



Owen Daniel-McCarter.

TRANS JUSTICE

Owen Daniel-McCarter takes helm of Illinois Safe Schools

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

Attorney Owen Daniel-McCarter usually begins every meeting he leads or every email he sends with the words “Beautiful people.”

It is a philosophy that has guided his life, despite a childhood beset by the kind of merciless bullying that would leave anyone with an understandably negative view of the world.

However, Daniel-McCarter’s belief that there is inherent value in every human being, no matter how flawed they may appear, has been so infectious in his attitude and so pervasive in his activism that the countless numbers of people he has touched would describe him as a “Beautiful person.”

On July 1, Daniel-McCarter officially took on the role of executive director of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance—an organization that “promotes safety, support and healthy development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, in Illinois schools and communities, through advocacy, education, youth organizing and research,” according to its website

He will be moving from his former position of policy and advocacy director to succeed Anthony Papini, who left Chicago for his hometown of Seattle in April.

Daniel-McCarter has made history as the first openly transgender individual to take the helm of a major LGBT nonprofit in Illinois.

He is proud and humbled to be sure, but, in his habitual way, more excited about the possibilities which lie ahead to ensure that no child in Illinois has to know the awful feeling of dread the night before school.

He sat down with Windy City Times in the children’s reading section of Chicago’s Edgewater library. His genuine smile and unassuming nature obliterated any discomfort with the hushed backdrop to a deeply personal conversation.

Where Daniel-McCarter does his work or presents his training seminars is not as concerning to him as the people he affects. Wherever he may be, he never seems to forget that he’s seen worse places.

Born in Milwaukee, Daniel-McCarter lived primarily with his mother. Although he credits his father and grandfather as special because they were influential in his life, he said his mother is “important to who I am as a person. She is very much a feminist and an activist and I can remember, as a small child, going to gay-rights marches, pro-choice rallies and protesting the Gulf War.”

Just as significant to Daniel-McCarter’s outlook was growing up in poverty.

“I remember my mom working a lot of jobs. There wasn’t money for childcare so I went to her work quite a bit,” he said. “She was a single mom and working and going to school. When

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'JUNGLE' FEVER

Talking with Alexander Skarsgard of Tarzan: Lord of the Jungle.

Photo from Warner Bros.

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MARY POWERS

Watchdog and LGBT ally dies.

Photo from Bill Kelley

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LGBT VETERANS TRIBUTE

Saluting those who serve and have served our country.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

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PAULETTE ARMSTEAD

Lesbian running for Florida legislature.

Photo courtesy of Armstead for FL House

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CLASS ACT

LEFT: Brett Bigham (with President Obama) talks about being Teacher of the Year, visiting the White House and settling an LGBT-related complaint.

Photo courtesy of Bigham

MURPHY'S LAW



Actress Erin Murphy talks about being Tabitha on the classic TV show Bewitched and her new role as a lesbian.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

SCARLETT'S WEB



Scarlett Johansson was honored at the Siskel this past weekend.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

THE HAILEY NEWS

Queer musician Hailey Wojcik hit a couple Chicago spots last week.

CLAMMING UP

WCT profiles the restaurant Travelle, a hot River North spot that serves dishes such as pork and clams.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Gus Kenworthy, Queer As Folk and Danielle Brooks.

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DANIEL-McCARTER from cover

she was getting her Master's and then her Ph.D., I would go to a lot of her classes."

His own education was just as unforgettable but for an entirely different reason.

"I had so many hard things happen in school," he said. "When I was in kindergarten in Milwaukee Public Schools our teacher was physically abusive to students. It was mostly the Black students who were physically punished in front of the others."

The bullying never relented even in daycare.

"I was picked on a lot because of my size because I used to be a very big kid," he said. "I would also get sexually harassed."

He was 11 when Daniel-McCarter's mother received her Ph.D. and they moved to the Chicago suburb of Oak Park.

Far from easing the level of harassment Daniel-McCarter received, his new home only intensified it.

Bullying can have devastating psychological effects on most children, but it turned Daniel-McCarter into an activist.

"I remember that I wanted to do something to change what was happening," he said. "I'm also a Pisces so it was hard for me to just think about myself. Instead, I knew that if it was happening to me it was happening to other people. For me, it was less internalizing the problem and more protecting mom and dad from knowing about it. When you grow up without a lot of money and you see how worried your parents are, you don't want to add another thing for them to be stressed about."

In the sixth grade, the bullying Daniel-McCarter suffered was so horrendous that, one day, he marched into the principal's office with a list of demands.

"I wanted an apology from the student," he said. "I wanted there to be more of a presence of teachers in the area of the playground where they could not see what was happening between the students."

It was the first of what would be many successes.

"The student had to apologize to me, which was a huge win," Daniel-McCarter said. "It was one of those moments of validation where somebody who caused harm actually said they caused harm."

One year after Daniel-McCarter moved to the Chicago area, his grandfather came out as a gay man.

It was an equally transformative moment.

"It motivated me to do a lot more work around LGBT issues before I ever did it for myself," he said. "It also made a lot of other things make sense—systemic homophobia leading to a lot of personal heartbreaks in the family."

Daniel-McCarter described his junior high and high school years as "hard but aren't they always?"

He won a scholarship to attend the prestigious Latin School on Chicago's Near North Side.

"I didn't feel comfortable there," he said. "It was my first time being around a lot of people with excessive wealth. It's hard to learn in an environment where you don't see people like you around you. I was commuting from Oak Park and so I was seeing Black people in really destitute poverty in areas like Garfield Park and Austin and then going to this really affluent area of the city where parents are paying for an education that is more expensive than most colleges. Even as a kid, it just felt so wrong."

Once again, Daniel-McCarter faced-off with the principal in order to provide him with an unsolicited education.

"I told him that you can't just bring kids that don't have a lot of money into your school and then not change anything to make us actually feel comfortable here," he recalled.

Despite the pleas of his principal, Daniel-McCarter had made up his mind to leave. In his new public high school in Oak Park, he found his creative side in poetry and the creation of zines. Meanwhile he tutored homeless individuals in G.E.D. course work.

After graduation, he attended the University of Vermont, where he majored in women's and gender studies.

"I felt unhappy in Chicago," he said. "I just



Owen Daniel-McCarter addresses D211 School Board.
Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

needed more space and autonomy. I didn't know if I would ever come back."

At university, photography became an important part of Daniel-McCarter's life.

"I would always have my camera with me. I took a lot of pictures of people," he said. "I captured moments and essences of a situation. For me, the process of developing the pictures was the most fun part. There's little tiny things you can do differently that can change the outcome quite a bit."

He joined the school's LGBTQA campus group Free 2 Be as an ally, eventually becoming president. There, he was instrumental in starting a national one-day event called the Translating Identity Conference (TIC) which "explores a wide array of topics in discourses regarding gender and transgender identities, expressions, communities, and intersections."

It is now in its 12th year.

He also helped start an LGBT studies minor course at UVM.

Daniel-McCarter found time to lobby the Vermont State legislature during an internship in his senior year.

"I was lobbying around bullying laws," he said. "We were trying to get gender identity protected in anti-discrimination laws. There was a Republican-controlled house and a Republican governor. We got the bullying law passed but we did not get the anti-discrimination legislation."

Since 2005, the University of Vermont College of Arts and Sciences has offered the Daniel-McCarter Award. "Named for Owen Daniel-McCarter '04 in recognition of his dedication to LGBT concerns at UVM," it says, "this award honors outstanding scholarly and creative coursework on LGBT/queer topics by undergraduates."

When Daniel-McCarter met celebrated transgender attorney and founder of New York's Sylvia Rivera Law Project Dean Spade, it set him on a journey that would as much change other lives as it did his own.

"It was the first time I ever saw a lawyer say things that I felt were deeply true to me," he said. "He was connecting The World Bank and the IMF [International Monetary Fund] to the criminalization of trans women in the United States. There were connections on how systems are working together to enforce gender norms. I was so inspired, that I decided to go to law school."

He attended the City University of New York (CUNY). There he met a "a lot of other rabble rousers," he recalled. "It was an amazing place to go to law school."

An internship at the Sylvia Rivera Law Project politicized Daniel-McCarter around prison abolition.

"The first time I ever went inside a prison was when I went to visit two trans women at the Great Meadow Correctional [Facility] who were clients of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project," he said. "It's a maximum security men's prison in upstate New York. My skin is crawling thinking about it but I remember going into these tiny little cages to meet the women. Everything in my body about the prison itself was saying 'this is wrong.' It was a complete area of moral clarity. The fact that prisons exist and what it means to be a person in a cage was something I had not spent a lot of time thinking about until that moment. I was horrified and I felt compelled to make it stop."

That passionate need to end the prison system eventually brought Daniel-McCarter back to

Chicago.

"I started to realize that there were all these LGBT organizations that did not do criminal defense work," he recalled. "I wondered why they were not thinking about the criminal legal system as one of the primary tools for harming LGBT people."

Daniel-McCarter envisioned an organization that focused on issues such as prisoner's rights, criminal defense and the collateral consequences such as complications in transgender names changes with a criminal record.

A fellow student at CUNY Avi Rudnick—who at the time was working with the advocacy group The Bronx Defenders—collaborated on an idea that would eventually become The Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois (TJLP).

"He convinced me to start it in Chicago," Daniel-McCarter said. "There are fierce political lawyers in Chicago, but there was not a lot of organizing happening around trans advocacy and defense. We also had the legitimacy of being from there."

The four founding members of the TJLP took their first case in 2008. The collective then set about "filling the urgent need for holistic, abolitionist criminal legal services for transgender and gender non-conforming people in Illinois who are targeted by the criminal legal system, and to address gaps in the mainstream LGBT civil-rights movement."

The collective provides legal services for people targeted by the criminal justice system, educational materials and training and community support for those both on the inside and outside of a prison's walls. Their name change drive regularly helps transgender people navigate the complex legal processes involved at the Daley Center.

"I've had a lot of clients who have said that they felt seen and heard by me," Daniel-McCarter said. "That I did a lot of things that no one else had ever done for them before."

To keep the bills paid, Daniel-McCarter taught at DePaul University. He moved on to take a position at Chicago House after being approached by then-CEO Stan Sloan about the idea for The TransLife Center.

"He believed a legal program was important in making the Center a success," Daniel-McCarter said. "It was really a turning-point for me because it meant that I had to step away from a lot of things that I was committed to with TJLP. The thought of how much more I could do with the support of a large organization was an exciting opportunity."

He was right and Chicago House provided innumerable people with legal services—something the organization remains active in doing so today.

However, Daniel-McCarter felt as if he was missing something.

"I felt unhappy doing legal work without the political framework of prison abolition," he said. "It's something that is at the core of myself. I wanted to solve some of the root causes of people who ended up being criminalized. I knew that the beginning of that process happens in school. So when the Alliance reached out to me and encouraged me to apply, I knew I could combine teaching and addressing the root cause."

One could argue that, from the moment Daniel-McCarter stepped into his sixth grade principal's office demanding change, his life had been leading up to such work on a massive scale.

"I love working with young people," he said. "I feel like their creativity, anger and hope is really vital and I feel like they have a lot of answers. Because of ageism, we don't always listen to them. Policy work feels very proactive rather than reactive. When you are defending someone in court, the harm has already happened. The policy work is about anticipating the harm and stopping it so that we don't have to have more people being hurt."

Even with the additional responsibilities of his new position of executive director, Daniel-McCarter stressed that he hasn't walked away from the TJLP but is supporting other people in their leadership of the collective. He is proud of the exponential growth the TJLP is seeing.

The TJLP just filed for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status and has relocated to offices opposite the Thompson Center in the Chicago Loop. The collective remains "deeply committed to the universal right of gender self-determination, a long-term goal of abolishing the prison-industrial complex, and commitment to transformative justice models as necessary alternatives to the criminal punishment system."

"It's a little bittersweet for me because TJLP was my baby and my partner for such a long time in my life," he said. "But it's unhealthy for any organization to be reliant on a single person to exist. Any one of us should be prepared to keep it moving."

Meanwhile, Daniel-McCarter has found a more romantic love with his partner Jessie. They have been together for over six years. "I can't imagine being where I am without him," he said. "He supports me in ways that I don't know I need."

It is the kind of support Daniel-McCarter has brought to children at the schools the Alliance serves across Illinois. There have been a number of success stories such as the implementation of a school-wide transgender affirming policy in Berwyn's District 100.

Elsewhere, the level of bullying Daniel-McCarter has encountered has exceeded even that of his own childhood.

"I've seen all sorts of things," he said. "Intense physical violence to the point where law enforcement is involved to deeply painful things like a trans student finding graffiti in the bathroom with their name and their assigned sex at birth. The thing that I have noticed is that a lot of these kids want to change things for others. They want it to be different. Students like [Alex McCary] in Williamsville wanted there to be a policy in his school even though he is going off to college. He wanted to make sure the next trans student didn't have to go through what he did."

"It's important for anybody who is not trans to realize that we live in a world that is actively erasing us and pretending that we don't exist," he added. "A trans student may not have any other trans students in school, they may not be able to talk to their parents about what is happening or have any allies in school or any staff. They are not going to see themselves reflected in history or literature classes."

Now that Daniel-McCarter is taking the lead in the fight for students like that, he believes it must come "from a sincere place. I don't want to just fit into the role. I want to bring my genuine Owen into it. There's a lot of organizations that are doing nonprofit leadership differently and living out their values in how they lead. That's what I can do at the Alliance. I really want to create the kind of space that my staff want to be in. I have so many ideas."

