees some patients who have been coming to the practice since the mid to late ’80s, meaning they understand firsthand what it feels like to confront the kind of stigma that began to grow around mpox. He noticed they were feeling impacted by the news in negative ways. “I think that’s what pushed me so hard just to make sure that this was going to be dealt with quickly, rather than dragging our feet and waiting for it to become a lot worse.”

When the clinic was outed as the location of the first Michigan mpox case on record, Petrat recalls feeling a little alarmed, but immediately switching into nurse mode. “The

first thing you do is you don’t panic — that’s just going to upset the patient,” he says, noting that the potential mpox patient had recently traveled in areas that tracked with data Petrat had been following.

“We just kind of calmly walked out of the room and told him we’d contact the local health department about how we might screen him.” Two days later, the health department confirmed a positive result. “From there, things started to cascade,” he says. “We were seeing anywhere from two to three cases a week coming into the office — we were lucky to be in such close contact with the Oakland County Health Department that we actually had access to the antiviral for acute infection. It was just super nice to be able to get these people treated.”

“We’ve had no hospitalizations or deaths because we had access to treatment. So, it’s kind of hard to argue with that data. We know it’s effective — it’s just kind of getting access to it can be a little cumbersome,” he says.

Petrat played a big part in solving the access issue. In fact, Southeast Michigan boasts one of the highest rates of mpox-vaccinated regions in the U.S. according to CDC data. Be Well Center alone has administered more than 1,200 mpox vaccines, and health department collaborations have helped get the vaccine into more than 13,000 arms across the state. The vaccines are highly effective — CDC data from July 31 – Oct. 1, 2022 shows that for every 1 illness among fully vaccinated people, there were 10 illnesses among unvaccinated people. To date, Michigan has seen around 400 positive cases.

Ultimately, though, mpox is not generally considered a deadly illness, though a small number of people globally have died from the virus. Some may ask why, then, the government and local agencies have dedicated funds and energy to slowing the spread. Compared with Covid, which has killed at least 40,000 Michiganders, mpox is an inconvenience, but is it really serious? As BTL reported last year, mpox is not an illness anyone wants to contract.

The lesions are not only unsightly, they can be excruciatingly painful — enough to send patients to hospitals for pain management. And they can appear virtually anywhere on the body, even in those harder-to-reach places, which is a problem considering how unbearably itchy the rash can become. Even when patients are diagnosed and treated with

“

*Anyone with skin can get this. It doesn’t matter your age, sexual orientation, gender identity. Skin is skin.*

antiviral medication, it can take weeks for the open wounds to heal. Then there are the chills, fever, fatigue, headaches, muscle aches and other typical viral symptoms. While sick, patients should be quarantined, but the stigma associated with mpox keeps many positive-testing people quiet, hiding their lesions under clothing.

As a healthcare professional, Petrat wants to reduce all this potential misery for as many people as he can. Prevention through vaccination is the best tool in his arsenal, and connecting people with vaccines through the well-connected Southeast Michigan health community has been the vehicle that has driven the initiative all along.

In addition to Be Well, Oakland County Health hosted numerous clinics throughout the county and Ferndale’s Affirmations was able to connect with the public in unlikely places like pop-up vaccine clinics outside popular venues. Oakland County Health Department, Petrat says, has a strong team and a great deal of passion for what they do. “I think rather than seeing this as a problem, they used it as an opportunity to creatively solve an issue,” he remarks.

See **Chris Petrat**, page 17



### BRINGING WELLNESS TO LIFE

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

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

**SERVICES OFFERED:** Mental Health Services, Substance Use Disorder, Prevention & Treatment, HIV Prevention, STDs Testing, Primary Care, Health Workshops, Intellectual Development Disabilities Services, Skill Building, Family Support and more.

**TRAUMA INFORMED GROUPS:** • Anger Management • Dialectical Behavior Therapy • Recovery • Smoking Cessation • Trans Trauma (T-TREM)

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR APPOINTMENT  
CALL (313) 924-7860 | [www.awbs.org](http://www.awbs.org)





# NO X CAP!

1

MANY STIS DON'T CAUSE SYMPTOMS

2

TESTING IS THE ONLY WAY TO KNOW

3

GET TESTED TO KEEP YOU AND YOUR PARTNER HEALTHY

**Visit or Call iDecide Health Clinic**  
100 Mack, Detroit, MI 48201 | (313) 876-4319





# Upcoming FDA Guidance May Finally Ease Restrictions on Blood Donation By Queer Men

## Local Healthcare Professionals Discuss Ever-Evolving Rules

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The FDA could soon reverse restrictive rules that have prevented many gay and bisexual men from donating blood. Since 2015, the agency has allowed members of the MSM (men who have sex with men) community to donate after

three months of sexual abstinence, a less strict policy than the one put in place at the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the mid-1980s.

The '80s policy banned people who had been sexually active with another man since 1977, when HIV is thought to have reached the U.S. That initial policy stated that such men were

banned from donating blood for life.

In 2015, the FDA relaxed that policy to state that MSMs could donate blood so long as they had not been sexually active for one year prior. That period was ultimately reduced to three months amid a severe blood shortage in 2020. The same policy waiting period is

applicable to women who have sex with gay or bi men, injection drug users, sex workers and people who've recently received tattoos or piercings or traveled to certain countries.

But now, the FDA has decided it's time to review its policy toward MSMs again.

"The FDA remains committed to

gathering the scientific data related to alternative donor deferral policies that maintain a high level of blood safety," read in part a statement released by the agency late last year. The FDA added that it plans to issue "updated draft guidance in the coming months."

That new guidance, say local leaders, cannot come soon enough.

"The restriction against MSM donating blood is obsolete and needs to be revisited," said Dr. Paul Benson, who sees many MSMs at his Be Well Center in Berkley. "With the blood supply always being in limited supply, we can do better in determining risk of communicable diseases, including HIV in donors."

Benson pointed out that not all gay men are at risk for HIV.

"Some take PrEP, some are not sexually active, and some are in monogamous HIV-negative relationships," he said. "This puts these groups of individuals at no risk or less risk than others."

What's more, Benson said that the restriction adds to the stigma that may be present toward the queer community. Then there's the fact testing methods have improved drastically since the FDA's previous guidance was put in place.

