

MICHIGAN NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993

Between the Lines™

NEW YEAR, NEW START
Former BTL Publishers
on Surviving a 'Terrifying'
Cancer Battle

WHAT WE WON
10 Big Political
Wins for LGBTQ+
Michiganders in 2023

A COMEDIAN IN FLUX
Alex Edelman Is Still
Figuring Himself Out,
One Joke at a Time

WELCOME HOME, MADONNA

Before her January show, a celebration of the Michigan native's legendary life



AFFIRMATIONS OPEN HOUSE



We're having a party and we'd love to see you there!

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 09 | 7 PM-10 PM

We're excited to welcome you into Affirmations, introduce you to new staff, and tell you about all the exciting things our community center has to offer.

It wouldn't be a party without the vibe setting expertise of DJ Nouveau and refreshments. Wine and non-alcoholic drinks will be available.

This is a free event and all are welcome!

290 W. 9 Mile Rd | Ferndale | MI



- 4 5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now-ish
- 6 10 Triumphs for LGBTQ+ Michiganders in 2023
- 7 Madonna Was an AIDS Advocate Before the President Would Even Say the Word
- 8 Former BTL Publishers Reflect on Cancer Journey, Retirement
- 11 The Scroll: New LGBTQ+ Senior Centers to Open This Year
- 12 Alex Edelman Is Still Figuring Himself Out, One Joke at a Time
- 15 Transpapers: A Free, Michigan-Made Resource for Trans Empowerment Across the U.S.
- 17 Who's That Girl? An Interview with Mary Gabriel on Her Book 'Madonna: A Rebel Life'
- 19 Second Glances: If Madonna Calls, I'm Here



Photo: Patrick Demarchelier



Delivered ~~Straight~~ to Your Mailbox

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

WWW.PRIDESOURCE.COM/SUBSCRIBE

VOL. 3202 • JANUARY 11, 2024
ISSUE 1245

PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP
www.pridesource.com
Phone 734-263-1476

PUBLISHERS
Benjamin Jenkins
benjamin@pridesource.com

Publishers Emeritus: Jan Stevenson & Susan Horowitz

EDITORIAL
Editorial Director
Chris Azzopardi
chris@pridesource.com

Managing Editor
Sarah Bricker Hunt
sarah@pridesource.com

Senior Staff Writers
Ellen Shanna Knoppow, Jason A. Michael

CREATIVE
Cartoonists
Paul Berg

Graphic Designer
Sarah Wolf

Contributing Photographers
Andrew Potter, Andrew Cohen

ADVERTISING & SALES
sales@pridesource.com

Carolyn Cardenas
734-263-1476
carolyn@pridesource.com

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

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

National Advertising Representative
Rivendell Media, 212-242-6863

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



2022 AWARD WINNER



NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN CHAMBER
CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITIES



"Pride Source"



Follow us @pridesource



@pridesourcemedia



Pride Source



Email your op-eds to editor@pridesource.com



Sign up online to receive our E-Digest

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

Copyright 2023

BTL | January 11, 2024 3

5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now-ish

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

Now that we've officially crossed into the part of the winter season where the days are longer than the nights, it's time to look ahead with renewed hope and curiosity. May your 2024 bring an abundance of light and laughter and plenty of opportunities to enjoy events like the upcoming Ann Arbor Folk Fest and ongoing social gatherings like an older adult's LGBTQ+ monthly meetup, a queer book club or an old-school bowling league with a queer twist. You can even venture out for the unlikely pairing of a classic Michigan card tournament and an LGBTQ+ fundraiser.



Emmylou Harris. Photo: emmylouharris.com

1 Buy Tickets for Ann Arbor Folk Fest

Grab your tickets now for the 47th annual Ann Arbor Folk Festival, sure to sell out ahead of the big weekend Jan. 26-27. This year's lineup includes headliners Old Crow Medicine Show and Emmylou Harris as well as a roster of modern folk mainstays and up-and-coming acoustic acts that should be on your radar. Queer folk singer, songwriter and harpist Lizzie No appears on Saturday, and you won't want to miss indie-pop sibling trio Bailen on Friday. Actor Jeff Daniels will emcee the event on both nights.

Jan. 26-27, Hill Auditorium (825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor). Find tickets at theark.org/folk-festival.



2 Sign up for a Queer Bowling League

Roll it old school style this winter by joining the Stonewall Sports' queer-inclusive bowling league. The mixed-ability group will play on Tuesdays at Renaissance Bowling Center in Detroit and is open to bowlers of all skill levels and genders. As Pride Source reported last year, Stonewall Sports offers a wide range of athletic activities for queer players. "Having a queer league," bowler and kickball player Lindsey Mattson told Pride Source, "provides safety and camaraderie" and a chance to meet friends. Registration ends Jan. 12 and the season begins Jan. 16. If bowling isn't your jam, Stonewall also offers billiards, pickleball, volleyball and kickball at different times of the year.

Jan. 16-March 5, Renaissance Bowling Center (19600 Woodward Ave., Detroit). Learn more at stonewalldetroit.org.



3 Socialize with Other LGBTQ+ Seniors

Joining up with like-minded queer community folks is important and enjoyable at every stage of life. The Detroit Elders Project provides an opportunity for older queer adults to gather together every third Thursday of the month at Detroit's Hannan Center as part of a collaboration with MiGen, Michigan's LGBTQ+ elders network. Each meeting includes a complimentary dinner and a chance to mingle and discuss important issues in a safe, supportive environment.

Third Thursday of each month, Hannan Center (4750 Woodward Ave., Detroit). Reach out to Cornelius Wilson to learn more (cwilson@migenceconnect.org or 313-942-2803).



Play Euchre with the Elks

Support Ferndale Pride while showing off your mad euchre skills at a classic Euchre tournament at the Ferndale Elks club Jan. 13. The event features cash prizes, a 50/50 raffle drawing, Jell-O shots and more. Could this event be the quintessential way to express your uniquely Michigan brand of queerness? Euchre is a true Michigan staple, and playing it in an Elks club is giving the kind of ironically cool queer vibe you'll only find around these parts.

Jan. 13, Ferndale Elks #1588 (22856 Woodward Ave., Ferndale). Buy tickets at bit.ly/4aLfD6T.

2024 Kresge Artist Fellowships

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

Apply by January 18, 2024

Learn more at kresgeartsindetroit.org

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS



Join a Queer Book Group

Set an intention to read more in 2024 — especially queer books. Ypsilanti District Library's (YDL) monthly Adult Queer Book Group features works of fiction, poetry and graphic novels focused on queer identities and subject matter. Each meeting offers a chance to discuss the monthly pick, led by a YDL staffer who taught feminist and LGBTQ+ courses at Eastern Michigan University's Women's and Gender Studies Department and the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility. Upcoming selections include "Hijab Butch Blues" by Lamya H (Jan. 18), the "Monk and Robot" series by Becky Chambers (Feb. 15) and "Burn the Page" by Danica Roem (March 21). See the complete 2024 list at bit.ly/48FjQHy.

Monthly on varying dates including Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m. Ypsilanti District Library Whittaker Branch (5577 Whittaker Road, Ypsilanti).

Big New Musical.
Big. Huge.

PRETTY WOMAN

THE MUSICAL

FEBRUARY 20-25

FISHER THEATRE / [BROADWAYINDETROIT.COM](https://broadwayindetroit.com)

GROUPS (10+) broadwayindetroitgroups@theambassadors.com (SUBJECT: PRETTY WOMEN)

10 Triumphs for LGBTQ+ Michiganders in 2023

From equal civil rights to a ban on conversion therapy, we have a lot to celebrate

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

For LGBTQ+ Michiganders as a whole, 2023 was a banner year, one in which the community finally gained civil rights protections. To kick off 2024, BTL sat down with HRC state director Dakota Torolski to discuss the highlights. “Incredible” was his one-word summary of the year — success he traced back to 2022.

“From our perspective, at HRC, we declared a national state of emergency. We saw attacks continue across the country, radical politicians attacking our community to try to score political points.” Meanwhile in Michigan, the 2022 election cycle saw voters reject the politics of hate and elect the greatest pro-equality majority in the history of the Michigan Legislature and largest LGBTQ+ legislative caucus by far, which paved the way for progress.

While the following are presented in no particular order, expanding the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include protections for the queer community rightfully earns the top spot.

1. LGBTQ+ rights are guaranteed (finally!)

Raise *another* glass! The civil rights of queer Michiganders were enshrined into law in March, the culmination of more than 40 years of tireless work by LGBTQ+ activists and pro-equality legislators. With her signature, Gov. Whitmer kept her promise to the community. For Torolski, who witnessed the event, it was a historic moment.

“I think often about the signing with Mel Larsen,” Torolski said of the former lawmaker who was



Gov. Whitmer celebrates with the community during the Pride march in Detroit. Photo: Andrew Potter

in attendance. “Actually being there brought the moment into its historic context.”

Michigan joins 22 other states where the rights of LGBTQ+ people are guaranteed by law.

2. Conversion therapy on minors is banned

In 2023, banning conversion therapy represented the legislative

win with the greatest and most positive impact on the health of LGBTQ+ youth in Michigan. This was another hard-fought battle, one that required educating elected officials in Lansing in the form of persistent lobbying. Hate Won't Win coalition partners spearheaded the

efforts.

“Another super exciting win,” said Torolski of the ban. “A huge win for protecting Michigan youth, specifically. No one should live in

See **What We Won**, page 14

Madonna Was an AIDS Advocate Before the President Would Even Say the Word

A timeline of the pop icon’s outspoken support for the community

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

Find me a better queer ally than Madonna. Go on, I dare you. After all, there are precious few people who have risked as much as Madonna did when she spoke out about AIDS and visibly supported the gay community at a time when literally touching a gay person was considered a frightening prospect by much of the world’s population.

Madonna took off for the excitement of New York City in the late ’70s as a young adult, but not before she spent time as a dance major at the University of Michigan after graduating from Rochester Adams High School in 1975 as a straight-A student. As a teen, she spent time at queer nightclub Menjo’s, no doubt finding a home among Detroit’s more colorful characters. She’s been an outspoken LGBTQ+ ally ever since.

