African-American Support for Same-Sex Marriage Surges

The leaders of the Maryland Black Family Alliance (MBFA) celebrated the announcement of a new poll showing that growth in African American support for marriage equality is helping to create a huge public opinion swing in favor of legal protections for all families in Maryland. Overall, the Public Policy Poll of Maryland voters shows a decisive majority (57%) would vote in favor of same-sex marriage if it is on the ballot in November, while 37% would vote against.

“These numbers confirm what those of us in the community already knew – that when we are faced squarely with the question of whether all Maryland families should be treated as equals, not in the church house, but in the State House – we stand on the side of justice,” said Rev. Larry Brumfield, president of the Maryland Black Family Alliance.

The MBFA is a coalition member of Marylanders for Marriage Equality (MME), which released the poll today. In a press release, MME today highlighted a memo by PPP pollster Tom Jensen noting there has been a “major shift in opinion about gay marriage among black voters [in Maryland].” Fifty-five percent of African Americans now say they would vote for the law and only 36% oppose it. These numbers have essentially flipped since PPP conducted an identical poll in March.

The MBFA believes that recent announcements by both President Barack Obama’s and the NAACP’s support for marriage equality have helped to create a positive environment for African Americans to have real conversations about why all families, including Black families headed by same-sex couples, deserve to be valued.

“People tend to believe that African Americans are dead set against marriage equality. However the reality is that African American attitudes are not half as intense as people thought they were,” said Lester K. Spence, associate professor of political science at Howard University.

By Steve Charing

We Have Pride in June

By Steve Charing

It’s become a rite of spring. Every mid-June going back decades, June Horner gathers her PFLAG buttons and placards from her Sykesville, Maryland, home and stuffs them into the already cramped trunk of her car. She needs to move around several hundred PFLAG and safe-school pamphlets as well as other LGBT literature to allow space for the signs, which she always takes with her to the Capital Pride (Washington, D.C.) and Baltimore Pride parades.

Typically, the sign June and her husband Graham hoist up at these events reads: “Our kids are fine – just the way they are.” But there are others she will employ too, depending on the event and the message she wants to convey. Often, June can be seen at Lobby Day rallies or other parades raising the familiar “Civil marriage is a civil right” placard or a “Someone you love is gay” bumper sticker.

June is a recognizable figure. Usually donned in a “I’m a PFLAG Mom” tee-shirt or similar PFLAG garb, khaki shorts, a pink HRC cap or straw hat with an assortment of LGBT-related buttons, and a fanny pack, June Horner, who is in her early seventies, crams more energy in her small frame than most Generation Y folks – one of the primary groups she has been fighting for when it comes to LGBT rights and equality.

And come this June 16, she will be even more recognizable. June Horner has been named unanimously by the Baltimore Pride Committee to be the parade’s grand marshal – an honor that has been traditionally reserved for city leaders and pioneers in the LGBT rights movement.

“June Horner has been to every single Baltimore Pride parade,” Donald Young, parade committee chair explained to Baltimore OUTloud. “Her outstanding work in PFLAG and her belief that every human being should be treated equally and

—continued on page 2

June Horner, Baltimore Pride parade’s grand marshal

By Steve Charing

More than double the required amount collected

Marriage Foes Submit Needed Signatures

Virtually all marriage equality advocates expected the opposition to garner a sufficient number of signatures to place the same-sex marriage law before the voters in a referendum this November. They accomplished that on May 29 as they submitted more than 122,000 such signatures according to the Baltimore Sun, 55,736 are required.

The Maryland Marriage Alliance, the group leading the opposition to the Civil Marriage Protection Act that was signed by Governor Martin O’Malley on March 1, hopes to collect 150,000 signatures by the June 30 deadline. This is to safeguard against signatures deemed invalid based on review by the state board of elections.

Boxes of petitions were delivered to the secretary of state’s office. Afterwards, Rev. Derek McCoy, who heads the Maryland Marriage Alliance, said the effort was “absolutely exhilarating” and that “Marylanders have a right to vote on this issue.”

Both sides of the debate jockeyed to present their points of view following the delivery of the petitions. “Given the low bar for petitioning a law to the ballot in Maryland, we’ve always expected same-sex marriage opponents to meet that threshold and then some – up to their stated target of 150,000,” Marylanders for Marriage Equality campaign manager Josh Levin said in a statement.

“But don’t confuse meeting the legal requirement with intensity of measure of support,” Levin pointed out. “It’s clear those opposed to marriage equality are losing ground. Our PPP poll last week showed

—continued on page 9
June Horner at 1986 Baltimore Pride

attempts to be spokespersons to educate the general public. It seemed the Federal Government was doing nothing and really didn’t care. Those were heartbreaking and exhausting times. Thank goodness, we’ve come a long way... but still much work to be done.

June started a PFLAG chapter in Baltimore in 1985, and it began well. But after the first year there was a decreasing involvement from the city’s parents. Other subsequent attempts to establish a chapter failed to catch on, so currently there is none in Baltimore.

Undaunted, PFLAG reached into the suburbs. In 1994 June was a founding member of the Columbia-Howard County chapter that was started by Colette Roberts and Linda Linton. And she continues to be a vital member of the chapter today. June has been on the steering committee since its inception and currently serves as the chapter’s treasurer and librarian as well as any other function for which she feels she can help. June is also a popular speaker before employee, community and LGBT groups.

And she is one fierce advocate. Always telling her story to elected officials either at Lobby Day or some other event, June consistently impresses. She has testified in front of legislative committees in an effort to move the marriage equality bill along. Republican Senator Allen Kittleman credits June along with other PFLAG advocates for helping him see the light in supporting marriage equality. She was on hand to witness Governor O’Malley’s signing the bill into law in March, and she later hugged him for his efforts.

Recognizing the need for an LGBT support group in conservative Carroll County, June along with other concerned county residents helped establish a PFLAG chapter in Westminster in 2011. She sits on their steering committee as well.

June Horner began marching in Baltimore’s Pride Parade in 1986. “I am truly proud of my gay son, and I was and continue to be ready to tell the world!!” she beams. “I’m proud of every son and daughter of our fabulous community.”

She has marched in countless pride parades over the years in D.C., Baltimore, New York, San Francisco and Philadelphia. “Marching in pride parades is the easy and fun part,” June points out. “Not so easy but most essential is changing the law. Old discriminatory laws needed to be changed. New civil rights and protections need to be added.”

June acknowledges that we’ve come a long way but we’re not done yet. “Now we’re preparing for the referendum which will surely come. And we’ll be trying our best to spread the word to Vote FOR the Maryland Civil Marriage Protection Act in the November election.”

This tireless PFLAG Mom has been the quintessential ally, and the LGBT community of Baltimore and beyond should be eternally grateful as she has dedicated the past two and a half decades passionately fighting for the cause.

As we approach yet another Pride Parade, June won’t have to march this time; she can ride, right up front.

Cheer her on!
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Please participate in the largest Gay & Lesbian Community Survey in history, and help demonstrate the growing Power in Our Pride.

Recent surveys have had 45,000 respondents from over 100 countries!

Everyone who completes the survey by June 30, 2012 will be entered into a drawing to win one of five US $100 cash prizes. (Or if you win, you may designate a non-profit charity to receive the prize.)

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About the Gay & Lesbian Community Survey®: Tremendous strides toward full equality have been achieved by our communities over the past decade. There’s Power in Our Pride. Power to make a difference!

Gay and lesbian survey studies have opened doors (and minds) in leading corporations and organizations, which in turn have recognized the value of their LGBT employees through the establishment of equal hiring policies and domestic partner benefits. This has been a catalyst, leading to sweeping changes in political and social inclusivity.

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We respect your privacy. All personal survey data is held securely by Community Marketing, Inc., a gay-owned and operated, independent market research and communications firm based in San Francisco, and will not be sold to third parties or used for marketing purposes. CMI was founded in 1992 and is proudly NGLCC-Certified. Thank you!
MD Court of Appeals Recognizes Same-Sex Divorces

BY STEVE CHARING

Same-sex marriage in Maryland will not be legal until January 2013 provided that a referendum attempt to overturn the Civil Marriage Protection Act fails. But divorce of same-sex couples is now legal.

By a unanimous 7-0 vote, the Maryland Court of Appeals – the state’s highest court – ruled on May 18 that same-sex couples who were legally married in other states (and D.C.) may obtain divorces in Maryland.

“The high court of Maryland confirmed today in this divorce case that out-of-state marriages of same-sex couples are entitled to legal recognition under longstanding principles of comity, allowing this couple the same access to a divorce as other married couples whose relationships have ended,” said Susan Sommer, Director of Constitutional Litigation at Lambda Legal. “The Court of Appeals’ ruling establishes that Maryland law respects marriages of same-sex couples entered elsewhere, bringing clarity to the legal recognition due these marriages.”

The case involved Jessica Port, a Maryland resident and Virginia Anne Cowan of the District of Columbia who were married in San Francisco. They petitioned for divorce and appealed a Prince George’s County judge’s denial of the petition in 2010.

“We are glad that the Court of Appeals has resolved this issue,” Carrie Evans, executive director of Equality Maryland, told Baltimore OUTLOUD. “Ms. Port and Ms. Cowan are able to use the courts of Maryland to move on with their lives.”

In February 2010, Attorney General Douglas Gansler issued an opinion that Maryland should recognize those same-sex marriages conducted in jurisdictions where they are legal. This court decision validates Mr. Gansler’s opinion.

NAACP Okays Same-Sex Marriage
Decision Affirms Opposition to Government Efforts to Codify Discrimination

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People released a resolution on May 19 supporting marriage equality. At a meeting of the 103-year old civil rights group’s board of directors, the organization voted to support marriage equality as a continuation of its historic commitment to equal protection under the law.

“The mission of the NAACP has always been to ensure the political, social and economic equality of all people,” said Roslyn M. Brock, chairman of the board of directors of the NAACP. “We have and will oppose efforts to codify discrimination into law.”

“Civil marriage is a civil right and a matter of civil law. The NAACP’s support for marriage equality is deeply rooted in the 14th Amendment of the Constitution and equal protection of all people,” said Benjamin Todd Jealous, NAACP president.

The NAACP has addressed civil rights with regard to marriage since Loving v. Virginia declared anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional in 1967. In recent years the NAACP has taken public positions against state and federal efforts to ban the rights and privileges for LGBT citizens, including strong opposition to Proposition 8 in California, the Defense of Marriage Act, and most recently, North Carolina’s Amendment 1, which changed the state constitution’s to prohibit same sex marriage.

“The NAACP has long been the nation’s conscience and champion for an America where all share equally in the promise of liberty and justice for all,” said Evan Wolfson, president of Freedom to Marry in a statement. “The NAACP resoundingly affirmed that the freedom to marry is a civil right and family value that belongs to all of us and that discriminatory barriers to marriage must fall. The toxic tactics of anti-gay groups like NOM to ‘drive a wedge between blacks and gays’ will be washed away in the wave of righteous affirmation.”

At a press conference at the NAACP’s national headquarters in Baltimore on May 21, Jealous said, “We make this statement today because it is the legacy and responsibility of the NAACP to speak up on the civil rights issue of our times. We are both proud of our history and challenged by it – challenged to never allow threats to equality for all people under the law to go uncontested.”

