TRANS* ACTIVIST MISS MAJOR MARKS JANE ADDAMS' DAY

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# WINDY CITY TIMES

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN, BI AND TRANS COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

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SEPT. 10, 2014

*VOL 29, NO. 50*


# Agencies push state to release HIV/AIDS funds

**BY MATT SIMONETTE**

A number of HIV/AIDS agencies, all serving persons of color, are preparing to lobby the Illinois government to release funds that had been awarded to them for fiscal year (FY) 2015, but were never allocated.

In July, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) informed 20 service providers that money awarded to those agencies for FY 2015 through the African-American HIV/AIDS Response Act would not be allocated to them. Those agencies were awarded the money through a request for proposal process, and most made budgeting decisions based on those awards, so the sudden reversal could have potentially devastating effects.

Why the money was not turned over remains unclear. IDPH officials say the General Assembly needs to replenish funds. But Illinois state Rep. Greg Harris, D-Chicago, who chairs the House Appropriations–Human Services Committee, said that although IDPH requested an initial appropriation of about $1.5 million, it did not specify a revenue source from which to draw the funds.

The agencies were informed of the situation in a July 17 conference call that most participants expected was

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**SINEAD O'CONNOR TALKS NEW CD, CHICAGO BLUES**
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**HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE CARYN BERMAN DIES**
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**OUT GAY LATINO MOUNTS ALDERMANIC CHALLENGE**
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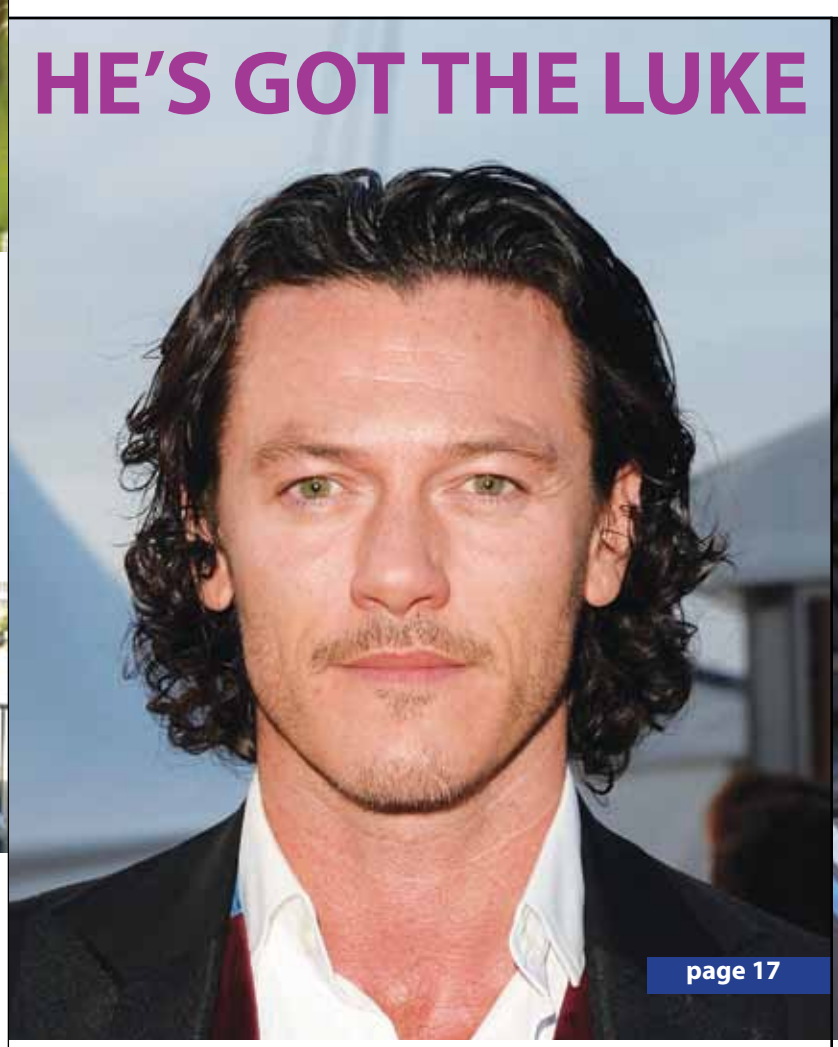
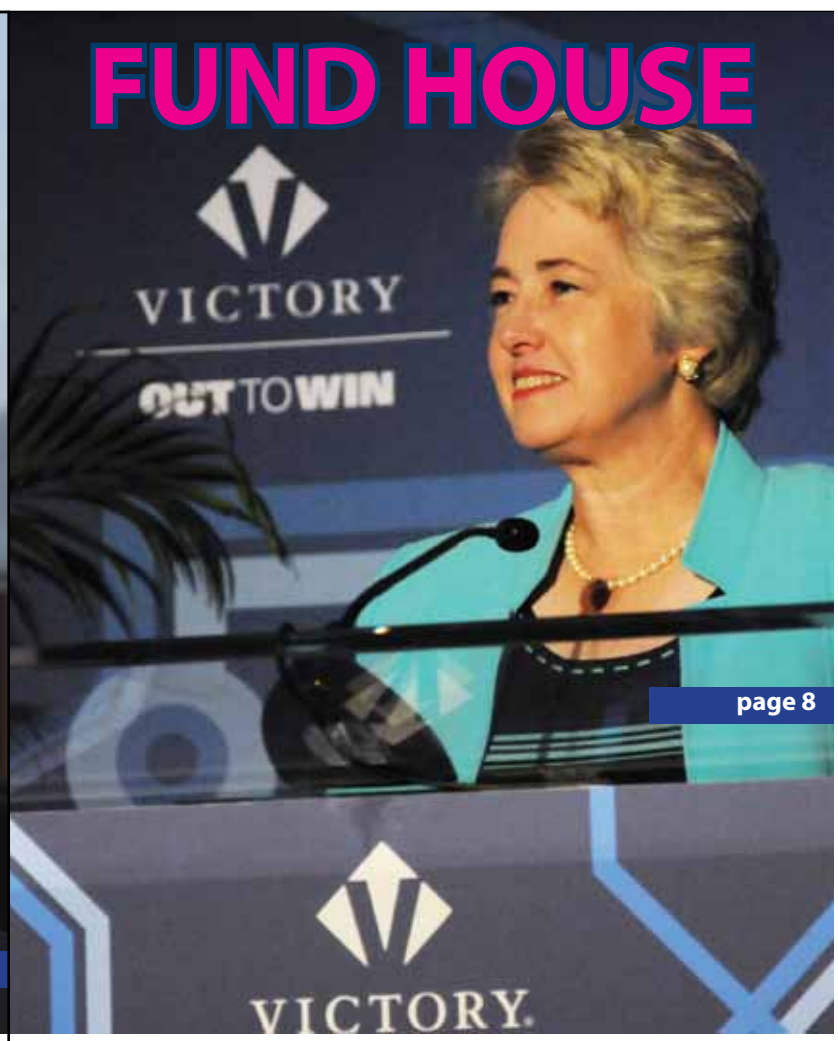
**Some of the groups fighting for funding include Black Men's Xchange (left), and Affinity Community Services (right), and many others.**




Luke Evans is part of Windy City Times' fall movie lineup, starring in Dracula Untold. See page 17. Photo by David M. Benett/Getty Images




Houston Mayor Annise Parker was the featured speaker at the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund's annual champagne brunch Sept. 7 at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel. See and read more on page 8. Photo by Hal Baim

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*Images on cover (left, from top): Photo of Miss Major Griffin-Gracy by Gretchen Rachel Blickensderfer; photo of Sinead O'Connor by Donal Moloney; photo of Caryn Berman by Tracy Baim; photo of Carlos Ramirez-Rosa by Matt Simonette*

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### 'TRY' ONE ON
"Try" singer Colbie Caillat (left) talks about her Human Rights Campaign video, going retro and the woman behind the music.
*Photo by Jerry Nunn*

Windy City Times reviews theatrical productions The Coward (above) and The Game's Afoot.
*Photo by Johnny Knight*

Thad Gerardot aims to be the first out state rep in Indiana.
*Photo from Gerardot*

### GETTING PHILOSOPHICAL
Hiram Crespo, who identifies as gay, is the author of Tending the Epicurean Garden and founded the Society of Friends of Epicureanism.

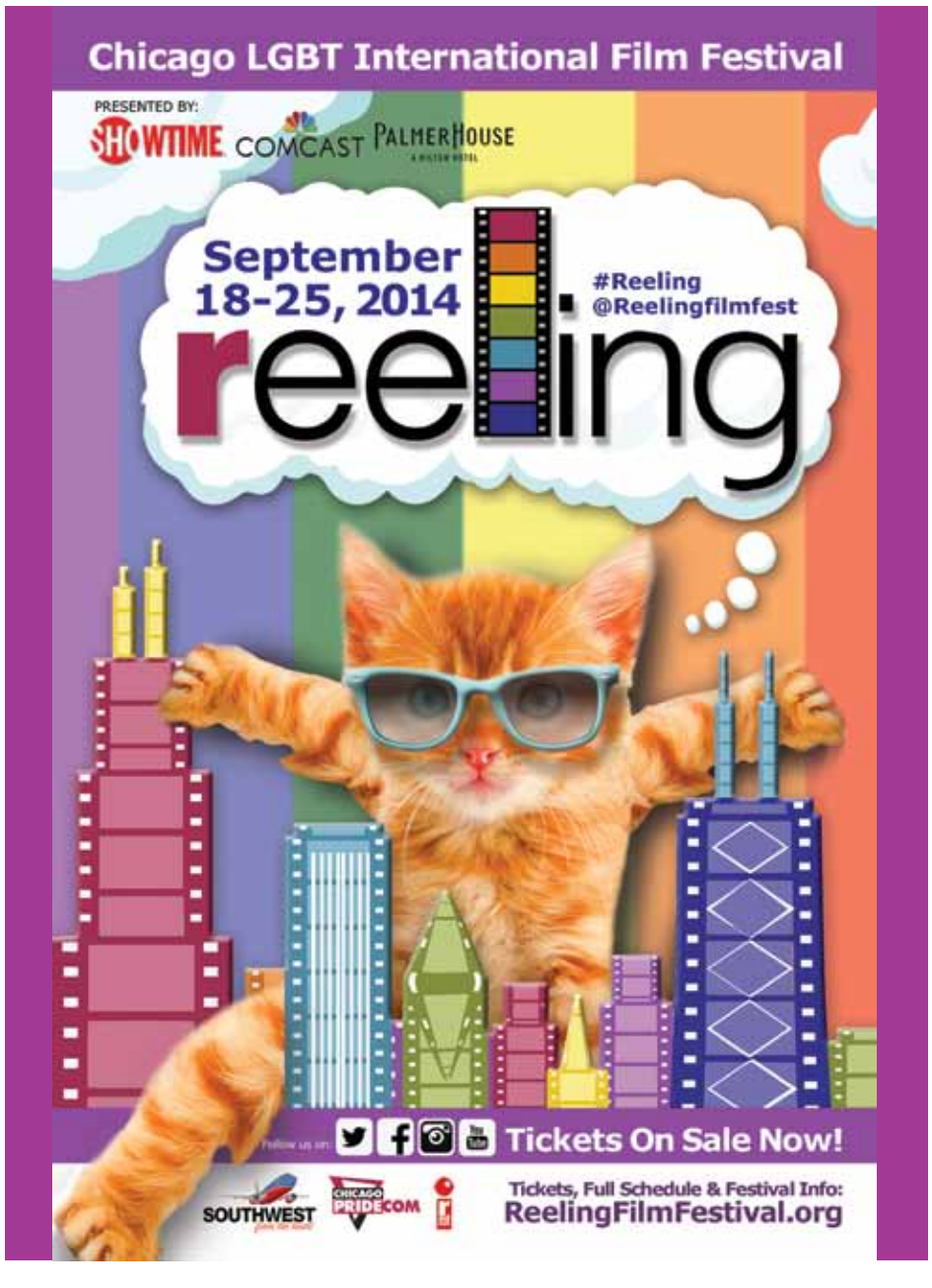
### NOT TO BRAGG, BUT...
Musician Billy Bragg muses on everything from being an ally of the LGBT community to being part of the upcoming Riot Fest.

### THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT
Find out the latest about Nene Leakes, Frozen, Jenny Shimizu and Gone with the Wind.

### SKY HIGH

Chicago Sky fan Berna Whiteside is backing her team all the way as it takes on Phoenix in the WNBA finals.
*Photo by Ross Forman*

plus
## DAILY BREAKING NEWS



Carlos Ramirez-Rosa. Photo by Lauren Childers

ELECTIONS 2015

# Openly gay candidate challenges Colon in 35th Ward

**BY MATT SIMONETTE AND LAUREN CHILDERS**

Carlos Ramirez-Rosa has said that, if he's elected to represent the city's 35th Ward, he would be an "organizing alderman."

Ramirez-Rosa, who would be the city's first openly gay Latino candidate to run for alderman, said, "I am tired of the direction our city is going in. I see our public dollars handed out to private pockets while our potholes aren't being fixed and our schools are neglected. I also see the need for elected officials who are accountable to the community, and that are working closely and building relationships with community and advocacy groups."

He is challenging incumbent Rey Colon to represent the ward, which is comprised of areas in Logan Square, Avondale, Irving Park, Albany Park and Hermosa.

Ramirez-Rosa, who officially announced his candidacy Sept. 6, is a community organizer is currently a deportation defense organizer with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. He also worked as a congressional aide in the office of U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez.

Colon has not taken a proactive stance in making sure constituent services have been widely available, nor in responsibly developing resources throughout the ward, he said.

"Folks feel [Colon's] office is not responsive to the needs of the community, and he has completely sold out to developers," Ramirez-Rosa noted. "When he was elected as a 'progressive' candidate, he pledged to turn over zoning and development decisions over to the community. Shortly thereafter, he reneged on that promise. The community has seen families evicted from their homes, and it's seen developments it didn't want come up."

In July, Colon was pulled over on the Eisenhower Expressway and arrested for driving under the influence.

"As elected officials, we're held to a higher standard, and that's something that should concern residents," Ramirez-Rosa said. "But I would be running even if that hadn't happened. I'm more concerned about how decisions are being made in our community—decisions that are not in the best interest of the people in my ward—and the way services have been mismanaged. I will not sit back and just let things happen in the community. I'm going to get out and speak with my neighbors."

He emphasized the importance of having these conversations be about development, so residents will have a larger say in what does and does not get built.

"I'm not going to be spending all my time at City Hall cutting deals," Ramirez-Rosa added. "I'm going to spend time canvassing and knocking on doors, and tell residents that they have the ability to decide how to spend the ward infrastructure funds, and the ability to decide what zoning and development decisions are going to be made. That means they have to step up, be present and make their voices heard."

He hopes that those discussions will eventually grow into a model of community engagement that can be used across the city. "We're engaging leaders in every single precinct that are then talking to their neighbors and are then determining policy in the neighborhood," he said. "I'm going to present a vision and ask, is this the vision you agree with? If the leaders I'm working with say the residents that they're engaged with say that that's not what they want to see, then I have to take a step back."

In June, barriers were erected beneath a highway overpass in the ward, in order to make the space uninhabitable for homeless residents. Colon, for his part, said that the operation did not start at his behest.

"We spent tens of thousands of dollars on creating an inhospitable area, for folks without a home, and creating a public safety risk, because now you have that tunnel effect that's there," Ramirez-Rosa said. "That money would have been better spent uplifting the people out of poverty—not a handout but a hand-up, and that's something as alderman I would strive to do: creating an equality of opportunity.

As such, he supports a $15-an-hour minimum wage. "Currently we have working poor. If you're working a full day, you should be able to provide for your family and pay the rent," he said, emphasizing that he'd also work to bring in small businesses that paid living wages to community members.

"I grew up at the intersection of 'Latino' and 'gay,' and that's informed my view of the world," Ramirez-Rosa added. "In many ways that's why I am a progressive. I can't deny that there are things that are fundamentally wrong with our society and our laws, and the way that our economy is structured. … LGBTQ issues are more than marriage equality. There are poor LGBTQ people and there are undocumented LGBTQ people. As a member of that community, I want to make sure that everyone is included in that struggle and that no one is left out. That includes queer folks and trans folks—everyone who falls under our umbrella."

**Declares candidacy**

Community residents gathered in Fireman's Park Sept. 6 for Carlos Ramirez-Rosa's announcement of his candidacy.

Calling upon his slogan, "Putting the neighborhood first," Ramirez-Rosa asserted stances in his campaign declaration on issues that he said directly affect individuals within the 35th Ward.

"I'm going to tell you something revolutionary today," he said. "Something that's going to put a bull's-eye on my back and that's going to get people in city hall very angry: Chicago belongs to the people!"

At 25, Ramirez-Rosa said he is running for alderman to "invest in our public schools and city services, raise the minimum wage and keeping housing affordable, and strengthen democracy and fight corruption." The latter is a call to put residents in charge of local zoning and budgetary decisions, to fight to institution of corporate handouts for schools, fight deportations of immigrants, and issues of plowing and pothole repairs.

After paying homage to his activist forefathers, Ramirez-Rosa acknowledged, "I have been a beneficiary of movements. I'm standing here today as a Latino that can run for alderman because people have fought." Ramirez-Rosa is very aware and connected to those activist roots and seeks to build off that platform.

The gathering had a community and familial atmosphere. Ramirez-Rosa's sister introduced him, followed by the aldermanic candidate encouraging the crowd to come closer before delivering his campaign speech. Ramirez-Rosa then invited his grandmother to conclude the event with a closing prayer given in Spanish.

