#BLACKLIVESMATTER

THE QUEERS BEHIND THE MOVEMENT

BLACK HISTORY MONTH MARKS ANOTHER YEAR OF STRUGGLES FOR LGBT MINORITIES • PAGES 24, 25

Photo Credit: L. Bryant/St. Louis American.
TRUMP PROMISES 'FORWARD MOTION' ON GAY RIGHTS; DO YOU TRUST HIM?

Alan Dorfman —
I don’t trust Trump on LGBTQ issues or any other issues. You know he lies, his lips are moving.

Don Sadler —
Can’t trust Trump, he has said too many things that are anti-GLBT!

Luimar Zibetti Garza —
“Yes...I do” - but not in the traditional marriage vows sense...

David Brakebill —
Rubio was born Catholic. That’s where this story ends. He was LDS (Mormon) and now attends an evangelical church of some sort. In other words a Heretic.

Carl Merchant —
What an idiot to talk on a late night show about him attending a foam party — everyone knows the foam parties were at GAY BARS so who was pulling his underwear down if he even had any one. And now he wants all LGBT’s to be treated like dogs — the past always catches up with you.

Pastor Protection Act Moves Forward in Florida House

Martin Talbot —
There are many secular and religious alternatives for the LGBTQ community! Organizations that are biased against the LGBTQ community will go into further decline!

Phil Lauderdale —
Invented fictional problem. Plenty of protections already in place for pastors and churches, but if they wish to open the door for regulation, let’s see what revenue streams we can find.

Steve Johnson —
Yes, indeed. Florida is a SOUTHERN STATE.

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The Gay Men’s Chorus of South Florida released final figures of their “Magic of Music” gala held last month at the Hyatt Pier 66 in Fort Lauderdale.

Chorus officials report the gala raised $50,680 and was attended by 370 people. The gala featured performances by chorus members under the direction of interim conductor Harold Dioquino, a brunch and auction.

Additionally, GMCSF announced the hiring of Michael A. Mendillo as director of development. Mendillo comes to the chorus from Shenandoah University Conservatory in Winchester, Va., where he earned a bachelor’s degree in vocal performance and a master’s in arts leadership and management.

“The chorus does so much for the community to change hearts and open minds through music,” Mendillo said. “I am so thrilled to be joining such a talented group of men.”

Up next for the chorus is a program by its elite ensemble group, Tropical Wave. On Feb. 20 at Sunshine Cathedral, 1480 S.W. 9th Street, Fort Lauderdale, Tropical Wave presents “What’s Love Got To Do With It?: A Valentine Musical Showcase.” Tickets ($25 to $40) remain for the 8 p.m. concert time. To order, visit gaymenschorusofsouthflorida.org or call 954-763-2266.

The 165-member chorus returns to perform “Love American Style” March 18 and 19 at Sunshine Cathedral. The program aims to tell the story of America through musical genres of classical, gospel, country, rock, disco, Broadway and more in a patriotic and romantic fashion.

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On Friday, February 12th, Scripps South Florida will hold a lecture titled, “HIV/AIDS Pursuing the Cure.” During this forum, attendees can learn about some of the most cutting-edge drug discoveries from top experts looking for a cure. It’s part of this year’s “What If” Discovery Lecture series looking at some of the most deadly diseases that touch all of our lives. Learn what is being done to turn treatments into cures and how you can help us realize the goal in our quest to make the world a healthier place to live.

Speakers include two scientists from Scripps Research Institute in Florida. One is Michael Farzan, Ph.D. He is the Vice Chairman and Professor Department of Immunology and Microbial Science at Scripps’ Florida Campus. He is leading the research on a multi-million dollar grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop a revolutionary HIV/AIDS alternative vaccine that has demonstrated great potential in animal models.

Farzan takes an innovative approach to combating HIV. His lab works by coaxing muscle cells into producing inhibitor proteins that block key sites on the virus’s surface used to attach and invade human immune cells—fooling the virus into thinking it is binding to a human cell.

Mario Stevenson, Ph.D., is also part of the discussion. He is Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases within the Department of Medicine. Stevenson is an internationally known HIV/AIDS researcher. He spent twelve years as the Director of the Center for AIDS Research at the University of Massachusetts. He has also been Adjunct Trustee for the American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR) as well as Chair of their Scientific Advisory Board for the past five years. In 2000 he was recognized by the National Institute of Health by receiving their Merit Award for his significant research efforts.

Susan Valente will also sit on the panel. She is an Associate Professor Department of Immunology and Microbial Science at Scripps’ Florida Campus. Valente’s research focuses on identifying the molecular interactions that occur within a host cell that are critical for viral replication, and on understanding mammalian genes that have evolved to block that replication. This research could lead to therapeutic targets for combating a number of viruses, including those that might be used as bioterrorism agents.

Jackson Kaguri is the featured special guest. He was born and raised in Uganda in the small village of Nyakagyezi. He was a young student from an early age and eventually went on to study at and graduate from Makerere University in Kampala. In 1996, Jackson’s life took an unexpected turn. His brother died of HIV/AIDS, leaving Jackson to care for his three children. One year later, his sister died of HIV/AIDS, also leaving behind a son. It was through his own personal experience this native Ugandan saw the plight of orphans in his village of Nyakagyezi. He took the $5,000 he had saved for a down payment on his own home and built the first Nyaka School. Jackson later became a visiting scholar at Columbia University where he studied Human Rights Advocacy. Over the years he has been involved extensively in international community efforts as a human rights advocate, fundraiser, and inspirational speaker.

Does a single molecule hold the cure for HIV?

Denise Royal
Equality Florida Awards West Palm Beach Mayor Jeri Muoio

Equality Florida (EqualityFlorida) Equality Florida will present the Voice for Equality Award to Jeri Muoio, Mayor of West Palm Beach, at the organization’s 3rd Annual Palm Beach Gala on Thursday, February 11 at 6 p.m. at Lake Pavilion, 101 South Flagler Drive, West Palm Beach.

The Voice for Equality Award is bestowed annually upon a person who, with courage, passion and unwavering commitment, moves Florida’s LGBT community closer to full equality. Last year’s recipients were Ruth Berman & Connie Kurtz.

Jeri Muoio was first elected Mayor of the City of West Palm Beach in 2011 and was reelected to the office of Mayor in March 2015. She previously served on the West Palm Beach City Commission for four years, having been reelected twice by voters. During her tenure, she has been a steadfast advocate for full equality. She was one of the first to join Mayors for the Freedom to Marry, and ensured that West Palm Beach filed an amicus brief supporting marriage equality.

In April 2015, Mayor Muoio was the first Florida mayor to ban city-related travel to Indiana, in light of that state’s discriminatory “Religious Freedom Restoration Act. She has consistently supported the LGBT community on important issues like adding comprehensive health benefits to domestic partnerships, adding gender identity and expression to the city’s equal opportunity ordinance and extending family leave benefits to domestic partners.

The event includes entertainment by Karl Koppertop, dancing to the tunes of DJ Jeffrey Michael, an open bar and culinary delights sponsored by Lyora’s, Grato, Nick & Johnnie’s, Rocco’s Tacos, Pistache and Paneterie. Complimentary valet parking is generously provided by Salon Margrit.

Tickets are $150 and may be purchased online at www.eqfl.org/palmbeachgala. Sponsorships are still available. Contact Row@eqfl.org 305-335-2102, or go to www.eqfl.org/palmbeachgala for complete details. SFGN

Groundbreaking Tax Guide Launched to Help LGBTQ Taxpayers

(TheTaskForce) The National LGBTQ Task Force has launched a groundbreaking income tax preparation guide for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people. The new taxpayer resource is intended to guide LGBTQ people with questions they might want to ask when sitting in front of their tax preparer or program. The first-of-its-kind guide translates complicated income tax form information in a way that is more understandable and accessible for LGBTQ people.

“Most LGBTQ people don’t know that you can deduct out of pocket costs for transition-related care including surgery. Many of us also don’t know that you may be able to claim a large credit for adoption related expenses,” said Meghan Maury, Criminal and Economic Justice Director, National LGBTQ Task Force.

The new publication is part of the organization’s “Queer Our Taxes” effort, a public education and advocacy campaign focused on securing economic justice for LGBTQ people. To learn more about Queer Our Taxes, and to download the new taxpayer guide, please visit: http://queerotourtaxes.org/SFGN

National Book Foundation Creates First After School Reading Club for LGBTQ Teens

(NationalBook.org) – On Friday, February 5th, the National Book Foundation launched BookUp LGBTQ, a new BookUp site for LGBTQ teens at the Hetrick-Martin Institute (HMI). Taught by Cave Canem fellow and poet T’ai Freedom Ford, BookUp LGBTQ will provide books and activities tailored to young LGBTQ readers. BookUp LGBTQ's students will choose from a booklist curated by today’s most influential LGBTQ authors, including Naomi Jackson, Garth Greenwell and 5 under 35 honoree Megan Kruse, and go on field trips to the New York Public Library’s Gay and Lesbian Collections, queer bookstores, and other historic and literary sites throughout the five boroughs.

Hetrick-Martin Institute (HMI) was founded in NYC in 1979, HMI provides comprehensive counseling and case management for nearly 2,000 LGBTQ youth and their families. By partnering with HMI, BookUp LGBTQ brings BookUp’s engaging programming to a new constituency that will benefit from seeing their own stories and history reflected in LGBTQ books and more.

“I am very excited about the partnership between HMI and the National Book Foundation,” says Juan Williams, HMI's Director of Academic Enrichment. “I believe that this opportunity will empower our readers and budding writers to build on their strengths and flourish in their communities.”

BookUp LGBTQ will be run in partnership with Lambda Literary, the oldest literary organization championing the works of LGBTQ writers and an honorable mention for the National Book Foundation’s Innovations in Reading Prize last year.

Created in 2007, BookUp has programs in New York, Texas, and Detroit, and has provided nearly 30,000 books free of charge to students to foster a lifelong love of reading. SFGN

Pete Nowalk to Receive LGBTQ Community Award

(Point) Point Foundation will honor producer, showrunner, and writer Pete Nowalk with the Point Leadership Award. Point presents its Leadership Award to an individual who has achieved prominence in their professional career and unequivocally supports the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community.

Nowalk, whose credits include creator and executive producer of ABC’s “How to Get Away with Murder” and producer credits for “Scandal” and “Grey’s Anatomy,” will receive the award April 11 at the Point Honors gala at the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue. Point Foundation, the nation’s largest scholarship-granting organization for LGBTQ students of merit, has used the grand setting of the library in recent years to present awards to Lena Dunham, Neal Baer, Jonathan Groff and Jeffrey Tambor.

“I am in awe of the support and scholarship the Point Foundation offers to LGBTQ students,” said Nowalk. “There’s no better way to empower our future leaders than by helping them get the education they deserve. I’m honored to receive this award and look forward to celebrating the scholars and mentors who have my deepest admiration.”

Additional celebrity participation for the April 11 Point Honors event will be announced in the coming weeks. Some of Point’s 85 current scholars and 227 alumni will be present at the event to share with the audience their inspiring stories about how they have overcome challenges to get their higher education degrees. Information about attending or supporting Point Honors is at www.pointfoundation.org/Honors2016. SFGN

Compiled by Jillian Melero
Ellie’s severe asthma attacks were triggered by secondhand smoke at work. She and her partner have to live with its effects forever. If you or someone you know wants free help to quit smoking, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

Ellie, Age 57
Her partner, Karen
Florida

#CDCTips
Georgia House Panel Backs 'Pastor Protection' Legislation

(AP) Georgia law doesn't require religious officials to perform same-sex marriages, and a bill making that clear is moving through the Georgia House.

The “Pastor Protection Act,” the first of several proposed religious exemptions for opponents of the marriages to gain any traction this year, won approval Thursday in a House Judiciary subcommittee and was sent on for a full committee vote.

At least 8 bills filed by lawmakers would grant a variety of exemptions for people who object to same-sex marriage - including one measure allowing private business to refuse participation in a same-sex wedding ceremony.

The measure approved by a subcommittee Thursday also would allow religious organizations to prevent property from being used for purposes "objectionable" to religious beliefs.

Gay-rights supporters question that portion of the bill, arguing it could let nonprofits connected to churches limit access to housing, food pantries or other services but continue to receive federal or state tax dollars without meeting nondiscrimination requirements.

Georgia’s business community has warned that any legislation viewed as discriminatory could result in economic backlash - like the social-media driven boycotts that followed Indiana's 2015 passage of a religious freedom law. SFGN

Mich. Senate OKs Bill Banning Anal Sex, Punishable By Up to 15 Years

(EDGE) Despite the Supreme Court’s landmark 2013 ruling on Lawrence v. Texas, which banned sodomy laws, the Michigan Senate passed a bill Thursday reaffirming the state’s unconstitutional ban on anal sex, the New Civil Rights Movement reports.

Senate Bill 219 would make acts of sodomy a felony and punishable by up to 15 years in prison. The measure was part of a package of animal protection bills that would prohibit animal abusers from adopting pets. One of the clauses, however, has some peculiar language, and is aimed towards Michigan’s penal code on bestiality and sodomy, which are conflated in the state.

“A person who commits the abominable and detestable crime against nature with mankind or with any animal is guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for no more than 15 years,” the measure reads.

The bill also proposes that if the person is already a sex offender, then they could be sentenced to life in prison, The New Civil Rights Movement reports.

The Michigan House is expected to consider the bill early this week.

Twelve states still have laws banning sodomy, despite the high court’s ruling. SFGN

Arkansas Supreme Court Race Pits Judge vs Little Rock Lawyer

(AP) The race for an open seat on the Arkansas Supreme Court pits a state judge and ex-lawmaker who once advocated banning gays and lesbians from fostering and adopting children against a Little Rock lawyer who touts his lack of political experience as an asset.

Circuit Judge Shawn Womack and attorney Clark Mason are running in the March 1 judicial election for the seat held by retiring Associate Justice Paul Danielson. The two are running after the court’s unusually public split over its handling of a gay marriage case.

Womack, 43, has served as a circuit judge in the 14th Judicial District in north Arkansas since 2009. Before that, he served four years in the state House and six in the state Senate as a Republican. Though he's running for a non-partisan post, Womack points to his time in the Legislature as a sign that he’ll respect the role of the state’s highest court.

When he was in the state Senate, Womack introduced legislation in 2007 to ban gays and lesbians from fostering or adopting children, a move that passed the Senate but failed before a House committee. His proposal was in response to the state Supreme Court in 2006 striking down a state regulation banning gays and lesbians from being foster parents. Voters approved a similar restriction in 2008, which the court also struck down.

Mason, 56, has practiced for 32 years as an attorney in Little Rock and has never run for public office before.

"Not being a partisan politician, having never run for office, having clearly the most experience and certainly the broadest experience in the race and the fact that I am not beholden to any special interest whatsoever, I have no agenda," Mason said. SFGN

Debate Continues Over Tenn. High School’s Gay-Straight Alliance

(AP) Supporters and critics of Franklin County High School’s Gay-Straight Alliance have picked the county school board’s upcoming meeting to discuss the organization.

The Daily News Journal reports the establishment of the group, which meets to talk about issues among gay and heterosexual students at the school, has generated debate in the community about its intent and necessity.

A social media page created last month called for school board members to move the club off campus.

Franklin County Schools Director Amie Lonas says the organization, which was created to promote tolerance and acceptance, followed the proper procedure to establish the club. The group was granted approval to form by school officials in December.

Lonas says the board is not set to consider any action about the group at Monday’s meeting. SFGN
India's Supreme Court Reconsiders Decriminalizing Homosexuality

(EDGE) LGBT rights activists in India earned a big legal success this week after the country’s Supreme Court agreed to reconsider a campaign urging the high court to decriminalize homosexuality, GlobalPost reports.

"We were so scared, none of us could sleep last night," Ramachandran, one of the activists outside the Supreme Court building Tuesday, told GlobalPost.

The India Supreme Court took just five minutes to hear the petition against the high court’s 2013 decision to re-criminalize gay sex. That ruling came four years after a lower court declared it legal.

Gay rights activists and supporters fought hard against the 2009 Delhi High Court ruling that Section 377 of India Penal Code, which criminalizes "carnal intercourse against the order of nature," violated India’s constitution, GlobalPost reports. When the country’s Supreme Court overruled the judgement, activists had to restart their fight for equality, fighting against Section 377, a law from colonial times.

GlobalPost notes India’s current government is ruled by right-wing Hindu movements. Nevertheless, gay rights activists are optimistic.

"This is a matter of equality and rights, it is not just about sex," Vimal Bhai, an activist with the National Alliance of People’s Movements told the newspaper.

"If 377 is abolished, nobody is going to come out and force people to be gay. Decriminalization will actually save Indian families, because gay men and women will no longer be forced into unhappy marriages that harm the straight spouse, too." SFGN

New UN Stamps Support Gay Rights

(AP) The United Nations Postal Administration on Thursday released six new postage stamps promoting equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

The colorfully designed stamps by artist and UNPA art director Sergio Baradat are also meant to celebrate the diversity of the gay community and marks the first time the global body’s post office has issued stamps with an LGBT theme.

The stamps were unveiled in a ceremony at the U.N. General Assembly building that included a performance by the New York Gay Men’s Chorus.

"We need to change attitudes to one of acceptance," said Stephen Cutts, U.N. Assistant Secretary-General for the Department of Management.

The stamps support the U.N. human rights office’s Free & Equal campaign, which aims to promote fair treatment of the LGBT community.

Charles Radcliffe, chief of the global issues section of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, said there have been advances in human rights for members of the LGBT community, but more must be done because hate crimes are still too common and homosexuality is still criminalized in some countries.

The first United Nations stamps were issued in U.S. dollar denominations on United Nations Day, Oct. 24, 1951. Besides human rights, stamp themes have included peace, the environment and endangered species. SFGN
A federal judge has issued a permanent injunction striking down Nebraska’s now-negated ban on gay marriage and civil unions. The injunction issued Tuesday by U.S. District Court Judge Joseph Bataillon was largely a formality, as a Supreme Court ruling in late June legalized gay marriage across the county. Bataillon’s injunction orders state officials to treat same-sex couples the same as different-sex couples in everything from processing marriage certificates to issuing birth certificates.

State attorneys had argued that the injunction was not necessary, because the state has complied with the Supreme Court’s ruling since it was issued. But several same-sex couples who challenged the state’s ban in 2014 argued that the state’s attempt last year to exclude same-sex spouses on their children’s birth certificates showed that the injunction was necessary.

Two North Carolina lawmakers and a magistrate have asked a federal court to let them defend a religious exemption law involving civil marriages challenged as discriminatory against gays. They largely blame their request on Attorney General Roy Cooper, who is personally opposed to the law but whose office represents the state in the litigation.

Senate leader Phil Berger, House Speaker Tim Moore and Alexander County Magistrate Brenda Bumgarner filed motions this week to intervene in the lawsuit as additional defendants, represented by private attorneys. They contend that Cooper cannot adequately defend a law that he is known to personally oppose.

Three couples sued in December over the law the General Assembly passed last year that allows local magistrates, who can preside over marriages, to opt out of performing all marriages if they have a “sincerely held religious objection.” The law and litigation also covers assistant and deputy registers of deeds who issue marriage licenses. Department of Justice spokeswoman Noelle Talley said the agency, which Cooper heads, has effectively defended several laws that the attorney general himself opposes personally.

"It’s a waste of taxpayer dollars for legislators to pay outside lawyers to do the work our attorneys are already doing defending the state in this case," Talley wrote Friday by email. State attorneys filed their own motion late Friday asking the lawsuit be dismissed.

The “pastor protection act” aimed at preventing lawsuits against churches or preachers for refusing to perform same-sex marriages is ready for a vote on the Florida House floor, where it’s likely to pass.

The House Judiciary Committee approved the measure after lengthy debate Thursday. That was the final committee stop for the bill in the House. It still faces two more Senate committee hearings before it can go to a floor vote there.

The bill passed on a near-party line vote in the committee. Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda of Tallahassee was the only Democrat voting in favor.

Nearly 40 pastors and gay rights activists spoke on the bill. Most of the clergymen favored the bill but several representing large, mainstream denominations opposed it, saying it’s not needed.
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outofthecloset.org
Florida Considers Anti-Discrimination Bill for LGBT Rights

(AP) When it comes to LGBT issues, Florida’s Republican lawmakers are known more for trying to keep transgender people out of bathrooms, protect pastors from marrying same-sex couples and seek exemptions for private adoption agencies who don’t want to place children with gay and lesbian couples.

But this year, some Republican lawmakers are backing a bill that would give lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender residents the protection against discrimination.

“It’s a breakthrough for the South. It’s of huge significance that a Southern state -- the third largest in the country -- is taking this up. It is the first time that a Southern legislature will be contemplating passage of a bill that affirms rights, not takes them away,” said Nadine Smith, CEO of Equality Florida.

In a sign that Republican attitudes on LGBT issues are shifting, the Senate Judiciary Committee will consider the bill during a meeting Monday. Similar measures have been filed for about a decade and neither chamber of the Republican-dominated Legislature has given it a hearing until now.