He added, “We want to be on the record that the NAACP now firmly opposes all efforts to restrict marriage equality.”

Below is the text of the resolution passed by the NAACP board of directors: “The NAACP Constitution affirmatively states our objective to ensure the “political, educational, social and economic equality” of all people. Therefore, the NAACP has opposed and will continue to oppose any national, state, local policy or legislative initiative that seeks to codify discrimination or hatred into the law or to remove the Constitutional rights of LGBT citizens. We support marriage equality consistent with equal protection under the law provided under the 14th Amendment. Further, we strongly affirm the religious freedoms of all people as protected by the First Amendment.”

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE SURGES
– continued from front page

Johns Hopkins University. “And when trusted elites like President Obama or even JayZ express support, African Americans tend to revisit and revise their own attitudes.”

Founded in 2007, the Maryland Black Family Alliance is an alliance of straight, black allies who are faith leaders, elected officials, social workers, artists, professors, activists, attorneys, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and friends who all believe injustice for all of Maryland families – including those headed by same-sex households.

“Things are moving in Maryland,” said Josh Levin, campaign manager for Maryland-
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SAVE THE DATE

1/1/13

1. With the signing of the Civil Marriage Protection Act, Maryland is one step closer to marriage equality. Smyth would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge this great milestone.

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SINCE 1934

SMYTH Jewelers
SINCE 1934
Yes! Gaydar is for real, study shows

Seattle, Washington – After seeing faces for less than a blink of an eye, college students have accuracy greater than mere chance in judging others’ sexual orientation. Their “gaydar” persisted even when they saw the photos upside-down, and gay versus straight judgments were more accurate for women’s faces than for men’s. The findings, published May 16 in the open-access online journal PLoS ONE, suggest that we unconsciously make gay and straight distinctions. “It may be similar to how we don’t have to think about whether someone is a man or a woman or black or white,” said lead author Joshua Tabak, a psychology graduate student at the University of Washington. “This information confronts us in everyday life.” Tabak says that our ability to spontaneously assess sexual orientation based on observation or instinct conflicts with the assertion that if people just kept their sexual orientation to themselves then no one else would know and discrimination wouldn’t exist, an argument frequently used by opponents of anti-discrimination policies for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people.

In the study, 129 college students viewed 96 photos each of young adult men and women who identified themselves as gay or straight. Concerned that facial hair, glasses, makeup and piercings might provide easy clues, the researchers only used photos of people who did not have such embellishments. They cropped the grayscale photos so that only faces, not hairstyles, were visible. For women’s faces, participants were 65 percent accurate in telling the difference between gay and straight faces when the photos flashed on a computer screen. Even when the faces were flipped upside down, participants were 61 percent accurate in telling the two apart. At 57 percent accuracy, they had a harder time differentiating gay men from straight men. The participants’ accuracy slipped to 53 percent—still statistically above chance—when the men’s faces appeared upside down.

Don’t think you have gaydar? You’re not alone. Tabak says that in his experiments there are “always a small number of people with no ability to distinguish gay and straight faces.” It’s unclear why some have better gaydar than others, since studies have only tested this aptitude in college students. Tabak speculates that “people from older generations or different cultures who may not have grown up knowing they were interacting with gay people” may be less accurate in making gay versus straight judgments. (ScienceDaily.com at Sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/05/120516115858.htm)

ExxonMobil shareholders to vote on job protections

Dallas, TX – ExxonMobil shareholders meeting at the Meyerson Symphony Center on May 30 will vote on a proposal to add sexual orientation and gender identity to the company’s employment nondiscrimination policy. Members of GetEQUAL, environmental activists and others plan to protest outside the symphony hall. In the past, the company has sometimes hired counter protesters to draw media attention away from its detractors. Mobil was one of the first companies in the world to include sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination policy and offer benefits to the same-sex partners of gay employees. But ExxonMobil rescinded those policies after the merger.

“ExxonMobil has received $1.3 billion in federal contracts,” said Daniel Cates, North Texas regional coordinator for GetEQUAL. “That’s why we’re pushing [President Barack Obama] on issuing an executive order. Such an order would require federal contractors to include sexual orientation and gender identity in their nondiscrimination policies if they do business with the federal government. However, Obama announced earlier this year that he doesn’t plan to sign the proposed order anytime soon. “Most Fortune 500 companies realize that nondiscrimination is good for business,” Cates said.

A shareholder-initiated change to the policy has been proposed each year since Mobil and Exxon merged in 1999. The percentage of shareholders voting for the policy has increased steadily. This year, the resolution was initiated by New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, who wants the company to not only amend the nondiscrimination policy, but also to begin offering health benefits to the spouses of employees married in the Empire State. “ExxonMobil’s failure to include sexual orientation and gender identity in its written equal employment policy has made the company an outlier among its peers,” DiNapoli said. From a shareholder’s perspective, this policy means that ExxonMobil isn’t able to attract and retain the best talent to come work for the company. ExxonMobil maintains the lowest possible rating on the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index, with a minus-25. (Dallas Voice – David Taffet at Dallasvoice.com)

Governor O’Malley seeks support for marriage in Arizona

Scottsdale, AZ – Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley says that President Barack Obama’s support of marriage equality could help in what’s expected to be a battle at the ballot box to preserve same-sex marriage in his state. During a visit to Arizona, O’Malley met with local LGBT leaders who donated to the Maryland Marriage Fund, set up by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) to defend marriage equality in Maryland. After it was approved by the Maryland Legislature, O’Malley signed the same-sex marriage bill on March 1, an event that he called a “phenomenal moment.” He was in Scottsdale to speak at the Arizona Democratic Heritage Dinner.

But opponents are mobilizing to gather more than 50,000 signatures needed to get a referendum on the ballot in November to overturn the law. “There will be a state that is the first to affirm marriage equality,” O’Malley said. “I believe our state will be the first.”

O’Malley’s Arizona visit on May 10 came during what the governor called a week of “whiplash” on the issue, with voters in North Carolina approving a measure defining marriage as between one man and one woman, followed by Obama’s historic announcement supporting marriage for gay and lesbian couples. O’Malley noted public opinion has been evolving on the issue. “It’s one of the faster-moving issues of its kind in modern history,” he said. “The consensus point has moved quickly.” Support for marriage equality is being driven by what O’Malley called a “dance mix” of religious freedom and human dignity. He acknowledged that he’s done “a bit of a tap dance” on marriage equality as he decided when the moment was right to take a stand. In hindsight, he said he could have made marriage equality a bigger issue during his 2010 re-election campaign or made it a priority during the 2011 legislative session when the measure was defeated.

O’Malley said he has personal experience with generational differences on the issue, noting that when the topic comes up at the dinner table, his four children ranging in age from 9 to 20 question why there’s a problem. (Echo Magazine – Glenn Gullickson at Echomag.com)

Dayton, Cincinnati approve domestic partnership measures

Dayton, OH – On May 2, the Dayton city commissioners voted unanimously to join five other Ohio cities with domestic partner registries. While the registry, which begins on June 1, does not offer any benefits in itself, registering as domestic partners can be used as proof for employers who offer insurance benefits to partners of employees. The registry is open to opposite-sex and same-sex couples who are not married or in a domestic partnership already. Couples would also have to affirm that they are in a committed relationship, are 18 or older and are not related in any way that would prevent them from marrying if they were able. They must also live together.

The same day, Cincinnati City Council voted 8-1 to pass domestic partner benefits for city employees. “It feels great,” said Chris Seelbach, the city’s first openly gay council member. “I’m very happy and proud of my colleagues that they were willing to stand with me on this.” Seelbach had promised to make this measure one of his first priorities in office. “In the end, we’re doing this because it’s the right thing to do,” he added. The sole dissenting vote was from councilor Charlie Winburn, who is an evangelical Christian minister. Winburn
Chronicle E

In 2010, Powell indicated he needed more legal clarification before he could vote on the motion.

Colin Powell OK with same-sex marriage

Washington, D.C. – Retired Gen. Colin Powell is known for the high positions he’s held in the U.S. military and government. He is a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and served as secretary of state for former President George W. Bush. However, in the LGBT community Powell became infamous for one thing: ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.’

Powell was one of the masterminds behind the discriminatory law, which ruined more than 14,500 military careers. He eventually came out against DADT in 2010 and supported President Obama’s call for repeal. Times have changed, he said. Still, Powell wasn’t exactly welcomed into the good graces of the LGBT community with open arms. However, during a CNN interview with Wolf Blitzer, May 23, Powell said that of the same-sex couples he knows “[T]hey are as stable a family as my family is and so I don’t see any reason not to say that they should be able to get married.”

Powell’s expression of support for marriage equality is a strong sign of the changing views of the country on same-sex marriage. His statement comes two weeks after President Obama announced on May 9 that he had ‘evolved’ on the issue and now believes that same-sex couples should be allowed to marry. During the CNN interview, Blitzer asked Powell, “Are you with the President in supporting Gay marriage?” Powell responded. “I have no problem with it but as I’ve thought about Gay marriage, I know a lot of friends who are individually Gay but are in partnerships with loved ones, and they are as stable a family as my family is, and they raise children. And so I don’t see any reason not to say that they should be able to get married.” (SEATTLE GAY NEWS – Shaun Knittel at Sgn.org)

U. of Texas Arlington to expand LGBT programs

Arlington, TX – The University of Texas at Arlington will further its efforts this summer to bring informative, educational and recreational programs and activities to the college’s LGBT community. An LGBTQA and gender identity task force was created in February and began assessing the school’s current programs, and looking at possible ways to improve the campus atmosphere for the community and its allies, said Frank Lamas, UTA’s vice president for student affairs. Lamas initiated the task force when he learned that not much was happening for the LGBT community.

More programming and education began with the creation of the Safe Zone program three years ago. The program educates students and staff members on diversity, and provides LGBT students with a list of on-campus resources and places they can go to talk while feeling comfortable, Lamas said. The Safe Zone, along with a campus GSA, counseling services and other programs, offers a variety of outlets. But Lamas said during discussions with students in the last few years, the need for the university to do more has been brought up. “I had concerns that we weren’t doing enough to support these students from the feedback I was getting,” he said.

The nine-member task force produced four recommendations to help expand current programming and create new endeavors, which Lamas said were “a very good starting point.” The recommendations included adding two graduate interns to supervise LGBT programs, as well as several peer volunteers, and additional funding for programs and the Safe Zone initiative. Lamas brought the recommendations to the student allocation committee in April. Out of the committee’s $54,000 annual budget to fund student affairs and other groups, $30,000 was allocated to the initiative, with Lamas putting in the additional $6,000 from his budget. (DALLAS VOICE –Anna Waugh at Dallasvoice.com)

Dutch police dismantle gay prostitution ring

Limburg, The Netherlands – Radio Netherlands Worldwide reports that Dutch police have dismantled a prostitution ring that involved dozens of young Romanian men. Four people in the southern province of Limburg have been arrested. The Romanian men were brought to the Netherlands without being told that they were to work as prostitutes. According to the police, the men were required to give their “pimps” their passports and whatever they earned. Those who refused to cooperate were put under pressure and blackmailed.

The men were told to use gay chat sites to find customers. Some clients were blackmailed with secretly-taken footage and were too afraid to inform the police.

