

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

VOL 31, NO. 16 JAN. 13, 2016

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DAVID BOWIE DIES

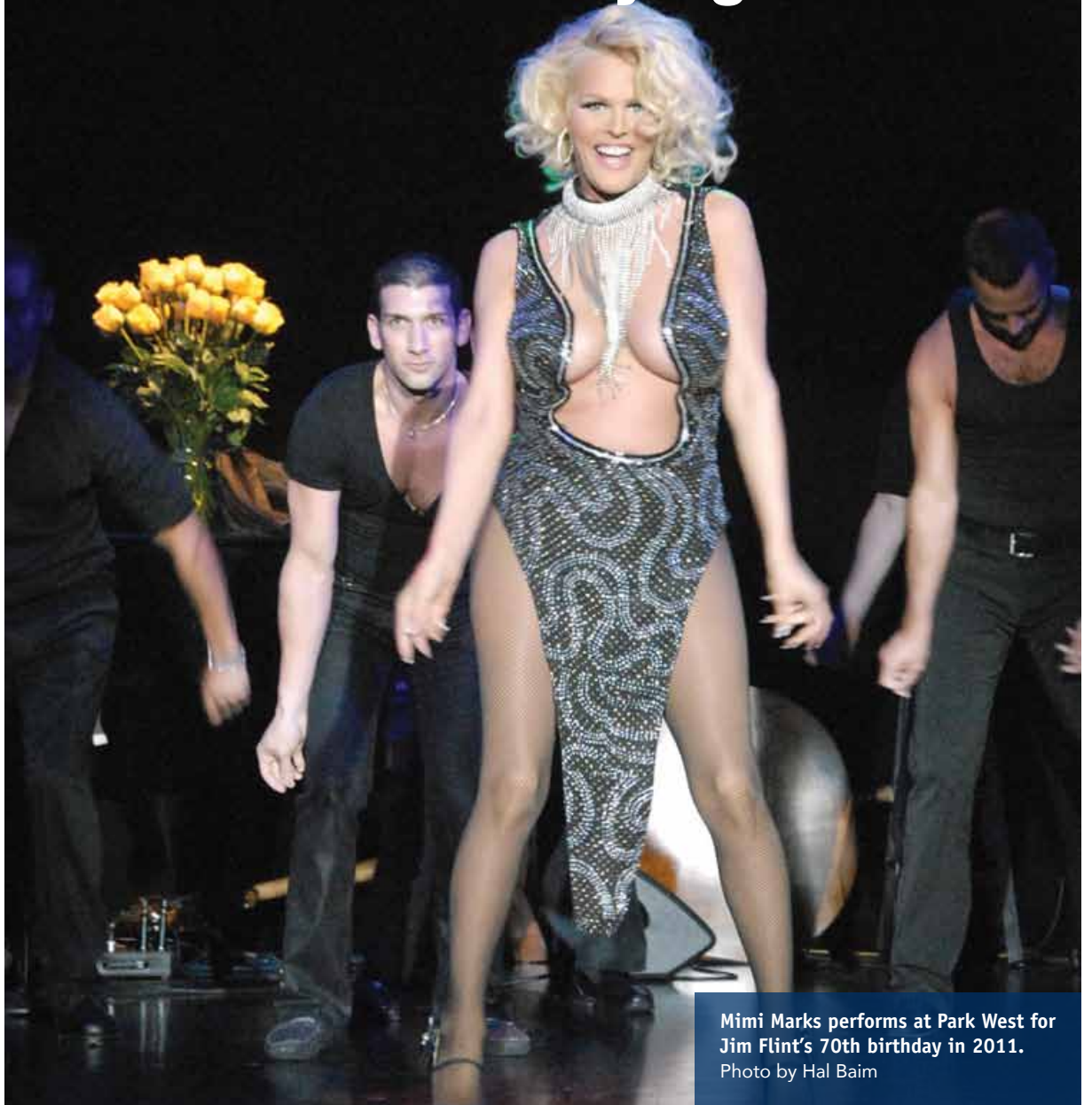
Musical innovator was 69.

Album cover shoot for Bowie's Aladdin Sane by Brian Duffy

15

OH MY, MIMI!

Legendary Baton performer Mimi Marks is saying farewell



Mimi Marks performs at Park West for Jim Flint's 70th birthday in 2011.

Photo by Hal Baim

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz author L. Frank Baum once famously noted "never give up. No one knows what's going to happen next."

Not only is Baum responsible for one of the favorite childhood stories of legendary Chicago entertainer and showgirl Mimi Marks but, on Jan. 24—as she takes her final bow after a quarter-century on the stage at River North's The Baton Show Lounge—his words encapsulate both her life and its future.

Sitting down with Windy City Times in a small coffee shop in her adopted home of Lake View, it was difficult for an outwardly tranquil Marks to contain her emotions as she reflected on a history the likes of which Dorothy Gale would have been proud.

Born in Waterloo, Iowa, during the civil-rights tumult of the late 1960s, the youngest of a close family of two brothers and one sister, Marks lived in a black-and-white world of expected gender conformity. Her parents hoped she would follow in her brother's footsteps as accomplished ice-hockey players.

"The hockey game would be playing in one end of the arena and I would be at the other end figure skating, waving to my mother," she said with a laugh. "My parents said 'OK, this is not going to work' but they were cool with that. When I came out as gay, my family took it harder than when I told them I was a girl."

The discovery of her gender began the moment Marks left high school, whisked away at the center of a determined whirlwind.

Turn to page 11



JEANNE CORDOVA

Lesbian author passes away.

6



BURNING BOWL

Annual event celebrates the old and the new.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

10



JAY MICHAEL

Cancer claims developer at 34.

Photo from FLATS Chicago

6



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INDEX

NEWS
Chicago police wants LGBT recruits 4
ACA event at Howard Brown 5
Passages: Jeanne Cordova; Jay Michael Delgado stepping down 6
Trans 100 has uncertain future 7
Burning Bowl marks old and new 8
Mimi Marks to bid farewell 10
Viewpoints: Cianciotto; de la Croix 12

ENTERTAINMENT/EVENTS
Dancin' Feats 13
Theater reviews 14
David Bowie dies at 69 15
Precious Davis and the 'Dress' 16
Books: Queer Rock Love 17
NIGHTSPOTS 18

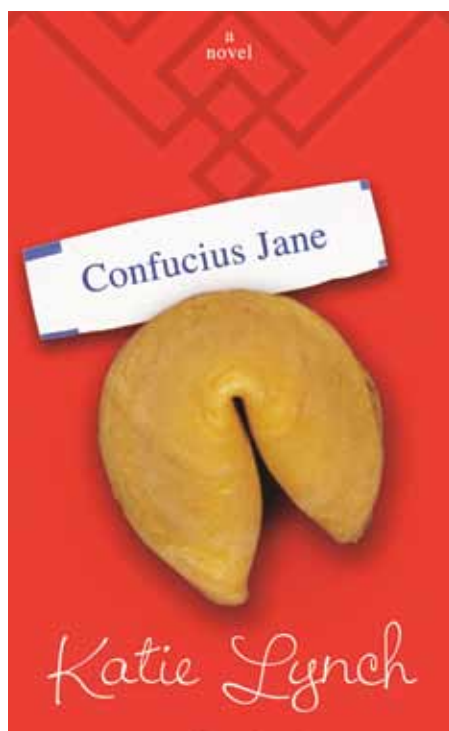
OUTLINES
Classifieds 20
Calendar Q 22

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THE 'JANE' EVENT
The lesbian-themed book Confucius Jane (left) is among Five Worth Finding.

ACE UP HIS SLEEVE



Windy City Times reviews the local production The Magic Lounge. Photo by Greg Inda

MEET THE 'ELITES'



WCT talks with two members of The Prancing Elites before their second-season debut on Oxygen. Photo from Oxygen

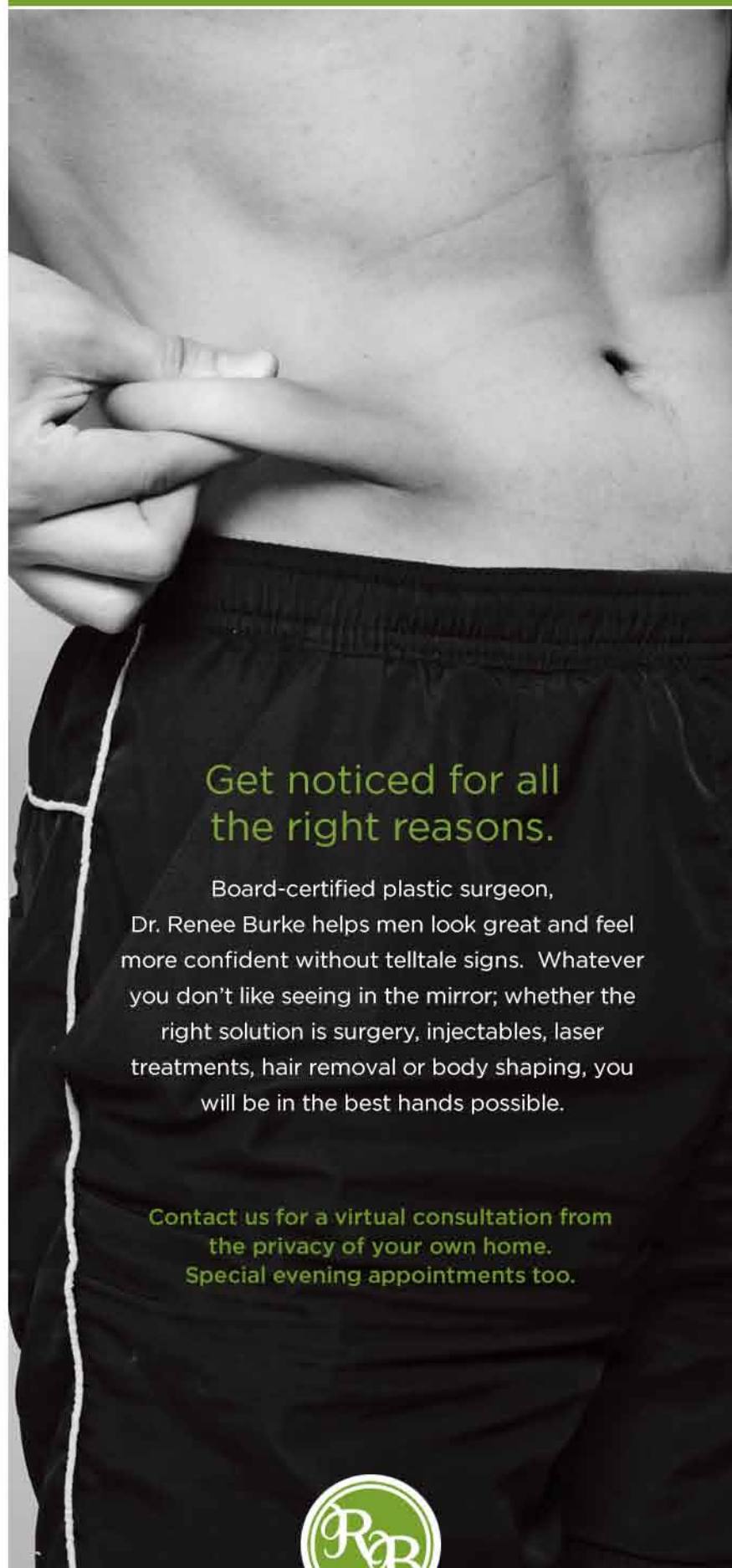
GOING FORWARD
Ask Lambda Legal discusses what's next for the LGBT-rights movement.

CREEP FACTOR
Bent Nights looks at the latest Glitter Creeps show as well as a performance by Dylan Wright.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ
Find out the latest about Absolutely Fabulous, Clay Aiken and Beyonce.

plus **DAILY BREAKING NEWS**

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Chicago police seek LGBT recruits

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Officers from the Chicago Police Department (CPD) will, on Jan. 14 at 6-7 p.m., be available at a booth at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., as part of an outreach to recruit members from the city's LGBT community.

"They're making an overall citywide push to reach as many communities as possible," said Jose Rios, CPD's LGBT liaison. "There will be people on hand who know what it's like to be out and a member of the police force."

Information will be available about taking the police test, which will be held this year in early April. The registration application deadline for the test is Jan. 31; the application form is available online at ChicagoPolice.org.

CPD does not keep any statistics on the number of LGBT officers on the force for legal reasons, according to CPD Director of Human Resources Donald O'Neill. "We don't have a goal number right now," he added. "The standard is, where will the force be 10 years from now? How well will we be representing the community?"

The initiative comes as part of a larger push to recruit members from all minority communities, he added.

"It's important for good community and police relations to see every community represented on the police force," said Ald. Tom Tunney (44th). "To have that protocol in place, where officers come in as a peer of the community, is imperative."

Tunney noted the trust deficit between CPD and the community that has only been heightened since the release of the Laquan McDonald video in November.

"The more we can do to re-establish that trust, the better," he said. "It's markedly better with the inclusion of out and open members of the police department."

O'Neill encouraged all who were interested to consider filling out the application. "You don't



Ofc. Jose Rios of the CPD.

Photo by Micki Leventhal

have to be a citizen, and you can try even if you have been arrested," he noted. "All that we ask is that you be forthright about it."

Rios admitted that, as the LGBT liaison, his perception of how welcoming the force is "a bit biased—It's always been very welcoming to me. I can't say that's how things have happened for everyone, but we learn as we go along. There should be no fear for a gay person going onto the force."

and medical health outcome disparities using various types of data with a matched control group. The veterans were treated between 1996 and 2013.

The result was that trans veterans were found to have global disparities in psychiatric and medical diagnoses compared to matched non-trans veterans. The researchers stated that the finding will have important implications for policy, health-care screening and service delivery in VHA and possibly other healthcare systems.

The report is at <http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/pdf/10.1089/lgbt.2015.0058>.

Changes secured in state prisons

Law firm Dentons announced a *pro bono* victory in a seven-year legal battle to improve the treatment of thousands of prisoners with mental illnesses currently incarcerated in the Illinois correctional system.

As part of the settlement, some of the terms include:

- For the first time ever, Illinois will provide both long-term and acute care for prisoners who are so seriously mentally ill that they require hospitalization;

- More than 300 new clinical staff will be hired to treat prisoners with serious mental illnesses, along with more than 400 new security staff to work at the new residential treatment units; and

- Four residential treatment units will be constructed at Logan, Pontiac, and Dixon Correctional Centers, and the now-closed Illinois Youth Center in Joliet.

Open To Thinking

BY NICK PATRICCA



The Silencing of Writers: Saudi Arabia

On the Rue Saint-Jean in the Place d'Youville just inside the Gate to the Old City of Quebec, a young woman stands in silence with three young children at her side.

A large photo of a man stands next to them. BADAWI is printed on the left side at the bottom of the portrait; on the right side is printed the logo of PEN International. The young woman—her name is Ensaf Haidar—is the mother of the three children: two girls and one boy, ranging in age from 8 to 11 years old.

Ensaf is the wife of Raif Badawi, the man in the large photo. These are his children. Though their French is limited—they are in exile in Quebec—the family stands patiently in the early morning mist of a balmy October day in the hope of making the world aware of Raif Badawi—the husband, the father, the writer—imprisoned in Saudi Arabia for planning a conference on human rights.

Badawi was arrested in 2012, convicted in 2013 with a sentence of seven years in prison and 600 lashes. In 2014 Badawi's sentence was increased to 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes. In January 2015, the first 50 lashes were inflicted upon him with disastrous effects on his health. The lashings are currently on hold.

The main original charge against Badawi was "insulting Islam through electronic channels." This charge has been upgraded



Raif Badawi's wife Ensaf Haidar and children in Place d'Youville, Old City Quebec.

Photo by Joanne Leedom-Ackerman

been sentenced to 15 years in prison (and a 15-year travel ban after serving those 15 years) for forming the organization 'Monitor of Human Rights in Saudi Arabia.'

To beg King Salman for a pardon seems the only way out of jail for Raif Badawi.

Women, Shia and other minority forms of Islam, Christians and other non-Muslims, writers, non-conformists, homosexuals,

guest workers (there are more than 9 million), internet users, artists—all are special subjects for the scrutiny of the religious police who work hand in hand with the various Saudi security services to maintain social and moral order and the ruling family's political control.

