



Bianca Del Rio in *Hurricane Bianca*.
Photo courtesy of Reeling Film Festival



'DRESS' UP
Hugo Weaving on *The Dressmaker*, possible *Priscilla* sequel.
Photo by Ben King/Broad Green Pictures/Amazon Studios

'REEL' TALK

34th Reeling Film Festival makes America gay again

BY STEVE WARREN

Last summer we celebrated the Supreme Court decision on same-sex marriage. This summer we mourned the victims of Orlando's Pulse massacre.

But on the brighter side, the Republican presidential candidate (Is this really happening or am I trapped in a bad movie?) threw a crumb to the LGBTQ community, even if he couldn't pronounce it.

Whatever happens, some people have to make movies and just about all of us have to watch them. So Reeling goes on, as it has for 34 years, discovering LGBT films and filmmakers before the mainstream does, and offering a queerer alternative to what's on other screens.

The more assimilated we become, the less ghettoization there is, in cinema as well as real life. There are still films made by, for and about us; but most can be appreciated by wider audiences now that our secrets are as out as we are.

So why do we need a festival? I wonder that every year, until I start watching the films. Yes, there's mainstream work out there that accepts and includes us; but these films are us.

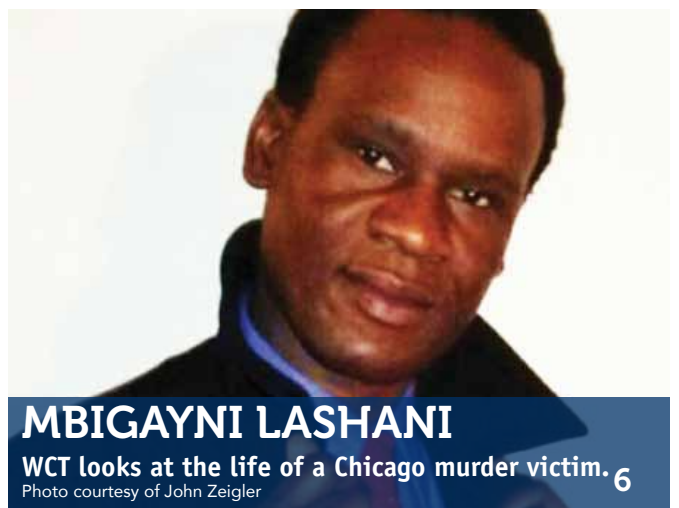
They bring up memories, happy or sad, of being bullied, of being out and proud; the pain of wanting someone you can't have, the thrill of finding out you can have them and the letdown after you do. Loving and losing—or winning—aren't exclusive to us, but sometimes the way we do it is special.

There are stories, real and fictional, that illustrate the steps we've been through on our journeys and remind us that others are still going through the process, which can be just as painful in this more enlightened age. The courage of our predecessors can empower and inspire us as they have others.

I've managed to preview almost two thirds of the festival's features and while I didn't love them all (never trust a critic who likes everything!), there were only a couple I really disliked.

Watching so many films in a short period, one expects to see plot points repeated—a teenager struggling with his/her feelings for another or with gay urges in general; a gay woman or man lusting after someone in a hetero relationship; men whose fathers were gay, whether they know it or not; a man

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MBIGAYNI LASHANI
WCT looks at the life of a Chicago murder victim. 6
Photo courtesy of John Zeigler



ALLIANCE BRUNCH
Illinois Safe Schools hosts annual event. 14
Photo by Kat Fitzgerald



WERQ! JOB FAIR
Seventy businesses/companies take part. 13
Photo by Hal Baim



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'REEL' TALK

34th Reeling Film Festival makes America gay again

online exclusives at www.WindyCityTimes.com



THE 'HEEL' THING
 Julie Tarney (left) discusses the process of writing My Son Wears Heels.
 PR photo

ART-FELT



Lesbian artist Marketka Sivek is doing her part to support the organization Lawrence House.
 Photo courtesy of Sivek

COME TOGETHER
 Bent Nights takes a look at The Hideout's 20th-anniversary reunion.

BUSH LEAGUE
 Chicago P.D.'s Sophia Bush talks about her show and pro-LGBT activism.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ
 Find out the latest about Wentworth Miller, Lady Gaga and Aphex Twin.