"We can identify HIV much earlier in those asymptomatic for HIV," he said. "All donated blood should be screened for communicable diseases such as hepatitis and HIV regardless of who the donor is. It's wrong to assume that if you are not MSM, you are safe to donate."

Jeremy Toney has worked in the medical and HIV fields for two decades. Currently he is the PrEP navigation specialist with MAC Community Health. Toney said the existing FDA policy is unfair.

"I always thought that it was weird that gay men couldn't donate due to HIV," he said, echoing Dr. Benson. "They test all of the blood. So why wouldn't they still be able to donate? They test all the blood anyway. I feel it was pretty discriminatory for that even to be a rule."

Toney went on to say that loosening the policy or even getting rid of it altogether would be a "great thing." If that were to happen, the FDA would likely simply use a questionnaire to determine each individual's risk factors — something Benson said all who donate blood

See **Blood Policy**, page 19





Chris Petrat. Photo: Andrew Potter

Chris Petrat

Continued from page 15

As case counts grew and then eventually tapered off (only a few cases have been reported in recent weeks), Petrat kept in close contact with Kate Guzman, who serves in an administrative capacity at the county health department. That connection was a bridge between federal and state resources and healthcare workers. “They were very receptive — a lot of that probably was that the community

is familiar with me, so it was like ‘Hey, we know this nurse, he’s part of the community and we’re all very comfortable with him.’ I think that helped us gain access to those vaccines as they became available.”  
Petrat’s reputation may have preceded him, but it was his work on the ground that ultimately helped keep mpox from infecting more people in the community. “Chris single-handedly tackled vaccine outreach at social events every weekend,” Guzman says. “He is incredible and all too humble.”

We value diversity in the City of Ann Arbor, and take pride in being **different** from the rest.



The City of Ann Arbor is an Equal Opportunity Employer

We are proud of our diverse workforce and our commitment to equal opportunity. We do not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived age, arrest record, color, disability, educational association, familial status, family responsibilities, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, height, HIV status, marital status, national origin, political beliefs, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, source of income, veteran status, victim of domestic violence or stalking, or weight in any aspect of our hiring or employment process. The City of Ann Arbor has earned a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s Municipal Equality Index (MEI), which assesses lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer equality in more than 500 cities across the nation.

[a2gov.org/jobs](http://a2gov.org/jobs)

FERNDALE'S ONLY FULL SERVICE MED SPA



WE OFFER

BOTOX, FILLER, PDO THREADS, HAIR RESTORATION, PRP TREATMENTS, B12 INJECTIONS, MICRONEEDLING, IV HYDRATION, MORPHEUS-8, LUMECCA, LASER HAIR REMOVAL, HYDRAFACIAL, MICRODERMABRASIAN, CHEMICAL PEELS, CUSTOMIZED FACIALS & MASSAGE THERAPY



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR SERVICES OR BOOK ONLINE HERE:



VISIT OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES FOR UP TO DATE SPECIALS & EVENTS:



ELIZABETH.MEDSPA  
©(248)268-1655  
HTTP://WWW.ELIZABETHMEDSPA.COM  
928 E 10 MILE RD SUITE 300FERNDAL MI, 48220





Actor Allie Reninger and director Orion Couling. Photo: Daryl Wilkerson Jr.

# Meet the Pansexual Filmmaker Showcasing Stories That Star Neurodivergent Actors

## Michigan-Born Director Portrays Differently-Abled People as Heroic Protagonists

BY MELISSA HART

In December, Michigan-born writer and filmmaker Orion Couling, who is from Marquette, walked the red carpet alongside four actors with Down syndrome who gathered at the performing arts center in Skokie, Illinois to celebrate the world premiere of their fan-film "Gemseeker." It's a 17-minute homage to "Lord of the Rings," featuring both neurotypical and neurodivergent actors.

Couling's goal with this, his second movie, is to portray performers who are differently-abled as heroic protagonists in a multiyear collaborative process of rehearsal and filming that offers all participants dignity and autonomy.

Down syndrome is a genetic condition caused by an extra piece of one's 21st chromosome. I grew up with a brother who has this condition, and I was eager to talk with Couling about the philosophy he incorporated

into the crowdfunding campaign for his first fan film, inspired by "Star Wars."

"When the galaxy needs heroes," he wrote as the film's tagline, "chromosomes don't count."

**How did you get started as a filmmaker featuring actors with intellectual and physical disabilities?**

I graduated from Northern Michigan University with a degree

in theater and became a stage combat instructor and a coach for elite gymnastics teams. I longed to make more of a difference. I'd taught theater in prisons and youth facilities, and I wanted to work with communities that weren't being represented. As a children's theater director in a Chicago suburb, I met Sandy Pazerunas who has a daughter with Down syndrome; they're part of UPS for DownS (United Parent Support for Down

Syndrome). We began working together, and this community became my community.

**Tell me about the first fan film you made, "No Easy Target," your homage to "Star Wars" about a colony that welcomes people of all abilities and proves their worth to a violent and dismissive First Order commander thanks to the strength and resilience of actor Garrett Anderson's Jedi and the other members of the**



## community.

Each film we make has a theme. “No Easy Target” is about language. We did a lot of work around the R word [retarded] and why the villain used it, and how to push back on it. As Bridget Brown says as the Jedi Consular, Briga, “We are more than our outward casing . . . we are constantly judged as inferior, but like this droid here, we are so much more.”

“No Easy Target” took second place in the Cinema Touching Disability Film Festival in 2019 and screened in Tokyo, Italy and Iceland. That was rad because we had three people on our film crew, and we went up against the American Film Institute, which won first place with a film crew of 350 people. But we don’t send our work to many disability film communities because that’s not the target audience I’m trying to reach. I’m trying to reach people who haven’t seen this kind of story yet. I don’t market our work as disability films; I market it as films starring actors with disabilities.

**Your second film, “Gemseeker,” is a short fan film inspired by “Lord of the Rings,” starring Nicholas Pesce as a gentle, wise Hobbit-like character in search of friendships that last beyond a single encounter. Tell me more.**

The theme in this film is really, “I don’t need to use a bow, or a sword, or magic to be an important part of your party. What I do need to do is bring out the

beauty that maybe you’re missing.” Find out what someone’s jam is, and find that mutual ground, whether it’s a dance party, or a good book, or film or a TV show or a walk in the woods. We hope that viewers realize that whether someone has a physical disability or intellectual disability, everyone has the ability to make sincere and lasting friendships based upon mutual respect.