Daniel-McCarter recalled a quote to which the Alliance often refers by lesbian poet Adrienne Rich. "When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing. It takes some strength of soul—and not just individual strength, but collective understanding—to resist this void ... and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard."

More than anyone, Daniel-McCarter knows just how true that is.

For more information on the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, visit <http://illinois-safe-schools.org>. For more information of the Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois, visit: <http://tjlp.org>.

Military to end anti-transgender ban

On June 30, Defense Secretary Ash Carter stated the military was ending the ban on transgender people being able to serve.

Carter, who had studied the issue of transgender inclusion for almost a year, also said that trans service members will also receive the same medical coverage as any other person serving in the military. Said coverage includes such procedures as gender-reassignment surgery and hormone therapy, if doctors deem them medically necessary.

Reactions from the LGBTQA community were swift. Aaron Belkin—founder and executive director of the PALM Center, which promotes the study of LGBT people in the armed forces—said, “With today’s historic decision, the U.S. military has taken a sweeping step to advance readiness.”

OutServe-SLDN Executive Director Matt Thorn stated, “Transgender service members have been awaiting this announcement for months and years: It has long been overdue. Secretary Carter, with his statement, has given a breath of relief and overdue respect to transgender service members who have been and are currently serving our country with undeniable professionalism, the utmost respect and illustrious courage, with the caveat to do so silently.”

Similarly, American Military Partner Association President Ashley Broadway-Mack said, “Words cannot express how much this announcement means to so many of our transgender service members and their families—brave men and women who have proudly served our nation in silence for far too long.”

SPARTA, the largest organization of actively serving transgender military members, celebrated the Pentagon’s announcement. SPARTA



SPARTA President Sue Fulton.
Photo courtesy of Fulton

President Sue Fulton said, “The thousands of transgender soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen—and their commanders—have one less burden on their shoulders today. We are grateful to the military and civilian leaders in the Department of Defense who worked so hard to get this right.”

However, military-related organizations were

not the only ones praising the decision. Selisse Berry, CEO/founder of Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, said, “I am so thrilled that the oldest government agency, the Department of Defense (DOD), recognizes the valuable contributions of transgender service members to our country’s security and will finally lift the ban on transgender service. Together, we begin a new chapter for the nation and our defense.”

And in a separate statement, Rabbi Jonah

Dov Pesner, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said the “announcement that the Pentagon will lift the ban on transgender troops is an affirmation of what has always been true: transgender service members are committed to serving and protecting the nation and are best able to do so when they are free from fear of harassment for being who they are.”

Trans women win congressional races

Two trans women have more than their first names in common, as they made history June 28 by winning congressional primary races—becoming the first trans individuals to become major candidates for the U.S. Senate or House, The Huffington Post reported.

In Utah, Democrat Misty Kathrine Snow prevailed in her senatorial race and will compete against Republican U.S. Sen. Mike Lee in November. Also, Democrat Misty Plowright will square off against Republican U.S. Rep. Doug Lamborn in Colorado.

Snow, a 30-year-old progressive who works at a grocery store in Salt Lake City, beat her primary opponent Jonathan Swinton by nearly 20 percentage points. (Swinton was originally favored to win.) Plowright, a 33-year-old Army veteran and former Microsoft employee, downed primary opponent Donald Martinez by 16 percentage points.

On her website, Snow noted, “While I’m not running on the basis of being a trans woman, my experiences as a trans woman have given me the empathy to understand the struggles of groups that feel that the American Dream is out of reach. I’m running to give a voice to the voiceless.”

Plowright is running to represent Colorado’s 5th Congressional District. According to her website, she and her wife, Lisa, have both



Misty K. Snow.
Photo from campaign website

been in a committed relationship with their mutual partner, Sebastian, for the past two years.

The Huffington Post item is at HuffingtonPost.com/entry/transgender-candidates-congress_us_5773dcf4e4b0352fed3e8695?section=

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Chicago LGBT veterans' salute recalls the moment of battle

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

A June 27 sun beat down on downtown Chicago's Daley Plaza as representatives from American Veterans for Equal Rights' (AVER) local chapter held their annual salute to America's LGBT veterans.

However, when U.S. Army Military Police combat veteran and AVER member Heather Yang gave an extraordinarily courageous and moving speech, she demonstrated that, compared to the heat of battle, the blazing temperature of the day might as well have been that of winter.

Yang spoke following the presentation and posting of colors by the AVER Color Guard and a stirring rendition of the national anthem provided by International Mr. Leather Show Director Dean Ogren.

LGBT veterans from the U.S. Navy, Army, Coast Guard, National Guard and Air Force were present as U.S. Army and Illinois National Guard veteran Larry Simpson called for a moment of silence "in memory of all American Veterans who have gone on before us and especially for our LGBT Veterans, many of whom had to serve in silence about their personal lives."

"Today we especially remember the 49 lives taken in Orlando on 12 June," Simpson added, struggling to contain his emotions.

James Darby—AVER board president, co-founder of the Chicago Chapter of the organization and a U.S. Navy veteran who served in the Korean War—noted that two of the slain individuals at the Pulse nightclub massacre were veterans: Angel Candelario-Padro, who served in the Puerto Rico National Guard, and the U.S. Army Reserve and Antonio Davon Brown, who served in the U.S. Army Active Reserve.

A proclamation from Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel was read and delivered by City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations Chair and Commissioner Mona Noriega.

"We kicked off Pride by commemorating and honoring those lives lost in Orlando," Noriega said before reading the proclamation. "I also want to say thank you to the first responders who went into danger. We owe all of them a debt of gratitude."

The June 23 proclamation, in part, read, "Whereas throughout the history of America, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Americans of diverse yet converging backgrounds have fearlessly defended the principals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of these United States through their service in the United States Armed Forces side-by-side with their heterosexual counterparts and it is generally recognized that the catalyst for the modern gay civil-rights movement—the Stonewall Uprising of 1969—sparked unified resistance to the widespread injustices faced by all in our greater LGBT community leading to a resurgence of political, economic and community activism to gain these rights."

"Whereas, while making history day in and day out, American Veterans for Equal Rights has also witnessed extraordinary cultural shifts in the rolling out of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010 allowing LGBT-identified citizens to serve openly and proudly in the United States Armed Forces," the proclamation continued, "and whereas the members of the Chicago chapter of AVER persist in their tireless work toward a more perfect union affirming to all, they continue to selflessly give of their time, resources and expertise to improve the lives of all veterans, I, Rahm Emanuel, do hereby proclaim June 30 to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Veterans of America Day in Chicago and encourage all Chicagoans to acknowledge and salute these outstanding

veterans for their brave sacrifice, unwavering dedication to our country and ongoing contributions to the City of Chicago."

A native of Buffalo, New York, who joined the military in 1996, Yang provided a visceral illustration of Emanuel's sentiments.

"I was only 17 when I enlisted," Yang said. "I spent 16 weeks completing basic training and moving on to advanced individual training. After graduation I returned to New York to enter the 105th MP [Military Police] Company where I was assigned to 1st Platoon. When I was told that, I thought there must have been some kind of mistake because it was a well-known fact that there were no females in 1st Platoon."

"I showed up for the first formation and I was met with more than a few judgmental looks," she added. "This was the first time a woman was standing in these ranks and I knew I would have a lot to prove."

Yang's company was sent to New York City Sept. 11, 2001.

"We arrived just hours after the Towers had

She described the three days 3rd Squad was assigned to the top of a hill halfway between their base camp and the city of Baghdad in order to "relay messages from one point to another."

"I had a bad feeling about going that day," Yang said. "I couldn't pinpoint why. My gunner and still one of my very best friends kept reassuring me that everything was going to be fine and there was nothing to worry about."

Yang was listening to Radiohead on her headphones when she "first heard a noise that I have now come to dread and fear."

"I ripped my headphones off and heard everyone yelling at me, 'Get in the bunker!'" she said. "Without question, I grabbed my Kevlar [body armor] and made the mad dash to our poor excuse of a bunker which we built into the hilltop. I'm still unsure whose hand it was, but a hand stretched out, grabbed my vest and pulled me into the bunker just as the first mortar hit the hill."

Yang seemed to be forcing herself to continue with the story—the very act of reliving it causing her voice and body to tremble.

"All 10 of us [were] crammed into this small bunker," she remembered. "Mortar after mortar hit the top, side and base of the hill. I remember thinking to myself 'is this what an earthquake feels like?' The squad took a second to regroup and we headed back out to fight."

Yang told her friend, "I don't want to die here. Not like this."

"He grabbed me by the shoulders, looked me in the eyes and said, 'I promise you, we are not

nothing we could do at that point but to duck down and cross our fingers."

"We were outnumbered and the small arms fire and mortars showed no signs of stopping," Yang said. "We were like sitting ducks so the decision to leave the hill was made. Everyone went to start their Humvees."

One of the Humvees had a dead battery.

"I did the only thing I could think of. I jumped out of my truck, grabbed the military version of jumper cables, hooked them up to my truck and ran to the dead [Humvee] to connect them," Yang said. "I was never so happy to hear that other Humvee start in my entire life. I had hooked up the cables just as two more thuds were heard and I jumped back into my driver's seat. As I shut the door, the mortars hit the hillside and we took off with everyone from my squad safely in tow."

"Some of the guys in the platoon always had doubts about me, that I could really handle being in combat as a woman," Yang remembered. "But when they thanked me and hugged me for getting them off that hill, I knew I had changed their minds and I would never be doubted again."

For her actions, Yang was awarded the Army Commendation Medal of Valor.

She ended her service in 2005 and moved to Chicago.

"The years I spent in the military and the people I served with helped me to become the strong, proud and confident woman that I am today even though it did come with its downfalls," Yang said. "I suffer with anxiety and



Above: Dean Ogren (far right) sings the National Anthem.

Left: Jim Darby. Below: Heather Yang.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond



come down and it's almost impossible to describe the sights, sounds and smells from that month that I spent there," she said. "We worked alongside FEMA and it was beyond emotionally draining. The one bright spot was how much we all bonded, supported and uplifted one another."

Yang noted that the bond between the members of 1st Platoon was strong enough for them to face deployment to Iraq on Valentine's Day 2003 where they remained for 16 months.

"I was 24 years old when we left," she said. "During our deployment, we lost two members of our company; my friends Sergeant Heath McMillin and Specialist Michael Williams. Both were killed on action by improvised explosive devices."

"My squad, platoon and company were attacked more times than I can remember," Yang added. "But one particular attack, I don't think I will ever be able to forget."

going to die. Not tonight! When I stepped out of the bunker, it was almost like I'd stepped into a movie. Tracer rounds were screaming through the air and our squad leader was yelling out orders while firing his weapon from the Humvee. It was like everything was happening in slow motion."

Realizing that there was no one manning it, Yang said she "jumped on the radio and, in the calmest voice I could muster, called back a situation report."

"Nothing could have prepared me for how loud it was on top of that hill," Yang remembered. "Thankfully, 3rd Platoon was currently on patrol. Waiting for them to arrive was the longest 10 minutes of my life. I never left my post in spite of the constant mortars and gunfire. Just as 3rd Platoon was radioing back to me that they were at the base of the hill, I heard that unmistakable thud of a mortar being launched and it was close. There was really

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It is something I will carry with me for the rest of my life. Every time I am able to share my story, I let other servicemembers know that they are not alone. It gets easier and makes it all worth it."

As they applauded Yang's speech, the audience took a breath along with her.

Under the haunting sounds of Echo Taps played by Lakeside Pride Marching Band members Susan Jones and Melissa Terrell, a wreath was laid at the Daley Center Eternal Flame—a lasting memorial to those whose stories must live on in people like Yang and her fellow AVER members.

They are stories which must be told and passed down through future generations so they will never take the word "sacrifice" and the blood in which it is defined for granted.

For more details about AVER, see AVERchicago.org.

Humanitarian group releases glossary for LGBT people

Organization for Refuge, Asylum & Migration (ORAM)—an international non-profit organization founded in 2008 that is devoted to advocating on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers—has released a first-of-its-kind glossary of terminology to assist humanitarian professionals to communicate with people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

The comprehensive, 124-page glossary, “Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression: Essential Terminology for the Humanitarian Sector,” contains the most appropriate and culturally sensitive terms for communicating with LGBT individuals.

Following the glossary, ORAM plans to release a full toolkit for the international humanitarian profession that will contain a variety of products designed to help LGBT individuals worldwide be treated with dignity and respect. The toolkit will include training modules, checklists for humanitarian professionals to create a safe space, and visual safe-space collateral.

Visit oramrefugee.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Glossary-PDF.pdf.

Right: The cover of ORAM’s new glossary of LGBT terminology. Image courtesy of ORAM



Report: 1.4M trans people in U.S.

An estimated 0.6 percent of adults in the United States, or 1.4 million individuals, identify as transgender, according to a new study authored by researchers at The Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law. The study provides the first-ever state-level estimates of the percentage of adults who identify as transgender throughout the United States, ranging from 0.3 percent in North Dakota to 0.8 percent in Hawaii.

“The findings from this study are critical to current policy discussions that impact transgender people,” said Jody Herman, one of the authors of the study. “Policy debates on access to bathrooms, discrimination, and a host of other issues should rely on the best available data to assess potential impacts, including how many people may be affected.”