The religious police of Saudi Arabia—the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (CPVPV)—

function as a semi-autonomous agency that reports directly to the king. The CPVPV enforces a code of conduct governing all behavior. Their members do not wear uniforms. They enforce their idea of Sunni fundamentalism as they see fit.

According to Amnesty International, in 2015 Saudi Arabia executed more than 150 persons, mostly by beheading. Some by crucifixion. Too many by legally flawed processes. Too many with the excuse that they were security threats to the state or that they insulted Islam.

The 2015 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index ranks Saudi Arabia 164th out of 180 countries.

This past September Saudi Arabia was appointed to head the five-nation panel that advises the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Go figure.

© nicholas.patricca@gmail.com

"The main original charge against Badawi was "insulting Islam through electronic channels." This charge has been upgraded to the charge of "apostasy" which means that Raif could be sentenced to death—probably a moot issue since he is unlikely to survive a 10-year sentence or the lashings."

to the charge of "apostasy" which means that Raif could be sentenced to death—probably a moot issue since he is unlikely to survive a 10-year sentence or the lashings.

Later this same October morning, Ensaf and the children appeared before the assembly of PEN delegates at the 81st PEN Congress in Quebec. This time there would be an empty chair to mark the absence of Raif Badawi from his rightful place as a speaker at this conference in which I was a participant. Ensaf addressed us in Arabic. Her plea for her husband's release was translated into English, French and Spanish.

The European Union awarded Raif Badawi the 2015 Sakharov Prize for defense of freedom of thought and human rights.

This past December Raif went on hunger strike and was moved to a high-security prison. His lawyer Waleed Abu Al-Khair, who was planning an appeal for Raif, has

Nick Patricca is professor emeritus at Loyola University Chicago, president of Chicago Network and playwright emeritus at Victory Gardens Theater.



From left: Mike Ziri, Molly Malone, Kathleen Falk, Rep. Mike Quigley, David Ernesto Munar, Kristin Keglovitz Baker and Michelle Wetzel.
Photo by Carrie Maxwell

LGBT people focus of ACA press conference

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Local, state and federal officials held a press conference focused on LGBT Chicagoans and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Jan. 5 at the Howard Brown Health Center.

Among the speakers were David Ernesto Munar (president and CEO of Howard Brown Health), U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (vice-chair of the Congressional LGBT Caucus), Kathleen Falk (region V director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), Ald. Tom Tunney and Molly Malone, who recently received assistance from Howard Brown in getting ACA coverage.

According to the event's press release, "the percentage of LGBT adults without health insurance has decreased since the ACA went into effect, however, many LGBT individuals are still uninsured."

To get covered by Feb. 1, leaders are urging everyone without health insurance to sign up by the Jan. 15 deadline. The final deadline for coverage in 2016 is Jan. 31 with coverage beginning March 1.

"There are many ways to enroll and Howard Brown Health can help," said Munar. "The LGBT community is impacted by a wide range of health concerns, from diabetes to HIV to substance use, and we're proud to help provide a path to insurance coverage to address these issues. Enrollment and coverage transforms people's lives. We've seen it in our patients and in our community so it's vital to get covered."

"Over the past two years, we've helped over 500 people get covered through the marketplace, and we have a full team of insurance navigators to help the uninsured determine their eligibility, assess their options and make a decision."

"Thanks to the ACA, we're seeing the rates of uninsured people fall below 10 percent for the very first time in our nation's history," said Falk. "Over 17 million people now have health insurance through the ACA. We're seeing record demand and our message of quality, affordable coverage is resonating, but we know there are still many more people without insurance, including many in the LGBT community. As open enrollment proceeds, we're not taking our foot off the gas pedal and neither are our great partners."

Falk praised the work that Quigley and U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky (who was scheduled to attend but was unable to) have done in making the ACA happen. She also noted that prices for coverage have gone down in the area this year.

Falk spoke about the President's Healthy Communities Challenge, which focuses on boosting the enrollment numbers in 20 communities with large numbers or high percentages of uninsured people. The communities were chosen by President Obama and currently Chicago is in fourth place. Falk called on everyone in Chicago, including the LGBT community, to keep enrolling so Chicago will come out on top.

"Before Congress passed the ACA, premiums were rising three times faster than wages, the rising costs of health care was hurting small

businesses and Americans were denied coverage because of preexisting conditions," said Quigley. "Those weren't the good old days. Now, thanks to the ACA, all Americans have access to affordable health insurance, which is especially important for groups that have unique health needs or have traditionally been underserved, like the LGBT community."

"It's fitting that we're here at Howard Brown because they've served this community for over 40 years when many in our community had no insurance whatsoever," said Tunney. "As health care has evolved and access is attained, we need to continue to support institutions like Howard Brown who are meeting the needs of the community every day."

Malone, who lives in Evanston with her 14-year-old son, spoke about being laid off and needing affordable health insurance since both her and her son receive medical care on a regular basis. She noted that she enrolled in COBRA but it was expensive and unsustainable, so she looked to the ACA for coverage.

"I tried to register online, but I found it a little confusing, and had difficulty understanding exactly what the questions meant, so I knew I needed to ask for help," said Malone. "I found out about Howard Brown's Health Insurance Enrollment Assistance Program and called to get an appointment. The facilitator helped me with the questions on Healthcare.gov, so I could accurately answer them and find the best plan for myself and my son."

"As a parent knowing that your child will get the healthcare they need is so important, and not having to budget for our healthcare, gives me peace of mind. As I look for work, I'm thankful this is one thing I don't have to worry about."

Also in attendance were Howard Brown Health General Counsel Michelle Wetzel, Howard Brown Health COO Kristin Keglovitz-Baker and Equality Illinois Director of Public Policy Mike Ziri.

Howard Brown offers free, in-person help Monday-Friday at its 4025 N. Sheridan Ave. location. See www.howardbrown.org.

Enrollment opportunities are also available Sat. Jan. 9, at Community First Medical Center, 5645 W. Addison Ave, 7th Floor at 9 a.m.-4p.m.; Thursday, Jan. 14, at New Age Services, 1330 S. Kostner Ave. 2-6 p.m.; Friday, Jan. 15, at Presence Saints Mary, 2233 W. Division St., 3rd Floor, at 12-8 p.m.; and Saturday, Jan. 16, at Roberto Clemente Community Academy, 1147 N. Western Ave, at 9 a.m.-5p.m.

For more information, visit www.GetCoveredIllinois.gov or call 866-311-1119.



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Feminist writer/activist Jeanne Cordova dies

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

Pioneer feminist, activist, journalist, publisher and LGBT media figure Jeanne Cordova passed away Jan. 10 at the age of 67.

According to Frontiers Media, Cordova died peacefully at her Los Angeles home in the early hours of the morning. Her spouse Lynn Ballen and friends were at her side.

prediction. According to her biography, it gave “voice to the new generation of lesbian feminists.”

One of those voices belonged to current distinguished visiting writer at Mills College Achy Obejas, who met Cordova in Southern California in 1981.

“I was familiar with The Lesbian Tide and I called them up and volunteered to work for

Southern California’s Gay and Lesbian Community Yellow Pages and a statewide campaign, Destination New York—as Cordova put it “part of a national gay and lesbian effort to seat a record number of queers as official delegates in the 1980 Democratic National Kennedy Carter Convention in New York.”

Cordova’s published works include The New Age Telephone Book, Square Peg Magazine and books Sexism; It’s a Nasty Affair and Kicking the Habit.

“Hidden in the ‘ism’ of each generation is the seed of the next revolt,” Cordova wrote. “So activists beware—understanding what happened yesterday will show you what you can make happen tomorrow.”

“One of the really great things about Jeanne was that she did not consider herself indispensable,” Obejas said. “I think that’s a real mark of visionary maturity. One of the things she was always doing was bringing people up. In the process of bringing into activism and into community and the institutions that she founded she was inevitably displaced by younger people—ironically almost by design. It’s part of her generosity that she knew when to move on to the next thing that she did. She knew when to go to the next place. A lot of people have founders syndrome—you found something then you can’t let go of it, but she was very good about giving people opportunities, training them, giving them the skills and helping them shape a vision and a mindset.”

On Sept. 30, 2015, Cordova published a column in Windy City Times in which she confirmed rumors that she had brain cancer.

Yet she was still teaching the generations who would inevitably follow her work.

“You gave me a life’s cause,” she wrote. “It is wonderful to have had a life’s cause: freedom and dignity for lesbians. I believe that’s

what lesbian feminism is really about, sharing. We built a movement by telling each other our lives and thoughts about the way life should be. We cut against the grain and rethought almost everything. With just enough left undone for our daughters to reinvent themselves. Death should be a part of life. Not hidden, not a secret, something we never said out loud.”

In that column, Cordova pledged to “fulfill an early personal vow to give back half of my estate to our movement. I do this with Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice (out of New York City) and other organizations. I believe it so critical to our transforming movements to leave our estates to our LGBTQ charities, not some errant heterosexual relation we hardly know!”

“Even in death, she is going to continue to bring people up and help people find their way in the world of activism and organizing—all the things she did, cared about so deeply and into which she recruited so many people,” Obejas said. “She had such faith in the essential goodness of the lesbian nation (to use one of her phrases). She believed in her blood that all kinds of love was the pinnacle of existence. She was faithful to the idea that lesbians are a very special tribe.”

“A constant beacon in my life has been the reimagining of myself, or an entire generation of teens, growing up in a queer affirming world,” Cordova wrote in *When We Were Outlaws*.

Her life gave stride to the LGBT community in the creation of that world. It will echo into each of the countless numbers to come who, like Cordova, will change history for the better.

For more information about the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, visit AstraeaFoundation.org.



Jeanne Cordova.

“I have always been fascinated by how a noisy swelling called a social movement arrives on the doorstep of an individual’s life and how she responds to it,” Cordova began in her 2011 memoir of love and revolution *When We Were Outlaws*. “Most ignore the calling of the unfathomable energies of our times. For the rest of us—how does one recognize a social movement when it comes calling at your door? And what greatness or despair might follow should you open the door and invite it into your life?”

Cordova’s life served as the quintessential answer to that question—one seeded from the moment she joined the Immaculate Heart of Mary order of nuns immediately out of high school and was inspired by the social justice work of the Sisters to become a community organizer and activist for the lesbian and gay communities.

As others were protesting the war in Vietnam, Cordova was already thinking ahead to the next great civil rights frontier.

“I realized that one day, the lesbian and gay struggle, as we called it then, had to grow into a mass movement,” Cordova told journalist contributor Sarah Toce in *Gay Press, Gay Power*. “I wondered if we ever would or could become as big as this anti-war movement.”

It could well be argued that Cordova’s founding of the national newsmagazine *The Lesbian Tide* was fundamental to the realization of that

them,” Obejas told Windy City Times. “I showed up one weekend afternoon and helped layout the paper. They made me a part of the staff and then I wrote for them for years. Jeanne was an extraordinary person. She was very smart about people, organizing and about lesbians. She really got how to move people and how to move things along. She was always more fired up than anybody else in the room and had more endurance for the work that needed to be done.”

That work involved becoming the human rights editor of *The Los Angeles Free Press*, the presidency of the Stonewall Democratic Club, the “accidental” but galvanizing invention of

Hall of Fame seeks board members

The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame is now accepting applications for board members.

The organization’s yearly events include the Celebrity Bowl; Pride and Joy Reception; Chicago Pride Parade; Hambioing at Hamburger Mary’s; and the annual induction ceremony.

Those interested in being on the board should complete the form at <http://bit.ly/1R7E0zH>.



Jay Michael.

Photo from FLATS Chicago

Jay Michael dies of cancer

Jay Michael—a gay developer who was part of the Chicago-based reality show *100 Days of Summer*—died recently after battling cancer. He was 34.

Michael was the co-founder and chief operating officer of FLATS Chicago and was a founding partner as well as chief marketing and innovation officer of CEDARst, a diversified holding company.

Michael was a controversial figure for some. In 2014, Windy City Times covered a protest of 46th Ward Ald. James Cappleman’s reelection launch. Protester Ryne Poelker mentioned that Michael was among the top donors of Cappleman, who Poelker said pushed classism “with his pro-developer bias.” Others said that Michael was among those who displaced everyone from senior citizens to veterans out of single-room occupancy hotel rooms.

In response, according to a Crain’s Chicago Business profile, Michael said the quality of those apartments accounted for the low rents.

In a statement to Windy City Times, CEDARst said, “On Friday evening [Jan. 8], we lost our dear friend and colleague, Jay Michael. Jay was a visionary in the truest sense of the word; he only saw possibility and he was steadfast in bringing his ideas to life.

“Jay led by example, fighting feverishly each and every day for all of the things in this world that he wanted to improve. As the co-founder of CEDARst, he was constantly bucking real estate and design conventions, religiously following only his intuition as he developed new and better ways to live. After all, Jay wasn’t merely developing real estate, he was creating spaces that fostered community and platforms for creative spirits to thrive.

“Over the last year, Jay approached his fight against lymphoma in the same the way that he tackled everything else, with perseverance, humor, and more than a little chutzpah. We may have lost our Jay Michael, but Jay did not lose to cancer. As he said many times, upon his diagnosis he made a decisive choice to live.

“This past year was the year that he embraced living the hardest, which was the truest testament to his character, and perhaps his greatest lesson to us all. During this difficult time, his example pushed us to become better coworkers, better friends, and better people, lessons we are grateful to carry with us into this next chapter as we deeply miss having him by our sides. Jay’s vibrant personality and bravado touched the lives of everyone around him, and we vow to keep his innovative and tenacious spirit alive in his legacy, our ongoing work here at CEDARst.”

Michael wrote a blog, “My Choice to Live,” that initially ran in the Chicago Sun-Times publication *Splash*. “My Choice” detailed his fight with cancer. He is survived by his mother, Frances, and brothers, Steven and Mark.

—Andrew Davis

State Sen. Delgado to leave office

BY MATT SIMONETTE

State Sen. William Delgado (D-Chicago), on Jan. 5, announced that he would not be seeking another term in Springfield, citing family reasons as the main reason for his decision.

"Spending close to 17 years in the Illinois General Assembly, I have had the honor of being the first Latino to serve in both Chambers," Delgado said in a statement. "I am privileged to have represented the constituents of the

2nd Legislative District on important issues that have positively impacted their lives.

"After careful deliberation, I have decided that it is time to come home to my wife Iris, and help my only remaining son Adam as he plans for his future. I will not be seeking reelection in the 2016 cycle, as I will formally withdraw my candidacy this morning.

"Although I retire from the Senate, I am not retiring from the political arena. We still have much work to do in the City of Chicago, as everyone's efforts are needed to save our public school system, and bring public safety to every community. I look forward to working with you as we build a stronger and safer Chicago for our working families."

Delgado has long been supportive of LGBT causes and issues. In March 2015, he was the solitary "nay" vote—in addition to state Sen. Heather Steans, who voted "present"—when the Senate voted to ratify the nomination of Rev. James Meeks as the chair of the Illinois State Board of Education.

"It was my understanding that others were



Illinois state Sen. William Delgado. Photo by Hal Baim

Ex-Gov. Quinn at EQIL PAC event

Former Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn will be the featured speaker at a Jan. 14 Equality Illinois PAC event at the Hubbard Inn, 110 W. Hubbard St., at 5:30 p.m.

The PAC aims to help defend the LGBT community's victories and elect pro-LGBT equality candidates in the 2016 elections.

Tickets to the event are \$50-\$150. (Contributions to the Equality Illinois PAC are not tax-deductible.) Visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/join-pat-quinn-in-supporting-pro-equality-candidates-tickets-20078486293>.

For more information about the Equality Illinois PAC, contact Mike Ziri at mziri@eqil.org.

Creating Change Jan. 20-24

Thousands of LGBT individuals are expected at the 2016 Creating Change Conference, slated to take place Jan. 20-24 at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave.

The National LGBTQ Task Force sponsors and organizes the event, promoted on its website as "the pre-eminent political, leadership and skills-building conference for the LGBTQ social justice movement."

Among the items scheduled are Day Long Institutes, trainings in the Academy for Leadership and Action and a special programming segment called "Practice Spirit, Do Justice" for faith leaders and organizers. There will also be approximately 250 workshops and caucus sessions, four keynote plenary sessions, worshipful gatherings, film screenings, meetings, receptions, social events and other networking opportunities.