Ramirez-Rosa said he has worked to stop school closings, expand access to education, and create equal opportunity for women, immigrants, the LGBT community and working people. He proclaimed his dedication to helping the "everyman" of the 35th Ward and actively encouraged a dialogue between himself and community members.

# Appeals court strikes down Ind., Wis. bans

In a swift three-to-zero decision that was issued Sept. 4 in Chicago, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals said marriage-equality bans in Wisconsin and Indiana were unconstitutional. The decision came just nine days after judges heard oral arguments in the cases.

The 40-page ruling confirmed many of the concerns that the three-judge panel expressed about how children with LGBT parents might be impacted by discriminatory laws: "Formally these cases are about discrimination against the small homosexual minority in the United States. But at a deeper level, as we shall see, they are about the welfare of American children," wrote the decisions author, Judge Richard Posner, who went on to dismiss the argument, primarily made by the State of Indiana, that marriage laws incentivized "intended" births that could be raised in stable households with a mother and a father.

"Overlooked by this argument is that many of those abandoned children are adopted by homosexual couples, and those children would be better off both emotionally and economically if their adoptive parents were married," Posner wrote, adding that the argument was "so full of holes that it cannot be taken seriously."

Ronald Reagan appointed Posner. Joining him on the panel were Judge Ann Claire Williams, appointed by Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama appointee Judge David F. Hamilton.

The State of Wisconsin, among its arguments, said that its marriage ban stemmed from socio-cultural tradition, another argument the court, in its decision, did not buy: "If no social benefit is conferred by a tradition and it is written into law and it discriminates against a number of people and does them harm beyond just offending them, it is not just a harmless anachronism; it is a violation of the equal protection clause, as in *Loving* [*v. Virginia*]."

Wisconsin also argued at various points that the state had to apply marriage laws cautiously since the long-term effects and consequences of same-sex marriage were not yet known; that marriage matters are best left to the state legislature and voting referenda; and that, same-sex marriage was analogous to no-fault divorce in that it weakened the stability of the marriage institution. The decision pointed out the irony of the final contention: "Of course Wisconsin has no-fault divorce, and it's surprising that the state's assistant attorney general, who argued the state's appeal, would trash his own state's law."

Marriage-equality advocates immediately heralded the court's ruling.

"The court has affirmed the love and commitment our plaintiffs and thousands of same-sex couples in Indiana and Wisconsin have for each other. The unanimous decision also reinforces the importance of marriage for the children of same-sex couples, who shouldn't have to grow up thinking their families are inferior to other families," said Paul Castillo of Lambda Legal in a statement.

"Today we join same sex couples, their families and our allies across the country in celebrating this victory," said Larry Dupuis, legal director of the ACLU of Wisconsin"Every loving and committed couple in the U.S. should have the freedom to marry, protect their loved ones, and have their commitment honored by our legal system. We celebrate and tomorrow we continue the fight to make marriage equality the law of the land, not just in certain states."

Ken Falk, ACLU of Indiana legal director, added, "We are ecstatic that the court recognized what we have always maintained: That there is absolutely no justification for treating same-sex couples any differently than loving couples of opposite genders."

## Suspect arrested in murder of trans woman

Transgender woman Alejandra Leos was murdered just steps away from her home in north Memphis, Tennessee, on Sept. 5—and a suspect has been arrested according to WREG.com.

Marshall Pegues, 21, was arrested and charged with first-degree murder of Leos, 41. A police report showed that Leos had an argument with Pegues at their home prior to the incident.

A Facebook page entitled "Black Trans Women's Lives Matter" stated that a funeral was planed for Leos at Hickory Hill Funeral Home on Sept. 10.

## Heartland president to step down

Rev. Dr. Sid Mohn, president of the anti-poverty organization Heartland Alliance, has announced his plan to retire after 35 years of service to the organization.

"I am eternally grateful for the opportunity I have had to pursue my vision of creating a world in which each of us realizes our human right to live free from poverty. Through the energy and the vision of a new president, Heartland Alliance will realize a new and exciting set of opportunities to do so as it moves into the next 125 years," Mohn said in a statement.

Mohn will remain as president until a successor has been identified. Russell Reynolds Associates, a national executive search firm with expertise in nonprofits nationally and globally, will lead the search for his successor.

# Illinois Humanities Council event focuses on drag

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL BLICKENSDERFER

The Illinois Humanities Council's 2014 "Now What?" series has played host to spirited discussions in venues across the city with headliners and experts weighing in on array of topics that are shaping U.S. business, culture and politics from the rise and proliferation of social media to equality and the role of democracy in public education.

On Sept. 3, the fourth and penultimate conversation filled The Empty Bottle bar in Ukrainian Village to capacity. Focused upon drag performance and its impact upon perceptions of gender alongside the artistic disciplines of theatre and music, Illinois Humanities Council (IHC) Executive Director Angel Ysaguirre posed and fielded questions from an enthusiastic audience to two drag artists—Justin Honard and Daniel Alexander Jones. Both appeared as themselves rather than as their characters.

Honard—who began his performance days in theater—recalled always gravitating to girls' clothes "because they are fun and prettier" and so felt the call to become a drag queen during a 22nd-birthday visit to the San Francisco event "Trannyshack"—which is currently in the process of being renamed. He described his character of Alaska Thunderfuck 5000 (a name based on a potent, lemon-scented strain of marijuana) as an alien from the planet Glamtron who crash-landed on earth.

These days, she "whores" around the planet social climbing in the gay community, making music videos and not quite winning season five of RuPaul's Drag Race while swallowing up the required amount of Twitter followers to repair her ship. An unfortunate incident with a single ice-cube led to Thunderfuck recently donating 120 one-dollar bills to the ALS association. "I don't know where that came from" Honard admitted in describing how he got the idea for the character. "It was channeled. I was reading about Daniel's work as Jomama and how [she] takes the passenger seat and takes over."

That takeover began for Jones at the age of 25, when he was living in Minneapolis-Saint Paul. He discovered Patrick's Cabaret—an experimental performance space in the city that specifically encourages work from artists of color, as well as those who are LGBTQ or have disabilities. According to Jones, the cabaret's founder Patrick Scully "opened his doors to anybody who wanted to try something." Thus, Jones created a performance piece that was inspired by his impassioned love of the legendary television series "Soul Train."

His character of Jomama Jones "came out of the ether," he said. "She was very concerned with herself and the story that emerged was that she was receiving a lifetime achievement award from Don Cornelius." Jomama declined the award refusing to allow Cornelius to put her in a "career graveyard."

Jones did not perform as Jomama for the next two years.

After a miserable break-up and with his career as a playwright and performance artist at a standstill, depression had set in when Jones said he heard Jomama's voice in his head. "She was like 'it's my turn, give me the reins'," Jones recalled. "She saved my life."

Jomama is described as a former teen R&B music star who fell from grace when the record company asked her to straighten her hair. That incident plus disagreement with the policies of Ronald Reagan caused her self-imposed exile to Switzerland where she spent her days shoe shopping with Tina Turner and raising goats. She eventually returned to the United Stated to record the album "Radiate." In 2011—alongside backup singers The Sweet Peaches—her live concert opened at the Soho Repertory Theatre in New York. The New York Times hailed it as "hard not to surrender to this sequin-encrusted earth mother's soulful embrace."

Ysaguirre attempted to determine the relationship between the drag character and performer. "Justin is pretty measured, zen and calm," Honard replied. "I think the Alaska thing is a release valve. We all have that inside of us—unbridled chaos and madness. You can really turn on the levels and let it go."

In doing so, Honard wants his character to inspire both laughter and happiness from her audience. "I want people to feel like it's OK to be weird, to not be afraid of that and to celebrate it and to feel less alone in the world," he said.

Jomama refers to Daniel simply as "her poor cousin." On the other hand, Daniel has said that Jomama comes from a distinguished lineage of artists from the '70s and '80s such as Diana Ross and Minnie Riperton that today is a vanishing breed. "They represented a certain kind of blackness that I don't see much now," he said. "It was eroded and you don't see the diversity of representation of Black women that you ironically did then. Black music at that time didn't just function as entertainment, it was nourishment for a community to reflect upon itself. How can we reclaim the fact that beauty comes in a lot of shapes, sizes and textures?"

A member of the audience asked how both characters related to the trans* and post gender-movement. After mulling that over for a moment, Horton replied that Thunderfuck identifies herself as an alien woman with a penis. "She doesn't fit into a gender normal classification," he said. "Does that make her a trans* person? She's, like, gender-variant."

From left: Daniel Alexander Jones, Justin Honard and Angel Ysaguirre. Photo by Gretchen Rachel Blickensderfer

"I feel like my trans* friends have totally blown my mind open," Jones said, "and challenged me to go to a level of digging up the roots of my own assumptions of gender."

Honard said he believes RuPaul's Drag Race has widened public perceptions of drag. "A lot more people know what drag is," he stated. "It's a performance thing you're doing on the stage. I think it makes people feel more able to express themselves however they want to."

During the recent contentious debate regarding offensive terminology used in RuPaul's program, Thunderfuck expressed herself with a video that appeared to show noted trans* commentator Parker Molloy being assassinated. Horton eventually apologized and removed it. Off stage, he acknowledged to Windy City Times that the video was a reactionary decision. "It was stupid, harmful and it was wrong on my part," he said.

Horton added that there is a common ground between drag artists and the trans* community that could spur ongoing conversation. "A lot of the trans* people I'm friends with are also performers," he said. "Gender is performance. We have a lot more in common than we think and if anybody wants to talk about that with me I'm here to listen and I'm here to talk because I don't want us to be fighting. I think that we should all work together to make the world a better place."

When Ysaguirre raised the opinion of some that drag reinforces female stereotypes an audience member commented that women aren't given the "in your face" platform a lot of drag queens enjoy.

Jones replied that he was raised by lesbian feminist artists who would not accept the banal theatrical roles usually being written for female actors. "These women who raised me up in theatre said 'I want to tell my story'," Jones recalled. "Nobody gave me this platform. I made this platform. I made it with blood sweat and tears. So make your platform. Nobody needs to give you damned permission. Take the stage, because it's yours."

The discussion was followed by drag and drag inspired performances curated by the underground art group Salonathon with music by Baathhouse and Big Dipper.

For more information about the Illinois Humanities Council, visit http://www.prairie.org/.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Caryn Berman (left) and Laura Cuzzillo in 2007. Photo by Hal Baim

# Healthcare advocate Caryn Berman dies

**BY TRACY BAIM**

Longtime healthcare advocate Caryn Berman, 62, died Sept. 1 of cancer.

Berman told the story of her fight against cancer for an Aug. 6 Windy City Times article. She spoke of her wife of 36 years, Laura Cuzzillo, and of saying goodbye to friends and family.

The memorial will be Sunday, Sept. 21, 2 p.m., at Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, 303 Dodge Ave., Evanston.

Close friend Bruce Koff said in an email: "As I watched Laura tend to Caryn in Caryn's final hours with indescribably aching tenderness, all I could think was, 'This is love. This is love.' And I thought of how much time and energy we have sadly had to expend over my lifetime just to explain, justify and defend this simple truth. This is love. The relationship they shared over these 36 years was a pure partnership in which Caryn's passion for packing in as much living as possible and leaving the world a better place was matched by Laura's gracious heart, quiet dignity and deep respect for life's simple pleasures: a great book, a passionate discussion, a generous garden, a perfect meal, a moving work of art. Together, they created a welcoming oasis for so many of love, joy and intellect. This resides forever in Laura's soul and Mitchell and I are so grateful to have dwelled in this place with them for almost 30 years."

In the 1980s, Berman helped organize the AIDS Foundation of Chicago with William Young and Drs. Ron Sable and Renslow Sherer. She also was instrumental in founding the Hispanic AIDS Network, and she was on the city's first Mayor's Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues, under Mayor Harold Washington.

She started the PASSAGES HIV project at Horizons Community Services, where she was also a volunteer therapist, and she was an organizer of the agency's annual Identity conferences. She worked at Travelers and Immigrants Aid, and worked with the Chicago Board of Health to develop protocols and health policies for HIV and AIDS. She also worked for several years with the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Berman, a psychotherapist and social worker, was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 1995. The Hall of Fame website states: "Berman's impact on the mental health of lesbians and gay men goes far beyond her own clinical work. She has taught courses on psychotherapy with gay and lesbian clients to both gay and non-gay students and practitioners in psychology and social work at the Illinois School of Professional Psychology and the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration."

Because she was so engaged in the LGBT and AIDS movements, Berman wanted to say goodbye to the community, so she shared her thoughts about life, and dying, with Windy City Times in a July 31 interview.

Catapulted into AIDS activism by the death of a close friend in 1985, Berman never questioned her involvement in fighting the disease on both the medical and political fronts.

After moving to Chicago from her native New York City, Berman received a masters in social service administration from the University of Chicago in 1980. This made her uniquely positioned to take part in the AIDS movement here, from both a lesbian perspective and as a public health advocate.

"Having lived through the AIDS crisis, how it affects us now, as we're aging and we're dying—at least through my filter—I have less fear about dying myself because we've lost friends, in a way we accompanied them, and their buddies, and sat with people who were dying … looked after them, and it's not so foreign," Berman said. "I think our attitudes toward death … would be easier for us because we've already … been forced through the epidemic to come up with some sense of why and where does it all lead do.

"You just have to develop, in the face of the epidemic, or as an aging adult, you need to have a perspective about death and life … . I feel comfortable with it, that I'm dying. I don't feel afraid of it. … I will see a lot of people I know, and there will be a collective pooling of our energy and resources, for recycling."

Berman and Cuzzillo were married in 2010 in Iowa after that state legalized same-sex marriages. Cuzzillo said they were going to hold out for federal recognition and Illinois marriages, but then Berman was diagnosed with cancer in 2009. "We said, we're not going to wait … we're going to elope to Iowa."

They had a double ceremony with a gay male couple who they knew in Iowa. The person who performed the ceremony was Polk County District Court Judge Robert Hanson, who wrote the opinion in favor of marriage equality in Iowa. His ruling was stayed pending an appeal to the state Supreme Court, where it was eventually upheld.

Reflecting back on her activism, Berman said it was "exciting" and "defining" to be on Mayor Washington's gay and lesbian committee, and she met Washington several times. Berman said she saw people as individuals, which is why she was able to work with gay men at a time when there were more gender divisions in the community.

For the complete video interview see: www.youtube.com/watch . For the Aug. 6 article see: www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Caryn-Berman-reflects-on-her-life-of-activism/48541.html .

In 2007, the couple sat down for an interview with my ChicagoGayHistory.org project; visit chicagogayhistory.org/biography.html.

Caryn Berman with politician Art Agnos (left) and the late Chicago gay activist Bob Adams at an IMPACT event in 1991. Image from Berman's archives

# Trans woman, others allege bias at Lake View diner

**BY MATT SIMONETTE**

A transgender woman posted a video to Facebook over Labor Day weekend, saying that she and her friends were unfairly denied entrance to Clarke's Diner, 930 W. Belmont Ave., because they were trans and gay. Other individuals responded to the posting, saying that they too had not been let in to the late-night diner for any legitimate reason.

Sara Andrews, a transgender woman who lives in Florida but visits Chicago regularly, was leaving Berlin Nightclub, 954 W. Belmont Ave. with some friends in the early morning of Aug. 30. She said that her group was denied entrance by Clarke's security guard, who blocked the door without saying why.

"I thought that he was kidding," said Andrews. "I was smiling, at first. I kept asking, 'You're joking right? You're kidding, right?'"

On the video, Andrews and her friends are standing in front of the restaurant. The diner's guards "Clarke's…Clarke's in Boystown… is refusing us service because we're gay," Andrews says.

"Except they won't say that, because we're on video now," adds a friend of Andrews.

The camera then zooms into a sign posted on the restaurant's door that says it reserves the right to refuse service for any reason. Andrews and her friends are then told not to obstruct the door.

Alex Lopez, a manager at Clarke's, said he was told that Andrews and her friends were not let in because they were being "rowdy" on the street, which Andrews denies.

"We were not being loud at all—that's what kills me," Andrews said. "We weren't being belligerent or acting crazy."

Andrews admitted that when she and her group were leaving Berlin, someone from across the street yelled, "Transvestite!" she yelled back, "No shit, Sherlock!" But she said it was unlikely the guard had even seen or heard the exchange.

After Andrews posted her video, a number of commenters said that they'd had similar experiences at Clarke's. Drag queen Sissy Spastik and a friend were denied entrance after one of their performances because the friend was wearing a mask from the show.

"I've never had a bad experience at Clarke's until that guard was hired," said Spastik. "In my five years of giving Clarke's business, I was never treated like this until that guard started working there."

Another time, Spastik and a friend were asked to leave, supposedly because they were being too loud, after spotting some friends in the window and going in to speak with them.

Lopez said that Clarke's guards are there to protect its patrons and employees from disturbances, and said there is no anti-LGBT sentiment intended. "Most of our business comes from gay or trans people, probably 80%," he said. "We have the guards because we've been having a lot of people being bad out on the street, then coming in and insulting our employees and our customers. We've had people come in with tasers. It's dangerous out there."

But Spastik said that the security can't discern the difference between real danger and regular patrons of the neighborhood businesses: "You have to expect people of all walks of life to [set] foot in your restaurant, especially when you're in an LGBT community."