**Did you grow up with someone who has Down syndrome?**

I started out not having a personal connection, but it became very personal right out of the gate. I’ve got maybe two dozen families now whom I hold dear to my heart; we socialize outside of the theater, as well.

**You’ve been working as a consultant for Kai Shapiro, the only American member of the UK company Drag Syndrome, which just appeared in RuPaul’s DragCon UK.**

Kai is amazing. Between the drag and the autobiography they’re writing, their creativity is unmatched. I worked with them last year writing lyrics for the album they want to put out. We’re having so much fun.

**What film are you and your actors planning next?**

We want to make a Western. One of our actors is interested in cowhands, and I’m passionate about that history. We’ve started drafting a script and figuring out who has horses, and we’re



Orion Couling showing actor Nicholas Pesce and others how to light on the set of “Gemseeker.” Photo: Eileen Pesce

scouting locations. We just need to secure funding for the film.

*For more about Orion Couling’s work, visit his Vimeo channel. “No Easy Target” is available for screenings now; “Gemseeker” will be available after its 2023 festival run.*

**Blood Policy**

Continued from page 16

should already be completing.

“Anyone donating blood should have a sexual history taken, regardless of their sexuality,” said Benson. “If there is no increased risk in the sexual history for HIV, including IV drug use, then donation should proceed.”

And it’s not just that testing has improved, said Toney. But, also, the face of HIV and AIDS has changed dramatically since the guidelines were first put into place.

“The outdated rule makes it seem that HIV is a gay man only disease,” he said. “The numbers have shown that Black women were at one time the fastest growing number of new infections at one point. And heterosexual numbers are also up among the newly diagnosed.

“It’s pretty much an all-persons’ disease at this point,” he continued. “That’s why

I think it’s just straight discriminatory against gay men.”

Another factor, of course, is the increased need for blood.

“We need more blood,” said Toney. “When I was at Henry Ford and they were doing blood drives, the numbers were always low. That was always a thought in my mind. If MSMs could donate blood they’d probably have more participation. . . . It’s crazy that a person who has HIV can donate an organ but not blood.”

Restricting blood donating exclusively to MSMs “makes little sense and imposes limits on the amount of blood collected,” Benson said. “The benefits of increasing the size of the donation pool safely with a risk assessment and infectious disease testing outweigh the risks of potentially acquiring HIV from a blood transfusion.”

Even some who are HIV positive should likely be able to donate, Benson said, referring to those living with an undetectable viral load.

“I’m not certain what the

recommendations would be for those living with HIV but are on medications and are living with an undetectable viral load,” he said. “We know that a person living with HIV that is undetected cannot spread HIV to their partners. That does not include living undetected with HIV and donating blood. We need clinical trials to determine that.”

In the meantime, the potential policy reversal is gaining support across the country.

“While today’s reports of an overdue move from the FDA is an important step, our community and leading medical experts will not stop advocating for the FDA to lift all restrictions against qualified LGBTQ blood donor candidates,” said GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis in a statement.

The FDA is expected to release more information about potential updates to its blood donation guidelines in the next few weeks.

DALE'S LAKEFRONT COTTAGES - CASEVILLE, MI

**4 BEDROOM  
LAKE HOUSE****SPECIAL RATES FOR FALL,  
WINTER, AND SPRING!****SLEEPS 10!  
BOOK NOW  
FOR SUMMER  
2023!  
(989) 856-8480**

DALESLAKEFRONTCOTTAGES.NET

**LOOKING TO  
REACH THE LGBTQ+  
COMMUNITY?****PRIDESOURCE.COM/ADVERTISE****The Old Rugged Cross-dresser  
Puzzle on page 25****Don Chisholm, REALTOR®**

(248) 425-4366

DChisholm@RealEstateOne.com

www.DonChisholmRealtor.com

**Your Personal Advocate**

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

**Real Estate One**  
26236 Woodward Ave.  
Royal Oak, MI 48067**Michigan's Largest Real Estate Company**





Tommy Karr. Courtesy photo

# The Halls of History, But Queer-Friendly

## Tommy Karr Leads Communications and Engagement at the Ford House

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Tommy Karr, the newly installed director of communications and engagement for the Edsel and Eleanor Ford House, walks through the halls of history every day.

Located in Grosse Pointe Shores, the Ford House was designed by famed architect Albert Kahn for Edsel and Eleanor Ford in the late 1920s. The lakeside estate features over 20,000 square feet of extraordinary splendor situated on exquisite grounds that visitors wander all year round.

Despite the grandeur, the property has become a surprisingly comfortable and welcoming home away from home for Karr. “If there weren’t ropes up, you’d feel perfectly comfortable to come sit on the furniture or read a book and have a lovely experience,” Karr said, adding that he thinks of the house’s grounds as “everybody’s backyard.”

“You can come to the grounds, you can explore, take a class, come meet Santa Claus,” he continued. “All these magical things happen at this place that very much still feels like a home.”

Karr spends much of his work life focused on welcoming more people to the Ford House. “How do we enhance the programs here and how do we really lean into the inclusivity that is part of our mission and really make this a place that every person, regardless of background or financial status, can come here and have an amazing experience? People can learn about some Michigan history that truly impacted the rest of the world,” he said.

Karr, for his part, has only called Michigan home since 2017. And his journey to get here was long and winding. Hailing from Pigeon Forge,

Tennessee — or, as he calls it, “the Myrtle Beach of the mountains” — Karr was a navy brat who traveled with his enlisted father around the country. Eventually, the family settled back in Tennessee just in time for Karr to begin his sophomore year of high school. Karr recalled “slinging frozen lemonade” as his job at Pigeon Forge’s Dollywood, the theme park owned by the incomparable Dolly Parton. There, he developed a certain fondness for bees.

“If you got stung, they required you to take a two-hour break,” he said. “So, when you’re 15 and hot, you’ll take a bee sting.”

After a start at Middle Tennessee State University, Karr earned his bachelor’s degree in art and theater in 1998 from the University of Tennessee. In college, he had gotten involved in the theater program and actually changed his major to chase his new dream. His first production was a bit part in “La Cage aux Folles.”

“I had no experience,” he recalled. “I had no idea what I was doing.”