The study—“How Many Adults Identify as Transgender in the United States,” by Andrew R. Flores, Jody L. Herman, Gary J. Gates and Taylor N.T. Brown—updates previous estimates of the population of transgender adults in the US. Study authors used data from the 2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), which includes representative surveys of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and US territories. In 2014, 19 states included a question about transgender identity on their BRFSS survey, and the number of states that

ask that question is growing. The authors used additional data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey to develop estimates of the transgender-identified adult populations of the other 31 states.

Key findings from the study include:

- Approximately 0.6 percent of adults identify as transgender, or 1.4 million adults.
- There are differences in the percentage of adults who identify as transgender among the states. Hawaii (0.8 percent), California (0.8 percent), Georgia (0.8 percent), New Mexico (0.8 percent), Texas (0.7 percent), and Florida (0.7 percent) are the states that have the highest percentages of adults who identify as transgender.
- The states with the lowest percentages of transgender-identified adults are North Dakota (0.3 percent), Iowa (0.3 percent), Wyoming (0.3 percent), Montana (0.3 percent) and South Dakota (0.3 percent).
- Young adults are more likely than older adults to identify as transgender. Among adults ages 18 to 24, 0.7 percent identify as transgender; among adults ages 25 to 64, 0.6 percent identify as transgender; and among adults ages 65 and older, 0.5 percent identify as transgender.

The full report is at <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/How-Many-Adults-Identify-as-Transgender-in-the-United-States.pdf>.

United Nations creates LGBT post

The United Nations’ Human Rights Council—in a 23-18 vote (with six abstentions)—will appoint an expert to monitor LGBT-based bias and violence.

The expert is expected to be appointed at the next meeting of the Geneva-based body in September. In general, Latin America and the West voted for the position, while China and many Middle Eastern and African countries voted against it, ABC News noted.

“This is truly momentous,” said Micah Grzywnowicz from the Swedish Federation for LGBTQ Rights, RFSL. “This is our opportunity to bring international attention to specific violations and challenges faced by transgender and gender non-conforming persons in all regions.

The decision to establish an Independent Expert for LGBTQ rights is a significant milestone in the global effort for LGBTQ equality,” added Ty Cobb, director of HRC Global, in a separate statement. “This new UN role will reinforce and institutionalize a commitment to combating discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity wherever it occurs. All LGBTQ people, regardless of where they live, will soon have a dedicated watchdog at the United Nations looking out for their rights, interests, and lives.”

Report reveals support levels for LGBTIs

Funders for LGBTQ Issues and the Global Philanthropy Project have released “The 2013-2014 Global Resources Report: Government and Philanthropic Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Communities.”

The document captures funding from 415 foundations as well as 16 government and multilateral agencies, reporting on 9,347 grants. Also, the report provides detailed data on the distribution of LGBTI funding by geography, issue, strategy and population focus, offering a baseline for identifying trends, gaps and opportunities in the rapidly changing landscape of LGBTI funding.

Among other things, the report finds:

- Over 2013-2014, government and philanthropic support for LGBTI issues totaled \$424 million; and
- For every \$100 awarded by foundations, only 13 cents benefit LGBTI communities. For every \$100 awarded by government and multilateral agencies, only four cents benefit LGBTI communities.

The full report is at LGBTFund.org/resources/pub.cfm?pubID=87.





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Police watchdog and LGBT ally Mary Powers dies

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Mary Powers nee Downey, 93, a longtime activist and LGBT ally, died June 25 at Evanston Hospital following a short illness.

Powers was born Sept. 10, 1922 and spent her early years in East Lansing and Flint, Michigan. She attended Marygrove College—a private, Catholic, women's college—but graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a degree in sociology.

She worked at the American Red Cross briefly before taking an employee counselor position at Western Electric where she worked from 1946-1950. It was while working at Western Electric that Powers became aware of gay and lesbian people—her fellow employees—and the difficulties they faced.

She said in a 2012 interview with Windy City Times, “In that counseling role, I was fortunate enough to build enough confidence in the people I was working with that they confided in me their personal problems. At that point, people were losing their jobs [because of their sexual orientation]. This was such a moving and compelling situation, I began to feel involved in the issues of this community right then.”

Powers married her husband William (who preceded her in death) shortly after World War II and they lived in Winnetka, Illinois for many years.

She is survived by her daughters Joanne Powers and Elisabeth Marcum, sons William and Stephen, seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Along with many activists, 1969 was a transformative year for Powers. Shortly after the 1969 raid on the Black Panthers' apartment on Chicago's West Side, Powers and a few of her neighbors from Winnetka walked through the raided Panther apartment after the raid and were appalled at the destruction.

“We were all so shocked that we decided to get involved and do something,” said Powers in 2012.

Powers saw a flier from the Alliance to End Repression, a coalition of social-activist task forces, advertising an open meeting at DePaul University to galvanize citizens against the structures that lead to their own repression. Powers chose to join a board directly involved in monitoring and fighting what activists felt were overreaches of power in the criminal justice system. Shortly after the meeting, the group became a part of Citizens Alert in an attempt to tackle perceived abuses of power in the CPD.

As vice president of the Alliance to End Repression, she supported the formation of what would later be called the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Powers involvement included serving on CA's board for a number of years, and was active with the group until it folded last year.

One of the things she was best known for was her efforts to bring Chicago Police Cmdr. Jon Burge to justice beginning in 1991. Burge was accused of getting confessions out of suspects via torture methods in Chicago Reader articles. Powers attended Burge's federal trial some 20 years later where he was convicted of perjury and obstruction of justice.

Powers was inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame in 1992 as a friend of the community for her work in advocating for LGBT civil rights as well as addressing police abuse and harassment. In 2012, she received the Elizabeth I. Benson Award from Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ for her years of service and dedication to police accountability.



Mary Powers.

Photo courtesy of Bill Kelley

“For many years when it was really necessary to demonstrate on the street about gay and lesbian issues, the police were always there with heavy surveillance, so the Observer Program would appear at many of those occasions when asked to do so by the community, wearing our Citizens Alert volunteer armbands and recording every bit of interaction between demonstrators, the police and the public,” Powers said in 2012.

She was also an active member of the Catholic Church where she served as a board member of Chicago Catholic Women (CCW) from 1977-1985.

“Mary was an unwavering advocate for women and the LGBT community both within the Catholic church and in society,” said LGBT activist Rick Garcia. “Since the late 1960s, long before it was fashionable, she advocated for formal training of police officers on LGBT issues. She also documented police brutality and fought against the abuses of the police toward minority communities; timely positions to take even today. Mary played a significant role in the successes of Chicago's LGBT community. We owe her an enormous debt of gratitude.”

“She was a wonderful woman and real fighter for what she believed in,” said longtime friend Mary Jane Vogt.

“In 1975, I asked Mary to give testimony on the topic of women in prison for CCW's participation in the Bicentennial Conference of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops,” said CCW founder and Executive Director Donna Quinn. “While serving on CCW's board, Mary was one of the organizers protesting for the inclusion of female altar servers which eventually led to universal acceptance of this practice. Mary was a well-loved member of CCW. She continually taught others about our work fighting against gender discrimination both in the church and society at large and will always be remembered.”

Per Powers' request, her funeral service (provided by Donnellan Family Funeral Services in Skokie, Illinois) will be private.

See the 2012 interview with Powers at WindyCityMediaGroup.com/lgbt/Citizens-Alerts-Mary-Powers-on-advocacy-and-the-power-of-individuals/39470.html.

Paulette Armstead.

Photo courtesy of Armstead for FL House



Openly lesbian attorney running for Florida legislature

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

Running in the Aug. 30 primary election for the Democratic stronghold of District 92 (Broward County) in Florida's House of Representatives, Paulette V. Armstead describes herself as having “diverse experience for diverse challenges.”

As an openly LGBT candidate, should she prevail against her four challengers for the seat vacated by the popular Gwyndolen “Gwyn” Clarke-Reed, Armstead will be swimming against the tide in a state that saw the rise of Anita Bryant's 1977 campaign against gay rights and has rarely looked back. There is no Republican listed on the ballot for this November.

Despite support for the LGBT community voiced for the benefit of the hordes of television cameras which descended on Orlando in the hours after the Pulse Nightclub massacre, Florida's Republican Gov. Rick Scott and Attorney General Pam Bondi have been openly hostile to LGBT issues.

There is currently only one openly gay member in the Florida legislature—Rep. David Richardson (D-113).

He and fellow Democrat Joe Saunders were elected in 2012 as the first openly gay men to serve at the State Capitol in Tallahassee. Saunders is now the Southern Regional Field Director for the Human Rights Campaign.

Florida did not relinquish its ban on gay adoptions until 2010. It was the last state to do so.

Thanks to the efforts of organizations such as Equality Florida, religious “freedom” legislation similar to that in North Carolina was not brought to the House floor in 2016. However, it and a swath of anti-LGBT bills remain an ominous threat for the 2017 session.

A proposed bill banning anti-LGBT discrimination in public accommodations, housing and employment (the Florida Competitive Workforce Act) failed following arguments by opponents who, according to Equality Florida “appealed to irrational fears and invoked the same bathroom arguments fueling discrimination in North Carolina and dehumanizing transgender people in particular.”

Bondi refused to offer an opinion on federal guidelines determining access to restrooms by transgender public school students. In April, 2016 Florida's Department of Children and Families (DCF) struck the language sexual orientation and gender expression from its anti-bullying guidelines.

But swimming against the tide is something Armstead has had enough practice to ensure she will not drown.

She was the third to file in her field of five and she did so out of a determination to give the marginalized a voice which is consistently muted in a Republican-controlled legislature. If Armstead has her way, that voice will be enough of an exclamation to throw a wrench in the works of indifference.

“When it comes to the LGBT community, the Republicans are not fighting for inclusion,” she told Windy City Times. “They are legalizing discrimination. Sexual orientation and gender identity are protected classes under federal law and Scott is pushing against that. You just can't discriminate against a block of citizens. Employers here like AT&T and Disney want the anti-discrimination bill passed but Scott and his Republican cronies are blocking that.”

“The Republican agenda has taken precedent,” she added. “When it comes to the economy, Scott says he wants to create jobs and so he has given large corporations huge tax breaks and eliminated a lot of industry regulations. That is not how you are going to create jobs. Employers are looking for a skilled labor force. Our emphasis should be on preparing workers with skills in technology, engineering, math and science. To grow our workforce, we must have affordable housing, good schools and cultural activities.”

Armstead is equally as impassioned about women's rights.

“Florida is one of the remaining states that has not ratified the ERA [Equal Rights Amendment],” she said. “That's uncalled for. Scott launched an investigation into Planned Parenthood. It came back showing that there were no irregularities but, in this last legislative session, he signed a bill to defund an organization that provides reproductive healthcare for working-class women, mammogram screenings, gynecological exams, HIV and STD testing for females and males.”

The list of battles that lie ahead are as long as they are formidable but, if she wins at the polls, Armstead will be armed with a resume filled with multifaceted public service and a life history that forged a fighter through necessity.

She was born prematurely leading to a serious heart condition which doctors didn't think she would survive beyond the age of

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Legacy Project program examines pivotal Supreme Court cases

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

As part of its Legacy LIVE series, the LGBT educational organization The Legacy Project brought its groundbreaking digitally interactive Legacy Wall to the Center on Halsted the last week of June. Coinciding with the display was a June 29 program with five speakers discussing six significant LGBT-related U.S. Supreme Court cases. The Legacy LIVE series is presented by Legacy Project, Center on Halsted and the Northalsted Business Alliance.

Pride Action Tank Executive Director Kim Hunt moderated the "Judgments in June" event that included author, LGBTQ history scholar and retired University of Chicago at Illinois (UIC) professor Dr. John D'Emilio; Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim; Legacy Project Executive Director Victor Salvo; and award-winning Lambda Legal attorney Camilla Taylor.

Together, they charted the history of LGBT challenges and progress at the nation's highest court beginning with *ONE, Inc. v. Olesen* (1958), *Bowers v. Hardwick* (1986), *Romer v. Evans* (1996), *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), *The U.S. v. Windsor* (2013) and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015).

According to Hunt, the cases "transformed the movement and our role and visibility in society."

The stories behind the cases served as a visceral representation of how far the community has come in its legal fight for civil rights and how far it has left to go.

Baim had written about the *One, Inc.* decision in her 2012 book *Gay Press, Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America* "because it was about early gay media," she said, adding that *ONE, Inc.* was founded from a discussion during a 1952 meeting of the Los Angeles-based Mattachine Society on the need for a magazine.

The August/September 1953 issue of *ONE* was seized by the Los Angeles Postal Authority and then released three weeks later with no explanation.

"Ironically, on the cover 'Homosexual Marriage' was a headline," Baim said.

The October 1954 issue was seized on charges of being obscene, lewd, lascivious and filthy. It and the 1873 Comstock Law became pivotal in the case before the Supreme Court.

"It took four years of legal rulings for the U.S. Supreme Court to say that it was not in violation of obscenity laws," Baim recalled. "In the pre-internet era, print publications were a part of activism. They were critical tools for the movement."

Baim noted that, during the June 1957 Supreme Court determination on obscenity in *Roth v. United States*, Justice William Brennan writing for the majority said, "material that has even a modicum of redeeming social value is protected free speech."

"That was key," Baim said. "The *Roth* test, while vague and inconclusive, was enough to be the basis of a Supreme Court decision in the *Olesen* case. *ONE, Inc.* was the first U.S.