Spastik and some other regulars said the Clarke's guards deny entrance based on arbitrary standards. RaShaan Houston said that, about two months ago, he was with a friend, a drag queen, who was turned away for wearing shorts that were too short. He said no one in his party was being loud.

"At the time, I thought it was a fluke, a one-time thing," said Houston.

Clarke's does not have a dress code per se, according to Lopez. But he said that a patron might be turned away, "If they showed too much skin." He added that the restaurant does not have a written set of criteria delineating when to admit or deny entrance to a patron, but does leave the matter to the guard's discretion.

"You can't pick and choose who is allowed in based on physical appearance," said Spastik. "I could understand if we had been loud and crazy, but we weren't. We only wanted to eat."

"I've been going to that restaurant regularly for the last 12 years, and I'll never go again," added Houston.

# FUNDS from cover

going to be about policies and procedures pertaining to the awards.

"Most of us were really excited going into the call," said Calvin Spinks, CEO of the Chicago chapter of Black Men's Xchange, which had been awarded a $100,000 grant. "Then they just hit us with the news that the money would not be allocated."

Spinks said that Mildred Williamson, chief of IDPH's HIV Division, told callers that the matter was "out of IDPH's hands," and that the agency was unaware when issuing the request for proposals that there would be a problem with the appropriation. No explanation was offered.

Without the grant money coming through, Spinks is faced with the prospect of having to shut down. "That money was my entire budget," he said. "I am exploring other grant options, and using my personal money, and I let my contractors go. But if nothing comes through in the next few months, I'm going to have to close my doors."

Kim Hunt of Affinity Community Services said her organization was scheduled for a $100,000 grant as well. "That would have doubled our budget," she added. "It was intended to provide resources for Black trans women on the South Side—that's enough [money] for two staff members. But for us, the impact was not as severe because those were new services."

"This is a very strange situation," said activist Keith Green. "This has the potential to devastate many of these organizations."

Shortly after the conference call, Harris inquired about the situation. In a letter dated July 21, IDPH Director LaMar Hasbrouck told Harris, "Since grants were awarded in FY 2014 (from FY 2008 leftover money), the IDPH HIV section were hopeful that such funding would continue. As a result of this, IDPH included a request for appropriation authority for this fund in our initial FY 2015 budget submission. Without [Illinois Office of Management & Budget] and/or the legislature identifying additional funding to be deposited, the only monies that could be spent in FY 2015 from this fund would be any unspent monies from the FY 2014 grants."

Harris said, "We have about 2,200 funds like this. Often, they are funded from a specific revenue source—if a cigarette tax funded smoking prevention, for example. But there was no request made for the money to come from a specific fund."

Windy City Times asked IDPH whether Harris' assessment was fair and accurate. In an emailed response, spokesperson Melaney Arnold said, "In creating the African-American HIV/AIDS Response Act, the legislature did not identify where the money would come from to populate the fund. This means that unless the General Assembly allocates cash directly to the fund, the fund receives no new monies. Money from other IDPH funds cannot be used to populate the African-American HIV/AIDS Response Fund."

Hasbrouck said in the letter that about $650,000 remained unspent as of late July, and that a determination would be made in August as to how much would be available for FY 2015.

Arnold said in her email, that, as of Sept. 4, "A little more than $220,000 remains in the fund, and the Department is exploring options to supplement money into this fund prior to issuing grants."

The African-American HIV/AIDS Response Act was signed by Gov. Rod Blagojevich in 2005. The original legislation, co-sponsored by former state Rep. Constance Howard, D-Chicago, and state Sen. Kimberly Lightford, D-Maywood, was intended to alleviate disparities facing persons of color with HIV/AIDS. Among its objectives were funding that targeted organizations of specific sizes, ensuring that smaller agencies would be able to enjoy equal opportunities for funding that larger ones did. It also expanded HIV testing in prisons.

**Lloyd Kelly (above) has been indicted for misusing funds allocated to the now-defunct Let's Talk, Let's Test Foundation—which had received much of the African-American HIV/AIDS Response Act's appropriation the measure's first two years. Photo by Andrew Davis**

Activist Michael O'Connor was an aide to Howard at the time, but did not assist her with work pertaining to the act. Nevertheless, he was very aware of its potential impact: "This legislation was monumental in 2005. The fact that HIV infection rates among African Americans was even dealt with this way back then was incredible. I thought the African-American HIV/AIDS Response Act was a public policy solution."

But for its first two years, just under half of the act's appropriation was allocated to the now-defunct Let's Talk, Let's Test Foundation (LTLTF), headed by Lloyd Kelly, who had previously been an aide to Howard. Kelly was accused of using the foundation's funds for his personal use, as well as some of Howard's campaign expenses, and was indicted by federal prosecutors in mid-2013 for mail fraud. He is currently scheduled to stand trial in November. Howard pled guilty to mail fraud in 2013, and is likely to be sentenced late this year.

The act's funds were frozen once Kelly's handling of the money was called into question, according to Hasbrouck's letter to Harris. IDPH had to reclaim the first year's allocation, but the second year's monies were never allocated, and resided in the Fund's account while the investigation proceeded. So nothing was spent in the account between FY 2009 and FY 2013. In that time, the money was rerouted after Gov. Pat Quinn authorized "inter-fund borrowing," but it was eventually replenished, and the funds became available again in FY 2013. Funds that were appropriated in FY 2014 were actually monies left over from 2008.

"We want to continue to fully fund HIV outreach opportunities, but until the state can resolve many of its budget issues, this can get worse," said Harris.

Eighteen of the 20 affected organizations are forming a coalition they hope will compel the General Assembly to authorize the release of the funds, Green said. He added that the coalition has enlisted help from several legislators, including many from the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, but could not yet disclose who they were. The coalition will issue a formal announcement sometime the week of Sept. 7.

"It looks like we're going to be doing some lobbying this fall," said Hunt. She noted that, should they prove successful during the fall veto session, the agencies would be still not be getting any money until January.


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# Houston mayor, local pols gather for Victory Fund

**BY MATT SIMONETTE**

Openly lesbian Houston Mayor Annise Parker was among those who spoke at the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund's annual Champagne Brunch Sept. 7 at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel in Chicago.

Among the politicians attending were U.S. Rep Mike Quigley, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Illinois state Sen. Heather Steans and Illinois state Rep. Kelly Cassidy as well as alderpersons Tom Tunney, Deb Mell and James Cappleman. "Out to Win" was the theme of the event, which celebrated the organization's work in training, vetting and providing support for LGBT candidates across the country.

Cook County Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Debra Shore, who is board chair of the Fund's Victory Institute, hosted the program and introduced Zach Wahls, who made the news in 2011 when he testified on behalf of his lesbian mothers before the Iowa House Judiciary Committee, when the Iowa legislature considered banning gay marriage. Video of Wahl's testimony "went viral," and he became a sensation among marriage equality supporters.

Wahl, who was conceived through artificial insemination, said bluntly, "My existence is political, like it or not. We aren't the ones who picked this fight. … We didn't start [it] but we will finish it."

He noted that any states that have managed to advance pro-marriage equality legislation have done so thanks to the efforts of openly LGBT politicians, a sentiment echoed by Jeremy Moss and Jon Hoadley, who are both running for seats in the Michigan House of Representatives. That state, though it has had some progressive politics in its past, has more recently been particularly harsh with LGBTs.

"Jon and I are here because Michigan has some of the most restrictive anti-LGBT laws in the country," Moss said, noting that the state dawdled in advancing emergency relief after floods ravaged the metropolitan Detroit area, but appealed U.S. District Court rulings that overturned the state's marriage ban with great haste.

Chicago Cubs co-owner Laura Ricketts and Ray Koenig of the Clark Hill law firm received awards for their work in advancing marriage equality. They were co-chairs of the finance committee for Illinois Unites for Marriage, which pushed for passage of the state's marriage equality law in 2013. Ricketts noted that, "Money and politics is seen as a bad [combination], but it is a reality."

Koenig added, "Now that we have marriage equality, we must help other states achieve the rights we now enjoy here."

Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund and Institute President/CEO Chuck Wolfe noted that Maine is proving to be a key battleground. Openly gay candidate Michael H. Michaud is running for governor. If Michaud were to win, becoming the first openly gay governor in U.S history, Wolfe said, "It [would be] a big deal when that person goes to the National Governor's Association and has a conversation."

He also discussed Maura Healey, a lesbian who is running for the office of attorney general in Massachusetts. Were Healey to win, she would become the first gay attorney general in the U.S. "I don't think I need to tell you why having out attorney general is an important thing," Wolfe said.

Ken Stromdahl, a scheduling associate at the office of Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, discussed his experiences as a Victory congressional intern. The Fund paid him a stipend and provided his housing expenses working in Quigley's Washington, D.C., office.

"The skills that I gained in that office set me off on a better trajectory," Stromdahl said. "Victory unlocked my potential." He added that he made his transition back to Chicago confidant that he would be able to effect positive change in the city.

Parker, who was introduced by Samantha Abeysekera of Northern Trust, discussed the myriad functions Victory Fund provides, among them vetting of candidates' likelihood of winning.

**Laura Ricketts and Ray Koenig received awards for their work on marriage equality, presented by Victory Fund CEO Chuck Wolfe. Photo by Hal Baim**

**Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, philanthropist and businesswoman Laura Ricketts, Mayor Annise Parker, Cook County Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Debra Shore and Chris Abele, Milwaukee County executive. Photo by Hal Baim**

# CDPH's Project CHAT surveys gay, bi men

**BY MATT SIMONETTE**

According to Nikhil Prachand, director of the Surveillance Epidemiology and Research Section at Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), the agency's Project CHAT initiative strives to get "everywhere" in the community.

"We go out to bars, clubs, beaches, bathhouses, parks, hobby groups, volleyball leagues—you name it, we're there," said Prachand. "We work to find everything from hidden spots to places on Halsted—we strive to get to every venue where gay and bisexual men congregate."

The initiative sends out CDPH staff to various venues throughout the city in order to engage gay and bisexual men in conversations about their perceptions and behaviors. This year marks Project CHAT's fourth cycle. According to CDPH, about 2,200 men have been interviewed in about 300 venues throughout the city. Its data is used to help formulate the agency's strategies to reduce HIV transmission in the city.

"By actually being there and getting information directly from people—we're not collecting it through a clinic, for example—it's a dialogue between the community and us," added Prachand. "We let the community tell the whole story."

Noting an upsurge in interest in men's health issues, Prachand said that it's been necessary to distinguish Project CHAT's research from other studies in Chicago: "We're trying to separate ourselves a little bit and point out that we're the original survey, and show that our survey's been used most widely."

CDPH staff usually takes about six months to design questions for a survey. They poll venue owners and community members to first gauge what concerns might be especially pertinent for gay and bisexual men. The surveys are then carried out over the course of the following six months.

Prachand said that researchers follow a standard set of questions—polling respondents about demographic matters and risk behaviors, for example—but added that the survey is tailored to address new issues.

"In 2005, when there was all this concern over crystal meth, we were able to say that we had data about crystal meth use, and say that we could add questions to understand it more," he noted. "Sure enough, we found that there was a perception that most gay men were running around using crystal meth, but we were [able to respond], 'No, less than one out of ten gay men have ever used crystal meth in their life.'"

This year, many of the new questions pertain to public perceptions of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

"We've been asking PrEP questions for the last six years," according to Prachand. "We've seen the perception and knowledge of PrEP increase incrementally over that time. But this is the first survey since the FDA approval, and [widespread] third-party reimbursement, so this year we're looking to do a thorough examination of PrEP utilization and access difficulties. We are asking how much it's costing and whether it is changing behaviors. Because the surveys occur at regular intervals, we're able to keep up with current events in the community."

Officials try to visit 50 to 60 venues over the course of each cycle. About five-to-seven CDPH staffers take part, and will randomly approach members of the public to participate. Participants are paid $75 and are offered an HIV test once they finish the survey.

"We do a lot of interface with a lot of venue owners—venue owners know us," said Edgar Gutierrez, Project CHAT's project coordinator. "It's a whole random process, but, once we get there, we're a very friendly face. We like walking away from an event with a participant feeling they've had a 'deep' relationship with the Department of Public Health."

"It's a very customer-oriented approach," added Prachand. "The approach is very scientific, but we rely on the community's input. We rely on building a relationship with the community. We can't just rely on the science. If we showed up with white lab coats and clipboards, we'd never get anywhere."

# Trans* activist Miss Major helps mark Addams' birthday

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL BLICKESNDERFER

Students, advocacy group representatives and activists covering a broad spectrum of age, race, gender and gender identity crammed into the residents' dining hall of the 125-year-old Jane Addams Hull-House Museum at the University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC's) campus Sept. 4 for a conversation with Miss Major Griffin-Gracy.

Co-sponsored by UIC's Department of Gender and Women's Studies, Gender and Sexuality Center, Institute for Research of Race and Public Policy and Social Justice Initiative, the event celebrated the Sept. 6 birthday of Jane Addams—this country's first woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize and one of the most prolific social activists of the 20th century.

Affectionately called "Mama Major" by the many trans* women whose lives were saved from violence, destitution and homelessness by her mentorship, advocacy and support, Griffin-Gracy spent the latter years of that century as an activist on the forefront of trans* rights.

She was at the birth of the modern LGBT-rights movement, at New York's Stonewall in 1969. Two years later—while imprisoned in New York's Attica Correctional Facility—she participated in the uprising that drew world attention to the horrific maltreatment of prisoners there. She has since rallied internationally on behalf of trans* women of color who have been systematically brutalized, murdered and are still suffering devastating human-rights abuses in America's prison system.

Today, she is the executive director of the Transgender Gender Variant Intersex (TGI) Justice Project—an organization of trans* individuals based in Oakland, Calif., and dedicated to the "fight against imprisonment, police violence, racism, poverty and societal pressures." She is also the subject of an upcoming documentary, Major!, that looks back upon her life and achievements and, according to filmmakers Annalise Ophelian and Storm Miguel Florez, demonstrates "how caring for one another can be a revolutionary act."

Describing the trans* experience as "walking around with big 'X's on our bodies," Griffin-Gracy told the audience that there are stories that must be told if walls both physical and mental are to be torn down. However she also noted that "As quick as you tear one down, trust me those motherfuckers will throw another up like that. They waste no time in trying to keep what they feel is a danger to them out of their existence," she said. "The problem with that is we're not a danger to them. We suffer and go through a lot of stuff just to survive. You feel as if 'well I'm all alone and I'm on this island and I'm not going to make it through this and I'm going to die before my next birthday'."

Griffin-Gracy said that neither she nor any trans* person should require anyone's approval. "With all the stuff that we have to go through, it becomes a matter of being secure within yourself," she said. "Realizing the power you have for who you are and that you owe nobody an apology for wanting to pursue that, for utilizing it, for standing up and appreciating it and then taking it forward."

With almost everybody sharing some form of transition during their lives—whether as a teenager deciding upon self-expression or changes in a future direction—Griffin-Gracy wondered why the trans* community still sits at the bottom of society's totem pole, subject to arrest even when simply fighting for their rights. "Why is it that this community is one that they're not going to talk about, that they're going to hide?" she asked. "We deserve to be loved and cared for and appreciated for who we are and how we represent."

Miss Major Griffin-Gracy. Photo by Gretchen Rachel Blickensderfer

Griffin-Gracy acknowledged she was talking to an audience who cares and wants to make a difference in society. However, she added it is not an easy task. "It takes a lot of thought," she said. "By hearing somebody else's story you embrace your life and you embrace theirs. This world doesn't have time for that. They'd rather blow it up, kill it, shoot it, bury it and act as if it never existed. We're a room full of people that are going to make sure they know we exist and we're not going anywhere. Despite all the shit that you throw at us, we're a tough bunch of bitches and we're going to go on; forward."

In doing so, she urged the importance of absolute inclusion in the fight for civil rights. "We cannot afford to throw anybody under the bus," she said. "With this gay marriage thing, they spent $300 million fighting that. What was wrong with taking some of that money to make schools for young gay, straight and transgender kids so that they don't have to be bullied?"

To Griffin-Gracy, caring about somebody else is a matter of being human. "It's really a difficult thing to not appreciate yourself because of the skin you have, or because of the shape of your body or because of how you think," she asserted. "Let that crap go. Open up your minds and your brains and your bodies and your hearts and your spirit to change."

National consultant, activist, educator and former director of the Young Women's Empowerment Project Shira Hassan, who spent almost two decades shedding light on the experiences of people involved in sex work, moderated the questions. She encouraged the audience to form groups and discuss how to incorporate the life lessons and accomplishments of Griffin-Gracy, coming up with—not only a question for her—but one concrete thing that can be done to make Chicago and the world in general a safer place for trans* women of color.

One group wondered how the celebrity of women like Laverne Cox and Janet Mock has helped the transgender community. "That has been a really wonderful thing," Griffin-Gracy responded. "We've become the flavor of the month in a sense. Everybody now wants to do some kind of transgender work." However, she challenged such new advocates to include all transgender people, not simply those who can pass.

Off-stage, Griffin-Gracy talked with Windy City Times about the divisions in the transgender community. "We need to find something to pull us all together so that we create one solid voice," she said. "I think the way to accomplish that is by getting involved with organizations who are fighting for human rights. We're human and our rights are being violated regularly."

**For more information about the work of the TGI Project, visit http://www.tgijp.org/.**

**The online version of this article has more photos, plus videos from the event.**

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# LETTERS

## Leaving a legacy

For all things, there is a season. All business relationships come to an end, and the only thing that is permanent is change.