IN THE SWIM



Ayrton Kasemets is an Oakland University swimmer who recently came out as gay.
 Photo courtesy of Kasemets

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County health system expands PrEP access

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Cook County Health & Hospitals System (CCHHS), on Sept. 15, announced an initiative to increase access to pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, for its patients.

The new program funds staff in additional locations on the city's West Side, along with CCHHS' Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center, to assist patients in obtaining PrEP, an intervention, usually available as the oral medication Truvada, that significantly diminishes the risk of HIV infection. Patients who begin PrEP will be able to see doctors at those locations for follow-up visits and care for other conditions.



David Schwartz, M.D.
Photo by Matt Simonette

The CORE Center received funding from Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) in early 2015 to create a PrEP program, but officials determined the scope of those initial efforts were too small, said David Schwartz, M.D., infectious diseases division chairman for CCHHS.

"It started small, one half-day a month, and expanded to three half-days a month," said Schwartz. "This experience was good. It got a lot of people into PrEP. It did not get the numbers as hoped though. Part of the problem was there were not a lot of time slots available. If you're a busy person, you may be working or have other things going on [at those times]. So that was an obstacle."

Schwartz said other obstacles for potential PrEP candidates included working around the high cost of the medication, navigating the county health system logistics and deciding whether or not to take a medication for preventative purposes.

Earlier in 2016, CDPH obtained additional money from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to expand the program to make PrEP more available to Chicagoans on the West and South Sides. CCHHS used that funding to expand access to two West Side locations, Austin Health Center, 4800 N. Cicero Ave., and Jorge Prieto Family Health Center, 2424 S. Pulaski Rd. The CORE Center, 2020 W. Harrison St., has also expanded its PrEP clinic hours to five days a week at 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

"These are clinics that do general medicine, but the money from the grants is paying for a project coordinator for both sites, and a navigator at each site, whose job it is to help people get started on and maintain PrEP," Schwartz said.

CCHHS provided medical personnel at those clinics with the training to administer PrEP as well. It also expanded the PrEP services at the CORE Center, so that individuals could inquire about it at its walk-in clinic every day. Furthermore, those using the clinic would not be billed for that first visit, at which time staff could help determine whether private insurance, Medicaid or other means could pay for subsequent appointments. Schwartz noted that lab tests for that first visit would also be free.

"Another problem is that when people came in for PrEP, it was just for PrEP—the visit didn't address the other needs of HIV-negative, high-risk people," Schwartz added. CCHHS will now make a concerted effort to get those individuals on their own continuum of care, so providers can address other chronic health conditions or mental health issues, for example, as they arise. Schwartz said that both the CORE Center and the West Side clinics could serve as both gateways and destinations for care for persons seeking PrEP.

"PrEP should not be PrEP and nothing else—it should be part of comprehensive medical care," he added.

Provident Hospital of Cook County, 500 E. 51st St., also obtained funding in the CDPH PrEP initiative. "They hadn't done PrEP previously on a consistent basis, so they are stepping that up," Schwartz said.

The program begins Oct. 19 and will take place the third Wednesday of every month (6:30-8:30 p.m.) until March 15, 2017. People who are interested in learning more about the program, donating food or supplies, or becoming a mentor should contact Jes Scheinpflug at 773-248-5200, ext. 367, or at jscheinpflug@chicagohouse.org.

TPAN's 'Hero' event Sept. 27

Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) will honor National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day with "Hero: A Gay Men's Health Event" Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 5050 N. Broadway.

Among the slated offerings are inspirational speakers, a meningitis Q&A and a free luncheon presentation on PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis). Also, vaccinations and 15-minute Reiki sessions will be available.

See "HERO: A Gay Men's Health Event" on Facebook.

Chicago House launching TransWorks mentorship Oct. 19

Chicago House is launching its third TransWorks Mentorship Program this fall, beginning Wed., Oct. 19.

The purpose of the program is to facilitate supportive and positive relationships between transgender and gender non-conforming (GNC) individuals in order to build community, increase life skills and create leadership opportunities.

TransWorks is seeking transgender and GNC individuals to participate in the six-month program as mentors. Mentor applicants must have been employed for at least six months by October, and must commit to meeting with the group and with their mentees once a month for six months, a total of three hours per month.