Legacy Project panelists (from left) Tracy Baim, Dr. John D'Emilio, Camilla Taylor, Victor Salvo and Kim Hunt.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

Supreme Court rule to deal with homosexuality and the first to address free speech rights with respect to homosexuality. The next issue of *ONE* stated, For the first time in American publishing history, the decision binding on every court now stands; affirming, in effect, that it is in no way proper to describe two homosexuals as constituting obscenity. Another writer said that "it was the day anti-gay censorship died."

However, it was only a first step.

D'Emilio described the *Hardwick* and *Lawrence* cases which converged around United States sodomy laws as "profoundly important."

"Both of them had an incredibly powerful impact," he said. "Both led to really significant change. Initially, sodomy was a capital offense. The [laws] continued on the books for over 300 years. They were the foundation for seeing same-sex behavior as fundamentally criminal."

In 1961, Illinois became the first state to repeal its sodomy law.

"Other states followed but by the early 1980s when the *Hardwick* case has its beginnings there were sodomy laws in half the states,"

D'Emilio said. Michael Hardwick was arrested in his own home for having sex with an adult male.

In ruling for the constitutionality of Georgia's obscenity law, D'Emilio noted that the language used in the Supreme Court's opinion was "insulting, condemnatory and contemptuous."

D'Emilio added that the same 17-year period passed between the Stonewall uprisings and the *Hardwick* decision and then the 2003 decision overturning it six to three in *Lawrence*.

By contrast, D'Emilio described the language as written by Justice Anthony Kennedy in that decision as "quite exhilarating."

Similarly far-reaching was the decision reached in *Romer*.

"In 1992, something was happening across the country in that municipalities were passing ordinances protecting LGB people," Salvo said. "The T had not really factored into a lot of people's radar at the time."

Turn to page 14

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**Samantha
POWER**

White House dialogue on global LGBT human rights

Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, spoke at the White House Dialogue on Global LGBT Human Rights. Her remarks, as delivered, are included below.

It's amazing to be here and to be with all of you. This is a really important thing to do, particularly in light of recent events, but anyway, to step back, and to look back at what has been achieved in this last five years. From the diplomatic corps representatives who are here, to civil society representatives—each of you have played a really critical role in bringing us to where we are today. I'm only going to speak very briefly, but do want to pull a few of the highlights out of the last five years and look at the legacy of the presidential memorandum, which is itself just a symptom of the president's leadership.

Five years ago, when I was in the position occupied brilliantly now by Steve Pomper, I had the privilege, along with Ambassador David Pressman, who you will hear from a little bit later, of helping President Obama shepherd this historic LGBT memorandum through the U.S. government. When he signed the presidential memorandum—I remember as if it was yesterday—the response inside the government, as well as outside the government, was immediate. And in particular, I will never forget the outpouring of emotion from people around the United States—again, whether inside or outside the government—but also around the world, when they heard that LGBTI rights was being embedded, as Josh put it, into the DNA of the U.S. government.

I don't know why it resonates so much more when one sees one's own issue in the kind of sterile bureaucratized that is the lifeblood of government, but, you know, if every other issue that is a priority lives in those documents and in those directives, why not LGBTI rights? And sure enough, putting it into that form and having that directive go out to all the agencies and departments that are part of the U.S. government, it's game-changing. It means it's there forever; it means someone has to take it away. And it really was a historic step that the President took, and one of the many reasons I'm incredibly proud to get to work for him and to represent him.

So the idea that there's this memorandum that dedicates the U.S. government and our foreign policies, a matter of national interest, to fighting the criminalization of LGBTI status; to directing significant resources to empowering LGBTI groups abroad; to responding swiftly and meaningfully when governments have repressed LGBTI rights. These are words on a page, but they spring off the page when they affect—as Josh, again, put it—real people.

On the conference call that we convened to walk people through the components of this presidential memorandum—which I should say was issued the same day Secretary Clinton gave her amazing speech in Geneva, where you could've—I wasn't there, but I gather—could've heard a pin drop when she said “LGBTI rights are human rights; human rights are LGBTI rights and all universal rights.” We convened

a conference call, and what I remember most about that call was one woman, describing her life as a lesbian woman with her partner, deciding where she could travel with her children abroad, and knowing her whole life that there were “No Go Zones” that were sort of off-limits—parts of the map that may as well not have been on the map for the purposes of her and her children and her partner. And she said, “Suddenly with this memorandum—even though we're so far from that day—it's the first time I see my government announcing to the world that its ambition is that there will be no ‘No Go Zones’ for me and my family. And because if these rights were universal rights, it would be so weird! We would actually never have to have that thought, that voice in the back of our heads, of thinking, you know, is that a place that is going to be friendly to me? Is it going to be hostile to me? Is it going to be criminal to love in the way that I can love in my home?” And, you know, as someone who hasn't had to have that voice in her head, it really, really struck me what universality actually means and what a denial of universality means concretely for people who don't—who can't experience and don't see their rights fully realized.

So this presidential memorandum sets out to end the “No Go Zones” and to expand enjoyment of rights in a deep, deep way. We have been implementing it, also in a deep way. The progress abroad, of course, is not like what we have had the amazing fortune of witnessing or experiencing here in this room. In some ways, some of the setbacks abroad I feel are a reaction in a way to some of the progress that has been made here, for all of the challenges that lie ahead even within our own borders. But even abroad we are making headway, and I can see it, as someone who worked here at the White House on these issues for four years, and now up in New York for three years. It's different, it's really different pushing this agenda internationally.

Five years ago, I would never have foreseen being able to hold a UN Security Council meeting—a mere meeting—on the topic of violence against LGBTI persons. And yet on Aug. 24, 2015, we and Chile co-sponsored this meeting. Also, lots of countries in the UN family—even those who aren't great on these issues at home—they showed up. And they heard one of the most powerful presentations any of them will ever hear: Subhi Nahas sharing his story of fleeing his home in Syria after being threatened by ISIL and even threatened by his own family. Subhi was recently honored as a Logo Trailblazer and as one of the Grand Marshals of New York City's 2016 Pride March.

But I compared to that day—I'm not sure which is more amazing, to actually be speaking in front of the world about the need to change norms and implement human rights standards equally, without prejudice to whom we are applying them to, versus hanging out with Bill de Blasio and the other Pride March. But Subhi did a tremendous job. And the way we will change policy is we will change hearts and minds. And that is the order in which we are progressing in New York.

Five years ago, the United Nations did not even think about granting benefits to the families of same-sex UN employees. But a courageous UN Secretary-General put forward a UN bulletin granting those benefits. And I'm very proud of the fact that last year, the United States and a group of countries committed to non-discrimination and equality were able to thwart a very spirited Russian effort to force the Secretary-General to pull back his directive actually securing same-sex benefits—benefits for same-sex couples. So, that was another one that if you look at the 193 countries in the UN

and the policies they have at home, it was not obvious that we were going to be able to sustain support for the Secretary-General's important directive. But because—as we always say on my team—we want it more, and because we had such great support from civil society, the Russians were thwarted in a very, very lopsided vote, in fact, and were unable to defy the will of the Secretary-General.

Five years ago, one could not have dreamed that we would end up, in any circumstance, able to secure a Security Council condemnation of the targeting of people on the basis of sexual orientation. But out of the horrific Orlando attack and the heartbreak of that, we knew that we had to do everything in our power to try to unite a very, very divided Security Council. And on Monday, June 13, for the first time in the UN's 70-year history, the Security Council denounced violence targeting people “as a result of their sexual orientation.” Even countries like Russia and Egypt did not block this effort.

And five years ago, I would never have imagined that we would be able to bring a diverse, regionally cross-cutting group of UN ambassadors to Stonewall for a monumental meeting of a new network that we are part of in New York, called the LGBT Core Group. And this was just an amazing meeting, where you had countries from Asia, Latin America, Europe—not yet Africa—but sitting around the table and talking about redoubling our efforts to push this agenda around the world. The UN is just a venue; it's a forum—we shouldn't confuse forum with substance. But if we can work it at the center and then get the change out into the capillaries, through the governments and their representatives and their citizens, we will turn the tide against discrimination internationally.

So we have come a long way in these five years, but the next five years start today. And I think it is invigorating that the Obama administration—and thanks hugely to the leadership of Steve Pomper and Ambassador Rice—are not letting up in our efforts to promote LGBTI rights internationally.

I think we need to work very concretely to try to get more countries, more governments, to issue directives along the lines that President Obama had the foresight to issue five years ago. I will have the privilege of attending, with Special Envoy Berry, the Global LGBTI International Conference in Montevideo, Uruguay on July 13. And there, ministers and civil society activists from around the world will discuss how we can better promote LGBTI rights and inject, again, this agenda into various countries' foreign policy agenda, but also into inclusive development. And I hope that any of the governments represented here will send ministers to that meeting. We are seeking to secure the highest level of representation possible.

I want to end just on a sobering note, and the reminder that for all of this progress—some of it in form, a lot also in substance—more than 70 countries still criminalize same-sex relationships, legislators continue to pass discriminatory laws, and LGBTI civil society actors face harassment and discrimination. And we need a global coalition of diverse voices, but also of united voices, standing up against hatred. We should all be able to love openly without hiding in the shadows. Nobody should ever have to have that voice in their head. We've got to eliminate the “No Go Zones” once and for all.

And I want to thank you, really and truly, for all of your work in this regard. We wouldn't be here without you. And we won't get where we need to get going forward unless we stay united. So I thank you, and I thank you very much for having me.

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Picture perfect?

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WCT reviews *The Woman Who Amuses Herself*, about the Mona Lisa.

Photo from Idle Muse Theatre Company

THEATER

Queer as 'Folk': Trans actress stars in New Colony play

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

William Glick's play, *Kin Folk*, proposes a trio of sisters on the brink of major change. Following the death of their parents, the plan is to sell the family house in the suburbs and follow their respective blisses in glamorous Chicago.

Mary prepares to launch her homemaking website, offering advice on creating the perfect household. Eleanor has recently transitioned from male to female and looks forward with undiluted eagerness to life in the city. Lucy is caught in the middle of an identity crisis, though, her ambivalence arising from the prospect of leaving before completing her initiation into the world of "Otherkin"—a community of once-magical creatures now forced to live incognito among human beings—when she will be re-baptized as the mighty dragon, Kreeka. Of the three, only Eleanor remains confident and steadfast as she faces a new future.

Once upon a time, this role would have been played by an exceptionally tall and/or brawny female actor, or a male actor in drag. For this New Colony world premiere production, however, Eleanor is portrayed by Alexia Jasmene, herself a transgender actress whom audiences may recall seeing in Step Up's 2015 holiday production of Mia McCullough's *Temperance vs. Tolerance*, where she also played a transgendered child of a family at odds with one another's life choices.

"Every trans narrative is different, but for myself, I knew I was a girl when I was 4 years old," Jasmene confided. "My femininity was pretty prominent until I was 9, when—let's say, an individual new to my life—began to harangue me so that I hid who I was from the world and myself. At the age of 24, I was living in China, teaching English and trying to make inroads into music and acting, when I finally had my moment of complete self-acceptance."

China is not a country that comes to mind when listing enclaves of non-conformist behavior, but Jasmene said there was no overt hostility while undergoing transition: "I had steady employment, a small amount of savings, an apartment, a group of supportive friends, and my uncle is a doctor who has helped trans women through their transitions. Even on the other side of this planet, I had knowledgeable people to assist me." She added, with a slight frown, "I didn't factor in the 'all-white-people-look-the-same' attitude of the local population, or being stared at for both my height AND my complexion—but I never encountered the hate and violence that I might have met here in the States."

The family in William Glick's play may have problems acclimating to their relations' adopted identities (both intergender or interspecies)—but Jasmene has nothing but praise for those witnessing her re-entry into U.S. society.

"I have been insanely lucky compared to most trans individuals," she said. "My new name and pronouns were a hurdle at first, but although there are still a few slip-ups, my family and long-time friends are trying their hardest to adjust. Most trans folk don't have this kind of network. Fortunately, there are organizations that can help trans people in crisis, like Trans Lifeline (the only trans crisis line in the country), or Trans Tech, which finds them employment opportunities. Their budgets are minuscule compared to the demand for their services, though."

In both plays featuring Jasmene in their casts, her character has been designated "transgender" in the script. Does the actress anticipate a time when she can play—say, Dolly Levi or Lady Macbeth, rather than roles custom-tailored and labeled "transgender"?

"I'd like to expand my range to include cis women, but I also would like to continue rewriting the 'pathetic-man-in-a-dress' stereotypes. I'm looking to break into film and television where I can portray strong, capable,

individualized trans women. This is especially important at this time, because we are severely underrepresented in mainstream media—*accurately* represented, that is—and these stories, and plays, and films and television show influence society's perceptions of who we are in real life."

Your transgender character's adaptation to new ways of viewing the world proves the most successful over the course of the play. Do you think the playwright planned it that way?

"I think *all* cis writers should take a page from William Glick's book, especially his including people from the trans community in his research. Eleanor is more sure-footed than her relatives because she already had to go through so much in her quest to live authentically, and that's a process that usually forces you to find the core of who you are and what you want. The play is about extreme attitudes and how they can turn on themselves, but Eleanor can pick up the pieces and keep forging ahead even when things get tough. It has been a joy to play her."

The New Colony's production of *Kin Folk* opens Tuesday, July 12, at The Den, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave. For further information, contact TheNewColony.org.