Before President Reagan had even acknowledged that AIDS existed in 1985, Madonna had been advocating on behalf of her friends and loved ones for compassion, funding and education. It was a bold choice in an era that was anything but kind and welcoming to the LGBTQ+ community, especially gay men. These highlights from her long career are just a few examples of how the pop queen has always advocated for AIDS patients and their loved ones.

1985

Madonna Appears in AIDS ‘SNL’ Sketch

In 1985, Madonna confronted the AIDS stigma through a skit on “Saturday Night Live” titled

“Pinklisting.” Channeling Joan Collins with a dark wig and a clipped British accent, Madonna played a TV actress apprehensive about scenes with a co-star due to AIDS fears. In an era where AIDS was deemed a death sentence, Madonna’s bold approach, less than a month after Rock Hudson’s death, brought a crucial discourse into millions of homes.

1986

Madonna Loses Her Best Friend to AIDS

Before she was famous, Madonna shared a small apartment in New York City’s Lower East Side with her best friend Martin Burgoyne, who would later draw the cover image of her 1983 “Burning Up” EP and appear in the video for “Material Girl.” Burgoyne was one of the first people Madonna knew who was diagnosed with AIDS. She cared for him throughout his illness and paid for his medical expenses at St. Vincent’s Hospital as well as a nearby apartment for him in Greenwich Village. Madonna was by Burgoyne’s side

As a teen, she spent time at queer nightclub Menjo’s, no doubt finding a home among Detroit’s more colorful characters. She’s been an outspoken LGBTQ+ ally ever since.

when he died at 24 years old in 1986. Her 1992 song “In This Life,” from the album “Erotica,” is about

their relationship.

In a since-deleted Instagram post from 2018, Madonna posted a tribute to her friend. “In my

apartment on the L.E.S. [Lower East Side] where I lived with my best friend Martin Burgoyne who died of AIDS,” she wrote alongside a photo of the two in better days. “I held his hand as his spirit left his body,” she continued “He was so beautiful and talented and full of life like so many others. In those days it ravaged people and took so many lives in the blink of an eye. We have come a long way but we still have NO cure! Let’s pray for

this and more tolerance in the world.”

1989

AIDS Pamphlets in Copies of ‘Like a Prayer’

When Madonna released her fourth studio album “Like a Prayer”

See [Madonna’s AIDS Activism](#), page 16



Madonna performs during the Celebration Tour, which stops in Detroit on Jan. 15. Photo: Ricardo Gomes

Former BTL Publishers Reflect on Cancer Journey, Retirement

Susan Horowitz and wife Jan Stevenson open up about ‘terrifying’ illness and what’s next

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Ring the bell after her final chemotherapy infusion was a long-anticipated moment for Susan Horowitz, one that signaled the end of 19 weeks of grueling treatments. While Horowitz stood with health center staff and loved ones, her wife, Jan Stevenson, was on hand to capture the hard-fought accomplishment on camera.

“It was great to have people who had kind of been close to me during the recovery phase,” Horowitz said. “I mean, ‘recovery’ is a strange word. There wasn’t a moment when I recovered, but ringing the bell was like marking a moment in time when the chemo was done.”

The video received an “overwhelming and heartwarming” response online, Stevenson said. “This has been terrifying for me. The prospect of Susan having cancer and getting to the point where you can ring the bell was a real milestone.”

Two months later, BTL sat down with the couple to hear their reflections on Horowitz’s journey from diagnosis through remission. They also let us in on life nearly four years after retiring from producing *Between The Lines*, Michigan’s premier queer print publication and its affiliated website PrideSource.com, which they ran from 1995 until 2020.

Although Horowitz and Stevenson are no strangers to the disease today, ovarian cancer was the last thing on their minds when Horowitz was suffering from a lingering case of Covid she got in the spring of 2022 that left her debilitated.

“I was totally asymptomatic,” said Horowitz, in reference to the unexpected cancer diagnosis. “And in the process of elimination, of trying to figure out what was happening to me with [Covid], they did a full body scan and found the tumor that two different doctors thought was likely to be benign.”

After the first surgery, the test results that came back from the Mayo Clinic indicated cancer.

At this time, there is no known reliable screening for ovarian cancer. It’s usually found at a later stage when there is less opportunity for life-saving measures. Horowitz, whose disease was found accidentally and at an early stage, said that,



Susan Horowitz (left) and Jan Stevenson at home. Photo: Andrew Potter

in an odd way, it was serendipitous Covid led her there, just as the remnants of the virus persist to this day.

“As I was going through those eight or nine months of not being able to really walk, it was really challenging,” Horowitz said. “I couldn’t walk right; I couldn’t talk very well; terrible headaches — all sorts of experiences with the Covid stuff. But once I got the cancer diagnosis in late March, we went into hyperspeed to find a surgeon.”

Horowitz and Stevenson landed at Henry Ford Health Center downtown where Horowitz was in surgery three weeks later. She said they had a remarkable experience with an excellent team.

“When I heard I had ovarian cancer, I thought, ‘Well, I’ll be dead in six months,’” Horowitz recalled. “And that diagnosis is almost going to be a year in March.”

To complete 19 weeks of chemotherapy, Horowitz endured a new infusion every three weeks. She reported being immobilized for the first week, while weeks two and three were slightly more tolerable. “I’m an adventurer,” Horowitz said wryly. “So I got to try every kind of possible side symptom of chemo that they offered.”

Stevenson stayed by Horowitz’s side for her near-daily appointments, including 34 trips to the infusion center. Horowitz said she couldn’t ask for a better caregiver.

“I could not imagine going through what I went through without her there,” Horowitz said. “I marvel at what she did — she did everything that I couldn’t do. My sense of independence was completely compromised.”

Stevenson was the cheerleader, too, even though she was terrified of the diagnosis as

much as anyone. The fact that their friends stepped up made a huge difference as well.

Horowitz was still experiencing significant fatigue at the time of this interview, but Stevenson remarked on her progress.

“I feel like I’m starting to get my girlfriend back,” Stevenson said. “She can talk and walk and argue with me and yell at me like she always used to and all that stuff.”

“Yell about things,” Horowitz responded. “Not at Jan. Well, I mean, sometimes. Maybe sometimes.”

Two weeks after completing chemo at the end of September, Horowitz’s cancer was officially in remission. “I think I have more faith and more hope than I did at the beginning of this,” Horowitz said, reflecting on what she’s been through. “I’m more in the day each day, and I’m more appreciative

of what I have.”

Even though she struggles with certain physical actions, most of the time it doesn't define her. And while Horowitz calls herself impatient by nature, she notices that's less the case today.

Stevenson has noticed changes in herself, too. Much of it has to do with the two of them getting older. “We’ve been sort of going through a process of, I call it, clearing the decks,” Stevenson said. “Susan’s 70. I’m going to be pretty soon.” They’re simplifying their lives and focusing on things they like to do and people that are important to them. But it was Horowitz’s diagnosis that accelerated the process.

Horowitz had various support along the way, and she encourages anyone in a similar situation to take advantage of that. For her, that support included palliative care for pain management and mental health services, “because it is a unique chance to review life when you’re facing its possible end in the immediate future,” she said.

For Thanksgiving, Stevenson and Horowitz were joined by “a posse” of eight friends who needed a place to enjoy the holiday, a tradition that spans two decades. Neither has a large family.

“Cancer is a beast,” Horowitz said. “It’s also a great teacher. I think what I learned during that whole period was how important people are, to be surrounded by people who care about you and love you and who know what they’re doing. Those were the professional people, the nurses and the doctors. I just got so lucky with the team that I got to take care of me.”

Stevenson and Horowitz plan to take a road-trip this spring. For now, Horowitz must be careful not to get sick, so she’s wary of large crowds, though they have been out with friends for meals. She’s eager to get back to the theater and music venues, gardening and creating art.

“Honestly,” Horowitz said, “in July of 2021, I had back surgery. In the following spring, I got this Covid illness that lasted eight or nine months for 2022. And then in 2023, I got cancer. So we joke that now all I need to deal with is — what — acne, maybe?”

Given Horowitz’s physical challenges and the fact that they had a solid transition plan for the paper in place, retiring in 2020 after 25 years of running BTL made sense.

“The transition happened during the height of Covid before the vaccine,” Horowitz said. “So everybody tried to respect one another in the process and did, I think, quite well. And I love that.”

“It’s a more rare product each year that goes by,” she continued. “There are papers across the country like Between The Lines that are closing.”

While they were publishing BTL, the couple began running Happy Hounds Dog Day Care & Lodging in 2012 and

inherited the business from Stevenson’s sister in 2016. It’s notable for being a cage-free facility. Currently, Stevenson and Horowitz have two cats at home.

“My life is all about dogs and animals now,” said Stevenson, who has been volunteering twice weekly at Maybury Farm for the past two years. “I put hay in and take shit out. That’s what I do. I love it.” She was also an elf for the farm’s Santa event. “I always joke that I’m really barely housebroken and I’m outside as much as I possibly can be. I feel great.”

Still active politically, Stevenson is a poll worker and is involved in some campaigns. “We’re really interested to see [Congresswoman] Elissa Slotkin get elected [this] year,” she said.



Susan Horowitz. Photo: Andrew Potter

It was their activism that informed the mission of the newspaper from the beginning. Horowitz pointed out that the mere existence of a queer newspaper like BTL is inherently political and that while there is plenty of focus on matters of politics and policy these days, times have changed for the LGBTQ+ community. She says that BTL, in its current form, reflects that evolution.

“I think it’s great,” Horowitz said. “I think the team’s really seemed to respond to what’s needed in the current climate.”

“One of the things that comes across my mind right now is how grateful I am that projects that both of us had been involved with for a long time are continuing to this day and are more needed than ever,” she added. “I’m grateful that BTL is ongoing and that Affirmations that Stevenson was responsible for founding is ongoing. That is not something to take for granted. It’s because the community stepped up at critical times to keep things going over the course of its life.”

Compañía Nacional de Danza

Carmen

Madrid-based 'National Dance Company'
Detroit debut!

Choreographer Johan Inger's reimagined version of Georges Bizet's iconic 'Carmen'

WED / JAN. 17, 2024 / 7:30P.M.
AT THE DETROIT OPERA HOUSE

Detroit Opera

TICKETS AT
DetroitOpera.org

DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE FOR GROUPS OF 10 OR MORE
GROUPSALES@DETROITOPERA.ORG

Matthew Sinclair
WILLIAM DUNHAM FOUNDATION
SEASON SPONSOR

Norton's
FLOWERS & GIFTS

Delivering Amazing Quality
since 1892.