As a regular, longtime reader of Windy City Times, how could I miss the poignant, bittersweet news about the selling of Andersonville's iconic independent bookstore highlighting the population for which it is named, "Women and Children," on North Clark Street ("Women and Children bookstore sold," July 16)?

While it is a change I have been aware of for some time, it nevertheless shocked me a bit and saddened me when I actually saw that news in print. We can only hope that the new owners will continue and perhaps even advance the courageous visions and implementation of former owners Linda Bubon and Ann Christophersen, dedicated to the core for many decades. They bequeathed a literary and community legacy to countless supporters and admirers that all civilized, culturally connected people will long treasure.

I will miss them, and I thank them for the memories. It is not possible to erase experience.

*With gratitude,*
*Leon J. Hoffman, Ph.D.*
*Chicago*

## Parading LGBTs

*Dear Editor:*

The Rainbow Sash Movement (LGBT Roman Catholics) is impressed that Cardinal Dolan puts Irish community unity above the sectarian needs of Catholic homophobia. By welcoming the LGBT NBC contingent to participate in New York City's St. Patrick's Day parade next year, he has turned a page in the relationship with the New York LGBT community. We see this as an opportunity for meaningful dialogue.

We are saddened by the clownish response from the Catholic League and hope it can put a muzzle on its guttural mouth when it comes to the issue of diversity in the parade.

Long gone are the days since this parade is recognized as only a Roman Catholic event. Certainly, that is part of its history, but it should not been seen as a platform from which to promote intellectual homophobia in the name of God, as the late Cardinal O'Connor did.

We believe the Irish community in New York is a diversified community which, like the Gay Pride Parade, celebrates its culture and not the promotion of sectarianism.

Congratulations, Cardinal Dolan, for taking to heart Pope Francis' lead. Now is the time for Cardinal O'Malley of Boston to lift that city's ban on LGBT participation in the Boston St. Patrick's Day parade.

*Bill O'Connor*
*Rainbow Sash Movement*

## Wards matter

*Dear Editor:*

One has to question whether Michael O'Connor ("Wards hurt" letter in Windy City Times, Sept. 3 issue) has visited the 46th Ward since the election of James Cappleman as our alderman.

He cites the closing of the Hotel Chateau, where the few residents living there existed in squalor and dangerous conditions. You may recall that at least one resident had to be removed by ambulance and would likely have died there if not for the intervention. Of course, those who only used the Hotel Chateau for their "business enterprises" but lived quite comfortably elsewhere profiting from the profits of their illegal drug trade were disturbed. As one of the owners of the few businesses who remained when the hotel closed said, "It sure ruined the drug trade!"

Since it has been closed a total renovation has been taking place—tuck-pointing, installing new windows, total rebuilding of the sidewalk and, now, preparing a new entrance. Having lived in the neighborhood for more than 40 years, I learned to warn visitors to avoid the area in front of the Chateau for fear they would be attacked or injured during the frequent brawls that occurred there or from bottles falling from the window sills. One can hope that it will reopen to provide safe living conditions for residents in the future.

O'Connor also cites the controversy about the Salvation Army (an avowed anti-LGBT organization) distributing food—and, one assumes, religious tracts—to the homeless who gathered near the Wilson Avenue underpass while ignoring their other needs. Cappleman rightly argued that aid to these individuals needs to include access to more comprehensive services.

Perhaps O'Connor and other professional protesters who recruit well-meaning but uninformed persons to join them should learn more about what they are opposing before leading a charge.

*Roger A. May*
*Chicago*

## Community investment

Are we witnessing the passing of the gay ghetto?

What is happening with the gay ghetto in Chicago? Is it being dismantled in front of our eyes?

We have heard the negatives of a ghetto mentality, but have we really looked at the positives of the ghetto? My experiences are that it was a place of welcome and safety for so many in our community, when all around bigots attempted to keep us in our place. It was out of the ghetto that we realized our political, social, religious and cultural agendas. It was from here we were enabled to take our issues to the streets.

I am not sure what the answer is, but I do believe we must take seriously this passing moment in our movement's history in Chicago. This community has a lot of wonderfully talented people who have the ability to renew the LGBT culture in Boystown and further develop our sister ghetto in Andersonville.

Some of our political leadership tells us same-sex marriage is not the end, but rather the beginning. I believe they are right. Is it possible I wonder to rediscover the gay/LGBT ghetto that gave birth to our rights movement? We have so much more to do.

I would like to quote from Suzanna Walters' new book, The Tolerance Trap: How God, Genes, and Good Intentions Are Sabotaging Gay Equality. "No civil rights movement worthy of the name has banked its future on being tolerated or accepted," she says. We tolerate bad wine and a boring film.

So I would ask you my sisters and brothers to put your thinking caps on, roll up your sleeves and begin anew to build our ghetto of hope, where many of our dreams came into being. It's where all members are valued not based on their looks, economics, race, sex, age, ability or disability, or gender identity, but rather the deeper quality of who we are as human beings.

I would be curious to hear others' thoughts on this matter.

*Joe Murray*
*Chicago*

## Dealing with stigma

*I wanted to be sure I submitted my contribution to the conversations leading up to A Day with HIV. [Editor's note: "A Day with HIV" took place Sept. 9.] Below is my letter about stigma:*

When I was first diagnosed with HIV, I was more concerned about my health and the effects HIV might have on my physical appearance than I was about stigma or discrimination.

Ironically, the hardest parts about being HIV positive are stigma and discrimination. The world around us teaches us to fear HIV and those who are infected or at risk of being infected. HIV-positive people face the prospect of being marginalized by family and friends, terminated from jobs, evicted and physically harmed when their statuses are revealed. These are external sources of stigma and discrimination.

Equally harmful is internal stigma or "self-stigma," which refers to how people living with HIV regard themselves. Before my diagnosis I, too, feared people with HIV. And, even though I later learned my fear of HIV was not at all based in science, that internalized fear remained with long after I was diagnosed. The toll it took on my self-worth was nearly irreversible.

This week, I will regain control of my self-worth by participating in Positively Aware's annual #ADayWithHIV anti-stigma photo campaign. Whether you are infected or affected with HIV, join the global conversation via social media using the hashtag #ADayWithHIV. Talking openly and honestly about HIV is essential to reducing stigma and eradicating the disease.

*Ken Williams*

## No shame needed

*Dear Editor:*

Coming out two decades ago was hard. The American culture was not, for the most part, ready to embrace me. Will and Grace were not yet friends. Michael Sam hadn't started school. Edie Windsor and her wife were living without legal protection. Sure it's easier now, but there is a different type of "coming out" with which individuals still struggle.

It's one of the greatest issues that the gay community has ever faced—not to mention our nation. It's not a cultural revolution like sports or marriage. Rather, HIV/AIDS, which has been around far longer, continues to polarize people with a nearly impenetrable wall of stigma and shame.

Having been positive for nearly a decade, I've seen and felt the pain and rejection from the uneducated population (gay and straight) who are misguided about what the CDC now considers a manageable chronic illness, just like diabetes. In other words, it is no longer a death threat.

While it doesn't provide a good chuckle like television, or is a political issue to debate, it *does* give us a reason to rally: to educate one another so we can eliminate the misconceptions of HIV/AIDS. With infection rates continuing to grow and no cure, the energy we use to educate ourselves could not only make the same headway as we have with our other causes, but perhaps we could celebrate that we are a community who truly cares about its own.

*Rob Campbell*
*Chicago*

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# GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

Photo by Donal Moloney

# NOTHING COMPARES TO HER

**Windy City Times talks with singer/iconoclast Sinéad O'Connor. See page 22.**

## THEATER

**'Whale' of a tale.**
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*Photo of The Whaleship Essex by Emily Schwartz*

## DISH

**Pie anxiety.**
**Page 18**

*Photo of The Florentine's sausage pizza by Andrew Davis*

## BILLY MASTERS

**Salute to Joan.**
**Page 21**

*Photo by William Bush*

DANCIN' FEATS

# Singer Rachael Sage featured on 'Dance Moms'

**BY LAUREN WARNECKE**

Singer/songwriter Rachael Sage tours to Chicago next month, and might be best recognized as the lady behind MPress Records, a well-known independent record label under which acclaimed artists such as Seth Glier and Melissa Ferrick produce their albums.

More recently, Sage is increasingly noticed for role in the hit Lifetime series Dance Moms, the network's top reality show. Big, boisterous Miss Abby has been using Sage's music for competition numbers throughout the years, at first unknowingly. In July, Sage launched a new single, Happiness: Maddie's Song, featured in episode 25 as the music for "Moms" star Maddie Ziegler.

In a recent interview with Windy City Times, Sage discussed Dance Moms, and her past and present connections to the dance world.

**Windy City Times: How did you first get involved with Dance Moms?**

Rachael Sage: Actually, Dance Moms first began using my music, without my awareness. I was only made aware initially by videos that "leaked" from the show onto YouTube, shortly before the season-four premiere in January. Fans were uploading footage from their competitions, showing my songs "Birthday" and "Confession" within the context of the show. Then when they actually aired, I was kind of amazed—and very excited!

Ultimately, [Dance Moms] used eight of my songs this past season. I was eventually able to meet Abby Lee Miller and all the ALDC dancers, which was kind of a thrill because I truly am in awe of these young girls' talent and their incredible work ethic. When I met Abby, she told me she'd been using my music for years, well before they had a reality show, in her school and for various competitions, including my song "Frost," which she first choreographed to a decade ago!

**WCT: Do you write music specifically with dance and/or the show in mind?**

RS: So far, all of the music that has aired on the show has been music that I'd already released, selected for various dances by Abby and her team. But without revealing too much, let's just say that composing something special for the show is something I would definitely embrace!

**WCT: How has being featured on television helped your career (assuming it has)?**

RS: I think the main way that these song placements on Dance Moms have helped me, honestly, has been in terms of my creative self-confidence.

You'd think that this far along in my indie career, I'd feel ok most of the time, as an artist ... and while I generally do, of course, it's been a challenging journey with many ups and downs. There have been moments in which I came very close to giving up all together even in spite of my passion for making and performing my own music. The support that Abby Lee Miller and her show have expressed, simply by choosing my work to accompany their dances, has given me a very tangible boost in my self-confidence.

I was a ballet dancer, well before I had a professional career in music. I studied ballet since I was 3, and eventually became a student at The School of American Ballet, dancing with The New York City Ballet in productions like The Nutcracker, Coppelia and Mozartiana at Lincoln Center in my teens. I've always had a pretty big hole in my spirit, since giving up my "other love." Somehow, the whole symbiosis between the show, my music and my prior life as a dancer has brought me full-circle.

Rachael Sage. Photo by Shervin Lainez

**WCT: What about your music lends itself to dance?**

RS: I used to think it was the pianistic arrangements, and the flow I feel when I play, but Dance Moms and some other dance schools around the country started using more aggressive, rocked-out tracks of mine, so now I'm not really sure! Maybe it's the way that I try to create very wide dynamics as the lyric and emotion warrants... I think I must just have a dancer's spirit—even though I can't do all the pirouettes anymore—and maybe that comes though! They say, "Once a dancer, always a dancer," and if I have a glass of wine, I'm still known to pull out some moves.

**WCT: Has anyone at Dance Moms been concerned about you being an out LGBT musician?**

RS: It's never remotely come up. I never made a conscious choice to do anything but be myself, as a person and as an artist. It's all I know! I like to think that if [Dance Moms] did a dance to Kinky Boots they'd be okay with that bit of info; but the bottom line is that I am a musician first.

I've never been particularly interested in discussing my private life, although I am always very eager to stand up for anyone's right to love whomever they choose! I'm a singer-songwriter, and touring artist who's put out 10 indie albums, run my own label for over a decade and tried my best to live in a compassionate way. Along my journey I've supported causes in which I believe personally, but never pander exclusively to one "scene" per se.

I have definitely never identified as a "queer artist" ahead of simply being "an artist." I'm not quite sure how that would benefit me—let alone the LGBT community—to do so. Since I first started playing piano and writing songs at 5 years old, my goal as a human being has always been to bring people together through entertainment—never to divide or exclude anyone, ever!

**Rachael Sage's tour stops in Chicago Sunday, Oct. 5, at Uncommon Ground, 1401 W. Devon Ave., at 8 p.m. Tickets are $10; visit rachaelsage.com or uncommonground.com.**

## What is STRIBILD?

STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before. It combines 4 medicines into 1 pill to be taken once a day with food. STRIBILD is a complete single-tablet regimen and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines.

**STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS.** To control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses you must keep taking STRIBILD. Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to reduce the risk of passing HIV-1 to others. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

## IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

### What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?

**STRIBILD can cause serious side effects:**

- **Build-up of an acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms of lactic acidosis include feeling very weak or tired, unusual (not normal) muscle pain, trouble breathing, stomach pain with nausea or vomiting, feeling cold especially in your arms and legs, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Serious liver problems.** The liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and fatty (steatosis). Symptoms of liver problems include your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice), dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored bowel movements (stools), loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, and/or stomach pain.
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or serious liver problems** if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking STRIBILD for a long time. In some cases, these serious conditions have led to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any symptoms of these conditions.
- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you also have HBV and stop taking STRIBILD, your hepatitis may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking STRIBILD without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health. STRIBILD is not approved for the treatment of HBV.

### Who should not take STRIBILD?

**Do not take STRIBILD if you:**

- **Take a medicine that contains:** alfuzosin, dihydroergotamine, ergotamine, methylergonovine, cisapride, lovastatin, simvastatin, pimozide, sildenafil when used for lung problems (Revatio®), triazolam, oral midazolam, rifampin or the herb St. John's wort.
- **For a list of brand names for these medicines,** please see the Brief Summary on the following pages.
- **Take any other medicines to treat HIV-1 infection,** or the medicine adefovir (Hepsera®).

### What are the other possible side effects of STRIBILD?

**Serious side effects of STRIBILD may also include:**

- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do regular blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before and during treatment with STRIBILD. If you develop kidney problems, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking STRIBILD.
- **Bone problems,** including bone pain or bones getting soft or thin, which may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people taking HIV-1 medicines.
- **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking STRIBILD.

**The most common side effects** of STRIBILD include nausea and diarrhea. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or don't go away.

### What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking STRIBILD?

- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. STRIBILD may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how STRIBILD works. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist. Do not start any new medicines while taking STRIBILD without first talking with your healthcare provider.
- **If you take hormone-based birth control** (pills, patches, rings, shots, etc).
- **If you take antacids.** Take antacids at least 2 hours before or after you take STRIBILD.
- **If you are pregnant** or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if STRIBILD can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking STRIBILD.
- **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk. Also, some medicines in STRIBILD can pass into breast milk, and it is not known if this can harm the baby.

**You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.**

Please see Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information with **important warnings** on the following pages.

STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used as a complete single-tablet regimen to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before. STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.
I started my personal revolution
Talk to your healthcare provider about starting treatment.
STRIBILD is a complete HIV-1 treatment in 1 pill, once a day.
Ask if it's right for you.
STRIBILD®
elvitegravir 150mg/ cobicistat 150mg/ emtricitabine 200mg/ tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300mg tablets

## Patient Information

**STRIBILD® (STRY-bild)**
**(elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/ tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) tablets**

Brief summary of full Prescribing Information. For more information, please see the full Prescribing Information, including Patient Information.

### What is STRIBILD?

- **STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before.** STRIBILD is a complete regimen and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines.
- **STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.
- **Ask your healthcare provider about how to prevent passing HIV-1 to others.** Do not share or reuse needles, injection equipment, or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them. Do not have sex without protection. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

### What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?

**STRIBILD can cause serious side effects, including:**

1. **Build-up of lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis can happen in some people who take STRIBILD or similar (nucleoside analogs) medicines. Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Lactic acidosis can be hard to identify early, because the symptoms could seem like symptoms of other health problems. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms which could be signs of lactic acidosis:**
   - feel very weak or tired
   - have unusual (not normal) muscle pain
   - have trouble breathing
   - have stomach pain with nausea or vomiting
   - feel cold, especially in your arms and legs
   - feel dizzy or lightheaded
   - have a fast or irregular heartbeat
2. **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems can happen in people who take STRIBILD. In some cases, these liver problems can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis). **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms of liver problems:**
   - your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice)
   - dark "tea-colored" urine
   - light-colored bowel movements (stools)
   - loss of appetite for several days or longer
   - nausea
   - stomach pain

   **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking STRIBILD for a long time.**
3. **Worsening of Hepatitis B infection.** If you have hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and take STRIBILD, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking STRIBILD. A "flare-up" is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before.
   - Do not run out of STRIBILD. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your STRIBILD is all gone
   - Do not stop taking STRIBILD without first talking to your healthcare provider
   - If you stop taking STRIBILD, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly for several months to check your HBV infection. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking STRIBILD

### Who should not take STRIBILD?

**Do not take STRIBILD if you also take a medicine that contains:**

- adefovir (Hepsera®)
- alfuzosin hydrochloride (Uroxatral®)
- cisapride (Propulsid®, Propulsid Quicksolv®)
- ergot-containing medicines, including: dihydroergotamine mesylate (D.H.E. 45®, Migranal®), ergotamine tartrate (Cafergot®, Migergot®, Ergostat®, Medihaler Ergotamine®, Wigraine®, Wigrettes®), and methylergonovine maleate (Ergotrate®, Methergine®)
- lovastatin (Advicor®, Altoprev®, Mevacor®)
- oral midazolam
- pimozide (Orap®)
- rifampin (Rifadin®, Rifamate®, Rifater®, Rimactane®)
- sildenafil (Revatio®), when used for treating lung problems
- simvastatin (Simcor®, Vytorin®, Zocor®)
- triazolam (Halcion®)
- the herb St. John's wort

**Do not take STRIBILD if you also take any other HIV-1 medicines, including:**

- Other medicines that contain tenofovir (Atripla®, Complera®, Viread®, Truvada®)
- Other medicines that contain emtricitabine, lamivudine, or ritonavir (Atripla®, Combivir®, Complera®, Emtriva®, Epivir® or Epivir-HBV®, Epzicom®, Kaletra®, Norvir®, Trizivir®, Truvada®)

**STRIBILD is not for use in people who are less than 18 years old.**

### What are the possible side effects of STRIBILD?

**STRIBILD may cause the following serious side effects:**

- **See "What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?"**
- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before you start and while you are taking STRIBILD. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking STRIBILD if you develop new or worse kidney problems.
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take STRIBILD. Bone problems include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicine. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the middle of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system** (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome) can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having any new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.