Alexia Jasmene in *Kin Folk*.
Photo by Evan Barr

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THEATER REVIEW

The Book of Mormon

Music & Lyrics & Book by Trey Parker, Matt Stone & Robert Lopez
At: The Private Bank Theatre,
18 W. Monroe St.
Tickets: 800-775-2000;
BroadwayinChicago.com; \$35-225
Runs through: Aug 14

BY ERIC KARAS

Hello! The Book of Mormon tour is back in Chicago and as funny as ever. A overachieving Mormon Missionary Elder Price (Ryan Bondy) is partnered with an underachieving partner Elder Cunningham (Cody Jamison Strand).

Elder Price wishes to go to Orlando but winds up in Africa instead. As events unfold Price loses his faith while Cunningham finds his. Of course, under the guide of South Park's Trey Parker and Matt Stone as well as Avenue Q's Robert Lopez, it's a crass, over-the-top ride that is only for someone with a funny bone that is distinctly not politically correct. It also lovingly sends up the Mormon beliefs while promoting the core values of family, friendship and team work, which is why they get away with it.

Bondy, as Elder Price, has the heavy lifting of the show. He is in almost every scene and he does a terrific job. His plastered-on smile and confidence embodies the optimism under duress the part requires. Cody Jamison Strand, as Elder Cunningham, is more of a cartoon than SpongeBob down the block. His performance is shrieking followed by low-voiced reaction and very funny. They play well off one another. When they have to be serious, you buy it. Can-



Denee Benton and Cody Jamison Strand in The Book of Mormon.
Photo by Joan Marcus

dace Quarrels, as the girl in the village, Nabulungi, brings a reality to her role that counterbalances the outrageous comedy. Her song "Sal Tlay Ka Siti" is beautiful. Bondy does a fine job on "I Believe," which is a highlight of the show. Jamison Strand's silly "Man Up" sends people laughing to intermission.

The supporting cast are really wonderful in

this show. The Mormon Missionaries and the African villagers are all in perfect voice and really sell the comedy here. The dancing and the characterizations are all spot on. It's really hard to pick out one musical number to highlight either group because they all hit. I can say that by the time the African villagers are performing "Joseph Smith American Mo-

ses," the audience is rolling in the aisles. A few years ago Book of Mormon was as hard to see as Hamilton and it's still worth the hype. If you want to laugh and enjoy a fun musical that actually sends up musicals from Disney to The King & I, then this is for you. (Younger or more sensitive viewers should probably stay home.) "I believe" you'll have a great time.

THEATER REVIEW

Importance of Being Earnest

Playwright: Oscar Wilde
At: The Athenaeum Theatre,
2936 N. Southport Ave.
Tickets: 773-935-6860 or at
DeadWriters.net; \$40.
Runs through: July 31

BY LIZ BAUDLER

When the box-office staff introduces the play as "three hours long, with two intermissions," a theatregoer might start to get anxious.

But relax! It's Oscar Wilde, he of infamous rapid-fire witticism, and Importance of Being Earnest is regarded as his finest play. Dead Writers Theatre Collective's (DWTC's) produc-

tion of "Earnest" is crisp yet genteel, gaudy but not mannered, and a treat to watch.

"Earnest" is not just a character trait, but a plot device in Wilde's play about two friends, Algernon Moncrieff and John Worthing, who desire female companionship. (Or do they? It's Wilde: Gay subtext abounds. "Earnest" was apparently code for homosexual in Wilde's day, and Moncrieff's nebulous habit of Bunburying is a double entendre for gay sex.) Their potential lady partners are bewitched by the name "Ernest," the name of neither Moncrieff or Worthing, and that is the least of the obstacles the two face in their quest for conquest.

DWTC's theme this season is "Mad About the Boy", and good sense blessedly does not abound in this script: everyone is hilariously self-interested, deluded and deceptive. Each of "Earnest's" three acts is rich with happenings and have its own unique arc; none of them

feels too long. This is partly due to famous Wilde lines like, "to lose one parent seems like misfortune; two, carelessness" and partly due to the incredible verve the cast delivers them with.

Small moments of physicality help bring Wilde's already sharp words alive. There's a certain slapstick quality all of actors embody that is most obvious in the second act, where muffins are devoured recklessly and a teacake is stabbed to great effect. Jack Dryden plays Moncrieff with an excited mince, and Mary Ann Bowman summons the most booming, imperious voice imaginable for Lady Bracknell, the supreme arbiter of romantic decisions and social tastes. Even Lane the butler's dry pessimism is punctuated by Chris Bruzzini's delightfully sour faces.

DWTC wanted to give their sets the feel of Victorian pop-up Valentines and toy theatre,

beginning each act with actors posed amid the set and the sound of a winding music box. The sets add a regal touch and work well on the Athenaeum's tiny stage, but what really shines is the costuming, particularly Moncrieff and Worthing's sumptuous suits.

Overall, DWTC's "Earnest," its season opener, is a loving re-creation of Wilde's world done with zeal. The play itself, with its deliciously awkward encounters, ridiculously ill-conceived explanations and deliberately overblown pronouncements, should never fail to amuse its viewers, and it's clearly a well-cast production. The season is off to a fabulous start.

CRITICS' PICKS



Death of a Streetcar Named Virginia Woolf, Writers Theatre, Glencoe, extended through Aug. 14. Tim Ryder and Tim Sniffen's comic mashup of great American theater dramas by the likes of Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Edward Albee and Thornton Wilder is a laugh riot—particularly for seasoned theatergoers. SCM

Deathtrap, Drury Lane Theatre, through Aug. 14. Ira Levin's classic 1978 Broadway thriller is given the luxury treatment in director William Osetek's top-notch revival that can still make audiences gasp out of shock. SCM

The House That Will Not Stand, Victory Gardens Theater, through July 10. The social-climbing and hilariously shade-tossing French Creole women of New Orleans face threats to their identities and livelihoods with the approach of the Americans in the decade after The Louisiana Purchase. SCM

The SpongeBob Musical, Oriental Theatre, through July 10. Time is running out to catch director Tina Landau's visually stunning stage adaptation of the beloved Nickelodeon animated TV series. SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

THEATER REVIEW

The Woman Who Amuses Herself

Playwright: Victor Lodato
At: Idle Muse Theatre Company at
Edge Theater, 5451 N. Broadway
Tickets: 773-340-9438 or
IdleMuse.org; \$15-\$20
Runs through: July 24

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It's a safe guess that playwright Victor Lodato would be perfectly happy if your mind "went there" with the title of his play The Woman Who Amuses Herself. But it's not nearly as salacious as all that in Idle Muse Theatre Company's Chicago premiere.

Lodato's drama is actually about Leonardo da Vinci's painting of "Mona Lisa," which was nicknamed by Italians as "*La Gioconda*." That expression literally translates into English as Lodato's play title.

But rather than dramatize the Renaissance

creation of the painting and its mysteriously smiling sitter, Lodato instead offers up a fragmentary portrait of Vincenzo Peruggia (also spelled Perugia). He was the Italian house painter who stole the "Mona Lisa" in 1911 from Paris' Louvre museum.

It was a low-key heist full of dumb luck. So Lodato instead imagines what obsessions that supposedly drove a monologue-prone Peruggia (Nathan Thompson) to steal the painting and hold onto it for two years in his grimy Paris apartment. Lodato also jumps ahead in time to show how later generations view the "Mona Lisa."

Some of these time shifts are funny, particularly Cat Hermes as the school teacher Miss Mattel who puts too much personal emotional significance on the painting as part of a class assignment. Joel Thompson also is sly as the mischievous dadaist artist Marcel Duchamp who shares his playful desecration of the painting.

But what's crucially missing is a pompous media expert to argue that the "Mona Lisa" is only famous today because of Peruggia's theft of it and the worldwide newspaper coverage

of the story.

Lodato's mix of historical information and entertainment is fine, but rarely are you truly moved by what his characters have to say. (Maria Kovacevic, as Perugia's baffled mother, comes the closest.)

That same level of admirable proficiency but so-so passion also could describe director Nathan Pease's overall approach to Idle Muse production of The Woman Who Amuses Herself. Laura Wiley's animated production designs are nice, although they don't always fill out the surprisingly grand stage of the new Edge Theater.

The show's acting ensemble also is fine, with each clearly relishing their time alone onstage. But sometimes the actors don't always make what their characters are saying into vital comedy or drama.

So grab your art-historian friends to see The Woman Who Amused Herself to see how Lodato chose to dramatize the theft of one of the world's most famous paintings. Just be aware that the experience will be more contemplative than gripping.

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GOODMAN THEATRE



Jacqueline Grandt, Abby Dillion and Mark Pracht (from left) in *The Seedbed*.
Photo by Jan Ellen Graves

THEATER REVIEW

The Seedbed

Playwright: Bryan Delaney
At: Redtwist Theatre,
1044 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.
Tickets: 773-728-7529 or
Redtwist.org; \$30-\$35
Runs through: July 17

BY SEAN MARGARET WAGNER

Redtwist Theatre's production of Bryan Delaney's *The Seedbed* is an oddity. Like the characters onstage, the show is warm yet distant, and filled with love and disgust all at once. Like an optometrist's eye chart, no matter how hard you stare at that blurry numeral, you can't quite make out if you're seeing theater that's

bone-chilling or melodramatic.

Hannah and Thomas, a middle-aged Irish couple, have just turned a corner on a particularly nasty patch in their relationship and are ready to welcome their estranged daughter Maggie back home. But Maggie returns home to celebrate her parents' anniversary with her new, much older fiancé Mick, whose presence brings gently simmering tensions to a boil. The family has done something devastatingly irredeemable, but they are dedicated to keeping those actions—and the culprit—a secret from all others.

What results is almost a family-drama whodunit: Was it Hannah, the jealous, overbearing mother? Was it stepdad Thomas, who spends a suspicious amount of time in his shed with his collection of birds? Or was it Maggie, who ran to Holland to escape her family's prying eyes?

Author Bryan Delaney devises what seems like a thousand ways to keep the family's secrets from spilling for duration of just one more scene, but the process starts to feel manufactured. Think of all the soap-opera revelations that begin with one character patting the couch and stating, "We need to talk about last night," while the other character refuses. The *Seedbed* is full of these moments, but thrives in spite of them thanks largely to Mick. The role is a welcome breath of South London air, as he bombards us with dirty flower shop sexual innuendo and tales of his parents' sexual escapades. Who did what hardly matters when the delightfully grizzled florist charms us with nerve and backbone.

Jacqueline Grandt (Hannah) and Mark Pracht (Thomas) manage the task of humanizing two

very cryptic characters gracefully. For *The Seedbed* to function as something of a staged mystery, the two must navigate increasing tension, higher stakes and possibly the tiniest stage in Chicago. Abby Dillion (Maggie), too, will make you think twice about trusting your instincts about a character who hasn't quite escaped the clutches of bad influence. And there's hardly room enough to contain the charm and ferocity of Adam Bitterman (Mick), who might as well pack up the scenery and take it home, because it belongs to him.

Director Steve Scott has served up an odd mixture of compelling and frustrating theater that I am at a loss for how to recommend. I will say this: Let your tolerance for Irish accents, poetic food fights and Cockney stories be your guide.



SPOTLIGHT

Circle Theatre continues its Full Circle Series of benefit concerts where all the proceeds go to worthy causes. **It's a Privilege to Pee: Owning Your Identity and Other Basic Human Rights** is a cabaret concert response to the anti-LGBTQ legislation passed in North Carolina earlier this year, and the starry local talent lineup includes Honey West, Lili-Anne Brown, Dixie Lynn Cartwright, Sydney Charles, Erin Daily and many more. Benefiting from the show is Chicago House. It's a Privilege to Pee: Owning Your Identity and Other Basic Human Rights plays at 7:30 p.m. Monday, July 11, at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave. For more information, visit CircleTheatreChicago.org.

Caption: Honey West. Photo by Kandy John



CULTURE CLUB



LEGACY from page 9

Colorado stemmed the tide by voting in an amendment not to "adopt, enact or enforce any statute, regulation, ordinance or policy whereby homosexual, lesbian or bisexual orientation, conduct, practices or relationships shall constitute or otherwise be the basis of or entitle any persons or class of persons to claim minority status or claim of discrimination."

"It neutralized the existence of a gay-rights law in Colorado," Salvo said. "It was a horrific instance because all we had were these ordinances."

Richard G. Evans and three other people sued the state to stop the enforcement of the amendment. Salvo described the October 1995 arguments before the Supreme Court as a "nail biter."

"If we had lost this one, it would have wiped out an entire generation of activism," he said. "Not only could we not be protected, the only way any kind of law could ever be written that could protect us was that another amendment would have to be passed in the state constitution to undo the other amendment. We'd never have been able to muster that politically."

The Supreme Court ultimately ruled that the Colorado amendment was based on animus.

"It was a sweeping affirmation of our right to exist and participate in the political process," Salvo said. "It made Lawrence possible and certainly played into Windsor and Obergefell. It was the first time I had ever read in a decision that we could possibly be thought of as a protected class."

Taylor addressed the *Windsor* and *Obergefell* cases.

"Up until 2010 or so, gay-rights organizations were trying to create precedents for

striking down these amendments [banning same-sex marriage] as unconstitutional," she said. "We were really focusing on states. We didn't think it was safe to go to the Supreme Court. There was a concern about victory and the stakes were very high."

However, as states struck down their same-sex marriage bans one by one, Taylor said, "There began a momentum for trying to take down the Federal Defense of Marriage Act [DOMA] because there were thousands of same-sex couples who were now validly married but had no federal respect for those marriages."

One such person was Edith Windsor, who won a 2013 victory in achieving recognition of her marriage to her spouse, who died in 2009.