Instead, expansion of gay rights such as same-sex marriage and allowing gay and lesbian couples to adopt children has been achieved through the courts.

It’s not that Republicans as a whole have suddenly become gay friendly. Far from it. While the anti-discrimination bill would be the most far-reaching gay rights legislation enacted in Florida, there is a Republican-sponsored bill that would allow health care providers and hospitals to refuse treatment of gays based on religious beliefs. The same bill would allow any individual to refuse service to gay customers based on their personal religious beliefs. And there are House and Senate bills that would change Florida law to say churches can’t be forced to marry same-sex couples.

“You have my bill on one side, and you have their bill(s) on the other side,” said Republican Rep. Holly Raschein, the House sponsor of the anti-discrimination bill, which has nine Republican co-sponsors. "Sometimes you take two steps forward, three steps back, but that's all part of the battle."

While the bill prohibits any discrimination against the LGBT community, supporters are focused on its economic impact. The bill is being called the “Competitive Workforce Act” and a group running a campaign to promote it is backed by AT&T, Wells Fargo, Marriott and Carnival Corporation. The argument is that Florida will be able to attract corporations that provide high-paying, high-skilled jobs and the workforce to fill them if it has clear anti-discrimination laws.

"Republicans are able to see that this is not only the thing to do, but it’s also the right thing to do from a competitive standpoint," said Patrick Slevin, the campaign manager for Florida Businesses for a Competitive Workforce. "It's not just the employees that we're trying to recruit, it's also their families. When they're looking at job offers across the country, it's going to be taxes, it's going to be education, it's going to be safety and it's also going to be diversity." SFGN
NEWS NATIONAL

New York Moves to Halt 'Conversion Therapy' for Youths

Jennifer Peltz

(AP) New York is taking steps to stop therapists from trying to change young people's sexual orientation, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Saturday, joining a number of states that have acted against what’s known as gay conversion therapy.

The Democratic governor’s move, announced Saturday, comes as gay rights advocates have campaigned state by state with mixed results to try to ban a practice that major mental health organizations have repudiated.

Using executive power in a state where legislative bids to ban the therapy have stalled, Cuomo announced planned regulations that would bar insurance coverage for the therapy for minors and prohibit mental health facilities under state Office of Mental Health jurisdiction from offering it to minors.

"Conversion therapy is a hateful and fundamentally flawed practice" that punishes people "for simply being who they are," Cuomo said in a statement.

It’s unclear how prevalent the practice is in New York. Cuomo’s office didn’t immediately respond to inquiries Saturday; nor did a handful of New York mental health organizations. A spokeswoman for the New York Health Plan Association, an insurers’ group, was unsure.

Insurers will wonder whether the new regulations will obligate them to investigate whether any given mental health visit was for conversion therapy, Cuomo said in a statement.

It’s unclear how prevalent the practice is in New York. Cuomo’s office didn’t immediately respond to inquiries Saturday; nor did a handful of New York mental health organizations. A spokeswoman for the New York Health Plan Association, an insurers’ group, was unsure.

Nationwide, there are no firm figures on the extent of conversion therapy. But proponents and critics have said it is not rare for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youths to undergo some sort of program aimed at changing their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

The American Psychological Association and other mental health groups say conversion therapy, sometimes called reparative therapy, wrongly treats being gay as a mental illness and may make young people feel ashamed, anxious and depressed. Democratic President Barack Obama’s administration called last year for an end to the practice.

Chad Griffin, president of the gay rights group Human Rights Campaign, commended Cuomo’s action.

"No young person should be coerced or subjected to this dangerous so-called therapy," Griffin said in a statement.

Cuomo was presented with the group’s National Equality Award on Saturday night and told an audience his action “rejected fundamentally the absurd notion that being gay is a psychiatric disorder.”

But supporters of the therapy say prohibiting it limits treatment options and undermines religious liberty.

"Minors "should have access to professionally based, ethically directed care that assesses, clarifies and aligns with their deeply-held values, faith and life goals," Carrie Gordon Earll, the public policy vice president of the conservative Christian ministry Focus on the Family, said by email Saturday. She said the group opposes efforts like New York’s.

California, Oregon, Illinois, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and Cincinnati have outlawed the practice. But efforts to ban it have fallen short in several other places, including Colorado, Nevada and Iowa.

In New York, a ban has passed the Democrat-controlled state Assembly twice. But it has gotten nowhere in the Republican-led Senate.

The new regulations wouldn’t apply to counseling that discusses but doesn’t try to change sexual orientation or gender identity. 8FGN
(EDGE) Toymaker Mattel announced they will make a special Barbie Doll representing Pittsford native and former U.S. soccer star Abby Wambach. The doll is made in her likeness, and will be wearing her white Team USA uniform and No. 20 jersey. “This proves we are really getting somewhere,” Wambach, 35, said about the stereotype-busting toy, in a recent article in the Democrat and Chronicle.

Wambach was on hand when they revealed the doll at The Makers Conference, which brings together organizations and educational institutions to showcase and discuss successful and exceptional women and female leaders. Wambach, who retired as a player last December after one of the most decorated careers in soccer history, talked about the doll. She is the all-time leading scorer among men and women in soccer history.

“You guys may not believe this but I was a Barbie kid, like for real. I'm not just saying that,” said the two-time Olympic champion, 2012 FIFA World Player of the Year and member of last year's World Cup winning team. “When I told my mom (Judy) two days ago that this was happening she said, ‘Oh my gosh! Can you get like a case of those things?’”

(SFGN) Alex Anders, a contributor to the YouTube Channel “Bisexual Real Talk” recently posted a video calling for bisexuals to leave the LGBT community in response to internal discrimination in the form of biphobia and bi erasure.

Citing two studies from the “Journal of Bisexuality,” Anders says the lack of support within the LGBT community, can be far more detrimental to those seeking help and acceptance, than the discrimination which is often expected outside of the community.

Anders bases his theory on another study which shows that suicide rates among middle aged white men with a high school diploma or lower, are steadily increasing versus the suicide rates among men of color. According to Anders, the study determines the reason is that white males, have grown up with a certain amount of privilege, and when they feel they are not being granted that privilege, they become more distraught compared to men of color, who expect to be at a disadvantage. SFGN
HURTFUL COMMENT PROMPTS TRANS GIRL SCOUT TO SELL THOUSANDS OF COOKIES

(EDGE) A 9-year-old Illinois transgender Girl Scout who is proving that success is the best form of revenge. Stormi (her last name has been withheld by her parents) was on a tear selling boxes of cookies for her Girl Scout troop.

Her winning streak was put on hold when she knocked on a door three blocks from her home. After Stormi delivered her Girl Scout cookie pitch, the man at the door told her: “Nobody wants to buy cookies from a boy in a dress.”

Stormi took her mission to the Internet. Using the Girl Scouts’ online platform Digital Cookie, she set up her online store. Meanwhile, her foster mother shared Stormi’s story in an online forum for parents with transgender kids.

Stormi’s story went viral and by Thursday she sold over 3,000 boxes of cookies from customers around the globe who were moved by her bravery.

“I want kids like me to know they are perfect just the way they are,” Stormi said. “There are people all over the world that love you. Never give up because it does get better.”

(SFGN) The Huffington Post recently changed the name of its “Gay Voices” section, to “Queer Voices,” a move barely noticed by some and deeply painful to others, NewNowNext reports.

“Yes, the word is painful. It was a point driven home to me with fists and kicks. It was the word vomited at me by bullies at school. It was one of the words, along with “faggot” and “sissy” that the gym coaches threw at us. If you didn’t want to put on boxing gloves and hit another kid in the face you were a fag. You were queer. If someone was queer it was okay to inflict pain and suffering on them because of it. That message came from staff at school, from coaches, house parents, and the older boys. It was pervasive and universal. Let’s all play smear the queer,” wrote James Peron, a contributor who resigned from the site over the issue.

However the argument has been made many that the one-time slur has since been reclaimed by the LGBT community, and may even be more inclusive than the existing acronym.

“It’s hard for me to put into words what it means for me to see “queer” actualized and solidified as a way to talk about the vast spectrum of identities and experiences that we try to elevate on this site. However, I can say that it is something truly spectacular,” wrote Queer Voices Deputy Editor James Michael Nichols. SFGN

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New animal testing for lubricants required by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration can and should be replaced by non-animal methods, PETA and a lubricant company have shown. The problem is getting the FDA to accept the alternatives.

As of December 31, lubricant manufacturers have been required by the FDA to conduct testing on their products. The federal agency’s required tests include injecting guinea pigs and rabbits with the lubricant to look for evidence of skin allergy and vaginal irritation—even though animals and humans have very different physiologies.

The good news is that human cells can replace animals in some of these experiments and PETA scientists have been working with lubricant companies, including Oregon-based Good Clean Love, to persuade the FDA.

PETA told Good Clean Love about a non-animal replacement for one experiment, and the company was happy to use it. Even though the FDA still insisted that it use animals, Good Clean Love conducted the non-animal test as well and shared the results with FDA. Results of the non-animal test demonstrated that this approach should be accepted by the FDA in place of using animals.

“Good Clean Love, in partnership with PETA, has proven that non-animal methods are not just good for animals; they are also good science. We will work with any company that has the tenacity and vision to make their products cruelty-free,” says PETA Vice President of Regulatory Testing, Jessica Sandler.

Wendy Strgar, CEO and founder of Good Clean Love says, “I never wanted to test on animals and I’m angry that I was forced to do it. And, in the end, animal testing doesn’t even tell us about toxicity.”

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**THE FEDERAL AGENCY’S REQUIRED TESTS INCLUDE INJECTING GUINEA PIGS AND RABBITS WITH THE LUBRICANT**
Gay Rags
A Survey of LGBT Periodicals

WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

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Daniel Sohn, an openly gay man, has withdrawn his candidacy for the Dania Beach City Commission. In a telephone interview with SFGN Monday evening, Sohn cited personal reasons for leaving the race. “I am moving to Palm Beach County to be with my partner, Ross, who I love very much and I am in the process of transitioning my life there,” Sohn said.

In leaving the Dania Beach race, Sohn is throwing his support behind the candidacy of Tamara James, a retired professional basketball player and University of Miami graduate. “Tamara shares my values and I am confident she will fight incompetency and corruption in Broward’s first city,” Sohn said.

In Palm Beach County, Sohn said he intends to remain active in the public arena. He has filed papers to run for a supervisor position on the Palm Beach Soil & Water Conservation District. The county-wide position is a four-year term and receives zero monetary compensation. “I’m pro-environment and pro-conservation,” Sohn said. “This position is important as it provides recommendations to the county commission on environmental and conservation needs.”

If elected, Sohn said he intends to educate the public about soil and water issues by implementing school programs that enlighten students as to the importance of clean water and sustainable energy. As a supervisor, Sohn said he would work with the United States Department of Agriculture to protect endangered species in their habitat. “Increasing community involvement is key,” Sohn said. SFGN
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Glen Weinzimer, the founder of SMART ride, is being honored by the World AIDS Museum at a cocktail party next week in Fort Lauderdale.

The museum is presenting Weinzimer with its 2016 Humanitarian Award at the exclusive Las Olas home of Eindar Khant and Dixin Gonzalez. Weinzimer is fresh off his 12th SMART ride, the annual cycling event from Miami to Key West which raises money for HIV services. The 2015 ride saw 383 people participate and raised more than $967,000.

For advance tickets ($50 per person), call the World AIDS Museum at 954-390-0550.

Meanwhile, politically, HIV/AIDS often falls on the margins of the public narrative. The Gay Men’s Health Crisis announced last week none of the Republican candidates in the U.S. Presidential election answered its survey on how they plan to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and Martin O’Malley, however, did respond to the survey.

“As while we are extremely disappointed that not a single Republican candidate submitted a response to the presidential survey on HIV and AIDS, we are heartened that those who did respond have thoughtful plans on how to end the epidemic,” said GMHC Chief Executive Officer Kelsey Louie.

Elsewhere, in Tallahassee, local AIDS activist Michael Rajner testified recently against the confirmation of John Armstrong as Florida’s Surgeon General and head of the Department of Health. Rajner said Armstrong’s leadership style had “cloaked the Sunshine State in darkness” and done little to reduce the number of HIV/AIDS cases.

As SFGN went to press Tuesday night, results from the New Hampshire primary were still elusive. For complete election coverage, visit www.sfgn.com

As New Hampshire voters cast their ballots Tuesday, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont and billionaire businessman Donald J. Trump both led in the polls.

On the Republican side, Trump held a large lead in the polls and seemed to be having fun at his rivals’ expense. On Sunday, at a rally on the campus of Plymouth State University, Trump told the crowd, “If you are not going to vote for me, then just don’t vote” before exiting to the Beatles’ anthem “Revolution.”

Two days later, Trump repeated the word “pussy” — much to the riot of his followers — in describing his chief rival, U.S. Senator Ted Cruz of Texas.

Trump also accused Cruz of deploying dirty tricks in Iowa. The Cruz campaign, Trump claims, circulated rumors that Ben Carson had dropped out of the race, thus propelling Cruz to victory.

“That’s because you got Ben Carson’s votes,” Trump said at the Republican debate last week implying that is why Cruz won in Iowa. Cruz apologized to Carson for any confusion and tried to lay blame on CNN.

Meanwhile, third place Iowa finisher Marco Rubio has been under attack from New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, both of whom are making the argument that the freshman U.S. Senator from Florida is not ready to serve in a Presidential capacity.

“You have not been involved in a consequential decision where you had to be accountable, you just simply haven’t,” Christie told Rubio at Saturday night’s debate.

At the debate, Rubio reiterated his belief that marriage should be between one man and one woman, a position that earned him the ire of a New Hampshire business owner during an impromptu meeting Monday.

“Why do you want to put me back in the closet?,” asked Timothy Kierstead, a married gay man, when Rubio approached him at the Puritan Backroom diner in Manchester, N.H.

Rubio’s rehearsed talking points became apparent during the New Hampshire campaign as he was caught repeating lines by Christie and others. In the final days of the New Hampshire campaign, activists dressed as robots followed Rubio to events, shouting “robot!, robot!”

On the Democratic side, tensions simmered too as former U.S. President Bill Clinton accused the Sanders campaign of being “inaccurate” in their tactics and Hillary herself asked Sanders to end the “smears.”

Closer to home on Tuesday, Clinton’s campaign issued a press release backing the Florida Competitive Workforce Act. The proposed legislation, currently sitting in a senate committee hearing in Tallahassee, seeks to provide protections for LGBT people in the workplace, housing and public accommodations.

“LGBT Floridians deserve to live their life free of discrimination,” Clinton said in a statement.

From New Hampshire, Democrats head to Nevada to caucus, while Republicans travel to South Carolina for a primary election. Both contests are scheduled for Feb. 20.
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Latinos Salud, a non-profit agency that offers free HIV and STD testing, prevention education, outreach, and linkage services in Broward and Miami-Dade Counties, announces the opening of its new center in Kendall, funded in large part with a two-year grant totaling $160,000 from Health Foundation of South Florida.

Latinos Salud, which expanded from Broward to Miami Beach in 2014, reports a record number of new HIV diagnoses in Miami-Dade. According to Latinos Salud’s Executive Director, Stephen Fallon, PhD., “Many of the gay Latino residents we diagnose face barriers to accessing health services and as a result, gay Latinos in Miami-Dade live only about half as long as their non-minority peers. We want to remedy that.” He added, “Our new location enables us to reach more people, including those who didn’t know that they qualified for medical care, those who feared their status would be revealed to employers, and who simply misunderstood what their diagnosis means.”

Before choosing to expand to the southwest, the agency conducted a field and on-line survey of Miami Latino gay and bisexual men, which found that 74% of respondents reported rarely or never seeing a testing van in the zip code where they live, and 36% reported no convenient access to any HIV or STD testing or prevention services. Latinos Salud identified Kendall, Hialeah, Sunset, and Westchester/Sweetwater as the specific areas most in need of preventive education and screening services.

“Our outreach and linkage specialists not only speak the language, but also reflect the culture of our clients. Their mission is to translate, represent, advocate, and provide ongoing support to clients at risk of or infected with HIV,” said Latinos Salud’s Director of Health Programs Rafaelé Narváez. Narváez said that the new location will blend in-office and community-based outreach services. “Staff will perform late night outreach and education every week, offer testing in mobile HIV testing vehicles, and also make regular deliveries to keep businesses stocked up with free condoms and information packets.”

Latinos Salud’s new location, 9580 SW 107th Avenue in Kendall, is now open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. All free services are described on the agency’s website at LatinosSalud.org. At other times, staff will be out in the field, taking services to gay Latinos and other men living with HIV throughout Miami-Dade County.

Data: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that Miami-Dade County ranks first in the nation for its rate of new HIV infections, and that the majority of these new infections are occurring amongst Latino gay/bisexual men. With this new location, Latinos Salud will reach more people in need of vital services. More than 43,738 residents in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties are living with HIV/AIDS. Miami-Dade’s population is 65% Latino. Half of Miami-Dade’s population is foreign born, and 60% speak Spanish at home.
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After the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting and death of Trayvon Martin, Alicia Garza wrote a short, but history-making statement in social media -- seeing it, her friend Patrisse Cullors turned it into a hashtag, which went viral.

#BlackLivesMatter

Since then, the movement has spread across the country, bringing together activists of all ages and races. Garza, Cullors, and their friend Opal Tometi are credited as the founders of the Black Lives Matter movement.

“I thought, wow, we’re onto something and obviously this wasn’t just something that myself, Alicia, and Opal felt,” Cullors said.

Cullors is the founder and a board member of Los Angeles’ Dignity and Power Now and the director for truth and reinvestment at the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights.

Many people are surprised to hear that the founders of BLM not only are women, but that two identify as queer. Cullors said that the LGBT community has been a large part of the movement, and many LGBT people have stepped up in their neighborhoods to spread the word of equality.

“We’re not a monolithic group,” Cullors said of black people. “We come in different shades and different sizes, we have different sexual orientations, different gender identities, different gender expressions. We are children, we are adults, we are teenagers.”

“To try to talk about LGBT people and black people as separate entities is a mistake and we have to talk about the intersections in which people live,” she continued.

Since BLM got its start, the “Say Her Name” campaign has urged people to not ignore the murders of black transgender women. Many other variations have since popped up as well including #GayLivesMatter and #BlackTransLivesMatter.

According to an extensive report by BuzzFeed News, 24 transgender women were killed from November 2014 to
November 2015, double the previous year's numbers. Seventeen of them were black.

Naomi Parker is an outspoken activist who has lived in Wilton Manors for 23 years, including running for Wilton Manors commissioner.

“It was started about black lives mattering in terms of not being visible,” she said of the movement. “If you’re looking through that lens of only one ethnicity or that lens of just one race, then you don’t really see anybody.”

Protesters and activists have furthered the movement in Ferguson, MO and Baltimore, MD, but recently the movement hit home in South Florida with the death of Corey Jones, a black musician who was killed in Palm Beach Gardens in October 2015.

Although details are not clear, according to reports, Jones was driving home from a late gig when his car broke down on I-95. As he waited for his band mate to get help, an off duty officer pulled over, thinking he had come across an abandoned van. It’s believed that Jones was alarmed and pulled out his gun, which he owned legally. The officer shot at him six times, hitting him three times, and Jones’s body was found 80 to 100 feet from his car, according to CBS News.

The officer who shot and killed Jones was put on administrative leave, then fired.

It just really hits home because you think you’re driving home late at night... we’re coming home late from gigs, that could easily be one of us,” said Valerie Tyson, a local musician.

Because she is well known within the musician community, and is a sort of “elder statesman” to younger musicians, she tries to keep a positive tone on her social media and encourages young people to respect themselves and be kind to one another.

“We’ve got to do better than this. This is not how we do things,” Tyson said. “Every time you turn on the TV, someone is getting gunned down, some person is losing their life, and nine times out of 10 over nothing. Over nothing. As a human being, I hurt for them.”

Tyson attended a rally honoring Jones, and was moved by the fact that a variety of people attended.

Cullors said that many people have been confused about why there has been such a focus on black lives, but feels that “when we really deal with issues of black people, inside this country and outside the country, we will make the rest of this country better.”

Parker points out, “All lives matter. But black lives matter, women’s lives matter differently — not better, I’m just saying differently — in the sense that when you have a factor of invisibility that’s why it takes on a different light.”

When asked what advice she would give to local South Florida activists, Cullors said: keep going.

“It’s important to know that myself and Alicia Garza and I are out, queer women and that when we joined this movement, especially the movement for black lives, we just said ‘Black Lives Matter.’ There weren’t many spaces for black people to come as our whole selves, especially with our sexual orientation. It’s critical that we see that there’s an evolution in this current civil rights movement.” SFGN
I have been waxing confused lately about the use of the term “sodomized” when referring to men who have been raped. It is on my mind because of the recent news that David Ritcheson, a young Mexican-American who was violently raped in 2006, jumped to his death on July 1st from the deck of a cruise ship. Ritcheson was raped with a plastic pole. He required two dozen surgeries to correct the damage done to his body from the violent episode.