To get the part, Karr was required to attend one of three dance workshops.

“I didn’t know you only had to do one,” said Karr. “I was still terrible at dance, but at the audition they offered me a spot. Later, they told me they felt so bad that I’d tried so hard in all those workshops that they just had to give me a chance.”

That chance led Karr to pursue a career teaching theater. After graduation, Karr worked there for the Theatre Development Fund in New York City, where he helped establish the organization’s first marketing department, increased membership and implemented a number of data-driven research initiatives.

See **Thomas Karr**, page 24

[www.PrideSource.com](http://www.PrideSource.com)





Chase Cantrell. Courtesy photo

## Chase Cantrell

Continued from page 8

"He's definitely someone who is thoughtful in how he approaches situations," Heard added. "He likes to bring people in, to really take things apart and look at it and find the specific issue and be able to pinpoint 'This is the thing that we need to fix in order for us to really be equitable in the end result of what we're doing.' And I think that really helps him be able to navigate and maneuver through spaces in the city of Detroit, understanding the historical context of where we live, how we operate in the city, and how the city should operate. I think that's a beautiful thing about what he does as a leader in this community."

Cantrell said it's sometimes frustrating that popular images of what it means to be gay are not aligned with being Black — but he said this perception is shifting.

"Being in a majority Black and Brown city, the gay people who are here are in fact Black and Brown," Cantrell said. "So it's always been a struggle of what people's perceptions of gayness are. But it's also been an opportunity for me, I think, to also highlight the fact that there's diversity within the LGBTQ community. So in fact, that

intersectionality is a point of pride. Like, yes, I can be both Black and gay. I can be proud of both. And I can represent a community that doesn't often get highlighted as even existing."

Proud of his identity as a gay, Black man living in the city of Detroit, Cantrell is staying put. As a developer, he's currently working on about 21,000 square feet of commercial space on the west side of the city, where he lives. His parents, brother and sister all live on the west side, too.

Cantrell said his goal is to practice what he preaches. He enjoys teaching, but also wants to stay active in doing the work.

"I keep leaving and coming back, but every time there's this pull of, 'I really want to be here,'" he said.

"One, there's a community here that feels enriching. I enjoy the fact that this is the majority Black city. But also, there's so many challenges in this region. And I use the word region on purpose; it's not just a city. There's so many challenges of Southeast Michigan functioning as a region that I feel like my skill set really can have impact here in ways that I wouldn't be able to have impact in other places. So, as I think about my career and about the things that I want to accomplish in my lifetime, this feels like the right place to do it."

at *Hodges*...

**SUBARU**

PDF-31 **OUTBACK**  
Special Order Your  
Special Edition

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

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

**EVERYDAY!**

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

**FEBRUARY 5 - 10**  
**ANN ARBOR**  
**RESTAURANT**  
**WEEK**

**AnnArborRestaurantWeek.com**

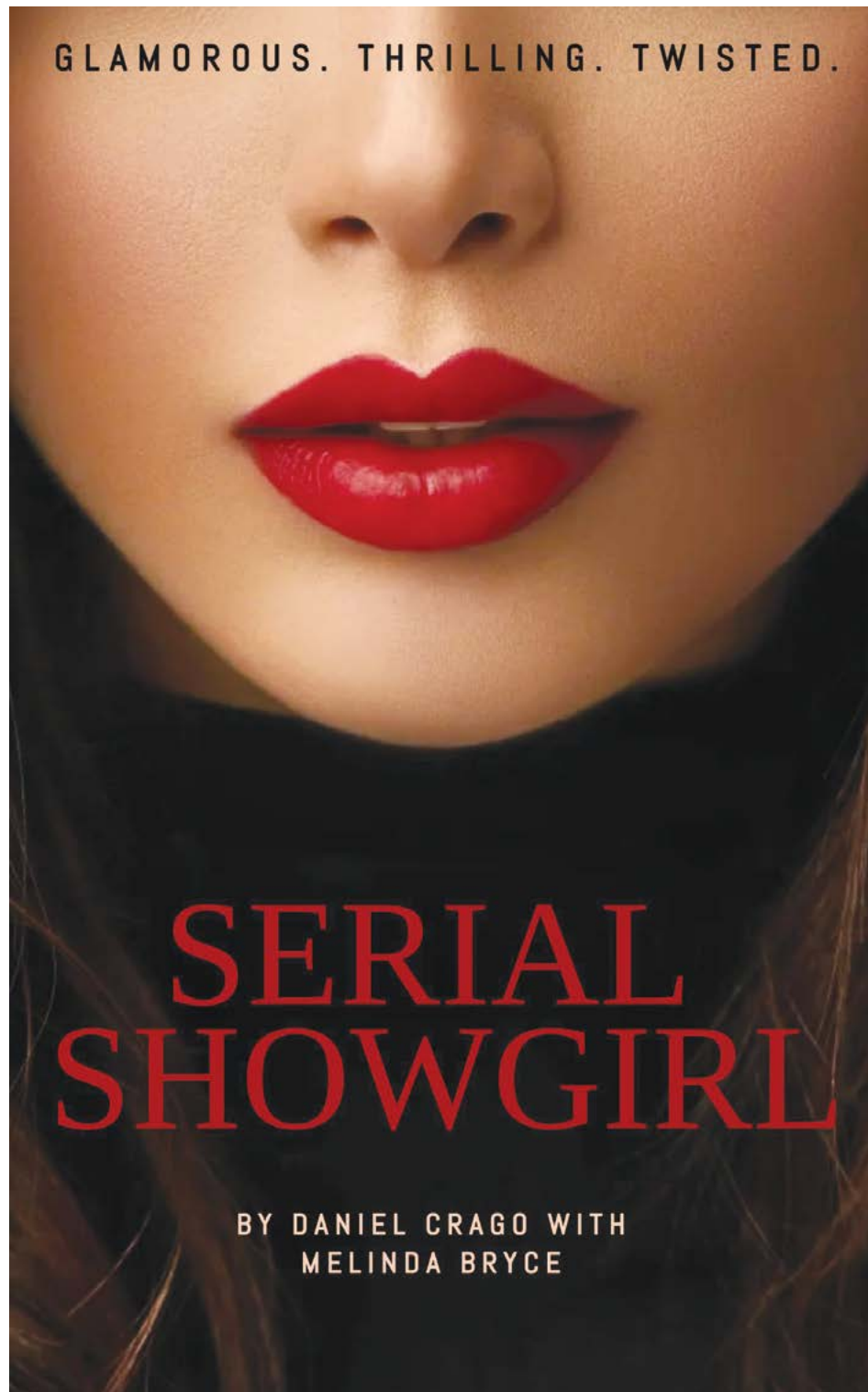
THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:

**MAIN STREET Ann Arbor** **R-HIRT DETROIT** **MICHIGAN RESTAURANT & LODGING ASSOCIATION** **ANN ARBOR** **GREAT LAKES Wines & Spirits** **BTL Between Lines**



# Warm Up With These Queer Winter Reads

These Michigan Authors Got You (Just BYOB... Blanket, That Is)



BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

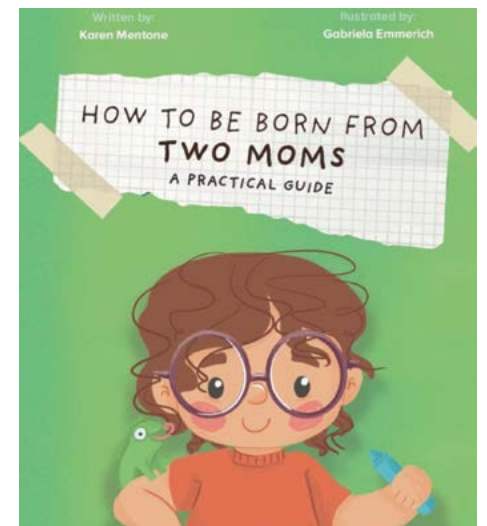
Michigan gets a bad rap when it comes to winter weather. Yeah, you might lose a hubcap trying to maneuver around Volvo-sized potholes (and yeah, it's going to be a while before you're busting out the beach wear), but if we lived in a more temperate climate, could we excuse all the hibernation? Is there anything more Michigan than curling up with a good book in a warm room under a cozy blanket (and, perhaps, your great-grandfather's prize-winning deer head)?

As it turns out, yes, we could and, yes, there is — if the book is written by a Michigan author. That's why we've rounded up this list of new and upcoming books crafted (mostly) by Michigan authors who happen to represent the state's thriving LGBTQ+ community. We care about the quality of your hibernation. So, whether you're an ebook-and-handcrafted-latte kind of reader or an old-school paperback and chipped-mug-full-of-Folgers reader (or somewhere in the middle), make your next cozy read a Michigan-crafted, queer delight.

**'Serial Showgirl' by Monique Madison (aka Daniel Crago) and Melinda Bryce**

Here are three terms you probably haven't seen in this order, but may send you directly to the library or your favorite online bookseller: "LGBTQ+ crime thriller." Yes, please. "Serial Showgirl" focuses on Charlie Moreno, a young drag queen whose best friend is raped and left for dead. Charlie winds up taking on the role of vigilante crime fighter while balancing life as a young gay man navigating a society rife with toxic masculinity and the sometimes disillusioning world of drag.

Author Monique Madison is a regular drag performer at Five15 in Royal Oak and heads the popular drag girl group The Kuntz Kittens, which performs throughout the state. Monique is also a familiar face on



the Pride circuit. Fellow author, Michigan screenwriter Melinda Bryce shares equally impressive Michigan bonafides, including her work on an upcoming 2023 movie, "A Holiday I Do," an LGBTQ+ Christmas movie featuring Michigan actors (including Monique).

**'How to Be Born from Two Moms: A Practical Guide' by Karen Mentone**

Don't forget the young readers in your life, who need a little cozy book time as much as the rest of us. "How to Be Born from Two Moms: A Practical Guide" is a sweet, pragmatic read from Michigan author Karen Mentone and illustrator Gabriela Emmerich. The story focuses on Lupe, who shares the ins and outs of how two women can become parents. It really is a practical guide, as promised, with a childlike perspective that keeps the subject positive, straightforward and equally helpful for adults curious about the subject or who are about to embark on this journey. If you know a child or adult who truly wants to understand the medicine and science behind how some families are formed, this is an excellent pick (you'll probably learn a thing or two along the way, too).



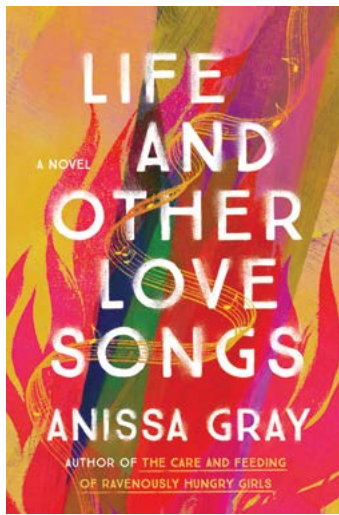
## 'Life and Other Love Songs' by Anissa Gray

When West Michigan native Anissa Gray isn't working as a successful journalist for CNN Worldwide, where she serves as a senior editor, she's penning gripping novels that explore big, juicy topics like race, class and generational history. "Life and Other Love Songs" digs into these topics from the perspective of a Black family in America through a gut-wrenching story that spans the Great Migration through the '90s. At the heart of it all is a central question: What would happen to a family if the husband and father disappeared without a trace?

## 'Edmund White's A Boy's Own Story: The Graphic Novel' by Brian Alessandro, Michael Carroll and artist Igor Karash

This reimagined graphic novel based on, you guessed it, Edmund White's "A Boy's Own Story" is a modern retelling of a book that gripped audiences when it debuted in the early '80s. Set in the 1950s, the book focuses on a gay child growing up in a tumultuous period of American history while dealing with a challenging home life. Audiences connected with the powerful narrative in the near post-Stonewall era, when norms within and outside the queer rights movement were being examined and, in many cases, shattered. White's writing was disarming, healing, and undeniably funny at times — graphic novel format.

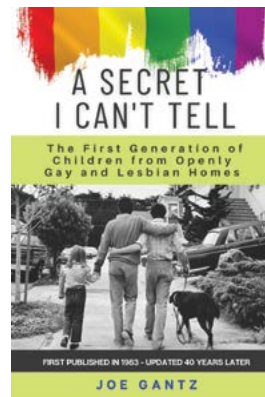
Writers Alessandro and Carroll and illustrator Karash collaborated on the book, which features dreamy painted



panels that incorporate White's original story with personal details from their lives. While the creators don't hail from Michigan, the story takes place in a Midwestern setting that Michiganders are sure to recognize and relate to.