Registration fees range from free to \$450, depending on an attendee's age, when one chooses to register, and whether an attendee seeks financial support to attend.

See CreatingChange.org.

WXRT's Hemmert to have cancer surgery

WXRT-FM/93XRT personality Terri Hemmert—a strong supporter of the LGBT community—will be off the air and away from the radio station for at least a month to have cancer removed.

Hemmert had previously missed many weeks in the summer of 2014, with that absence caused by her having knee-replacement surgery.

On her midday show, Hemmert said after having polyps removed last November, "cancer behind the polyps" were discovered just before Thanksgiving.

She also said, "Cancer is the scariest word in our language and it's also a wake up call. It's a reminder to get to the doctor every year and when your body is trying to tell you something. It's a reminder that every day of life is precious. It's a reminder that we get by with a little help from our friends. I've got this. You've got my back. So how can I lose?"

The article is at <http://chicagoradioandmedia.com>.

voting out of a sense of loyalty to a colleague—I voted my conscience," Delgado told Windy City Times shortly after the vote. He said he was motivated by several factors, among them Meeks' various homophobic remarks; Delgado's late son was bisexual.

"My son never expected that to influence my voting, but that is something I pay attention to," Delgado added.

In 2014, Delgado introduced a Senate bill banning anti-gay conversion therapy for mi-

nors. His particular bill never came to a vote, but such a ban was passed in Illinois the following year.

Activist Rick Garcia called Delgado's announcement "disheartening," adding, "Sen. Delgado has been one of the strongest and best allies for our community. Not only could we count on him to vote 'properly' for our community, he also spoke out for us forcefully. This is a big loss for the Senate, and I hope [Delgado] continues his public work."

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Questions surround uncertain future of Trans 100 event

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

For the past three years, the International Trans Day of Visibility has also seen the presentation of the Trans 100—a gala evening held in Chicago that unveils a list of 100 impassioned transgender and gender nonconforming individuals representing a vast cross section of age, race, talent, profession, income level and culture from across the United States.

However, since the 2015 event, the Trans 100 website remains inactive and its social media pages have gone dark. The question remains as to whether there will even be a list or an event in 2016 and beyond.

The genesis of the Trans 100 occurred in the fall of 2012 when Arizona-based Trans 100 creator and Executive Director of Transcentrism inc. Antonia D'orsay posted a comment on Facebook she had made to her son regarding how she believed she more modestly ranked among transgender people. The post was seen by internationally celebrated advocate and co-writer and co-producer of Her Story Jen Richards.

Richards and D'orsay collaborated on the production of the first Trans 100 in 2013 so beginning a legacy that provided a sampling of everyday transgender people celebrated—not as a best-of or a top-100 but for their work for the transgender community that has both elevated and advanced it in a society whose hostility, judgements and overall misconceptions about transgender individuals have led to prejudice on every level, inordinate poverty, mass incarceration and appalling violence oftentimes going uninvestigated by law enforcement, ignored by the mainstream press and forgotten with sublime disregard by legislators.

In 2015, Richards turned over the reins of the event to Community Educator of the Midwest regional Office of Lambda Legal Crispin Torres alongside activist and national educator Rebecca Kling.

With the numbers of transgender women of color murdered during that year; reports detailing the tremendous financial, judicial and human-rights inequities faced by transgender individuals; the attempts to legislate against transgender use of public spaces; and the impact of Caitlyn Jenner's public transition, the 2016 Trans 100 would seem more imperative than ever.

However, the immediate hours after the March 29, 2015, Trans 100 were marked with disputes regarding the selection of that year's list along with an open letter of protest regarding off-the-cuff remarks made by the evening's keynote speaker.

A disagreement between Torres, Kling and D'orsay regarding ownership of the event and its website quickly devolved into a heated public fight on social media.

"Following the 2015 Trans 100, we had a number of conversations with Toni where it became clear she expected to rejoin the Trans 100 as Executive Director," Kling told Windy City Times. "Crispin and I were interested in continuing to co-direct the Trans 100 at the time and so invited Toni to come on as an advisor and a voice in the future of the event but neither of us were comfortable walking away when we had been asked by Jen Richards to lead the organization."

"Toni feels a lot of personal investment in the Trans 100," Torres added. "Neither of us have a close relationship with her but she was essentially unwilling to work with anyone else on the project. She was looking for sole leadership and ownership of the Trans 100. At the end of the day, Rebecca and I thought it was

best to step away from the project and let Toni take the lead. Even though we're not sure what that would do to the future of the Trans 100, we did not want to have an inter-community conflict over something that really belongs to trans people across the country."

Both Kling and Torres maintain that D'orsay took the website down after they refused to acquiesce to her demand to take full ownership of the Trans 100—one that she was expressing via email even during the 2015 live broadcast.

"Unfortunately that has not resulted in a 2016 Trans 100," Kling asserted. "We are proud of the work we did with it in 2015. It was not perfect and there was and is room for improvement. One of the things that breaks my heart is that, at least in the short term, we're not going to be able to explore what was possible. One of the reasons I was interested in having Toni involved as part of a more cohesive board that we were hoping to form was to make things more accountable and transparent to the larger trans community."

D'orsay told Windy City Times that much of 2015 was spent dealing with the horrific illness which eventually claimed the life of her husband. It has taken her well over a year to begin to recover from her loss.

"Everything was centered around him," she said. "I was difficult to get a hold of. The content and the idea of the Trans 100 is obviously something I'm extraordinarily passionate about. But I wanted to wait to step in until [Torres and Kling] had completed the 2015 event. They were under the impression that I had left it entirely which was not true. So there was a conflict in terms of how we saw the ownership of it and therefore the direction that we wanted to take it. I had wanted to work with them but, due to the nature of the events surrounding the turnover, it unfortunately meant that they were not willing to go forward."

D'orsay added that she has spent the last six months quietly working through the issues that were raised following the 2015 Trans 100.

"I haven't decided whether I'm going to do a list this year or not," she said. "Because I need to get some of these issues finalized and formulated before I can move ahead. The transparency issue has always been something that has haunted the Trans 100. My model for it was created to avoid the kind of political infighting that tends to plague the community. The question is are we going to be doing that on a larger scale? The Trans 100 needs to be international but there are cultural and socio-political considerations to that."

"My heart is in the creation of the list," D'orsay stated. "I love the event and it is a critical and crucial component of the Trans 100. Some of my ideas are to have the Trans 100 be something that moves around the country so that is not tied to a specific location. I did not disagree with creating a sense of stability with what we were doing by keeping it in Chicago for a few years. I would actually love to do it again in Chicago but, as an individual, I don't have the capacity or the skillset to pull it off. So it may not be possible to have an event this year."

Regarding the social media fight, D'orsay asserted that it was born out of a breakdown in communication with Torres and Kling.

"We were all negotiating and dancing around each other," she said. "We weren't getting anywhere, so I took my complaint to a public platform in order to get a response. It wasn't something I liked doing. But I felt like I was being completely cut out of my project. In my doing so, I created an interpersonal rift between the three of us and that was not my goal. I would



Crispin Torres.

actually love to work with Crispin and Rebecca in the future. I've apologized for the rift but there's nothing more I can do. There's a justifiable, understandable, very human reason why this division exists and the responsibility for it does fall to me but, at the same time, I don't regret it because of the position I was in at the time."

"In all the conversations that came up with Toni and up to the point we resigned, we were very willing to work with her," Torres said. "We wanted to make that relationship equitable. We weren't trying to keep her away or out of the project. We wanted to honor and respect her leadership of the origins of the Trans 100. We weren't denying her a seat at the table. We just wanted to do it in a way that was respectful of the amount of work everyone put into this. We all believe in the mission. We're all here for the same reason."

Kling and Torres have managed to keep the email newsletter going that is circulated between prior honorees and others involved in the organization of the event. "The goal of that has been to keep the network and the community going," Torres said. "We believe in the power of the people who have been involved, in the possibilities for collaboration, supporting each other and lifting each other up."

"I know that there is no enterprise that has had the scope, tenor and public scrutiny of the Trans 100 that can go without criticism," he added. "It's truly ironic that the Trans 100 is not supposed to be about celebrity but that is some of what ended up creating conflict around it. The whole situation was damaging and traumatic for me personally. To have your own community lack compassion and understanding was hurtful."

Ala. judge defies marriage equality

Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore issued an order directing Alabama's probate judges not to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that same-sex marriage bans in Michigan, Kentucky, Ohio and Tennessee, are unconstitutional, and instituted marriage equality across the country. However, Moore directed probate judges to refrain from issuing any marriage licenses that are "contrary" to Alabama's Sanctity of Marriage Amendment or the Alabama Marriage Protection Act; they assert legal marriage can only be between a man and a woman.

In a statement, Susan Watson, executive director of the ACLU of Alabama, said, "The law is clear and well-settled in Alabama as it is across the country. Bans on marriage for same-sex couples are unconstitutional. Moore's directive doesn't hold water because there's a valid federal court injunction issued July 1, 2015 that we expect probate judges across the state to comply with, overriding anything issued by the Alabama Supreme Court."

However, according to Advocate.com, compliance with Moore's statement lasted about a day. By Jan. 7, probate judges had begun issuing licenses again.

"There was ego involved. I created the Trans 100 and I'm not going to back down from that," D'orsay said. "It's my legacy and I'm going to protect it. I want it to blossom and move forward but a fundamental philosophy I have is that nothing can be done by yourself. Every single person on the last has been surrounded by other people who have made it possible for them to do the things they do. If Crispin and Rebecca want to get back together, work with me and make something happen, I am absolutely willing to."

D'orsay pledged that the Trans 100 website and accompanying social media would be back up by the end of the month. She added that the reason it has been down is due to issues with a new server she was using.

"We and dozens of volunteers put a lot of time, effort, love and belief in the value of the Trans 100," Kling said. "It is so important to have spaces that are celebratory, where we can lift each other up and demand visibility of our value and the important work we are doing. To do any activist work requires you to be an optimist, so I still have hope that the Trans 100 will return."

"I have to decide now whether I will be working on a list for 2016," D'orsay said. "The Trans 100 is going to continue on. It's going to be international and it's probably going to take a couple of years to get there. In the end, the Trans 100 is about bringing us together, showing the world what we are about and recognizing that, as much change that has been happening over the last decade, there's still much more work to be done and this work has real impact on the daily lives of everyday trans people."

Indiana measure excludes trans people

Indiana state Sen. Travis Holdman, on Jan. 7, presented a measure meant to be an alternative to the Senate Republicans' widely criticized ban based on sexual orientation and gender identity, IndyStar.com noted.

Senate Bill 344 would extend protections to gays and lesbians—but would exclude the transgender demographic. Instead, the measure would assign a committee to study anti-trans discrimination.

In 2015, Holdman submitted Senate Bill 100, which proposed balancing LGBT rights with religious liberty—but neither side was satisfied with it.

In a statement, Freedom Indiana said, "This bill is a non-starter that offers zero protections for transgender people in Indiana."

"Both SB344 and SB100 represent complicated attempts to cure a problem that requires a very simple solution. Gay and transgender people should not be subjected to legal discrimination in our state. The civil rights law should be updated to reflect that commitment and make it clear that we are an open, welcoming place to live, work and play."

The IndyStar.com item is at <http://www.indystar.com>.

Chicagoans among 'Advocates to Watch'

Northwestern University pediatrics professor Robert Garofalo and Howard Brown Health Center youth counselor Cassie Warren have been included among Plus magazine's "16 HIV Advocates to Watch in 2016."

The profile includes Garofalo's founding of the organization Fred Says (named after his dog), which aims to raise funds for agencies that help HIV-positive young people.

In her profile, Warren said she would love to obtain a mobile van to help youths. "I think if we want to make PrEP, hormones, and birth control more accessible to young people we have to reduce the number of things you have to do to get it, and we have to do it in a youth-centered environment. We have to bring it to them," she said.

Some of the others who were cited were Nigerian Kenny Brandmuse, London-based advocate Greg Owen, British mother Lizzie Jordan and Atlanta's Masonia Taylor.



Robert Garofalo and Fred.
Photo by Ed Negron

Chamber announces partnership with SCORE

The Chicago Area Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (CAGLCC) announced that it has formed a business-mentoring collaboration with SCORE Chicago.

This is the first such partnership in the nation between any SCORE chapter and an LGBT business-focused organization. SCORE Chicago partners with such businesses as PayPal, Constant Contact, 1871 Incubator, MB Financial, Autism Speaks and Crain's Chicago, among many others.

Beginning in early 2016, SCORE Chicago will have a mentor on-site weekly at the CAGLCC's offices in Chicago's Lake View neighborhood for mentoring sessions. Visit GLChamber.org.

Brief examines anti-trans legislation

A policy brief released from The Fenway Institute and the Center for American Progress examines state and local legislation that would prevent transgender people from using gendered public facilities, such as restrooms or locker rooms, that align with their gender identity, a press release stated.

The brief debunks myths about safety concerns regarding the use of these spaces by people who are transgender and describes the many negative outcomes that these discriminatory bills could cause. Lastly, it calls on states to pass laws that protect the rights of all Americans to access public accommodations regardless of gender identity.

The policy brief, "State Anti-Transgender Bathroom Bills Threaten Transgender People's Health and Participation in Public Life," is available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/ext/2016/01/05/128257/state-anti-transgender-bathroom-bills-threaten-transgender-peoples-health-and-participation-in-public-life/>.

National media group expands

The National Gay Media Association (NGMA), which brings together the top regional newspapers serving the U.S. LGBT communities, announced the addition of three new papers

to its membership: Watermark in Orlando, The Pride in Los Angeles and Philadelphia Gay News, a press release noted.

Other NGMA members are The Washington Blade, The Bay Area Reporter (San Francisco), Bay Windows (Boston), Between the Lines (Detroit), the Dallas Voice, Gay City News (New York City), GA Voice (Atlanta), South Florida Gay News and Windy City Times (Chicago).

NGMA has its roots in the old National Gay Newspaper Guild.

Tutu's daughter marries partner

The Rev. Canon Mpho Tutu—daughter of Nobel peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu—wedded Professor Marceline van Furth in a small civil ceremony in the Netherlands, according to a Times Live article.

Canon leads the Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation. van Furth is a professor in the Pediatric Infectious Diseases at the Vrije University in Amsterdam; she also holds the Desmond Tutu Chair in Medicine at the university.

It is the second marriage for both women. The Times Live item is at <http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2016/01/02/Canon-Mpho-Tutu-and-Professor-Marceline-Furth-tied-the-knot-in-the-Netherlands>.

HRC previews legislative battles

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) has previewed state and local legislative battles in the year ahead, including anti-LGBT bills likely to be considered in at least 27 states.

HRC anticipates that, as in 2015, anti-LGBT activists will push for measures that give legal cover to discrimination against LGBT Americans in dozens of states. The analysis also highlights opportunities to advance LGBT equality in 2016.

In 2016, HRC expects more than two dozen state legislatures to consider anti-equality measures, including those in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

The full report can be read at www.hrc.org/2016legislature.

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Affinity holds annual Burning Bowl, names new director

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

Affinity Community Service's annual Burning Bowl has traditionally dispensed with the old by setting it to flame, while the ashes of lessons learned during the past year provide the fuel for determination to improve—and so be empowered to create and celebrate the new.

However, the 2016 event offered something starkly different from previous years.

The enthusiastic Jan. 9. audience of Affinity supporters and allies packed into St. Martin's Episcopal Church—a West Side first for the 20-year-old organization—and took the occasion to, this time, honor both old and new.

The flames of the Burning Bowl set up beyond the stained glass of the church building served to ignite a torch passed to new leadership and a new direction.

The extensive and painstaking search to replace Affinity Executive Director Kim Hunt—who left in 2015 to helm the Pride Action Tank—culminated in the introduction of Imani Rupert-Gordon. She took the stage and Hunt's former position to exuberant applause.

Rupert-Gordon has a lifelong history of fighting for social justice. She has been director of the Broadway Youth Center (BYC) and is the founder of the Social Fiction Conference (SFC), which used science fiction, fantasy and gaming models to facilitate greater discussions between attending students and faculty about issues such as identity and how to dismantle societal bias and oppression.