Without minimizing the gravity of the loss of this young man, I constantly worry about the use of the term “sodomize” instead of “rape” when men are the victim of sexual assault.

Rape is a horrible thing. Of course it is not about sex, it is about power and control and exerting dominance over someone. It is also about humiliation. The universal way for men to humiliate other men is to call them a queer or treat them like one. Rape is a tool of choice for men in many settings, including prison, to solidify their masculinity and dominance in the pecking order of any social group.

What would possess someone, or a group of people, to rape someone with a pole? It boggles the mind. The violence and savagery in rape is very, very different from sodomy. Sodomy has many definitions but most people understand it to be anal sex. Anal sex is not rape. By two men making love and engaging in anal sex, they are not raping or hurting each other. That is my problem with the double standard for the term “sodomize.”

Every time the media or law enforcement uses the term “sodomize” they are really talking about rape. The more we allow that term to be used and seen as a violent act of aggression the more we allow society to define consensual anal sex as some kind of horrible thing that happens to you. Here is my point. Being sodomized can be consensual. Being raped cannot.

Rape can occur orally, anally, vaginally and in many other ways. I think the ambivalence about the use of the term “sodomize” comes from the fact that most people actually believe that being on the receiving end of sodomy must be an unpleasant thing, so folks have acquiesced to the term and they just don’t want to talk about it anymore.

I propose that when we talk about sexual assault, we talk about what really happened, and why that behavior is bad. I am not an expert in sexual assault or rape, but I have dealt with enough clients over the years to have some competency on this issue. Rape is a term people understand. Rape has a definition. Rape survivors have a network of therapists, shelters and non-profit agencies to rely on. There is more data, research, evidence and resources for survivors of rape. But my hunch is there is very little in the field of “sodomized.”

I also believe there is a double standard based on sex. I believe that when a woman is raped, it is classified as rape — even if she was anally raped. But if a man was anally raped, he was sodomized. What if these survivors and their families don’t see being “sodomized” the same as they see rape?

If they don’t see themselves as the victims of rape, because we are not calling it rape, won’t it interfere with the healing process and the effective delivery of competent counseling services? Are we averse to admitting that men get raped, leading us to use a completely different term for what it really is?

In my mind there is little difference between being raped with an object or by a person — in terms of what word we use. But I do fear that the sole use of the term “sodomize” when referring to anal rape is misleading, harmful and further marginalizes consensual anal sex and gay people as a whole.

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WHO'S TO BLAME FOR SEXUALLY DEFORMED PEOPLE?

The priests aren’t the problem, the Church’s teachings are the real culprit

Brian McNaught

Whether or not my good friend, Paul Shanley, dies in prison, the global sex scandal in the Catholic Church, and in other denominations, will never be over until the Church changes its sexual ethics and publicly apologizes for improperly molding the minds and hearts of its sexually abusive and abused priests, nuns, religious brothers, and lay people. That means everyone raised Catholic.

Indoctrinated since birth with the message that having sexual thoughts and feelings, and expressing yourself sexually with yourself or with another (before heterosexual marriage), are gravely sinful, and grounds for spending eternity in hell, Roman Catholics are transformed into monsters, deviants, and repressed, immature, ignorant, and sexually non-functioning individuals.

The most damaged were people like me, who grew up in a sexually-repressed, Irish Catholic family, and who went to Catholic schools for sixteen years. Priests, such as Paul Shanley’s classmates, entered the seminary and a life of celibacy after eighth grade, at age 14. Most nuns and brothers entered the religious life of chastity after high school, at age 18.

Was it nobody’s fault that we became among the most sex-negative and sexually-obsessed people in the world? It was as if the Church took a litter of puppies and trained them to be afraid of having sex-related abuse of children and adults, sex-related alcoholism, drug abuse, and suicide, and sex-related emotional breakdowns.

Paul Shanley was one of those sexually damaged people, but he fought hard against the messages and training he received. He preached tolerance and acceptance of those condemned by the Church. He started a ministry to street kids, runaways, hustlers, drug addicts, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender children.

He successfully lobbied to get himself appointed as the first official minister of the Church to LGBT people. His message was that gay is good, bi is good, and straight is good. He was frequently featured in the Boston Globe, and on radio and television. He was handsome, masculine, very intelligent, and defiant of authority, be it Church or State. He dared to go where no other priest was willing to step, including a meeting of men who claimed to be lovers of boys. Having worked extensively with gay hustlers, Paul felt he had a relevant perspective to offer.

Paul is 85, and may never leave prison despite more than a decade of incarceration for a crime he couldn’t have committed. He was no saint, but he’s not a pedophile. Yet, with his poor health, and trembling hands, he is the Sacrificial Lamb of both the Catholic Church in Boston, which will oppose his release until his death, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which wants to look tough on the crimes of the Catholic Church. He is in protective custody because of the witch-hunt created by the Boston Globe’s Spotlight team, canonized in the film Spotlight. The hysteria created by the constant drumbeat of the media resulted in the beating to death of an old, feeble priest in prison, prior to Paul’s incarceration.

Paul Shanley’s former boss, Cardinal Bernard Law, instead of being in prison for shuffling abusive priests from parish to parish, fled to Rome where he has a cushy job in the Vatican at a prestigious parish. The current head of the flock in Boston has refused for 10 years to meet with Paul in prison. Nor has any other diocesan priest, all former friends and classmates of Paul, visited him.

According to Paul, the District Attorney, Martha Coakley, offered him a plea deal just prior to the trial. If he would plead guilty to a lesser charge than raping a six-year-old every Sunday for several years, he wouldn’t spend any time in jail. He said, “no,” because he was innocent and didn’t want to be listed as a child molester.

There was no evidence he committed the crime, only the “recovered memory” of a very disturbed man, who after reading the Spotlight’s stories on big money paid to victims by the Church, claimed that he just remembered that 40 years ago he was molested by Fr. Shanley. But the jury wanted to find the priest, whom the Spotlight team repeatedly focused on prior to the trial, guilty of something. So, the man featured in People magazine as the hippie street priest, was sent to prison, and everyone hoped that was the end of the story, and the bad press.

Why aren’t Catholics taught that all feelings are natural? Why wasn’t I told that being gay wasn’t something to be ashamed of, or secretive about? Why weren’t priests, nuns, and brothers taught to be healthy role models of sexual maturity? Why isn’t masturbation, or self-pleasuring, described as normal and a healthy way to relax and relieve sexual tensions? Why are condoms and birth control pills not seen as effective ways to prevent the birth of an unwanted child, and a way to allow sexual pleasure to be experienced without fear of consequences? Why are condoms different from pot holders? Is it God’s will that we be burned?

The Catholic Church owes some apologies: to me for what it did to me, to the people who abused me, and to the people I impacted negatively. The Church needs to take responsibility for how it trained us, and for the results of its training. Defrocking or excommunicating us doesn’t end the problem. We’re not the problem. The priests in prison are not the problem. The Church’s non-sensical sexual theology, and its highly-destructive mind- and heart-molding methods, are the problem.
The Pride Center is going back to high school. Our Kiki Project has embarked on new adventures for young Black same gender loving men between the ages of 16-19. The Kiki Project has launched two programs in local high schools—Kiki Culture and Get Your Life.

“We’re spearheading new empowerment programs with high school young people,” says Lorenzo Robertson, Emerging Interventions Manager at The Pride Center. “We’re helping high school age gay black men look at sex from a different perspective. We’re working with them to be open and understanding of their own sexuality. We’re discussing how to keep them safe from HIV and STIs and how to share that with others.”

Kiki Culture is a new adaptation for high school students of The Center’s ongoing Kiki Project. Robertson had shared about The Kiki Project at a community meeting. Representatives from the Broward County Public School’s Diversity, Prevention and Intervention program reached out to Lorenzo to see if The Center could

Elder Housing identified a desperate need in the greater Fort Lauderdale area for low-income housing. We have a growing, aging LGBT local population with limited affordable housing options. The City of Wilton Manors approached The Center about addressing local needs and Equality Park’s optimum location and resources to help meet those needs. We’ve also seen a national trend toward senior affordable housing projects being built in conjunction with LGBT community centers with whom we work—L.A., San

+Continued on pg. 8

By Robert Boo, CEO

The Pride Center wants to offer seniors an affordable place to live in the heart of Wilton Manors. Our Board of Directors continues to explore the best path to build low-income senior housing on the Equality Park campus.

Many local residents learned of the project when we received a demonstration of public support last Fall from the Wilton Manors city commissioners in our application for affordable housing credits from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation. Although we didn’t receive funding from our first submission, our Board already is assessing future opportunities for funding. This project will allow us to expand our vital programs and services to seniors and bring substantial income to The Center.

How did we arrive to this exciting juncture? A few years ago, Gay and Lesbian Elder Housing identified a desperate need in the greater Fort Lauderdale area for low-income housing. We have a growing, aging LGBT local population with limited affordable housing options. The City of Wilton Manors approached The Center about addressing local needs and Equality Park’s optimum location and resources to help meet those needs. We’ve also seen a national trend toward senior affordable housing projects being built in conjunction with LGBT community centers with whom we work—L.A., San

+Continued on pg. 4

Conceptualized mock-up of potential mixed-use structure combining low-income senior housing and community space

School Daze

Kiki Project Launches New Prevention Programs with Teens

+Continued on pg. 8

Jakari Roundtree, Kiki Project Specialist
The Kitchen of the Community

A letter from Robert Boo, C.E.O. of The Pride Center at Equality Park

very wise woman once described The Pride Center as “the kitchen of the community.” I think it may have been Maya Angelou. No, maybe it was Mother Teresa. No, then again as I think about it, it was Carol Moran (long-time local community leader, volunteer, activist and business owner). I’ve always liked that description that Carol came up with for The Center. I like to cook and the kitchen is where everyone always ends up during a gathering or dinner party. I also think that when you invite someone to sit at your dinner table, you invite them into your life. That is what we strive to do at The Center, invite each other into our lives.

As we’ve launched a new year, it allows us time to reflect on the accomplishments we have achieved. Our ever-growing services programming continues to be the largest LGBT seniors program in the nation. Please read all about how Bruce Williams, Senior Services Coordinator, and his group of volunteers have impacted so many. Out of the 170 LGBT community centers in the country, none even come close to the numbers of people we serve weekly. Our Women With Pride program continues to provide valued services and programs to the LGBT community. Roya Amiriromand, WWP Coordinator, was recently recognized (alongside 8 other Center staff and Board members) as one of the LGBT Movers and Shakers in the state of Florida by the Agenda. She was described as the “Dolly Levi for women services.” We had to explain to her who Dolly Levi was. I hope you are as grateful as I am for the continuing impact of the work of our women’s programming. Did you know that over 12,000 unique visitors were linked to healthcare by the online LBT health directory that we manage last year?

If you haven’t been to The Center lately to access any of the many HIV services we provide, you will be surprised to see that everyone has moved into the back building. I mean all HIV services: Testing, Outreach, Healthcare Navigator and Linkage, PreEP, LIFE, CHOICES, Couples Speak, the Kiki Project, ARTAS and VOICES. We took advantage of the opportunity to strategically place all HIV services together to provide better customer service and improve the client experience. Please stop in to see the new digs and talk to the staff. In this issue, you can read up on the move and some of the caring staff.

We recently received funding to expand to a full time PreEP Coordinator. William Whiteside is one of our newest additions to the staff and you can read up on him and learn more about PreEP. We also received funding to expand our Kiki Project to meet the needs of young men of color in the Broward County School system. We are very excited to collaborate with this very progressive and the sixth largest and school system in the country. Lorenzo Roberts, Emerging Interventions Manager, has a great article in this issue telling us all about this new project.

At the beginning of this year, we unveiled Social LIFE and had over 150 people attend the opening event. Social LIFE is a group bringing together all of the past graduates of our LIFE program. We have had over 700 men graduate from the LIFE program over the past nine years; this program helps people living with HIV/AIDS improve their holistic health. After each cycle, participants say that they would like to continue getting together for social activities. You can learn more about this dynamic group and about Shanna Ratliff, Prevention With Positive Manager, in this issue. You can also refer a friend to take this powerful program.

Finally, I am pleased to see that our Tropical Plant Fair will be held on March 26 & 27, Chuck Nicholls and Richard Perez have organized the event over the past four years for The Center and this year they’re working with us on another great event. Mark your calendar! The campus is exceptionally beautiful to walk around and shop for deals on beautiful plants.

It’s time for me to get back into the kitchen, YOUR community kitchen. On behalf of the Board of Directors, the staff and the 250 volunteers, here’s to a prosperous 2016! I hope to see you soon at The Center. If you have never been, request a tour on our website or call me directly!
Join The Pride Center as a Member Today!

Types of Membership:

- Individual $40 per year
- Household $70 per year
- Student (under 25) $30 per year
- Senior (over 65) $30 per year
- Friends $200 per year
- Best Friends $500 per year
- Founders Circle starting at $1,200 per year*

*Additional Founder Levels are available.
Contact 954.463.9005
Home Sweet Home

+Continued from pg. 1

Conceptualized mock-up of potential mixed-use structure combining low-income senior housing and community space

Did you know?

+ 800 people living with HIV have graduated from The Pride Center’s LIFE Program, a holistic health program. It changes lives and improves health. Contact The Center to learn more!

+ The Pride Center recently built the first playground for LGBT families and allies on a community center campus. Go check it out!

+ Over 200 Seniors join us for Coffee and Conversation every Tuesday morning at 10 a.m.

+ More than 4,500 people like The Pride Center’s Facebook page. Have you?

Four years ago during our Strategic Planning process, the Board of Directors set a goal to evaluate the potential of a senior affordable housing project to be built on Equality Park. Over the next three years, we did our due diligence. Let me tell you, this is one of those projects where the more you learn, the more you realize you don’t know.

Fortunately, we have board members with these specific skills and experience. One of those, Jim Walker, said, “The Center is extremely fortunate to have a five-and-half acre campus, and we want to maximize that resource to serve our community. We also are fortunate to have several community members who were willing to help The Center.”

During this same time, we also decided to update the Master Plan for our campus. We partnered with Jason Hagopian at TSAO Design and his team in the year-long process. Last Spring, we gathered 65 diverse community leaders to participate in a Charrette. During this guided planning retreat, community members brainstormed and prioritized possibilities of how we could and should use our campus in the future. It was the largest Charrette Jason and his team had facilitated. These community members gave up their free time to gather together to help identify the roadmap for Equality Park’s future. It was an amazing experience.

The results of that Charrette were presented to the Board last summer, and the top priorities helped set our direction. One goal, for example, was to make the campus more family-friendly. Last October, we installed the first playground on an LGBT community center campus in the United States.

Board Chair Ilene Berliner was impressed by the investment of so many community members in the campus planning process. “The contributions from our immensely talented board, donors and volunteers humbles me. What The Pride Center at Equality Park has in store for the future is beyond any of my wildest dreams, and my belief is that the generous contributions of time, talent and funding will continue to make what was a blank canvas an incredible destination.”

The Senior Affordable Housing Project remains one of the largest, most significant projects identified both by our Strategic Plan and the Charrette process. Over the past several years, we cultivated relationships with three top developers in the South Florida area. In the end, we partnered with Carrfour, Florida’s largest non-profit developer, to submit our first proposal this past November.

There was a specific funding opportunity that the federal government had put into place in the 1980s. It became apparent that those tax credits were going to sunset at the end of 2015. Over a six week period, we worked very hard with Carrfour, with some help from TSAO Design, to come up with the finished proposal.

On November 5th Carrfour submitted our proposal. Only four projects were going to get funded out of 56. Each proposal to the state was assigned a lottery number based on the luck of the draw. We drew number 55 out of 56 applications, not the best luck. Our first submission didn’t lead to instant success, but The Center continues to evaluate new opportunities for funding.

As a Center, we look forward to the day when we announce successful funding of this important project. It will enable us to meet the growing needs of many in our community. Very selfishly, I’m looking ahead for myself. I want to be able to pack my office in a grocery cart and move into my own apartment when the time comes.
Whether looking for “Mr. Right” or “Mr. Right Now,” most gay men have found themselves surfing countless Grindr profiles available at the touch of a button. Social media apps have become legendary meeting spots for many in the gay male community. Not long ago, the easiest way to meet a guy was going to a gay bar or club. Grindr and other social media apps have revolutionized the way gay men meet-up and hook-up. For better or worse, they have become part of the fabric of pop culture. More than one million Grindr users logon to the app in 192 countries, transmitting more than seven million chat messages and two million photos to each another every day.

With social media apps used so frequently, we may wonder how many guys actually make conscious decisions regarding safe sex practices. How many are aware of the facts of HIV transmission and prevention? How many feel equipped to consistently make healthy decisions? South Florida is one of the largest gay hotspots in the U.S., so it is extremely important to use effective prevention methods to deliver accurate and current information on sex, health, testing, medical care, HIV and STIs to our gay population and visitors.

The Pride Center prides itself on being an HIV prevention and outreach leader in South Florida. It was only logical that we would take advantage of the opportunity to utilize social media platforms like Grindr and Scruff to deliver the latest information to those wondering about HIV prevention but afraid to ask their questions in person.

A recently published study by Hunter College’s Center for HIV Educational Studies and Training (CHEST) found that 10% of men on Grindr have never been tested for HIV, though nearly a third of them still claim they’re negative. Grindr has become a legendary meeting spot for the headless torsos of the world since its launch in 2009, but did you know that almost a quarter of those headless torsos are still hiding in the closet? Of that 18 percent, six percent say they never plan to come out at all. Understandably, a large number of those on Grindr and similar apps live in fear or ignorance regarding HIV, prevention methods and testing.

In the past few years, The Pride Center has worked to expand an online social media presence to provide information about HIV prevention to those who are a bit shy. Specifically, we offer current information regarding prevention methods, HIV treatment, and events of interest happening in our community. One of the best parts about this service is that our clients in the community can contact us anonymously and without inhibitions. Yes, you read correctly. No inhibitions means that as a Grindr, Scruff, Growler, Hornet, Mr. Right or (almost every) other app user, you can contact our Cyber Outreach Coordinator while on these apps and ask me pretty much anything about HIV, STIs or other Pride Center related information.

We’ve provided over 150,000 people with valuable prevention information and HIV counseling through social media apps. The responses we’ve received from both openly gay and anonymous users or different apps are encouraging:

“It is cool having someone here to talk honestly about my health.”

“I feel like I can ask anything without shame. I would not be able to ask you these questions in person; I am super shy.”

“I love to get your ‘shouts.’ They are always filled with useful info. Thanks!”

I think it is extremely important that the community has a real person to freely ask their questions and tell their stories with no censorship. Yes, I have gotten a bit of everything from community members online, like x-rated pictures, funny compliments and super-crazy sex stories, and I have to redirect conversations at times. But at the end of the day, what I love the most is the great feeling of knowing that someone feels comfortable to come to me without holding anything back, and that I am able to help them.

Do you have questions about condoms? PrEP? Testing? Accessing medical care? If you do not feel comfortable coming to The Center and talking in person with one of our prevention team members, you can use your social media account to contact someone from our cyber outreach team. We will be there to answer your questions. If we cannot answer your specific question, we will link you to the appropriate resources who can help.

For more information, email me at mleon@pridecenterflorida.org
Rainbow Run

5K in Wilton Manors to Benefit The Center

Lace-up your brightest jogging shoes and slip on your splashiest running shorts! You can soon dress in your favorite color of the rainbow and join The Pride Center’s inaugural 5K fundraiser. Stroll, jog or run your way across the finish line with your closest friends and family!

The Rainbow 5K Run/Walk will be held on Sunday, April 10, 2016. Participants will wind through the beautiful tree-lined streets of the Island City on the 3.1 mile certified 5K course.

The Rainbow Run is the newest part of The Pride Center’s health initiative programming. “A 5K run thru the Island City is a great way to encourage a healthy lifestyle for local participants and running enthusiasts in South Florida,” said Robert Boo, Pride Center CEO. “We are excited to once again collaborate with The City of Wilton Manors on another great event.”

Live entertainment along the route and post-race music, food and beverages also are planned for the event. More than 400 participants are expected to attend. The starting line will be in the heart of Wilton Manors on Wilton Drive, and runners will take off at 7:30 a.m. The Center is collaborating with Split Second Timing for event organization and promotion.

Early-registration admission is $15 for adults and $10 for kids. Participants will receive a Pride Center Rainbow 5K Run t-shirt, and teams will be able to run in their favorite color of the rainbow. Proceeds of this event support the vital services and programs of The Pride Center at Equality Park.

There are several levels of sponsorship opportunities. For more information contact Roger Roa, Director of Development, at 954-463-9005 or RRoa@PrideCenterFlorida.org.

For more information on the Rainbow 5K, visit our website or follow us on Facebook!

Green Thumb Paradise

Equality Park Tropical Plant Fair Set for March

Need that perfect orchid for your balcony? Maybe a rare bromeliad or palm for your garden or landscaping? Don’t miss the upcoming Equality Park Tropical Plant Fair!