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

LOCATIONS IN YPSILANTI & ANN ARBOR

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine Decides Trans Lives Don't Matter After All



BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Well shame the fuck on me for giving Gov. Mike DeWine (R-Ohio) any praise at all for vetoing a bill aimed at gender-affirming care for minors. I should have known better.

DeWine really did veto the bill after reportedly talking to families with transgender kids, telling WTRE, “I’ll never forget what so many of them told me. They said, ‘Governor, but for this, my child would be dead by now. My child would have committed suicide.’”

I guess caring about the lives of trans kids only lasts as long as one news cycle, because he then turned around and gave a big gift to the anti-trans extremists in his party by way of an executive order.

“After the rest of his party threatened to override his veto, DeWine did something unexpected,” reports The New Republic. “He went above and beyond the original bill, restricting some access to gender-affirming care for adults as well.”

“

I sincerely apologize for saying that DeWine was in any way not a creep. He’s a creep.

I sincerely apologize for saying that DeWine was in any way not a creep. He’s a creep.

“Under the new set of administrative rules, both minors and adults seeking any gender-affirming care will require sign-offs by multidisciplinary teams. That team could include (but is not limited to) an endocrinologist, a bioethicist, and a psychiatrist,” according to TNR. “The new rules will be enforced by the Ohio Department of Health and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.”

On the surface, it sounds reasonable. DeWine explained it by saying, “I am

concerned that there could be fly-by-night providers, clinics that might be dispensing medication to adults with no counseling and no basic standards to assure quality care.”

He makes it sound like he’s just trying to protect trans patients. Something we should all want to do! But the reality is very different.

“The new steep barrier of entry — which is not required in most states across the nation

— will likely tack on incredible medical expenses, only further limiting access to what is often viewed as life-saving care for transgender individuals,” reports TNR.

A de facto ban via impossible-to-meet restrictions is straight out of the anti-abortion extremists. TRAP laws have been used across the country to limit access and drive out providers by setting medically unnecessary criteria for abortion providers and clinics that make it too expensive or too arduous to stay open.

“The rules being proposed are the most stringent rules currently under consideration anywhere in the United States, and would

restrict gender-affirming care providers to a handful of university hospitals by requiring lengthy assessment by a multidisciplinary team, including a board-certified endocrinologist, psychiatrist and most unusually — a bioethicist,” writes Jessica Kant LICSW, MPH, a family therapist and researcher. “This last requirement is perhaps the most onerous. While bioethicists are employed by hospitals to review complex cases, no infrastructure exists for what DeWine is proposing. This would create an immediate barrier to care that is impossible to satisfy, putting every patient in indefinite limbo.”

When DeWine vetoed the initial bill, he said in a statement, “Ultimately, I believe this is about protecting human life. Many parents have told me that their child would be dead today if they had not received the treatment they received from an Ohio children’s hospital. I have also been told, by those who are now grown adults, that but for this care, they would have taken their life when they were teenagers. What so many of these young people and their families have also told me is that nothing they have faced in life could ever prepare them for this extremely tough journey. Parents are making decisions about the most precious thing in their life — their child — and none of us should underestimate the gravity and the difficulty of those decisions.”

Oh, what a difference a week or so makes. How you can publicly say these words and then turn around and say, in essence, “Just kidding. Go fuck yourselves” is beyond me.

As Kant puts it, “DeWine is going to get people killed by throwing extremely safe, lifesaving care into total disarray with no benefit or function other than for the sheer cruelty of it.”

It’s infuriating and heartbreaking, but not surprising. “Protecting human life” my ass.

“There is no way that our siblings in Ohio can do this alone, and this past year has shown us that we are facing an enormously organized assault on trans lives by some of the most powerful people in the United States,” Kant writes. “The move by the wealthiest people on Earth to purchase enormous amounts of electronic infrastructure to manipulate public sentiment against us — at a time where the largest platform no longer flags false accusations, misinformation and outright blood libel against marginalized communities — information is going to get harder to trust and a hundred times more important. The threat is real, and it is an existential one at that.”

Thankfully there are things you can do, starting with contacting DeWine at governor.ohio.gov/contact. Kant has compiled a long list of ways to help trans people in Ohio at jessk.org/blog/things-you-can-do-right-now-for-ohio. Get busy.



THE SCROLL

QUICK HITS & CAN'T MISSES

New LGBTQ+ Senior Centers to Open This Year

A partnership between MiGen, Michigan's LGBTQ+ elder network, Corktown Health Center and Affirmations will center on an innovative new community center model for the state's older queer population. The centers will operate inside Corktown Health in Detroit and Affirmations in Ferndale.

MiGen helps local LGBTQ+ community members over 45 connect with healthcare resources, social and educational engagement, and more. MiGen Executive Director Angela Gabridge points to the unique partnerships with the two organizations

as key to getting the senior community center project off the ground. "Amazing partners can help us to achieve amazing things," she tells BTL. "We're excited to be piloting this super efficient, embedded model with trusted community partners Affirmations and Corktown Health."

Gabridge says the new community centers will help MiGen expand services in other parts of the state. "This is a great opportunity to support and supplement the incredible work our other LGBTQ+ and aging partners are doing across Michigan," she says. "We're so excited to see what comes next and to be part of making Michigan a place where LGBTQ+ folks can live vibrant, authentic lives at all ages and stages."

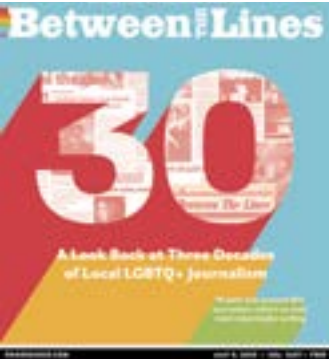
For more information on MiGen's programming and services, visit migenconnect.org.



Michigan Ranks in Top 10 for LGBTQ+ Population

A new report released by the Williams Institute gives new insights into Michigan's LGBTQ+ population. According to the data, more than 400,000 LGBTQ+ adults live in the Great Lakes State — around 5.5% of the population. This puts Michigan in the top 10 in terms of the total number of LGBTQ+ adults, behind larger states like California, Texas, Florida and New York. Ohio clocked in with more than 550,000 adult LGBTQ+ community members.

Younger generations boast higher percentages of queer populations, according to the report. Fifteen percent of people 18-24 identify as LGBTQ+, while the 25-34 age range group includes around 9%. The percentages decrease with age — only around 2% of adults over 65 identify as LGBTQ+.



BTL Gears Up for 2024 Coverage

BTL is rolling into its fourth decade of reporting on Michigan's LGBTQ+ community, from in-depth profiles you won't find anywhere else to queer local news, politics and entertainment. Highlights include our 2024 Sex and Love issue in February, our Home and Music issues in March, our annual Pride coverage throughout

June, the BTL Parenting issue in August and a detailed voter guide ahead of the November election. Don't miss our glossy magazine editions — you'll find our wedding guide on stands March 1 and our annual Pride Magazine in June.

Are you following us online? BTL's home on the web (pridesource.com) includes web versions of our print editions as well as exclusive digital-only content. Join the conversation on Facebook (pridesource), Instagram (pridesourcemedia) and X (pridesource).

George Michael Production Coming to Detroit

Broadway in Detroit will present "The Life and Music of George Michael" on March 1 — tickets are available now for the concert-style show chronicling the late queer singer's personal and professional life. Full performances of classic hits like "Faith," "Careless Whisper" and "Father Figure" are interspersed throughout the two-hour concert documentary. Find tickets at broadwayindetroit.com.



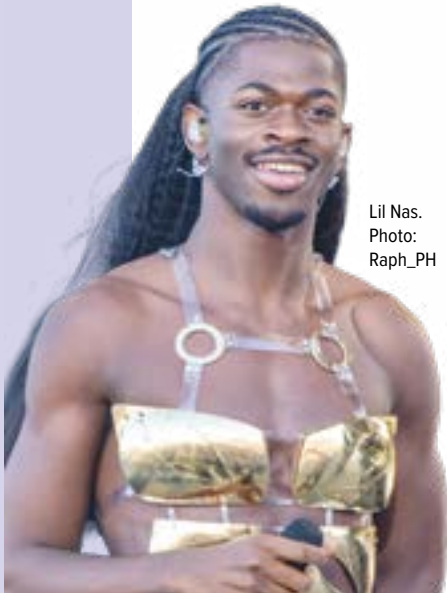
Photo: University of Houston Digital

CNN Rings in an Extra Queer New Year

When gay besties Andy Cohen and Anderson Cooper host CNN's New Year's Eve coverage, audiences expect an alcohol-powered, giggly good time, and the 2023 event delivered. John Mayer dialed in from a Tokyo cat cafe, and the duo played a revealing game of "Never Have I Ever" with Neil Patrick Harris. The quote of the night came when Cohen suggested Cooper could be a "pass-around party bottom" if he appeared on Matt Rogers' and Bowen Yang's Las Culturistas podcast. We'll be playing the highlights all year.

Lil Nas Doc Debuts on HBO

A new HBO streamer shines a light on the life of queer superstar Lil Nas X and his 2022-2023 Long Live Montero tour. The film, divided into three acts — Rebirth, Transformation and Becoming — follows Lil Nas X behind the scenes as he works through a journey of self-reflection and discovery across 60 days during the sold-out tour. "Long Live Montero" debuts Jan. 27 on HBO and Max.



Lil Nas.
Photo: Raph_PH

Alex Edelman Is Still Figuring Himself Out, One Joke at a Time

Before his Detroit show, the comedian reflects on his queer inspirations and his own identity

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Comedian Alex Edelman is experiencing lots of firsts. For Edelman, many of those firsts, including questions that challenge him to reflect on his sexuality, are being lived out in public, even in interviews such as this one.

First there was his debut stand-up comedy show, “Millennial,” winner of the Edinburgh Comedy Award for Best Newcomer at the 2014 Edinburgh Festival Fringe, making him, yes, the first American to do so since Arj Barker won in 1997. Another first — covertly attending a meeting of White Nationalists amid anti-Semitic rhetoric pointed in his direction online — would later become part of his “Just for Us” show, which gave him his first Broadway run when it launched at the Hudson Theatre in the summer of 2023.