The case came to light when one of the Romanian men went to the police. Two more people came forward this week. Police have searched the suspects’ homes and have seized their computers, mobile telephones, pictures and other materials. (Radio Netherlands Worldwide at rnw.nl/english/bulletin/dutch-police-dismantle-gay-prostitution-ring)
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BESURE Releases HIV Study
Epidemic in Baltimore skewed by race and youth

BY CURTIS PRICE
In May, the Baltimore wing of the BESURE (BEhavioral SURveillance Research) Study released results from their latest research. The MSM Wave 3, which ran from September to December 2011, is part of a three-pronged study. Besides men who have sex with men (MSM), BESURE targets IDUs (Intravenous Drug Users) and heterosexuals at risk for HIV.

Each year, BESURE collects data on sexual behaviors in one target group, using data to spot trends in sexual practices and HIV infection. Baltimore BESURE itself is part of a multi-site national study funded by the CDC and partners with the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

In the third MSM cycle since the local BESURE project was launched in 2005, 403 MSMs were interviewed about their sexual behaviors. Outreach teams recruited men outside local bars and street-based venues, mostly interviewing on site. (You may have seen the white BESURE vans parked near the Hippos, Leon’s, The Drinky and other bars last fall.)

Seventy-six percent of participants were black, not Hispanic, fourteen percent white, not Hispanic, with nine percent self-described as “other.” Thirty-one percent were aged 18-24, 27% were 25-34, 17% were 35-44 and a quarter were 45 or older. Close to one-third each said they worked either full-time or were unemployed, with the remaining third divided between part-time workers and those not in the labor force. Sixty-four percent self-identified as homosexual/gay, a third bisexual and the remainder as heterosexual or other. Fourteen percent said they had been incarcerated in the past year and 17% experienced homelessness. Slightly over one-half used non-injection drugs in the same period.

In terms of sex practices, two-thirds had men-only sex partners, with the rest reporting sex with both men and women. A majority claimed less than three sexual partners in the past year. Twenty-four percent of those surveyed claimed less than three sexual partners in that period, a drop from the fifty-three reported in the first MSM Wave in 2004-05. Both HIV infection rates in general and unrecognized HIV infection were more concentrated among African-Americans than among whites. High unrecognized HIV infection rates were also found in younger men.

Interviewers also asked a structured series of questions to determine if men had been victims of stigma and discrimination because of race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and HIV status. Interestingly, HIV positive men who knew their status reported higher rates on both than men who were either HIV negative or HIV positive, but unaware. Again, African-American men reported higher levels of stigma and discrimination than whites did.

Connecting the dots
What talking points for future HIV prevention policy can be drawn from these results? One, race persists as a factor in HIV infection, even when controlled for demographic or behavior differences. Two, unrecognized HIV infection locally is more common among younger than 35-year-old MSMs, signing a critical need for more widespread and innovative types of HIV testing.

Connecting the dots
What talking points for future HIV prevention policy can be drawn from these results? One, race persists as a factor in HIV infection, even when controlled for demographic or behavior differences. Two, unrecognized HIV infection locally is more common among younger than 35-year-old MSMs, signing a critical need for more widespread and innovative types of HIV testing. Three, stigma and discrimination play an important if poorly understood role in HIV risk and social stress, especially among African-American MSMs. More research is needed to better understand these connections. Then of course, there’s the impact of larger disparities of race, class and poverty that have framed how HIV is spread.

As with any study, there were limitations that may have skewed data. For one, the study was cross-sectional, meaning it recorded results at a particular slice of time and didn’t try to follow any causal relationships before, after or long-term.

Two, people volunteered, meaning what in epidemiology is called selection bias may have crept in. Third, people were only recruited at venues and thus data may not include MSMs with different characteristics who don’t frequent venues. Last, all data was based on self-reporting, meaning there is no independent verification how accurate peoples responses were. Even with these caveats, the BESURE 2011 MSM data provides a good snapshot of what’s happening locally with sex practices and HIV infection.

More detailed data, along with slides and materials, is up online at the Maryland Infectious Disease and Environmental Health Administration website at Bit.ly/KDHzl.

In Baltimore the NHBS is performed as a collaboration between the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and operates as the Behavioral Surveillance Research Study or BESURE.

No Jail Time for Dahrun Ravi – Please

BY TOBY GRACE
The young man that captured his college roommate, Tyler Clementi, on a webcam while intimate with another man is facing sentencing later this week after being found guilty of invasion of privacy and bias hate crimes. The various demonstrations around New Jersey in support of Dahrun Ravi, as well as the voices of almost every LGBT publication (including this one) and many independent gay pundits of note, all calling for a non-custodial sentence in this case deserve to be heard by the court.

The prosecutor, obviously keen for a conviction and harsh sentence at any price, has certainly paid no attention to the intelligent and reasoned voices from the community that have repeatedly called for a lenient sentence. The question arises as to who the prosecutor thinks he is protecting by this harsh and narrow application of the law. Does he suppose he is protecting the LGBT community from homophobic? But no substantive evidence has ever shown that Ravi is homophobic. Is he protecting the community from college student pranks? If we are to jail students for pranks, we might as well shut down the colleges and build a lot more prisons.

It would appear that the New Jersey bias crime law is rapidly going the way of Megan’s Law: another tool to destroy the lives of harmless people. Megan’s law was written to impose serious penalties on dangerous sex offenders. Unfortunately, it has also swept up numerous high school students, guilty of no more than an ill-advised love affair, ruining their lives in the process. Likewise, our bias crime laws were written with the idea of protecting many minorities from the bashers and haters. Unfortunately, in the hands of a prosecutor who cares for nothing but building a reputation as a winner of cases and “tough litigator,” the law is a way of destroying someone like Dahrun Ravi – a young man of great promise, no previous record of wrong-doing and no convincing homophobic intent.

Clearly Ravi’s life means nothing to the prosecutor but it should – it must – mean something to the court. We urge the court to hand down a non-custodial sentence of community service and thus to bring at least some sense of proportion into this terrible affair.

Editor’s note: On May 21, Dahrun Ravi was sentenced to 30 days in the Middlesex County jail in North Brunswick New Jersey. Toby Grace is the senior editor for Out in Jersey.

MARRIAGE FOES SUBMIT NEEDED SIGNATURES – continued from front page

57% would vote to uphold the law – with 37% voting against – if the election were held today. A surge in support among African American voters (to 55%) in the wake of endorsements by President Obama and the NAACP are key factors in that change. As we open two new campaign offices and build out a robust field operation to offer information, register, and mobilize voters this summer and fall, we will be looking to maintain this record-level of support for marriage equality in Maryland.”

McCoy brushed off the impact of President Obama’s endorsement. “Every day we have had more and more momentum,” he said and dismissed the poll as “propaganda.” The law as written is scheduled to go in effect in January 2013 to allow for the predicted petition drive in attempt to overturn it.

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Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.com

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Nick.Mosby@baltimorecity.gov

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William.Welch@baltimorecity.gov

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Carl Stokes
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410.396.4814
MaryPat.Clarke@baltimorecity.gov

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We all remember where we were on 9/11. Those of us who are old enough also remember where we were when John F. Kennedy was shot, or Martin Luther King, or Bobby Kennedy. The King assassination at the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis in 1968 remains the most vivid memory for me. A Saturday murder allowed adults to consider the implications of his demise over the weekend. I was in the sixth grade.

The Monday after Dr. King was assassinated my science teacher separated me from the girl I sat next to. Both the girl and the teacher were African American. The girl, Juanita, was much better at science than I was and she helped me with my work. I was very hurt, and for many years I thought my teacher was being racist. Years later, I came to understand that my friendship with a black girl could have put both Juanita and me in danger. I was too naïve to know that I attended school with both decent folk as well as with devout bigots. My close circle of friends were decent folk, I painted my world accordingly.

My mom explained it to me when I was 16. I got into some trouble with a black girl I was dating; my mom didn’t know I was seeing her. It was puppy love, and I was probably the only person in my circle of friends who was still a virgin, so it was not that kind of trouble. It had to do with some herbs; let us leave it at that. My mom was so afraid for me.

It was not racism; it was fear of what could happen to either of us because of other people’s racism. My mom grew up in the Deep South, Little Rock Arkansas, and Johnson City, Tennessee. The KKK had torched the family church in Tennessee in her childhood. Mom was a big fan of Dr. King. Later, with the founding of the Southern Poverty Law Center, she became a fan of Julian Bond, as well as a donor to the center. That’s not to say that she was an armchair activist. She stood up to racism where she encountered it; the workplace, the shopping center (there were no malls back then), and the schools, but she was never a placard-carrying activist. She knew well the meaning of justice and was never silent when justice was absent. I miss my mom, but in a sense, she is still alive in the sense of social justice that she gave to me, a legacy that lives in my son also. Nature or nurture?

I don’t know.

None of this was her fight. It did not touch our lives directly. For my mom it was a simple matter of right vs. wrong, good vs. evil. The civil rights bandwagon was not a private party, all people of goodwill hopped aboard. It did not matter if they had skin in the game or if they were black or white. People were angry.

A few days after the King assassination there was a terrible storm, our windows were open in our little home in Clarksville, Maryland. The odor of ozone in the air and the frightening sound of nature’s violence accompanied a long explanation that a mother should not have to give to a child. She told me about hatred and racism and how people fail to love one another. I remember that conversation with my mother more than any other conversation, even the one about the birds and the bees.

“In adulthood, I came to understand the battle for social justice in terms of rhetoric and activism. Yet still, whenever there’s a terrible storm, and the odor of ozone in the air, I recall that conversation with my mother.”

In adulthood, I came to understand the battle for social justice in terms of rhetoric and activism. Yet still, whenever there is a terrible storm, and the odor of ozone in the air, I recall that conversation with my mother.
Safe Spaces for Gay Youth

Last issue, Steve Charing highlighted the opening of The Den, a safe space for GLBT youth ages 13 to 24. Kalima Young, one of the driving forces behind The Den, told Steve that "youth have suffered from our unwillingness as adults to address structural issues such as poverty, classicism, racism and sexism in the LGBTQ community that directly impacts where and how youth experience the LGBTQ community."

It is critical – because the situation GLBT youth face in Baltimore City is dire. According to a recent Baltimore City Health Department study, between the years 1999-2000 and 2007-2008, 92% of the youth victims and perpetrators of violence were chronically truant in at least one academic year. 62% had a history of out of school suspension and/or expulsion; and 38% repeated two or more grades. This data suggests that academic participation in schools immunizes students against being a perpetrator or a victim of violence. In addition to violence, GLBT youth face an even greater risk than their peers of dropping out of school, experiencing homelessness, or acquiring HIV.

The Den offers a refuge for these kids from these far too adult pressures, a "safe space to simply exist without judgment from societal pressure."

And in addition to the great need for help with the massive structural problems they face, I am going to suggest something that these kids need.

A little tenderness.

Over the last year, numerous GLBT youth in Baltimore City have contacted me – confidentially, privately – to express fear. Not fear of gay bashing by right-wing bigots, not fear of being fired from a job, not fear of coming out.