This outdoor event will occur March 26 and 27 on the beautiful grounds of The Pride Center at Equality Park, 2040 North Dixie Highway in Wilton Manors. The Fair will include more than 40 plant vendors from around the state showcasing outstanding plants and related accessories. Industry professionals, amateurs and organizations will participate, including pet rescue/adoptions and Florida Native Plant Societies.

Proceeds from this event will help develop the gardens at Equality Park, and benefit the diverse, life-enhancing programs and services of The Pride Center.

The Fair will include multiple raffles, silent auctions and engaging activities, including an exciting treasure hunt with The Center to organize and host a plant fair. 2016 promises to be the best fair yet.

“When you’re a plant enthusiast, it is very contagious,” says Nicholls. “It’s a passion; it’s an obsession. It is the best therapy for healing that I know of. The Plant Fair brings enthusiastic plant vendors to our doorstep.” Beautiful trees, flowering shrubs, cycads, tillandsias, rare palms and other tropical exotic plants will be featured along with outstanding orchids, bromeliads, heliconias and gingers. All plants will be available for sale. Information related to landscaping, insect control, fertilizer and irrigation will be available from the Master Gardeners of Broward County. An additional half dozen non-profit organizations will participate, including pet rescue/adoptions and Florida Native Plant Societies.

For more information, please contact Richard Perez at 954.257.2317. Don’t forget to like the Fair on Facebook: Equality Park Tropical Plant Fair.
"People Are Looking for Human Connection"

**Ratliff Uses Power of Community to Impact People Living with HIV**

By Ebony Wilson

When people come into our offices or into our lives, they have to feel like they’re at home,” says Shanna. “That’s why people love the PALS Project and The Center in general. Once they come in our doors, they want to come back.”

“Shanna is uniquely qualified for the job. “It takes a special person with a specific combination of skills to do this role well,” says COO Kristofer Robertson, who originally brought The PALS Project and its LIFE, CHOICES and other programs to The Center. “Shanna is gifted. She’s fiercely intelligent, organized, and hilarious. She’s visionary, down-to-earth and practical at the same time. She builds rapport well; she has sharp clinical skills. She knows how to expand programs and manage budgets. She knows how to develop leaders among staff and volunteers. She has the right education and work foundation. She has good judgment.”

“I had a community member tell me he was shocked we would put a woman in this role, leading a program that engages so many men living with HIV,” Kristofer continues. “The many men who’ve been impacted by Shanna over the years were not shocked. She’s special. She has this ability to connect. She disarms defenses. She helps people open up. People trust her.”

Colleagues that have worked closely with Shanna, affirm her abilities. “She has brought a new spirit and vitality to the program that will ignite growth and expand our services bigger and better for the community,” says Lorenzo Fegenbush, Emerging Interventions Manager.

“She is a committed professional in the HIV Field.” says Robert Cullen. “She will make positive changes.”

One of Shanna’s main goals managing the PALS Project is to “focus on keeping those we serve engaged after they finish our programs.”

Shanna is off to a notable start. Program graduates and volunteers are joining alongside her vision to create a stronger community to combat HIV. There’s no stopping this juggernaut; she’s the epitome of social work.
provide similar work among high school students. Broward’s program addresses sexual health and concerns in the schools.

The Kiki Project is designed by Black gay men for Black gay men. It provides discussions, workshops, small groups and events that talk about what really matters: relationships, love, sex, HIV, stigma and identity as Black gay men in our community. The Kiki Project works to understand the needs of the same gender loving men in developing HIV prevention programs for that population, programs designed for us by us.

Just launched, Kiki Culture already is getting noticed. “I just got a call today from a father whose son is gay and out on campus and wants to learn about the work we’re doing,” says Lorenzo.

At the same time, Advocates for Youth approached Lorenzo about providing a program called Get Your Life to young high school men of color.

“The Get Your Life Intervention is a workshop series I wish was around when I was younger,” says Jakari Roundtree, Kiki Program Specialist. “If I had been able to participate in this type workshop it would have made a difference in my sexual history.”

Get Your Life is an adaptation of the Many Men Many Voices intervention designed for Black same gender loving men. It addresses factors that influence their behavior including, cultural, social, and religious norms. Get You Life also addresses interactions between HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, sexual relationship dynamics and the social and psychological influences that racism and homophobia have on HIV risk behaviors.

“We’re working to empower young black gay men,” continues Robertson. “We explore the duality: what does it mean to be black? What does it mean to be gay?”

“I see a lot of positive change and outcomes from this workshop and I enjoy getting the ball rolling,” says Jakari.

The new programs target priority schools in Broward County Public Schools during the next school year. The goal is to recruit students, especially young Black same gender loving men, to participate with Kiki Culture and Get Your Life.

“We will make a difference in the lives of the next generation of Black same gender loving men,” says Lorenzo passionately. “We are recruiting for the Kiki Culture Program, so if you know any young Black same gender loving men, please share our information!”

For more information, contact: Kikiproject@pridecenterflorida.org or 945-463-9005, ext. 308 or 309

Did you know?

+ Each month, more than 1,000 women visit our LBT women’s Health Directory at LBTHealth.org, Check out this group resource of culturally competent healthcare providers!

+ Over 200 people attended our last Founders Circle reception. Founders donate at least $100 monthly to support our vital programs and services.

+ The Pride Center has provided more than 6,800 HIV Tests over the past year.

+ The Pride Center has distributed 445,000 condoms this year. That’s a LOT of safer sex!
Campus of Care

Equality Park continues to expand as a bustling, active campus of care. We invited the nonprofits housed on Equality Park to share a bit about themselves and how their place on campus enhances their services.

ArtServe
ArtServe, one of the country’s original six arts incubators, is an award-winning nonprofit offering programs, partnerships and affordable facilities that support artists, cultural entities and community groups as a means to creating vibrant communities because when arts thrive, communities flourish. From marketing support and professional development training to crafting creative collaborations with community partners, ArtServe fosters the business and entrepreneurial growth of artists and cultural organizations, helping them turn their art into business while enriching the entire community. When the arts thrive, communities flourish.

“Strategic collaborations, like the one we have with The Pride Center, are the cornerstone of our mission and build partnerships that enhance the cultural landscape of our community, but create avenues for broad civic engagement and programs that benefit all. Having a footprint on The Pride Center campus makes sense and is mutually beneficial as it furthers this mission, deepens our community connections and provides us with a strong platform for success.”  — Jaye Abbate, President & CEO

Congregation Etz Chaim
Congregation Etz Chaim is the synagogue for LGBT Jews, our families and allies, that is celebrating our 42nd year in the area. We exist to bring together the LGBT Jewish community and to share our history and culture with members and the wider community, as a model of a faith community that celebrates diversity, our common humanity, and encourages all people who seek to improve and embrace our world.

“We love being on the Equality Park campus, because it allows us to be more visible and accessible to our community, while lending our strength to the community as a whole.”  — Rabbi Noah Kitty, Executive Director

Gay Men’s Chorus of South Florida
The Gay Men’s Chorus of South Florida is the Southeast’s largest gay men’s chorus. Through a robust, three-concert series season reaching 5,000 people, the Chorus opens hearts and changes minds through the power of music.

“Having our offices at The Pride Center at Equality Park places the Gay Men’s Chorus of South Florida at the epicenter of the LGBT community. We are able to effectively network with community leaders, forge partnerships with other non-profits and quickly access the local business community.”  — Mark Kent, Executive Director

Church of the Holy SpiritSong
Church of the Holy SpiritSong (SpiritSong Church) is a non-denominational Christian church located in the heart of the community on the campus of Equality Park. We provide a safe space for the LGBTQ community and our allies to worship God, attend Bible study, and serve our community as Christians, without the fear of being singled out and bullied because of our sexuality. We seek to share God’s love with everyone, and we take that commission seriously in the form of meeting needs.

“The strategic placement of our church on the Equality Park Campus is one that affords us the opportunity to serve a multitude of people as they visit the campus, as well as meet needs for those less fortunate. Our food pantry has become an integral resource in our community for those who do not qualify for other services.”  — Pastor Leslie Rutland-Tipton

SAGE of South Florida
SAGE of South Florida is a non-profit organization for Senior Action in a Gay Environment to enrich the lives of the LGBT senior community through membership inclusive of age, gender, race, nationality and religion. We believe this can be accomplished by sponsoring social alternatives to provide personal interaction among older LGBT members, offering educational opportunities to deal with the special needs of aging, and promoting contact with the isolated and home-bound persons of our community. SAGE is also an advocate for the concerns and needs of the senior LGBT community at large, providing referral information of community resources and promoting intergenerational communication in the GLBT community.

“SAGE of South Florida was founded in 1994 as a Florida ‘not for profit’ Corporation. We have had many ‘homes’ in the past 22 years. None more welcoming and more in tune with our goals than The Pride Center at Equality Park. The Pride Center is the epicenter of LGBT life in South Florida, and there is no better partner for us than to be aligned with them.”  — Carl Galli, President

Planned Parenthood of South, East and North Florida
Planned Parenthood of South, East and North Florida is a private, nonprofit health care agency that provides affordable, accessible comprehensive sexual health care through the provision of clinical services, education and advocacy to and for all women, men and youth in the community. We offer education programs to provide youth and other groups in our community with the necessary and essential skills they need to make educated, conscious decision regarding their health and well-being.

“Planned Parenthood believes that reproductive rights are deeply connected to LGBTQ rights and is proud to be a provider for so many in the LGBTQ community. We care passionately about helping women, men, and young people lead healthy lives, no matter who they are and no matter where they live.”  — Lillian Tamayo, President/CEO

For information on nonprofit rental space on the Equality Park campus, please contact The Pride Center at 954.463.9008.
When Marvin Shaw applied to be Coordinator of The Kiki Project, one line from his cover letter stood out: "I am the Kiki Project." It caught the attention of Center staff. Marvin explained his background, experience and why he'd be perfect for the position—why he mirrored the communities he would serve. All who interviewed him agreed.

Marvin always thought that he was born to do something significant for the Black gay community. The Kiki Project is a dream fulfilled. Growing up, Marvin endured being called faggot, punk, sissy and other derogatory terms. He gained the wherewithal to understand and show empathy for men in the program who have shared stories of their painful lives. Marvin feels he once was an underdog, and now has compassion—and must be a champion—for other Black same-gender-loving men who are underdogs.

He demonstrates compassion and high integrity as he facilitates Kiki sessions with those who have experienced stigma and feelings of alienation.

Born and reared in Fort Lauderdale, Marvin hails from a pretty large family with seven brothers and eight sisters. His upbringing was fairly routine with not too many ups and downs. Well, that is if you do not count coming out in an extremely religious family. And if you know anything about Black religious families, it didn't go over that well. They wanted to pray and make him better. But over time, they realized that Marvin was who he was—a Black same-gender-loving man—and relished the fact.

He is a product of Broward County Public School and attended American Intercontinental University. Marvin Shaw is a great addition to The Pride Center as the Kiki Project Coordinator.

The Kiki Project is an HIV prevention program designed by Black gay men for Black gay men. It provides discussions, workshops, small groups and events that talk about what really matters: relationships, love, sex, HIV, stigma and identity as Black gay men in our community. The Kiki Project works to understand the needs of the same gender loving men in developing HIV prevention programs for that population, projects designed for us by us. It is funded by the Florida Health Department in Broward County.

Over the years, Marvin has done lots of volunteer work with a variety of community-based and AIDS-service organizations in Atlanta and Florida. His volunteer efforts helped prepare him for what was to come, coordinating the Kiki Project.

Marvin hit the ground running, making strides and inroads to make a difference in the Black community. He has worked diligently to connect and give the Black community a new perspective on what Black, gay, HIV-positive men look like. He wants to shift the consciousness of the Black community to the reality that Black, positive, gay men can be healthy, vibrant, employed and connected.

When asked about his goal for the Kiki Project, he said that he wants the Kiki Project to become a household name in Broward County, State of Florida and nationwide. He wants to make a big difference.
Founders Circle Reception at Allied Kitchen and Bath

Allied Kitchen and Bath recently hosted and sponsored a recent Founders Reception in their stunning showroom. Founders Circle Members underwrite life-enhancing programs and services to the community. To learn more about Founders, contact Roger Roa at RRoa@PrideCenterFlorida.org

Photos by Stephen Lang

Dog Wash

The Pride Center, Hunter’s Bar and Central Bark collaborated on a dog wash to benefit The Pride Center’s team for the Florida AIDS Walk team. To sponsor our team, follow the link on our website!

Photos by Stephen Lang and Manuel Leon
Transgender Day of Remembrance
The Pride Center organized and hosted Transgender Day of Remembrance. This evening of commemoration is a call to action for those who have lost their lives due to bias and hatred based on gender identity and expression worldwide. Community collaborators included The Florida Department of Health in Broward County/T-House, The Fort Lauderdale Convention Visitors Bureau, AHF, HRC and Equality Florida. Photos by Manuel Leon

Playground Design Day
The Pride Center, South Florida Family Pride and KaBOOM! hosted a packed room of LGBT families to help envision, design and plan a playground. The children submitted drawings of their dream play spaces while parents and friends figured out the logistics of raising volunteers and donations. Photos by Steve Shires
Did you know?

+ In November, The Pride Center and the Florida Health Department in Broward County again organized and hosted several events for Transgender Awareness Month. Check out our monthly Trans Educational series!

+ Did you know there have been more than 2,855 group meetings at The Pride Center this year? Take part in an activity at The Center!

+ Our SAGEWorks program helps older LGBT adults gain vital skills for finding employment. Contact Bruce Williams to learn more at 954.463.9005!

+ Pride Center volunteers have provided more than 14,500 hours of service so far this year. Contact The Pride Center to volunteer!

Monthly Bazaar is Over-the-Top Fabulous

It's 5 o'clock in the morning on the first Saturday of the month. Do you know where your friends and neighbors in Wilton Manors are? If you drive by The Pride Center at Equality Park campus, you may find some setting up their vendor booths. Along with over 80 others, they are preparing for the 8 a.m. opening of the fun and always fabulous monthly Flea Market.

This ain't your average flea market, honey. From drag queen attire to beautiful orchids to never-to-be-seen-again treasures, The Pride Center serves up unique finds that you just can't miss.

Suzanne has been a faithful Pride Center flea market antique vendor for 10 years. Her daughter shares, “I don’t know if mom buys more than she sells but she has so much fun doing both.”

Suzanne and her daughter sell one-of-a-kind antiques in one of The Center’s indoor booths. (Oh you thought that The Pride Center Flea Market was an outdoor-only market?) There are 15 eclectic vendors inside the Main Hall of The Schubert Building, and over 50 amazing vendors outside on the first Saturday of every month.

“I come to the Pride Center Flea Market to meet up with my friends and for the grilled hotdogs,” says frequent visitor Kirk.

The Pride Center Flea Market (affectionately known to some as The Pride Center Bazaar) is managed by Customer Service Coordinator Samantha McCoy with the help of volunteers and staff.

“The Pride Center Flea Market is such an exciting event, says Samantha. “As soon as you arrive on campus in the wee hours of the morning, there is an electric energy that is quite addicting. From morning until the 2 p.m. closing, you can watch the campus parking lot transform into a magical marketplace filled with vendors just as extraordinary as the items they sell.”

On the first Saturday of January--The Center’s very first market of the New Year--patrons poured in. It is only befitting that The Center kicked off the year with two drag queens wearing flawless makeup and glittery shimmering dresses, walking around in five-inch stilettos, waving at shoppers and vendors. There are just so many sights, sounds and yummy, grilled concession-stand smells that fill the campus of Equality Park on Flea Market Saturday. All that’s missing is you.

If you want to participate as a vendor, simply contact our Customer Service Coordinator at (954) 463-9005 ext. 101. We begin selling vendor spaces on the Tuesday after the last market, and Pride Center Flea Market vendor spots fill up very fast. If you are a shopper, we host the market year-round on the first Saturday of every month, rain or shine from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Join your friends and make new friends at The Pride Center at Equality Park Flea Market, because it’s 5 o’clock somewhere!

Wicked Manors

Once again, The Pride Center organized Wicked Manors, the original Halloween Block Party Celebration, on Wilton Drive. Hunter’s Nightclub returned as the major presenting sponsor. Over 30,000 attended. This collaboration with The City of Wilton Manors raised more than $40,000 for vital services at The Center. Photos by Stephen Lang
World AIDS Day Candlelight Vigil

A passionate crowd gathered for the annual candlelight vigil in Wilton Manors to honor World AIDS Day. The vigil, organized by Broward House, culminated in a rally ended at The Pride Center at Equality Park.

Photos by Manuel Leon

The Pride Center Founders Circle

LIFETIME
Bob and Hal Bernier-Peterson
Gil Cowin
John C. Graves Charitable Fund
Alan Schubert

PREMIER LEVEL ($20,000 and above)
Cox Media Group
Diageo / Coastal Wine and Spirits
Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau / Richard Gray
Hunters Nightclub
JerBlue
Richard and Emilio Quadracci Cabrera
Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino - Hollywood

PLATINUM LEVEL ($10,000 - $19,999)
Anonymous (2)
AIDS Healthcare Foundation - Southern Bureau
Dr. James Doan
Multimedia Platforms Worldwide / Bobby Blair
Kenneth Grass
Hotspots Magazine and Mark's List / Peter Clark
Oberlin Kramer
Live Solutions / Scott Kean
Panache Style / Bobby Kyser
Robert S. Klee Trust
South Florida Gay News / Norm Kent
The Alfred Woih Family Foundation
The Howard Griffin Charitable Foundation
Wells Fargo Foundation

DIAMOND LEVEL ($5,000 - $9,999)
D.C. Allen and Ken Fick / No Hate Fund at Our Fund, Inc.
Argenti Jewelers / Mark Silver
Ilene Berliner (Board Chair) and Maura Lane
James Takei and Don Chooping
Freedom Travel / Richard Safety (Board Member) and Cmer Mirachi
Will Gingles
LGBTQ Community Center
Dolphins
Goldman Sachs
Kenneth Hollander and John Karb (KSH Charitable Foundation)
LGBTQ Charitable Foundation
Liquid Raider / Eduardo Garcia and Charles Rude
Law Office Arthur A. Smith
Periodic Productions / David McLaren
Pinnacle Housing Group / Michael Wohl
Dr. Dale Russell
Wayne Schreebe and Roy J. Stegman Charitable Fund at Our Fund, Inc.
Ted Schubna
Seiler & Weiss / Attorneys / Jeffrey Seiler, Esq. and Roy Penney
Jim Stepp and Peter Zimmer
Whole Foods Market

GOLD LEVEL ($2,500 - $4,999)
Anonymous (2)
Alfred Kitchen and Bath
Alpine Jaguar
Chris Armit and Scott Clearwater
Ron Kavan and Jim Stork
Scott L. Bennett
Bitha & Associates, Inc. / Don Bitha
Broward Heath - Imperial Point
Michael Camardello
Doug Candler
Michael Dager and Harvey Shapiro
Fast Printz / Victor Flores
Andrew Fishman
August Gold and Carol Logan
Tyrone Hall
Neil Hirst, MD and Greg Hughes
Robert Hubbard and Bill Greaves
Isotta Bank
James A. Johnson / James A. Johnson Fund for Giving at Our Fund
Robert Judd and Russell Neal
Don Kocher and Jonathan Salt
Steve Love
Marriott Fort Lauderdale – North
Lynn McAuliffe and David Webb
David Miclon and Lauren Sam
Gregory Moore and Dr. Allan Barsky
Richard Nolan and Robert Pingpank
As an aspiring artist, I get overwhelmed with the thought of displaying my own artwork: the venue; producing enough artwork; the cost of putting on a show; not to mention the public’s reaction to my work. They say art is subjective, yet exposure is required for it to subjected. The Pride Center opened its doors and provided me the opportunity to display my work, and in gratitude I work to continue this mode of exposure.

The Pride Center Galleries provides local artists in our community an avenue to showcase their talent and works of art. The showrooms provide spacious settings and extensive walls equipped with professional tools for safely hanging and displaying the artist’s work for an entire month at a low cost. In addition, the artist can host a reception for friends, family and the community to attend and enjoy the work. I work to ensure the set up for our artists runs smoothly.

We’ve received incredible feedback from artists. “I had done many shows in Venezuela,” said Manuel Leon. “‘The Color Theory and Geometry Light Impression’ was my first show in the United States. I was nervous. However, the whole process at The Pride Center was a breeze. I had my work shown to a completely different public than what I was used to. It inspired me to create more work, and do it again.”

Landon, a local artist who brought his vivid and provocative photography to raise awareness about transgender issues, stated, “Images of Trans people (and especially images of nude Trans bodies) are still rarely shown and displayed in broader LGBTQ spaces. Bringing my digital images of trans-people bodies to life in print, and having The Pride Center embrace this body of work, was really encouraging.”

Pride Center Galleries also provides the layout and design for the artist’s flyer advertising their reception event. We promote the art through our social media. We want to help artists expand their audience beyond their peers, potentially selling their work and networking with other organizations.