**The most common side effects of STRIBILD include:**

- Nausea
- Diarrhea

**Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.**

- These are not all the possible side effects of STRIBILD. For more information, ask your healthcare provider.
- Call your healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

**What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking STRIBILD?**

**Tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including:**

- If you have or had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis B infection
- If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if STRIBILD can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking STRIBILD.
  - There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of this registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk with your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.
- If you are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take STRIBILD.
  - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
  - Two of the medicines in STRIBILD can pass to your baby in your breast milk. It is not known if the other medicines in STRIBILD can pass into your breast milk.
  - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

**Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements:**

- STRIBILD may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how STRIBILD works.
- Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you take any of the following medicines:
  - Hormone-based birth control (pills, patches, rings, shots, etc)
  - Antacid medicines that contain aluminum, magnesium hydroxide, or calcium carbonate. Take antacids at least 2 hours before or after you take STRIBILD
  - Medicines to treat depression, organ transplant rejection, or high blood pressure
  - amiodarone (Cordarone®, Pacerone®)
  - atorvastatin (Lipitor®, Caduet®)
  - bepridil hydrochloride (Vascor®, Bepadin®)
  - bosentan (Tracleer®)
  - buspirone
  - carbamazepine (Carbatrol®, Epitol®, Equetro®, Tegretol®)
  - clarithromycin (Biaxin®, Prevpac®)
  - clonazepam (Klonopin®)
  - clorazepate (Gen-xene®, Tranxene®)
  - colchicine (Colcrys®)
  - medicines that contain dexamethasone
  - diazepam (Valium®)
  - digoxin (Lanoxin®)
  - disopyramide (Norpace®)
  - estazolam
  - ethosuximide (Zarontin®)
  - flecainide (Tambocor®)
  - flurazepam
  - fluticasone (Flovent®, Flonase®, Flovent® Diskus®, Flovent® HFA, Veramyst®)
  - itraconazole (Sporanox®)
  - ketoconazole (Nizoral®)
  - lidocaine (Xylocaine®)
  - mexiletine
  - oxcarbazepine (Trileptal®)
  - perphenazine
  - phenobarbital (Luminal®)
  - phenytoin (Dilantin®, Phenytek®)
  - propafenone (Rythmol®)
  - quinidine (Neudexta®)
  - rifabutin (Mycobutin®)
  - rifapentine (Priftin®)
  - risperidone (Risperdal®, Risperdal Consta®)
  - salmeterol (Serevent®) or salmeterol when taken in combination with fluticasone (Advair Diskus®, Advair HFA®)
  - sildenafil (Viagra®), tadalafil (Cialis®) or vardenafil (Levitra®, Staxyn®), for the treatment of erectile dysfunction (ED). If you get dizzy or faint (low blood pressure), have vision changes or have an erection that last longer than 4 hours, call your healthcare provider or get medical help right away.
  - tadalafil (Adcirca®), for the treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension
  - telithromycin (Ketek®)
  - thioridazine
  - voriconazole (Vfend®)
  - warfarin (Coumadin®, Jantoven®)
  - zolpidem (Ambien®, Edlular®, Intermezzo®, Zolpimist®)

**Know the medicines you take.** Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine. Do not start any new medicines while you are taking STRIBILD without first talking with your healthcare provider.

**Keep STRIBILD and all medicines out of reach of children.**

This Brief Summary summarizes the most important information about STRIBILD. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can also ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about STRIBILD that is written for health professionals, or call 1-800-445-3235 or go to www.STRIBILD.com.

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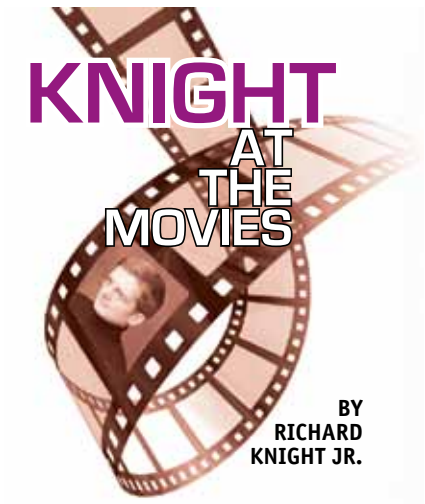



BY RICHARD KNIGHT JR.

# The Skeleton Twins; The Homestretch; film notes

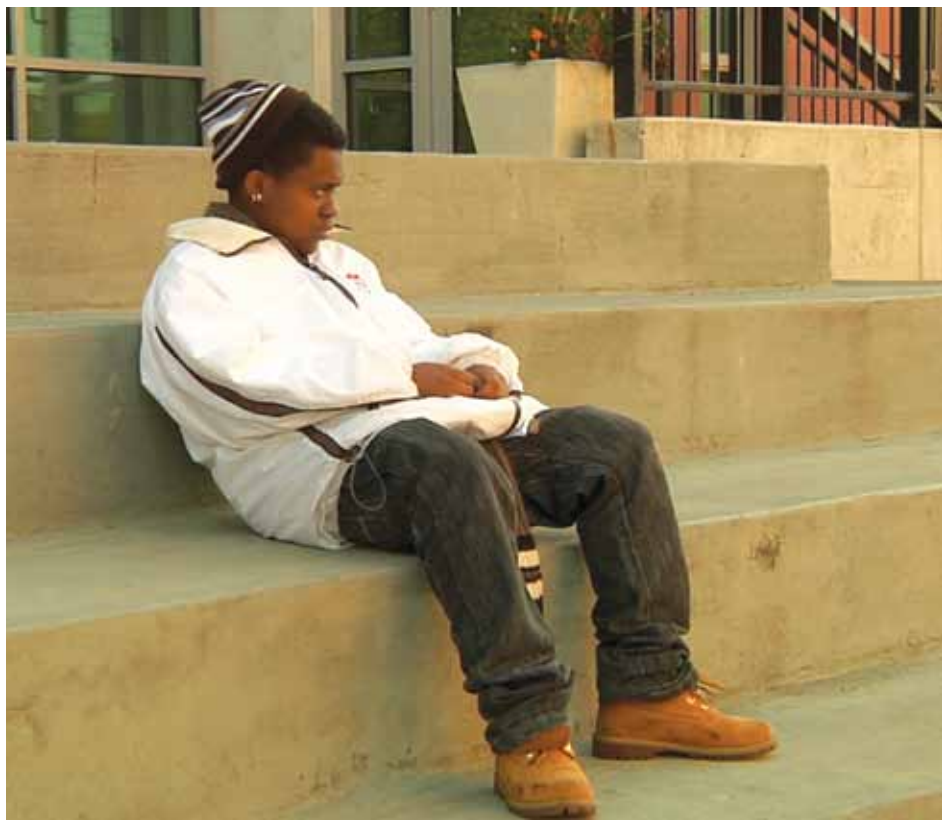
Sibling rivalry and revelry has long been a great basis for movies of nearly every genre (The Savages, Conviction, and In Her Shoes immediately spring to mind). And with **The Skeleton Twins,** from out director Craig Johnson, we have another strong example. What makes Johnson's movie—a sometimes uneven but ultimately winning black comedy that he cowrote with his college buddy Mark Heyman—of particular resonance for Our People, of course, is its focus on a gay man and his rather fraught relationship with his sister.

Estranged for a decade by circumstances that slowly reveal themselves as layers are unpeeled, Milo (Bill Hader) and Maggie (Kristen Wiig) are brought together at the outset of the film after Milo tries to kill himself and Maggie shows up at his hospital bedside. Milo's attempt has come after yet another relationship has gone sour and, without much prompting, he leaves LA and heads east with Maggie to upstate New York to meet her sweet but clueless husband (Luke Wilson) and try to get his life back together.

What we know—and which Milo quickly discerns—is that Maggie is also in the midst of an emotional meltdown. Trying to wedge herself into "normalcy" via that nice but dimwitted hubby, a job as a dental assistant, the standard accoutrements of "the good life," etc., have had the reverse effect on Maggie and she's contemplating an affair (with her scuba-diving instructor) to soothe her pain while trying to help Milo pick up the pieces. Slowly, these two lost souls who early on survived the death of their father and the selfish behavior of their narcissistic, New Age-spouting mother (Joanna Gleason), grapple with their deep seated issues. For Milo, that means confronting a seminal figure from his past (which Ty Burrell of TV's Modern Family beautifully underplays).

If this doesn't sound like much fun, well, at times, it's not (and there are other dark elements that aren't exactly side-splitting). What drives the picture and lifts the veil of darkness descending over these two is their nonstop brother-sister bantering—the spot-on, acidic wit of Hader as Milo ("Yeah, look at me—another tragic gay cliché" he tosses off to sis upon waking up in the hospital) and Wiig's convincing, under-the-breath retorts. The chemistry of this dynamic comic duo draws on the reportedly tight bond they share in real life, dating back to their SNL days; this adds another dimension to their multifaceted performances. Hader's work is a revelation and is light years from Stefon, the cuckoo party boy he played on SNL; Wiig, given a partner in crime to match her understated, crack timing, rises to the occasion as well.

At one point, letting her perky façade drop, Maggie admits to Milo, "The rest of us are just trying to walk around, not being disappointed with the way our lives turned out." When Milo attempts to cheer her up by lip-syncing to the Jefferson Starship '80s anthem, "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now" with Maggie finally not able to resist joining in—the movie reaches comic nirvana. Even though the film later stretches the credibility of the characters, this blissful sequence overrides its momentary missteps (and the Halloween segment with Hader in drag is a visual highlight, to boot). The Skeleton Twins announces the arrival of a remarkable talent and I eagerly await Johnson's next film.



**Kasey is among those featured in The Homestretch. Photo from Kartemquin Films**

The statistic that starts off Anne de Mare and Kirsten Kelly's documentary **The Homestretch** is, indeed, sobering. On any given night there are thousands of homeless teens sleeping on the streets of Chicago—and it would seem that we are in for a real downer. And while the filmmakers certainly don't skimp on the often heartbreaking realities of life on the streets, the heavy subject matter is leavened by the three individuals who are the foci of the movie.

The presence of Roque, Anthony and, especially, the funny, vibrant Kasey, whose lesbianism has contributed to troubles with her family, puts a human face to this shameful problem. Also, their compelling stories are presented in an unforced way that allows us insight into their lives and affords these teens the dignity and respect that they deserve.

Determined to overcome the difficult hand that life has dealt them—in addition to trying to stay in school and graduate they must battle Chicago's blistering winters—Roque, Anthony and Kasey also share the common bond of a love for the arts. Roque's passionate about Shakespeare and acting, Anthony is a poet and rapper, and Kasey is a poet, painter and (based on the evidence here) a budding stand-up comic. As their stories play out, we encounter several adults—Maria from the Night Ministry shelter program, for example—whose passion for helping these kids and their ilk, which visibly include many LGBTQ teens, usually goes unsung.

The directors (who also acted as cinematographers) don't pretend that this insidious problem—or the lives of Roque, Anthony and Kasey—can be tied up neatly with a ribbon at the end of the film's 90 minutes; however, they do leave us with hope that at least this trio of budding adults will overcome what can seem an insurmountable obstacle. The Homestretch opens exclusively at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., on Friday, Sept. 12. The directors, subjects in the film and representatives from the Chicago homeless services represented in the movie will be on hand at many of the screenings. http://www.siskelfilmcenter.org/homestretch

**Film notes:**

—The lesbian-themed short film **Hatboxes**, from Chicago writer-director Susana Darwin, played at last year's Reeling and will screen as part of the Movies in the Park series Friday, Sept. 12, as part of a short- film showcase at Union Park, 1501 W. Randolph St., at 7:30 p.m. https://www.facebook.com/HatboxesTheMovie

—The 1928 jazz baby flapper, silent classic **Our Dancing Daughters**—which vaulted Joan Crawford to stardom—is playing, complete with live organ accompaniment, at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave., on Saturday, Sept. 13, at 12 p.m. as part of its Silent Saturday series. www.musicboxtheatre.com

—Pride Films and Plays is hosting its second annual **Women's Words Film Festival** on Monday, Sept. 15, at the Public House Theatre, 3419 N. Clark St., beginning at 7:30 p.m. The evening will include the Chicago premiere of seven short films and two webisodes from Chicago-based lesbian company tello Films. Complete programming list at www.pridefilmsandplays.com

—Bisexual actress Gillian Anderson and Ben Foster are the latest duo of actors to take on the iconic roles of Blanche DuBois and Stanley Kowalski in Tennessee Williams' classic **A Streetcar Named Desire**. Fathom Events, National Theatre Live and BY Experience present a one-night-only broadcast from London's Young Vic Theatre stage performance of the play on Tuesday, Sept. 16, at area Chicago cinemas (including AMC River East 21) at 7 p.m. http://www.fathomevents.com/event/a-streetcar-named-desire

## Joan Rivers dies at 81

Joan Rivers, a witty, sometimes-controversial comic, actor, TV host, author and producer, has died at age 81. As a stand-up comic she fought for her rightful place in a sexist industry, and her career went into higher gear as co-host of E! TV's Fashion Police.

Her first of many appearances TV's The Tonight Show was in 1965, and that helped her reach a national audience.

Rivers had a big following in the LGBT community, and she was among the first celebrities to help raise money to fight the AIDS crisis, in the mid-1980s—including in 1984 for AIDS Project Los Angeles, Aid for AIDS and the Shanti Project.

On May 14, Windy City Times ran an interview with Rivers about her newest project, an animated series titled Fashionista and Glamour Girl.

"We took a superhero, made her a woman and a sidekick who is woman, and that is who Fashionista turned into," Rivers said in May. "Nobody has ever done this before." Melissa Rivers, her daughter, took on the role as supervillain Bangs.

Rivers said she enjoyed working on Fashionista and Glamour Girl because it's so different from what she is already involved in. "This is much more collaborative," she said. "There are many more people and there is a lot of acting involved in this, which is so much fun."

In a 2012 interview with Windy City Times, Rivers discussed collaborating with her daughter: "We have always worked together. Everyone forgets we started the red carpet. We go back 15 years together. It is funny when I am not working with Melissa in a sense. She is a great producer and I let her be the producer."

Asked about her high-energy performances on stage, Rivers said: "I love being onstage because I get to perform, and work out. I like multitasking."

Rivers' funeral was conducted Sept. 7 at Temple Emanu-El, a Reform Jewish synagogue in New York City. Among the scores of celebrities who attended were Howard Stern, Rosie O'Donnell, Inside Edition host Deborah Norville, Sarah Jessica Parker, Whoopi Goldberg and Dr. Mehmet Oz. Hugh Jackman—who won a Tony in 2004 for his role in Peter Allen's autobiographical Broadway musical The Boy From Oz, performed one of the show's songs: "Quiet Please, There's a Lady on Stage." The New York City Gay Men's Chorus and Audra McDonald sang as well, E! News reported.

Rivers' May 14 interview with Windy City Times' writer Charlsie Dewey: www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Joan-Rivers-gets-animated-in-new-show/47393.html.

The Feb. 8, 2012 interview with Joan and Melissa Rivers, by Windy City Times' writer Jerry Nunn: www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Joan-and-Melissa-Rivers-Who-knows-best/36035.html.

## 'The Roosevelts' avoids Eleanor's sexuality

Ken Burns' latest PBS opus, The Roosevelts: An Intimate History, runs 14 hours and aims to cover previously unexplored areas in the lives of Theodore, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. However, The Hollywood Reporter noted that the miniseries won't make any definitive statements on the much-speculated-about sexuality of the longest-serving first lady in U.S. history.

At a recent project for TV critics, Burns and longtime collaborator Geoffrey C. Ward were asked about Eleanor's affectionate letters to friend Lorena Hickok—which has led some to question the former first lady's sexuality.

"This is an intimate history, not a tabloid history," said Burns, who also took the time to address similar speculation about the 16th president. "There are intimate letters between Abraham Lincoln and one of his close friends, Joshua Speed. … The intimacy between them would convince you that they had a homosexual relationship."

The duo may not subscribe to the notion that Eleanor was a lesbian, but the film does include interviews with those who feel differently.

The Roosevelts will air on PBS stations Sept. 14-20, 7-9 p.m. CT each night. PBS is also rolling out the entire 14-hour series online starting Sept. 15.

# Fall LGBT movie preview

**BY RICHARD KNIGHT JR.**

With the release of the indie romantic drama Love is Strange, the dog days of summer have given us one of the year's best gay-themed movies—and with The Skeleton Twins opening this week (see my review in this issue) the fall season is off to a promising start. A random sampling of what lies ahead cinematically in the coming months, movies overtly queer or just plainly anticipated by yours truly. Unless otherwise noted, the opening date listed refers to at least a one-week theatrical run or VOD.