She will officially become Affinity's executive director on Monday, Feb. 1. While describing her appointment as an "honor," Rupert-Gordon is also well aware of the mountain of work which lies ahead.

"We see that trans women of color face unfathomable violence and discrimination," she told the audience. "We see our young Black sisters, brothers, sons and daughters being killed at the hands of people that are sworn to protect us. But every time I get discouraged about fighting the same battles we did 20 years ago, I am struck by another constant: Affinity."

"For Affinity, Black lives have always mattered," Rupert-Gordon added. "That's what makes me proud of, not just our past, but for our future. In the next 20 years, we will continue to serve in trans communities, we will prioritize Black voices and highlight the experiences of lesbian, bisexual and queer women. We will work to eliminate wage gaps and experience education. We will work to ensure that people like us are informed about voting and policies that matter to us. We will continue the legacy. Who knows what we will be coming together to celebrate again? Who knows what past pains we will be ready to burn?"

For the present, Board President Ebonie S. Davis celebrated Affinity's accomplishments in 2015 and acknowledged the myriad of people who helped found, shape, nurture and expand the organization over the past two decades, not the least of whom was Barbara "Robbie" Smith who passed away in March of last year.

Davis described the Affinity founding board member as a "friend and mother to many that walked through Affinity's doors. For at least 13 years of our existence, she kept the financial growth of this organization in a manner we could only dream of."

To that end, this year's Burning Bowl included the presentation of the Barbara "Robbie" Smith Award of Excellence—created to honor an individual who exemplifies her legacy through leadership, perseverance, strength, compassion and integrity.

The recipient was Mary F. Morten—president



Affinity ED Imani Rupert-Gordon.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

of the Morten Group, who has received multiple accolades for her leadership regarding social change, public policy and advocacy.

Morten aided Affinity through a year that was not only transitional but defining in its level of accomplishment and number of new partnerships forged.

"We saw an increase in funding for programs across the board," Davis said. "We received some of the largest grants in the organization's history for HIV services and to provide direct services and assistance for seniors in the LGBT community. We were also instrumental partners in bipartisan laws that went into effect on January 1: a ban on conversion therapy for LGBT youth and the first-ever law specifically allowing transgender individuals to specify gender identity in funeral and burial arrangements."

Yet Davis also noted the long list of work to be done, such as addressing the systematic and unlawful detentions of Black trans women; unspoken rapes and sexual violence against Black trans men; the rate of pregnancy, STD and STIs among Black young people; immigration reform; and the coming battle against a Religious Freedom act currently being pushed by Springfield lawmakers in response to marriage equality.

"No longer can we say we are allies. We must be advocates," Davis said. "We must take back our lives. Affinity is up to the task."

This year's Burning Bowl therefore required a more unilateral effort and declaration. Participants were encouraged not only to burn their own personal negative experiences but those affecting the community at large—homelessness, prejudice, injustice, gun and domestic violence, unemployment and silence were just a few written on a large sheet of paper that was the first to be put to the fire.

They were replaced by a collective agreement to bring—among other things shouted out by the audience—love, positivity, activism, joy, peace and justice in 2016.

In delivering her keynote address after a prolonged ovation in gratitude for her years of unparalleled service to Affinity, Hunt recalled a quote from author Octavia E. Butler's *Earthseed* that has defined her life: "All that you touch, you change. All that you change, changes you."

Hunt asserted that the event's theme of Passing the Torch was not only fitting organizationally but for the days ahead.

"I am literally in awe of the organizing work that's going on among young Black activists today," she said. "They are really honoring the history of resistance of Black people from the



Burning Bowl participants.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

time we arrived on these shores. It brings me great joy to know that there are Affinity connections in terms of the organizations and collectives moving this work forward."

"Organizations like Affinity are precious gifts to the LGBTQ community," Hunt noted. "They are rarer and rarer."

According to Hunt, for Affinity to continue to pass the torch successfully involves planning and recognizing its imperfections, embracing fear, letting go and understanding that "you don't have to have the torch to have it right."

"In times of change, we have to remember to offer each other grace, benevolence and patience," she said. "We have to be flexible. We have to face hard truths through transi-

tions because our ultimate goal is about serving the people. Giving up the torch frees your hand to accept new possibilities and accepting the torch allows you to build upon the progress and the lessons of the past and light the way forward."

Masters of Ceremonies for this year's Burning Bowl were internet radio show host and "peace and love poet" Niki Gee alongside veteran social service organizer and Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame inductee Pat McCombs.

A rousing spoken word performance was provided by celebrated poet and Windy City Times 30 under 30 honoree Nikki Patin.

For more information about Affinity, visit Affinity95.org.



Salt Lake City Jackie Biskupski taking oath of office, with fiancée Betty Iverson.

Photo by Kate Kendall

Lesbian SLC mayor takes oath

Jackie Biskupski was sworn in Jan. 4 as Salt Lake City's first openly gay mayor.

Biskupski, 49, noted the historic moment as well as the great strides the LGBT movement has made, according to a Daily Journal article.

"I know that we have work to do still. And it is work that I take seriously," she said. "But I am a firm believer that in order for true equality to exist for anyone, we must pursue it for everyone, and that is a goal of mine."

Biskupski took the oath with fiancée Betty Iverson present.

Along with Biskupski, new Salt Lake City councilman Derek Kitchen was sworn in the same day, becoming the city's second sitting gay councilman. Kitchen and husband Moudi Sbeity were one of three couples who sued to overturn Utah's same-sex marriage ban.

The article is at <http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/story/88be5d5bbcb84e7eb9a820747a7457d7/US--Salt-Lake-City-Mayor>.

'Fabulous' panel event Jan. 22

As part of its annual "Out at CHM" program, the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St., will host "Are We Still Fabulous?" on Friday, Jan. 22, 2016, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

A reception with refreshments and appetizers will start at 5:30 p.m., with the program commencing at 6:30 p.m.

A panel will weigh, among other things, how LGBTQ individuals identify themselves, now that marriage equality is the law of the land. Jennifer Brier, director of gender and women's studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, will moderate a panel that will include performance artist/academic/activist Ricardo Gamboa; activist/writer Yasmin Nair, Ph.D.; Francesca Royster, PhD, professor and chair of English at DePaul University; and Joseph Varisco, founder and creative director of JRV MAJESTY Productions.

The cost is \$15-\$20 per person; visit chicagohistory.org.

Board members to be homeless Jan. 22

Explaining that many people are just two missed paychecks away from becoming homeless, board members of the 530 Fullerton Foundation are planning to leave their own homes on the night of Friday, Jan. 22.

The night of homelessness is intended to raise awareness of the issues facing the 140,000 people who are homeless in Chicago as well as raise funds to help finance the organization's programs.

The group will be providing real-time updates via its Twitter account, @530Fullerton, using the hashtag #530Sleeps. Financial support can be provided at <https://www.crowdrise.com/homelessnessSleepout/>.

Some performance photos of Mimi Marks from the Nightspots archive. See more online at www.windycitymediagroup.com



Mimi Marks at The Baton, 2008.
Photo by Kirk Williamson



Mimi Marks at Hydrate, 2007.
Photo by Ryan Kolodziej



Mimi Marks at Hydrate, 2005.
Photo by Chuck Kramer



Mimi Marks at The Baton, 2013.
Photo by Hal Baim



Mimi Marks.
Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

MIMI from cover

"I tried to experience life as I thought I was—a gay male," she recalled. "I knew on the inside that [identity] wasn't actually what I was feeling but, at that time, being transgender was not even a reality to me."

Settling an hour away from home in Cedar Rapids, Marks began performing. "I would do a show on Friday night and then I would still be in my gear on Sunday. I'd never want to take it off."

At the age of 20, Marks entered a talent competition in Milwaukee at the gay bar Club 219. To Uptown's "I'm Losing You," she began what would be a signature theme of dazzling the audience. "I was gymnast growing up so my routine involved backflips and cartwheels. There weren't a lot of girls doing those kind of things" she said. "I won the prize and they offered me a job that night."

During the two years she spent in Milwaukee, Mark's life began to open up to possibilities and a discovery of Baum's "road paved with yellow-bricks"—one she had never imagined.

"I met a couple of other girls there who were trans," she said. "I started taking hormones and I knew this was a reality. I was living in a world in black and white but I knew that it wasn't like that—it was colors of every kind."

When Baton owner Jim Flint saw Marks perform, he saw potential. She was taken to the bar's Miss Continental pageant for the first time. "I'd never seen anything like that before," Marks said, her eyes still growing large with the wonder of the memory. "A beauty pageant but with girls just like me. Just like I wanted be. In my head I thought it was too much, 'I could never do this.'"

But Mark's adopted drag mother, Ginger Spice, would not hear it. She entered her protege into Miss Cosmopolitan—a preliminary to Miss Continental. "I won the pageant and Jim asked me if I would like a job at the Baton," Marks recalled. "It was every girl's dream—a full-time job."

"My family were excited for me," she added. "They came to my last show in Milwaukee. A couple of days later, I packed up the few things I had into my friend's car."

Marks arrived in Chicago. She was 23 years old and in a place with—as Baum would have described it—"dresses, made of silk and satin and velvet, and all of them fitted Dorothy exactly."

Marks said she credits Miss Cosmopolitan owner John Bradley as instrumental in helping her settle in and find a home.

"I got lucky," she said. "I never had a problem with harassment. Probably my biggest challenge was being on my own in a big city for the first time. But there were girls who started working with me at the same time, like Monica Munro and Cezanne. We became very close and

great friends right off the bat. They used to call us Jimmy's Angels and we performed and grew up together."

Marks recalled the past 25 years as challenging as they have been glamorous. "I worked five days per week and three shows per night," she said. "It wasn't fun every day. There were times when I didn't feel like being 'on'. When I initially started, I wasn't making that much money at all. But I got to be a better entertainer and things improved. It's what I do. It's in my blood. I'll be in this business in some form for the rest of my life."

"I've always been the same person on stage as I am off," she added. "I love live performances and the feedback you get. After 25 years, I still get nervous."

Over the past summer, Marks spent some time in Los Angeles. There, a new world opened

up—one that has led her down a path of altruism.

"I got to go to the Los Angeles Children's Hospital, where I met a lot of trans children," she said. "It was like a light bulb went off. I am ready for my life to move into the next phase. I want to travel and eventually move out west and work with trans communities."

"The Baton has been a huge part of my life," Marks added, wiping away a tear. "But I'm ready to do more. I'm throwing caution to the wind, knowing that it is the right time for me to start my life again."

No matter where she ends up, Marks could be forgiven for answering the question "Where did you come from?" with the closing words of the same book that forged her childhood dreams.

"From the Land of Oz," said Dorothy gravely.



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Discrimination against LGBTIQ people costs lives and global economic prosperity

More than \$400 billion lost annually—enough to eliminate extreme poverty worldwide

Too frequently, the daily news includes stories about discrimination and violence perpetrated against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people around the world. The images may range from bruised and bloodied faces in Jamaica to men being thrown off buildings in Iraq to the reported 689 murders of transgender people in Brazil from 2008 to 2014, reflected on a map.

Civil society organizations like OutRight Action International (Outright), formerly the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, have advocated for the human rights of LGBTIQ populations around the world for over 25 years. Yet, it was not until 2008 that the United Nations General Assembly first discussed LGBT rights. In the proceeding years, with persistent advocacy, there has been steady progress. Most recently, a U.N. forum honoring Human Rights Day focused on the cost of LGBT exclusion—co-organized by OutRight and Human Rights Watch (NGO members of the coalition of 18 countries known as the U.N. Core Group)—along with the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

For the first time ever, the president of the General Assembly addressed a U.N. forum on LGBTIQ issues. In opening remarks, H.E. Mogens Lykkeftoft made it clear that member states are obliged to protect the human rights of LGBTIQ people.

“As you know, not all members of the General Assembly see eye to eye when it comes to questions of sexual orientation and gender identity. ... At the same time, no member state

can deny that it is legally bound to ensure that all people enjoy their human rights without discrimination—and this includes discrimination against those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

“Regrettably, we still have a long way to go before LGBT people ... are able to live their lives free from fear or harassment; free to contribute to their society like any other person.... We know what states need to do to change this reality and address these abuses:

—Repeal laws that criminalize people for being gay and transgender;

—Put in place anti-discrimination laws that penalize anyone who discriminates against people because of their sexual orientation and gender identity; and

—Educate people ... to respect one another, no matter the differences that distinguish us one from another.

Taking steps such as these will enable member states to enrich people’s lives. It will see them fulfill their international human rights obligations and ... help them to reap significant economic dividends.”

The forum, “The Economic Cost of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Exclusion,” focused on a World Bank report by economist Dr. M.V. Lee Badgett. The report quantifies the cost of workforce discrimination, increased health costs, and anti-LGBT laws, which can cost a nation up to 1 percent of its Gross Domestic Product.

Applied globally, a conservative estimate of this impact (0.05 percent) amounts to over \$400 billion—enough to eliminate extreme poverty globally—a preeminent goal of The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Dr. James Heintz, economics professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, explained some of the factors included in Dr. Badgett’s analysis, which can lead to reduced GDP for homophobic and transphobic nations:

—Anti-LGBT discrimination in the workplace lowers the productivity of LGBT people, which lowers the contributions their labor makes to the economy.

—LGBT people who live in homophobic and transphobic nations experience more negative physical and mental health outcomes, which increase health care costs to society.

—LGBT youth who experience harassment and violence in school and/or at home are more likely to drop out and become homeless,

often during a critical transition to adulthood. This reduces their potential productivity for the rest of their lives.

—Anti-LGBT laws carry an economic cost of enforcement, diverting resources that could be used to increase the productivity of the economy.

—International investors and businesses are less willing to invest in a country that does not support fundamental human rights for all people.

These fundamental factors were further explained in a new video released at the forum by the UN “Free and Equal” campaign, titled The Price of Exclusion. OutRight also released the final video in its “Cost of Exclusion” LGBTIQ Africa series.

Heintz emphasized that while Dr. Badgett’s findings will provide additional support for UN member states to change their anti-LGBT laws and policies, there is intrinsic value to protecting the human rights of all people, regardless of economic consequences.

Panelist Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera, director of Freedom and Roam Uganda, put a face to the economic data. Through sharing her own personal story as a lesbian living in Uganda, Kasha highlighted personal economic effects, such as the cost of repeated evictions from home and long-term unemployment, and the affects on families, many of whom need to flee their country in order to be safe.

Kasha challenged decisions by nations and humanitarian organizations to reduce international aid or boycott Uganda or other nations based on homophobic laws and policies. “That causes a backlash to our community,” she said, “if you single out such a group of society as a condition to suspend aid.”

Rather, Kasha encouraged other tactics to hold governments accountable while supporting LGBTIQ populations, such as through direct connections to civil society. “For example, most of us human rights defenders are here today because of OutRight Action International,” she said. “Try to work with some of our partners in the West to support us on the ground.”

Jason Cianciotto is the former research director for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, ex-director of public affairs and policy at GMHC and former executive director at Wingspan: Southern Arizona’s LGBT Community Center.

The article originally appeared in The Seattle Lesbian.



**St. Sukie
DE LA CROIX**

SENIOR MOMENTS From completely gaga to Lady Gaga

Once upon a time, a long, long, time ago, LGBT’s were completely gaga in the eyes of the medical profession. Until the late 19th century, homosexuality was a “moral weakness,” then it became a “mental disorder,” as doctors jumped on board the homophobia gravy train and made the life of homosexuals miserable for the next 100 years. In 1899, Chicago doctor Denslow Lewis claimed he could cure lesbianism by applying a cocaine solution to the external genitals and prescribing large doses of cannabis indica. That’s not a cure, that’s a lesbian dance party waiting to happen. Other Victorian doctors suggested saltwater baths and other as-

sorted nonsense.

Sigmund Freud muddied the waters with his theory that we are all born bisexual and homosexuality is an inverted Oedipus complex where men identify with their mother and take themselves as a love object. He also thought that cigar smoking was a substitute for the addiction of masturbation. The man was an idiot. There followed decades of psychiatrists, psychologists, and snake oil salesmen spouting mumbo-jumbo about homosexuality for their own financial gain. In short, they were all guessing the causes, roots and potential cures for homosexuality, just making things up. Anybody can do that. St. Sukie’s cure for male homosexuality involves scoffing chocolate eclairs, lying on a sofa in my PJs and watching old black and white movies. It’s worth a try. I can feel my man-on-man sexual neurosis dripping away just thinking about it. What would you rather eat, a man or a chocolate eclair? No contest, a chocolate eclair every time. A chocolate eclair doesn’t steal from your wallet or whine endlessly about its previous boyfriend. A man always does.