One of my favorite’s recent showcases was for Rene Perriolat. Not only did his work touch me, but the story why it was displayed at the gallery was simply beautiful. “Rene passed away in May of 2013,” stated his partner Gregg. “It was a wonderful event to be able to honor his memory and his artistic talent in this way. He would be proud. His multi-medium works looked fabulous and were professionally displayed and sold. Thanks once again to The Pride Center and Anthony for this very positive and memorable experience.”

We seek artwork that portrays and represents different cultures, beliefs, and narratives. As a community center, we host diverse monthly events and activities which provide additional exposure to the artists showcasing their work. During many months of the year, we collaborate with other art groups across South Florida to fill the galleries with the works of their artists. We try and bring in several artists’ work to hang at a time, thus giving visitors different interpretations and views on self expression and identity.

I’ve only organized the galleries for a handful of months, but I want to see Pride Center Galleries develop. I want to make this a place to motivate creativity. I want to provide a platform to gain experience to the “closeted artist” who can one day see work at Art Walks, shows and larger galleries. My personal call is to LGBT youth, to artists with hidden talents in our community, our local schools, whose work we do not yet see in the windows of fancy galleries or shops. Help us enhance the inclusive home we envision The Pride Center to be.
2015 was an absolutely amazing year for Senior Programming at The Pride Center. Attendance skyrocketed as we’ve addressed real needs among Seniors. The Pride Center now provides the largest program for LGBT Seniors at any community center in the country. Together, we have connected older adults with area resources, facilitated the provision of healthcare services, offered support services and hosted events both educational and fun. Our collaborations with area organizations result in an enhanced senior life style and improve the aging process for future generations of LGBT seniors.

By the end of the year, we logged nearly 27,000 visits by LGBT seniors—a record number of visits. Of that number, we welcomed over 9,000 Coffee & Conversation visits, 8,745 Enhance Fitness hits and a highly-successful Sixth Sensational Senior Health Expo that sold out to over 65 vendors and drew a crowd of over 600 LGBT seniors, friends and families. Support groups for Seniors that we organize have received over 600 visits. Our Pride Thursday series reports more than 400 visits and featured brilliant presentations by area dignitaries. Our SAGEWorks program has provided technological training and professional guidance that has enabled a number of local adults to find new or better employment and reports more than 500 visits to workshops, events, classes or individual consultations.

Our community service efforts have included quarterly Driver’s Safety Programs and annual Income Tax Preparations Service in collaboration with AARP. We hosted helpful events featuring a spectrum of services from free telephones for individuals with limited funds and hearing disabilities to sessions with experts in the areas of Advanced Directives, LGBT property rights, voter registration with ballot explanations, and Medicare coverage choices. Speakers at our weekly Coffee & Conversation gatherings have included physicians, dentists, hospitals and home health care agencies. Other community partners have presented information about addiction and rehab resources, end of life services, and renovation techniques to make one’s home more age-friendly and extend the ability to live independently. We offered support programs in collaboration with The Alzheimer’s Association, Gilda’s Club, Trustbridge Health Services, Vitas Health Services and others. We enjoyed lectures by Dr. Anthony Del Nuovo, who was with The Betty Ford Clinic, and everyone’s favorite, Betty Rossi. Jerry Chasen of SAGE USA, inspired us with a chat about “Successful Aging”.

A project that began as an attempt to find out if there were any LGBT-supportive long term care (LTC) facilities has turned into our Sixth Sensational Senior Health Expo, selling-out to exhibitors yet once again. In an effort to keep seniors fit, we offered our Enhance Fitness Program with The YMCA of Broward County.

Healthy and supported” but “no fun” doesn’t work, so we produced many entertaining events with SAGE of South Florida, The Prime Timers, live theater, an expert in ancestry/genealogy and even a Drag Show at 10 am in the morning.

We launched SAGE Stories, a project in conjunction with SAGE USA, recording brief, personnel anecdotes from LGBT seniors examining how they’ve overcome discrimination. They describe growing up gay in a harsh and homophobic society. We hope that these stories will serve not only to preserve historical, personal narratives, but help enlighten younger generations. These stories will create awareness to help thwart attempts to reverse civil rights successes recently achieved by our community.

The sheer numbers of LGBT seniors attending our gatherings has elicited inquiries from similar groups in both Dade and Palm Beach Counties to visit and learn how to create similar programs. The numbers also have caught the eyes of several area political figures; Congresswoman Lois Frankel, for instance, recently chose one of our events as an opportunity to present Vice Mayor Julie Carson with a U.S. Congressional award. This year, we also were very proud to be honored by The League of Women Voters for our outstanding work with LGBT seniors.

Although we recorded over 27,000 senior visits at The Pride Center last year, this represents just the tip of the iceberg of our LGBT senior community. In an effort to identify new individuals and their needs, we have collaborated with Case Western Reserve and The University of Miami to administer surveys of seniors’ needs and preferences. We were honored to be invited to participate in The White House Conference on Aging in Tampa which served as a forum for making known LGBT-specific issues in reference to The Older American’s Act.

We recently embarked on the “Protect Our Elders” Project to equip ourselves with nationally-respected cultural competency training certification. We aim to equip local senior service providers with training to make their businesses into more LGBT-friendly, supportive and culturally proficient environments. We’ve embarked on this project in conjunction with Our Fund, LGBT providers throughout South Florida, SAGE USA and The National Resource Center.

As Sonny and Cher noted, “The Beat Goes On!”

For further information on Seniors Services at The Pride Center, please contact Bruce Williams: bwilliams@pridecenterflorida.org
A New Platform

Wilson Uses Outreach Leadership Role to Engage Diverse Communities

By Shanna Ratliff

Ebony Wilson is no stranger to the hard work and dedication required to bring HIV prevention services to previously overlooked communities in Broward County. During her past three years as the Expanding Testing Initiative Coordinator at The Pride Center, Ebony has taken testing services to areas outside the LGBT community, including more than two dozen new locations throughout Broward County. She’s successfully targeted communities of color in unique settings.

Recognizing Ebony’s passion, professionalism, creativity, skill and dedication, The Pride Center recently promoted Ebony to HIV Prevention Outreach Coordinator. She will build on her previous success for expanding HIV prevention and outreach services to broad and diverse communities.

The Pride Center’s clients, volunteers and staff recognize Ebony’s talent and focus. Testing and Outreach Specialist Julian Alterman has worked with Ebony since he first became involved with The Center. “Ebony taught, mentored and guided me during my early days providing HIV testing,” says Julian. “Her knowledge, dedication and commitment to HIV prevention, education and outreach have been an inspiration to me. I am thrilled she has been given this new platform to further the positive impact she has had on our community.”

Ebony has been developing the goals she will seek to achieve in her new position. “My primary goal will be to extend our range of influence throughout Broward County by expanding beyond the borders of Wilton Manors,” she shares.

Ebony wants residents throughout Broward County to know about each of The Pride Center’s diverse programs and services. She wants people linked to healthcare, support groups, workshops and HIV testing.

Ebony explains the importance of this action plan: “By succeeding in expanding services to people we don’t yet know, we will live up to The Center’s goal to provide a safe, welcoming space, not only for the LGBT community, but any and all residents of Broward County.”

Ebony is hard at work developing new community engagement strategies and planning events designed to diversify the reach of those receiving The Pride Center’s HIV prevention services. Ebony has reached and begun collaboration with the department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in Sunrise. The VA recently reported an alarming increase in HIV diagnoses of veterans. The VA and The Center have partnered to develop strategies on how to integrate and deliver The Pride Center’s varied programs to the VA’s population. Ebony and the VA have begun discussing a Pride Center and VA joint social function to inform the veteran population of the vast range of services available at The Pride Center. By reaching out to diversified populations, Ebony will broaden the Center’s impact on all populations at risk of contracting or spreading HIV.
Senior Health Expo
Over 600 people attended our sixth annual LGBT Senior Health Expo. The Expo provides seniors with a unique, comprehensive overview of available healthcare services. Over sixty LGBT-friendly medical, senior living, social service, insurance, financial, legal and home health providers showcased their services and products through this trade show.

Photos by Photos by Steve Shires
Founders Circle Reception at The Pride Center
The Law Offices of George Castrataro generously sponsored a recent Founders Circle Reception at The Pride Center. Founders provide at least $100 monthly to support the programs and services of The Pride Center. Photos by Stephen Lang

Fifth Annual Community Day
The Pride Center organized and hosted this popular community and family outreach day. Activities included a Kids’ Costume Contest indoors with South Florida Family Pride. Broward Sheriff’s Office provided K9 demonstrations, fire trucks, police vehicles and more. Photos by Steve Shires
Founders Circle Reception and Toy Drive Launch at Gallery One

Gallery One hosted and sponsored a recent Founders Reception. The evening also served as the successful launch party for the ninth annual Judy Shepherd Toy Drive. Funds donated by Founders Circle underwrite life-enhancing programs and services to the community. Hundreds of toys were collected that night. Photos by Stephen Lang
“W”hat am I going to do on Tuesday nights now?” is a common question posed by graduates of the L.I.F.E (Learning Immune Function Enhancement) Program.

Social LIFE is a new peer-driven, social, cultural and educational program aimed at actively engaging the graduates of the L.I.F.E Program.

Over a decade, the PALS (Positive Action for Living Safely) Project at The Pride Center has coordinated 21 cycles of the L.I.F.E program. L.I.F.E is an 18 week prevention and health enhancement program focused on addressing vital co-factors related to maintaining biological, psychological and social wellness for those living with HIV. Over 40 participants attend each cycle. To date, over 800 individuals have graduated from the program. Graduates have sought opportunities to connect.

Shanna Ratliff, Prevention with Positives Manager, and other PALS staff interviewed former L.I.F.E. participants for feedback. They consistently requested on-going programs. Shanna invited several former LIFE program participants to form a committee to discuss ideas and options to meet the needs of graduates. From these meetings, Social LIFE was created.

The first event, an Open House and Reception, was held prior to the Candelight Vigil on World AIDS at the newly renovated PALS offices at The Center. Over 50 attendees toured the new space for all HIV prevention services at The Pride Center and met with staff and volunteers.

The second event “RETURN TO THE HIVe” was held in January to reunite and reconnect program graduates and friends. The L.I.F.E. meeting room was transformed into a golden hive ambiance complete with bees by the generosity and talent of Bobby Kyser and his phenomenal staff from Panache Style. A wonderful buffet of entrees and desserts was coordinated by Patrick Drake and donated by former participants. DJ Julian Marsh spun amazing music to keep people mingling and smiling throughout the evening.

Shanna, Robert Boo, CEO of the Pride Center, and Kristofer Fegenbush, COO, welcomed the participants and invited everyone to get involved in the SOCIAL LIFE Program. Boo, a participant from Cycle 3 beamed, “I am so excited to see so many of you returning tonight. The LIFE Program is about making and maintaining connections and this certainly demonstrates the need for this program!”

Fegenbush encouraged, “We need each and every one of you to become part of this program – to share your energy and spirit to build and sustain the energy we see and feel here tonight.”

Evidently the event was long overdue as several participants commented that they were looking forward to some opportunities to reconnect.

• “I attended Cycle 6, and I couldn’t believe you contacted me for a reunion. This is wonderful.”

• “I’m looking forward to getting involved. We need more of this positive energy.”

• “I actually met some new friends who I am excited to get to know better.”

The Social LIFE Committee is actively looking for ideas, suggestions and involvement to create an ongoing schedule of activities, programs and events to meet the needs of all individuals impacted by HIV. Some programs will be for L.I.F.E participants and others will be for the entire community. Whether it’s a panel discussion, guest speakers, workshops, movie night, bowling or collaborating with other organizations to create larger programs, we need to hear from you!

A new Social LIFE Community Organization Facebook page has been created so you can keep in touch and share ideas online. Just search for Social LIFE on Facebook or enter the following link in your browser https://www.facebook.com/PrideCenterSocialLife/.

For further information and to get involved, contact the PALS Project at PALS@PrideCenterFlorida.org or 954.463.9011.
Playground Build

The Pride Center at Equality Park, KaBOOM! and JetBlue collaborated to build the first playground on the campus of an LGBTQ community center. Over 300 volunteers assisted with the planning, fundraising, preparation and construction of the playground. Photos by Steve Shires
Kwanzaa

The Pride Center’s Kiki Project collaborated with Black Gay Pride South Florida, Stonewall National Library and Archives and others on the annual Kwanzaa celebration. This gathering of people of color, their allies and friends celebrates cultural diversity and unity.

Founders Circle Reception at B Ocean

The B Ocean Hotel on beautiful Fort Lauderdale beach hosted and sponsored a recent Founders Reception. Guests enjoyed refreshing ocean breezes and stunning views. Founders provide at least $100 monthly to support the programs and services of The Pride Center. To learn more about Founders, contact Roger Roa at RRoa@PrideCenterFlorida.org

photos by Stephen Lang
Memories at a Discount

Take advantage of special on personalized engraved pavers in Equality Park Courtyard

By Bryon Bowlby

For a limited time only, buy a Commemorative Paver at The Pride Center at Equality Park at a discounted price.

From now until March 31, 2016 you can purchase one of the following personalized pavers at the following discounts:

- 4” by 4” Paver - $75 – (Regularly $100)
- 4” by 8” Paver - $200 – (Regularly $250)
- 12” by 12” Paver - $375 – (Regularly $500)

(Due to the limited space, discounts do not apply to Paver Arrays. Other limitations and restrictions apply; contact Bryon or Roger at The Center for more details!)

“What a better way to remember a loved one, a special occasion such as a wedding or a birthday than to have the memory engraved in a paver and installed in The Pride Center’s Equality Park Courtyard?” asks Robert Boo, CEO. Proceeds from your donations go to help fund essential services at The Pride Center.

Many members of the LGBTQ community have gone on-line or come in to meet with Development Team at The Center to buy a brick. They give generously to leave a lasting message important to them in these watershed times in the LGBTQ Community.

As one member said when he bought his bricks, “I can’t wait to see the expression on my husband’s face when he sees our names on our bricks.”

Do you have you a message you would like to leave or a remembrance for someone you have lost? What better way to do so than to name a brick at The Pride Center? Won’t it be a wonderful statement to one day have the entire walkway filled with messages from the LGBTQ community and friends of the community?

To become inspired, or to see the great progress being made on the Equality Park Courtyard, please visit the South side of the Schubert building. See what your friends and neighbors are saying!

Hurry now, as this special offer only lasts until March 31, 2016!
LGBT seniors have a lifetime of powerful experiences to share. The Pride Center partnered with SAGE USA in a national digital story-telling project that captures anecdotes reflective of growing-up in a homophobic, intolerant and discriminatory society. We recorded brief, personal stories from local LGBT seniors. We hope that these stories will serve not only to preserve historical, personal narratives, but help enlighten all generations. These stories will create awareness to help thwart attempts to reverse civil rights successes recently achieved by our community.

Join us for a public showing of these video testimonials, as friends and neighbors courageously share poignant thoughts, reflections and memories from their past.

**WHEN:** February 23, 2016 at 1:15 pm  
**WHERE:** The Pride Center at Equality Park, Schubert Building Main Hall

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**SAGE Story Survivors. These are some of the stars of the project:**

**• CARL BARTON, 76**  
Wilton Manors, Florida  
“My Mother said that someone had told her I was queer”

**• LARRY ELWIN, 79**  
Wilton Manors, Florida  
“My gay escape story…… well, they threw me in jail”

**• MARK MEDLIN, 59**  
Wilton Manors, Florida  
“My Mom told me last night that your Father is gay”

**• ROGER MILLER, 74**  
Wilton Manors, Florida  
“Good boys didn’t dance…… not good Christian boys”!

**• BURKE LAURENDINE, 63**  
Wilton Manors, Florida  
“They were using trumped up charges to cut his hand off because he was gay”

**• TERRY FEATHER, 61**  
Wilton Manors, Florida  
“I never had the conversation I wanted to have with my Father”

**• SONNY MILLER, 69**  
Wilton Manors, Florida  
“My Mother gave me a letter that said I had trouble dealing with men…… which was NOT my problem”

**• RICHARD FRAZER, 75**  
Wilton Manors, Florida  
“Back in the 60s, the thing that you did was get married”
“I Realize How Vital this Resource Has Become…”

Reflections on Impact of Women’s Health Directory at LBTHealth.org

By Roya Amimiroumand, Women with Pride Coordinator

Back in November, our friends at the Compass Community Center hosted the Women’s Health Conference. I had the pleasure of presenting at one of the breakout sessions about the online LBT Health Directory. During the session, I talked about the value of cultural competence, the importance of preventative care, and why LBTHealth.org has grown tremendously in provider recommendations and visitors over the last several years.

What I found most interesting and impactful during this time was the feedback that I received from the attendees. We discussed the invaluable resources the Directory provided, what was missing and what we could improve moving forward. After the event I walked to my car and I could not stop thinking about one particular moment. In the midst of my animated and rather hasty speech, one individual stopped me to make a comment. This individual told me that she was impressed with my willingness to take constructive criticism, and my enthusiasm about making such improvements. At that exact moment I thought, “where did this come from?” But afterwards I was incredibly grateful and deeply moved when I realized the magnitude of such a comment.

It takes a village to make something transformative happen. In the initial phases of the Directory, we surveyed LBT women in the community for best practice techniques, their needs and healthcare provider recommendations. With your input we have been able to put together an incredible resource that can help each of us check-in and take care of our mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Over 1,000 new, unique visitors utilize the online directory ever month.

As we move closer to spring and Women’s History Month, I am reminded to stay humble, connect with others and reflect on my own self-care. In our busy lives and agendas, it is easy to overlook the smaller moments that make up the big goals and those individuals that deeply care and share the same passions that we do. Ultimately, it is the volunteers and those who share their feedback and experiences with us that help to revise, update, and expand LBTHealth.org.

At this time, the online LBT Health Directory covers Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties with over 300 providers and 40 specialties. Each provider profile includes information on insurance, additional services, and LGBTQ inclusivity and policies. As the unique visitors and provider recommendations continue to grow, I realize how vital this resource has become. I encourage everyone to take a look at LBTHealth.org and tell us what you like, what you do not like, and what is missing. If you are interested in working with our team please email us at: LBTHealth@pridecenterflorida.org.

Breast Cancer Walk

The Pride Center organized a passionate team who dressed in pink and raised money for the annual American Cancer Society breast cancer walk through downtown Fort Lauderdale. Photos by Manuel Leon and Kristofer Fegenbush
Have questions about PrEP? Wondering if what you’ve heard from friends is true? Need help accessing a competent physician? Facing challenges with payment?

The Pride Center has expanded its PrEP with Pride program and has hired a creative, passionate, full-time PrEP Coordinator, Patrick Whiteside. Whiteside has been working to increase the awareness of PrEP to at-risk individuals, expand a directory of culturally-competent medical providers prescribing PrEP, and provide direct linkage-to-care for people seeking access to PrEP. Additionally, he is facilitating Pride Center activities, resources, events and services for PrEP as an effective HIV prevention tool.

“The studies have shown that PrEP works,” says Patrick. “It’s great that HIV is no longer the death sentence it once was. Even better, we now have a new way to prevent it: one pill, once a day. But not a lot of people know about this new form of protection, and some can hardly believe it. So we’re here to change that because PrEP is an effective ‘always-on’ form of protection and is proving to be life-changing for our community.”

About 50,000 people get infected with HIV each year in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control. PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) is the first proven-effective biomedical approach to HIV prevention. Currently approved for PrEP is Truvada, an anti-retroviral medication, now used to prevent people from becoming infected with the HIV virus. It is a single pill, and when taken daily has shown to be highly effective against HIV. Adherence is vital. The protocol is recommended in conjunction with testing and condoms. PrEP does not protect you from other STIs.

The Pride Center is excited to expand this game changing shift in HIV prevention, which is aligned with The National HIV/AIDS Strategy three main goals: 1 Reduce HIV-Incidence; 2 Increase access to care and optimize health outcomes; and 3 Reduce HIV-related health disparities.

“In collaboration with The Pride Center’s HIV prevention services, Whiteside has brought his unique marketing perspective to expand the PrEP workshops, conduct innovative town halls and contribute to the goal of Getting to Zero new infections,” says Dr. Listron Mannix, Testing and Outreach Manager.

Whiteside has over 20 years of marketing communications experience, and holds a bachelor of science of advertising communications from Florida International University. He is excited to work at The Pride Center, where he can marry his advertising and advocacy skills to advance information on PrEP.

“Not only are PrEP users reporting less anxiety in their sex lives, but serodiscordant couples are now able to shed the fear that the negative partner might become positive thanks to the protection it provides,” says Patrick. “Although this isn’t the cure or the vaccine we’re still waiting for, it’s definitely a game-changing form of protection we welcome.”

Since beginning his work a few months ago, Patrick has directly counseled over 40 clients and linked them with local doctors. And, feedback affirms he’s off to a great start.