**Jane Fonda in This Is Where I Leave You. Photo by Jessica Miglio**

**September**

**Reeling**—The Chicago LGBT International Film Festival returns for its 32nd year with a great line-up of queer-themed features and shorts—the majority of which are Chicago premieres. The fest is also back at the Landmark Century as the primary screening location. Festival highlights will be profiled in next week's WCT (and see this week's story on Reeling's many trans*-themed films). Sept. 18-25

**This Is Where I Leave You**—Shawn Levy directs what looks to be a comedic variation of August: Osage County in which four grown-up siblings (Tina Fey, Jason Batemen, Adam Driver, Corey Stoll) are forced by their hypersexed mother (Jane Fonda) to spend a week living together following the death of their father—and, yes, there is a gay twist. Sept. 19

**The Boomer List**—PBS screens this entry in it popular American Masters series, a documentary focusing on high-profile baby boomers (born between the years 1946 and 1964) and their groundbreaking accomplishments. Rosie O'Donnell, Eve Ensler, Tommy Hilfiger, Samuel L. Jackson, Dave LaChapelle and AIDS activist Peter Staley are among those included. Premieres Sept. 23

**White Bird in a Blizzard**—Queer film auteur Gregg Araki adapts (from the best-selling novel) and directs this tale of a college girl who goes into emotional freefall after the disappearance of her mother. Red-hot Shailene Woodley (Divergent; The Fault in Our Stars) headlines a cast that includes Shiloh Fernandez, Eva Green, Chris Meloni, Thomas Jane and Gabourey Sidibe. Sept. 24

**October**

**Chicago International Film Festival (CIFF)**—Chicago's most prominent film festival celebrates 50 years with a line-up and attendant special events that will certainly offer plenty for LGBT audiences. The fest is often the place for Chicago premieres of prominent queer-themed films (last year, festivalgoers were the first to see Blue Is the Warmest Color and Kill Your Darlings). The festival has already announced the critically lauded Brazilian film The Way He Looks as part of its line-up. Oct. 9-23

**Hunted: The War Against Gays in Russia**—This HBO documentary examines the fallout after the introduction of Russian government's virulent anti-gay propaganda law. Narrated by out actor Matt Bomer. Oct. 10

**Pride**—Imelda Staunton stars in this true story of a UK contingent of gays and lesbians who came to the aid of conservative, striking miners at the height of the Thatcher regime during the 1980s. It looks like a gay twist of The Full Monty, Calendar Girls, etc. Oct. 10

**Dracula Untold**—The once openly gay Luke Evans (according to an interview with the Advocate in 2002)—who has had supporting parts in a slew of big-budget franchise flicks (The Hobbit, Fast & Furious, etc.)—stars in this bloody actioneer about the origins of the Prince of Darkness. Oct. 10

**To Russia with Love**—Johnny Weir, the irrepressible champion skater who is renowned for his outrageous behavior and unapologetic openness about his gay sexuality, is the focus for this documentary that profiles Weir's experience as a commentator at the winter Olympics held in anti-gay Russia. Screening on the EPIX channel. Oct. 22

**Advanced Style**—The Gene Siskel Film Center presents the Chicago premiere of Lina Plioplyte's documentary about seven Manhattanite fashionistas (ages 60 to 90) whose dedication to their outrageous, uber-stylish wardrobes has brought them plenty of notoriety. Oct. 24

**November-December**

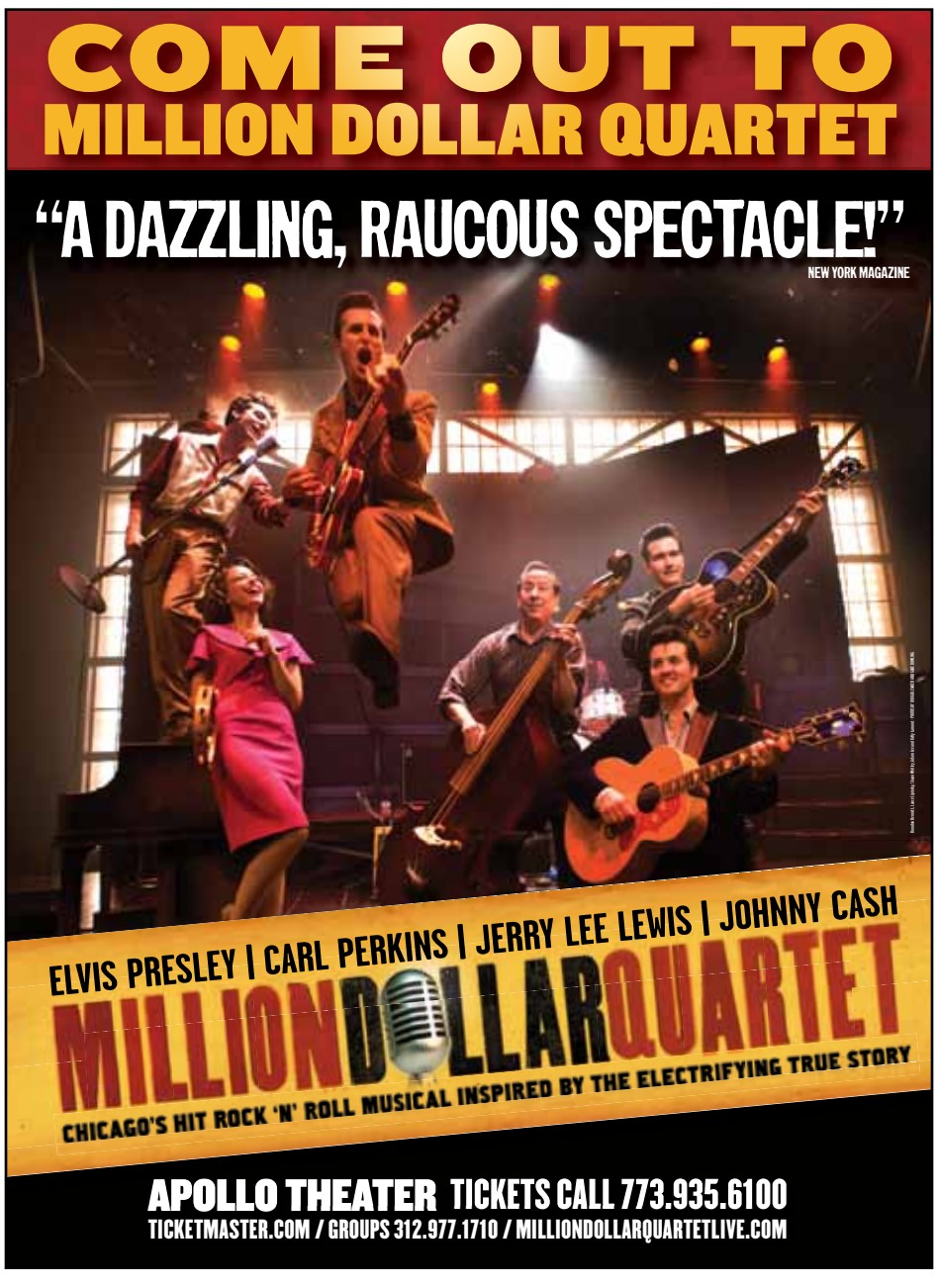
**Foxcatcher**—Director Bennett Miller and screenwriter/actor Dan Futterman—the duo behind 2005's Capote, have won raves (and Miller the best directing prize at Cannes) for this true-life crime saga about Olympic wrestling champs Mark and Dave Schultz and how their lives were tragically impacted by their involvement with John du Pont, their wealthy but mentally disturbed sponsor. Steve Carell, Channing Tatum (Magic Mike) and Mark Ruffalo (The Normal Heart) co-star. Nov. 14

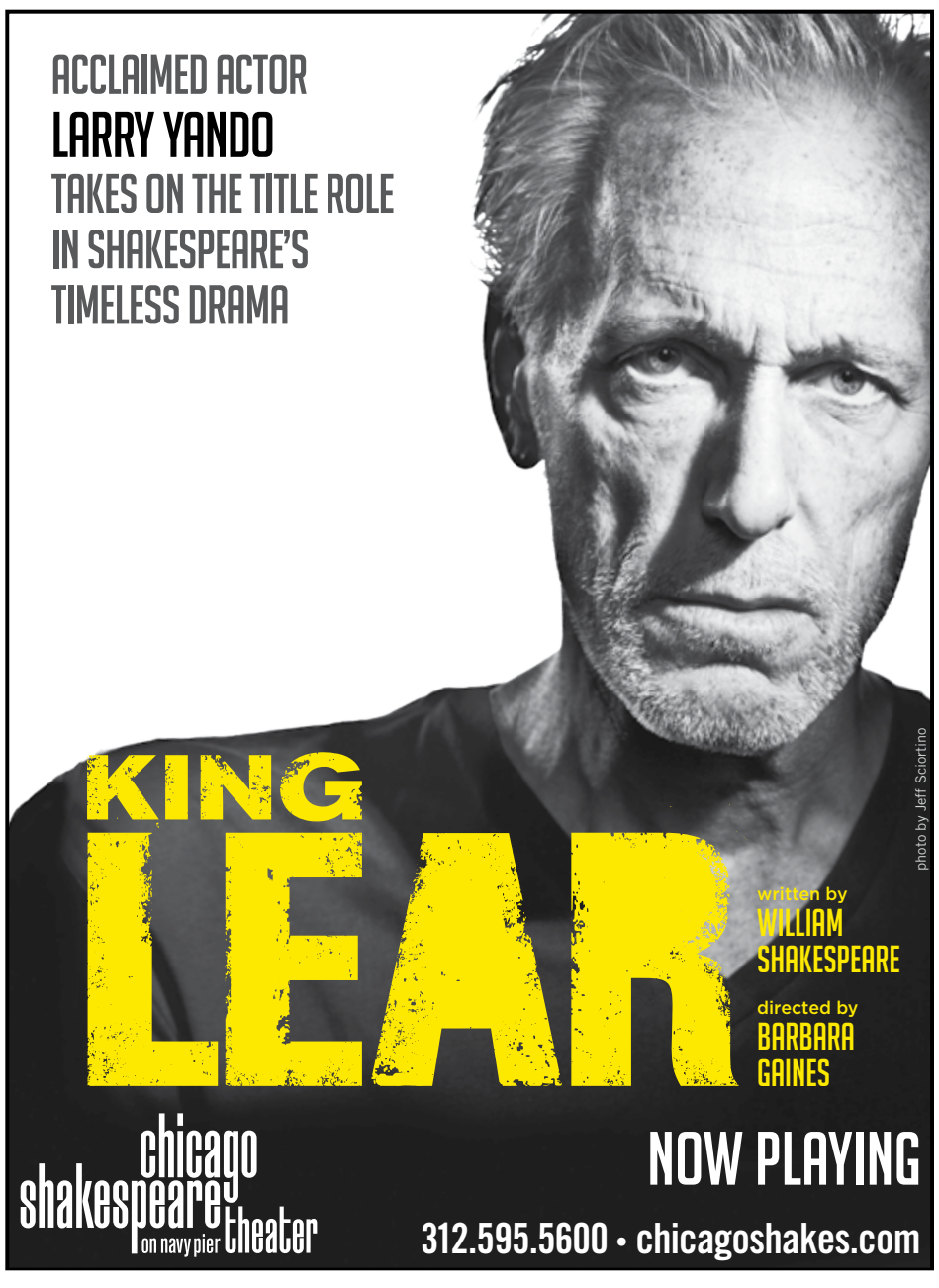
**The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I**—It's the beginning of the revolution in this third and penultimate installment of the mega-popular film franchise. Jennifer Lawrence returns as the kickass heroine and face of the revolution Katniss Everdeen, along with Josh Hutcherson, Liam Hemsworth, Woody Harrelson, Elizabeth Banks, et al. Julianne Moore is new to the cast as the president of the evil Capitol. Nov. 21

**The Imitation Game**—Benedict Cumberbatch stars as the math genius Alan Turing, whose cracking of the Nazi's Enigma Code turned the tide for the Allied Forces in WWII. Turing, who is often referred to as the father of modern computers, was forced out of government service when he admitted being gay, eventually killing himself. Mark Strong, Keira Knightley and Matthew Goode co-star. Nov. 2

**Sing-A-Long-Sound of Music**—For close to a decade, Thanksgiving weekend has meant a trip to the Music Box Theatre for its annual sing-a-long presentation of the 1965 Rodgers & Hammerstein musical classic starring Julie Andrews as the chirpy Maria, Christopher Plummer as the riding crop-wielding Captain Von Trapp, all those Von Trapp kiddies and a bevy of nuns. Get out your wimples, girls! Nov. 28

**Exodus: Gods and Kings**—Ridley Scott moves into Cecil B. DeMille territory a la The Ten Commandments with an epic retelling of the epic Biblical story of Moses leading the Hebrews out of Egypt. Hunky Christian Bale steps in for hunky Charleton Heston, hunky Joel Edgerton is in for hunky Yul Brynner, hunky Aaron Paul is in for hunky John Derek, and Iranian-born actress Golshifteh Farahani slithers in for Anne Baxter. Sigourney Weaver and Ben Kingsley also star. Dec. 12



the DISH WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN WINDY CITY TIMES

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# Current; Florentine

BY ANDREW DAVIS

I was quite sure what to expect from W Lakeshore's **Current** (680 N. Lake Shore Dr.; http://www.wchicago-lakeshore.com/current-chicago-restaurant) in light of the substantial renovation the hotel has undergone—but what I encountered was one of the best brunches I've had in quite some time.

One server called the decor "Great Gatsby," and that description seems to fit. The look is very sleek and shiny—almost a little bright for someone who might have a hangover. However, all the elements come together beautifully.

Executive Chef Gregory Elliott told me he decided to go with an Italian-focused menu because it's "seasonal" and "simple," adding that it "plays to what the customer base wants."

And the customer base will especially want to start things off with the housemade morning bun with orange zest, cardamom and nutmeg (so good that I also got one to go). The chicken-fried bacon was an incredibly tasty twist on an item that's popular in Chicago, to say the least.

Photos of Current by Andrew Davis

I'm not usually the biggest fan of too many sweets in the morning, and I thought I'd reached my limit early on with the bun. However, I'm still dreaming about the Nutella-stuffed French toast (listed under "Dolce," along with items such as crepes and buttermilk pancakes). Lastly, my dining companion and I tried the house-cured salmon pizza, complete with dill creme fraiche, capers, red onion and a hard-boiled egg—and both of us were impressed.

So say goodbye to Wave (the restaurant that was housed here)—and "wave" hello to a new place with incredible offerings. I have been to very few places with items that impressed from beginning to end. I will be stopping by again soon. (Note: Current is also open for breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week.)

**The Florentine** (151 W. Adams St.; http://www.e2hospitality.com/florentine-chicago/), located at the JW Marriott Hotel, was one of the first restaurants I visited for this column.

However, there was a different chef at the helm then (Todd Stein). Now, the executive chef is Chris Macchia, who has worked at such establishments as Coco Pazzo.

However, before I settle in on the food at The Florentine—which still maintains its library-like feel while I'm amongst hotel residents and power brokers—I'm served a Black-Eyed Angel. The name is pretty fitting in at least one respect: The mocktail (pomegranate juice, blackberry puree, sparkling water and peach bitters) tastes like it was sent from heaven. I would return for this alone.

Chef Chris Macchia of The Florentine.

Now, for the lunchtime cuisine: The Italian-focused menu doesn't seem the most challenging—but that's actually part of the allure for me. As long as the items are done well, it's all good.

On that level, The Florentine more than succeeds. Even the bread that's served (particularly, the focaccia) is amazing.

Among the items I tried were the sausage pizza (mushrooms, tomato, fiore di latte and rosemary), chicken panini (with smoked mozzarella, peperonata and basil aioli) and a sandwich twist called an MLT (griddled mortadella, fried egg, provolone, mayonnaise and country bread). Among the trio, the MLT was undoubtedly my favorite, with the egg dripping through.

If you somehow have room for dessert, there are several tantalizing options, including the torta (a smaller, round cheesecake with red wine-poached figs and pine-nut brittle).

By the way, the restaurant has tasting specials with a theme. A recent theme was tomato, with buffalo mozzarella and brandywine tomato cobbler among the offerings.

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The Whaleship Essex. Photo by Emily Schwartz

THEATER REVIEW

## Ecstasy

**Playwright: Mike Leigh**
**At: Cole Theatre at Red Orchid,**
**1531 N. Wells St.**
**Tickets: 312-943-8722;**
**www.coletheatre.org; $15-$25**
**Runs through: Sept. 28**

**BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE**

In 1979 England, £19 (about $31 U.S.) a week rents a petrol-station cashier an SRO with a calico curtain hanging below the sink, a folding tray doubling as a liquor table, a kitchen chair for seating guests and a bed pushed against the bricked-up fireplace. This being the outskirts of London, the residents also enjoy such post-WWII amenities as coin-meter electricity, a bathroom down the hall with an audible dripping pipe and a pay telephone on the sidewalk outside. Single woman Jean claims to like her apartment's cozy low-maintenance squalor, but the nearly bare refrigerator and the empty beer bottles scattered among the furnishings reflects likewise empty off-duty hours devoted to peripatetic sex with unreliable partners.