In 1968, Charles W. Socarides M.D., wrote: “Homosexuality is a psychological and psychiatric disorder, there is no question about it. It is a purple menace that is threatening the proper design of gender distinctions in soci-

ety.” Thankfully, Socarides died in 2005, so we don’t have to listen to any more of his garbage. Some people are better off dead and Charles W. Socarides falls into that category. However, when he was alive, this fraudulent psychobabbler managed to procreate and produce a “purple menace” of his own. His son, Richard Socarides, is a Democratic political strategist, writer, commentator, attorney, and was a White House adviser under President Bill Clinton.

In the 1960s, it wasn’t only homosexuals who were diagnosed as insane. In June 1970, in the Chicago Defender, Faith Christmas reported on a meeting of the Chicago Mental Health Association. Brian O’Connell, the executive director, spoke of the high incidence of mental illness in “ghetto” areas and how poor Blacks had inadequate health care. He also urged the medical profession to stop diagnosing “homosexuals, student activists, anti-war protestors and Black Panthers as being mentally ill.”

Which brings me to Dr. Robert Spitzer, a psychiatrist who recently died aged 83. He seems to have been one of the good guys in the psychiatry business, encouraging the American Psychiatric Association to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1973. The American Psychological Association Council of

WINDY CITY TIMES

VOL. 31, No. 16, Jan. 13, 2016

The combined forces of Windy City Times, founded Sept. 1985, and Outlines newspaper, founded May 1987.

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WEB HOSTING: LoveYourWebsite.com (Lead programmer: Martie Marro)

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(MAILING ADDRESS ONLY)

Windy City Times Deadline every Wednesday.
Nightspots Deadline Wednesday prior to street date.
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Turn to page 22

WINDY CITY TIMES

DIVERSIONS

THEATER • FILM • ENTERTAINMENT • SPORTS



18

Coconutz.



19

Boylesque at Mary's Attic.



In the 'House'

14

Windy City Times reviews Ten Dollar House

Photo by Paul Goyette

DANCIN' FEATS

Mid-career artists confront aging in aMID

BY LAUREN WARNECKE

"Art, for me, is something that completely drives my life," said Michelle Kranicke in a phone interview with Windy City Times. "I'm most comfortable and happy when I'm in it." Kranicke has spent more than 20 years at the helm of Zephyr Dance, and will perform in and present the aMID Festival Jan 21-31 at Links Hall.

Each bringing decades of experience to the festival, Kranicke considers the mid-career contemporary dancers and performers sharing the bill to be her heroes. As many of her peers are retiring from the stage to take other roles in the dance community, Kranicke remains committed to performing. The artists recruited for aMID (Deborah Hay, Bob Eisen and Cynthia Oli-

ver in the first weekend and Bebe Miller with Darrell Jones, Smith/Wymore Disappearing Acts and Pranita Jain in the second) have chosen similar paths by remaining onstage beyond a conventional career length; each created or restored works for aMID inspired by the topic of how artists' aesthetics changes as they age.

But aMID isn't about aging, exactly. Sure, the festival is centered around what happens to the physical body as it changes over time; for dancers and performance artists engaged in body-centered practices, the effects of aging are magnified. In a field that often celebrates superhuman physical feats, each performer inevitable comes to terms with his/her humanity, and the changes in physicality that occur over time. "There has a lot of emphasis on the word 'aging,' but aMID explores versatility, ma-

turity, and expansive thinking in dance," said Kranicke, and the approach, process and products of those investigations are fodder for rich discussion about how audiences view dance as well as what choreographers, dancers and audiences value in dance performance.

Kranicke's personal investigation into her movement practice lead to changes in her choreographic aesthetic, and Zephyr audiences may have noticed distinct changes in how Zephyr creates, presents, and performs dance. "There is virtuosity in the sense of technical/physical prowess, and virtuosity that comes from the restraint of being still," she said, and prudence often comes from time and experience onstage. While young dancers sometimes rely on fast, explosive movement to impress audience members, mature performers command the stage through their presence, as though saying, "I invite you to watch me, I invite myself to be seen," said Kranicke.

In acknowledging a change in her physical capabilities, Kranicke now finds more possibilities than limitations. "It's not about closing up or minimization. It's about maximizing and expanding opportunity, she said. "If I am no longer able to physically maneuver specific move-

ments or techniques, what does that open up for me? What are the pathways that are more available?" Kranicke simultaneously began to question how she positioned herself in relation to the other members of my company. "I have to confront whether or not a particular maneuver is necessary, and if so, who's going to do it? I've found this to be a fruitful exploration. ... I look at it as some of the best work I've been doing."

Some of the noticeable products of this investigation are that Zephyr presents work less frequently, creates over a long period of development, often exploring site-specific and durational work that takes hours to unfold. Dance patrons who have followed Zephyr over the years will notice a clear departure from its early "dancier" dances. In confronting traditional definitions of dance virtuosity, Kranicke occasionally skirts the line between dance and performance art, creating multidisciplinary performances that can be examined from all sides and in multiple iterations.

The series of performances over two weekends at Links Hall includes two distinct programs and a veritable rock star lineup of performers. The aMID festival takes place Jan. 21-25 and 28-31 at 7 p.m. at Links Hall at Constellation, 3111 N. Western Ave. Festival passes are \$50 for adults, \$40 for industry members and \$25 for students; pass holders must reserve seats in advance to ensure admission. Single tickets are \$10-17, available at linkshall.org.

An additional event during the aMID festival is a free Moving Dialogs conversation Tuesday, Jan. 26, 6-7:15 p.m. at Links Hall, featuring Hay, Eisen, Oliver and Kranicke and moderated by Elise Archias, assistant professor in the School of Art and Art History at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Zephyr Dance artistic director Michelle Kranicke.
Publicity photo



Submissions sought for trans work

The Living Canvas, in partnership with Nothing Without a Company (Nwac), is developing a new work of theater created and devised by trans voices entitled [Trans]formation.

As such, they are reaching out to the trans community for submissions; stories, paintings, poems, allegories, songs or any work of art that explores the naked truth of being transgender.

Interested persons should email submissions or questions to thelivingcanvas.nwac@gmail.com no later than March 31. Pieces should not exceed three minutes or five pages in length. Attach written works as a Microsoft Word document or PDF, visual art and photography as .jpeg, and videos as a link to an Unlisted YouTube video link.

THEATER REVIEW

What I Learned in Paris

Playwright: Pearl Cleage

At: Congo Square Theatre at the Athenaeum, 2936 N. Southport Ave.

Tickets: 773-935-6860;

www.congosquaretheatre.org; \$20-\$37

Runs through: Feb. 7

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Pearl Cleage's title initially suggests coming-of-age erotica in the Anias Nin mode, or perhaps a Lost Generation *roman a clef*. Her play's chronological setting on the day in 1973 (when Maynard Jackson was elected Atlanta's first Black mayor) leads us to anticipate political hijinks—a reasonable assumption when all but one of the characters were, a few hours earlier, part of the winning candidate's campaign staff.

Playgoers enamored of these well-worn tropes may, with some effort, succeed in imposing a socially significant subtext on a plot borrowing more from Moliere than from Aaron Sorkin, but to do so would subvert Cleage's foray into that rarest of theatrical genres: African-American romantic comedy.

Cleage makes no secret of her intent: After some perfunctory rejoicing in the election headquarters, we are told that loyal supporter J.P. Madison is a favorite for the post of city attorney. We also learn that, in response to his divorce five years earlier, he married Anne, his considerably younger former secretary. Oh, but Anne, whose consent was founded less on affection than duty, is in love with her husband's



What I Learned in Paris.
Photo from Congo Square Theatre

likewise-smitten best friend, John.

Furthermore, Evie—aka the *first* Mrs. Madison—has returned from the West Coast, intent on becoming the Pamela Harriman of the "Black capital of America." As press secretary Lena struggles to keep a lid on these new complications, a potential scandal is revealed—possibly the only on record where the threat arises from people *not* having sex—leaving the savvy women to put things to right.

What? You thought that the great events of history lay exclusively in philosophical issues

argued by men, flanked by obedient female counterparts meekly concurring? Until Evie breezes in from San Francisco, resplendent in tie-dye kaftans, New Age yoga and a feminist manifesto born of embracing solitude, it's easy to forget the injustices existing side by side with advances within recent memory.

Playgoers seeking material for earnest post-show debates can waste time mulling over these themes, but the smarter course is to enjoy this Congo Square Theatre Chicago Premiere production's on-target period decor (Andrei

Onegin, Marci Rodgers and Rick Sims nail the era down to the orange walls and rotary-dial telephones) and Cleage's snappy regional-accurate dialogue, delivered with razor-sharp precision under the direction of Daniel Bryant by an alert and energetic cast featuring Shanesia Davis as the irrepressible Evie Madison, whose tale of self-discovery during a week's vacation in Paris—hence the play's title—is enough to send us home ready to call our travel agents the very next morning.

THEATER REVIEW

Ten-Dollar House

Playwrights: Rick Kinnebrew and Martha Meyer

At: Pride Films and Plays at Piccolo Theatre, 600 Main St., Evanston

Tickets: 800-737-0984 or

www.pridefilmsandplays.com; \$22-\$27

Runs through Jan. 31

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

There's a great joy in watching a gay-history play like Ten Dollar House. Husband-and-wife playwrights Rick Kinnebrew and Martha Meyer insightfully realized great dramatic potential in the Depression-era romantic story of Robert Neal and Edgar Hellum, two men whose passion for historic preservation and small-town life

left a lasting legacy via the Pendarvis historic district in Mineral Point, Wisconsin.

That said, it does pain me to say that Ten Dollar House is far from perfect in Pride Films and Plays' Chicago-area premiere. Some of that can be chalked up to the uneven casting and questionable staging choices by director Michael D. Graham. There's also some script issues, too.

Much of the exposition is clunky, especially when delivered by actors like Tom Chiola and Jean Marie Koon as wealthy brother and sister characters William Gundry and Marjorie King. Both Chiola and Koon also could work at finessing out the laughs in their dialogue.

But things pick up with the arrival of Robert Neal, played as a worldly effete and design dandy by Scott Patrick Sawa. As Neal, Sawa carefully and honestly keeps his performance from veering into caricature even with all the

overly witty and sarcastic quips in the script.

As the much butcher laborer Edward Hellum, Joe Anderson is very good, too. Yet Anderson's portrayal of Edward's conflicted aloofness of a man afraid of getting a reputation over his sexuality comes off more like a blank page instead of a real sense of inner turmoil churning from within.

Mindy Barber is very proficient as the Madison reporter Betty Cass, whose main purpose is to narrate historical background, forward the story along and to bring publicity to Neal and Hellum's insightful work.

Director Graham does a generally good job at steering the story along as love blossoms between Neal and Hellum as they scramble to restore derelict Cornish cottages and build an antiques business. But one questionable staging decision involves old-lady drag, injecting a moment of camp silliness that feels out of tune

with the overall earnest tone of the piece.

In Ten Dollar House, Kinnebrew and Meyer do an extremely adept job of fitting in so much biographical and historical detail into such an entertaining romantic story of ingenuity against the odds. Now if only they could fix up the ending, since the play suffers from what feels like successive conclusions that overstays the play's welcome.

If I'm being too hard on Ten Dollar House, it's because there's so much that is great about it that you wouldn't want the current imperfections to prevent it from finding a future life in other regional theaters. For too long, amazing stories of LGBTQ history and romance have been untold or suppressed, so Ten Dollar House skillfully and engagingly helps to redress that imbalance.

THEATER REVIEW

29th Annual Young Playwrights Festival

Playwrights: Myka Buck, Brian Hayes and Keauna Pierce

At: Pegasus Theatre Chicago at Chicago Dramatists, 1105 W. Chicago Ave.

Tickets: 773-878-8864 or

www.pegasustheatrechicago.org; \$18-\$30

Runs through Jan. 23

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

You might wonder about the winners of youth playwrighting competitions. Do the victors truly represent the best of young writers, or are the judging committee selections more reflective of what adults think that students should be writing about?

This question comes to mind watching Pegasus Theatre Chicago's 29th Annual Young Playwrights Festival. Three short plays were selected for production from 500 submissions by Chicago Public Schools students writing around the 2015 theme of "expectations."

Myka Buck of Kenwood Academy took her inspiration from a friend in her school's gay-

straight alliance for her dramatically underdeveloped *Our Little Secret*. It focuses on a high school senior nicknamed Tommy (Danielle Rennalls) who weighs whether or not to come out as a lesbian to her religious mother, Tracey (Shadana Patterson).

As with any coming-out story, the unknown parental response causes a lot of insecurity. But Buck tips her hand toward a happy outcome by featuring Tommy's supportive lesbian friend named Chrissie (Brenann Stacker) who is already accepted by Tracey. Tommy also gets support for her relationship with Onya (Erica Pezza) from her incarcerated father (Chris Cinereski).

The subject matter of *Our Little Secret* might be brave for a high school student, but Buck's script doesn't mine the possible high drama of the situation. The actors under the direction of Lavinia Jadhvani also don't rise to the occasion to flesh out the characters' conflicted feelings.

Much more successful is *The Adventures of FeRB* by Brian Hayes of Taft High School, which pokes fun at high school cliques of goths, nerds and B-boy dancers. Named after elements on the periodic table, a scientifically minded transfer student called FeRB (a sunny Chris Acevedo) tries to find a group to

fit into, only to be repeatedly thwarted by the omnipresent Bradley (a sly Eric G. Walter, who is also, oddly, on crutches).

Director Jason Fleece finds the perfect satiric tone plus a speedy wackiness to bring Hayes' comic tale to life. You can also see how the cast including Stacker, Pezza and Will Kiley all clearly relish playing such cartoonish teenager types.

The final winning play, *A Cup of Souls and One Grim Reaper*, Please by Keauna Pierce of Lane Tech High School, feels like a throwback to last year's competition theme of "something wicked interferes." Pierce's play is about a newly appointed grim reaper (Cinereski) who botches his first soul reclamation, much to the dissatisfaction of the Devil (Kiley) and his giggly minions.

It's an interesting premise which allows director Ilesa Duncan to produce some interesting staging ideas. But ultimately Pierce's play feels a tad undercooked with a far-too-easy solution.

This year's selections for the Young Playwrights Festival sometimes made you question whether you were seeing the best of the best. But as with any artistic competition, it's all truly subjective.

CRITICS' PICKS

Dynamite Divas, Black Ensemble Theater, through Jan. 24. The goofy framing device in BET's latest musical revue is only to provide rest breaks for an all-star cast of warblers and belters delivering spot-on impressions of the century's greatest female pop vocalists. MSB

Good for Otto, Gift Theatre, returning from Jan. 14 to Feb. 7. Both profound and invigorating, David Rabe's world premiere looks at two community mental health workers and their patients struggling with parental abandonment. JA

Gotta Dance, Bank of America Theatre, through Jan. 17. The creators of this Broadway-aimed musical comedy about seniors learning hip-hop dance still have time to tinker on it before its New York bow next fall. In the meantime, do your part to give feedback during its local tryout run. SCM

R+J: The Vineyard, Red Theater at Den Theatre, Jan. 22-Feb. 20. When Juliet Capulet meets Romeo Montague on Martha's Vineyard in 1890, feuds between the hearing-impaired and aural-dependent flare in this trilingual re-mount of Shakespeare's classic tragedy. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan



David Bowie album cover shoot for *Aladdin Sane*. Photo by Brian Duffy

David Bowie dies at 69

Superstar British singer/songwriter David Bowie has died at age 69 after a sustained battle with cancer.

Bowie (who was openly bisexual) was active until the end, releasing his final album, *Blackstar*, on Jan. 8—his birthday.

Born David Robert Jones in London, Bowie was part of the music scene for almost 50 years. He first found success with "Space Oddity" in 1969 and became a global star thanks to his androgynous alter ego Ziggy Stardust.

Among a few of his other hits were "Under Pressure" (with the group Queen), "Let's Dance," "Fame," "Starman," "Modern Love" and "Miracle Goodnight."