“On behalf of myself and my partner, I wanted to thank you for time yesterday,” says one recent client. “Your knowledge, patience and professionalism were greatly appreciated.”

Patrick is passionate about his work. “When our clients take the time to reach out to me to offer their gratitude for helping them access PrEP, it reminds me how much of an impact we’re making in our community. We’re truly changing lives, but, most importantly, we’re making sex even safer and preventing new HIV infections.”

For information contact:
Patrick Whiteside; (954) 463-9005 ext. 210; 2038 N. Dixie Hwy; Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33305; pwhiteside@pridecenterflorida.org
Founders Circle Reception at The Westin Fort Lauderdale

The Westin Fort Lauderdale Hotel recently hosted a Founders Circle Reception. If you’d like to become a Founder and empower the work of The Center, contact Roger Roa at 954.463.9011. Photos by Stephen Lang.

Martin Luther King Parade

The Pride Center was honored to participate in the annual Martin Luther King Parade. Outreach and prevention staff were received warmly and were able to share about the work of The Center. Photos by Manuel Leon.

Want A Jump-Start To Healthier Living?

If you're a gay or bisexual man living with HIV, you can learn to keep your immune system in strong, peak condition.

Join the FREE 18 week LIFE Program

Contact Shanna Ratliff at (954) 463-9005 Ext. 304 OR sratliff@pridecenterflorida.org

This program can help you...
- Build deeper, supportive relationships with new HIV+ friends!
- Get the latest facts on HIV!
- Improve your physical, emotional and social well being!
- Share your story while you learn from others!
Leland Gallery Opening
This art exhibit opening featured the works of trans artist Leland as part of our month of events honoring Transgender Awareness Month. To learn more about our transgender services and monthly educational events, contact Transgender Services Specialist Jodi Reichman at JReichman@PrideCenterFlorida.org Photos by Manuel Leon

State of the Kiki
The Center’s Kiki Project gathered local leaders and community members to discuss the program of this innovative HIV prevention program. Kiki is designed by same-gender-loving men of color for same-gender-loving men of color.
All Together Now

Consolidating HIV Services Benefits Clients

By Dr. Liston Mannix, Testing and Outreach Manager, and Lorenzo Robertson, Emerging Interventions Manager

Changes are happening on the Equality Park campus. The changes are not only good, but great for clients we serve. We’ve moved all our HIV prevention services--all staff, all programs--to new spaces in Building B. Our changes to serve you better, our community.

“I feel the changes are great for the client,” says Jakari Roundtree, Kiki Project Outreach and Testing Specialist. “If a client is reactive when receiving an HIV test, we can walk him directly to our Healthcare Linkage Coordinator, without parading him across campus. He can meet the team from the PALS Project across the hall. Having all prevention services housed in one building also promotes confidentiality for the client.”

As you may be aware, our HIV testing services used to be located on the first floor of the Schubert Building at the front of campus. Outreach services, healthcare navigation, ARTAS, VOICES and some other prevention services were on the second floor. Our PALS Project, Couples Speak and the Kiki Project were housed in Building B at the back of campus. For clients, community members, visitors or collaborative organizations, it could all be a little confusing.

The Center’s prevention services have grown exponentially over the last decade. New programs, new services and new staff moved into available spaces as we evolved. There was always a method to the madness. As we assessed the best ways to serve the community, though, we’ve long wanted to unite our HIV prevention services into one cohesive space. Now we have.

“I love the changes,” says Rafael Reyes, Healthcare Linkage Coordinator. “I think the moves make the experience more seamless for clients. As staff, we can work more cohesively as a prevention team.”

We hope the new space lives up to our mission statement: to provide a welcoming, safe space—an inclusive home—to our community. Our prevention staff and volunteer team is dedicated to providing the best, most welcoming services. Whether you’re picking up a condom, seeking counsel, needing to be linked to healthcare, investigating PrEP, having a Kiki, or enrolling in LIFE, CHOICES or Couples Speak, we’re here for you. We encourage neighbors, visitors, clients, supporters, friends and family to come take a tour of our new home. Stay awhile! Our services are FREE.

Did you know?

- Our PrEP Specialist helps people get information, education and access assistance for Pre Exposure Prophylaxis. Email Prep@PrideCenterFlorida.org for more info.

- Over 1000 visitors and 80 vendors attend The Pride Center’s Flea Market on the first Saturday of every month. Check it out!

- Every day, The Center hosts a variety of 12-step meetings, including AA, NA and CMA

- The Pride Center is the largest site for Enhanced Fitness classes for Seniors offered in the United States. Get healthy with The Center!
**Groups at the Pride Center**

**WEEKLY RECURRING MEETINGS**
- AA – Each Day a New Beginning, Recovery, Daily, 9-10a
- AA – Northeast Group, Recovery, Mon, 8:30-9:30p
- AA – Sober, Proud and Gay, Recovery, Fri, 8:30-10p
- AA – Pride 5:45 Meeting, Recovery, Daily, 5:45-6:45p
- A Course in Miracles, Social, Tues, 7:00p-9:00p
- BrothasspeakFTL-Social, Wed, 7:00p-9:00p
- Coffee and Conversation – SAC, Social/Seniors, Tues, 10:30a-12noon
- Crystal Meth Anonymous, Recovery Mon 6p-7p, Wed, 6p-7p
- Games Day, Social, 2nd & 4th Tues, 1-4p
- Gay Bridge Club, Fun, Mon & Fri, 1-4p
- Gay Hearts, Social, Sun, 1-3:30p
- Gay Men’s Empowerment Group, Thurs 7p-8:30p
- Living Agelessly @ Pride Center w/ August Gold, Tues, Social, 12-1p
- Island City Al-Anon-Support, Thur, 7-8p
- Mahjong, Social, Wed, 1:50p
- Man2Man Talk, Social, Mon, 7-8:30p
- Monday Night Women’s Group, Social, Mon, 7-8:30p
- Narcotics Anonymous Rainbow Group, Recovery, Wed, 8-9p
- New Path Narcotics Anonymous Group, Recovery, Mon/Tue/Thu, 7-8p
- New Path Narcotics Anonymous Group, Recovery, Sat/Sun, 4-5p
- Open Hearts Meditation Group, Sat, 3:30p-5p
- Overeaters Anonymous, Recovery, Sun, 12n-1:30p
- Overeaters Anonymous, Recovery, Fri, 7:30-9p
- POZ Attitudes Here and Now, HIV Support, Wed, 7-8p
- Quit Smoking Now, Tues 7p-8:30p (inquire for details)
- SAGE Men’s Social, Social/Seniors, Wed, 1-3p
- SAGE Computer Club, Wed 4p-5:15p
- SAGE CO-ED Discussion Group, Thurs, 1p-3p
- Sunserve POZ Long-Term Survivor, Gay Men/HIV Support, 1st & 3rd Tues, 6:30-8p
- Senior Games Day, Social, 2nd & 4th Tue, 1-4p

**BI-WEEKLY RECURRING MEETINGS**
- Ballet & Opera Group, Educational, 2nd & 4th Sunday, 1-4p
- Sunserve POZ Long-Term Survivor, Gay Men/HIV Support, 1st & 3rd Tues, 6:30-8p
- Senior Games Day, Social, 2nd & 4th Tue, 1-4p

**MONTHLY RECURRING MEETINGS/EVENTS**
- Pride Center BINGO, Open to Public, 2nd Sat, 7-10p and 4th Sun, 4p-7p
- Dolphin Democrats, Monthly Meeting, 2nd Wed, 7:30-9:30p
- Equality Park Garden Club, Educational, 3rd Wed, 7-9p
- Pride Center Flea Market, Open to Public, 1st Sat, 8a-2p
- Primetimers, Open to Public, 1st Sun, 2-4:30p
- SAGE Movie, Social, 3rd Mon, 4-6p
- Spiritual Workshop with August Gold, Social, 2nd Sat, 1p-3p
- Transgender Support Group, Support, 3rd Fri, 7-8:30p
- Women with Pride Book Club, 2nd Thu, 7-8p
- Women with Pride Game Night, 1st Tues, 7-9p
- Women with Pride Book Club, 2nd Thu, 7-8p
- Women with Pride Game Night, 1st Tues, 7-9p

For further information or to rent a room for your special event call: Samantha McCoy at 954-463-9005 ext. 101.
Visit www.pridecenterflorida.org/calendar for meeting room assignments.
Room days/times subject to change.
These businesses represent some of our valuable supporters. To become a Business Founder, please contact Roger Roa: RRoa@pridecenterflorida.org or 954.463.9005
Did you know?

- The Pride Center’s CouplesSpeak program builds relationship skills, improves communication, lowers risks, and enhances sex

- The Pride Center’s Healthcare Navigator links people daily to vital medical care. Contact The Pride Center for more info!

- The Pride Center provides workshops for prospective and current LGBT parents. Follow The Center on Facebook to stay up-to-date

- The Pride Center has provided individualized HIV prevention outreach to more than 70,000 people since the beginning of 2015
WHAT’S YOUR DEAL?

How do you prevent the spread of HIV?
Start the conversation using #SaferSexDeal

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A
other year has come and gone since I’ve written anything for SFGN and in that year I’ve had a lot of life experiences that have shaped my life as a person living with HIV for the better and the worse.

When I wrote to you all last January, I was just in Florida for a quick visit for my medicine study appointment and I was heading back to Nashville. I’m very fortunate that this study has allowed me to explore all the avenues in my life that I want to and still be able to participate. I like getting a little mini-vacation to Florida every 12 weeks if I’m elsewhere in the country. I’ve been on this study for a little over three years now and I’m doing great as far as medicine is concerned (minus one little bout of pneumonia last March) but maybe society has a different opinion.

I’m still trying to find my place in this world. Some might think I’m running from something but I don’t see that. In the last year I’ve been in Nashville, Chicago, New York City, Fort Lauderdale and now I’m back in my home state of Virginia as I write this. In fact, I’m sitting in my parent’s home office using their computer to compose this diary entry.

Virginia is really the last place I want to be right now but just like a Lemony Snicket narrative, a series of unfortunate events has kept me here. The move to Chicago was for love. New York was for a work opportunity that I knew was too good to be true. I landed back in Fort Lauderdale when I felt I had nowhere left to go. Funny how I’m literally home, but Florida will always feel like the place I grew up.

The point of telling you about all of my travels and lack of stability is -- a few weeks before I had to travel back to Virginia for my grandmother’s funeral -- I didn’t think I’d make it. I’m not talking about travel plans; I had friends help me with a flight. I started to feel very closed in and backed up against a wall. I was going through a bottle of vodka a day. I wasn’t taking my meds like I should have. I was making myself feel somewhat wanted by having aimless sex with strangers. I had no idea what to do or where to turn to next and I only saw one way out: taking my own life.

HIV has been a constant struggle for me. Coming to grips with the diagnosis was my first hurdle. The next hurdle was dealing with the rejection of people in my own community AND family. You’d think being in the house of a man that told me I was going to die of AIDS and go to hell would make me want to kill myself, but it was the “no way out” feeling I had in Florida that had me at one of the lowest points in my life.

All of these thoughts were flashing in my head and all I could focus on was hoping that the vodka or this virus would hurry up and kick in. My grandmother’s passing is the only thing that saved my life. A death giving life to something else is very poetic. I’m not the type of person that views suicide as selfish. Hey, I can completely understand when someone might feel there’s nothing they can do to make themselves happy. I messaged my friend Matthew in Chicago about what I was thinking and he managed to talk me off an edge. He asked me to think about what it would do to my mother to lose me and my grandmother in a matter of days.

I still don’t know how I feel about the way my life is going right now. I’m back in my home town with no job, no income and I’m staying on a friend’s couch. All I know is that I’m alive and these two pills I take every morning are only one of the reasons. What I’m looking forward to the most is waking up tomorrow. I know that deep down I feel like shit every single day but maybe things will turn around. I’ve learned a very important lesson in patience this last year.

A lesson that has been the most valuable one I have ever learned.
Welcome back to Bilerico. It’s good to see you again.

When I shut down the Bilerico Project last year after pouring my heart and soul into it for over a decade, I thought the dream had died. Many of you mourned Bilerico's demise with me and sent me kind notes asking if there was any way to resurrect it. There was.

I sold the site to the great folks at Q.Digital later in the year and they’ve brought it back! Bilerico Project will always hold a special place in my heart as a gathering place for new ideas and community voices. It will remain that. But it’s all time for Bilerico to “evolve” like Obama and Hillary Clinton.

In a blogosphere full of news aggregators and short copy-and-paste clippings, it’s time to bring back the real stuff. For the most part, only larger mainstream sites and local queer newspapers are taking on the challenge of original reporting; it’s time to provide that again for our community on a national scale.

So welcome to the new Bilerico Report. Our focus will be a little different, but we’ll still bring you the quality reporting and op-eds our readers expect. Instead of covering every news item, our partner LGBTQNation will handle that. Our friends at Queerty will provide the fun and snark we always incorporated in our coverage. We’ll be able to put our time and energy into the in-depth investigative reporting, opinion and think pieces that have become scarce lately.

I’ll still be running the show here and helping out in the morning with LGBTQNation. Some of our old contributors will be coming back to interact with you again and we plan on re-running some of Bilerico Project’s best posts again so they get one more turn in the spotlight. And the timing couldn’t be better! We’re right in the middle of a presidential election that will partly determine our future and our increasingly international movement for equality and freedom needs close examination.

While you’re here, don’t forget to like our Facebook page and follow us on Twitter if you have not already. Our social media presence will ramp back up now and you won’t want to miss a thing.

After all, Bilerico has always been about family. Welcome home.
HOMO HISTORY 101

History was never as straight as we are told. Recording our history means reporting the truth.

Pier Angelo

Italian designers Domenico Dolce (1958) and Stefano Gabbana (1962): The two met in Milan in 1980 and designed for the same fashion house. In 1982 they established a designer consulting studio; in time it grew to become the world renowned “Dolce & Gabbana” fashion house. They presented their first women’s collection in 1985 in Milan, where a year later their store would open its doors. They won the Woolmark award in 1991, and the prize “most feminine flavor of the year” in 1993.

Towards the end of the 1990s their sales were around 500 million dollars and in 2003 their revenue reached $633 million. By 2005, their turnover was over $ 900 million. What is considered to be their first foray into international recognition came when Madonna wore a corset made of gemstones and accompanying jacket from Dolce & Gabbana to the premiere of Truth or Dare: In Bed with Madonna at the 1990 Cannes Film Festival. The duo then partnered with Madonna in 1993 to design over 1500 costumes for the artist’s Girlie Show international tour in support of her 1992 album Erotica. In an interview about the costumes, Madonna stated that, “Their clothes are sexy with a sense of humor—I like me.”

In 1994, the house’s trademark double-breasted jacket was named “La Turlington” after model Christy Turlington. That same year the company launched its second main line—D&G, a line aimed at younger individuals. In 1996 the D&G runway show appeared only on the Internet and not the runway, in an experimental move towards new media. That year Dolce & Gabbana also designed the costumes for the film Romeo and Juliet. In an interview in the 16 March 2015 issue of Italian magazine Panorama, they aroused controversy with the remark: “We oppose gay adoptions. The only family is the traditional one.” They also criticized in vitro and surrogacy by saying, “No chemical off-spring and rented uterus: life has a natural flow, there are things that should not be changed.” Since the comments were made by two gay men in an industry often seen as gay-friendly, reactions were especially harsh. Critics took to social media to voice their opposition, with the hashtag #BoycottDolceGabbana garnering 30,000 tweets on Twitter in five days. Celebrities, including Elton John, Madonna, Victoria Beckham, Ricky Martin, Martina Navratilova and Courtney Love, were among those expressing anger over the remarks. Love said she would “burn all of her Dolce and Gabbana clothing”, while John, father of two children conceived through IVF, commented, “How dare you refer to my beautiful children as ‘synthetic.’” Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana say their most difficult time came in 2005, when they broke up as a couple after 23 years together, but remained partners professionally.

Platinette: The most famous Italian drag queen, was born on November 4, 1955 in Pilastrino, Italy, as Mauro Coruzzi. As an actor he is known for A Magnificent Haunting (2012), Hate 2 O (2006) and A Christmas Carol (2004). He has been a radio and TV talk show host, a writer and a singer. Platinette’s breakthrough came after her appearance on a well-known Italian night time talk show called The Maurizio Costanzo Show. From the start she never spared spicy comments immediately grabbing the audience’s attention in a conservative world that only gave space to handsome men and beautiful women. One of the reasons she was embraced across the board was that she didn’t just talk about cross dressing, homosexuality or transgender issues. Instead she went on TV to discuss and ridicule, often with irony, topics that everyone could relate to and in the process made many realize that even if people seem different, in the end we are really more the same than the other way around. And so she became part of Italian pop culture. Now that Italian gays are finally beginning to gain acceptance and traction a figure like Platinette symbolizes a sense of freedom and liberty and someone to look up to. Someone that can provide strength and inspiration. Furthermore, the longer Platinette has been on television and radio talking about things like politics, religion and life in general, the less the cross-dressing is even an issue for those who may have been taken aback at first.
Six degrees of separation.

That, supposedly, is the difference between you and any given person on the planet. Your dentist, for example, knows somebody who knows someone who... and pretty soon, you're linked to a famous scientist or Hollywood star. It's a fun pastime, that Six Degrees thing, and surprisingly easy to do but in the new novel “And West is West” by Ron Childress, it could also be a deadly game.

Living with Zoe wasn’t originally Ethan’s desire. She’d stayed at his Manhattan condo many times – they were a couple, after all - but he was still surprised when he heard himself ask her to move in, and equally surprised that she agreed. Yes, he loved her – which was something he only truly realized just before she left for a job in D.C.

Heartbroken, Ethan turned to his other love: coding for United Imperial Bank. For him, it was the perfect job. UIB gave him an office and freedom to write algorithms to follow terrorists in order to follow the markets, creating serious money for Ethan and for his employers. That, plus Zoe, could’ve made him happy.

Except Zoe was gone, then someone set Ethan up to fail at work and his job was gone, too. And just as he thought things were looking up, Zoe was dead and Ethan was left holding the secrets of her life that her parents couldn’t tell her.

It always seemed as though Jessica Aldridge was running.

She ran away from her mother’s alcoholism as a child. She ran away from family as a teen. She ran to the Air Force, where she became a highly-trained drone pilot but, since a remote strike had gone horribly wrong and someone had to take the fall for it, she ran from that, too.

But Jessica had just been following orders then. Her real mistake, she understood, was confiding her misgivings to the wrong person: her imprisoned father, whom she barely knew. She also understood that the government wasn’t going to take a breach of security lightly - and with the FBI on her tail, Jessica had to run again...

I have to admit that I was no big fan of “And West is West” when I started it. Its first few pages were more techy than I expected, and I wasn’t in the mood for that.

Whoo, was I glad I stayed.

Once you get past the prologue, author Ron Childress takes readers in a whole different, unexpected direction with what seems like a profile of a psychologically flawed man. Ethan, in fact, is driven, indecisive, and so very imperfect - which makes him the perfect distraction from the page-ripping thriller that is Jessica. It seems unlikely, then, that the two are connected, but you’ll recall that six degrees stuff?

Yep, and it doesn’t even take that many steps.

This is one of those keeps-you-up-at-night, miss-your-subway-stop kinds of books that you’ll pass around to friends. It’s one to take to your book club. For sure, “And West is West” is a solid ten.
SFGN held its 6 year anniversary on January 27 at Hunters Nightclub in Wilton Manors. The party doubled as a benefit for Poverello raising more than $2,400 for the organization.
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For someone who fixes teeth for a living, Doctor Charmaine Johnson’s heart is certainly in the right place. Founder of Premier Smile Center in Fort Lauderdale, Johnson is a respected dentist with a welcoming demeanor and a passion for social justice. She has been in practice for 16 years, educated in Chicago and raised in South Africa.

“I had braces as a child,” she admitted during a recent interview with SFGN from her office on East Oakland Park Blvd. “I was the typical nerdy kid.”

Understanding the importance of self-esteem, Johnson decided to make smiles a living. She started in her native South Africa, volunteering at clinics serving the impoverished and struggling.

“We saw people who had full blown AIDS and cancer wasting,” recalls Johnson. “They felt embarrassed and ashamed, but we let them know that we were there to help and we would not treat them any differently.”

Johnson returns to South Africa regularly with her charity, A Spring of Hope. The organization provides sanitary water to schools and communities in need by drilling wells and building reservoirs.

“What we love about this charity is it has an immediate impact and works toward long term improvements in the lives of people and especially the children,” Johnson said.

After relocating to the United States, Johnson taught dentistry at the University of Illinois at Chicago where she completed her general residency. She relocated to South Florida in 2002 and began teaching at Nova Southeastern University. While in practice, Johnson has had multiple research papers published in dental association journals.

At Premier Smile Center, Johnson said the first order of business is to make the patient feel comfortable.

“Some people are scared to see a dentist,” she admitted. “We do our best to provide excellent and friendly care.”