Rather, these youth fear other members of the GLBT community. It seems that, in our quest for equality, a certain orthodoxy has developed around what GLBT youth – and "genderqueer" youth (many of whom, incidentally, are heterosexual) – must believe. This new generation is certainly geared towards social justice, but their mechanism for social justice policing includes violent death threats – specifically with regard to the acceptance of transgender men and women as the sex to which they transition. Unfortunately, the Internet and its innumerable iterations of social media networking has emboldened this trend, with users able to shield themselves behind a nom de guerre as they metaphorically let guns blaze when someone dares express the opinion that transgender people are not the sex they present themselves as. One rather ominous post on Tumblr noted that you need at least 15 people to "break the spirit" of anyone who disagrees with the party line.


Why is this happening? In what movement is it appropriate for one group of people to demand blind acceptance?

According to the Pew Charitable Trust, this generation of 18 to 24 year olds uses technology and the Internet more than any prior generation to connect with people through text messaging, instant messaging and social media websites like Facebook and blogging sites like Tumblr – the "Look at Me" generation.

This tendency towards over disclosure of personal information gives frightening insight into what some of these kids are thinking. A recent Internet meme – Die Cis Scum – was coined in response to perceived oppression by nontransgender people against transgender people. Those that proclaim "Die Cis Scum" give us the electronic equivalent of a lethal combination of unearned indignation, instant access to information with little to no understanding of what that information means and youth culture that celebrates appearance and political ideology as a marker of inclusion in a nihilistic "in" group.

So, what do we do? Do we do anything? Do we let the next generation of GLBT folks whip nonconformists into submission? Or do we force a time out?

The GLBT community has advanced as far as it has – in a relatively short period of time – in part because of the innovative thinking bread by nonconformist thought. It is essential to question everything, and it is essential to have the room to question things. One of my greatest worries is that GLBT youth have no space to question things in an environment that demands strict adherence to a set of beliefs, because deviations from the accepted dogma of the GLBT Church earn severe social punishments.

This sounds like fascism.

Kids need room to breathe – a safe space. Safe space is even more important for GLBT youth, because most spaces are not GLBT-friendly. The Den’s unveiling in Baltimore City could not come at a more timely moment for GLBT youth – because a little tenderness, and room to maneuver, can go a long way towards protecting the next generation of innovative community thinkers.
Let's Not Get Carried Away

A recent wave of positive events has added momentum to the effort to defeat a near-certain referendum on the Civil Marriage Protection Act that was signed into law in March. Not the least of which was President Obama’s offering public support for same-sex couples. That was followed by the NAACP’s endorsement of same. Then Colin Powell added his powerful voice to the cause, and rapper Jay-Z also weighed in with a strong message.

The pro-equality forces see these developments as huge steps in helping to mitigate opposition within the African-American community in Maryland given that well-respected, influential individuals and organizations have expressed this support.

Adding to this string of welcome developments was a Public Policy Poll released May 24 and commissioned by Marylanders for Marriage Equality that revealed an astonishing 20 percent margin – 57 percent to 37 percent – favoring the marriage law in Maryland.

In a memo, PPP pollster Tom Jensen notes there has been a “major shift in opinion about gay marriage among black voters [in Maryland].” Fifty-five percent of African Americans now say they would vote for the law and only 36% oppose it. These numbers have essentially flipped since PPP conducted an identical poll in March.”

Rather than viewing these numbers through rose-colored lenses, however, they should be examined with caution. Even if the results are accurate, which would be great news, let’s not get carried away.

You may wonder, why put the damp cloth over what appears to be an outstanding and historic few weeks in the quest for marriage equality? Simply put, we’ve been led down this primrose path before with favorable polling data and we had our hearts broken. It behooves us to learn why.

Anybody who is associated with Marylanders for Marriage Equality and all other advocates and supporters should make the Prop 8 Report (prop8report.lgbtmentoring.org/home) required reading. This in-depth analysis of the failed Prop 8 campaign in California is instructive, and it would be foolish and irresponsible to ignore the lessons provided.

You see, in the equivalent period before the decisive voting took place in 2008, the polling numbers were similarly favorable. The “No on 8” group (pro-marriage equality) raised tons of money (over $43 million) and had a record-setting number of volunteers (51,000), so the playing field was level even considering the influences of the Mormon Church, the Roman Catholic Church and others pushing the “Yes on 8” vote.

So what went wrong? Many erroneously blamed African-American voters who turned out in large numbers to vote for Barack Obama and are generally opposed to same-sex marriage. However, while that group did support Yes on 8 by a decent majority, they are not the principal reason for the disappointing failure.

In fact, African-Americans only comprise 30 percent of Maryland’s population. In Maryland it’s close to 30 percent. According to this report, a large number of people – regardless of race – who claimed they supported marriage equality in the months prior to November 2008 changed positions at the end. In three-fourths of the cases, those who shifted were parents who have children under age 18 living at home. The report states, “When parents hear that their kids are in danger, even if it’s a lie some of them believe it – particularly when the lie largely goes unanswered.”

This swing from supporting marriage equality to voting for Prop 8 occurred several weeks before the election – following a series of TV ads that charged that schools would expose kids to inappropriate information about gay people. This is the key weapon for marriage equality opponents and why they have won every state ballot measure in the past: scare families that children in school will be taught about the evils of homosexuality. And there was a two and a half week delay in rebutting the ads by the No on 8 side – a costly tactical misstep – allowing the lies to sink in.

Accordingly, polling taken today does not necessarily presage similar results in the future. When our highly motivated opponents use their proven tactics of lies and exaggeration – and they certainly will – people could be influenced to change their minds. And conservative religious leaders will continue to use their pulpits to hammer away at the one “sin” (ignoring all the others) and framing marriage in biblical terms. The current rosy picture we are witnessing today could be quickly crushed.

On the bright side, the Prop 8 campaign was waged without any national leaders like Barack Obama and Colin Powell expressing support for marriage equality. Their recent pronouncements could make a substantial difference with those voters in Maryland who are soft on the issue and are not tied to deep religious convictions.

“Simply put, we’ve been led down this primrose path before with favorable polling data and we had our hearts broken. It behooves us to learn why.”

It is critical that the folks at Marylanders for Marriage Equality do not fall into the same trap that wrecked other states’ efforts. They should not interpret these positive news developments and poll results as a juggernaut of support. They cannot afford to take their eye off the prize.

Fundraising and a solid ground game is crucial, and we must engage and galvanize our own community to be part of the effort. There should be no perception that we have this in the bag, but equally as important, these leaders should read that Prop 8 report, learn from past mistakes, and use that to formulate a blueprint for this campaign. As American philosopher George Santayana wrote, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Good things are happening now, but complacency can be a killer.
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Herpes Zoster: Not an STD

Dear Dr. Eva,

An elderly relative was recently told she has a form of herpes. It appeared as a painful rash with patches of small blisters on one side of her chest. She has not been sexually active for over 15 years, and before that she had only one partner for 30 years. I know herpes can stay dormant, but she is sure she has never had this type of rash before. This diagnosis was made without a culture of the rash or any other test. Does this sound like herpes to you?

Doubtful

Dear Doubtful,

It does not sound like herpes genitalis, the sexually transmitted disease. It sounds like a classic case of herpes zoster, also called shingles.

Herpes is the name for a whole family of viruses. Herpes simplex virus type 2 is the virus that usually causes genital herpes. This is the virus people usually mean when they mention herpes. Herpes simplex virus type 1 is the virus that causes cold sores and sometimes causes genital herpes. There are many other herpes viruses, including some that cause cancer.

Herpes zoster virus (also called varicella zoster virus) causes chicken pox in children and shingles in people who are elderly or immunosuppressed. The shingles rash is a painful, blistering rash on one side of the body, usually on the chest, abdomen, or face.

Shingles is caused by reactivation of dormant herpes zoster virus. When a person has chicken pox, the zoster virus goes dormant in a nerve, and can be reactivated. Unlike chicken pox, which is extremely contagious, shingles is not very contagious. It is only spread by directly touching the rash. As long as the rash is kept covered, there is no risk to others.

The shingles rash is very distinctive – nothing else looks like it. The diagnosis can usually be made by examination with no need for tests. The virus can be cultured from the blisters, but this is expensive and is only done if there is doubt about the diagnosis, for example if the rash is not typical or there is a possibility the rash is due to herpes simplex. This might be suspected if the rash is near the genital area or looks more like a genital herpes rash (fewer blisters, more redness and swelling.)

In most cases, shingles clears up in two to four weeks. However, in some people the pain persists for months and even years after the rash is gone. This is called post-zoster neuralgia, and the pain can be disabling. This is why it is important for people over 60 to get the vaccine to prevent shingles (see next letter.)

Dear Dr. Eva,

You have written that there is no vaccination available to prevent herpes. I read online that there is one, but it is only recommended for people over 50. This doesn’t make sense to me – aren’t younger people more at risk for herpes than over-50s? Or is herpes that much worse when you are older?

Wants Protection,

a long way under 50.

Dear Wants,

Unfortunately, there is no vaccine available to prevent sexually transmitted herpes infection.

There are two vaccines available to prevent herpes zoster. Herpes zoster is a virus in the herpesvirus family which causes chicken pox in children and shingles in adults. It is not sexually transmitted.

The children’s vaccine (brand name Varivax) is given in 2 doses at age 1 and 4 years. It is covered by insurance and in most states must be given for a child to start first grade.

The adult vaccine (brand name Zostavax) is recommended for everyone over age 60, and is also approved for people aged between age 50 and 60. It is given as a single injection, just one dose. It is expensive (about $200) and not always covered by insurance. However, anyone who has had shingles would say this is a good investment.

The zoster vaccine is about 51% effective in preventing shingles and 66% effective in preventing post-herpetic neuralgia. If vaccinated people do develop shingles, the disease does not last as long and is not as severe.

If any vaccines become available to prevent sexually transmitted infections, I promise you will see the news here!

Eva Hersh is a Baltimore family physician. Send her questions at editor@baltimoreoutloud.com.
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Double Your Fun with the Perry Twins

BY TYE HOGAN

Doug and Derek Perry, better known to dance music lovers everywhere as the Perry Twins, are looking forward to the Memorial Day Weekend and the unofficial start to the summer season. “People are ready to shed their problems and shed their outer wear to show off their new bodies for swimsuit season both in and out of the clubs.” Since headlining last year’s Global Groove Tour sponsored by Centaur Entertainment and GuySpy.com, they have had a busy schedule with DJ appearances across the country.

This summer, the Perry Twins expect to be just as busy, as they are currently writing and producing new songs for their upcoming album. “We are so excited to be working on an original song with Rhona Bennett (En Vogue, The Mickey Mouse Club) entitled “When Love Is Gone.” She is an awesome singer with a great energy.”

They are also writing and producing new tracks for Ejay Day (American Idol finalist) and Jania with whom they released Activate My Body in 2007. Recently, they have collaborated on tracks with DJ Kelly Divan and other terrific artists that will be hitting dance floors this summer.

The Perry Twins are Los Angeles based DJs/Producers who hit number-one on the Billboard Club Play Chart with “Bad, Bad Boy” featuring Niki Haris. “Bad, Bad Boy” is the follow up to their debut single “Activate My Body” featuring Jania. They recently released remixes of their latest single featuring Abigail, “We’ll Never Know” and the mix cd compilation “Global Groove Dance 4” through Centaur Entertainment. Global Groove: Dance 4 is available at theoutclub.com, Amazon, iTunes and check at your favorite retailer.