Relationships & the Law Today

BY COURTNEY POSNIK, CLARK HILL PLC



Married on Saturday, fired on Monday: Recent developments in employment law

The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals recently held that sexual orientation claims are not actionable under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In *Hively v. Ivy Tech Cmty. Coll.*, the court considered a case wherein the plaintiff, a former part-time adjunct professor at Ivy Tech community college, alleged that the college refused to even interview her for any full-time teaching positions for which she applied based on her sexual orientation. 2016 U.S. App. LEXIS 13746 (7th Cir. July 28, 2016).

This issue is not new—courts across the country have considered whether Title VII protects employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation. However, this was the first time a Federal appellate court addressed the question since a July 2015 decision by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC"), which held that discrimination based on sexual orientation violates Title VII. The *Hively* case sets a significant precedent in sexual orientation discrimination claims, hopefully setting the stage for legislative action or Supreme Court intervention.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a Federal law that prohibits employers from discriminating against employees on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin and religion. Generally, Title VII applies to employers with 15 or more employees. Title VII has a complicated legislative history, which was cited as reasoning in rejecting plaintiff's claims in *Hively*. The original purpose of Title VII was to remedy racial discrimination, and the prohibition of discrimination based on sex "was thrown in at the final hour in an attempt to thwart adoption of the Civil Rights Act as a whole." *Id.* Thus, "sex" has been construed narrowly, with courts holding that Title VII's prohibition on discrimination based on an individual's sex "extends only to discrimination based on a person's gender." *Id.*

Precedent

Also important to the Seventh Circuit in *Hively* was precedent holding that Title VII does not redress sexual orientation discrimination. The court cited two Seventh Circuit cases from 2000, which both relied on a Seventh Circuit case from 1984. All three cases held that "Title VII offers no protection from nor remedies for sexual orientation discrimination." *Id.* Accordingly, the Seventh Circuit in *Hively* held that it was "presumptively bound" by its own precedent "even in the face of an abundance of judicial opinions recognizing an emerging consensus that sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace can no longer be tolerated." *Id.*

EEOC Decision

The EEOC is a federal administrative agency that enforces federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination, including Title VII. In July 2015, for the first time, it held that "sexual orientation is inherently a 'sex-based consideration' and an allegation of discrimination based on sexual orientation is necessarily an allegation of sex discrimination under Title VII." *Baldwin v. Fox, EEOC Appeal No. 0120133080* (July 16, 2015). While this decision applies to

federal government employees and not the private sector, decisions of the EEOC are entitled to deference by courts.

The EEOC reasoned that the border between sexual orientation discrimination, which is not actionable under Title VII, and discrimination based on sex, which is actionable under Title VII is imprecise and that "sexual orientation is inseparable from and inescapably linked to sex." As an example, the EEOC stated "assume that an employer suspends a lesbian employee for displaying a photo of her female spouse on her desk, but does not suspend a male employee for displaying a photo of his female spouse on his desk. The lesbian employee in that example can allege that her employer took an adverse action against her that the employer would not have taken had she been male." Nonetheless, the Seventh Circuit in *Hively* did not give deference to the EEOC and concluded, based on binding precedent, that "Title VII, as it stands, does not reach discrimination based on sexual orientation."

Implications of *Hively*

The Seventh Circuit in *Hively* understood the potential absurdities that could result from its decision and precedential decisions on this issue. Following its holding, courts must continue to separate gender discrimination claims, which are actionable under Title VII, from sexual orientation claims, which are not actionable. The court admitted that "doing so creates an uncomfortable result in which the more visibly and stereotypically gay or lesbian a plaintiff is in mannerisms, appearance, and behavior, and the more the plaintiff exhibits those behaviors and mannerisms at work, the more likely a court is to recognize a claim of non-conformity which will be cognizable under Title VII as sex discrimination." *Id.* Thus, the line of cases holding that Title VII does not apply to sexual orientation discrimination claims "create[s] a paradoxical legal landscape in which a person can be married on Saturday and then fired on Monday for just that act."

State Anti-Discrimination Laws

Pursuant to *Hively*, "any private employer can summon an employee into his office and state, 'You are a hard-working employee and have added much value to my company, but I am firing you because you are gay.' And the employee would have no recourse whatsoever—unless she happens to live in a state or locality with an anti-discrimination statute that includes sexual orientation." *Id.* Illinois, through the Illinois Human Rights Act, and the City of Chicago, through the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance, prohibit discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation.