He then got his first review in the New Yorker when the show first hit the stage off-Broadway, at SoHo Playhouse in New York. “Uproarious! Among Edelman’s many strengths as a writer and performer is an exceptional eye for the absurd,” Rollo Romig wrote. The show ran internationally in London and Melbourne, and will now tour the U.S., including a stop at the Fisher Theatre in Detroit on Feb. 10. The “firsts” extend to an appearance in late 2023 on “Jimmy Kimmel Live!,” where he met, for the first time, one of his favorites: Mariah Carey. On camera for our interview, Edelman holds up his phone to show me a text from his mom with a screenshot and this caption: “Your GF in People Magazine.” I asked him if he saw her in concert during her holiday run of shows, and I can’t tell if he’s serious, but he joke-whispers to me on camera that, “We looked into canceling a show to go see Mariah.”

Then there’s his Queerty debut; without knowing it until this interview, he first made it onto the queer media site in June 2023, Pride month, with the headline, “Will Broadway’s Alex Edelman be our new straight (bi?) BFF?” Edelman tells me he is very connected to queerness through close, loving connections he has in the community, even if he’s still figuring out where he might fit into that community.

As someone who didn’t even envision “Just For Us” on Broadway, what has it been like for you to see

the show evolve from small venues to Broadway and now a national tour?

Magical. Halcyon. Unbelievable. Heartbreaking. Bewildering. Fulfilling. An escape. Such a textured set of emotions, and also to have to constantly re-engage with the material in different contexts is really interesting as a craft challenge, and an emotional one. But, yeah. It’s been really, really special. It’s been the most gorgeous experience. It’s really something.

Considering the comedic nature of the material, I’m struck by the word “heartbreaking.”

We lost our director [Adam Brace, who died in May]. My best friend, who I did the work with. So, on one hand, to use a horrific, horrific cliché, my community has really rallied around me. And, on the other hand, he’s missing all of it. Adam’s missing all of this. The show has been, thank god, rapturously received and people seem to enjoy it, and I love doing it. But part of the reason I love doing it is because it makes me feel close to my dead friend. Not to be too direct, but I’ve had two coffees today already. So, I’m very spicy.

When it comes to the show’s material, how does sharing your experiences, even just sharing your life as a Jewish person, feel for you now during what’s happening in the Middle East with the Israeli-Palestinian war?

I think it’s become more visceral for me. There’s a question at the center of the show, which is, what is our place in the world? And I think an invitation to consider that in a way that is 90 minutes of jokes, is actually a really interesting and unique way to envision it.

Look, when I was in college, one of the theories of postmodern literature, which I studied, was the idea that you stand a much better chance of getting your arms around big concepts by viewing them in your peripheral vision or through the prism of something else. So, the questions of Jewish identity and what does it mean to be Jewish? I’m grateful that I’m doing a show that’s about assimilation, or about people’s



Alex Edelman. Photo: Jenny Anderson

place in the world.

Because the show has had a lot of relevance for people who are not just Jews. It’s found purchase with queer people and Muslim people and even a guy who told me he was from a family of musicians and always wondered if it should mean more. And I’ve had lots of people, Jews and non

Jews, come up to me to tell me that the show has been an escape for them in L.A. here, and in San Francisco, where I did it for a while. So, look, I’ve changed some things in the show. I open with a joke that addresses it, but I think the show’s been an escape. But comedy is a great way to Trojan horse things. Sugar makes the medicine go

down. And I think that the show has had that effect on people, thank god. I'm really thrilled by that.

You mentioned recognizing that you have a bigger queer audience now. I mean, Thanksgiving wasn't all that long ago, so you technically just came out all over again. Congratulations!

[Laughs.] So, if you're watching or listening or reading and you don't know, I did this joke in 2015 on television in Australia about how I have a homophobic uncle. And so, I come out of the closet on Thanksgiving, every Thanksgiving. It's like a description of doing it one year, which was 2014, 2013 maybe? I can't remember. And the joke's gone viral a bunch of times. When it started, everyone felt like the discourse was a lot of straight people going, "This is offensive." And a lot of queer people being like, "This is awesome."

And now, I reposted it the other day, because it was Thanksgiving, just to see what it would be like. Not a single negative comment. I was thinking about that. I was like, "I wonder if we've gotten more nuanced in our understanding of how jokes work, or if we've gotten more nuanced in our understanding of how queer experiences work?" It's really interesting watching people's response to the jokes. Jokes can be such good bellwethers or such good weather vanes for how people feel about certain social issues and our discourse and how we talk to each other. And no one has ever in person said to me that that joke has offended them. I have had a couple of people come up to me to tell me that that joke made them come out to their families.

To me, the point of that joke was that whether you're just an ally or not, it's important to have those hard conversations with people around you who you think may be homophobic.

There was a line in the joke that I was always very proud of, which is, "They say coming out is the hardest thing a young person can do. And it is, but it gets easier every single year." That's not mocking the idea of young people coming out. It's very hard. There's something special about making a point that everyone can laugh at, even though it's a divisive point.

I have my own sexuality and my own journey around my own sexual identity is something that I hold very closely to my chest and I'm very private about. And for reasons I don't completely understand, but sometimes get into in my art. But queer

people and trans people are huge, enormous parts of my life. My partners, my closest friends, family members. It's a really, really special thing to me.

Is it easier to talk about that aspect of your life through your work?

Yes. I have a joke in the show where I go, "If I was raised secular, I think I'd consider myself bisexual, but, because I was religious, I consider myself straight with some secrets." And one of the few knocks on the show said, "I wish that the show had talked more about that." The funny thing is, when I wrote the line, that was exactly how comfortable I was talking about it publicly. But I have lots of deep, deep conversations with queer people, particularly queer Jews in my life about sexuality in that intersection.



Alex Edelman in "Just for Us" on Broadway. Photo: Matthew Murphy

When did you write that joke?

2021. A couple of years ago.

You have acknowledged that perhaps if you weren't religious and you didn't grow up in Boston and lived in New York or maybe even West Hollywood that your experience with your own sexual identity might be much different.

Yeah. I think that's 1,000% true. But the people that I spend time with and draw wisdom from are people like Benj Pasek, an incredible songwriter, and Aluk, one of the great comics. And they're queer as well. I'm not just listing my queer friends; I'm talking about people for whom their queerness is an animating force and who think as deeply about their queerness as anyone thinks about a vector of their identity. Watching people go through that journey of interrogation, in particular people I met through Benj, prompted a methodology of self-interrogation for me.

See **Alex Edelman**, page 20



2 Great Options to Earn More This Year!

GENIUS HIGH YIELD CHECKING

5.25% APY¹

Earn up to \$400 a year¹ + enjoy Debit Rewards.

2 Simple Requirements

- Enroll in eStatements
- Use Your Genisys Debit Mastercard® 10 times a month for purchases of \$5 or more (excluding ATMs)

29 Southeast Michigan branches, find more at genisyscu.org

INSURED BY NCUA

¹ Annual Percentage Yield (APY) is the rate at which your money grows. APY is calculated based on the current rate and the number of compounding periods per year. APY is not guaranteed and may change without notice. APY is based on the current rate and the number of compounding periods per year. APY is not guaranteed and may change without notice. APY is based on the current rate and the number of compounding periods per year. APY is not guaranteed and may change without notice.

SAVINGS CERTIFICATES

Let your money grow with our High Rates as high as

5.51% APY¹

Open with as little as \$500

Federally insured by NCUA up to \$250,000

Check current rate at: genisyscu.org





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

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

Real Estate One



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

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



Shop LGBTQ+
PRIDESOURCE.COM

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



Scan for more info
or go to crsh.com



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

JOIN CRSH'S
QUEER MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP
Individual, Group and Couples Therapy

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

What We Won

Continued from page 6

fear of being subjected to the discredited and dangerous practice of so-called 'conversion therapy.'"

State-licensed healthcare providers are now banned from engaging in the practice on minors.

3. Largest LGBTQ+ legislative caucus in state history

Representation *does* matter. Other pro-equality legislation that was introduced might not have been possible if Michigan voters hadn't elected the largest LGBTQ+ caucus in state history, whose swearing-in occurred at the top of 2023. The seven includes the state's first nonbinary state legislator and first Black and openly LGBTQ+ state legislator. Many are up for re-election this year; watch for updates on those races and others.

4. Legislation to ban the gay/trans panic defense

A bill to ban the abhorrent gay/trans panic defense was introduced and passed by the Michigan House, aimed at preventing homophobia and transphobia from being used as valid legal defenses in violent crimes. Torolski hopes the enactment of the bill "will send a clear, concise and firm message that Michigan will not support the notion that one's sexual orientation or gender identity can serve as a justification or legal defense to criminal acts of violence."

5. Improving the name and gender marker change process

At the end of last session, legislation was introduced that would streamline the process for changing one's name or gender marker, something sorely needed in Michigan.

Currently, the name change process for the purpose of gender transition is not equitable for name change for other reasons, like marriage. Passage of the bills would end fingerprinting and other unnecessary requirements. Torolski is watching closely and believes it might not be a heavy lift as many of the provisions simply need to be codified into law.

"That legislation is a safety issue that directly impacts the community," Torolski said. "That's why it's going to be one of HRC's top priorities moving into next year. Unmatched records and ID docs can harm transgender individuals and increase the risk of discrimination, harassment and violence."

6. Surrogacy legislation

In other legislative news, in November the House passed a package of bills that, among other things, would legalize paid surrogacy contracts, thus aligning Michigan with the rest of the country. This represents an important milestone for LGBTQ+ couples, many of whom find becoming a parent challenging and expensive due in part to the state's current restrictions. All parents who use assisted reproduction would have the same rights and protections as other families.

7. Establishing an LGBTQ+ Commission

LGBTQ+ Michiganders were lifted up yet again by Gov. Whitmer with the establishment of an LGBTQ+ Commission in June. Many, including BTL, had brought this gap to her attention, and she delivered. The advisory board, which reports to the governor and the Department of Labor comprises 13 individuals representing diverse interests within Michigan's queer community.

"Michigan has been a beacon of hope for equality under [Whitmer's] leadership," Torolski said. "Implementing the first-ever statewide LGBTQ+ commission is another example of making Michigan a more welcoming and prosperous place for all."