The twins received the Weho Award for Outstanding DJ and have been DJing professionally since the late 90s. They continue to spin at hot clubs, parties, and star-studded events. Originally from Rhode Island, Doug & Derek developed a passion for music at a very young age. They inherited their rhythm and love of performing from their parents who are in a rock band called “Fortune.” Their Mom sings and Dad plays drums. The twins grew up dancing and playing music so it was no surprise when they decided to take on DJing, choreographing, dancing and remixing professionally. At the same time the Perry Twins began spinning at clubs, they started their own radio mixshow, “Dance Planet,” which aired for five years in New England. During that time, Derek & Doug’s dance troupe of the same name performed throughout New York and the east coast at concerts, clubs and Pride events. Their twintastic mixshows can now be heard internationally on many radio stations including their own Dance Planet Radio (Perrytwinsradio.com). Doug & Derek’s recent DJ appearances include the GLAAD Awards, Real Housewives of Beverly Hills: Adrienne Maloof Event, the Black and White Ball (New York), Hydrate (Chicago), Quo (New York), Unity (Montreal), Celebrities Nightclub (Vancouver), Red Dress Party (Seattle), the Factory (LA), Fresh (San Francisco), Tracks (Denver), the Mirage (Las Vegas), Vdara (Las Vegas), Krave (Las Vegas), Baydance (Fire Island), Nation (Mexico), LOGO’s New Now Next Concert Series, Winter Party Miami, Fire Island’s Ascension Weekend, Wonderland (Orlando), Infinita (Madrid) and Purple Party (Dallas).

The author is associated with Centaur Music, for 15 years a record label specializing in dance and pop music with an emphasis on gay and lesbian artists. Check out Baltimoreoutloud.com for the Perry Twins’ top ten list!
Sing Out, Sisters

BY GREGG SHAPIRO

Is Rachael Sage the queer Regina Spektor? In addition to sharing a monogram, they are also keyboard wizards and singers with distinctive vocal qualities. Haunted By You (MPress), Sage's 10th full-length disc in about 15 years, opens with "Invisible Light," a song that doesn't veer too far from Sage's standard musical formula. It's on Abby Would You Wait, with its tasteful horn and organ interplay and Seth Glier on backing vocals, that Sage eases away from her comfort zone. Sage's trademark sparkles get the tribute they deserve on the lovely "The Sequin Song" and "Performance Art" as dramatic as you might expect. "Birthday" ranks as one of Sage's prettiest tunes, while "Hey Nah" is one of her most joyous. That's Dar Williams on the reprise of "Invisible Light," which closes out the disc.

Like its predecessor 2010's "No Snare," the pulse of Where Are We From (K) by Tender Forever (a.k.a Melanie Valera) has a drum-machine at its heart, but don't expect a house-music rave-up. Tender Forever employs beats in a sparing, minimalist fashion. Although there are moments when the title track, "The Road Was Unkind" and "Blue" verge on aiming for the dance floor, and could do so in the hands of the right remixer. Tender Forever's bare-bones beat are in evidence on "Wrestle" and "Runaway."

You may recognize the name Yva Las Vegas from when the Venezuelan lesbian singer/songwriter teamed up with Krist Novoselic to form his short-lived post-Nirvana band Sweet 75. Las Vegas sings, make that belts, in English and Spanish on I Was Born in a Place of Sunshine & the Smell of Rape Mangoes (Moniker/Ass). There's a traditional quality to Las Vegas' performance, even on songs you might not expect, such as "Crack Whore" (because "the civil rights movement just wasn't enough") and "Pussy in Your Eye."

On her second full-length disc, Fool's Fantasy (Poprock), credited to Martha Berner and the Significant Others, Berner benefits from a full-band sound. More Nashville than insurgent country, twangy tunes such as "Cry," "Some Stay a While," "Where Does the Day Go," "Irene" and "Burning Candles," have the potential to earn Berner a broader audience among Carrie Underwood's fans. However, "All the Rockstars" and "Never Talked to Oz," the album's best tracks, illustrate that Berner also has a gift for writing memorable pop songs, too.

Lesbian guitar goddess Susan Surtone certainly lives up to her name on Shore (Acme Brothers). Like a female Dick Dale, Surtone rides the rocking and rolling waves of surf guitar, hanging ten on the frets and strings. You can practically smell the ocean and surfboard wax on original tracks including "Jade," "Tide," "Compression," "Chance," "Subduction" or her cover of the Doors' "Riders on the Storm." Don't be surprised if you find yourself seeking out Frankie and Annette for a little beach blanket bingo or contemplating how to stuff a wild bikini.

On Guitar Passions (Sony Classical), queer, classical guitar diva Sharon Isbin is joined by a notable array of friends including Nancy Wilson (of Heart), Stan Winter, Steve Morse and Steve Vai, to name a few. Aside from performing striking renditions of songs by Antonio Carlos Jobim ("Chovendo na Rosinha"), Joaquin Rodrigo ("Arpeggio" and Isaac Albéniz ("Asturias"), Isbin covers the Heart classic "Dreamboat Annie" (on which she is joined by Wilson).

Recorded at a concert in Nelson, New Zealand, Live (Appleseed) by bi-singer/songwriter Peggy Seeger, the widow of Ewan MacColl and half-sister of folk legend Pete, is a pleasant mix of storytelling/social commentary and music. Seeger performs a variety of traditional tunes, ranging from the serious "I Been a Bad Bad Girl" to the humorous "Mountaineer's Courtship." It's also a delight to hear Seeger singing her own originals, including "Everyone Knows," "I'm Gonna Be an Engineer," "You Don't Know How Lucky You Are," and "Everything Changes" (about her mother Ruth Crawford Seeger).

In his book Chicago Whispers: A History of LGBT Chicago before Stonewall, St. Sukie de la Croix writes about a number of queer blues singers, including the late Alberta Hunter. Recorded in concert in 1981, the CD reissue of Downhearted Blues: Live at the Cookery (RockBeat) found the groundbreaking blues diva having a gay old time performing originals including the title cut, "The Love I Have For You," "Remember My Name," "I've Got a Mind to Ramble," and fittingly "I'm Having a Good Time," as well as the standards "Time Waits For No One," "I Got Rhythm," "The Darktown Strutters' Ball," "Georgia On My Mind" and more.

Also, consider Caught in the Act Acoustic (Linqmusic.com), an acoustic set by protest singer Linq, containing the OutMusic Award-winning track "Oh Bully" and Camille Bloom and the Recovery's rocking disc Never Out of Time (Camillebloom.com).
An Interview with St. Sukie de la Croix
From a ‘Whisper’ to a Scream

BY GREGG SHAPIRO
Before he became a saint, Bath, England native Sukie de la Croix and I just missed crossing paths as members of Chicago’s gay writers’ group New Town Writers, but he joined just after I left the group. Shortly thereafter, we both found ourselves writing for what would be the first in a series of LGBT publications (some now defunct) in Chicago. Nearly 20 years later, both with new books to our names, we are about to embark on a book tour together, which will either strengthen and enrich or completely destroy our friendship. His book, Chicago Whispers: A History of LGBT Chicago before Stonewall (University of Wisconsin Press, 2012) covers a period of almost 300 years, and does so in a way that is as informative as it is entertaining. I spoke with St. Sukie about Chicago Whispers shortly before we hit the road.

Gregg Shapiro: St. Sukie, who do you see as the target audience for your book Chicago Whispers?
St. Sukie de la Croix: The target audience for this book was originally me. I wrote the book I wanted to read. Outside of that, it will be of interest to anyone who has ever lived in Chicago, or been intrigued by its history. Whatever comes to mind when you hear the word “Chicago” – Al Capone and the Mafia, Chicago Blues, political shenanigans – LGBTs were sucked up into the great drama of all of them. It’s a book about a metropolis, and the contribution that LGBT people made to its growth and development. But most of all it’s about individuals cast out from society, who found a niche, a way to survive, sometimes against terrible odds. In the end, Chicago LGBT people said “enough is enough” and they kicked against the pricks. And there were a lot of pricks in Chicago back then [laughs].

GS: You have said that you approached writing Chicago Whispers as a journalist, not as a historian. Can you say something about that distinction and about how you think that affected your writing and research process?
SDC: Historians have a set way of doing things, an academic clarity. There are rules to follow, whereas a journalist will sell his own grandmother to get to the bottom of a story [laughs]. Gay history is so hidden and buried, that it sometimes requires intense detective work. For example, I lied through my teeth to get into a couple of membership-only libraries. However, in the end, if the book is to be of any use to students, all the information has to be sourced, and I’m very proud of my bibliography.

GS: How did you go about formatting chapters?
SDC: With respect to the mechanics of writing the book, this appeared at first to be the biggest problem. The book covers 300 years of history and I wanted to place it in a timeline, but some subjects, individuals, and events, overlapped into different chapters. I struggled with this and eventually gave up and kept writing with no structure whatsoever, but as it often happens in these cases, that’s when it all fell into place on its own. Sometimes we overthink things.

GS: Chicago Whispers was also the name of the LGBT history column that you wrote, which ran for six years in Outlines and the second incarnation of Windy City Times, beginning in 1998. Did any or all of the chapters in the Chicago Whispers book have their genesis in those columns?
SDC: Writing the column inspired me to write the book. However, I didn’t use much from the columns, as they were oral history interviews and I was writing a factual history book. I did use a few anecdotes about gay bars and raids, but only when backed up by other sources such as newspapers.

GS: Chicago has long been considered to be a cultural mecca, and throughout Chicago Whispers, you shine a spotlight on the contributions of Chicago’s LGBT artistic community. Were you surprised to learn about the people about whom you wrote and do you think they will finally get their due?
SDC: Chicago has always been a city of artists and writers, I’m just pointing out that a lot of them were LGBT. I think that’s important. An individual’s sexuality is a vital ingredient to their work, but sadly it’s often ignored, denied or glossed over. Chicago should be proud of its arts community, past and present.

GS: Was there any event or person in writing the book that you would cite as having a profound effect on you?
SDC: Sitting down and talking to LGBT Chicagoans about their lives growing up in the Windy City has been the most inspiring aspect of this whole project. They were the impetus for me writing Chicago Whispers, the column and the book, the reason I stuck with it. At least four men I interviewed, and whose stories I used in the book, have since passed away: Charles B, the Polish Princess, Tony Midnite, and Dee Lobue. Each of those beautiful gay men had a profound effect on me. It was a great honor to know them, albeit briefly.

GS: Are there any revelations in the book of which you are especially proud to have uncovered?
SDC: In 1925 Henry Gerber, who founded the first gay group in America in Chicago, was arrested, but no proof of his arrest has ever been found. Until now, that is. I did some serious sleuthing.

GS: Is there anyone that you wrote about in the book that you wished you had met in person?
SDC: All of them. I would love to have interviewed the author Henry Blake Fuller, and Margaret Anderson, although, in truth, I don’t think we would have hit it off, she was terribly pretentious, ghastly but fascinating. I’d love to build a time machine and zap myself back to a club called Diamond Lil’s in 1928 and to hear a sixteen-year-old Alberta Hunter singing in a brothel on Chicago’s South Side. Imagine meeting Ma Rainey ... wow!