However, nearby states including Michigan and Indiana do not have similar state laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation in the employment context. Thus, a piecemeal approach to this issue varying widely state-to-state will continue until the legislature takes action or until the Supreme Court rules on this issue.

If you are interested in learning more about regulations affecting employment, please feel free to contact any of Clark Hill's experienced attorneys.

Courtney Posnik is an Associate Attorney in Clark Hill PLC's Health Care Practice Group in the firm's Chicago office. She focuses her practice on healthcare law, assisting clients with transactional, corporate, and regulatory matters. You may contact her at 312-985-5535 or cposnik@clarkhill.com.

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Mbiganyi Lashani: The life behind one of Chicago's 500 murder victims

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

On July 18, Mbiganyi Lashani was in his kitchen preparing a meal.

"So a dove came and sat on my window, as I was getting the skillet ready, it flew away," he wrote on social media.

Friends thought it was a good omen.

Eleven days later, just before six in the morning on July 29, Chicago Police Department (CPD) officers responded to reports of shots fired in the 6500 block of South Peoria Street in the South Side neighborhood of Englewood.

Lashani was pronounced dead at the scene. He was 41.

Born in Gaborone, Botswana, Lashani had forged a life in the United States in which potential seemed limitless not only for himself but for the youth of Englewood.

It is one of the most violent neighborhoods in Chicago. Death is so commonplace there that the kids who are cut down have now become part of routine, weekly reports in Chicago media.

Yet Lashani was determined to see them prevail by using his multifaceted abilities as an artist, musician and landscaper.

He believed that a "better life [doesn't] just happen. You have to prepare and work hard to achieve it. I know that now."

He shared that philosophy as a regular volunteer. Lashani cared so deeply about the kids with whom he worked that, a month before he was killed, he used his Facebook page to memorialize 18-year-old Latrell McMahon, who was shot to death June 18 in East Garfield Park. "These kids don't value life out here," he said.

Earlier this month, both McMahon and Lashani made national headlines, but only as numbers when the 2016 Chicago murder rate topped 500.

Lashani's body had long since been returned to Botswana where a grieving family laid him to rest while still hoping for a suspect to be found in his death.

Instead, he had become an unnamed talking point between warring politicians or for the usual fickle 24 hours of frenzied analysis on cable news.

His life and everyone it touched boiled down to a body count in what CBS News called an "undeclared war."

Initial reports of his death from the Chicago Tribune, Sun-Times and DNAinfo contained the usual boilerplate facts: name, residence, the time, place and circumstances of his death.

There was little about the man himself—a man with model good looks, whose heroes included civil-rights leader Malcolm X, who always looked forward to the arrival of spring, supported Bernie Sanders during the primaries and who prided himself on consistently looking his best.

A man who John Zeigler, the director of urban education and community partnerships at DePaul University's Steans Center for Community-Based Service Learning knew for more than 20 years.

At the time they met, Lashani was a philosophy major at DePaul who had arrived in the United States as part of a scholarship program for young students from Botswana and South Africa.

Zeigler was a social worker with the Chicago-based youth advocacy organization Youth Guidance.

"I was in my third-floor office at Harper High School in Englewood," Zeigler said. "MB just



Mbiganyi Lashani.

Photo courtesy of John Zeigler

walked in unannounced and wanted to volunteer. He was adamant about being engaged and involved and felt that it was his calling to work in that community and contribute to it. I asked him what his skill set was. He told me he was an artist and that wherever I wanted him to be, he could adapt."

Zeigler's first impressions of Lashani were of a "gentle and very bright man. He had an unassuming way. He was a tall fellow with an accent that people immediately noticed. Always curious and a risk-taker, he was always trying to deconstruct what Africa meant to him and what it should mean to others. He educated

SIDEBAR

LGBTQs, gun-violence prevention coalition to provide education, action

CHICAGO—In response to the epidemic of shootings in Chicago, and the massacre of mostly LGBTQ, mostly Latino individuals at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Chicago-area LGBTQ, Latino and gun violence prevention organizations are coming together for a town hall on Thursday, Oct. 20, for a forum aimed at education, coalition-building and action.