8. \$10 million for LGBTQ+ health disparities

Gov. Whitmer also saw to it that LGBTQ+ Michiganders were remembered in the 2023-2024 budget. That came through in the form of a \$10 million grant for LGBTQ+ health disparities, an initiative also undertaken by the entire LGBTQ+ legislative caucus. This unprecedented funding will support the work of community-based organizations.

9. Preferred pronouns in courtrooms across the state

Last year, the Michigan Supreme Court also focused on ensuring equitable treatment of LGBTQ+ people in court. Mandating the use of preferred pronouns in courtrooms statewide was a groundbreaking first for Michigan and the U.S.

10. Equitable parent doctrine

Rounding out the list was another milestone, with the state supreme court again stepping up to support the queer community in a ruling regarding the equitable parent doctrine, which had previously been discriminatory in its application. Now, Michigan is in line with the rest of the country, ensuring that parents of nonbiological children outside the context of marriage are allowed to petition for their custody. This ruling supports individuals who could not legally marry pre-Obergefell vs. Hodges.

Also worth mentioning is the introduction of legislation that would remove gendered marital language from the legal code, legislation that would strengthen penalties for hate crimes and the impressive wins of LGBTQ+ candidates in the 2023 municipal elections, most notably in Macomb County.

Torolski summed up the remarkable year, acknowledging the work still to be done.

"2023 was a rejection of the politics of hate and representation of the will of Michigan voters," he said. "Radical politicians were using attacks to try to score political points on our community. It didn't work. They might try that again in 2024. We're going to be happy to prove them wrong again."

Transpapers: A Free, Michigan-Made Resource for Trans Empowerment Across the U.S.

Simple website guides trans folks through name, gender marker change processes

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Transpapers is more than a free name-change resource. It's a tool for trans empowerment. Or, as stated by its developers, "almost fully automated trans rights."

When Sasha Lišková moved to Grand Rapids from Kentucky a little over a year ago, she and Stephanie Beckon bonded over a shared love of board games. The two trans women became fast friends and found something else they had in common: frustration with the needlessly complex process of changing one's name for the purpose of gender transition.

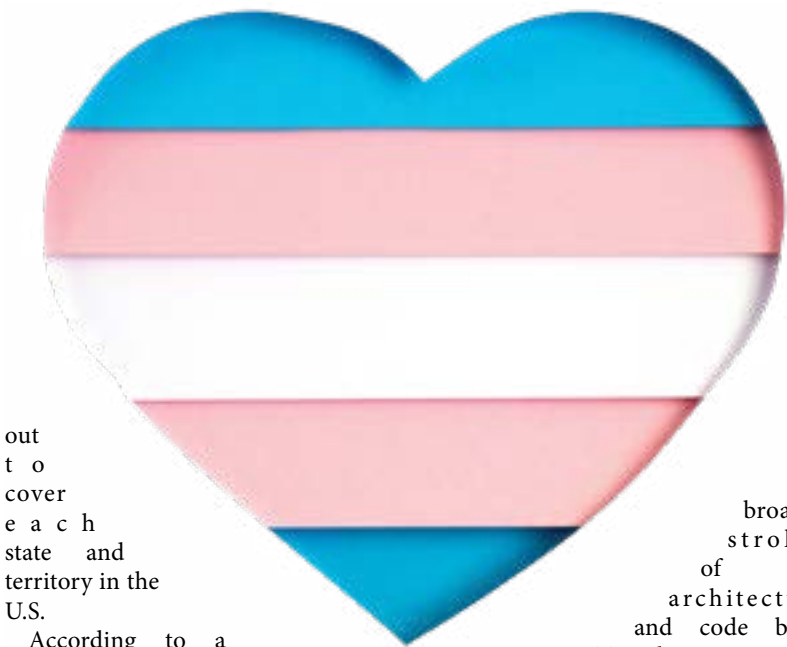
"[Beckon] told me about this big, long process," Lišková said. "And it was really unnecessarily, onerously complicated, in my opinion." She referenced seven or eight discrete forms plus publication requirements. Beckon had tried to mitigate the bureaucratic headache with a printed guide, but it was specific only to the county where she lives.

Lišková, a freelance software developer by trade, said she could feel the gears turning in her brain: "I could automate that," she said. That's exactly what she did with Transpapers, aided by the oversight of the Grand Rapids Trans Foundation.

"It basically walks you through the entire process of not only updating your name, but also your gender markers," said Beckon, a quality engineer with a knack for programming. Once an individual fills out the web form, a PDF of the pre-filled documents is generated for print for use by the court.

Details specific to each county, such as the quirk that Saginaw County requires forms in triplicate, are included in the personalized PDF. The step-by-step guide also lays out what to expect at the courthouse and contains numerous resources.

Transpapers' framework is currently applicable to all of Michigan's 83 counties. The duo will soon branch



out
t o
cover
e a c h
state and
territory in the
U.S.

According to a 2021 Williams Institute report, Michigan ranks number one for the most trans adults who lack the correct gender marker on their government documents at an alarming 78 percent. Eventually, Transpapers may be available to assist the estimated 476,000 trans adults across the U.S. who are without affirming ID.

"The reason that this is so important to me is that, well, obviously we're both trans women," Lišková said. "In recent years, I have become very much aware that our rights are being attacked... it's on the news every other day."

Beckon noted the lack of up-to-date, reliable information and where to find it. At court, she found clerks are legally unable to help. The pair contacted each county individually, but hope community members will provide feedback to help improve the system as it gets rolling to help ensure accuracy.

Privacy concerns

Filling out a form on a website with data as personal as a birth name can raise safety concerns. Lišková said security was a driving force behind the

broader
strokes
of the
architecture
and code base.

To be sure, no information is sent over the internet, so it's not collected or saved.

"Everything happens on your computer," Lišková said. "If you were security conscious enough and you had the technical know-how, you could copy this project to your own computer, turn off the internet and run it, and it would work." They've even provided a link to the code base. "So anybody with a programming background will be able to tell that the data never leaves," Beckon said. "We're trying to get the word out on that."

Transpapers' domain, .lgbt, represents another level of protection. It's a top-level domain known for security that would, for example, combat a phishing attack in which scammers might attempt to clone the website and redirect users. Because the domain is registered with Identity Digital, that's nearly impossible and would lead to legal action.

Further, Transpapers uses the open source platform Github, which runs on Microsoft servers. And if hackers

See **Transpapers**, page 20



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



LOOKING TO REACH THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY?

PRIDESOURCE.COM/ADVERTISE

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

Bless You, Father
Puzzle can be found on page 21

◀ Madonna's AIDS

Activism

Continued from page 7

in 1989, many critics considered it a departure from her pop roots. Here, she dove headfirst into topics like domestic violence, women's rights, spirituality and childhood trauma with a new level of vulnerability. She also took advantage of her superstardom to deliver a message about AIDS directly to a captive audience by including a safe sex pamphlet with facts about the disease inside every album.

The card insert called AIDS “an equal opportunity disease” and stressed that “people with AIDS, regardless of their sexual orientation, deserve compassion and support, not violence and bigotry.” The message may seem tame by today's standards, but remember, this was at a time when many Americans believed AIDS was a curse from God against the gay community.

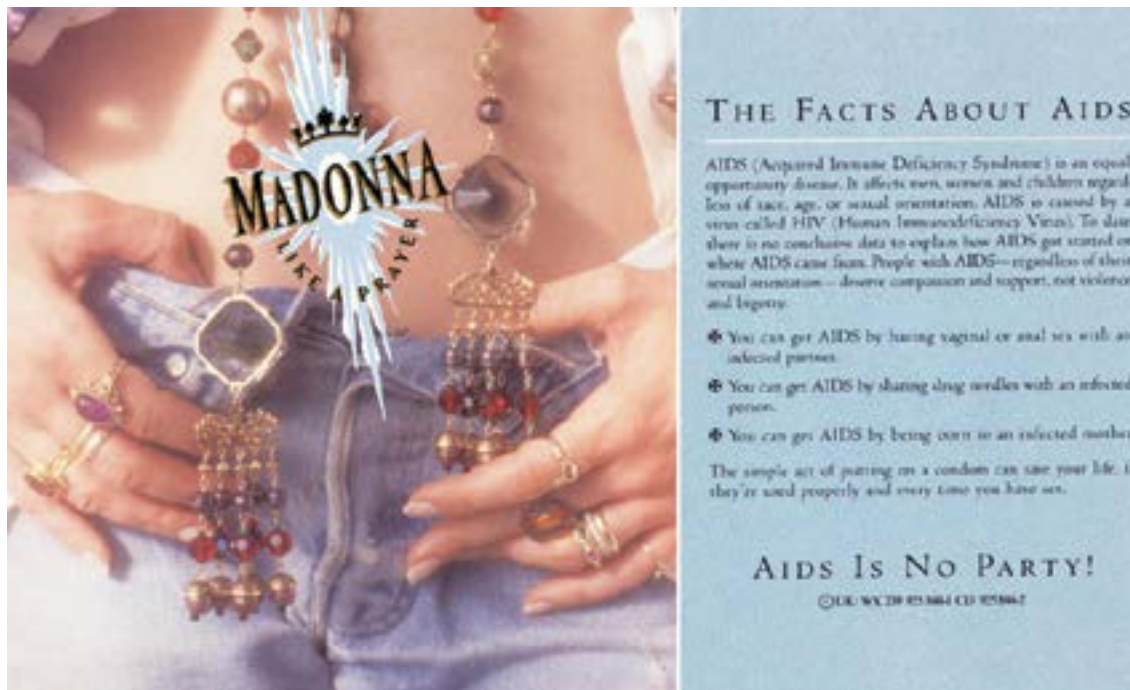
1990

Tribute to Keith Haring

Madonna's close friend, the artist Keith Haring, died from AIDS in early 1990. The singer spoke about him frequently, never shying away from Haring's diagnosis. Haring was outspoken about his status and she made it a point to honor his courage. On the last leg of her “Blond Ambition” tour in 1990, Madonna spoke about Haring from the stage. “Now, you probably know Keith Haring as an artist, but I know him as a man who had the courage to tell the truth,” she began. “The truth is he was gay. The truth is he had AIDS, and he said so to anybody who would listen.”