"The victory in Windsor was striking for the way it framed what had happened to Edith Windsor as depriving her of the ability to be a person," Taylor said, "and talked about the way in which laws that discriminate based on sexual orientation even harmed the children in these families by telling them that there was something unworthy about their families."

She added that it "spurred another wave of litigation."

One of those litigants was Jim Obergefell. Another was Illinois' Patricia Ewert, who was present at the Judgment in June event and received enthusiastic applause from the audience when Taylor acknowledged her and her late wife, Vernita Gray.

"The *Obergefell* victory did a number of interesting things," Taylor said. "The court was really looking at the harm done to individuals by depriving them of the ability to participate freely in society."

For more information on The Legacy Project, visit LegacyProject.org.

Alexander Skarsgard in
The Legend of Tarzan.
Photo from Warner Bros.

MOVIES

Alexander the great ally

True Blood alum Alexander Skarsgard on coaching gay-sex scenes, his outsider perspective, and Tarzan vs. Farrah Fawcett

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Alexander Skarsgard sure knows how to offset the uproar over his missing loincloth in *The Legend of Tarzan*.

"I'm actually wearing it right now," teases Skarsgard, joking about the brouhaha regarding this Tarzan's more civilized article of clothing as he portrays the jungle warrior in Warner Bros.' new take on a classic tale.

"I do all my phoners in a loincloth."

"Phoners or...?" I ask, hinting at the obvious rhyme.

The 39-year-old *True Blood* alum beams, cracking up. "Exactly! I do all my boners in loincloths."

And that's just the beginning of our revealing conversation, which leads to all sorts of places: being poisoned by Lady Gaga, how other straight men should approach a gay sex scene ["dive in"], and why—after giving us his best Farrah Fawcett impersonation last year—shooting *The Legend of Tarzan* "was nothing compared to that night in drag."

Windy City Times: So, I don't know if you know this, but gay men love you.

Alexander Skarsgard: Oh, really?

WCT: They do. Is that surprising to hear?

AS: Well, I don't know. I've always been... I don't know how to answer that question, but thank you. That's very flattering to hear. It's always been the most natural thing to me because my uncle and godfather is a gay man and

so growing up, even as a little toddler, it was just as natural as being straight. My aunt would show up with her husband and my uncle would show up with his husband. He was, by far, out of my father's four siblings [Alexander's father is actor Stellan Skarsgard], the most fashionable and the most trendy, cool guy. So, when I was a kid, he was the one I looked up to. I thought he was really badass: fit and awesome and cool, and obviously not because he was gay.

When I became a teenager and the kids made fun of other teenagers who were gay, I never really understood that. It just baffled me because my idol, my godfather, was gay, and he was the coolest guy I knew. I just couldn't understand how that could be an insult.

WCT: That kind of personal relationship can change everything for somebody.

I agree. And I think a lot of the xenophobia and fear comes from that, from not having a personal connection. People that know someone close that they love who is homosexual or bisexual are more likely to sympathize with people in the LGBT community.

WCT: The Legend of Tarzan is, in part, about making your own family. How might that resonate with the LGBT community?

AS: In a way, he's lost between two worlds, he doesn't fit in. He's adopted by these apes, and even though emotionally he's an equal and he's loved, he can feel that he's different. Then he goes to London and it's kind of the same. He looks like people around him, but he also doesn't fit in there either. That sense of being an outsider and trying to fit in or finding your home and your place in the world—it's interesting to explore that. He's a character who,

on the surface, has it all—this gorgeous, wonderful wife; incredible wealth; beautiful mansion—but people don't understand him, really, and his heart is still in the jungle.

WCT: Have you ever felt like an outsider?

AS: I can relate to the feeling of being somewhere between two worlds. I was born and raised in Stockholm, but I've lived in the States for 12 years. In a way, I feel at home when I go to Stockholm, but it hasn't been my permanent home for 12 years. So, there are a lot of things that make me feel like an outsider: cultural references, the music scene, the arts scene, theater, what's going on back home in movies; other references make me feel out of touch too.

The States have been my home for the last 12 years, but I also don't have any deep emotional connection to the place because I wasn't here as a kid. So walking around the streets of Stockholm, every single street corner will mean something because it had a profound impact on my formative years. I'll be like, "Oh, that street corner is where that girl broke up with me when I was 13," or, "That's where I had that fight with my best friend." I live in New York now and all my memories in New York are from the past 10, 15 years. Obviously, in Tarzan the two worlds are a bit more extreme! [Laughs]

WCT: There are no apes on the loose in New York that I am aware of.

AS: [Laughs] Yes, it's slightly more dramatic. But that is my job as an actor—to find something, even if it's on a more microscopic level, that allows me to tap into and understand the character on a larger scale.

WCT: What do you think starring alongside Lady Gaga in her "Paparazzi" video did for your gay following?

AS: I have no idea—I wasn't famous at all. I wore a wig in the first season of *True Blood*, so no one ever recognized me. But my friend Jonas Åkerlund is a tremendous music video director and called me and said, "Hey, I'm directing this video for an artist. Her name is Lady Gaga." I'd heard her name but didn't know much about her. He just basically pitched me

the idea: "You throw her off the balcony and then she comes back and she poisons you." [Laughs] It sounded like a fun love story, so of course I said yes. I had a super fun day.

WCT: How did portraying someone who is pansexual on *True Blood*, a show rife with queer characters and storylines, influence the way you view sexuality?

AS: It was just one of the most profound experiences ever—just liberating. Even though there's shitloads of nudity on the show, it never felt gratuitous. I think that's when, as an actor, you feel uncomfortable, if you're standing there with your clothes off and you're not quite sure why.

WCT: Like if you'd been wearing that loincloth in Tarzan.

That's why I wear nothing in all the flashbacks... because that would make sense! If it makes sense, it's not an issue; you just have to do it.

WCT: In 2006's *Kill Your Darlings*, you played a [cross-dresser]. Then, during the premiere of *Diary of a Teenage Girl* last year, you went in full-on drag as Farrah Fawcett. How would you describe the feeling of putting on women's clothing?

I loved it. It was so much fun. On that movie, *Diary of a Teenage Girl*, our first AD was a drag queen by the name of Cousin Wonderlette, who's on the San Francisco scene, and there was also Lady Bear, another drag queen who was the casting director for extras on the movie. Marielle [Heller], our director, wanted to do a big premiere at the Castro Theatre because she's from San Francisco, a lot of her friends live there and she has a lot of friends in the gay community.

So, Cousin Wonderlette and Lady Bear were gonna host the premiere and do a number from *Rocky Horror Picture Show* and then throw the afterparty at a gay club. Everyone was planning their outfits and talking about these crazy drag outfits they were gonna come in with. I was

Turn to page 16




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BOOKS

Bisexual author talks about 'Road' to self-discovery

BY NINA MATTI

David Matteson has served many roles in his life: author, professor, counselor, minister, father, husband and lover. He taught psychology and counseling Governor's State University and holds an undergraduate degree in psychology from Alfred University, a graduate degree in theology from Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School and a Ph.D. in counseling from Boston University.

When he realized his bisexuality in the 1960s and came out to his wife and children, his lifestyle changed drastically. Windy City Times sat down with the local author to discuss his recently released memoir, *I Took Both Roads: My Journey as a Bisexual Husband*.

Windy City Times: What made you step away from academic writing and take on a memoir?

David Matteson: Well I'd already published some 15 or 20 academic journal research articles on men who have sex with both men and women. I felt that again that was pure journal kind of stuff. If you want people to go through personal change, it's got to reach their gut not just their brains. That's what made me decide to write a personal story.

WCT: How was writing this book different for you than the past writings you've done? Did it teach you anything about yourself?

DM: Yes—very much so. In fact, I'm going to teach a class at the U.U. (Second Unitarian Universalist) Church, right in the gay area. The course is going to be called *Memoir Writing for Personal Growth*.

The whole genre has become very popular, but it's very hard. Print publishing is getting difficult in almost every field, but in the memoir field it's almost impossible unless you're famous. I lucked out and found a small publisher that wanted to take a chance on it, so it is out in print. I love books and I really wanted it out in that form, not just in the eBook form.

And the other thing is that the gay community is a huge span of socioeconomic groups. Those of us that use computers every day can easily get eBooks, but there are a lot of people that don't have that access and I wanted it to be accessible to them as well.

WCT: As a minister, religion has played a big role in your life. How did your spirituality affect your perception of your identity



David Matteson.

Photo courtesy of Matteson

when you first realized you were bisexual?

DM: When I first realized I was bisexual, I already had moved away from the mainstream Protestant churches into very liberal churches. And they were churches of social action. ... So there was this interplay all along that I was moving toward churches that are inclusive—racially inclusive, ones that accept women as fully ordained ministers and so on.

In some ways, I like the word "spirituality" more than "religion." The real issue isn't the terminology; it's whether a group is inclusive or whether it sees itself as the only one with true knowledge and views the rest as inferior.

WCT: You mentioned in the book that when you came out to your family, they had a more difficult time accepting your open, nontraditional marriage than your bisexuality itself. Do you think that society still today only accepts bisexuality if it's within a "traditional" relationship?

DM: Any form of same-sex relationship is an affront to the belief that males should only have sex with females and vice versa. And then there's that crazy stuff about how animals didn't do it. That happens to be quite wrong.

Well, bisexuality on top of that is an affront to the idea of monogamy. Bisexuality is like a double-barreled shotgun to the culture. Within the gay community when I first came out, in those Cleveland bars I would often hear from

gay men, "You're really more one way than the other. There's no such thing as equally bi."

Well, to me, it's not even a question of equal. It's like asking me if I like Brahms more than Mahler, who are my two favorite composers. They're incredibly different. When I'm listening to Mahler, I'm not comparing it to Brahms. I don't know which one I like best. The one I'm listening to at the time is the one I like best! People don't understand. You have to hunt for ways to connect it to their own lives. They then can begin to understand.

WCT: You wrote, "Looking back on my life, it's clear that sexuality was not the only area in which I have chosen to take both paths."

ALEXANDER from page 15

sitting there with my grey suit and I just felt like, "Fucking hell, this is so boring; can I play as well?" I said, "I wanna look like Farrah Fawcett." I showed them that iconic image from the early '80s in that golden dress with the blonde hair, so that's what we went for. I can't quite say that we nailed it. I mean, they did an incredible job, but I think it's tough with a dude who's six-foot-four and 210 pounds. [Laughs] And with those heels, I was, like, seven feet tall.

As physically demanding as shooting *Legend of Tarzan* was, it was nothing compared to that night in drag. Oh my god; walking around in those heels, in that super itchy, hot wig and the fake nails, I felt like Edward Scissorhands. I couldn't even grab a drink.

Once we got to the after party at the gay club, I just kicked my heels off and walked around barefoot because I was just dying. So, I have tremendous respect for all the drag queens out there. I got a little taste of what it takes to look that fabulous.

WCT: *True Blood* was groundbreaking for pushing many envelopes when it came to LGBT issues and sexuality. How does it feel knowing that you were a part of a show that some deemed "too gay?"

Well, that's ridiculous. What was so interesting about the show was that it wasn't on the nose. It's obviously a cultural reference and a metaphor. A lot of the storylines are metaphors for the strife people in the LGBT community experience, but it's done in a very subtle way where people who have never met anyone who's gay or who have prejudice toward that community would still embrace the show and would still come up [to me] and be super excited about it. They would love Lafayette—I mean, a Black, gay man. What [creator] Alan [Ball] did was beautiful and it was groundbreaking because, for myself, since I was a toddler, I've had someone very close to me that I admire who was gay, which made that lifestyle as normal as any other lifestyle. In this instance, a lot of people who didn't have anyone

Many times, instead of deciding between two contrasting elements, I have enjoyed exploring both paths and affirming both." Can you tell us more about how this outlook has played a role in your life?

DM: I basically don't like the idea that we see things as binary all the time. First of all, that whole "two roads" thing is a metaphor. I could've come to a break in the road and it could have gone three ways... [People] forget that if you think in polarities, on a normal curve you're leaving out two-thirds of the people that fall in the middle. ... I've developed a distaste for that kind of simplifying life that then distorts reality so much.

close to them in the LGBT community suddenly had someone in their living room every Sunday night that they loved.

WCT: What tips do you have for other straight men who are doing gay sex scenes?

AS: You just have to embrace it. I had two gay-sex scenes on the show. They're incredible scenes. I loved this scene and I remember talking to Theo [Alexander], who played the Greek lover of Russell Edgington [portrayed by Denis O'Hare], and that was the first gay-sex scene I had on *True Blood*. He's also a straight guy and he was nervous; he had never kissed a guy before. I just said, "Look at the scene. It's this nemesis and he comes in and then it gets seductive and you think they're gonna make love and it gets into that and then suddenly my character stabs him in the back and he explodes. In two minutes, look at this emotional rollercoaster we're taking the audience on. If we commit to this, it's going to be an amazing scene and we're going to be very happy with it forever. If we hold back, that's when it gets awkward."

Same thing shooting the other scene with Ryan [Kwanten]—we knew that it was coming because we shot a scene the previous year where I hypnotize him and say, like, "When you dream, dream sweet dreams of me." Because we did it in a very seductive way, when they said "wrap" and I turned around and I saw the writers, I could just see in their eyes that they were like, "We're definitely gonna see this dream later on in the show." We knew it was coming. You have to think of the scene and how it fits in and hopefully be excited about the scene. Then, just dive in.

WCT: When can we expect you to do something as gay as *True Blood* again?

AS: [Laughs] Well, I mean, next time I get drunk, probably.