Mike Leigh's play covers a long Friday, beginning when Jean, on the advice of her ever-optimistic chum (appropriately named Dawn), attempts to discard her most recent booty call. Their ambivalent tryst is interrupted, though—first, by the aforementioned Dawn, then by the would-be philanderer's irate wife, setting off a brawl that ends in damage to Jean's bed. That evening, the always-capable Dawn returns, accompanied by her amiably vulgar husband Mick and his shy homey Len, who repair the breakage with cheerful alacrity, after which the friends celebrate their success by embarking on an evening of hooch, tobacco and camaraderie.

"And that's all???" audiences may protest, confronted by a literary genre popular among playwrights in the United Kingdom, but less so in the United States. Our country's social mobility might have rendered everyday portraits of the working classes unnecessary, but as the four comrades listen to Elvis records, sing songs both solemn and bawdy, and recall their high school days with the nostalgia of much-older adults, perceptive playgoers may sense the bleakness underlying their rowdy revels. In a universe where the future offers small promise of significant change, Jean's decision to accept the attentions of a good man over her long string of bad ones, represents a turning point commensurate with far more cataclysmic resolutions.

The Cole Theatre ensemble, making its debut under the direction of Shade Murray, immerses us in the microcosmic environment of our characters (which occasionally encompasses a casual racist remark or juvenile toilet joke), their scene-study expertise crafting from Leigh's minimalist dialogue and heavy regional accents a history steeped in fierce loyalty that all but shimmers with the defiance of hardscrabble innocents determined to be happy despite their restricted choices. At the conclusion of the visit, we might still be glad *we* aren't them, but we don't regret a single moment spent in their company.

THEATER REVIEW

## The Whaleship Essex

**Playwright: Joe Forbrich**
**At: Shattered Globe Theatre**
**at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.**
**Tickets: 1-773-975-8150;**
**www.theaterwit.org; $30**
**Runs through: Oct. 11**

**BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL**

The Whaleship Essex isn't a great play, but it's riveting theater that tells a harrowing tale.

Similar to other real-life adventures from the Age of Sail—Mutiny on the Bounty, Two Years Before the Mast, Moby Dick (inspired by the Essex disaster)—it's Biblical in tone and scope, especially with the somewhat formal 19th-century syntax and vocabulary of the text. The tiny ship upon the vast sea is an apt metaphor for mankind amidst the cosmos, less than a blink of God's eye, while the sea captain holding life-and-death authority over his crew stands in for an Old Testament prophet if not for God outright.

The Essex sailed in 1819 from Nantucket Island, a prosperous whaling port before gaslight made whale oil obsolete. Small in size even then (at 87 feet about the size of Navy Pier's tall ship, Windy), the Essex nonetheless had a successful history that changed quickly. Two days out, a squall laid it "abeam" (on its side) causing heavy damage, but worse was yet to come. Having rounded Cape Horn to South Pacific whaling grounds, a huge sperm whale rammed the Essex twice and sank it. The surviving crew—in three whaling boats—went through a horrific ordeal sailing thousands of miles to the South American coast. After several men died of starvation, the others resorted to cannibalism and murder-by-lot of a crewmate to provide food.

That alone would make a well-told sea adventure, but there also are character issues to inflame things, chiefly the open antagonism between amiable first-time Capt. George Pollard (Brad Woodard) and whip-wielding Owen Chase (Joseph Wiens), Pollard's headstrong First Mate. Both survived to have careers as ship captains before retiring into haunted old age on Nantucket. Their contrasting temperaments are clearly drawn by Woodward and Wiens as guided by veteran director Lou Contey.

Author Joe Forbrich—absent from Chicago and Shattered Globe for 10 successful years—tells the tale in an almost matter-of-fact fashion. He's absorbed the two extant accounts of the voyage written by Chase and cabin boy Thomas Nickerson, seen in the play at 14 (Angie Shriner) and at 45 (Ben Werling) as the play's narrator. Forbrich excludes or alters many incidents, but such changes are necessary to construct a compact and dramatic piece.

And dramatic it is, gathering interest after a slow start. Under Contey, the physically dexterous cast of 15 works against brilliant black-and-white projections by Michael Stanfill. Ann Davis' rope-rigged set, Shelley Strasser Holland's lighting and Sarah Jo White's salt-tinged costumes fill out the spectacle along with Vivian Knouse's props and fight choreography by Christina Gorman. Still, the heavy, lengthy opening exposition leaves The Whaleship Essex becalmed for the first 20 minutes.

## CRITICS' PICKS

**Apes of Wrath**, The Second City e.t.c., an ongoing run. Deep existential despair and sci-fi matters make for great comic gold in this hilarious and new sketch comedy revue directed by Jen Ellison. The writer-performers are all unashamedly brainy and funny at the same time. SCM

**My Name Is Asher Lev**, TimeLine Theatre at Stage 773, through Oct. 18. Alex Weisman (of The History Boys) delivers another star-making performance in this adaptation of Chaim Potok's poignant novel—it's going to sell out fast, so get your tickets NOW. MSB

**On the Town**, Marriott Theatre, through Oct. 12. Three sailors on 24-hour leave in NYC find romance/adventure to Leonard Bernstein's jazzy music and Comden & Green's witty lyrics. The first-ever Chicago production of this 1944 gem bursts with exuberance, brilliant comedy and athletic dancing. A must! JA

**The Yellow Wallpaper**, The Mill at Chopin Theatre, through Sept. 14. Jaclyn Biskup's direction forges powerful visual metaphors for Lorelei Sturm's adaptation of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's American horror classic. MSB

*—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan*

# CALENDAR

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## Wed., Sept. 10

**Trans Youth Resources and Advocacy Youth Drop-In Center** Every Wednesday, safe, confidential place for transgender people between the ages of 14 to 24. Meet other youth who also identify as transgender, or are questioning their gender identity. Free food, snacks and refreshments, music, peer support, adult supervision, referrals and education. 5:00pm - 7:00pm Broadway Youth Center, 615 W Wellington Ave., http://www.genderadvocates.org/Tyra/TYRADropIn.html

**Mitchell Gold and Bob Williams** Toast our first 25 years, benefit Chicago House. Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, Mexico City's DJs Tom and Collins. RSVP rsvpchicago@mgbwhome.com 6:00pm - 9:00pm Mitchell Gold and Bob Williams, 1555 N. Halsted St., Chicago 312-397-3135 Tickets: http://www.chicagohouse.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/MGBW_Chicago_FormalInvite_25thAnniversary_9-10-14-2.jpg

**Mary Gordon, author The Liar's Wife** Acclaimed author Mary Gordon (Final Payments, Circling My Mother) returns with four exquisite novellas of Europeans in America and Americans abroad. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

**Fabitat: Homecumming** Bust out those corsages and book that limo, because FABITAT is back for its second season and it's gonna be one hell of a Homecumming. DJs Adam El and LDY PRBLMS. Homecumming queens include Lucy Stoole, Curlene Ribbon, Joan Waters, and the rest of The Saffire House. Live music from The K.i.D. featuring Jeremy Tromberg of the Ragtones and JC Brooks of the Uptown Sound. 9:00pm - 2:00am Double Door's Door No. 3 1551 N Damen Ave. Chicago, IL 60622 http://www.facebook.com/doorno3fabitat

## Thursday, Sept. 11

**Fr. Mychal Judge Tribute, screening of "Saint of 9/11"** G/L Outreach of Old St. Patrick's Church, Dignity Chicago, and the Legacy Project commemorate 9/11 and remember Fr. Mychal Judge, whose bronze memorial marker will soon join Chicago's "Legacy Walk" outdoor LGBT history museum. This free screening of the award-winning documentary will be followed by discussion. Free. Seating is limited. Please call by Sept. 8 6:00pm - 8:30pm Old St. Patrick's Church 700 W Adams St., Chicago 312-648-1021 https://www.dropbox.com/s/019t42u1f00cmkb/Fr%20Judge%20at%200SP%20Flyer.pdf?dl=0

**Parents of Trans* Individuals** Peer lead, conversation/ support group for parents of individuals who identify as transgender or are questioning their gender. Second Thursday of each month. Info from: evanderlinden@centeronhalsted.org 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://www.centeronhalsted.org

**Native Son** World premiere of American Blues Ensemble Member Nambi E. Kelley's new adaptation of Richard Wright's classic novel, directed by Seret Scott. Through Oct. 12, 2014. Check specific date for more information and start time. $45-$65 8:00pm Court Theatre 5535 South Ellis Ave. Chicago http://www.CourtTheatre.org

**John D'Emilio's Scholarship and its Impact on LGBTQ Life** The UIC Gender & Women's Studies is proud to invite our community to a two day symposium honoring Professor John D'Emilio's influential work. 6pm reception. Keynote Lecture by Estelle Freedman, Stanford University "Sexual Violence and Citizenship: Rape Reform in American History" 9:00pm - 8:00pm Student Center West, University of Illinois at Chicago, 828 South Wolcott Ave., http://johndemiliosymposium.uic.edu/

## Friday, Sept. 12

**John D'Emilio Symposium 2014** The UIC Gender & Women's Studies is proud to invite our community to a two day symposium honoring Professor John D'Emilio's influential work. 6pm reception. Keynote Lecture by Estelle Freedman, Stanford University "Sexual Violence and Citizenship: Rape Reform in American History" 9:00am - 8:00pm Jane Addams Hull House: University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago Illinois Tickets: http://johndemiliosymposium.uic.edu/events/

**Collateral Damage: The Human Faces of War** Vincent Cianni, gay New York-based documentary photographer captures the struggles of gay members of the military. Through Sept. 24. 10:00am Safety-Kleen Gallery One, Building H Arts Center, 1700 Spartan Dr., Elgin Community College

**Surrogacy Seminar by Men Having Babies** In-person consultations medical and financial questions about family building. Also see Gay Parenting Expo Sept. 13. 2:00pm - 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://GayParentsToBe.com

**Second Friday Open Studios** A variety of artists have active studios here, from established professionals with international reputations to emerging artists. Gallery openings, musicians' studios, alternative businesses. 5:00pm - 9:00pm Fine Arts Building 410 S. Michigan Ave Chicago http://www.fineartsbuildingstudios.com/

**Call Me Kuchu screening** Award-winning film about Uganda LGBTs' fight against bigotry. Discussion of anti-gay agitation in Uganda, and the resulting murder of that country's leading LGBT rights activist, David Kato. Fundraiser for Chicago LGBT Asylum Project (CLASP). Free will offering, no one turned away for lack of funds. 6:30pm Broadway United Methodist Church 3338 N Broadway Chicago

**OPALGA September Potluck** Bring a dish to share and your own drinks. 7:00pm - 10:00pm Contact an organizer for location https://www.facebook.com/events/321349971377442/?source=1

**Or Chadash** Shabbat Service with the Chicagoland synagogue serving LGBT Jews, their families, friends and loved ones. Membership is open to everyone. 8:00pm Congregation Or Chadash at Emanuel Congregation 5959 N Sheridan Rd Chicago http://OrChadash.org

**Homestretch youth homeless doc at Siskel** Shot over the course of five years with unprecedented access into the Chicago Public Schools, The Night Ministry's The Crib emergency youth shelter, and Teen Living Programs' Belfort House, The Homestretch follows three teens-Roque, Kasey and Anthony-- through a complex and haunting Chicago landscape of couch-hopping, emergency shelters, makeshift homes, and a school system that is struggling to cope with this crisis. In one scene, emergency shelter beds are meted out via a lottery. 8:15pm Gene Siskel Film Center 164 N State Chicago http://www.siskelfilmcenter.org

**Chicago Women's Expo** Meet Tabatha Coffey, Wynonna Judd, and Nene Leakes, and enjoy a free massage, beauty treatments and more at the Chicago Women's Expo, September 13-14 at Donald E. Stephens Convention Center. 2 for 1 tickets, only $5.00 each at www.chicagowomensexpo.com 10:00am - 5:00pm Donald E. Stevens Convention Center 9301 Bryn Mawr Ave Rosemont, IL 60018 http://chicagowomensexpo.com Tickets: http://chicagowomensexpo.com/purchasetickets

**Gay Parenting Expo** Consultations at the Gay Parenting Expo hosted by Men Having Babies. Speakers and break out sessions to help educate attendees about family building options for the LGBTQ community. Full schedule at the link. Register online $10, $15 at the door. 10:00am - 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://www.menhavingbabies.org/chicago Tickets: http://www.menhavingbabies.org/surrogacy-seminars/chicago-2015/registration/

**Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, Chicago-area GLBT Chapter** Specifically founded to meet the needs of the Chicago-area GLBT community with mood disorders or other significant psychological conditions, as well as their friends, partners, and family members. Free. No RSVP needed. 11:00am - 12:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://www.dbsa-glbt-chicago.com/

## ON THE MOVE

### Sunday, Sept. 14

The AIDS Run & Walk Chicago will take place in Grant Park.

*Photo*

## Sunday, Sept. 14

**AIDS Run & Walk Chicago** Registration will open mid-June. More information to come. 8:00am - 8:00pm Arvey Field in Grant Park 1501 S Lake Shore Dr Chicago http://aidsrunwalk.org Tickets: http://events.aidschicago.org/site/PageServer?pagename=rw14

**PFLAG Chicago Metro** Chapter meetings held the third Sunday 2:00pm - 4:15pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://www.pflagillinois.org/chapter-meetings/pflag-metro-chicago/

## Monday, Sept. 15

**Women's Words Film Fest** An evening of short films with lesbian characters or themes written or directed by women! Part of Pride Films and Plays' festival for plays and screenplays written by women with lesbian characters and themes, through Sept 21. Start time and more information, the full program of films will be announced in September. 6:00pm The Public House Theatre 3914 N. Clark St. Chicago http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com

## Tuesday, Sept. 16

**Adore Delano: Unplugged** RuPaul's Drag Race alum Adore Delano sings live, featuring hits from her album 'Til Death Do Us Party. $20 gen. admission; $30 gen. admission plus photo line meet and greet. Call 773-281-3355, ext. 2 or email shawn@roscoes.com for tickets. 9:00pm - 12:00am Roscoe's Tavern 3356 N Halsted St Chicago http://www.roscoes.com

## Wed., Sept. 17

**National AIDS & Aging Awareness Day** For National HIV, AIDS & Aging Day, the HIV services team of Center On Halsted will be providing free rapid walk-in HIV testing, linkage to care and other support services for Seniors and their loved ones. Learn more about HIV, AIDS, and how it impacts our aging population. 2nd Floor Lobby 10:00am - 1:00am Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://www.centeronhalsted.org

**Mary Gauthier** Acclaimed singer-songwriter touring in support of her latest release Trouble & Love Sam Baker will also be performing. 8:00pm City Winery Chicago 1200 W. Randolph St., Chicago http://www.citywinery.com

BOOK REVIEW

# Judy Garland on Judy Garland: Interviews and Encounters

**Edited by Randy L. Schmidt**
**$29.95; Chicago Review Press; 456 pages**
**BY ANGELIQUE SMITH**

If you're told exactly who you are in the beginning of your life, do you start to believe it yourself?

Judy Garland was truly born at the age of 12, when Frances Ethel Gumm ceased to exist and the newly named studio creation burst onto the Hollywood scene. But even her true age at that time should be taken with a grain of salt, as evidenced by both the fantastical output of MGM Studio's publicity machine and the reader's ability to digest all of her interviews and their contradictions.

To be frank, Judy Garland on Judy Garland: Interviews and Encounters is a must-read for only the most die-hard Garland fan. It chronicles her many published musings and interviews (print, television and radio) for over three decades, concluding with what would be her last interview in Denmark before her untimely death. It is a time capsule. It is Judy in

**Randy L. Schmidt. Photo by Walter Briski Jr.**

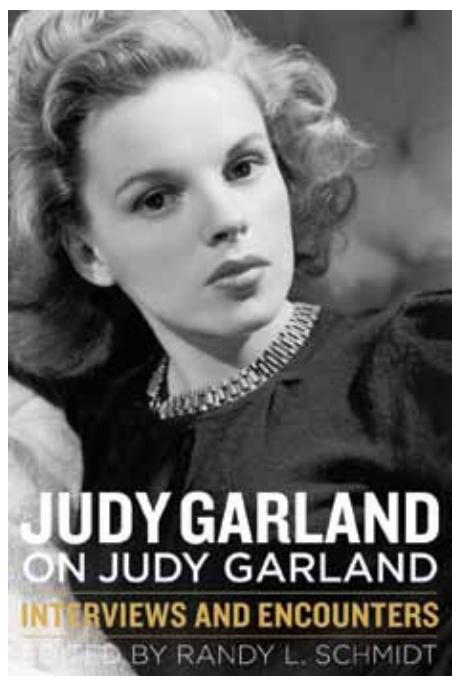
Judy's own words, with the first two decades' worth of words most likely coming from approved studio messaging.

For those with little more than a passive interest in the iconic star, it can be a bit repetitive. But maybe that's the point. It illustrates MGM's commitment to shaping the career and personal life of "the little girl with the big voice." At its best, it gives the reader a glimpse into signs of the times, when society's mores were set in stone and girls were expected to behave as such. Judy is against "necking" on dates and recommends laughing at boys jokes even when they're not funny: "The dumbest girl can seem smart if she keeps the conversation focused on the boy's interests, or at least keeps it steered on the one subject she knows most about."

Almost every interview mentions her love affairs, rates her mental and physical health, her looks (or lack thereof, depending on the article) and her weight. So, so much about her weight. She is "pudgy," "plump" and "husky;" except when she's "rail-thin," "gaunt" and "slender once again." Judy is infantilized and sexualized, she is lauded and hated, she is raked over the coals and put on a pedestal… sometimes in the same piece.