Bowie was also an actor, having appeared in works such as *Labyrinth*, *The Man Who Fell to Earth* and even *Zoolander*.

Bowie is survived by two children, Duncan Jones and Alexandria "Lexi" Zahra Jones, as well as supermodel wife Iman, whom he married in 1992.

The superstar has been covered numerous times. Last year, *Orange Is the New Black* actress Lea DeLaria released her fifth jazz vocal album, *House of David*, which spans a dozen Bowie covers.

Scores of celebrities reacted to the news. Singer Billy Idol posted, "Nearly brought to tears by sudden news of @DavidBowieReal David Bowie's passing RIP." Actress Kat Dennings stated, "David Bowie has been my musical north star my entire life. This hurts even more for people close to me. He will NEVER be surpassed, never." CNN journalist Anderson Cooper posted, "Find it hard to believe David Bowie has died. What an incredible life."

On Sept. 23, 2014-Jan. 4, 2015, almost 200,000 people visited the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago to see its "David Bowie Is" exhibition, setting attendance records. It was the only U.S. appearance of the exhibition, which London's Victoria and Albert Museum organized.

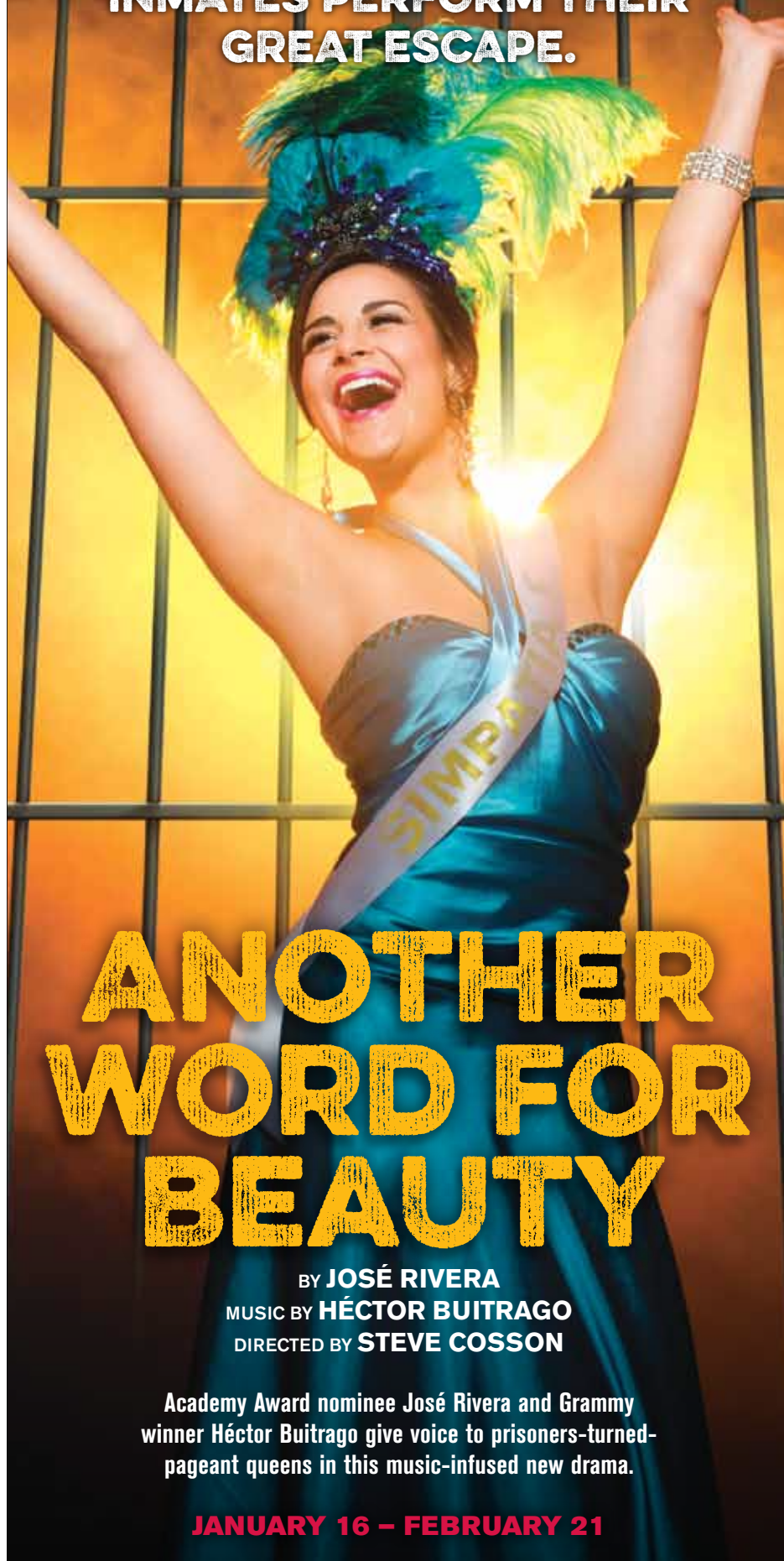


SPOTLIGHT



Out storytellers are part of the **19th Annual Fillet of Solo Festival**, originally created by the late Live Bait Theater and continued by Lifeline Theatre. Among the performers are storytellers from Sidetrack's monthly *OUTspoken!* series, plus David Kodeski's *True Life Tales: Another Lousy Day* in which he chronicles the life of a single TV factory worker in the 1960s from diaries he found in an antique store. The festival kicks off with a free show at 7 p.m. Wed., Jan. 13, at the Mayne Stage, 1328 W. Morse Ave., when audiences are offered the chance to buy festival passes at a steep discount. The rest of the festival runs from Friday, Jan. 15, through Sunday, Jan. 31, at two locations: Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave., and the Heartland Studio Theatre, 7016 N. Glenwood Ave. Call 773-761-4477 or visit www.lifelinetheatre.com. Photo of Kodeski by Johnny Knight

ONCE A YEAR AT THIS COLOMBIAN WOMEN'S PRISON, INMATES PERFORM THEIR GREAT ESCAPE.



ANOTHER WORD FOR BEAUTY

BY JOSÉ RIVERA

MUSIC BY HÉCTOR BUITRAGO

DIRECTED BY STEVE COSSON

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TELEVISION

It's simply the 'Dress' for Chicagoan Precious Davis

BY LIZ BAUDLER

Precious Davis is having a moment: last year she got engaged to fiancé Myles Brady and to start 2016, the trans professional, activist and performer appears on TLC's *Say Yes to the Dress* on Wed., Jan. 13.

"It was a dream come true," said Davis. "Everyone was so comforting. The entire experience of filming it was everything that I thought it would be."

Davis said she and Brady fielded offers from other shows looking to tell their love story, and found TLC to be the most authentic platform. "Other reality series wanted to come in and objectify us, or create a storyline that wasn't there," Davis said. "And our integrity is most important to us, the authenticity of our story and what we represent."

Host Monte Durham gushed over Davis's personality, comparing her to champagne. "She has such a strong voice and presence, and she was just gracious. We had a ball with her," Durham said.

The feeling was mutual. "Monte became like a little fairy godmother to me and just was such a great guide in a way that I never thought would happen," Davis said. "We really clicked."

Initially, Davis, being used to dressing up, had ideas about what she would want. "I thought I was just looking for a dress, and

what I didn't realize is that I was looking for a very specific kind of dress," she remembered. "I wasn't just looking for a dress. I was looking for a wedding dress. And I didn't realize what a wedding dress looks like, and what it feels like when you put it on. That was a surprise for me."

Both Davis and Durham were fully aware of the powerful nature of Precious's appearance. "I think that love comes in many packages, and it's beyond the continuum of the binary gender in itself," Davis remarked. "You have these stereotypical notions of what a relationship looks like, and I think Myles and I really redefine that in a different package."

"The average life expectancy of a trans woman in the United States is less than 30 years old. I just turned 30 this year and I'll be getting married," Davis continued. "I think that we represent hope and light. We are another narrative, to show that love is possible and that we are trans people. We have hopes, we have dreams, we want to be loved dearly, and we want our lives to have meaning."

She also felt the episode would show the importance of chosen family. Two close gay male friends who supported her during her transition appear in the show and will be men of honor at the wedding. "We're supporting each other across the lenses of identity," Davis said of their appearance. "I come from a tumultu-



Precious Davis (right) in *Say Yes to the Dress*. Photo from Discovery Communications

ous family experience, and not having my birth family but my chosen family stand in was a really powerful moment for me."

"No matter who you are, to stand up on that runway and be judged by your peers finding your perfect dress takes a lot of courage," Durham said. "Every bride goes through that. I think any time you can show anyone of any gender and sexual [orientation] in a positive light, it helps the community."

Durham, an out gay man, recalled his own commitment ceremony in 1992 and feels lucky to witness marriage equality. "It's like when you have children and you say, 'look at how I

raised my daughter, look at her, there she is! I'm like a proud daddy! It's just incredible to see this unfold in my lifetime and how lucky am I to see and experience and work for a company that not only embraces it but shares it, and that is rare," he said.

And as for the dress? No spoilers, but Durham said it's custom-designed by wedding dress maven Lazaro, and Davis called it fit for a queen. "Myles and I view ourselves as he the king and I the queen: a royal woman, a distinguished woman, a woman of power," she said. "[The dress] is, indeed, royal."

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PRIDE FILMS & PLAYS



Fawzia Mirza in front of the Trump Hotel. Facebook photo

Lesbian actress makes statement

Lesbian actress Fawzia Mirza recently made a statement in front of the Trump International Hotel & Tower Chicago.

In response to Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's comments about Muslims, Mirza posted, "Hey @realdonaldtrump WE ARE ALL MUSLIM #WeAreAllMuslim #MichaelMoore #wetrumpdonaldtrump #nohatespeech #chicago."

About Face's 'Le Switch' Jan. 15

About Face Theatre (AFT) will open its 20th-anniversary season with the world-premiere romantic comedy *Le Switch*, by Artistic Associate Philip Dawkins. *Le Switch* will play Jan. 15-Feb. 21, 2016, at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.

The production—in which a man and his non-traditional family must decide for them-

selves what it really means to be committed, what it means to be married and what it means to be queer—will feature AFT Artistic Associates Mitchell Fain and Elizabeth Ledo, with LaShawn Banks, Stephen Cone and Collin Quinn Rice.

Tickets are \$20-\$35 each (preview prices, Jan. 15-21, are \$10-\$20 each). Tickets are available at www.aboutfacetheatre.org, 773-404-7336 or at the Theater Wit box office.

Dancemakers wants proposals

Chicago Dancemakers Forum (CDF) has announced its annual call for proposals for its Lab Artist Awards in 2016.

Through \$15,000 cash awards complemented by a full year of mentorship and professional development, CDF supports choreographers as they explore and develop new work.

Visit <http://chicagodancemakers.submit-table.com> to access and submit the online form.

MOMBIAN: BOOKS

Rock 'n' roll queer families

VIEWPOINT BY DANA RUDOLPH

The tension between assimilation and queerness has long hovered over the LGBTQ community. As English writer Jonathan Kemp said a few years ago, "The assimilationists want gay marriage, inclusion in the military, the right to adopt children... Queers, on the other hand, ... [regard] the most vibrant and radical aspect of homosexuality as being precisely its opposition to normative sexuality and society" (Graduate Journal of Social Science: 2009). Two new memoirs, however, show that these concepts do not always have to stand in opposition to each other.

In *Queer Rock Love: A Family Memoir* (Transgress Press: 2015), Austin, Texas writer and activist Paige Schilt takes on a journey with her tattooed, genderqueer, rocker spouse Katy Koonce, their son Waylon, and a varied and quirky cast of family and friends. A jacket blurb from Lynn Breedlove, lead singer of the lesbian punk band Tribe 8, indicates this isn't the usual lesbians-in-the-suburbs tale.

Schilt, a self-described "depression-prone approval seeker with an addiction to vintage clothes," first met Katy at a concert where Katy was "wearing a full beard and a prosthetic man-chest ... playing bass for Raunchy Reckless and the Amazons, a Xena-inspired art band." A year later, they met again in a group therapy session. Schilt was finishing a dissertation in English; Katy was a therapist, musician, and former drug addict with hepatitis C and a New Age bent.

More than any other LGBTQ parenting memoir I've read, *Queer Rock Love* makes the case that not only are LGBTQ people as capable of being parents as any others, but that it is possible to be both a parent and queer in the "vibrant and radical" sense of the word.

It was Katy's fantasy of having a child, she says, that helped Schilt "[stop] thinking of motherhood as a retreat from being a lez. In a sense, I realized, becoming a parent might make me even more visibly queer." When their son calls the masculine Katy "Mommy" during a family trip to a convenience store and everyone looks, one suspects she might be right. The coexistence of radical queerness and children gets further proof when they attend a local church and find the childcare being ably run by two members of the local drag king group, one with green hair.

Schilt's thoughtful descriptions of Katy's identity, masculine but tender, illuminate the wonderful complexities of gender. Katy "knew that choosing to be called 'Mommy' might tether her to the feminine end of the spectrum," she writes, "But long ago, in her moments of childhood need, she had decided that a Mommy was the strongest thing she could be." She shows us, too, how their son accepted Katy's status as "a mix of girl and boy," and came up with his own terms to describe people's genders: girl, boy, boygirl, and girlboy.

Schilt writes of many common situations that most parents will likely relate to—the sleepless nights and hectic days of the early years; negotiating boundaries with our own parents; how much to limit a child's television time. But other experiences are unique to them, such as a show in which Katy performs in both male and female drag, and a reunion heavy metal concert between Katy and Brian their sperm donor, at which four-year-old Waylon desperately wants to perform with the band.

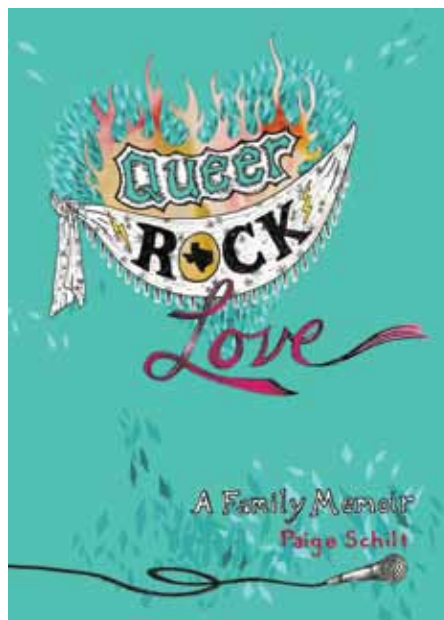
Schilt moves back and forth from childhood to college days to the present to explore the messages of faith, family, and gender that she has wrestled with throughout her life. She shows us the challenges her family has faced, including difficulty breastfeeding, Katy's hepa-

titis C, laws that didn't recognize them as a family, and trying to care for a young child while also helping Katy recover from top surgery. She doesn't flinch from exposing the stress from these events that drove her and Katy to couples' therapy.

This is not a sad or angry book, however, but a hopeful and often humorous one. Despite the obstacles, the love she and Katy have for their son and the commitment they have to making their family work shine through like a beacon.

Queer Rock Love is a captivating read that should be on the shelves of anyone who ever wondered if marriage and parenting mean giving up a certain radical queerness—and those who knew it didn't all along.

It also brings to mind a second new rock 'n roll-themed memoir. At one point, Schilt notes that her idea of a good dance song "was something that allowed you to thrash wildly, like



Sleater Kinney or Sonic Youth." As it happens, riot grrrl band Sleater-Kinney's own Carrie Brownstein has just released her own autobiography, *Hunger Makes Me a Modern Girl* (Riverhead Books: 2015).