The free program will feature various speakers who are doing the work on anti-gun violence, including through activism, advocacy and electoral politics. LGBTQ activists will address the need to amplify the existing organizational work, and bring new resources to the table for more effective coalitions.

Joy McCormack, founder of Chicago Survivors, an organization that provides crime victims services to families who experience violent loss, is working with Pride Action Tank, Windy City Times, and the Illinois Gun Violence Prevention Coalition to develop the event.

The event is 6-8:30 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 20 at Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 1650 W. Foster Ave., Chicago, just west of Ashland Avenue. The program will start at 6:30 p.m. Due to location restrictions, no food or beverage will be provided.

Additional information, including speakers, will be posted at <http://prideaction-tank.org/>.

others about Botswana."

Zeigler said that Lashani took the train from DePaul to Englewood almost every day to volunteer.

"He did a lot of tutoring in math and science, so we set up a space for him," Zeigler remembered. "People began to feel very comfortable with him and so students would talk with him about their science projects and where they were having problems with math."

Lashani was also heavily involved in a project Zeigler set up called Connections.

"It was an international program that involved students in a rite of passage," Zeigler said. "Part of that meant taking them to Senegal in West Africa. MB was enamored and intrigued with that process. Part of our work was looking at character and economic development, different ways to make an abstract Africa more concrete. Having MB there helped to move that process along."

It was at the Boulevard Arts Center on the South Side of Chicago that Lashani was able to put his artistic talents to an equally altruistic use under founder and executive director Patricia Devine-Reed.

"At the time it was the largest arts center in Chicago," Zeigler said. "It was a space in Englewood that you really could be free. Pat really used art as a way for community engagement around social justice issues. MB was immersed in that—painting murals, you name it. He was also a musician. In fact, he could make anything musical."

With the growth of the internet, Lashani began to design websites and dabbled in film.

"He would find raw filmmaking equipment and engage young people in participatory filmmaking around anti-violence," Zeigler said.

Lashani envisioned a TV Show he called Culturevate. The story, as he described it on the project's Kickstarter campaign, revolved around a "high school talented athlete who gets caught in the web of inner-city youth politics. With his mother strung on drugs, father and older brother in prison, all hell breaks loose when his grandmother loses her battle with Leukemia. He is then forced to fend for himself and his younger siblings."

Lashani believed in the project so fervently that he had Culturevate t-shirts designed. By May of 2015, he was a quarter of the way to his campaign goal.

"He was so multitalented," Zeigler said. "Every plant in my back yard, he planted. A month before he was killed, he painted a bench with the word 'peace' in different languages."

Such was his talent with landscaping that, in 2007, Lashani founded a company he called D'fynation. "As my clientele grew, I engaged teenage students in the neighborhood during summer breaks to help them gain earnest allowance" he wrote. "We also compiled a newsletter which we distributed free of charge in the community."

"He knew soil," Zeigler said. "What would grow and what wouldn't. I helped him with the start-up business design but it was frustrating because he wasn't consistent enough to keep it going and growing; to really just focus on what you can do well and do it. There were times when I had stopped talking to him out of that frustration."

In June 2012, Lashani graduated from the Keller Graduate School of Management with an MBA in marketing.

"MB was fearless and also the most trusting person," Zeigler said. "You know, even in his participatory filmmaking, he would give his equipment to people he didn't know well and he never got it back. I think because he was so soft-spoken and had such a gentle soul, people thought they could take advantage of him. I never saw him angry about it. He said 'it's just material. I can get another.'"

"He was always achieving," Zeigler added. "But he never could connect those dots to the point where it became profitable. Our final conversation reflected on that. He was thinking about how to move from one stage to another—where he could actually grow something versus jumping to the next thing. I always

thought of him as a spiritual person but he had started actively going to church and he was really beginning to find himself."

All that ended in an Englewood abandoned building on July 29. He had been shot multiple times. His wallet and cellphone were not taken.

Dawn Valenti is a crisis responder with the organization Chicago Survivors—an organization which "provides multi-cultural crime victim/survivor services to surviving family members following homicide in Chicago."

"I got called to the 6500 block of South Peoria and it was about 6:30 in the morning when I arrived," she told Windy City Times. "I talked to the detective on the scene and they were trying to find next of kin. We talked throughout the day and he couldn't locate anybody because one address that he had, MB hadn't lived in for years; another was abandoned. So it took him quite a while."