Sparkling white teeth and healthy gums for life is Johnson’s goal for every person she sees. Premier Smile Center works with most insurance providers and offers specials, gift cards, and payment plans.

“From a clinical perspective, we want to know what do you need?, What is your main concern? And what do we need to do to achieve those goals?,” Johnson said.
A few weeks ago, Honda brought out its eensy HR-V crossover and I kinda loved it. But for 2016, Honda has also brought out a redesigned model on the exact other end of the crossover scale, the seven-passenger Pilot.

Like many actual pilots I know, this one is handsome and refined and eminently likable. Its look is familiar, with the three-bar grille and beveled front fascia that we’ve seen on other Hondas for years now, but the crisp new body proves that Honda’s angular form vocabulary scales up pretty well.

Same story inside. Nothing mind-blowing here, but everything looks snappy and works well. Honda’s typical mastery of ergonomics and versatility are on full display, save, perhaps, for Honda’s touch-screen infotainment system, which occasionally works my nerve. (Bring back buttons, please!) And as always, the third-row seat is large—you’ll use it more often than you think—yet vanishes when not needed.

In keeping with Honda’s Earth-friendly mantra, the Pilot has become even more eco-friendly than ever, having trimmed nearly 300 pounds of weight and received a more powerful and more efficient V-6. Particularly in higher trims, where the standard transmission becomes a smooth and efficient nine-speed (!) automatic, the result is not just a vehicle that’s more fuel-efficient, but is more responsive when you stomp on it. After all, with cars as with people, less weight makes all things easier, from accelerating to stopping to changing directions. And for you trailer queens, this one can tug up to 5,000 pounds of your favorite weekend toys, whether they be for camping, off-roading, or, um, watersports.

The Pilot was designed in California and is built in Alabama, so in that new car smell is a whiff of patriotism, too. Prices start at $30,875, but I would suggest budgeting another 10 grand for bells and whistles. After all, Pilots (and pilots) are best when well-equipped.
Spending in America’s LGBT media is at a record high of $381.4 million, up 18.2% from 2012. Circulation and readership of LGBT media are also up a healthy 15.1%*

Now that’s just SUPER!
As an old married couple (24+ years), my husband and I tend to look at Valentine’s Day with a raised eyebrow and a snort of derision. It’s a holiday for young and/or new love. They exchange romantic gifts and go out for romantic dinners. Last year my hubby bought me a new lawn mower and picked up a bucket of fried chicken. This year I’m hoping for a drill (and that’s not a euphemism!) Who says romance is dead?

However, as Maggie Smith says in The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, “For those who like that sort of thing, that is the sort of thing they like.” Here’s a list of restaurants offering special dining options for Valentine’s Day.

### DB BISTRO MODERNE
255 Biscayne Blvd.
Miami
305-421-8800
dBBistro.com

The chic and modern Miami hot spot will offer a four-course prix-fixe Valentine’s menu on Saturday and Sunday for $155 per person. The meal starts with a choice of peekytoe crab salad or guinea hen terrine, followed by black truffle risotto and your choice of a duo of beef or butter-poached lobster. The meal tops off with a strawberry & raspberry tart with berry sauce and citrus yogurt ice cream or tiramisu with whipped potatoes, off the cob cream corn, vine ripened tomatoes and spring onions. The sweet finish is a chocolate lover’s dessert.

### PICCOLO RISTORANTE
2826 E Commercial
Fort Lauderdale
954-776-8066
PiccoloFL.com

If you’ve been dubbed one of the most romantic restaurants by the Sun Sentinel, you’ve got something to live up to. The intimate dining room and soft background music set the mood for a menu of specials in addition to the regular menu. The chef’s romance menu will be offering a few specials in addition to his regular menu; goat cheese stuffed figs wrapped in prosciutto, poached pear and gorgonzola risotto and pork with balsamic reduction as well as a variety of wine specials for the evening.

### III FORKS PRIME STEAKHOUSE
4645 PGA Blvd.
Palm Beach Gardens
561-630-3660.
iiIForks.com

The “Sweetheart Menu,” available Feb. 6-14, is $160 per couple and includes the choice of a salad or lobster bisque, along with a six-ounce filet mignon accompanied by a six-ounce cold water lobster tail, served with whipped potatoes, off the cob cream corn, vine ripened tomatoes and spring onions. The sweet finish is a chocolate lover’s dessert. What’s a celebratory dinner without sparkling wine? Chandon Brut is available for $15 by the glass, Gruet Blanc de Noir for $12 by the glass, Schramsberg Blanc de Blanc for $70 a bottle. The same deal is available at it’s Hallandale location in Gulfstream Park, 501 Silks Run, 954-457-3920.

### CANTINA LAREDO
501 Silks Run
954-457-7662
CantinaLaredo.com

Located right across the way from III Forks in Gulfstream Park, the modern Mexican restaurant offers a “Valentine’s Especialidad” for $35 per person, with cocktail pairings are available for an additional $15. The celebratory meal begins with either mango salad with jicama or creamy vegetable soup with chicken, tortilla strips and queso fresco. Entrée choices include sautéed shrimp with spicy mango mole sauce, a 10 ounce bone-in pork chop with guajillo-tamarind sauce and Angus filet mignon topped with black peppercorn Dijon sauce. Dessert options are fresh strawberries with whipped cream and vanilla ice cream on cinnamon chips or churros drizzled with chocolate raspberry sauce.

Speaking of casinos, you don’t normally think of one as a Valentine’s Day destination, but restaurants at two in the area are betting that they’ve got special menus to entice you.

### SEMINOLE CASINO
5550 NW 40th St., Coconut Creek
954-977-6700
SeminoleCoconutCreekCasino.com

If you’re the buffet type you’ll enjoy Fresh Harvest, now open after an extensive upgrade. The Valentine’s Day buffet, available until 10 p.m., is $35 and includes one pound of crab legs in addition to buffet items as well as endless mimosa and sparkling wine. The regular buffet features prime rib, leg of lamb, swordfish, truffle risotto, salmon Benedict, and sushi. If that’s a bit overwhelming, Sorrisi, also at the casino, offers a prix-fixe three-course meal for $55 per person. The repast starts with a choice of cioppino or strawberry salad appetizer, followed by truffled seabass or veal scallopine topped with butter poached lobster nestled over a bed of sundried tomato risotto for entree. The meal concludes with red velvet tiramisu, coffee caramel or buttermilk sorbet.
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**THU 2/11**

**CONCERT**

Cher may yet launch another “farewell” tour, but we’re betting an opportunity to see Barbra Live will never happen. Here’s the next best thing: “Hello Gorgeous! A Live Tribute to Barbra Streisand,” starring Rebecca Clark, at the Aventura Arts & Cultural Center, 3385 NE 188th St. in Aventura. Hear a real woman sing all the musical legend’s greatest hits tonight at 8 p.m. Tickets are $40.50 at AventuraCenter.org.

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**FRI 2/12**

**THEATER**

The world is a better place thanks to newspaper advice columnist Ann Landers, isn’t it? “The Lady with All the Answers,” this weekend at the Kravis Center in West Palm Beach, offers a compelling one-woman portrait of the writer who offered stern common sense to readers on a daily basis until her death in 2002. And we’re all better for it, except maybe that crazy mother-in-law. Tickets are $35 at Kravis.org.

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**SAT 2/13**

**ART**

Meet German-born pop artist Peter Max at Key West Gallery, 601 Duval St. in Key West, today between 1-4 p.m. and 7-10 p.m. The artist, known for brilliant, colorful works has created distinctive looks for international sporting events, Norwegian Cruise Lines and record albums. He’ll be showing an eclectic collection, including homages to the Impressionist masters. More info at KeyWestGallery.com.

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**SUN 2/14**

**TELEVISION**

It’s Valentine’s Day and if you’re not going to wine and dine your special someone—followed by a little “mow chicka mow mow”—then you may just have to resign yourself to the next best thing, the midseason premiere of “The Walking Dead” at 9 p.m. on AMC. Call us a little jaded, but we know some relationships that could take a few lessons from those zombies. Check local listings for stations and show times.

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**MON 2/15**

**FILM**

Time to perfect that pout, because the “world’s most beautiful people” are headed back to the silver screen in “Zoolander 2,” starring Ben Stiller. Super models are being assassinated and it’s up to Derek (Stiller) and Hansel (Owen Wilson) to infiltrate a new and different world of high fashion and stop their nemesis, the evil Jacobim Mugatu (Will Farrell). Check local listings for theaters and show times.

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**TUE 2/16**

**ART**

Don’t miss an opportunity to check out not one, but three exhibitions of work by pop art icon Andy Warhol at the Boca Raton Museum of Art, 501 W. Plaza Real. See his famous “Campbell’s Soup Cans” prints and more from the collection of Marc Bell, candid photographs by Bob Colacello of Warhol’s frenetic life and a rare assemblage of 60 record album cover designs. For more information, go to BocaMuseum.org.
The Kinsey Sicks in
Electile Dysfunction

FEBRUARY 21

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www.ParkerPlayhouse.com
DELARIA TO PERFORM AT PARKER PLAYHOUSE

Best known as “Big Boo” on Orange is the New Black, performer Lea DeLaria performs at the Parker Playhouse on February 13th. SFGN caught up with the actress, comedian and singer recently to talk Hollywood, health and her upcoming show.

SFGN: Orange is the New Black was a big winner at the SAG Awards. What was that like?

LD: It was a second time, which made it a tiny bit easier. It was very exciting. All of these awards shows are very fun. Given my history and where I’ve come from, I never expected to be at these award shows. Just being there is a real joy and the fact that we won is just craziness, two years in a row – craziness!

SFGN: This awards season the talk is all about the lack of diversity at the Oscars. What do you think about that?

LD: As I was quoted by a lot of different people, I personally think the fact that we’re even having the conversation is a win for the good guys. You know, I’ve been in this industry a long time. Those of us in the Queer community and let me be clear, I don’t say LGBTQ, I don’t say that because I believe Queer encompasses everybody. That’s just the way I work. I believe we in the Queer community have always talked about that, but in the mainstream world, especially the mainstream show business world, it’s a conversation that always needed to happen, but never has happened. Now suddenly everybody’s talking about it. That is a great deal. That is a huge deal and if you think about that, we’ve certainly come a long way.

SFGN: Are you engaged to be married. How’s planning for the big day going?

LD: My fiancée is a fashion designer/editor. For me to get involved at all is craziness. I mean, she’s the one with the aesthetic so I let her do everything. I’m not stupid, why would I stand in her way? She’s pretty much doing everything. I’m dealing with the music. I do a lot of the logistical stuff. I’m the one who got Sandra Bernhard to be our officiant and all that. I’m the one who picked who’s singing at our wedding. I’m hiring the band and that kind of stuff because that’s the stuff I know. She is designing all of it. And the two of us together are picking the venue.

SFGN: Who’s going to sing?

LD: Lots of people. Uzo Aduba is singing at our wedding. So is Dina Martina. Uzo is going to be doing ‘I’m Calling You’ from Baghdad Cafe. There’s going to be a nine-person gospel choir behind her. Dina Martina, who is my all-time favorite entertainer, is also a singer. Scott Thompson from the Kids in the Hall is also performing. Jesse Tyler Ferguson is my best man.

SFGN: You’ve been public with your diabetes diagnosis. How’s your health these days?

LD: I am a diabetic because the disease is chronic. I no longer really have diabetes. My blood sugar is being handled by exercise, medication and food intake. I am as healthy as a horse. I’m healthier than I’ve been in a very long time.

SFGN: Was it hard to take that public?

LD: No! I think it’s important that people be honest about who and what they are. It’s not like I have cancer you know what I mean? That would be a different issue entirely. I can see why Alan Rickman and David Bowie went the route that they went. It’s something else entirely. It’s very private and personal to have something that you’re going to succumb to but something like this that is chronic, I think it is good to put a good human face on it for people. There are a lot of diabetes out there and a lot of people who don’t understand the disease at all. There are so many misconceptions. I can’t tell you the number of people who said, ‘if you weren’t so fat, you wouldn’t get diabetes.’ That is not how you get diabetes. That is not what causes diabetes. The biggest issue is heredity. In fact, race and heredity are the biggest issues. I’ve spoken about it openly on The Wendy Williams Show. I spoke about it on The View. I do interviews about it. I said it to People Magazine and everything exploded. Look, it’s a disease that is chronic. If people don’t take care of it, they lose their feet; their legs or they can die. A lot of people don’t take care of it. I personally think I have as much responsibility around my diabetes as I do about being a butch dyke. I’m in the public eye; they know I have it, so take care of it.

SFGN: What are you looking forward to?

LD: Hanging out with Varla Jean will be fun. I can’t wait to do the songs and the show that I’m doing. Of course I’m looking forward to the warm weather. And I’m going to hang out an extra day, my fiancée is joining me and we’re going to spend Valentine’s Day at the tip of Florida. So that should be nice.

SFGN: Tell me a little about the show. What can folks expect?

LD: I think people are familiar with the format of this show. I bet all you queers down there are familiar with what Seth does. Seth couldn’t be there so Varla Jean Merman will be filling in for Seth. What basically is going to happen is Varla is going to talk to me about my career and during the course of that I will also be funny because that’s the stuff I do and I will sing songs as well because that’s what I do. I can’t wait to come to South Florida. For some reason, I have been in South Florida a lot lately. Every time I turn around I’m getting booked in Florida. I’m really excited to be coming back again and it will be really fun to do the piano/voice stuff for your guys because it’s a completely different sound. I’m also looking forward to the strip clubs. I do love the strip clubs down there.

SFGN: For more information about Lea DeLaria’s upcoming show, visit http://www.parkerplayhouse.com/events/detail/lea-delaria.
NEW PLAY OFFERS LAUGHS, SERIOUS LOOK AT SEXUAL IDENTITY

J.W. Arnold

You don’t have to be Dr. Phil—or Dr. Ruth, as a matter of fact—to figure out that playwright Ronnie Larsen is slightly obsessed with sex.

His works include “Making Porn,” the story of a straight man who finds himself sucked into the world of gay porn, last year’s smash hit “All-Male Peep Show” and “The Naked Penis Talk Show,” a hilarious live comedy act in which audiences get to ask three anonymous naked guys anything about their male organs.

Now, Larsen has returned to Empire Stage with “Cocksucker: A Love Story,” which opened last weekend to sold out audiences and may, according to the producers, be among the biggest financial successes for the tiny theater space.

Like “Peep Show,” inspired by Larsen’s experiences in seedy Times Square in the early 1990s, “Cocksucker” is somewhat autobiographical.

Larsen, who also directs, stars as Isaac, a gay man with an obsession for oral sex. Early on, he realizes his attraction isn’t to other gay men, but to the straight men he encounters at adult movie theaters and truck stops. When he dons any frumpy frock and a wig, however, these “straight” men get caught up in the illusion and cast inhibitions aside as “Truck Stop Sally” pleasures them.

Along the way, Isaac encounters opportunistic Harry (Roberto Adolpho), a gay filmmaker who takes a lesson from Isaac’s playbook, videotaping straight Marines who think they are auditioning for heterosexual porn flicks. Unfortunately, Harry is either not as skilled as Isaac or simply unlucky, when the game turns ugly after one of the Marines is court martialed.

And then there is Joshua (performed authentically by Brandon Renfroe), a young Marine recruit from rural Mississippi, who feels an attraction to Sally and at first seems open to the idea of a relationship with Sally and Isaac. That’s the love story.

Lory Reyes and David R. Gordon round out the small cast, portraying a variety of roles from mother and father to strippers and Marines.

Like all of his plays, “Cocksucker” is wickedly funny, with most of the best laughs generated by Larsen’s deadpan delivery. But, beyond the many one-liners and gratuitous full frontal nudity, the play offers audiences a veiled, but thoughtful examination of sexual identity and the willingness to compromise those roles to achieve sexual gratification.

The drama is accentuated with unusually strong sound design (also by Larsen). Sound clips of media interviews by Monica Lewinsky and President Bill Clinton provide context to the national dialogue about sex at the time and clever musical interludes effectively set the scene and advance the plot.

The many scene changes demand sophisticated lighting that Empire Stage’s meager resources can’t quite deliver, and the sparse set—decorated with U.S., Marine Corps and rainbow flags—provides an unusually blank canvas for the action.

“Cocksucker” still needs some polish, but the message was never lost on the mature gay men in the Empire Stage audience, some of whom may just be able to identify with Isaac’s conundrum.
Darlene Love may be a member of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and "one of the greatest singers of all times," according to "Rolling Stone," but the 74-year-old singer never became a household name even though generations of Americans have danced to her hits.

The daughter of a minister, she got her start singing in the choir in her father’s Los Angeles church. Producer Phil Specter discovered Love and, in the late ‘50s and early ‘60s, she sang back-up to some of the biggest artists of the era, Sam Cooke, Dionne Warwick, The Beach Boys, Elvis Presley, Tom Jones and Sonny and Cher.

Her first single, "He’s a Rebel," was a huge hit, except for one problem. Specter, eager to get the recording to market, credited the performance to another, better known group, The Crystals.

But, Love refused to give up and the spunky singer got the last laugh when filmmakers approached her in 2013 to appear in a documentary about her career. “When you talk about the things that happen to you in the business, shocking things come out, but it’s the truth,” Love explained. “I did get a chance to make a lot of things right.”

The film, “20 Feet from Stardom,” premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and went on to win the Academy Award for Best Documentary. The soundtrack nabbed Love a Grammy, also.

“Last year was a pretty good year,” she admitted.

Over the years, she’s dabbled in acting, starring as Danny Glover’s wife in four “Lethal Weapon” movies and taken star turns on Broadway in “Grease” and the short-lived revival of “Carrie.”

But, the Christmas holiday is Love’s true love. She performed her song, “Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)” on the last episode before the holiday on David Letterman’s TV shows from 1986 until last year. And, for more than a decade, she has performed Christmas favorites to sold out halls in New York, an annual tradition for many fans.

Her latest album, “Introducing Darlene Love,” produced by Steve Van Zandt and featuring two new songs by Bruce Springsteen, was released last September.

Love is excited to be performing in South Florida:

“I’ve never come before as Darlene Love,” she said, recalling previous appearances with Warwick and other singers. “I have my own band and my own back-up singers.”

She plans to perform both her classics and songs from the new album.

“I let my audiences pick,” Love explained. “We’re friends. We talk back and forth and have a great time.”

Above all, Love is certain audiences will leave and they will know her name.

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For more information please visit our website at www.pridewindensemble.org

Darlene Love performs Saturday, Feb. 20 at 8 p.m. at the Parker Playhouse, 707 NE 8th St. in Fort Lauderdale. Tickets are $37.50 - $47.50 at ParkerPlayhouse.com.
A trio of diverse films—a foreign language drama, the latest Michael Moore documentary and an LGBT comedy thriller—all opening next week in South Florida offer audiences a wide selection of entertainment options:

“The Club”
Opens Feb. 12 at Tower Theater Miami and O Cinema Miami Beach and Feb. 19 at Living Room Theaters, Boca Raton
Check local listings for show times.

“The Club,” the Chilean Golden Globe winner for Best Foreign Language Film is an apt counterpart to “Spotlight,” Tom McCarthy’s critically-lauded ensemble drama about the newspaper investigation that broke open the Catholic Church abuse scandal in Boston.

Living in exile in a seaside village, four disgraced priests and their caretaker, a nun, receive a surprise visit from a Vatican emissary. Their uncomfortably comfortable existence—a seeming purgatory void of absolution—turns dark as one of the priests’ victims shows up at the gate and yells profanities at the men, stirring feelings of shame.

Director Pablo Larraín’s film is dark and disturbing, a complex psychological portrait of men who committed heinous abuses and the attempts of the church to reconcile theology with organized religion.

“Where to Invade Next”
Opens Feb. 12
Check local listings for theaters and show times.

Filmmaker Michael Moore is a polarizing figure, drawing admiration from liberals and disgust from conservatives. His latest film, “Where to Invade Next,” based on the premise that all the United States lost every military conflict since World War II and if we invaded more “enlightened” countries, we could finally reap the benefits of war. Moore heads to Europe, where he sets his sights on invading Italy, where workers receive long lunches and even longer vacations; France, where school students eat gourmet meals every day; Finland, where college education is free and students are amassing incredible levels of debt with a weak job market awaiting them; and Germany, where the population is publicly shamed for its anti-Semitic past.

But, each of the countries he cites has flaws, too. France faces a 25 percent unemployment rate among young people. Finland, Slovenia and Iceland are relatively small, homogenous societies, Italy has a raging national debt and stagnated economy. I would wager that most citizens of any of these countries would still emigrate to the United States, given the chance.

As the prototypical moderate—a fiscal conservative and liberal on social issues—I found the film disturbing and got tired of his pummeling of “our” country. The United States is not perfect, but still one of the greatest societies in history. I would suspect I’m not alone in this opinion.

“You’re Killing Me”
MiFo LGBT Film Festival GLOW Series Thursday, Feb. 18, 8 p.m. O Cinema Wynwood, Miami
Tickets $10 at MiFoFilm.com.