Brownstein, also co-creator and co-star of the IFC show *Portlandia* and a recurring ac-

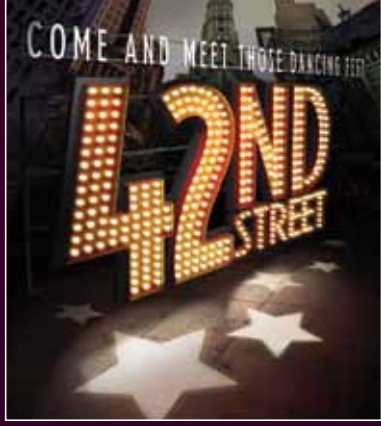
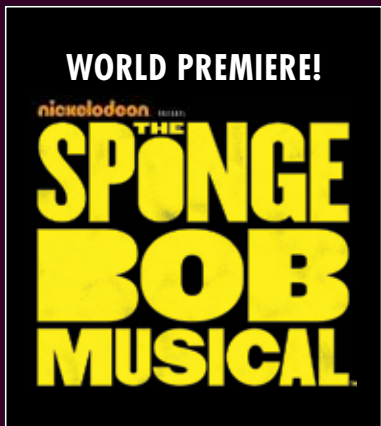
tor on Amazon's *Transparent*, has not written a memoir about being in a queer family per se, but rather about her own quest for identity from childhood through her years in the band. She writes at length of her dad's coming out at age 55, however, which to me is enough to place her book in the realm of memoirs by LGBTQ parents and our children. Brownstein, herself bisexual, offers proof that having an LGBTQ parent doesn't necessarily mean having an assimilationist worldview, as she writes of "the mainstream's toxicity" and the context of Sleater-Kinney being "one of fairly radical politics."

Have no fear, then, those who doubt: Even in these days of marriage and kids, there's still a fine stream of vibrant, radical queerness among LGBTQ parents and our children. Not that we all have to follow it, but it's good to know we have the choice. Rock on.

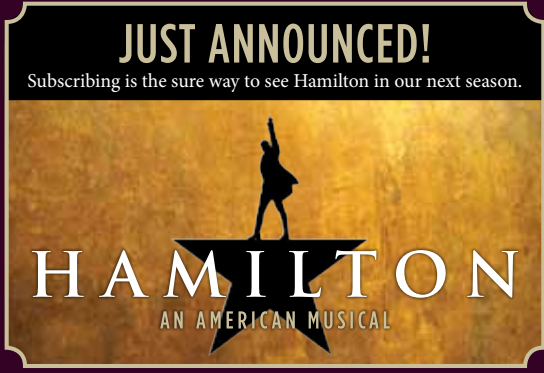
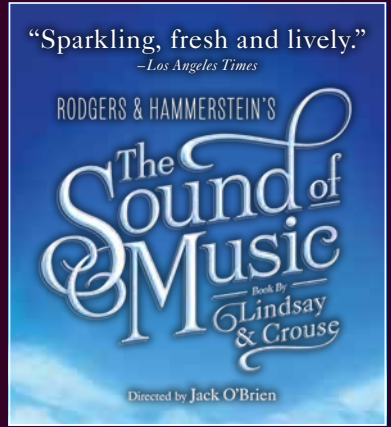
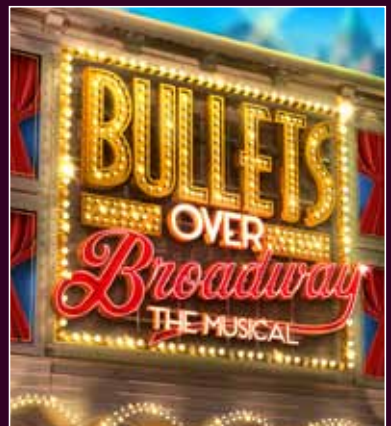
Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of *Mombian* (mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.

Paige Schilt will be at Women & Children First bookstore, 5233 N. Clark St., on Wed., Jan. 20, at 7:30 p.m. See WomenAndChildrenFirst.com.

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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Coconutz; Maple & Ash

BY ANDREW DAVIS

I'll admit it: I didn't walk into **Coconutz** (Coco-nutzChicago.com; 13 W. Division St.) with the highest of expectations.

There were at least a couple of reasons, ranging from the "z" in the restaurant's name to the fact that it's located along a stretch of Division Street that's known primarily for Jager bombs and the occasional thong contest.



Coconutz general manager Josh King (left) and chef Sean Welker.

Photo by Eliaz Rodriguez



Bacon-wrapped shishito peppers at Coconutz. Photo by Andrew Davis

However, general manager Josh King told me that the Coconutz aims to "draw the area's condo owners" to the stretch that some have termed a "frat boy's fantasy."

Call the island-inspired Coconutz an oasis that's off to a good start. It's divided into three areas (a front bar, a dining room and a lounge in the back), and offers "cabana bites" as well as a cornucopia of cocktails (including the cringeworthy-sounding Punch in the Nutz) and wines. By the way, Coconutz makes sure everything is as fresh as possible; even the pineapple juice is squeezed straight from the fruit.

An amuse bouche of tomato with jicama and serrano jam got the evening off to a kicky start, and I really liked the zabouca choka (Trini-style guacamole and tortilla chips), which sounded more exotic than it actually was.

I'm always a little cautious around shishito peppers; however, I fortunately didn't encounter any spicy ones with Coconutz's bacon-wrapped offerings. And as for the entrees, my dining partner adored the hot-and-sweet shrimp (although the heat from the habanero-laced mother-in-law slaw stayed with her for a while); I had a Malta-braised pork that was certainly satisfying.

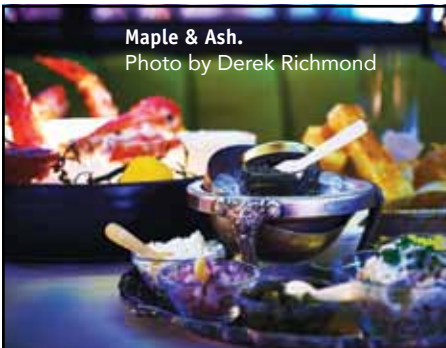
Coconutz recently opened, and there are a few kinks (as with the danger pie, which is a little too sweet). However, I definitely deem this a promising place (with kick-ass staff and sangria)—and a nice alternative to the usual Gold Coast Division Street scene.

Maple & Ash

Meanwhile, literally a couple blocks away from Coconutz is Maple & Ash (8 W. Maple St.; MapleAndAsh.com), a recently opened steakhouse that has gotten quite a bit of buzz.

It is an impressive spot, overall—although does pay for the experience.

Maple & Ash is a two-story restaurant. The first floor houses a cocktail bar and a more informal (but still attractive) menu. Offerings include salmon tartare, shellfish chowder, roasted lamb chops, apple-cider doughnuts and even grilled cheese (albeit with brioche, dijon aioli and green salad).



Maple & Ash. Photo by Derek Richmond

My dining partners and I dined upstairs, which is more formal. (Sartorial note: Collared shirts are fine. I wore a shirt and jacket, sans tie, and felt a tad overdressed.) The decor is pretty elegant, with a variety of seats (plush and otherwise).

The service was spot-on, with our server being supremely attentive. Also, the restaurant kept one of my friends' food allergies in mind, suggesting alternatives for her. As for the food itself, it's quite good: The foie gras (with strawberry preserves and brioche) was the best I'd had since Sepia last year, and the pork chop was pretty tasty, although it seemed a bit small for the price. Also, the drink list was most impressive; sommelier Belinda Chang knows what she's doing.

As for cost, be prepared to shell out some cash if you dine upstairs. The 40-ounce Eisenhower is \$115, grilled whole branzino is \$55, caviar (as expected) is \$100-\$220—and the "I Don't Give A F*@k" option costs \$145. However, if you have the dime, make the time for Maple & Ash.

DANCING ABOUT ARCHITECTURE

BY MARC 'MOOSE' MODER



David Bowie: A man of sound and vision

Much will be written in the years to come of the life, death and in-between of most influential artist of our time, David Bowie, after this week's news of his passing. The point cannot be made harder that Bowie changed the face of popular music, not once or twice like most superstars, but over his entire career. With abbreviation, here's a brief look at some of the key ways in which the White Duke made a difference in our pop lives.

Electronics and rock

Being one of the first rock stars to embrace electronics, Bowie famously powwowed with producer Brian Eno after hearing Donna Summer's groundbreaking "I Feel Love" while recording his Berlin Trilogy. Electronics incorporated into rock tracks is standard practice now.

Fashion

There was an entire exhibit last year at the MCA based in large part on Bowie's influence on fashion and costume. It was a rarity before Bowie (see Sgt.



David Bowie in striped bodysuit for the Aladdin Sane tour, 1973. Photo by Masayoshi Sukita

Pepper's) to see artists come out in costume, let alone take on entire characters for an album or single. This versatility and willingness to go outside his comfort zone made it okay for generations of drag queen, trans kids, club kids, and fashion designers to let go of societal norms and discover their inner fashion child.

Age

It was nothing but a number to him. While his contemporaries were happily complacent touring their old material and even abandoning any new material, Bowie kept right on making new, groundbreaking sounds up until the age of 69, and doing it better than kids a third his age. The men of rock could use some of Bowie's balls right about now.

Sound and music

Back when MTV started, there's was a pretty small pool from which channel could choose. Bowie's "Ashes to Ashes" was one they played ad nauseam, not just for its great visuals, but because it was before a time when artists automatically did videos. If you go back to the start, Bowie always used the visual medium as well as the audio, helping to create a whole new medium.

Race

Although he was a darling at MTV, Bowie also questioned the behemoth. In an interview with Mark Goodman back in 1982, he pushed Goodman, asking why there were no black artists on MTV, and he wasn't taking Goodman's excuses. That same year, Michael Jackson surfaced with "Billie Jean" and broke down the remaining wall. Even before that, he worked with a young Luther Vandross on "Golden Years," even appearing on Soul Train. He then went on to make an album with R&B artist sand producers Black Tie, White Noise.

Turn to page 20

nightspots the big TO-DO

OUR WEEKLY PICKS TO PLAN
YOUR NIGHTLIFE CALENDAR



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Steve Grand:
Live in concert

Fri., Jan. 15, 9 pm

Seven Nightclub,
3206 N. Halsted St.

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OTTER: Lumbersexual '16
w/ DJ Moose

Sat., Jan. 16, 9 pm

The Sofu Tap,
4923 N. Clark St.

Get some wood with DJ Moose and the hottest OTTER of the year. Don your manliest flannel, boots and whatever makes you long for the great outdoors and a burly man to snuggle.

Photo from Lumbersexual '15 by Kyle Henderson



"Can I just ask you a question? What the fuck does sugar tits even mean?"—The bleeped question from **Ricky Gervais** to **Mel Gibson** at the Golden Globes. What was his response? "I dunno. Ask the guy who said it, it wasn't me." A likely story!

Look, I loves me some **Jane Fonda** as much as the next gay man. But why does she always look so pissed off? Perhaps she has a different sense of humor—kinda like that laugh-out-loud comedy, *The Martian*! Every time the camera showed Jane, she had a martini in her hand—you'd think that would loosen her up a little. Even the new first and second ladies of comedy, **Eva Longoria** and **America Ferrera**, couldn't get Fonda to even chuckle!

Yes, we're talking Golden Globes—briefly. (I just got home and I'm exhausted.) If you ask me, **J.Lo** looked like the runner-up for Miss Universe. Or the winner. I can't keep track. I was thrilled that many of my favorite shows and people won awards. That said, how in God's name did **Lady Gaga** not only get nominated but actually win? It does put the Pia Zadora scandal of 1982 into perspective. And, why does she have such enormous difficulty walking? Eh, probably because she's used to traveling by egg! Before we move on, a special shout-out to my dear **Taraji**—and thanks for the cookie, Cookie!

You may have heard that **Colton Haynes** outed himself on Tumblr—words I never thought I'd utter (or type). For those of you who have no idea who Colton Haynes is, he's an actor currently on *Arrow* and was previously on *Teen Wolf*—suffice it to say, he's more People's Choice Awards than Golden Globes. He started out as a model, most notably posing affectionately in various forms of undress with other nubile lads in *XY* magazine.

The whole kerfuffle got re-fluffed Jan. 2, when someone posted on Tumblr "when I found out colton haynes had a secret gay past i got so excited even though i know it makes absolutely no difference in my life." Haynes reposted the original comment and then said, "Was it a secret? Let's all just enjoy life & have no regrets :)"—and there were lots of silly emojis that I thought only teenage girls used. In his *Teen Wolf* days, he was less laid back. I recall many websites receiving letters threatening legal action from Haynes' attorney if the *XY* photos were not removed. Since I never kowtow to such demands, those photos can still be seen on *BillyMasters.com*.

Hypocrisy is not limited to the entertainment industry. Last week, Christian family vlogger **Austin Null** found himself in quite a pickle—by showing off his pickle. Since I had no idea who this guy was, let's start with that. Null has a YouTube channel called *Nive Nulls*, which is described as a "Los Angeles-based, fun vlogging family, who show their crazy daily lives in an entertaining and fast-paced way." He's also described as having "an upbeat personality that's nothing short of infectious."

All his professional web infections apparently spilled over into his personal life. Turns out, this married, holier-than-thou zealot has been having some sort of webcam affair with (presumably) a woman. He posted a very special vlog with his wife Britt called "We Need To Talk." They talked about the nude photos of Austin that have surfaced—including some which show him being "inappropriate" with some household objects! Austin admits to having an "online affair" for five months during Britt's pregnancy! He's stopped the affair, confessed to Britt and is in counseling. So how



Did Colton Haynes kick open the closet door?
Instagram photo

did the photos and videos go public? We don't know, but his lawyers have threatened legal action against anybody publishing the material. And once again, we throw our head back and laugh—ha, ha—as we post them on *BillyMasters.com*.

That **Sean Penn** is smarter than he looks—well, he'd have to be. He scheduled his 5th Annual Help Haiti Home Gala in Beverly Hills on the eve of the Golden Globes. And it just happened to coincide with the night off of his ex-wife, **Madonna**. Madge rambled on a bit, lapsed in and out of an accent that one cannot pinpoint with GPS, and then whipped out a ukulele. Even though I knew what was coming, I still shuddered—much as I did during the Drowned World Tour where she showed off the three chords she learned. (The cursed ukulele was later auctioned off for \$300K.) Madonna announced that she'd sing "La Vie en Rose" with "my bad Parisian pronunciations." Not only am I not convinced that it was a Parisian accent—I am not sure I could identify it as French! But, here's my favorite part of her introduction: "If you know the words, please sing along. I've been known to forget the words occasionally—I have a lot on my mind." You know who has a lot on their mind? The people in HAITI! You can check out the video on our website.

Our "Ask Billy" question is kinda apropos of the Golden Globes. Gary in Providence said: "I think **Eddie Redmayne** is SO hot. Did we actually get a glimpse of his penis in *The Danish Girl*?"

Leave it to my readers to distill a movie with social relevance down to the lowest common denominator. And leave it to me to not only run the question, but answer it. Yes, when Eddie's character is fantasizing about what it would be like to live as a woman, he tucks his penis betwixt his legs. But briefly, ever so briefly, we get a glimpse of the goods. And we'll share that glimpse with you on *BillyMasters.com*.

When we're able to slip in a glimpse of penis, it's definitely time to end yet another column. As we go to press, we want to acknowledge the death of David Bowie. But perhaps mourning is premature. After all, last month he released a CD called "Blackstar" and featured a song, "Lazarus". If he rises from the dead, you'll hear about it first on *www.BillyMasters.com*, the site that never misses a resurrection - or any other kind of erection! If you have a question for you, send it along to *Billy@BillyMasters.com*, and I promise to get back to you before Fonda cracks a smile! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.



MARY'S ATTIC

Ben D. Mann's Boylesque shows its stuff, Thursday, January 7. See the show each Thursday.
Photos by Jerry Nunn

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BOOK REVIEW

The Wedding Heard 'Round the World: America's First Gay Marriage

by Michael McConnell with Jack Baker, as told to Gail Langer Karwoski
\$22.95; University of Minnesota Press; 200 pages
BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

There's always been a picket fence in your future. You could just picture it: charming spouse, two-point-five kids, minivan, Cape Cod with manicured lawn, birthday parties on the patio, all surrounded by that picket fence. It was a perfect dream of a blissful life. And, as in *The Wedding Heard 'Round the World* (by Michael McConnell with Jack Baker, as told to Gail Langer Karwoski), making history would be a nice bonus.