“In memory of Keith,” she continued. “Let's tell ourselves the truth. Let's tell it to each other. Let's face it together. The truth is AIDS is our enemy. Prejudice is our enemy. AIDS does not know if we are gay or if we are straight. It has no sexual preference.”

Madonna posted a tribute to Haring in 2018 on Twitter alongside a vintage image with the artist. “He was a big AIDS activist when everyone was calling it GAY cancer,” she wrote. “I was with him the day he died of AIDS. He said what hurt him the most was how people did not want to touch door



(Left) An AIDS facts card distributed inside copies of Madonna's “Like a Virgin” album. (Right) Madonna performs in front of a photo of the late artist Martin Burgoyne during her “Live to Tell” AIDS tribute during the 2023 Celebration tour. Photo: Ricardo Gomes

knobs after he touched them.”

1990

Christopher Flynn Dies

Madonna's ballet teacher and mentor from Michigan, Christopher Flynn, also died from AIDS in 1990. She told Interview magazine in 2010 that “Growing up in Michigan, I didn't really know what a gay man was. [Christopher] was the first man — the first human being — who made me feel good about myself and special. He was the first person who told me that I was beautiful or that I had something to offer the world, and he encouraged me to believe in my dreams, to go to New York. He was such an important person in my life. He died of AIDS, but he went blind toward the end of his life.”

1991

Madonna Becomes the Subject of HIV/AIDS Rumor

In 1991, Madonna was the target of rumors that she was HIV-positive, just a year after she lost both Haring and Flynn. Entertainment Weekly (EW) speculated that the rumors started when Christopher Anderson, author of “Madonna: Unauthorized,” which came out

earlier in 1991, published teasers that his book would reveal “the tragic reasons for Madonna's very personal campaign to find a cure for AIDS.”

In fact, the book doesn't indicate Madonna had ever tested positive. The teasers, he said, referred to the people she'd known and loved who had succumbed to AIDS. “Given her penchant for scandal, she's a lightning rod for this sort of untruth,” Anderson told EW. Anderson seemed to benefit from Madonna's lightning rod quality, honing in on claims that Madonna once “trolled” New York City's East Village for young Hispanic men in the early '80s, writing in his book, “It was anybody's guess whether any of them were carrying the AIDS virus or had been intravenous drug users.”

At the time, Madonna's publicist Liz Rosenberg told EW that Madonna was “angry and upset.” “She can't understand it,” Rosenberg told the outlet, “but feels there may be some kind of strange conspiracy behind it.” EW reported that some members of the gay community felt the root of the rumors was ultimately rooted in AIDS phobia. “I think this particular rumor is entirely AIDS-phobic and homophobic,” Richard Rouillard, editor of The Advocate at the time, told EW.

“It's a backlash at Madonna for being so actively involved in AIDS and championing gay people, both in her movies and in her interviews. This is a straight backlash,” said the late Howard Bragman, then-

president of Bragman & Co., a Los Angeles publicity firm that represents AIDS organizations as well as celebrities. Bragman said such rumors can be “very, very destructive. They can discourage people who are truly HIV-positive from coming forth, and that's a tragedy.”

2023

Celebration Tour AIDS Memorial

Madonna's emotionally charged rendition of “Live to Tell,” dedicated to HIV/AIDS victims, has stood as the poignant centerpiece of the Celebration Tour since its initiation in London in October.

The tribute unfolds within the concert set, commencing with the energetic “Holiday,” a nostalgic nod to 1983 at New York's iconic Paradise Garage, a pre-fame haunt for Madonna. In the middle of a group of frenetic dancers, a solitary figure collapses, paving the way for the somber transition to “In This Life” and the powerful “Live to Tell.”

Madonna's connection to the HIV/AIDS epidemic becomes apparent, rooted in her immersion in New York's queer club culture in 1978 and before that, at places like Menjo's in Detroit. A 2018 Daily Beast article recounts a fun bit of local lore related to Madonna's imprint on the long-standing queer mainstay. “Before she went to New York and got famous, this



was her hangout,” Menjo's manager Tim McKee-Zazo told the outlet. “Her period of coming here was the mid to late '70s, but then she was barred from coming,” he said.

Nodding to her early gay club days and close connections to the gay men in her life, the “Live to Tell” tribute integrates deeply personal elements, featuring video screens with faces that represent significant losses: Burgoyne, Flynn and Haring are all featured here before the screens expand to include numerous other victims, creating a universal and profoundly moving moment.

Say what you will about Madonna, but she has been unwavering in her full-throated support for the physical and emotional well-being of HIV/AIDS patients for her entire adult life. At a time when even the president of the United States refused to acknowledge the crisis was killing thousands of young men in this country, Madonna was steadfast in her defiance, knowing full well that her support had cost her career opportunities along the way.

When she takes the stage in Detroit, audience members who remember what it was like to live through the AIDS crisis will feel some catharsis and maybe a little healing, too. Forty years later, Madonna is still pouring love into the queer community and proving she will never forget what happened to the gay community in a country that should have known better.

Who's That GIRL?

An interview with
Mary Gabriel about
her book 'Madonna:
A Rebel Life'

BY MATTHEW RETTENMUND

Reading is ... hard. At some point, I joked that I don't read at all anymore, and I may have even said so to Mary Gabriel, the acclaimed writer who has set her sights on Madonna with her new biography "Madonna: A Rebel Life," because she teased me when she sent me a signed copy of her work — "I know you don't read Madonna books. But read this one. You might learn something."

I did, and I did. The book is not filled with shockers for diehard fans/addicts, though I'm sure there are things you didn't know or forgot you know, but it is something that has been missing from the hundred or more Madonna books out there so far — a serious, sober, all-inclusive, biographical look at Madonna's life and career executed with scrupulous attention to contextualizing who she is and why that worked and works for us.

There have been a couple of interesting Madonna biographies, but I always felt they were lost in the long shadow of Christopher Andersen's dreadful bestseller from 32 years ago. It was time for "Madonna: A Rebel Life."

I recently sat down with Gabriel to discuss the enormous effort it took to create what just might be the most thorough biography on the biggest-selling female recording artist of all time.

Did anyone discourage you from following your book detailing the impact of five pivotal modern female artists, "Ninth Street Women," which was critically acclaimed, with a mainstream biography of a pop icon?

Not at all. In fact, my agent Brettne Bloom agreed to this book faster than any of my others! And it's not just because it was about Madonna. I wanted to treat Madonna with the same seriousness and respect that I did all my other subjects. I wasn't writing about a pop icon; I was writing about an artist who changed culture globally. Her impact is undeniable. She is one of the most significant cultural figures of modern times. She is a historical figure and that is how I wrote it.

Which associates, past and present, of

Madonna's did you really want to speak with but could not?

I wanted to talk with everyone, but that wasn't possible for a number of reasons. Some of the most important people were dead. I, of course, wanted to talk to Madonna but I didn't realize that that would be impossible.

I came to this story wearing my journalist hat and thought I could schedule an interview.

I then learned that one doesn't "schedule an interview" with Madonna. After trying for five years, in fact each time she hired a new publicist, I realized it wasn't going to happen. I also discovered that if Madonna wasn't cooperating, her inner circle wouldn't cooperate either.

Luckily, I had long before decided to write this book the way I had my others, using mountains of archival material, which made it more historical than journalistic. And in the end, not to rationalize my inability to interview people myself, but I don't think it's invaluable to hear what people say in 1983, 1989, 1994, 2000, 2005, rather than what they remember about those periods today. Voices change, memories fade. I tried as much as possible to use quotes that were contemporaneous to the events. I think that makes the story more immediate and, in a way, more real. How Madonna sounds in 1984 is quite different from how she would sound in 2020 remembering that period.

Who, in Madonna's orbit, were the most helpful?

No one in Madonna's immediate orbit helped, but outside of that sphere there were some incredibly generous people who helped me understand her. Her University of Michigan friends, Whitley Setrakian Hill and Linda Alaniz, were so forthcoming and great. From her early New York days, the late Marcus Leatherdale and photographer Catherine Underhill helped me understand the club scene and Madonna's place in it. Actor Lawrence Monoson told me the story of his love affair with Martin in the months before Martin's death. It's a heartbreaking story of a

See Mary Gabriel, next page



Photo: Alberto Tolot

young man torn between his dying boyfriend and the necessity of protecting his career in homophobic Hollywood. Kevin Stea and Carlton Wilborn were great in describing the “Blond Ambition” period, and in Carlton’s case “The Girlie Show.” Donna De Lory and Niki Haris were also brilliant storytellers. Brian Antoni and Tom Austin gave me wonderful insight into the heady Miami Beach days when Madonna was queen and Versace was king of the beach. [Madonna’s brother] Christopher Ciccone talked me through Madonna’s life up to about 2008 during multiple interviews. His is an often-neglected voice in her story, and yet he was at her side for two decades of her professional



life. Really, the list is long and my gratitude to all the people who spoke with me is deep.



Mary Gabriel. Courtesy photo

It’s interesting that Madonna has consistently gone back to Martin Burgoyne, a close friend for a few years early in her life, but one who died over 35 years ago. What do you think bonded them so much that she never forgot him?

Their friendship began when Madonna was on the verge — but just at the verge — of her recording career. Martin was already part of the club scene; in fact, he was a beloved member of the club scene. She had been there, but Martin was like a USDA stamp of approval to all the skeptics who wondered about this ambitious Midwestern chick. The fact that she was with Martin meant that she was OK.

Another aspect of Martin’s role in Madonna’s life was protector. As a young performer without any power behind her to speak of, she was in a very vulnerable spot. Martin stood by her, and more importantly, believed in her. She tried out her routines on him, he advised her on her

look, he went with her to all her performances and even to record company negotiations. He was her sounding board and, in a way, her guardian angel. And he did it with joy. Without doubt there were many depressing moments for Madonna during those early days when the people who should have been able to help her career didn’t even understand her. Martin did, and he pulled her through those times.

But their bond was much deeper than just her career. Martin and Madonna were two sides of a coin. They were twins separated at birth. I get the impression that their spirits collided and didn’t separate until his death at the young age of 23. Her first heartache had been her mother’s death. Her second, I would argue, was Martin’s.

Madonna is often criticized for stealing in her rise to pop glory, yet it seems like she has taken inspiration from many sources and usually is very happy to talk about the origins of her work. Why do you think she is singled out as a pop cultural thief?