The MiFo LGBT Film Festival may be more than two months away, but organizers are offering a twisted teaser, “You’re Killing Me,” next week on Thursday, Feb. 16.

This black comedy, directed by Jim Hanson, stars Matthew McKelligon as a brooding serial killer a la “Dexter.” Through his twisted logic, Joe is doing his victims—mostly bitter queens—a favor by offing them and then dismembering their bodies. But then, he becomes enamored with an Internet video star, George (Jeffery Self). George doesn’t know what to think of his spooky stalker, but the narcissistic actor likes the attention and doesn’t quite know what to think when Joe reveals he’s a serial killer.

Hanson has high aspirations for this part-comedy, part-horror film, but, whether he intended or not, he ended up with a hot campy mess that is short on laughs. McKelligon is a compelling killer and makes the most of the predictable script from Hanson and Self (also author of the books, “50 Shades of Gay” and “Straight People”).

The unexpected highlight is a cameo appearance by Mindy Cohn (“Facts of Life”) as Joe’s final, unsuspecting victim. I found myself screaming at the screen as she offered Joe a lift. No, drive, Nat, drive!

Like many LGBT features on the festival circuit, the production values are strong (especially for a low budget, crowd-funded project) and the film is accentuated with especially tuneful original songs penned by Jared Lekites.

J.W. Arnold
When San Francisco filmmakers Dee Hibbert-Jones and Nomi Talisman were nominated for an Oscar for their film Last Day of Freedom, friends started asking one question: "What are you wearing?" to the Academy Awards gala.

"That was the last thing on our minds," said Hibbert-Jones, 53, an associate professor of art at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

"I thought matching socks might be appropriate," said Talisman, 49, a freelance editor and animator.

The women, who are married, have been collaborating on art for over a decade, although this is the first film for each. The 32-minute animated documentary, produced over a five-year period on a $120,000 budget, is the story of Manny Babbitt, a homeless Vietnam War vet suffering but untreated PTSD, who commits a murder. His brother Bill, also untreated, after several tours of duty in Vietnam suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as earlier mental health problems, also untreated, after several falls.

"Someone in Los Angeles is dressing me," said Hibbert-Jones. "I remember we were dancing around the kitchen when we heard we were accepted" into our first major festival. "To have come so far with our first film, it's all beyond our wildest dreams." Talisman, 49, a freelance editor and animator.

The film, said Talisman, "is a portrait of a man at the nexus of the most pressing social issues of our day: veterans' care, homelessness, race, class, mental health access and criminal justice." By using Bill as the film’s narrator, they wanted to "give voice to a perspective that is rarely broadcast," she added.

Although this is their first film, the women have had earlier collaborations. They were part of the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts' artists-in-residence program, where they created Living Conditions, an interactive project that focused on the lives of families with relatives on death row.

Last Day of Freedom is a stand-alone film that is part of that project.

Hibbert-Jones, originally from the United Kingdom, and Talisman, from Israel, both attended Mills College, where each received a master’s degree in fine arts. They started dating shortly after graduation, and married in 2014. They are already planning future projects, but "We are so honored!" said Hibbert-Jones. "I remember we were dancing around the kitchen when we heard we were accepted" into our first major festival. "To have come so far with our first film, it’s all beyond our wildest dreams."

"To have come so far with our first film, it’s all beyond our wildest dreams."

Dee Hibbert-Jones

Fundraising has been a part of their life for the past five years, when they first began the film. "We basically financed it from grant to grant," said Talisman. It was produced for $120,000, she said.

Fundraising efforts continue, with details about needs as well as a link to make a contribution, on the film’s website, LastDayOfFreedom.net.

The idea for the film came up while Talisman was working as a media specialist for the Community Resource Initiative, a local nonprofit that collects narratives to build cases against capital punishment.

"I came home every night and told Dee that I was hearing stories that we need to tell," she said. They explored telling the stories of a number of other families, but when they met Bill Babbitt, "we knew this was our story," Talisman said.

Both are experienced at drawing, and decided to use animation because it allowed them the "intimacy" of telling a story that was "difficult to hear" because it was so sad and painful. During the film’s five years of production, "we would often come home crying after hearing some of the details about what this family went through," Hibbert-Jones said.

The Babbitt family saga took place in Sacramento, when Manny returned from two tours of duty in Vietnam suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as earlier mental health problems, also untreated, after several falls.

Narrator Bill Babbitt describes his painful struggle after learning that his brother has probably committed a murder. After law enforcement assured him that they would not seek the death penalty, Bill turned his brother in. But the case was grossly mishandled by the defense team, and Manny was executed at San Quentin Prison in 1999, soon after being awarded a Purple Heart behind bars.

The film, said Talisman, "is a portrait of a man at the nexus of the most pressing social issues of our day: veterans' care, homelessness, race, class, mental health access and criminal justice." By using Bill as the film’s narrator, they wanted to "give voice to a perspective that is rarely broadcast," she added.
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**Broward County**

*Hillsong United*
Feb. 11 at 7 p.m. at the BB&T Center, One Panther Parkway in Sunrise. The Australian worship group is joined by Rend Collective. Tickets $22.25 to $95.25. Call 800-745-3000 or visit BBTCenters.com.

*Florida Grand Opera: Norma*
Feb. 11 at 8 p.m. at the Performing Arts, 201 SW Fifth Ave. in Fort Lauderdale. Priestess Norma falls for the enemy, Pollione, and has children with him. When he turns his eyes to Adalgisa, a temple virgin, Norma turns to murder. Tickets $25 to $75. Call 954-462-0222 or visit BrowardCenter.org.

**THEATRE**

*Crystal Bowesox*
Feb. 11 at 8 p.m. at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, 201 SW Fifth Ave. in Fort Lauderdale. A second-place winner on American Idol in season nine, the singer-songwriter is known for her folk-rock-country style. Tickets $25 to $75. Call 954-462-0222 or visit BrowardCenter.org.

*Marty Stuart and the Fabulous Superlatives*
Feb. 11 at 8 p.m. at the Parker Playhouse, 707 NE Eighth St. in Fort Lauderdale. Stuart plays some old favorites with Kenny Vaughan, Paul Martin, and Harry Stinson. Tickets $22 to $43. Call 954-462-0222 or visit ParkerPlayhouse.org.

**PostSecret: The Show**
Feb. 11 at 8 p.m. at the Parker Playhouse, 707 NE Eighth St. in Fort Lauderdale. Three actors guide the audience through an exploration of our deepest secrets. Tickets $30.50. Call 954-462-0222 or visit ParkerPlayhouse.org.

*The James Hunter Six*
Feb. 11 at 8 p.m. at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, 201 SW Fifth Ave. in Fort Lauderdale. Hunter mixes modern sounds with classic Deep South tunes. Tickets $25 to $35. Call 954-462-0222 or visit BrowardCenter.org.

*Serenade on Broadway*
Feb. 14 at 7:30 p.m. at the Coral Springs Center for the Arts, 2855 Coral Springs Drive in Coral Springs. Broadway singer, Todd Wagner, performs 25 favorites from the stage, including tunes from “Phantom of the Opera,” “Les Miserables,” “Wicked,” and more. Tickets $39.22 to $48.82. Call 954-344-5999 or visit CoralSpringsCenterfortheArts.com.

**Symphony of the Americas: Opera to Broadway**
Through Feb. 14 at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, 201 SW Fifth Ave. in Fort Lauderdale. The original singers of Broadway and opera perform classics. Tickets $20 to $85. Call 954-462-0222 or visit BrowardCenter.org.

*Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band*
Feb. 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the BB&T Center, One Panther Parkway in Sunrise. The nine-week River Tour makes a stop in South Florida. Tickets $55 to $150. Call 800-745-3000 or visit thebbtcenter.com.

*ABBA Mania*
Feb. 12 at 8 p.m. at the Aventura Arts & Cultural Center, 3385 NE 188th St. in Aventura. A tribute and recreation of the band’s last live concert. Tickets $45 to $49. Call 305-466-8002 or visit AventuraCenter.org.

**Miami-Dade County**

*Miami City Ballet Program III: Year of the Rabbit*
Feb. 12 to 14 at the Adrienne Arsht Center, 3300 Biscayne Blvd. in Miami. The company performs “Year of the Rabbit” by Peck and Stevens, “Sunset” by Taylor and Elgar, and “Bourree Fantasque” by Balanchine and Chabrier. Tickets $20 to $99. Call 305-994-6722 or visit ArshtCenter.org.

*Across the World in 80 Minutes with the Terry Barber Trio*
Feb. 13 at 8 p.m. at the Aventura Arts & Cultural Center, 3385 NE 188th St. in Aventura. The trio travels the world through music, performing songs in 10 languages. Tickets $40 to $45. Call 305-466-8002 or visit AventuraCenter.org.

**Miami Beach**

*PostSecret: The Show*
Feb. 10 and 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, 701 Okeechobee Blvd. in West Palm Beach. Three actors guide the audience through an exploration of our deepest secrets. Tickets $30 and up. Call 561-832-7469 or visit Kravis.org.

**Long Day’s Journey Into Night**
Through Feb. 14 at Delray Beach Playhouse, 950 NW Ninth St. in Delray Beach. Brooke Wyeth surprises her family with news that she is planning to write a memoir about a painful part of the family’s history. Tickets $30. Call 561-272-1281, ext. 4 or visit DelrayBeachPlayhouse.com.

**Free Friday Concerts**
Fridays at 7:30 p.m. at the Delray Beach Center for the Arts, 51 N. Swinton Ave. in Delray Beach. Enjoy live music from the comfort of your picnic blanket or lawn chair every week, for free! Call 561-243-7922 or visit DelrayArts.org.

**It’s Only a Play**
Through Feb. 21 at GableStage, 1200 Anastasia Ave. in Coral Gables. In the hours after opening night of his Broadway play, a playwright waits anxiously for the reviews to come in at an after party. Tickets $60. Call 305-445-1119 or visit New-Theatre.org.

**Water by the Spoonful**
Through Feb. 28 at Main Street Playhouse, 6766 Main St. in Miami Lakes. Elliott Ortiz is an Iraq War veteran with dreams of being an actor, but he’s stuck working at a sandwich shop and dealing with his mother, a crack addict. Tickets $20. Call 305-558-3737 or visit MainStreetPlayers.com.

**PAMM Outdoor Music Series**
Third Thursdays at the Perez Art Museum Miami, 101 W. Flagler St. in Miami. Come out for live music from DJs and musicians by the bay. Drink specials available. Free with museum admission. Call 305-375-3000 or visit PAMM.org.

**The Big Show**
Fridays and Saturdays at 9 p.m. at Just the Funny Theater, 3119 Coral Way in Miami. A collection of comedy mixing the likes of improvisation and sketches. Tickets $12. Call 305-693-8669 or visit JustTheFunny.com.
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LAST CHANCE: *Wet Foot/Dry Foot: Conditions and Contributions*
Through Feb. 13 at Rolando Chang Barrero Fine Art Gallery, 711 Lucerne Ave. in Lake Worth. Four Cuban artists share their works before and after the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1995. Call 786-521-1199 or email RCBlfineart@gmail.com.

**Get Closer: Stonewall Museum Fundraiser**
Feb. 13 at 8 p.m. at the Parker Playhouse, 707 NE Eighth St. in Fort Lauderdale. Known for her role as Big Boo in “Orange is the New Black,” Lea DeLaria is joined on stage by Varla Jean Merman. The largest fundraiser of the year for the Stonewall National Museum. Tickets $46.50 to $200. Call 954-462-0222 or visit ParkerPlayhouse.org, or visit Stonewall-Museum.org.

**Crush!**
Feb. 12 at 8 and 10:30 p.m. at Gramps, 176 NW 24th St. in Miami. A sexy burlesque show by Divas and Dolls, comedy by Lisa Corrao, Esther K, Pam Bruno, and Julie Baez, followed by music from Smiths/Morrissey tribute band, The Ordinary Boys. Tickets $15 to 25. Visit TicketFly.com/venue/17749-gramps.

**FEB. 10 TO FEB. 16**

**MIA-MI-DADE COUNTY**

* **Florida Beer Day**
Feb. 15 from 5 to 11 p.m. at Concrete Beach Brewery, 325 NW 24 St. in Wynwood. Celebrate beers made in the Sunshine State with 85 flights from breweries around the state. Call 305-796-2727 or visit ConcreteBeachBrewery.com.

* **Farm-to-Table Vegetarian Dinners**
Feb. 15 at 6:30 p.m. at The Cafe at Books & Books at the Adrienne Arsht Center, 1300 Biscayne Blvd. in Miami. Chef Allen serves a vegetarian dinner inspired by the food of Caracas, Venezuela, as well as an optional wine pairing. Tickets $25 for dinner, plus an additional $14 for the wine pairing. RSVP to 786-405-1745 or visit thecafeatbooksandbook.com/arsht-center.html.

**BROWARD COUNTY**

* **Gender Bender Youth Group**
Mondays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at SunServe Campus, 1480 SW Ninth Ave. in Fort Lauderdale. A group for LGBT youth 13 to 21 to discuss gender, gender expression, binary systems, friendship, family and whatever else comes up! Free. Visit SunServeYouth.com

* **PFLAG**
Tuesdays in Fort Lauderdale, Coral Springs and Southwest Ranches. A support group for parents of LGBT youth 13 to 21. Free. Visit SunServeYouth.com for dates and locations.

* **GayWrites**
Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. at the Stonewall Library, 1300 E. Sunrise Blvd. in Fort Lauderdale. Join us and write your memoir, poem, blog, novel or short story. Free. Email garri1@earthlink.net

* **SunServe Youth Group**
Tuesdays and Thursdays in Fort Lauderdale, Southwest Ranches, Coral Springs and Hollywood. A support group and night of fun for LGBT youth 13 to 21. Free. Visit SunServeYouth.com for dates and times.

* **Survivor Support**
First and third Wednesdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Broward Health Imperial Point Hospital cafeteria, 6401 N. Federal Highway in Fort Lauderdale. Find support from counselors and peers who have lost loved ones to suicide. Call the Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention at 954-384-0344 or visit FISPOnline.org.

* **Sweetie Bingo**
Feb. 13 at 6:30 p.m. at the Pride Center, 2040 N. Dixie Highway in Wilton Manors. Enjoy fun rounds of Bingo with a snack bar. Game package $15. Call 954-463-9005 or visit CompassGLCC.org.

* **Florida Renaissance Festival**
Every weekend from Feb. 13 to March 27 from 10 a.m. to sunset at Quiet Waters Park, 401 S Powerline Road in Deerfield Beach. The Middle Ages comes to life with knights, kings, queens, faeries, artisans, and more. Tickets $21 with $1.50 park fee. Call the park at 954-357-5000, or the festival at 954-776-1642, or visit Ren-Fest.com.

* **Dogs Bowl**
Feb. 14 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at T.Y. (Topekegee Yugee) Park, 3300 N Park Road in Hollywood. Bring your furry friends for the 10th anniversary Dog Bowl with games, contests, pet vendors, a raffle, refreshments, and rescue organizations. Free admission, park fee $1.50. Call 954-646-3786 or email Info@BoxerFriends.org.

* **Palm Beach County**

* **A Valentine’s Day Concert featuring Solid Brass**
Feb. 14 at 7 p.m. at Seabreeze Amphitheater in Carlin Park, 400 South SR A1A in Jupiter. Enjoy music from Solid Brass, playing rock and R&B, as well as concessions to enjoy the night. Free. Visit Facebook.com/SeabreezeAmphitheater.

* **Art Insights Lecture: Deception in Art**
Feb. 16 at 3 p.m. at Boca Raton Museum of Art, 501 Plaza Real in Boca Raton. Yvette Jayson Sencer, Ph.D. discusses artwork that is meant to fool the eyes and tease the mind. Tickets $6 for members, $12 for nonmembers. Visit BocaMuseum.org.

* **Food Truck Invasion**
Feb. 17 at 5 p.m. at Sunset Cove Amphitheater at the Burt Aaronson South County Regional Park, 20405 Amphitheater Circle in Boca Raton. Enjoy live music by Chase Stites and food trucks for a night out for the whole family. Free. Visit Facebook.com/SunsetCoveAmphitheater.

* **A Valentine’s Day Concert featuring solid brass**
Feb. 14 at 7 p.m. at Seabreeze Amphitheater in Carlin Park, 400 South SR A1A in Jupiter. Enjoy music from Solid Brass, playing rock and R&B, as well as concessions to enjoy the night. Free. Visit Facebook.com/SeabreezeAmphitheater.

* **Queer Alternatives**
Fridays from 5 to 7 p.m. at Compass GLCC, 201 N. Dixie Highway in Lake Worth. An all-encompassing social group, those 18 to 29 who consider themselves to be lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, questioning, or anything in between are welcome to join! Free. Call 561-533-9699 or visit CompassGLCC.com.

* **Compass Entourage**
Fridays from 5 to 7 p.m. at Compass GLCC, 201 N. Dixie Highway in Lake Worth. Free. Gay and bisexual men ages 18 to 29 are invited to socialize and meet new people with different planned activities, such as movie nights, volleyball games, discussion groups, nights out, and more. Free. Call 561-533-9699 or visit CompassGLCC.com.

* **Green Market**
Saturdays a.m. to noon at West Palm Beach Waterfront, 101 S. Flagler Drive in West Palm Beach. A relaxing morning of shopping through green vendors and live entertainment. Contact Katrina Resch 561-822-1520 or KResch@wpb.org.

* **Allied Nations**
Wednesdays and Fridays from 5 to 7 p.m. at Compass GLCC, 201 N. Dixie Highway in Lake Worth. Social groups and programming for LGBT people 18 and younger. Free. Email youth@compassglcc.com.

**Yoga in the Park**
Mondays and Wednesdays at 6 p.m. and Saturdays at 9 a.m. at Bayfront Park’s Tina Hills Pavilion, 1075 Biscayne Blvd. in Miami. Yogis 18 and older are invited to a yoga session taught by a certified teacher. Classes will be moved indoors in the event of rain. Bring your own mag, water, and towel. Free. Call 305-358-7550 or visit BayfrontParkMiami.com/Yoga.html

**The Flying Trapeze School**
Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 4 to 6 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. at Bayfront Park, 1075 Biscayne Blvd. in Miami. Soar through the air like a member of the circus with trained trapeze experts. Call 786-239-8775 or visit TheFlyingTrapeze.net

**Free Rapid HIV Testing**
Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at Latinos Salud, 555 Washington Ave. Suite 235 in Miami Beach. Receive the results of your free, confidential HIV test in minutes. Call 305-397-8967 or visit LatinosSalud.org

**Community Yoga Series**
Third Wednesdays at 6:15 p.m. at jugofresh Community Yoga Series, 20405 Amphitheater Circle in Boca Raton. Enjoy live music by Chase Stites and food trucks for a night out for the whole family. Free. Visit Facebook.com/SunsetCoveAmphitheater.

**SunServe Youth Group**
Mondays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Stonewall Library, 1300 E. Sunrise Blvd. in Fort Lauderdale. Known for her role as Big Boo in “Orange is the New Black,” Lea DeLaria is joined on stage by Varla Jean Merman. The largest fundraiser of the year for the Stonewall National Museum. Tickets $46.50 to $200. Call 954-462-0222 or visit ParkerPlayhouse.org, or visit Stonewall-Museum.org.

* Denotes New Listing
Aaron Schock, the disgraced U.S. Congressman from Illinois, has been presented with a way to work off his mounting debt. TitanMen.com is offering Schock a $1 million contract to perform in a series of exclusive hardcore gay porn films. Schock has yet to make a public statement regarding the offer, although it has been reported by several mainstream media organizations.

“TitanMen has a history of signing iconically handsome men with both brains and brawn and Aaron Schock fits that profile to a ‘T,’” said TitanMen.com Vice President Keith Webb, in a news release. “Despite Schock’s scandal over allegedly misappropriating campaign funds, he has much more to offer our fans. What we’re offering is a win-win situation, giving him the opportunity to break free and come out in a whole new world.”

As a congressman, Schock captured media attention for his chiseled good looks and high flying lifestyle. The 5-foot-8, 165-pound Republican posed shirtless for Men’s Health Magazine and often posted pictures to his Instagram account of good times from far-flung exotic destinations.

Ultimately, Schock was driven out of office amid questionable spending habits. According to recent Federal Election Commission filings, Schock has amassed close to $2.5 million in legal fees after his departure from Congress in March of 2015.

The 35-year-old Schock, a bachelor, has repeatedly stated he is not gay. “If Schock agrees to join the TitanMen family, he will be in good company,” Webb said. SFGL
I’m gay.

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Broward Health is proud to announce that Dr. Mammen Zachariah and Dr. Molly Ann Zachariah have joined the cardiac services program at Broward Health Imperial Point. This husband and wife cardiology team collectively brings over 60 years of extensive experience. They treat a broad range of heart conditions; from congestive heart failure to coronary heart disease. As an interventional cardiologist, Dr. Mammen performs lifesaving procedures such as cardiac catheterizations and stents. Together they have saved countless lives and earned the hearts of their patients.

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