GS: Many of the chapters have a vivid, cinematic quality to them. Is there a couple that you think might make a good movie?
SDC: Somebody needs to make a documentary about Chicago cross-dressers in burlesque, both male and female. Also, there’s a rich seam of history to mine on the subject of African-American pansy parlors in the early 1930s. Having said that I’ve seen some awful gay history documentaries, made by well-meaning people...but just dreadful.

GS: Have you begun work on your next book project(s)?
SDC: I’ve completed the sequel to Chicago Whispers and it sits with the publisher. I’ve almost finished writing an autobiographical novel about my childhood growing up in post-World War II Britain. After that, I’m writing a book of historical essays, followed by a book of short stories. I’m busy [laughs].
We Need to Talk

BY GREGG SHAPIRO

To say that Lynne Ramsay's film adaptation of Lionel Shriver's novel We Need to Talk about Kevin (Oscilloscope) devastating isn't hyperbole. It's the kind of traumatic drama where no one is blameless, which is precisely where it derives its raw and brutal power.

Like a series of nightmares from which the dreamer can't awake, We Need to Talk about Kevin warps time, slithering back and forth, between before and after. Often they merge explosively like gasoline and a struck match. When we first encounter Eva (Tilda Swinton), she is deep in a pharma-induced dream about a tomato festival, slathered in red. Red is as much a character in We Need to Talk about Kevin as the characters themselves, represented by blood, jam, leaves, paint and more.

Once awake in the "after" aftermath, Eva attempts to lead her shattered life, but her car and house are splattered in red paint. Following a job interview at a travel agency, she is slapped in the face by a woman on the street, a red mark left on her cheek. Why the paint and the slap? Because Eva's teenaged sociopath son Kevin (Ezra Miller in a star-making performance), inspired by Robin Hood, a toy bow and arrow, and later, a real bow and arrow, killed several of his high school classmates with, you guessed it, a bow and arrow. He also used the weapon to murder his father Franklin (John C. Reilly) and younger sister Celia (Ashley Gerasimovich).

Was Eva a bad mother? Is she to blame? Early on, we see Eva struggling with being pregnant, feeling detached from her newborn, being frustrated with her crying infant, experiencing great difficulty connect with her child and so on. Franklin, on the other hand, has bonded with young Kevin (Rock Duer and later Jasper Newell). The boy appears to be acutely aware of the power that he holds over his parents and plays it like a pro beyond his years. The demon seed has been planted and is growing.

As the horrors continue to mount (from Kevin's refusal to be toilet-trained and his abuses of Celia to derogatory attitude towards Eva when she visits him in a juvenile detention center), we see Eva's helplessness, as well as her unspoken acceptance of her situation, increase and expand, until it destroys her marriage and family. Not an easy film to watch by any means, We Need to Talk about Kevin, will, however give you plenty to talk about. Special features on the double-disc Blu-ray/DVD edition include a "behind the scenes" featurette, an interview with Shriver and much more.

A certified hit on the film festival circuit, Céline Sciamma's Tomboy (Wolfe) deserves every accolade. Cleft-chinned, freckled and short-haired Laure (Zoé Héran) has the physical androgyny of a 10 year old girl, but there's to Laure that and she embraces the tomboy that she is.

Laure and her family, including expectant mother (Sophie Cattani), father (Mathieu Demy) and six-year old kid sister Jeanne (Malonn Lévana) have just moved into a new flat. Per Laure's request, her bedroom has been painted blue. Laure gets along well with the girly Jeanne and they have fun playing together.

Everything changes once Laure ventures outside. She introduces herself as Mikael to Lisa (Jeanne Disson), the first of the neighborhood children that she meets. Lisa, the in turn, introduces Mikael to her friends. Things escalate from there.

The dramatic tension in the story arises from Laure/Mikael's ability to maintain separate identities at home and with her playmates. As you might expect, Lisa, the only girl in the gang, develops a schoolgirl crush on Mikael, further complicating matters.

When Jeanne inadvertently discovers the masquerade, she does what any devoted younger sister would do and comes to the aid of Laure, even embellishing the myth. Before long, Laure/Mikael's carefully crafted double life begins to unravel. Heran's one of a kind performance is riveting and must be seen. The same holds true for the other young actors, Lévana and Disson, making Tomboy a triumph. DVD bonus features include a "behind the scenes" featurette.

Baldvin Z's Jitters (TLA) begins with Icelandic teens Gabriel and Markus meeting as exchange students at an English school in Manchester, England. A drunken kiss during the trip raises serious questions for both.

Back home in Iceland, Gabriel, whom Markus pegs as the "cuddly one" that all the girls run to when they have boyfriend trouble, has his hands full with his own crumbling social circle, not to mention trouble on the homefront from his control-freak mother. Testing both his long-standing relationships and the new one he has just begun, Gabriel's jitters threaten to ruin everything, but the 16 year old is more resilient than he realizes. DVD special features include a "behind the scenes" featurette.
The End of an Era that Remains Hard to Define

Contemporary Museum ‘Hiatus’

BY MICHAEL FARLEY

The Contemporary Museum abruptly announced last week that it is suspending operations indefinitely. The Contemporary’s board of directors cited financial concerns and failure to fundraise as much as anticipated before moving into its new Charles Street location. Sue Spaid, the museum’s director, has been dismissed as well as the rest of the staff. The closing of the Contemporary is a major blow to Baltimore; it was somewhat of an anomaly that was neither institutional in the sense of more established museums nor as permeable and informal as the city’s numerous nonprofit, artist-run, or DIY spaces. The Contemporary was a unique bridge between the authoritative world of “museums” and the approachable (but often unnoticed) local art scene. The museum’s strengths, as well as its weaknesses, were rooted in its hybrid nature; it could attract mainstream and weak exhibitions from the Maryland Historical Society’s collection that examined the way race and material culture have defined each other. Mining was a revolutionary exhibition that attracted international attention; it redefined the found object as an inherently charged signifier that drew strength from its history, as opposed to the will of the artist as modernist “ready-mades” had in the past. Wilson legitimized recontextualisation and curatorial practice as artistic practice in the eyes of art audiences forever.

Throughout the 90s, the Contemporary Museum’s curators addressed both local context and globalization; staging site-specific exhibitions in such unlikely venues as subway stations and “The Block” while showing artists from behind the recently lifted iron curtain and developing world. In 1999, the museum moved into a space adjacent to The Walters on Center Street. From the Center Street space, The Contemporary brought high-caliber work to Baltimore throughout the 2000s, often at the expense of alienating the burgeoning local art scene. In 2005, the museum introduced East-Coast audiences to Beautiful Losers, a highly influential survey of subculture-inspired fine art that, for better or for worse, set the stage for much of the graphic-design and street-art-influenced painting and drawing that has dominated an entire generation’s visual culture. In 2006, The Contemporary pulled its neighbor into the 21st century with Louise Bourgeois:Femme, a retrospective of the feminist artist’s work curated in dialogue with the Walters’ permanent collection.

Despite bringing important artwork to the city, the Contemporary Museum remained unpopular with younger artists in Baltimore. With certain exceptions such as 2006’s Headquarters (in which the museum was boarded-up for a show dialoging with activists about the prison-industrial complex and the creation of site-specific interventions and controversial exhibitions that were both guest and host in an uncertain era of urban life defined by the devastating HIV epidemic, drug violence, and racial tension.

In 1992, The Contemporary made history by facilitating Fred Wilson’s Mining the Museum, an installation of artifacts from the Maryland Historical Society’s collection that examined the way race and material culture have defined each other. Mining was a revolutionary exhibition that attracted international attention; it redefined the found object as an inherently charged signifier that drew strength from its history, as opposed to the will of the artist as modernist “ready-mades” had in the past. Wilson legitimized recontextualisation and curatorial practice as artistic practice in the eyes of art audiences forever.

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Despite bringing important artwork to the city, the Contemporary Museum remained unpopular with younger artists in Baltimore. With certain exceptions such as 2006’s Headquarters (in which the museum was boarded-up for a show dialoging with activists about the prison-industrial complex and the creation of unique opportunity for local galleries to curate un-sellable and space-consuming performances and installations while giving emerging artists exposure to audiences who would patronize a “museum” but not necessarily walk-up spaces without much publicity on the city’s cultural fringe. Baltimore Liste served as an important bridge between the museum, the local art scene, and national audiences.

Spaid became a regular fixture at cultural events, climbing rickety staircases to warehouse venues, talking to local curators, and introducing Baltimore artists to contacts in New York and elsewhere. She most importantly offered a singularly critical, informed voice in a climate that all too often relies on complacent consensus rather than honest discourse. If Sue Spaid, who was uncharacteristically unavailable for comment, leaves Baltimore, the Contemporary Museum’s Board of Directors will have inflicted an even crueler blow to the city than closing one of its most versatile institutions.

Dave Hickey famously paraphrased George Bernard Shaw when he wrote, “Institutions collapse from lack of funding, they do not die from lack of meaning. We die from lack of meaning.” It is hard to sympathize with the Board of Directors’ decision to suspend museum operations. Although revenue streams trickled in the recession, cultural institutions are more needed than ever, and new opportunities and challenges have presented themselves. The Occupy movement has brought rage back into the streets and the studios of artists in a way not seen since the era of ACT UP and The Contemporary’s inception. The city is littered with vacant real estate (the Contemporary and the owners of the Rotunda were rumored to have been discussing reusing the former Giant food store as exhibition space) and people looking for a place to vent their frustrations. It is disappointing that an institution that established itself by creatively adapting to different venues and political issues gave up on problem solving now. Sources close to the museum expressed dismay that the Board did not merely downsize museum operations and continue to provide critical content with a Baltimore-appropriate budget. Just as Baltimore’s chaotic art scene had begun coalescing into cohesive movements and had the ears of a nationally recognized critical writer and curator, a major pillar has been knocked out from underneath us all. Adding insult to injury, the Board suspended operations in the middle of this year’s Liste series. As one person involved in the exhibition said, “Closing it at this time is really f***ing unfair to the artists in the show and the people who worked so hard to make it happen.” ▼
The King and Queen of Pride
THE QUEST | MAY 19, 2012 | PHOTOS BY JAY W PHOTOS
Summer Must-Haves

As we head off on our various summer vacations, I wanted to share with you the top 5 must-have items on the Domestic Dandy’s list for summer fun!

1) A nice tan – Before heading off to your summer event or vacation, make sure your skin is kissed with a golden tan. It not only makes your skin look healthy and glowing, but really makes your summer wardrobe pop! Ranking number 1 again on the Dandy list is my favorite sunless tanner, Jergens’ Natural Glow Foaming Daily Moisturizer. I’ve tried several other tanners and none compare to the ease of use and consistent color that this moisturizer offers. It dries quickly as well so you can dress immediately after applying!

2) A fun and interesting beach read – Whether you are looking for a trashy or serious novel, one should always carry a book to the beach. Not only does it keep one’s mind occupied, but it also comes in handy as a prop when trying to eavesdrop on your beach neighbor’s story about last night’s debauchery. For those captivated by the 2008 financial crisis, the ensuing financial scandals, and the lives of the wealthy, Cristina Alger’s novel, The Darlings offers a glittering and ultimately disenchancing glimpse into New York High Society. Her debut novel featuring the Darling family and its patriarch, billionaire financier Carter Darling, weaves a tale of the wealthy elite and all of its trappings into a fast-paced suspenseful thriller.