I find the entire cultural thief complaint bogus. First of all, all artists appropriate. That is how they grow. That is how they learn. Secondly, she always gives credit to the sources of her material [aside from a few songs when she may not have known that her collaborators were relying on material created by someone else]. If she presents a “discovery” to the world, like voguing, she shouts from the rooftops where she saw it, who was doing it, and she introduces artists from that scene to the world. Far from stealing, she celebrates the art of others and makes sure they get the recognition they deserve. She makes them part of her records, her videos, her tours. The theft accusations make me crazy. They’re made by people who don’t know anything about her career or don’t understand how art is made.

Do you have the impression that Madonna cares about criticism?

I’m sure she does, but she’s somehow trained herself to ignore it. I suppose after 40 years it would become so repetitive that it would be easier to ignore. Anyway, I hope so for her sake.

How do you feel about Madonna’s reaction to ageism? I’ve always found it strange that she is so reactive to anything to do with age — for example, the laudatory New York Times piece on her 60th set her off because it referenced turning 60. She seemed to see that as a dig as opposed to as a relatable milestone.

I think there were other issues with that piece that irritated her aside from just the age references.

Her reaction to ageism in general, though, is the same as her reaction to the other “isms” she has challenged throughout her career: sexism, racism and, well, homophobia isn’t an ism

but you get what I mean. You asked earlier if criticism irritates Madonna. When it’s directed at her personally, I think it doesn’t, but when it is the product of one of the isms, I think it annoys her quite a bit because, like any prejudice, it is so ignorant, and that drives her mad.

Like her earlier battles, her fight against ageism is designed to educate people to the fact that older women, who are traditionally awarded crone status when they pass menopause, are vibrant, powerful, brilliant and beautiful. Western cultures are terrified of the power of older women, who no longer “need” men to procreate and who are no longer inconvenienced by their monthly bodily functions. She is free, as free as a man, and for that reason societies have tried to put her in a box labeled “useless” and hide her away. Not for the first time, Madonna has said crush the box. She is living proof of what an “older” woman can be, and that power for her critics is terrifying.

If her anger is sharper than usual, maybe it’s because this particular prejudice is so entrenched and insidious. Or maybe she’s just tired of taking shit at every stage of her life for 40 years.

Were you surprised that Madonna’s new tour embraces all of her past incarnations and career eras? She has resolutely said she dislikes looking back.

It is a bit surprising, especially after the highly avant-garde Madame X tour. But then again, she’s been working on her biopic and no doubt that forced her to listen to her old material and reexamine her life. She must have found joy there because she decided that she needed to share that experience with her fans.

Also, I think the way she is looking back makes it less a trip down memory lane than something really new and innovative. The show’s visuals are fantastically original. The songs are reworked and performed in a way that gives them new life. So yes, Madonna’s story is the basis of the tour, but the way she presents it makes it entirely new and therefore exciting for her.

What do you think of the show? I have to believe you have watched it online!

I have been watching it and hope to see it at some point, probably early [this] year. I think it’s incredible. For all the reasons I stated above, but also because it is so radical. After Beyoncé and Ms. Swift, this is the year of women in the arena. Madonna has once again shown that she is not a woman singer, she’s not even a performer, she is an artist making important political, social and creative statements. The people she has on stage with her, the stories she is telling, are — for mainstream America — still as shocking as “Blond Ambition” was in 1990. I think it is thrilling. Madonna has made a corporation like Live Nation a delivery device for yet another radical artistic statement.

Do you think Madonna’s near-death

experience — it now seems clear she really did almost die, considering she is speaking about it emotionally in concert — seems to have led to a reset?

I only know what I’ve read, but I can’t imagine, knowing what I know of her past traumas, that it wouldn’t have had a profound effect on her. There is no way she didn’t reevaluate her life and her work after such a close call. I don’t think this concert tour is the reaction to that scare. I think we’ll need to see what happens next, whether it be another album, her film, or her autobiography.

Who do you see as Madonna’s clearest influences, directly and indirectly?

Musically, I think it’s the Detroit Motown, soul, R&B of her youth; in her presentation, I would say David Bowie because he helped her see that evolution is actually a good thing. But I think the impact of the clubs in New York in the early ’80s is too often overlooked. Madonna the artist came alive during one of the most experimental, sexually and racially diverse, wild, loving club scenes in U.S. history. It was about the music and how it made you move, but it was also about the tribe, belonging to a group of outcasts who were protected from a hostile world because they had each other. I think that experience in those clubs created the Madonna we know and continues to inform her work. I think that experience differentiated her from artists before and after.

What would an encounter between Madonna and Mary Gabriel look and sound like? What do you expect you would say?

Oh, dear. You know, when I contemplated this project, I thought of those two names on a book jacket and imagined that it would have to be the light blue of the Virgin Mary. It would reek sanctity. But of course, that’s not what happened and that’s not the story. I can’t imagine what our encounter would entail. I would probably do a lot of grinning and hopefully she wouldn’t say I had gotten her life completely wrong. That’s about as much as my imagination will allow.

But I know one thing I would say to her, and that’s thank you. She is an historical figure who has spent decades on the frontline of a fight on behalf of people who are traditionally voiceless and ignored. She gave those people — and I’m thinking here of women and the LGBTQ community — courage, support, but most importantly, love. It was a lonely battle for about the first 15 years, and it could get lonely once again as the world shifts toward intolerance. I would thank her for her past work on our behalf, and thank her in advance for what she is sure to do — express herself.

Matthew Rettenmund blogs at BoyCulture.com, where this interview first appeared, and is the author of the brand-new edition of “Encyclopedia Madonnica.” He grew up in Flushing, Michigan, and now lives in NYC.

If Madonna Calls, I'm Here



BY JASON A. MICHAEL

My Dearest Madge,

I feel quite confident it's all right to call you that. You've so intimately become a part of my life through the power of your music over these past four-plus decades that you must surely feel that closeness as well. If not, perhaps this letter will do the trick at showing you why this is true.

Madonna Louise Ciccone, you are a legend. Let me start there. You are featured perhaps more than any other artist on the soundtrack of my formative years. I grew up on your music, and it represents some of the best (the "Vogue" era) and worst (the "Take a Bow" era) times in my life.

I have various memories of you going back to the early '80s. I remember being near a softball field — my parents were playing, not me by any means — in 1984 when I first heard "Borderline." I had already heard "Holiday" and "Lucky Star," but "Borderline" hit different. I was 12, and the budding drama queen in me loved it immediately.

I was a teenager, but still too young to drive, when I found myself at a party with a badass cousin of mine who was always getting me in trouble. I knew no one there. They were all older than me and drinking alcohol. And I was standing alone in a corner humming along to "Like A Virgin." And I was — in every sense of the word! It was my first semi-adult, no-parents-in-attendance party and I felt horribly out of place.

I begged my cousin Brittany, the original "Material Girl," who I was spending the night with, to take me back to her apartment where my aunt was no doubt waiting up, furious. We'd blown curfew by a couple of hours. When she finally acquiesced to my (urgent) requests that we leave, it was me that my dear aunt blamed for staying out late. It seems that Brittany the Brat could never get in trouble but was always leaving me in a heap of it. Talk about "Papa Don't Preach."



Madonna. Photo: Jean-Baptiste Mondino

But I love a redemption story as much as anyone, and it was thanks to Brittany that I got the chance to star in your brave documentary "Truth or Dare." OK, so I didn't so much as star in it so much as I was sitting in row 18 at the Palace of Auburn

See **Second Glances**, page 22

"Hodges..."

SUBARU

REG-41 **OUTBACK**

Come See Our Inventory

HODGES SUBARU
Madonna: Madonna's "Vogue", "Take a Bow", "Borderline"

21205 Woodward Ave • Ferndale • MI • 48220
248.547.8800 • www.hodgessubaru.com
HOURS: **MONDAY** - 9:00A.M. - 7:00P.M.
TUESDAY - FRIDAY - 9:00A.M. - 8:00P.M.
SATURDAY - 10:00A.M. - 2:00P.M.

EVERYDAY!

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

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

MICHIGAN HIV/STI HOTLINE
800-872-2437

THE FINEST IN ADULT ENTERTAINMENT AT THE BEST PRICES!

SHANE SE
HOUSE PARTY
GANGBANG
C.W.
DRIVE-ALL
MOMENTS

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

UPTOWN
BOOKSTORES
ADULT VIDEO
2 LOCATIONS
WWW.UPTOWNADULT.COM

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

16401 W. 8 Mile
Between Greenfield & Southfield
Detroit
313.836.0647

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

◀ **Transpapers**
Continued from page 15

compromised Microsoft, “then we have bigger problems because that runs a great, great deal of software and they take security very seriously,” Lišková said.

Still, Lišková plans to include a disclaimer in the next update, noting, “If you want to be completely secure, you shouldn’t use the internet; you shouldn’t leave your house,” she said.

Community feedback

Liam Wolf, who is a community health worker and peer advocate for Transcend The Binary, an organization based in Southeast Michigan that supports trans/gender diverse folks and their families, lauded Transpapers. He told BTL he’s added it to his list of resources.

“I actually found it phenomenal,” Wolf said. “I cross-checked the information with state of Michigan documents for legal name change, and everything was accurate.” Wolf changed his name a number of years ago while living in Philadelphia, but said he struggled for years with a process that was complicated and confusing. Ultimately, he sought the assistance of a free lawyer.

“If I had had access to something like this when I was younger and changed my name, I would have had much more independence,” Wolf said.

Kathleen Redmon, a program developer for Transcend The Binary, was likewise impressed.

“By gathering all the necessary forms

and offering thorough instructions for how to complete and file them, this tool helps remove some of the guess-work and bureaucratic barriers,” Redmon continued. “We’re grateful for this much-needed resource, for Stephanie and Sasha for creating it, and for all those working toward our liberation.”

So far the feedback has been positive, and Beckon and Lišková appreciate tips for bug fixes. Because Transpapers’ code repository has a section for code issues, anyone can send a bug report or even contribute their own code to the project. “That’s why we open-sourced it,” Lišková said, to which Beckon added, “So it’s not just two people trying to hook up the entire nation.”

Looking ahead

Currently, the co-creators are expanding their reach to Rhode Island, Alabama and New York. New York was added after Lišková and Beckon received a message through the feedback form that a resident who has familiarity with the name change process there offered to help.