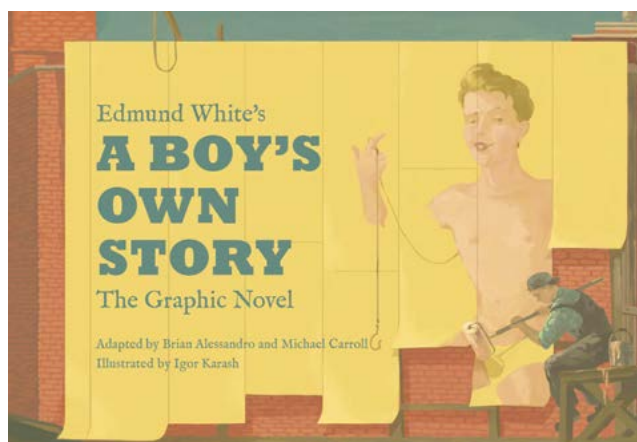
## 'A Secret I Can't Tell' by Joe Gantz

Back in the late '70s, Gantz witnessed the confounding, horrifying impact of Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" campaign, which carried with it the appalling slogan, "They don't reproduce so they have to recruit." The wildly successful campaign further threatened LGBTQ+ parents, many of whom had found themselves at risk of losing their jobs and custody of their children when California's anti-LGBTQ+ Briggs Initiative took aim at gay and lesbian school teachers. Gantz took on a researcher role, embedding himself as a reporter with five families for a week and then following up regularly over the following four years.



In 2022, Gantz revisited some of the children, who are now adults in their 50s, and documented the project in a reprised edition of "A Secret I Can't Tell," first published in 1983. The author dives into what it meant to grow up with LGBTQ+ parents at a time when outing them could have had devastating consequences. While these families experienced family joy and love, the dark cloud hanging over them had a lasting impact.

Today, Gantz sees disturbing political and societal parallels to the "Save Our Children" era. In a news release, he notes that the anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and violence we're witnessing now, which includes attacks like Club Q and ongoing damage from the "groomer" narrative, point to a climate ripe for a return to those days.



# Mirepoix

COOKING SCHOOL

## VIRTUAL WINE DINNERS

by HOLIDAY MARKET

TRY SOMETHING NEW IN 2023 WITH OUR VIRTUAL WINE, BEER & SPIRIT-PAIRED DINNERS. EXPLORE THE INTRICACIES OF YOUR PREFERRED INTOXICANT PAIRED WITH A FOUR COURSE MEAL CREATED BY OUR AWARD-WINNING CATERING TEAM.

*Reserve your spot today.*

**MIREPOIXCOOKINGSCHOOL.COM**



MIREPOIX COOKING SCHOOL | 1203 S. MAIN ST, ROYAL OAK | 248.541.1414  
MIREPOIXCOOKINGSCHOOL.COM





**LGBTQ+ people become caregivers at a higher rate than the general population.**

**We can help.**

24/7 Helpline:  
800.272.3900

[alz.org/gmc/offerings](https://alz.org/gmc/offerings)



## FERNDALE, MICHIGAN – CHIEF EXECUTIVE



**Location:** Ferndale Housing Commission  
**Salary Range:** \$80,000 – \$120,000  
**FLSA:** Non-exempt  
**Employment Type:** Full Time

The Ferndale Housing Commission is seeking a passionate, dedicated person to serve as their Chief Executive. This position will be responsible for strategic leadership, overall administration, staff management, financial oversight, and organizational performance. It will also oversee all administration of Low-Income Public Housing programs, Section 8 programs, related subsidized federal housing programs and any new programs as authorized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or the Board of Commissioners.

A salary range of \$80,000-\$120,000 (depending on qualifications) will be offered as well as an excellent benefit package.

Visit [www.ferndalemi.gov/jobs](https://www.ferndalemi.gov/jobs) for more information and to apply.



Tommy Karr and husband Matt. Courtesy photo

### Thomas Karr

Continued from page 20

These early career moves would help shape Karr's future, but perhaps the most lasting memento he would take with him when he left the city was his husband, Matt. The two paired up in New York in 2012 when Karr found Matt on the dating app OkCupid, years after both of them attended the final rehearsal of Carrie Fisher's "Wishful Drinking" show on Broadway and sat just seats away from each other without knowing it.

Their first date took place at a barbecue joint in Hell's Kitchen. "We had a great dinner and chatted. Then we went somewhere else for margaritas. And then we finished our night having these amazing cookies we bought from a cookie bakery. Then we started exclusively dating."

Within a year they'd be engaged and would eventually marry in Brooklyn.

"That was 2015," he said. "And within five days of getting married, we moved to Charlotte, North Carolina. We loved it down there. It was this great blue bubble in an otherwise red state."

In North Carolina, both Karr and his husband worked in the theater. Family concerns prompted the couple to relocate to Matt's home state of Michigan to be near his parents. "We came up with our five-year plan to move to Michigan," he said. "Once again, our plan was expedited because I was offered a job at Wayne State University." Five months later, they were living in the Great Lakes State.

At Wayne, as the graduate program director for the Theatre Management and Arts Administration department, Karr "loved mentoring students and helping them find their right path. Because my path was so choppy and unpredictable. I like helping students through that process and figuring out what they want to do with life."

Then came the pandemic, when there were no theatrical productions being launched. Karr left the university and took the position with the Ford House in November.

Now, Karr said he has "free rein to imagine

what we can do and what events we can offer. I have this sort of free rein to develop ideas and test them and experiment and amplify all of these offerings."

Karr said he loves working with professionals who "are intelligent about restoration, landscaping, horticulture. I'm getting to learn all of these things as part of this new experience in my career. I hope the people who come can learn a fraction of what our folks here have to offer them."

The Ford House is one of several mansions now open for tours. Other tourable homes owned by past local auto barons include the Henry Ford House in Dearborn, the Dodge mansion at Meadowbrook and the Fisher Mansion just north of downtown Detroit.

"I think people would be surprised by the fact that while it's a historic site, it's very forward-thinking," said Karr. "That's evident in our sustainability efforts. Our leadership here is very focused on that."