For the history buff, I recommend Gabriele Wills’s novel, The Summer Before the Storm. This richly detailed novel about the age of elegance begins in Muskoka, Canada, in 1914 as the affluent and powerful Wyndham family are enjoying their summer months on their private island, Wyndwood. The idyllic lake atmosphere, however, turns choppy as unknown family members begin turning up and World War I approaches. From the descriptions of the pristine, island-dotted lakes and summer mansions to the sinking of the Lusitania and war torn Europe this beautifully written book takes you on a wonderful ride that you won’t soon forget.

3) A great pair of sunglasses – We’ve all done it. In fact, we still have drawers filled with what was once the most trendiest sunglasses. This year, before heading out to purchase those “get noticed” glasses, learn about which sunglass shape works with what face shape.

- For a square face and round frames work best
- For an oval face – most frame shapes work
- For an oblong face – tall frames that help create a shorter face work best
- For a round face - rectangular and horizontal styles that make faces appear longer and thinner work best
- For a heart-shaped face – narrow, round frames that soften the forehead work best (from Framesdirect.com, Face Shape Guide).

4) A great looking... and fitting... swimming suit – If you’re headed to the beach this summer, make sure to take a great bathing suit with you. This is especially important for the gentleman. Nothing makes me want to do a clothing make over more than when I see a gent on the beach wearing ill-fitting basketball shorts. Please guys, respect yourself and your significant other by upgrading your swimsuit. They may not mention it, but they’ll appreciate the extra care you’ve taken to look good standing next to them. Park & Ronen (Parkeandronden.com) offer several options for the modern man. With suits ranging from a 2-inch inseam to a longer 12-inch inseam, they have you covered for the amount of skin you want to show. For the more daring individual, I recommend checking out freshpair.com. Swimsuits range from bikinis and briefs to a more modest square cut trunk. Either way you’ll be ready to tackle sand and surf!

5) A fun weekend bag to tote – all of your summer essentials

Never underestimate the importance of a stylish weekend bag. Whether stepping off a plane, gangplank or emerging from a cab, a striking statement bag is essential. A dandy vacation memory from last year was stepping off the fast ferry in Province-town with my blue w/white piping weekend bag in tow and meeting many a stranger on the street as they complemented my choice in luggage.

To find your signature bag check out ebags.com or if you’re looking to spend a little more, check out Mrporter.com. There you have it!

The Domestic Dandy “2012 5-Summer Must-Haves” for a fun and fashionable summer.

Have a wonderful holiday weekend and don’t forget the sunscreen!

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
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I just started reading Emotional Awareness: Overcoming the Obstacles to Psychological Balance and Compassion. It’s a transcript of a many-hours-long conversation between Buddhist and national leader, the Dalai Lama, and Paul Ekman, who is a famous psychologist specializing in how facial expressions communicate emotion.

I should probably begin by saying that, unless you’re a psychology nerd as I am, I can’t recommend the book. It’s very dense reading – I notice that I need to read each page much slower than normally. If you’re up for an exploration of emotions that requires some work, then give it a try.

Despite its limited appeal, there was one point early in the book that struck me, and I’d like to explore the idea in this column. During the conversation, Dr. Ekman begins to discuss his definition of a mood: “A mood distorts reality to fit our perspective of the situation triggered it. So, for example, someone’s exact thought at the time might have been, “Oh, no, no, no, girlfriend!” However, somewhere deep inside, there must have been a sense that, for example, “This other guy is trying to steal my boyfriend, that’s happened before, and I’m sick of it.” The “Oh, no, girlfriend!” thought didn’t trigger the emotion; the hidden, quick evaluation of the situation triggered it.

So, what’s the point to all this? I’m glad you asked.

As is the case when we learn about other cultures, we learn about new possibilities that didn’t exist in our own culture in quite the same way. It’s the ultimate “thinking outside the box” experience. For example, there really are no literal translations for the French phrases “joie de vivre” or “le petit mort.” The Dalai Lama offers us a different potential reality when it comes to our experiences of moods.

What if a large dose of our experience with moods is a social construct? What if we don’t have to feel stuck with a mood, with no other option than to ride it out and hope that it just changes in time?

Instead, what if we come at this from the Buddhist point of view? “I’ve been focusing on opportunities to get pissed off – or depressed or frightened or guilt ridden – lately. Why don’t I practice focusing on things that would help me to get things done and that would help me to feel better?”

Consider this possible new reality for yourself: there are no such things as bad moods. There are only unhelpful ways of focusing. Our poor focus gives us “bad moods,” like eating beans gives us gas. You don’t have to “take meds” for your “gas disorder.” (Okay, maybe some Beano would have helped.) You just have to go easy on the beans next time, and eat something else.

To wrap up, the book included an interesting discussion of the Buddhist psychological perspective of affective versus non-affective emotions. Any emotion – even anger, fear, sadness, or guilt – can be non-affective – helpful to us – if it’s appropriate to the situation, and if it’s aimed at the situation and not at another person. For example, “I’m angry at what you did, not at you.” If the emotion goes over the top, comes at things from a bizarre angle, or attacks another person, then it is affective. Again you find this Buddhist emphasis on how you are focusing. If you focus poorly, you get “sick” (afflicted).

Stay well, my friends. Focus well. ▼

Learn more at BaltimoreLifeCoachGerry.com
THE GOOD AND EVIL OF Gay Savannah

BY JON FAIRBANKS
Gaytravel.com
Savannah, Georgia is a charming gay oasis frozen in time. America’s first planned city boasts a thriving gay and lesbian scene and is a haven for the artistic and creative. Whether you’re looking to relocate or want a relaxing getaway, this historic city is a dream destination.

SCAD: Savannah is an art student’s inspiration
One of the reasons so many artists, musicians and freethinkers love “the hostess city of the south” is because of the Savannah College of Art and Design. The campus is stretched out across the downtown area and uses more than 60 buildings, including many historic structures. It’s not uncommon to see SCAD’s trademark red double decker bus passing through one of the squares. Many of the transplant gays are drawn to the city because of SCAD and the school’s presence adds unique appeal.

For gay and lesbian art enthusiasts, there are several opportunities to get your culture on in Savannah besides the gorgeous landmarks. There are a number of galleries featuring work by local artists, the acclaimed Savannah Dance Theatre and the Savannah Music Festival, an annual soiree that highlights an eclectic mix of performers.

True crime and the Lady Chablis
Savannah’s breathtaking downtown district and colorful residents became a worldwide phenomenon in 1994, when John Berendt’s iconic novel Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil first hit bookshelves. The book quickly topped the New York Times’ bestsellers list and stayed on that list for 216 weeks.

Midnight tells the story of a male prostitute who is killed by his gay lover. The death took place in a home built by a relative of native singer/songwriter Johnny Mercer. During the course of the novel, readers are introduced to several iconic, real-life denizens; many members of the LGBT community. Clint Eastwood adapted the book into a critically acclaimed film, starring Jude Law and Kevin Spacey.

One of the most notable characters in Midnight is real-life legendary female impersonator, the Lady Chablis. Chablis adds some comedy relief to the heavy drama of the main plot. The legendary performer played herself in the film version and

If you want to partake in some French cuisine, check out Papillote, intersecting with Broughton. After a late night of boozing, head to the Mellow Mushroom for a slice or a calzone.

Make sure you bring an extra suitcase so you can schlep back all of the antiques and other souvenirs you acquire back home with you. River Street is a great place to find unique pieces. Jere’s Antiques and Nature’s Treasures are just a couple of the most popular shops.

Savannah gay nightlife: Club One, Club All
So you’ve shopped ‘til your bank account balance dropped and now you want to check out the gay nightlife in Savannah. The most popular LGBT venue continues to be Club One. This iconic hangout offers two dance floors, a video bar and regular drag shows and liver performances. If you’re looking for a spot that’s a little more low-key, check out Chuck’s off River Street. This is a great place to chug down cheap drinks and meet friendly locals.

Life’s a beach on Tybee Island
One of Savannah’s biggest draws is the fact that it’s located on the coast. Tybee Island is the most popular local spot to find gay and straight hotties alike getting bronzed. The area, also known as “Savannah Beach,” is a great quiet getaway for locals and tourists. This is also where you’ll find the famed Tybee Island Light Station and Fort Screven Historic District.

Each May since 1987 Tybee Island has played host to the popular Beach Bum parade. This is a great event to spy scantily clad southern gents and belles in all of their glory. Just make sure you bring your water gun to squirt them when they roll by on their floats. The parade takes place on Butler Avenue, the main street in Tybee.

Art, music, amazing architecture and incredible LGBT nightlife, you can find it all in Savannah, Georgia. It’s a great city to relax in a rocking chair, put up your pinky and sip a mint julep in your best seersucker attire. I do declare!

To learn more about Savannah and other great LGBT travel destinations please visit Gaytravel.com.
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Find us on Facebook! facebook.com/chesapeakepride
LIVE LOVE BE
Call 410-599-0273 for more information on all 3 events
June 1-9
Theatre Project
A Fierce Longing closes out Theatre Project’s 40th Anniversary Season with a limited run. Directed by John C. Wilson, this is a highly visual, multi-media production that borrows stylistically from Japanese theater traditions. The play is drawn from the life and work of the Nobel-nominated Japanese novelist and playwright Yukio Mishima. A Fierce Longing chronicles his life, his work, and his turmoil. The opening of A Fierce Longing is part of Theatre Project’s 40th Anniversary “Homecoming Weekend.” Events will include free performances, a gala reception, door prizes, and special events. Call the box office for information 410-752-8558.

June 2
Downtown House Party
12:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. City Center Lot, N Potomac St., $35 in advance and $40 at the gate. $7 children 6-12 years old. Free for children 5 and under. Gates open at 11:00 a.m.

June 3
Western Maryland Blues Fest
June 1
Lotta Blues Kickoff
4:30 p.m. – 9:45 p.m. City Center Lot, N Potomac St., $20 in advance and $25 at the gate. $7 children 6-12 years old. Free for children 5 and under. Gates open at 4:00 p.m.

June 2
Downtown House Party
12:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. City Center Lot, N Potomac St., $35 in advance and $40 at the gate. $7 children 6-12 years old. Free for children 5 and under. Gates open at 11:00 a.m.

June 3
Family Blues Picnic
12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. City Park Bandshell, FREE. Lawn Chairs and Blankets Encouraged. Combo tickets available in advance, see website: www.blues-fest.org/index.html. ID required for events.

June 3
Family Blues Picnic
12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. City Park Bandshell, FREE. Lawn Chairs and Blankets Encouraged. Combo tickets available in advance, see website: www.blues-fest.org/index.html. ID required for events.

June 1–3
Frederick Festival of the Arts
A juried fine arts and crafts festival that takes place the first weekend in June along Carroll Creek Linear Park in historic Downtown Frederick. Two stages of live entertainment, artist demonstrations, children’s activities, boat rentals, food, and much more. Friday, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.; Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; Sunday 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. FREE admission. East Church St, Frederick, MD.