Chris Azzopardi is the editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service. He's also the proud recipient of an "I adore you, daaahhling!" from Mariah Carey. Reach him via his website at www.chris-azzopardi.com and on Twitter (@chrisazzopardi).



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CMSA at this year's Pride parade.
Photo courtesy of CMSA



CMSA embraces trans, GNC individuals with new policy

BY ROSS FORMAN

The Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) updated its policy and procedures manual in late June, adding further step in support of transgender and gender nonconforming (GNC) people, and bringing the predominantly LGBT sports organization in line with other mainstream sports organizations, such as the NCAA and the International Olympic Committee.

The update states that transgender or GNC athletes may play in any league of their choice

and are not required to explain, justify or provide documentation supporting this choice. Furthermore, it is not a requirement for any person to undergo hormone therapy, surgery or other treatment in order to play in a chosen league.

Cisgender athletes may play in any open league and in leagues that correspond with their gender identity, the policy also states.

Michael Erwin, the president of CMSA, said the policy "encourages everyone, regardless of who they are inside or out, to play sports and be comfortable. No members have to try to

hide who they are; they can be themselves, no questions asked."

He added, "No member should be made to play on a team solely because of the guidelines we have placed on gender. CMSA is not just a sports organization, but also a community organization where people come together to be themselves. This policy tells the entire Chicago community that we are open to them joining and we do it with open arms."

Erwin said the immediate response to the new policy has been overwhelmingly positive.

"When you are president of an organization, you get used to hearing more negative than positive. [Since the policy was announced], my email box [has been] full of very positive notes of thanks and support."

Erwin said that, in the fall of 2015, a sport commissioner came to him with concern about a member whose gender no longer matched the gender of the title of the sport. The commissioner asked to allow the person still to play. CMSA did not have a policy in place at the time. So Erwin left it up to the commissioner to decide what to do, and said he'd support the decision.

"In the meantime, I brought the situation to the CMSA board and asked Joshua Dehnke to begin to draft a policy that was in line with other sports organizations across the country," Erwin said. Dehnke is an attorney and spearheaded the new policy plan, talking with experts on the topic both locally and nationally.

"Years ago, a policy was voted on, but not put into the Policy and Procedures Manual. The board looked at the [old] language and decided that we needed to make some adjustments."

Erwin added, "I [can't] think of a better way to cap off a very emotional Pride month. Sending the new policy out days after the pride parade, the successful Pride Bowl and Pride on the Pitch, [tournaments for flag football and soccer, respectively], and getting such positive responses tells me that the hard work of all of our volunteers are doing every day is appreciated and is making CMSA even stronger."

Cyd Zeigler of Outsports.com said transgender people "should be able to play in the recreational league of their choice. Recreational leagues like those under the CMSA umbrella are intended to build character and friendships. It's good to see the organization affirm that with this policy."

Cassidy Fallik, 34—a trans man who has played men's flag football and co-ed soccer under the CMSA banner, and now lives in Oklahoma City—said the "CMSA has, and will always, have a special place in my heart," he said. "It's where I was not only given the chance to re-discover my love of sports and make lifelong friends, but it also gave me the opportunity to build my confidence in myself and in a body I wasn't always too sure about."

When Fallik started, he said he "had no idea what my place in sports would even look like," he said. "Fast forward to today, and I have no hesitation participating in leagues with cisgender males who never even have my gender identity on their radar."

"I want to commend CMSA for their new policy and specifically breaking down the barrier against requiring any person to undergo hormone therapy, surgery or other treatment in order to play in their chosen league. In a time when healthcare, in general, can be so expensive and some might not even choose to pursue medical intervention, it is an important statement to be made. Thank you CMSA for continuing to be a voice and a leader for the LGBT community."

Erwin said CMSA does not track the number of transgender athletes, but added, "I'm happy to report there are transgender athletes playing [in] almost all of our sports."

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SAVOR

Parts and Labor

BY NINA MATTI

Stepping into **Parts and Labor** (2700 N. Milwaukee Ave.; PartsAndLaborChicago.com) is like stepping into a time machine. Throwback hit shows like *Saved by the Bell* and *Freaky Geeks* are projected onto large screens as pleasant background noise while the restaurant's patrons enjoy food that is just as classic as its atmosphere.

The restaurant's especially well known for its classic griddle burgers, but Parts and Labor does everything well. From its vegan bean burgers to fried Twinkies with a raspberry glaze, everything on the menu was delicious. "We're successful because we provide something consistently good and accessible," general manager David Atkinson said. "We know who we are. We aren't going to be doing foie gras anytime soon!"

The restaurant's decor is inspired by a mechanic's garage, which is evident not only through

the gears and car parts integrated into the decor, but also through the large garage door at the back of the place which leads out onto a "hidden gem" of a patio, as Parts and Labor publicist Jonathan Blazejewski said. And a hidden gem it is. Tucked away from the street, the Parts and Labor patio would be a perfect place to grab a burger and sip on any one of the drinks on its extensive bar menu.

For a more upbeat night of fun and food, stop

by for Parts and Labor's weekly Karaoke Wednesdays or an evening of old movies and TV shows for its Throwback Thursdays. A recently acquired piano will also allow for musicians to come showcase their talents.

Parts and Labor seems to transport patrons to another time and place; however, its connection to Chicago is still strong.

"We're really locally involved," Blazejewski said. "Our pies are all from local bakeries; we

bring in local musicians to perform and get locally sourced vegetables whenever we can."

Although the restaurant has only been open for two and a half years, its rich history is clear. Restaurant owner Russ Grant, who also owns Boiler Room and East Room, was raised in the Chicago restaurant scene. His father owned Wonderburger on the South Side, which has a strong influence on Parts and Labor's menu and atmosphere.

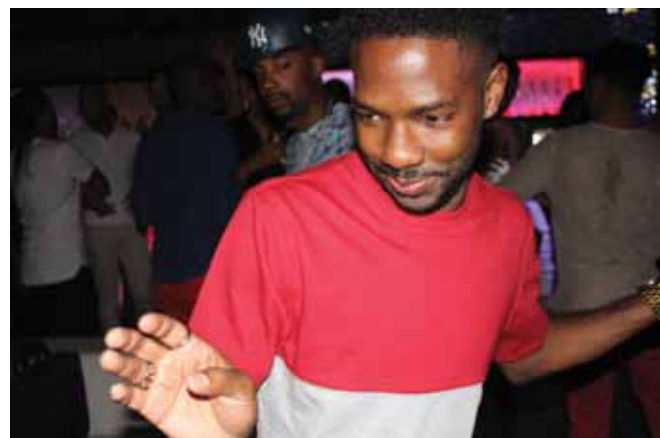


From Parts and Labor.
Photos by Nina Matti



Chicago Black Pride 2016

Chicago Black Pride 2016 kicked off with the opening party, Friday, July 1. The event was hosted by David Dodd, Lipstick n Lace and Brother to Brother Chicago. More than 200 people attended the event in Chicago's River North area. Photos courtesy of David Dodd





"Trump seems to be very much for women. He seems very much behind the LGBT community because of what happened in North Carolina with the bathroom issue. He backed the LGBT community."—**Caitlyn Jenner** shares her thoughts on Donald Trump. This reminds me of her infatuation with Ted Cruz. Perhaps she wishes Trump were behind her!

As we were preparing for our annual Independence Day jaunt to Provincetown, a crazed male model was running around Times Square at 8 a.m.—an odd hour for public nudity, but that's just me. The crazed model in question was **Krit McClean**, a 21-year-old Thai-British student at Columbia University and a Ford model. Krit's day started as he walked around Times Square muttering to himself and discarding articles of clothing. When he was approached by a security guard, McClean scrambled up the stairs to the roof of the TKTS Booth.

There, he continued his striptease—at one point, he hit a woman on the sidewalk with his watch! Police quickly arrived, which happens when a nude male model is screaming and dancing on the roof of a NYC building. At one point, he screamed, "I love fashion. It's taught me so much." Then he demanded a meeting with Donald Trump. Later, he extolled the virtues of photographers Bruce Weber and Mario Testino. Then, most shockingly, he referred to himself as a virgin! The police set up one of those inflatable bouncy pads on the ground and tried to coax him off. After about 90 minutes, he leapt from the 16-foot roof, just missing the pad and breaking his arm. As he was being transported to Bellevue Hospital, he continued his ranting. You can see Krit in all his glory on BillyMasters.com.

I did eventually make it to Provincetown, but not early enough to see **Caitlyn Jenner**. She was in town to take part in a fundraiser for Camp Lightbulb, an overnight summer camp in Provincetown for LGBTQ youths ages 14 to 17. Camp Lightbulb is called a place "filled with fun, pride, community, friends, support, self-discovery and memories to last a lifetime!" I'm not sure that's the experience Cait had. Quite a few people heckled her as she walked down Commercial Street. "You're a fraud," and "We don't want you here" were heard, as Cait blithely strolled by with her entourage. I think even we in the gay community are on an educational curve when it comes to transgender people—and having such a polarizing figure as Caitlyn in the spotlight only makes it more confusing.

Kristin Chenoweth just headlined a private reading of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* for a potential revival on Broadway. This project has been in the works for a couple of years, but it took a while to assemble the perfect cast—even for the reading. Chenoweth was joined by **Jennifer Holliday** as Jewel, **Kevin McKidd** as Ed Earl Dodd, **Christopher Sieber** as Melvin P. Thorpe, and **Kerry Butler** as Doatsey Mae.

From the Chicken Ranch to the Neverland Ranch. **Michael Jackson's** infamous lair is back in the news. Video from the 2003 raid has revealed details of his so-called "secret sex den" which was behind three deadbolts. He allegedly had a stockpile of pornographic images, animal torture, S&M and gore. While I refuse to believe MJ enjoyed that stuff, I suppose it might entice pre-pubescent boys. One of the items discovered was an autographed photo of Macaulay Culkin, signed, "Don't leave me alone in the house!"



Model Krit McClean took a bite out of the Big Apple, Billy says.
Facebook photo

Sounds like one of those notes you throw out the window hoping a passerby will come across it. At Neverland, it would have been eaten by a passing llama! But the piece de résistance was a large photo of JonBenet Ramsey. Turns out, it wasn't actually JonBenet—it was a lookalike who posed with a noose around her neck!

While promoting *The Legend of Tarzan*, **Alexander Skarsgard** compared kissing his *True Blood* co-star Ryan Kwanten with his "Tarzan" love interest, Margot Robbie, and with Nicole Kidman, whom he appears with in the upcoming miniseries *Big Little Lies*. "Out of the three, I've got to say Ryan Kwanten is surprisingly a good kisser actually," Skarsgard said. "He's very tender. You wouldn't think it because he's kind of a tough guy but very soft, gentle, tender touch." You can see that sizzling scene on BillyMasters.com.

Every once in a while, inspiration strikes me. My pal **Ronnie Larsen** is opening a new production of *Making Porn* at San Diego's Diversionary Theatre (running July 7-31). Due to the sudden indisposition of a notable porn actor, there was a hole in the cast. "What about **Dan Renzi**?" I suggested. Although the *Real World* alum is currently working as a nurse, I heard he had an extremely flexible schedule. Plus, he'd done numerous productions of *Making Porn* in the past, albeit in another part (a part I also played). With his caustic wit and exhibitionistic streak, I thought Dan would be perfect for the role of Ray, a veteran porn star who has been there, done that attitude. And, poof, just like that, Renzi signed on board. Trust me—you won't be disappointed by every inch of Renzi, to say nothing of the rest of the cast. To get tickets, go to RonnieLarsen.com.

Larsen is also premiering a new play at the same time at the Diversionary. A *Gay Marriage* is described as "a new play about what happens after the honeymoon ends." It's playing July 13-31.

Our quickie "Ask Billy" question comes from Frank in Los Angeles: "Thanks for the hot three-way video with **Nick Jonas**. But you never told us—who is the other guy? And do you have any nude photos of him?"

That would be underwear model (and, I suppose, actor) **Jared North**. I don't know much about him, but of course we dug up some nude photos—and they are definitely scorchingly hot. I like to imagine Jonas checked them out during the casting process. To see what Nick was playing with, go to BillyMasters.com.

When we're unveiling underwear models, it's time to end another column. Since this comes out on Independence Day, it seems appropriate to direct you to www.BillyMasters.com—the site that's been making fireworks for over two decades. If you've got something you want me to look into, send it to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Krit and Caitlyn become the newest counselors at Camp Lightbulb. So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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Chicago Black Pride 2016

The weekend festivities continued Saturday, July 2, at the Rooftop Party at The Kensington, 324 W. Chicago Ave. The party featured sounds from DJ Sedrick (DC, Atlanta) and FlavaWorks models and giveaways. Photos by Kirk Williamson



FLORIDA from page 8

16. She credits a full recovery at 13 to her faith in God. When she was three years old, Armstead's parents divorced leaving her mother to raise five children alone.

"When we reached our teen years," Armstead wrote in an essay about her life, "my brothers, sisters and I spent the summer months working in the hot, humid fields picking tomatoes and in the orange groves picking oranges and grapefruits. Our meager salaries helped pay the household expenses."

It was this work ethic that earned Armstead four college degrees and high level positions in multiple fields.

Armstead has been an attorney for two decades (four of them spent as an assistant attorney at the Florida Department of Natural Resources). She also served as a police officer, detective and deputy chief of legal affairs for the St. Petersburg, Florida, Police Department.

She nurtured aspiring minds as an assistant professor of criminal justice at the State Uni-

versity of New York and inspired religious faith as a congregational pastor.