From her telling of it, Garland dearly wanted to "set the record straight" and tell the truth about her life and the rumors surrounding her. From the '50s on, Garland gets much more comfortable and delights us with her self-deprecating wit and anecdotes about the likes of Clark Gable, Liz Taylor and Mickey Rooney. But old habits die hard and a lot of the same PC origin stories can't help but come out over and over. Her problems with addiction and suicide attempts are glossed over but, luckily, the interviews are interspersed with historical facts from editor Schmidt that set the scene for what is—and isn't—said.

In spite of her well-documented financial woes, insecurities, career highs and lows, and constant quest for what's over the rainbow, what most shines through in the interviews is Judy's sheer determination to remain on top, her undeniable love for her children, her devotion to her fans and, most of all, her ability to command an audience and stage.



# BILLY MASTERS

"*If everybody likes you—you're pretty dull.*"—Bette Davis' quote might as well have been directed at Joan Rivers ... or me. Neither one of us has ever been called dull.

I first saw Joan Rivers on The Tonight Show and immediately fell under her spell. I followed her every move religiously, sent her fan letters, and even jokes. She always graciously responded and sometimes even called from the road. Later, we got much closer. She opened doors for me, gave me endless opportunities, and inspired me more than almost anybody in my life. Over the years, I've known many celebrities, but only a small handful have a way of making their fans feel special. Joan was that kind of person. She used to say, "I always have time for my fans—they're the ones who made me a star."

This was a great year for Auntie Joan. She had another book on the New York Times Best-sellers List, returned to The Tonight Show after 30 years and had two hit television shows, with at least two others in development. To top it off, during her last hours on this Earth, she was onstage making people laugh. To me, Joan Rivers was like Mount Rushmore—something iconic and majestic that would withstand the test of time...and whose face would never move. She was an original, she lived by her own rules, and she was vital to the end. We should all be so lucky. We may have sorrow for her family and for ourselves. But Joan lives on forever in our hearts and souls. There's nothing to mourn here—only something to celebrate.

This week, I celebrated a milestone. I have been writing this column for 19 years. Yes, I know I barely look a day over 90, but that's not the point. The point is, if someone told me that I'd be writing this very column week in and week out for close to two decades, I'd have not believed it. But then again, nothing in my life has gone as planned. In fact, one of my earliest aspirations has yet to be fulfilled. I've never told you this, but when I was 14 years old, I ran away from home. I boarded a plane and flew to Orlando, Florida, to pursue a career at Disney World as one of the Seven Dwarfs. I wasn't picky as to which dwarf—at 14, its unlikely anyone would have given me a job. Had I not gone home, I probably would have ended up penniless, on the street, a prostitute, a junkie or worse. And yet, none of those unsavory possibilities could have prepared me for my current vocation. Ah, the road less traveled...

With the new television season starting this week, we will finally get to see the new and improved "View." There are a new set, logo and cast for The View. Officially joining the table are Rosie Perez and Nicolle Wallace. Two Rosies on one show? That's the least of their worries. And, as it turns out, Miss Perez will be awfully busy. She's just been cast in Larry David's new play Fish in the Dark, which begins previews on Broadway Feb. 2, 2015.

Just as Bryan Singer's legal woes ended on one front, they began on another. It's been a rocky few months since Michael Egan filed his sexual abuse suit against the filmmaker. Although Singer never wavered in assertions of his innocence, Egan's story grew more and more nebulous with implausibilities rising. He was dropped by his lawyer around the time that Singer filed his own malicious prosecution lawsuit (Egan had to be served while hiding in the bathroom stall of a small Las Vegas casino). Egan's case was ultimately dismissed when he couldn't find another lawyer to represent him, and Singer was able to sigh in relief.

But that respite was short-lived. Singer is allegedly being investigated by the NYPD. According to a police spokesperson, a male in his 20s who was visiting NYC from Virginia allegedly met Bryan at XL nightclub, was plied with alcohol, and taken back to the auter's hotel room where he was "forcibly sexually assaulted." The Special Victims Unit is investigating the case.

**Billy remembers Joan Rivers fondly. Photo by William Bush**

Death doesn't protect you from legal woes. In Los Angeles, a 36-year-old man is suing the estate of Michael Jackson for sexual abuse. The accuser appeared with Jackson in his famous Pepsi commercial. James Safechuck claims that he was abused by Jackson more than 100 times during a four-year period. Call me crazy, but after the first dozen or so times, wouldn't you just stay away? No, because the boy claims Jackson brainwashed him into thinking these were "acts of love." Oh, and did I mention that Safechuck was only 10 years old when the alleged abuse started? Reportedly, the sexual part of their relationship ended when Safechuck reached puberty, proving that even Michael Jackson had standards.

A contestant on VH1's Dating Naked is suing the network for showing non-blurred footage of her crotch. Frankly, if you're on a show called Dating Naked, you shouldn't have a problem with nudity.

Hot on the heels of Buyer & Cellar, writer Jonathan Tolins is working on a film about the life of comedienne Phyllis Diller. It might be time for me to revive my play Hollywood Uncovered, about my time with Joan Rivers.

Let's slip in a quick "*Ask Billy*" question. Henry in Tulsa writes: "*What is going on with the Magic Mike sequel? Is it really going to happen?*"

Not only is it happening, it's actually started shooting. Star of the original flick Joe Manganiello shared a photo from the first day on the set of Magic Mike XXL that we'll post on BillyMasters.com. Why he's being shot by the second unit is a mystery to me.

When Michael Jackson was practicing Safechuck instead of safe sex, it's definitely time to end yet another column. By the time you read this, I'll be off on another adventure in an undisclosed country—hopefully not one that looks askance at journalists (as if I consider myself one). No matter where I am, you can get the best dish at www.BillyMasters.com—the site that's very international. If you have a question for me, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Bryan Singer turns up on a special episode of Law & Order: SVU. Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

## Trans* activist Jones headlines release party

**BY CARRIE MAXWELL**

The Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois (TJLP) celebrated the publication of Hidden Expressions, vol. 2 with a release party featuring trans* activist Monica Jones at the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum Sept. 6.

The Hidden Expressions zine is, according to the TJLP's website, "a publication created exclusively with the contributions, wisdom, and creativity of transgender and gender non-conforming people who have been or are currently incarcerated." Volume two includes mail correspondence and collaboration between the members of the TJLP and more than 45 incarcerated trans* people in the United States prison system.

TJLP collective member Owen Daniel-McCarter shared the work that the organization does, and explained that the TJLP's goal is to abolish all prisons. Then TJLP collective member Lark Mulligan spoke about evolution of the zine, how they decided what to include in the zine and how popular it's become. Mulligan explained that the prisons "knew what we were up to and they didn't like it."

A student at Arizona State University's School of Social Work and a member of SWOP (Sex Workers Outreach Project) Phoenix, Jones was arrested and convicted of manifesting prostitution in Phoenix. Jones spoke about her experience of being criminalized while trans*.

Jones, with the help of the ACLU and SWOP Phoenix, is currently in the process of appealing the conviction, which she says is invalid because, at the time of her arrest, she wasn't engaging in prostitution.

She shared her back story including getting involved in sex work so she could pay her bills and way through college. "I'm not ashamed about my past as a sex worker," said Jones. However, she did speak about being ashamed of her voice; however, in recent years she said she's come to love her voice due to the positive feedback she's gotten from others.

See www.tjlp.org for more information.

## Women's Words Film Festival on Sept. 15

Pride Films and Plays has announced seven short films and two episodes from tello films receiving their Chicago premieres during Pride Films and Plays Women's Words Film Festival at the Public House Theatre, 3914 N. Clark St., on Monday, Sept. 15.

The screening will start at 7:30 p.m. and will be followed by a brief talkback with a few of the filmmakers. The Pub Theater bar will be open beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are $10 and VIP passes are available for $15; visit www.brownpapertickets.com or call 800-838-3006.

## Neil Patrick Harris weds

Neil Patrick Harris and partner David Burtka shocked fans recently when they got married in a romantic Italian ceremony, US Weekly reported.

"Guess what?" the How I Met Your Mother alum, 41, tweeted with a photo of the tux-clad couple during the service. "@DavidBurtka and I got married over the weekend. In Italy. Yup, we put the 'n' and 'd' in 'husband'."

Harris publicly came out as gay in 2006 and got engaged to actor and chef Burtka, 39, in September 2007. The couple has been dating since 2004. They are dads to twins Gideon and Harper, who were born via a surrogate mother in 2010.

## Martina proposes to girlfriend, honors Serena

Martina Navratilova recently made a lot of news at tennis' U.S. Open.

The tennis legend popped the question to girlfriend Julia Lemigova on the big screen at the tournament, according to 9News.com.au. The 57-year-old proposed in a TV suite off-court in between the men's semifinals to the cheers of fans who watched on live.

The pair have been together for six years and hope to get married in Florida, where they live. While not yet legal, a judge recently ruled that the state's ban on gay marriage is unconstitutional.

Also, Navratilova and fellow tennis icon Chris Evert honored Serena Williams, who tied them with 18 Grand Slam wins after winning the women's side of the U.S. Open on Sept. 7. They gifted Williams with an 18-karat gold Tiffany & Co. bracelet to mark the milestone.

## Lakeside Pride names new director

Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles has named Scott Malinowski as director of shhh...OUT! Lakeside Pride Jazz Ensemble.

Malinowski—who studied trumpet at the University of Illinois and Millikin University, where he received a bachelor of music with an emphasis in commercial music—was previously assistant director of the ensemble.

He released his 37th vocal album this past April.

## AIDS Run & Walk on Sept. 14

Thousands of Chicago-area runners will hit the lakefront path on Sunday, Sept. 14 for this year's AIDS Run & Walk Chicago, the city's largest annual fundraising run/walk for HIV/AIDS.

The event kicks off at Arvey Field in Grant Park with 5K and 10K courses winding along the lakeshore. Runners and walkers will be treated to post-race performances by local dance companies as well as entertainment along the route.

Since its founding in 2001, AIDS Run & Walk Chicago has raised more than $4 million to battle the epidemic.

Items are as follows:

8 a.m. Event registration and packet pick-up

9 a.m. Opening ceremonies

9:30 a.m. 5K Walk begins

9:45 a.m. 10K Run begins

9:50 a.m. 5K Run begins

10 a.m. Post-race entertainment

To register, donate or learn more, visit www.aidsrunwalk.org or call 312-334-0946.

## Sky's WNBA finals game Sept. 12

Game three of the WNBA finals between the Chicago Sky and the Phoenix Mercury will take place Friday, Sept. 12, at the UIC Pavilion.

Due to a conflict at Allstate Arena, the Sky will host games three and four (the latter, if necessary, taking place Sept. 14) at the Pavilion.

The Mercury routed the Sky 83-62 on Sept. 7 in game one.

MUSIC

# Sinéad O' Connor isn't bossy—she's the boss

Sinéad wigs out. Photo by Donal Moloney

BY SARAH TOCE

One can't help but notice the disclaimer strewn across her public website: "SINEAD'S MUSINGS. STRICTLY NOT FOR MINORS."

It's true; the 5'5" Grammy Award-winning Irish songstress takes distinct issue with the over-sexualizing of minors in the music industry. "There's a weighing kind of overemphasis on sexuality, which disempowers music generally, because it silences all the other voices; it makes music a very powerless force for changing the world," O'Connor tells Windy City Times. "It was the case in the '70s and '80s that people believed music could change the world. But now people aren't making music because they want to change the world; they're making music because they want to just make a ton of money."

A new worldwide tour and fresh lease on life have caused deep introspection for O'Connor. With three marriages under her belt and a fourth in progress, the mom of four has a new goal in life—putting herself first.

**Windy City Times: The title of your new album is I'm Not Bossy, I'm the Boss. It's very catchy. How did that title originate?**

Sinéad O'Connor: Well, originally I had a different title, which was one of the songs on the album ["The Vishnu Room"]. But then in February, the Ban Bossy campaign [which encourages girls to lead] came about, and I was really inspired by the campaign as a female boss. Because the way the music industry works, it really makes a musical artist—male and female—feel like we're working for the people who are actually working for us.

It's very hard to be perceived as a boss, and behaving like a boss or wanting to be treated like one are not encouraged, you know? And that's, I think, possibly—I could be wrong, but I imagine that that's exaggerated when you're female. And I've had issues around that a lot over the years, and the irony is that musical artists have enormous public voices, but behind the scenes we're voiceless, actually.

**WCT: What was it about the Ban Bossy campaign that inspired you to promote the messaging?**

SO: I'm someone who was inspired by the campaign, but I'm not part of the campaign. Although the campaign was aimed at young girls to encourage them to be assertive, I actually found just as a boss, because of the campaign I was able to take my power. For the first time I was able to actually realize that I actually am, in fact, the boss, and that it is okay for me to want to be treated like one. I actually didn't know that, really, until the Ban Bossy campaign and then I went, "Hold on. I haven't been imagining this."

**WCT: A lot of the reviews for I'm Not Bossy, I'm the Boss are talking about the wigs that you wear in the promo art for the album. Speaking of gender equality and neutrality, was depicting yourself in such a feminine way a conscious decision with this project?**

SO: It was pure publicity. It was really done purely to draw attention to the album, because I knew that nobody had ever seen me looking like a woman; and you know, looking like a girl and having hair and dressing sexy. And I knew that if I did it, it would draw a lot of attention to the album that the album would've not otherwise have gotten.

**WCT: The first single for I'm Not Bossy, I'm the Boss is "Take Me To Church." What does this song symbolize for you?**

SO: Really, it's about relationships; it's not about religion at all. There are four characters on the record—female characters—and then there's me. The majority of songs are not personal. There's one central character who turns up quite a lot, and she's having a series of conversations either with a particular man or with herself. And "Take Me To Church" is kind of what I call her "eureka" moment, if you like. She's really singing about relationships. It's referencing the song from My Fair Lady, which is called "Get Me to the Church on Time," which is a song about getting married. So she's talking really about getting married, and the "getting her to church" part is about getting married or having a relationship.

**WCT: And then talking again about self-identity and self-worth—I think those are big things going on in the album, obviously—do you feel, as an artist, that you're more in your skin now than previous recordings? Or is it a progression?**

SO: I suppose I just do [feel more comfortable in my own skin] generally, as a performer, and everything. Yeah, not necessarily just in the studio, though; I suppose as a performer and as a writer and everything as well.

**WCT: Do you have a true blue method for your songwriting?**

SO: Not really; I mean, my favorite way of working is if somebody gives me a piece of music, because I'm quite limited as a player, so it's my favorite thing if somebody gives me a piece of music and then I can write lyrics and melodies—that's what I like to do. And then you can do that anywhere, because people just email you tracks.

**WCT: Speaking of working anywhere, what do you do for your downtime? Is there anything that you really enjoy outside of music?**

SO: Well, just hanging out with my kids, really. And to be honest, it's something I'm having to look at at the moment—the trouble when you have a job like mine is it's your social life as well, so I need to actually [find] something to do in my downtime when my kids are at school. I suppose the danger when you have a job that involves writing is you can be a bit isolated or whatever, so…

**WCT: Is there anything that you want the fans to take away from this specific album?**

SO: Generally, I supposed what I want is for them to just like the record for the songs. I think they're funky songs; they're lovely songs that I love. I would like to think maybe people would like to come to our show as a result of the songs.

If there's a message in the record at all—which wasn't intended, it would be subconscious—there's a safety message within it, if you listen very carefully through the sequencing of the central character. There's a central character who appears more often than the others, and if you listen through to her journey, you realize that she is a safety warning … for females, specifically for females. She's a sexual safety warning.

**WCT: What made you fall in love with the Chicago blues?**

SO: I love songs and I love songwriting, and there's a standard of songwriting within Chicago blues in particular—I don't like the sad blues, necessarily. The Chicago blues is what I like, which is the kind of blues you can dance to—people like Magic Sam and Buddy Guy and that. And there's a standard of songwriting that, when you start immersing yourself in those types of songs, it raises your own bar as a songwriter. There's also simplicity in the songwriting. It's much harder to be simple than it is to be complicated.

**WCT: How do you feel the music industry has changed since your first album in 1987, and how do you think it might continue to change?**

SO: I don't know, I suppose the biggest change to me is this kind of very oversexualizing of everything. Not that anyone wants to take the sex out of rock 'n' roll, you know; that would be ludicrous. But it seems that everything now, it's like the sexuality is the only voice—everything else is gone. And what freaks me slightly is that it's the artists who look like minors and whose audience are minors, and they're the ones that are the most sexualized; that there's a certain element within the entertainment industry which is, whether unwittingly or not, sexualizing minors via this kind of oversexualizing of artists who look like minors and whose audience are minors.

There's a weighing kind of overemphasis on sexuality, which disempowers music generally, because it silences all the other voices; it makes music a very powerless force for changing the world. It was the case in the '70s and '80s that people believed music could change the world. But now people aren't making music because they want to change the world; they're making music because they want to just make a ton of money. There's been an awful lot of power taken out of music, and then the sexuality is being sold to the artists as power when, in fact, it's not. It's a way of hypnotizing their audience.

**WCT: Any hopes for the future for you after this album? What do you plan to do?**

SO: What I hope is to really focus on being a songwriter. I'd love to write songs for other people—that's something I'd really like to start doing. I'm hoping to move in that direction where even when I'm in between albums of my own I could still be writing songs for other people in other situations.

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