Edsel and Eleanor Ford were "so innovative," Karr continued. "She had mid-century modern designs in the home in the 1930s. She was 20 years ahead of her time. And we want to be the same way."

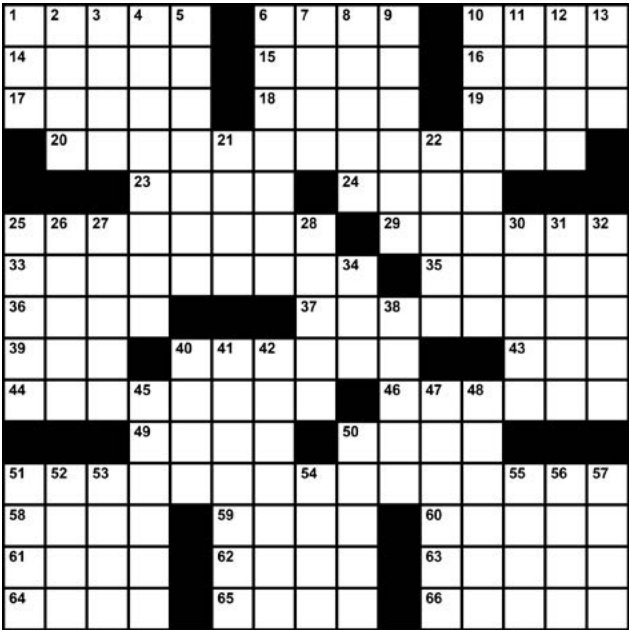
When not working at the Ford House, Karr lives in Livonia with Matt, two dogs and a cat. They are renovating their home, which is over 100 years old. Though it's not quite as grand as the Ford House, Karr said it's still a comfortable home.

Today, Karr is looking to make the Ford House more attractive and more accessible to the LGBTQ+ community.

"I think there's some really strong opportunities for us to create some engaging opportunities that the queer community can participate in. We've been very involved with Grosse Pointe Pride. We have pronoun pins our staff can wear. And we try to make it a place where everyone is welcome. You can come as you are, and we're going to celebrate with you."

*The Ford House is open for tours and special events. For more information, visit [fordhouse.org](https://fordhouse.org).*





The Old Rugged  
Cross-dresser

Across

- 1 Rio step
- 6 Tallulah's home state, for short
- 10 Type of shot for Patty Sheehan
- 14 Garden-variety
- 15 "Break \_\_\_!"
- 16 Glinda portrayer in "The Wiz"
- 17 One thousandth
- 18 "The Lion King" sound

- 19 Slips up
- 20 Start of a quote by 36-Across
- 23 Aspirin unit
- 24 In view
- 25 Gave another cream pie?
- 29 Bree Van \_\_\_ of Wisteria Lane
- 33 Comes before
- 35 El Prado, for one
- 36 Cross-dressing saint of Arc
- 37 More of the quote
- 39 He was a knockout at the gym

Q Puzzle

- 40 Contend with
- 43 CPA, at times
- 44 Like some gay porn
- 46 Guys under Hoover, e.g.
- 49 Carla portrayer on "Cheers"
- 50 S&M souvenir
- 51 End of the quote
- 58 Romantic island for gay weddings
- 59 Lake of Ohio ferries
- 60 Pop measure
- 61 Etcher's fluid
- 62 Trig function
- 63 A dentist may stick it in your mouth
- 64 Untouchable head
- 65 Penetrate the cracks
- 66 "Jailhouse Rock" units
- 25 Indian chief
- 26 \_\_\_ Gay
- 27 Part of a flight
- 28 Two guys lived together in his book
- 30 Lake Nasser dam
- 31 "Let \_\_\_ of here!" (closet cry?)
- 32 Polliwog's places
- 34 What Tim might call Tyne
- 38 Concern for boxers
- 40 Newspaper publisher Adolph
- 41 Emily Dickinson, in her day
- 42 Setting for Cather's "My intonia"
- 45 "Tin men" of sci-fi
- 47 Language that sounds like "gay lick"
- 48 Fur fit for a queen
- 50 Hard to mount
- 51 Male mating call?
- 52 It's sometimes a drag
- 53 Wilder's "The Bridge of San \_\_\_ Rey"
- 54 Bean's team, e.g.
- 55 "\_\_\_ cost you!"
- 56 Scott of "Beautiful Thing"
- 57 They don't hang out in gay bars

Down

- 1 Bottom line
- 2 Mishima's continent
- 3 Consider, with "over"
- 4 Hammer made from a testicle?
- 5 Covered for
- 6 President in "The West Wing"
- 7 What little things mean, in a Cher song
- 8 Board in a rooming house
- 9 "It's a deal!"
- 10 Like a neatly done circumcision?
- 11 "Cabaret" mister
- 12 About, in memos
- 13 "Swan Lake" step
- 21 Alan of "And the Band Played On"
- 22 Comes across as

See p. 19 for answers

# Prism of Possibilities Psychotherapy

## Christine Cantrell, PhD Fully Licensed Psychologist



Give yourself an extreme  
self makeover ...

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

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

**CALL NOW! 248-591-2888**

# NO SAFETY NET 3.0

Performance Artist Rachel Mars  
Closes No Safety Net Theater  
Festival in Ann Arbor

No Safety Net Series Sponsor



COLLEGE OF LITERATURE,  
SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

**RACHEL MARS**  
*OUR CARNAL HEARTS*

Wed-Sat Feb 1-4  
Arthur Miller Theatre

This hilarious show about envy is  
a toast to our competitive spirits  
and a rumbling dance for the ugly  
gutter-tramping parts of our souls.

**RACHEL MARS**  
*YOUR SEXTS ARE SHIT:  
OLDER BETTER LETTERS*

Sat-Sun Feb 4-5  
Arthur Miller Theatre

A one-woman show that's a love  
letter to erotic communications  
then and now. "Mars raises a toast  
to the human libido, elevating the  
carnal alongside the cerebral."  
(*Edinburgh Festivals Magazine*)

TICKETS: **UMS.ORG** | **734.764.2538**







ani difranco. Photo: Anthony Mulcahy

## ani difranco

Continued from page 11

time. Going from directly pitching herself to negotiating with corporate record companies, she was faced with a multitude of challenges.