All of this while pushing against the surge of inherent and constant discrimination.

"So often as a Black person, as a female and as a lesbian, I would hear statements that were negative," she said. "Growing up I went to a segregated school in disrepair that did not have adequate text books. They were hand-me-downs from those used in the white schools. It did not make sense to me. I grew up with a sense of 'I am just as good, just as equal and just as loved as anybody else.' I don't like it when anybody is treated differently because of a physical quality like race or gender."

"When I look back at all the jobs I have held, I have always had a care and compassion to protect the people and the environment," she added. "When I see people working out in the hot sun now, my heart goes out to them because I know what they are going through."

Armstead noted that it makes her angry to see the Florida agriculture industry take advantage of them.

"Many of them don't have insurance," she

said. "They don't have federal or state law protections when it comes to wages or benefits. As I got older, my social justice ministry was the strong voice who advocated for marginalized people. In my law practice I was only affecting a couple of hundred people. As a legislator I am expanding my desire and elevating my passion to be that voice. In order to push back and make a difference, I need to be a part of the decision-making body."

Armstead feels the same frustration from voters in Broward County that has been seen not only nationally but, as demonstrated by the result of Britain's June 24 referendum to exit the European Union, as part of a global shift against people's perceptions of establishment politics.

"When I talk to the voters many feel like they want to throw in the towel," she said. "But my response is to continue to fight. I'm a Black female. I've been fighting all my life. Giving up is not an option because the tide can change. We have same-sex marriage now. Can you imagine if we had just given up? We are in it for the long haul. If we don't fight for LGBTQ rights

and gender issues, no one else will. We need to be on the forefront."

Armstead has been on a constant journey of educational and spiritual growth. But the lessons she has already been taught—whether during her childhood, in lecture halls or throughout her career—have fashioned a philosophy that seems to set her apart from the cynicism of politics.

"I've learned a lot through my experiences," she said. "My family did what we had to do in order to survive but there was always a sense of unity; a moral obligation that if we stuck together, we could make it. In my campaign, I have really tried to connect with the communities that Gwyn represented but it's not about me. It's about what I can do to raise the quality of life for everybody in Florida."

For more information about Paulette Armstead, visit www.ArmsteadforFLHouse.com.

Contributions to her campaign can be made at www.ArmsteadforFLHouse.com/contribute.

Stained-glass experts to lead tours of local sites

Two unique bus tours of important Chicago stained glass will take place on Friday, July 8, 2016. The tours are co-sponsored by the American Glass Guild and the Stained Glass School of the Stained Glass Association of America, bringing together national and international experts in the field of stained glass for conferences in the Chicago area the same week, along with local studio Solstice Stained Glass.

One tour will focus on glass designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany and other artists of that same historical period. The other tour surveys some of the unique work of artist Edgar Miller. Both tours will originate at Second Presbyterian Church, which boasts an Arts & Crafts interior, nine Tiffany windows and others by Millet and McCully & Miles.

The Tiffany and the Gilded Age Tour, led by Chicago stained glass experts Rolf Achilles and Neal Vogel, will also visit the Macy's Pedway and Chicago Cultural Center, home of the world's largest Tiffany dome ceiling and 22 stained glass windows in an exhibit of Victorian non-religious glass; the Richard H. Driehaus Museum to see its dome of Kokomo glass; the Cathedral of St. James, which has windows made from more than 700,000 pieces of antique glass; the Chicago Sinai synagogue fea-

turing windows of Brian Clarke; Mother Cabrini Chapel; and Old St. Patrick's church, one of the few buildings to survive the fire of 1871 and the oldest public building in Chicago.

Planned stops on the Edgar Miller Tour, led by tour guides Larry Zgoda and Zac Bleicher, include the OakRidge Mausoleum in Hillside; Edgar Miller's home at the Glasner Studio; the Carl Street Studios, a series of unique art studio apartments that open out to closed communal spaces with gardens, fountains, koi and art; the ballroom of the Hotel Intercontinental, where Miller designed the Gothic-inspired stained glass windows King Arthur Foyer and Court; and the lobbies of 120 N. State and the Century Tower, both of which have Miller stained glass installations.

Tours will begin at approximately 10 a.m. and finish by 3 p.m. The cost of each tour is \$80 and includes a bag lunch. For more information, contact tour coordinator Bill Bein at 773-510-9021 or bill.bein@sbcglobal.net.

Register at <https://agg2015.formstack.com/forms/chicagostainedglasstours2016>.

The Stained Glass School, a 501(c)(3) organization, is affiliated with the Stained Glass Association of America (501C-6). The American Glass Guild is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Nikki Giovanni in Chicago July 10

Poet Nikki Giovanni will join Morris Gearing at a Coalition for Justice and Respect fundraiser Sunday, July 10, 3-6 p.m., at The Promontory, 5311 S. Lake Park Ave.

Giovanni and Gearing will celebrate the Black life in Chicago with soul and jazz music

as well as spoken word. The event will feature the music and lyrics of Oscar Brown Jr.

Giovanni has taught at various schools, including The Ohio State University and Virginia Tech. She has also won honors such as the NAACP Image Award, and has been nominated for a Grammy.

Admission is \$40-\$100 each; see <https://www.facebook.com/events/1132961456742098/> and Eventbrite.com.

'Girls in Boystown' walking tour July 10

Tour company Chicago for Chicagoans has announced the Boystown Walking Tour—an information-packed two-hour walking tour of the Boystown neighborhood, set to take place Sunday, July 10, 6-8 p.m.

The tour will feature special guest collaborator Andie McKenzie Meadows—a queer femme activist, Boystown historian and photographer

Nightlife organizers make 'Solidarity' video

A group of 20+ Chicago queer nightlife organizers came together in the wake of Orlando to share a message of strength, positivity and hope in a video directed toward the Chicago queer community, and the LGBTQ community at large.

Those in the video include Joe Erbentraut (Burly at the Burlington), Will Von Vogt (Salonathon at Beauty Bar), Ariel Zetina—IT Presents at Berlin, IMP Queen (IT Presents at Berlin), DJ All The Way Kay (LESBIFRIENDS at Progress + Bump & Grindcore at Beauty Bar), Scott Cramer (Do312 + Cramer PR) and JoJo Baby (Queen!).

Other speakers and partners of the video include [X]P (DURO at Berlin + FKA Big Chicks + Quest at Beauty Bar); Clandestina Chicago's Brooke Webster, Alma Izquierdo, Monica Raymund and Jenae Williams (WERK); Joe Varisco (QUEER, ILL + OKAY + Salonathon at Beauty Bar); and Open TV's Aymar Jean Christian and Elijah McKinnon.

Also, there are Bindu Poroori (Salonathon at Beauty Bar), Audio Jack (Slo Mo at the Whistler + Quest at Beauty Bar), David Dodd (D Square Events + David Dodd Presents) and Kristen Kaza (No Small Plans, Slo Mo).

The video is at <http://vamstudio.net/portfolio/solidarity>.

who will contribute her femme-focused and queer-inclusive perspective on the history of the country's first officially designated gay neighborhood.

Beginning at the Belmont Red/Brown Line stop, the Boystown tour will cover the history, architecture and landmarks of the neighborhood. The afternoon will end with a meal at Nookie's Tree and an after-party at The Closet.

Visit <http://chicagoforchicagoans.weebly.com>. Information on Meadows' Girls in Boystown project, visit AndieMeadows.com.



IMP Queen.



Scott Cramer (right) and Kristen Kaza.



Monica Raymund (right) and Brooke Webster.

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COMMUNITY
CALENDAR

Wed., July 6

Bud Light Stage at Taste of Chicago
Through July 10. 12:00pm - 8:00pm
Columbus and Balbo http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/taste_of_chicago.html

Thursday, July 7

American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) LGBT military veterans meet on the second floor first Thursday of each month. 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago 773-472-6469 <http://www.averchicago.org>

BITE: A Pucking Queer Cabaret Through July 20. Pride Films and Plays will complete its fun summer with the world premiere of BITE: A Pucking Queer Cabaret. PFP Artistic Associate Derek Van Barham's immersive, pop-rock ode to Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. BITE directly follows PFP comedy The Boys Upstairs by Jason Mitchell as the main entertainment in Mary's Attic for the summer. 7:00pm Mary's Attic 5400 N. Clark St.

New Town Writers' Workshop Participants are asked to bring copies of their work so other writers and listeners may follow along. Writers may read for 10 to 15 minutes, with an open discussion of the piece following the presentation. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N. Clark St.

Chigaygo at Laugh Factory Chicago Orlando benefit Queer comedy showcase presents special one-night only event to raise money for The Center Orlando, the LGBT center providing victim relief in the wake of the tragedy at Pulse Night-

DUFF ENOUGH
Thursday, July 7

Scott Duff will host a Chigaygo event at The Laugh Factory that will double as a benefit for Orlando.
Photo by Vern Hester

club. Doors 7pm. 8:00pm The Laugh Factory Chicago 3175 N. Broadway, 773-327-3175. <http://www.LaughFactory.com>

KT Tunstall Touring in connection with her four song EP, Golden State, and her new full length album coming early September. \$35. 21+. Doors 8pm 9:00pm The Beat Kitchen 2100 W Belmont Ave. Tickets: <https://www.ticketfly.com>

the kates Comedy Bowl Birthday Bash the kates, Chicago's all female comedy showcase, is turning nine years old on July 7th. In celebration of this big birthday, the kates are hosting a stand-up show/birthday party. \$10 suggested

donation. 8:00pm Diversey River Bowl 2211 W Diversey Pkwy. <http://www.thekates.org/>

Friday, July 8

Square Roots Festival Presented by the Old Town School of Folk Music and the Lincoln Square Ravenswood Chamber of Commerce, the three-day fun-filled festival features a wide variety of local craft beer options as well as a full line up of musical acts ranging from indie rock stars to '90s alternative band, Cracker. Through July 10. Suggested donation \$10 adults, \$5 seniors/kids, \$20 families 5:00pm - 10:00pm Lincoln Avenue, between Montrose and Wilson Ave., 773-728-6000 <http://www.square.roots.org>

Queer Genre Fiction Discussion Group The Ghost Network by Catie Disabato. Has the world's hottest pop star been kidnapped, brainwashed, or simply gone into hiding? The answer lies in the abandoned subway stations of Chicago... Bring yourself, a friend, and make few new ones at the book discussion group. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St. <https://www.facebook.com/events/270091273345850/>

Casey Rocheteau and Valerie Wetlaufer - An evening of poetry Hear poet Casey Rocheteau, winner of the first Write a House residency, and Valerie Wetlaufer, winner of the Lambda Literary Award for Lesbian Poetry, as they read from their recently released poetry collections. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St. <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Saturday, July 9

Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance (LGBTQ) Support meeting to talk about illnesses, symptoms, treatment, doc-

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

Queer Lines Combining visual arts, poetry, and live drag king performance to create a safe space for conversation about the queer and gender-nonconforming experience. 8:00pm 2557 W North Ave, Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/events/278575402488686/>

Sunday, July 10

aChurch4Me Sunday Worship Service A place to find peace, comfort and always needed prayer. 11:00am AChurch4Me MCC, 7366 N Clark St, Chicago <http://www.achurch4me.org>

Nikki Giovanni and Morris Gearing Celebrate Oscar Brown Jr. fundraiser for CJR celebrates the Soul, Jazz and Spoken Word of Black Life in Chicago. 3:00pm The Promontory, 5311 S. Lake Park Ave. West, Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/events/1132961456742098/>

Femme-friendly walking tour of the Boystown Information-packed walking tour of Boystown neighborhood with Andie McKenzie Meadows, a queer femme activist, Boystown historian and photographer, sharing the history, the architecture and landmarks of the first officially designated gay neighborhood in the U.S. ending with a meal at Nookie's Tree and an after-party at The Closet. Reserve a spot online. 6:00pm - 8:00pm Beginning at the Belmont Red/Brown Line stop Tickets: <http://bit.ly/boystowntour>

Adele 7:30pm United Center 1901 W Madison Ave. Other shows July 11 and 13. Tickets: <http://live.adele.com/north-america/>

Monday, July 11

Vito screening in the Leppen Theater Co-presented by the Queer Film Society, a screening of the award-winning documentary about iconic LGBTQ activist Vito Russo, co-founder of both Act-UP and GLAAD - whose bronze memorial will join the Legacy Walk this fall. Followed by a reception at Kit Kat Lounge and Supper Club. Part of the Legacy Live line-up 6:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.legacyprojectchicago.org>

Tuesday, July 12

Sappho's Salon Expressions of Queerness, Gender, and Feminism Co-hosted by Eileen Tull and Liz Baudler. Doors 7pm. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Wed., July 13

I Wanna Be A Producer: How to Make a Killing on Broadway ... or Get Killed The League of Chicago Theatres will host a speaking engagement and book signing event with John Breglio for his new book I Wanna Be A Producer: How to Make a Killing on Broadway ... or Get Killed. Free and open to the public. Reservations required. 7:00pm Goodman Theatre 170 N. Dearborn St. Tickets: <http://www.bit.ly/bregliochicago>

Thursday, July 14

AChurch4Me MCC Senior Connection Identify as "Senior" looking for other LGBT seniors? This group gathers for lunch each month to meet new people, offer support, and connect with social and service agencies as needed. Hosted by Seniors for Seniors, no need to prove age, just show up and enjoy food and conversation. 1:00pm - 2:30pm AChurch4Me MCC, 7366 N Clark St.

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