Back in Michigan, legislation has been introduced that would simplify changing one’s name for the purpose of gender transition, making it more equitable with name change for other reasons, such as marriage. The bills could be taken up next year.

“We’ll update the guide and the forms whenever that happens,” Lišková said. “We’re actually looking forward to it, because from what we hear, it would greatly simplify the process. And we are all for that.”

◀ **Alex Edelman**
Continued from page 13

I feel like what you’re asking me is if what you’re saying is OK?

I’m not asking you. I’m asking the most unkind people who might be viewing this or reading this and being like, “That’s not fair.” I’m not being like, “I’m friends with Jake Cohen, so I can speak with impunity about the way queer people move in the world,” as someone who is very close to the vest about their own queerness.

As someone who’s a rising comedian, is how open you are about your life something you have to take into consideration now?

I don’t know that I’ve ever talked about this in an interview, but I feel a tremendous need for privacy around aspects of my process. And I feel a tremendous need for privacy around how I feel about other comedians. And I feel a tremendous need for privacy about certain

... I don’t know. I guess, some topical things feel really private to me, even if they’re not the spiciest topics.

Other topics that are spicy, I don’t feel the need to be private about at all. I feel like I have a very heterodox understanding of what I do and don’t need privacy for. And I like that. But, even recently, just talking about my identity as a Jew, that’s new to me. And even talking at all about my sex life, that’s new to me. And talking about all of this is very, very new.

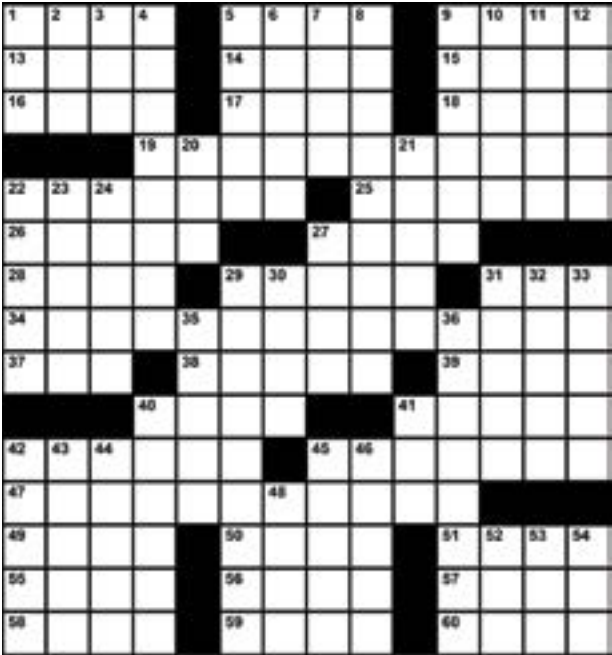
These are good questions, just given that they’re not the same questions, which is like, “What was it like walking into that room?” And I’m like, “Well, I did a 90-minute show about it that you can see.”

Once you are written about in Queerty, I feel like there is automatically some public interest in your sexual identity.

Have I been written about in Queerty?

Yes.

Oh my god. Wow! Don’t think I’m not looking that up as soon as I get off.



Bless You, Father

Across

- 1 Trail of the Tin Woodman's tear
- 5 Rainbow shape
- 9 Opera villain, typically
- 13 Area east of the Urals

- 14 Vegetable soup bean
- 15 Apple that isn't a fruit
- 16 Jodie Foster's "___ Driver"
- 17 Ghostbusters role
- 18 Verdi work adapted by John
- 19 The Roman Catholic church still says 34-Across are ___, but...
- 22 Ruled like a queen
- 25 Measure of manhood
- 26 River personified on Broadway
- 27 Singer on "Lord of the

- Rings_ soundtrack
- 28 Haul ass
- 29 Brando's last one was in Paris
- 31 Links letters
- 34 ...the church may now bless these
- 37 Cause of Apr. angst
- 38 Guitarist Eddie Van ___
- 39 Stallion's supper
- 40 "The Way We ___"
- 41 Rutstein of Disappear Fear
- 42 Police officer's badge
- 45 "There is no there there," per Stein
- 47 Gay-friendly leader of the Roman Catholic Church
- 49 What you should take it like
- 50 Like a top
- 51 Noncommittal words
- 55 Lucie's pop
- 56 How quickly one comes
- 57 Title for Edna or Judi
- 58 Ancient European language
- 59 You might ride one in Aspen
- 60 Go off, on Broadway

Down

- 1 Sarah Schulman novel "___ Bohemia"
- 2 Home o' the brave
- 3 Suppertime, for some
- 4 Scandal involving bottoms?
- 5 Relief for the head
- 6 Hard
- 7 "Get your rear in gear!"
- 8 Persevering still
- 9 "Othello" courtesan

- 10 Group that won't pose for nude photos
- 11 When repeated, a "Funny Girl" song
- 12 Gives the once-over
- 20 Roadside stop
- 21 "Didn't know you had it ___"
- 22 Martini's partner
- 23 Dana of "MacGyver"
- 24 Mosque heads
- 27 Suffix with prefer
- 29 Things "on my guitar" in a Taylor Swift hit
- 30 Trucker's shaft
- 31 Primary strategy
- 32 Gain admittance to Studio 54
- 33 Former leader of Syria
- 35 Where Wilde might be next to Wilder
- 36 Meet people in swimwear here
- 40 Member, in slang
- 41 Do the moguls
- 42 Your gardener's tool
- 43 Greek poet who didn't look at porn
- 44 Cry from a successful cross-dresser
- 45 Not straight up
- 46 Was a thespian
- 48 Like really picky sex?
- 52 Nathan's role in "The Producers"
- 53 Quebec compadre
- 54 To date

See p. 15 for answers

Prism of Possibilities

Psychotherapy

Christine Cantrell, PhD

Fully Licensed Psychologist



Give yourself an extreme self makeover ...

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

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

CALL NOW! 248-591-2888

Supporting the Community Since Before it was Cool.

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



Sandi & Linda
www.trilliumrealtors.com

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





HELLO 2024

IVEY

@IVEYSALON
IVEYSALON.COM
100 S FOURTH AVE,
ANN ARBOR 48105



PRIDESOURCE

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

PRIDESOURCE.COM/ADVERTISE

◀ Second Glances

Continued from page 19

Hills while the show was being filmed. But hey, I say I was in the damn movie, and I'm stickin' to it.

When I moved to Miami a few short weeks after the concert, my, shall we say, appearance in the film was my claim to fame in certain circles. You had not brought your Blond Ambition tour to South Florida, but I had already seen it. It was a "Live to Tell" moment. OK, perhaps not my biggest claim to fame, but it did earn me the envy — perhaps resentment — of a few diehard fans.

In Miami, I was soon enough engaged to a handsome man named Carlos who loved you. Cliché, perhaps, but he was "Crazy for You." He bought your "Sex" photography book, which was largely shot in and around our neighborhood and on South Beach. And your 1992 "Erotica" album became a big part of the soundtrack of our ever-shaky relationship. (I speak of deep cuts like "Waiting" and "Thief of Hearts." It was my favorite album of yours. Well, until "Bedtime Stories," the next one, came out and I heard "Secret" and "I'd Rather Be Your Lover.")

About that nasty breakup: "Bye Bye Baby" made me feel strong, and "Love Don't Live Here Anymore" spoke to me during that time, too. It wasn't an easy split. Carlos was the first man I had brought home and introduced to my parents. He even spent Christmas with my family two years in a row. But we were both young and we grew apart. Carlos decided to become an exotic

dancer and I decided to relocate. Still, "I'll Remember," as you sang.

When I moved back to Michigan, I kind of lost touch with you. You now represented my life in South Florida, and you were hard to listen to after the Carlos debacle. I had to take you off the playlist for a minute. But

"You are featured perhaps more than any other artist on the soundtrack of my formative years. I grew up on your music, and it represents some of the best (the 'Vogue' era) and worst (the 'Take a Bow' era) times in my life."

my respect for you never wavered.

You continue to be a trailblazer. I thank you for the music and how you've moved me through the years. I'll miss you this month when you come to Little Caesars Arena. Forgive me, but I'm not comfortable in large crowds and I'm too old to sit in the nosebleed seats and too poor to sit up front. But I'll always have memories of seeing you on the Blond Ambition tour in your cone-shaped brassiere. Over 30 years later, it still marks the greatest concert experience of my life.

Decades may have passed, the hair on my head may be gone and it's been years since I lost my own "blond ambition." But thank you for helping a gay boy like me grow into a proud gay man. I couldn't have done it without you.



Crown Pharmacy

Specializing in providing world class HIV pharmaceutical care and FREE HIV testing

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

24401 Plymouth Rd., Redford, MI 48239
313-532-DRUG (3784) 313-532-3718 (fax)
crownpharmacy1@aol.com
HOURS: M-F 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Closed Weekends and Holidays

Low Cost Pet Prescriptions

BANK OF ANN ARBOR PRESENTS

47TH ANNUAL ANN ARBOR

FOLK FEST 2024

HILL AUDITORIUM | 7PM

FRIDAY, JAN. 26

Old Crow Medicine Show

Devon Gilfillian • Bailen • Darren Kiely

Sons of Mistro • Emcee Jeff Daniels

SATURDAY, JAN. 27

Emmylou Harris

Michigan Rattlers • Steve Poltz

Lizzie No • The Sea The Sea

Emcee Jeff Daniels

TICKETS ON SALE NOW @THEARK.ORG

Program Subject to Change

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

New ED Treatment will Get Your Swing Back

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

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

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

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

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

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



Dr. Paul Benson's

Be Well
Medical Center

1964 Eleven Mile Rd
Berkley, MI 40872

(248) 544-9300
doctorbewell.com

A REVOLUTIONARY TREATMENT FOR
MEN



Living Life before
Alma Duo.

Living Life with
Alma Duo.

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

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

Paul Benson, DO



Mark Bornstein, DO



Caleb Youngblood, PA-C, AAHIV-S



Mark Rosen, PA-C



Leon Bullough, NP-F



Marna Taylor, FNP-C



New Locations Meet Community Needs

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

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

Community Health Awareness Group (CHAG) | Living Well Clinic of Detroit • 313-963-3434

1300 W. Fort Street, Detroit, MI 48226 • www.chagdetroit.org