As a child playing with neighborhood girls, McConnell remembers wanting the same thing they wanted: to grow up and marry a handsome man. Their crushes were his crushes, too, but in the

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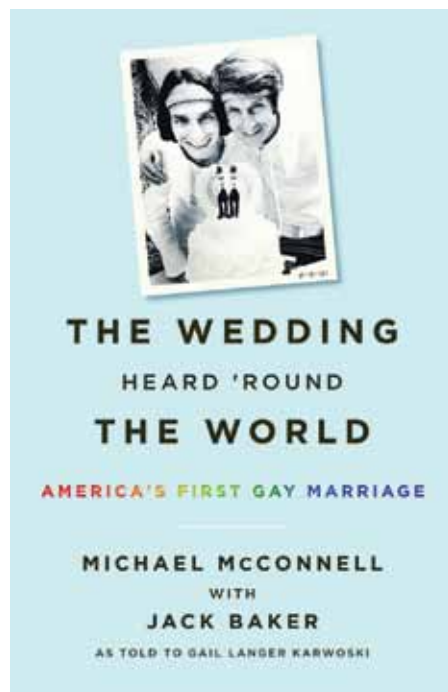
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1950s, that kind of thing wasn't discussed.

By the time he entered college at the University of Oklahoma in the mid-'60s, however, McConnell had come out to his family and was comfortable with his sexuality. He met other gay men and enjoyed an active social life on campus and then, on Oct. 29, 1966, he met Jack Baker.

For the first minutes of their get-to-know-you, McConnell thought Baker was much older, or perhaps straight. Baker's demeanor was businesslike, almost military in mien; McConnell had recently had his heart broken, and was guarded. Still, by the end of the evening, they were lovers; soon after, they were a couple.

By the early '70s, although their relationship had to be kept quieter, McConnell and Baker were "out" enough to want to make real change. Baker, a Minneapolis law student, filed suit against the U.S. Military over an unfair downgrade in his discharge status. After following Baker north, McConnell fought job discrimination. And then there was the wedding Baker promised McConnell on Baker's twenty-fifth birthday. It would happen – they just had to figure out how.

That would take some time, but Baker was on it. His legal training tickled his methodical mind, until he discovered two loopholes the state of Minnesota hadn't closed. One led to the next, and both led to their history-making wedding in 1971.

BOWIE from page 18

Genre

While Bowie did try briefly in the '60s to fit into a pop mold, it was his second album, *Space Oddity*, that most consider to be his real debut. After that glam masterpiece, he rarely stuck to a sound for more than three albums. He went from glam to soul to gloom/electronic/experimental in the '70s, then turned full pop in the '80s, industrial in the '90s, and then fully experimental in the '00s; Bowie was not going to be what you wanted him to be, unless what you wanted was surprise and artistry. He taught us and other artists that you must challenge to make great art, and never do what's expected.

Sex

He didn't have to tell *Melody Maker* in 1972 he was bisexual (a decision he'd later regret), but he did, and declared his alter ego Ziggy Stardust to be bisexual as well. At that time, sexuality was rarely discussed in private, let alone by a major star in print. Whatever his motive for his revelation, it was a clear bell to those young queer kids like Marc Almond, Neil Tennant and Boy George, along with countless others, that there was more than what is never spoken. It would be decades before it was again okay to be an out pop star, and by now it rarely makes a blip on the radar when it happens, and can often help a queer artist's career (although not always).

Volumes could be written about the ways this one man changed our lives, and it might takes us years to sort it out and absorb. Bowie's influence and impact is not just seen in the careers of Madonna, Lady Gaga and Janelle Monae, but in every artist free to be themselves and to reflect their true selves back at you, making us all a little Bowie.

That, of course, isn't the end of the story. Authors McConnell and Baker continued their activism but their nuptials, the first in America for same-sex celebrants, are the real focus in "The Wedding Heard 'Round the World."

And that's a good thing, too, because the love story in this book is what makes it so readable. McConnell's account (as told to Gail Langer Karwoski) is mostly what's here, and it's the quintessential romance: boy meets boy, boy marries boy, they live Happily (Almost) Ever After.

Conversely, it's the almost that makes this book so important: the battles the authors accepted caused emotional hardship in many ways and that almost caused a break-up. And yet, for the sake of others that came after them, they continued to take on gay rights issues – stories of which are told humbly, yet proudly.

Overall, this is a sweet story wrapped inside a righteous fight, told with charm and grace. It's deep, yet lighthearted and definitely worth a look. Start *The Wedding Heard 'Round the World*—and you'll have no defense.

Want more? Then look for *The Best Party of Our Lives: Stories of Gay Weddings and True Love to Inspire Us All*, by Sarah Galvin; or *The Essential Guide to Gay and Lesbian Weddings*, by Tess Ayers and Paul Brown.



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Jan. 13

Free HIV/AIDS testing at Affinity Community Services Affinity is a social justice organization that focuses on health and wellness, leadership development, and community building for Black lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women and LGBTQ youth of African descent in the Chicago metropolitan area. 1:00pm - 3:00pm Affinity Community Services 1424 E. 53rd St. Suite 306, Chicago 773-324-0377 <http://www.affinity95.org>

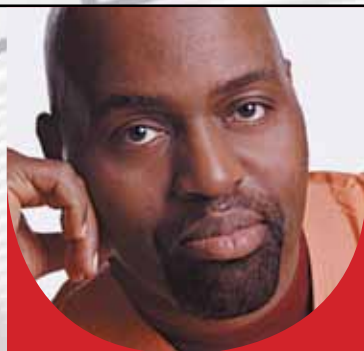
Brass Chuckles Comedy: Comedy that Kicks Ass Hosted by Tamale Rocks. Each Wednesday comedians performing stand-up and improv based on a nightly "Performer Challenge." After the mainstage show, there is an open-mic opportunity where anything is fair game. \$10 9:00pm Uptown Underground, 4707 N. Broadway

Another Door Opens More than 30 designers, architects and artists reimagine vintage doors in a one of a kind auction. Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, entertainment. Benefits Chicago House. 6:00pm - 10:00pm Architectural Artifacts 4325 N Ravenswood Ave Chicago <http://www.chicagohouse.org>

Author Reading Poor Your Soul by Mira Ptacin. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/author-reading-mira-ptacin-poor-your-soul>

Thursday, Jan. 14

AChurch4Me MCC Senior Connection LGBT seniors in the community gathers for lunch each month to meet new people, offer support, and connect with social and service agencies as needed. Hosted by seniors and for seniors. No need to prove age. Just

FRANKIE CODE
Sunday, Jan. 17

"For Frankie"—a benefit for the Frankie Knuckles Foundation—will take place at Smart Bar.

come and enjoy food and conversation. More info through Meetup: Chicago LGBT Christians Meetup Group 1:00pm - 2:30pm AChurch4Me MCC, 7366 N Clark St, Chicago <http://www.achurch4me.org>

Former Governor Pat Quinn reception for Equality Illinois PAC Reception supports election of pro-equality public officials. 5:30pm - 7:30pm Hubbard Inn, 110 W. Hubbard, Chicago Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/join-pat-quinn-in-supporting-pro-equality-candidates-tickets-20078486293>

Bi Discussion Group Chicago Bisexual / Queer Community meeting every other

Thursday to chat about community, upcoming bisexual events, bisexual concerns. 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago

Book Launch Party The Lightkeepers by Abby Geni 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/book-launch-party-lightkeepers-abby-geni>

Chi-Town Squares LGBT Modern Western Square Dance Club open to everyone and dedicated to having a great time square dancing. Mainstream/Plus Workshop & Dance. New: alternating Mainstream with "gentle" and full Plus tips. 7:30pm - 9:30pm Ebenezer Lutheran Church 1650 W Foster Ave., <http://chitownsquares.org>

Friday, Jan. 15

Bible Bingo: An Act of Charity in Two Acts Trade a good re-gift for a free ticket. Items will be donated to the Little Sisters of the Poor in Chicago, who operate St. Mary's Home. Bible Bingo is a comedy written by Vicki Quade about the Catholic culture of fundraising and bingo. 6:00pm Royal George Theatre 1641 N Halsted St Chicago <http://www.nuns4fun.com>

Bi-Trans-Queer Book Discussion Group Discussion of The Enchantments of Flesh and Spirit by Storm Constantine. Free. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago

Man Cave ManCave is a peer-led group for individuals that were Assigned/Designated Female at Birth (A/DFAB) AND ALSO who identify as trans, i.e. as anything other than cisgender. The 2nd Fridays of each month are rotating activity-based meetings, and the 4th Fridays are open to family, friends, partners, allies, etc. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.mancavechicago.org/>

Saturday, Jan. 16

Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance (LGBTQ) Support meeting to talk about

illnesses, symptoms, treatment, doctors, and personal issues such as dating, relationships and work. Every Saturday. 11:00am - 12:30am Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com>

TQI Lounge Come and hang out with other Trans, Genderqueer, and Intersex people at TQI Lounge - a stress-free and relaxed social environment with discussions about gender, sexuality, life, and so much more. 4:30pm - 6:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St.; <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=11210>

Homestretch screening Feature documentary that explores the lives of homeless adolescents in Chicago, breaking harmful stereotypes to build the urgency necessary to address the national crisis of youth homelessness. Potluck dinner 6:30 pm. Free 7:00pm Unitarian Church of Evanston, 1330 Ridge Ave., Evanston <http://www.homestretchdoc.com/>

About Face Theatre to present Le Switch Marriage equality comes to the U.S. and commitment-shy David finds himself unsure how to react to the nation's wedding fever. With AFT Artistic Associates Mitchell Fain and Elizabeth Ledo with LaShawn Banks, Stephen Cone and Collin Quinn Rice. 7:30pm Theater Wit 1229 W Belmont Ave. Chicago 773-404-7336 Tickets: <http://www.aboutface theatre.org>

Sunday, Jan. 17

AChurch4Me MCC Sunday Worship Service Diverse congregation welcomes all walks of life, paths of faith, and spiritual connection. 11:00am AChurch4Me MCC, 7366 N Clark St, Chicago <http://www.achurch4me.org>

OPALGA Holiday Brunch RSVP before Jan. 9 to opalgabrunch2016@gmail.com 12:00pm - 3:30pm Cucina Paradiso, 814 North Blvd., Oak Park <http://opalga.org>

March for Life counterprotest FURIE (Feminist Uprising against Inequality and Exploitation) is planning to march against the March for Life at Federal Plaza. FU-

RIE will meet at the courthouse, 219 S. Dearborn St. and move to Federal Plaza. 1:00pm Dirksen Federal Bldg, 219 S Dearborn St, Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/events/513884098788124/>.

For Frankie - A Benefit for the Frankie Knuckles Foundation David Morales, Louie Vega, Terry Hunter, Derrick Carter, Rochelle Fleming, Adeva, Michael Serafini and Garrett David. \$27 early bird, \$32-37 advance, \$200 VIP tables for two. 21+ 9:00pm Smart Bar 3730 N Clark St. Tickets: <http://www.etix.com/ticket/p/4744541/for-frankie-chicago-metrochicagoil>

Chicago Sinfonietta Annual Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. \$48-\$60 3:00pm Wentz Concert Hall 171 E. Chicago Ave Naperville, IL 6040 312-284-1554 <http://goSinfonietta.org>

Tuesday, Jan. 19

Women's Book Group Led by Women & Children First co-founder Linda Bubon. Meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/womens>

Wed., Jan. 20

28th National Conference on LGBT Equality: Creating Change Daylong Racial Justice Institute opens the nation's premier annual organizing and skills-building LGBTQ conference. Close to 5,000 LGBTQ community leaders and activists from across the country are expected to attend. Through Jan. 24. 9:00am Chicago Hilton and Towers 720 S Michigan Ave Chicago <https://www.creatingchange.org> Tickets: <https://www.creatingchange.org/registration/register-for-conference/>



Randy Harrison.

'Cabaret' casting announced

As part of Roundabout Theatre Company's 50th-anniversary season, Broadway in Chicago and Roundabout Theatre Company have announced casting for the national tour of Sam Mendes and Rob Marshall's Tony-winning Cabaret.

Randy Harrison—best known for his portrayal of Justin in the Showtime drama Queer as Folk—will step into the role of the Emcee while Andrea Goss, a veteran of Roundabout's Cabaret on Broadway, will return to the role of Sally Bowles.

Joining them are Shannon Cochran (August: Osage County) as Fraulein Schneider, Alison Owing (Cabaret/Broadway) as Fraulein Kost, Mark Nelson (Picasso at the Lapin Agile) as Herr Schultz, Ned Noyes (You Can't Take It With You) as Ernst Ludwig and Lee Aaron Rosen (The Normal Heart) as Clifford Bradshaw.

Cabaret will run at Broadway in Chicago's newly named The PrivateBank Theatre, 18 W. Monroe St., during Feb. 9-21. Tickets are \$25-\$98; call 800-775-2000, visit Ticketmaster.com or stop by the box office.

Travel/adventure show Jan. 23-24

The 2016 Chicago Travel & Adventure Show returns to the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 N. River Rd, Rosemont, on Jan. 23-24.

The line-up of featured speakers on the 1,000 seat Travel & Adventure Theater stage includes European travel authority Rick Steves, host of PBS' Rick Steves' Europe; CBS travel editor Peter Greenberg; Frommer's Guide editor Pauline Frommer; family travel expert and TV host Colleen Kelly; travel deals expert Johnny Jet; and travel author Allan Karl.

Returning to the show is the popular Taste of Travel Stage, where noted chefs including Table Fifty-Two's Art Smith, Big Hatt Gourmet's Craig Bell and many others will offer cooking demonstrations and delectable samples of global cuisine.

There will also be hundreds of booths offering information and special discounts on U.S. and international destinations.

For more information and for tickets (\$16-\$25), visit travelshows.com/shows/chicago.

Surprises mark Golden Globes

Surprises marked the Golden Globes, which award excellence in television and movies and took place Jan. 10, airing on NBC.

Among some of the unexpected wins were Maura Tierney, who won for Best Supporting Actress in a Series, Limited Series, or TV Movie for her show, The Affair. A stunned Rachel Bloom (Crazy Ex-Girlfriend) won for Best Actress in a TV Series, Comedy, edging such contenders as Lily Tomlin (Grace and Frankie) and Julia Louis-Dreyfuss (Veep). Also, the show Mozart in the Jungle won for both awards it was nominated for, including Best TV Series, Musical/Comedy, in which it prevailed over series such as Transparent and Orange Is the New Black.

Perhaps the most surprised winner was Lady Gaga, who was named Best Actress in a Limited Series or TV Movie for her role in American Horror Story: Hotel (edging nominees like Queen Latifah and Felicity Huffman). During her acceptance speech, she admitted that she wanted to be an actress before she wanted to be a singer.

However, there were also the expected wins, such as Leonardo DiCaprio (Best Actor in a Motion Picture, Drama for his role in The Revenant) and Brie Larson (Best Actress in a Motion Picture, Drama for The Room).

LGBT movie faves Carol (five nods) and The Danish Girl (three nominations) did not win any awards. On the television side, Transparent's Jeffrey Tambor lost, in an upset, to Mozart in the Jungle's Gael Garcia Bernal.

Ricky Gervais (and his barbs) returned as host after Amy Poehler and Tina Fey co-hosted for three consecutive years.

GAGA from page 12

Representatives followed suit in 1975, then finally the World Health Organization dragging its feet in 1990. However, before we place Robert Spitzer's star on the LGBT Sidewalk of Fame, he wasn't perfect. In 2001, Spitzer delivered a controversial paper, "Can Some Gay Men and Lesbians Change Their Sexual Orientation?" In that paper he argued it was possible to change

Artemis Singers shows Jan. 23-24

The nonprofit Artemis Singers (www.artemissingers.org) will present "Wildest Dreams," a concert where lesbian feminists musically share their visions, at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 23, 2016, and at 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 24, at the Ethical Humanist Society, 7574 N. Lincoln Ave., Skokie.

Among other things, the group will present the liberty piece, "Universal Dream," by Jenni Brandon with text by Meta Hellman, Artemis Singers president, and Jane Addams.

Tickets for "Wildest Dreams" are a suggested donation of \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door for adults. Admission for seniors ages 65 and older and for children ages 12 and younger are a suggested donation of \$10; visit <http://artemiswildestdreams.brownpapertickets.com/>.



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from homosexual to heterosexual. Spitzer wasn't gay himself, but that goes without saying. "Experts" on homosexuality are never homosexuals themselves.

So decades of medical "expertise" turned out to be a crock of poop. They were just using us as lab rats. We aren't gaga at all. In fact, Lady Gaga summed up homosexuality perfectly in one sentence: "You were born this way."

End of story.



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