Send your information for upcoming events to calendar@baltimoreoutloud.com

June 9
A Special Edition Variety Show
Creative Alliance with Breaking News from Tilted Torch! Baltimore, MD – Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Tilted Torch sets record for most engaging variety show on the east coast! DC and Baltimore based performers converge at the Creative Alliance for a recap of the day’s top stories! Our news anchor, Shortståx, delivers the news. Our beat reporter uncovers healing burlesque practices by Cheree “Sweetbottom” This Just In! Local districts are being scandalized by five alarm fire performances by Malibu and scantily clad Miss Joule. This broadcast is made possible by our sponsor Dr. Finius J. Nodno III, Esq. Creative Alliance, 3134 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore, show time at 8:00 p.m. Ticket Info: $11 Creative Alliance members and students, $16 non-members creativealliance.org or by phone: 410.276.1651.

Coppin State University
Join the American Cancer society and the area hospitals at the African American Men’s Health Conference 2012 Talon Center 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Doors open at 8:00 a.m. Program starts promptly at 9:00 a.m. Free conference (registration required). For more information or to register: CancerHealthForums.org Toll Free: 1-877-894-2862.

The Great Annual Country Barbecue & Barn Dance
Leave your cares (and your tax) at home, slip into your jeans and Stetsons, and come on out to the country. You’ll gaze on the sunset over the Blue Ridge Mountains, chow down on the best ribs and chicken east of the Mississippi, and swing your partner in the big ol’ barn at the most laid-back party of the year. Join the members of the Washington Chorus at Montervideo, the Kiplinger Family Farm at 6:30 p.m. in the evening. Reserve your spot today! For further information, please visit: www.thewashingtonchorus.org or call 202.342.6221.

June 13–19
The Star- Spangled Sailabration
Baltimore hosts the national launch of the bicentennial of the War of 1812 with the Star-Spangled Sailabration. U.S., British and Canadian naval vessels, tall ships from around the globe, and an air show, featuring the Blue Angels. Explore our sites, museums and historic locations, Travel along our trails and scenic byways. Experience our commemorations and special exhibitions., make Baltimore the place to be. For more information go to http://www.starsspangled200.com

June 15
East Meets West
Recital by Flute Virtuoso Marina Piccinini. Peabody Conservatory faculty artist Marina Piccinini will explore the spiritual and elegant relationship between Asian and French music. One of the world’s leading flute virtuosos, Piccinini will perform with pianists Arcelci Chacon and Colette Valentine. 7:00 p.m. in Peabody’s Leth Syington Griswold Hall. Tickets for the June 15 recital are $20 for adults and $10 for students with ID. To reserve tickets, call 410-234-4772. 17 East Mount Vernon Place, Baltimore MD.

June 16
Special pre-Pride show
Jay’s on Read. NYC’s singer-songwriter drag phenomenon, Candy Samples, will perform a special pre-Pride show at Jay’s on Read. The event, which is presented in part by Decadent Duck Events is free to the public. Candy is a new face to Baltimore audiences, but folks will find her show full of verve, vigor and vim! Originally from Atlanta, GA, Candy serves her southern charm and down-home realism as she sings her original tunes, “Green Bean Casserole”, “If I Had Only Left (Two Shots Earlier)”, ”Boy Crazy” and the celebrity-political inspired diddy, “Sweet Scandal”.. Jay’s on Read, 225 West Read Street Show starts at 3:00 p.m. Free!
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BY BOB FORD

Following a sun-baked disappointing outing at Camden Yards, Steve and I strolled to the Inner Harbor for dinner. We happened upon Brio, directly across Pratt Street at the Inner Harbor (same location where Legal Seafood had been), checked the menu and decided to give it a try. Why not? The Orioles lost so how could the day be any worse?

When we entered (indoor and outdoor seating was available), we were surprised to notice that it was rather empty at the time, contrary to rumors that area restaurants are packed following baseball games. It did fill up later on.

The decor was striking. Mediterranean motifs abound in an open, airy, upscale room. Large windows and arches added to the ambience.

Our server was Maya, and she was attentive from the beginning. Other servers pitched in during the course of the meal; all were friendly and efficient.

Steve chose as his entrée the Grilled Salmon ($21.95). A filet of salmon shared a plate with Romano crusted tomatoes, citrus pesto, asparagus and crispy shoestring potatoes. He said it was tasty through and through. The salmon was grilled long enough to be flaky while still retaining the flavor. The portion was substantial and filling.

I started off with the Brio Chopped Salad. It cost $3.95 because I purchased an entrée. Otherwise, it would have been $4.95. It consisted of chopped greens with tomatoes, olives, onions, cucumber, feta and red wine vinaigrette. The salad was large enough to share some with Steve. We both agree that it was very flavorful; the ingredients blended perfectly.

—continued on page 30
Houses and Water

BY WAYNE CURTIS

It's spring, otherwise known as Damp Basement Season, the homeowner’s nightmare. There’s no greater issue in real estate than water penetration into the house, usually the basement level, and what to do about it. When I bought my own house, the previous owner had installed a perimeter drain and two sump pumps, so I thought any water issues had been dealt with. They did not keep my basement from looking like the Lower Branch of the Pata-pasco after the first summer thunderstorm.

Until about 60 years ago, basements were not generally considered living spaces suitable for finishing off with drywall and carpet. Old foundations, whether brick or stone or even block, naturally allow a certain amount of moisture to get through. Some old cellars or crawlspaces have dirt floors. The vast majority of Baltimore’s housing stock was built BEMC (Before the Era of Man Cave). So whether you are looking for a home, have just bought one, or are thinking of selling, you most likely will be dealing with water issues at some point.

Here are a couple of things to look for so that you can catch problems when things are dry, before that hurricane-driven downpour builds a close relationship between you and your wetvac.

1) Look at the guttering and downspouts. Are they clean? Clogged gutters fill and overflow before they can move the water to the downspout, bringing water right next to the foundation wall. Can you see where the rainwater goes once it leaves the roof? In some areas the original builders put underground rainwater drain lines to the curb, so the downspouts may empty directly into a pipe opening right next to the house. This may have been a great idea when everything was new, but if the house is 30 years old or more, that underground drain has almost certainly become blocked, either by tree roots (and the tree could be long gone) or the drain pipe has collapsed with age and deterioration.

Other builders in this area routed rainwater from rear roof gutters back into the house through pipes that connected to the main sewer line. This was an issue in my basement, because during a subsequent renovation that drain line was cut off and the back gutter was emptied into a drain that went nowhere. That water had no place to go, except to bubble over and go into the ground right beside the foundation wall and then onto my basement floor.

They may not be pretty, but plastic downspout extenders that carry rainwater at least three or four feet from the foundation are the best, inexpensive, foolproof method of making sure none of that rainwater comes back in through the foundation walls.

2) Is the yard landscaped and graded to carry water away from the house? It does no good to evacuate the water four feet away from the foundation if the yard slopes and brings it all right back. That is especially true around old window wells. Old homes tend to have window wells made from brick, where both brick and mortar have cracked and now allow every drop of water to come through and have free entry right back to the foundation wall. Putting fancy coverings over the window well will do no good if the earth around it funnels every drop right back to the house.

If you can manage these rainwater issues before it penetrates the foundation, you will solve a majority of your wet basement problems.

After removing my front downspouts from the old underground drains and extending them away from the foundation, discovering and dealing with the cut off drain line in back, regrading around my window wells, and replacing one downspout with a larger version to carry off more water, the basement of my 90-year-old home has been dry for over a decade. As far as I know those sump pumps have never been used.

Rainwater penetration is not the only source of wet basements. Homes have sometimes been built in areas where the ground water level is unusually high, and basements can be damp without a heavy rain to blame. This water wells up from beneath the house and finds its way through the base of foundation walls. This type of problem requires the services of your local waterproofing company. The perimeter drains and sump pumps they install will collect water below the level of the current floor and prevent the water intrusion from happening in the first place.

Then it can be pumped away from the house where it will be harmless. Disclosure of such a condition by an honest seller is the best way to make sure that a buyer is aware of such a condition, since the water table rises and falls over time depending upon long-term weather trends.

Wayne Curtis has been a licensed real estate agent since 1998. His new website Rentorbuybaltimore.com helps first-time homebuyers decide whether they should rent or buy. Send questions to him at wayne@charmcityrealestate.com.
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Shane Brown Takes Triple L Title

On Saturday, May 19, 2012, all of Baltimore was excited about I'll Have Another winning a spectacular Preakness Race. Although horse racing fans will have to wait until June 9th to see if there is a Triple Crown winner, on the evening of May 19 it took less than an hour to select a Triple L winner. Shane Brown of Baltimore was selected the first ever Mr. Triple L / Leon's Leather 2011 Alex Lemaire, COMMAND, MC, member Jeff Daniels, and Triple L General Manager Larry. The score sheet was plain and simple. There would be no point system. The first category would be formal leather. The judges would merely put a check mark next to the name of the person who best demonstrated how a leather titleholder should look in complete leather. The other categories would be voted on based on audience reaction. The judges would put a check mark next to the name of not who the judges felt was best, but who got the biggest applause from the audience. At the end of the contest, Bob quickly introduced the judges as they turned in their score sheets. Since there were only three contestants, no runner-up was announced. It can be done – a complete contest in under an hour. (It would have taken longer had Bob put the patch in the claw machine!)

It also worked out very well that the contest was kept short. Afterwards I had time to run up to Mixer’s on Belair Road for a ShipMates' bar night. Many others in the audience headed over to the Baltimore Eagle for the IML Send-off Party for Mr. Maryland leather 2012 boy joe. It was a big night all over Baltimore. While I was helping to select a new leather titleholder at the Triple L, over at The Quest International Leatherboy 2006 marshal with being selected King of Pride along with Miss Gay Maryland America 2009 Sue Nami being crowned Queen of Pride. Look for both of them in the Baltimore Pride Parade on June 16 along with Mr. Triple L / Leon’s Leatherman 2012 Shane Brown. What a great bunch of representatives! When you see Shane in his leather you will be saying, “I’ll have another... Sir!”

International Mr. Leather 2012 Announced

For most people the Memorial Day Weekend means hot dogs and warm weather, but for the Leather Community it also means hot men and cool leather. On Sunday, May 27 Mr. Michigan Leather 2012 Woody Woodruff was sashed International Mr. Leather 2012 in a packed Grand Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. The title of 1st Runner up to IML 2012 was awarded to Mr. Eagle New York 2012 A.C. Demindont and 2nd Runner Up to IML 2012 is Mr. D.C. Eagle 2012 Kevin Jordan. Nick Elliot from Portland, Oregon took home the title of International Mr. Bootblack 2012. With most of the country talking about gay marriage it was noted for the first time in the thirty-four years of the IML Contest two contestants were legally married to each other. That claim goes to Maryland’s own contestants Mr. SECC Leather 2012 Andy Chmielewski-liu and Mr. Maryland Leather 2012 boy joe chmielewski-liu who were married in New York.

With the temperatures in the 90s in Chicago over the Memorial Day Weekend it was another hot International Mr. Leather Contest! 

Happy Pride Baltimore! Pride Weekend ...

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A Big Thank You to Bob Rose for a Job Well Done!

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International Mr. Leather 2012, Woody Woodruff  credit: Richard Puller
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