“The old analog system: The record companies, the radio stations, the TV ... was a very exclusive game,” she says. “And you had to get into that game to succeed. Until someone like me came along and proved otherwise.”

Instead of waiting on other people to make something of her, she created her own label — Righteous Babe Records — in 1990. The goal was to escape the clutches of the corporate music industry and independently release and control her own songs.

And while the music industry has transformed in many ways, artists today face just as many hurdles. “When I was starting out, it was not any easier for artists, just different,” she says. “These days with

the streaming platform, it’s no less exploitative.”

“The old model of the record company, at least when they got behind you, they got behind you. They would support you in certain ways while they exploited you. Now, [streaming services] say, ‘Just give me your shit, we’re not gonna help you make it at all, we’re not gonna help you promote it, we’re just going to exploit it more than ever.’”

Technology has allowed artists more access to people, the ability to self-record, even create a self-promoting YouTube channel.

“You can go from your bedroom to the world,” ani says. But in terms of the industry, and parlaying that into a career, she doesn’t see it as less abusive.

Righteous Babe Records rejects all of this. Its mission statement is “a people-friendly, sub-corporate, woman-informed, queer-happy small business that puts music before rock stardom and ideology before profit.”

The label currently represents almost a dozen artists. It also

considers at least 17 as alumni, including the late Utah Phillips, a folk singer and ani’s former touring partner. And her personal catalog rises above 20 albums plus several live recordings and compilations.

With her music, ani has made a career out of living unapologetically on her terms. Early on, she even devised a three-year curriculum in high school so she could graduate a year earlier. Describing this move as rogue and genius, I tell her if she would have stuck to the four-year plan, she and I would have graduated the same year. (We were both born in 1970.)

Seemingly out of nowhere, ani abruptly changes the subject.

“Ya know what’s funny? We’re both the same age ... menopause!”

“It’s a thing that all people with ovaries go through, individually in the dark with no information, because that’s how patriarchy works,” she says. “I have been out there and trying to engage anyone and everyone about this thing that has now entered my life. This huge seismic thing that

no one talks about that no one seems to understand.”

Patriarchal powers have morphed dialogue about menopause into a negative experience, she says.

“I actually have found that I am asking menopausal people at every opportunity, do you experience feeling liberated from the 24/7 job of taking care of others? I feel a little bit freer to not feel with every ongoing heartache and stressor. Menopause made me able to breathe through it. I have been chemically, biologically released by mother earth from having to feel all other beings before me. It’s such a relief.”

Historically, menstruation has been shrouded in mystery, shame and mental illness.

“I’m sure to people without reproductive systems we seemed crazy. Why you got to react so much to things all the time? Well, that’s what it means to be an agent of creation,” she says, adding the transition to menopause has dramatically changed how she experiences the world.

And it has opened up a path to

grounding her energy. At her home in New Orleans, ani spends a lot of time in her garden. “It literally brings me back to the earth.”

In recent years, she started a vegetable garden and has added fruit trees.

“I have a mini-urban farm going. I grow hardy vegetables because I’m back to touring. They need to be able to sustain themselves when I travel. So, the hardy survive.”

ani also keeps her fingers in non-music creative projects, including writing children’s books and dramatic works. Her kids picture book “The Knowing,” which explores individual power and collective responsibility, is slated for release in March 2023. “I’ve been branching out like everybody in the pandemic, trying to figure out how to continue to exist in the new paradigm.”

After a lifetime of activism, and that cumulative perspective, ani pauses to contemplate the future.


“It’s very hopeful,” she says, “if you can squint your eyes in the right direction.”



**BROADWAY'S DEARLY BELOVED  
MUSICAL COMES TO DETROIT**

# BEETLEJUICE

*The Musical. The Musical. The Musical.*



**OPENS IN 2 WEEKS DETROIT OPERA HOUSE  
JAN. 31 - FEB. 12 • BROADWAYINDETROIT.COM**

**GROUPS (10+) SUBJECT: BEETLEJUICE  
BROADWAYINDETROITGROUPS@THEAMBASSADORS.COM**

**OC - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5 7:30PM**

## FERNDALE, MICHIGAN – WATER SYSTEMS SUPERVISOR



FERNDALE

**Location:** Department of Public Works

**Salary Range:** \$58,427 – \$75,036

**FLSA:** Non-exempt

**Employment Type:** Full Time

The City of Ferndale is adding to our Department of Public Works team. We are now hiring for the position of Water Systems Supervisor. This position is responsible for overseeing 4-5 employees in the water department and 2 Motor Pool mechanics. The Water Systems Supervisor will have oversight in Water and Motor Pool planning, project management, and departmental day to day activities. We are looking for a candidate with a broad range of experience with the ability to effectively lead.

Candidates must have graduated from high school and have five (5) years of experience in a Department of Public Works, with specific water systems experience. Preferred candidates will have a Michigan S-2 water certification and are required to obtain an S-1 water certification within 1 year of employment. Hourly wage for the current fiscal year is \$58,427 to \$75,036 commensurate with experience. Average gross pay for the last 3 years was \$102,400. Medical, Dental, Vision, Life, FSA, and Retirement Plans are available. The position receives \$750.00 per year for maintaining their S-1 water certification and \$700.00 per year for a clothing allowance. A take home city vehicle is available to the Water Systems Supervisor. Visit [www.ferndalemi.gov/jobs](http://www.ferndalemi.gov/jobs) for more information and to apply.

## Supporting the Community Since Before it was Cool.

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



**Sandi & Linda**  
[www.trilliumrealtors.com](http://www.trilliumrealtors.com)

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



**TRILLIUM**  
REAL ESTATE





# THIS IS A **SAFER** PLACE

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

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

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

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

## **New Locations Meet Community Needs**

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

**Living Well Medical Clinic of Flint** 810-257-3131

311 E. Court Street, Flint, MI 48502 • [www.wellnessaids.org](http://www.wellnessaids.org)

**Community Health Awareness Group (CHAG)**

**Living Well Clinic of Detroit** 313-963-3434

1300 W. Fort Street, Detroit, MI 48226 • [www.chagdetroit.org](http://www.chagdetroit.org)

**Dr. Paul Benson's**

**Be Well**  
**Medical Center**

1964 Eleven Mile Rd  
Berkley, MI 40872

**(248) 544-9300**  
**[doctorbewell.com](http://doctorbewell.com)**