"MB was supposed to come by our house to do some work with my wife's business," Zeigler said. "Every other week he was by there. My wife texted him and he said he was coming but he didn't show up. He didn't leave a message. He had been pretty consistent. A week went by. It was an awful, rainy day when I remember that I got a call from a friend who said that MB had been murdered."

Zeigler said that Lashani's body had laid unclaimed in the city morgue during the entire time.

"I was numb," Zeigler said. "In the work I do in the community, death is never personal. But MB's death just hit me in a way that I was in a dream-like state. Images of him smiling, the last conversation we had, hearing him crack corny jokes and showing me his latest work all was a kaleidoscope that went past me. That day, I was supposed to meet with a pastor in North Lawndale to do some work around trauma. But something told me just to follow through. When I went up the stairs, she just hugged me and told me that she felt my spirit. I could not stop crying."

Zeigler believes that Lashani knew his killer. Although news reports placed his residence on the West Side, Zeigler said that Lashani had recently moved to Englewood and was killed "right next door to where he lived."

Nevertheless, progress on finding a suspect has been slow.

"The investigation is moving and it isn't," Valenti said. "It's not moving for a lot of reasons—where MB was found and the time that he was found, which was early in the morning. Somebody heard the gunshots, but you are talking about the South Side of Chicago, so it's not uncommon to hear gun shots. It was a neighbor who went out to walk his dog who found MB. DNA and forensic evidence takes time to come back, but I can guarantee you that the police are definitely working on it. I have seen the detective at a couple of other crime scenes and we always talk about MB."

Zeigler is not convinced.

"I am trying to figure out why it happened," he said. "We are at a place now where it has kind of come to a screeching halt. I don't know what the CPD is doing. Some of his family and friends here want to send out fliers, pay for a private detective and do a news conference to tell people who he was and maybe help bring someone forward who might have information."

"I've talked to MB's cousin and his family have been following the investigation through the media," Valenti said. "They want somebody to be arrested."

Malcolm X once observed that, "History is a people's memory, and without a memory, man is demoted to the lower animals."

In the case of Lashani and so many like him, his history and memory could have easily been demoted to the following three paragraphs from the Sun-Times wire published in Homicide Watch Chicago August 9.

"A man who was shot to death nearly two weeks ago in the Englewood neighborhood has been identified as 41-year-old Mbiganyi Lashani, a West Side resident and native of Botswana.



Karen Teplitzky (left) and Karen Steenstrup.

Photo courtesy of John Ziegler

PASSAGES

Karen Beth Teplitzky

Karen Beth Teplitzky—a former New Jersey resident who had lived in Lake Zurich, Illinois, since 2009—died Sept. 10 at JourneyCare in Barrington, Illinois. She was 47.

Karen was born Dec. 8, 1968, in Brooklyn, New York.

She was a graduate of State University New York at New Paltz, and was a member of the Sigma Delta Tau Sorority.

Survivors include her wife, Karen M. Steenstrup; parents, David and Jane (nee Goldman) Teplitzky; mother-in-law, Marion (late Chuck) Tallion; father-in-law, Late George Steenstrup; sister, Lisa (Michael) Mazzeo; nieces and nephew, Sarah, Daniel, and Emily Mazzeo; brothers and sisters-in-law, late Marty (Libby) Steenstrup, Cathy (John) McDonough, Dan (Maria) Steenstrup, Diana Rozhon, Chris (Jim) Arrigo and Kim (Don) Carlsson; and many nieces and nephews-in-law.

A memorial visitation was held Sept. 14 at the Ahlgrim Family Funeral Home, 415 S. Buesching Rd., Lake Zurich.

In lieu of flowers, memorials will be appreciated to JourneyCare, 405 Lake Zurich Rd., Barrington, IL 60010.

Playwright Edward Albee dies

Edward Albee—considered by many to be among the top U.S. playwrights for at least a generation—died Sept. 16 at his home in Montauk, New York, at age 88 after a short illness.

In 1962, Albee's Broadway debut, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*—a then-controversial analysis of a crumbling marriage—won a Tony Award for best play. It was later made into a movie starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. The play has also been revived on Broadway three times, most recently with Tracy Letts and Amy Morton in 2012.

In 2012, Albee's drama about a love affair between man and beast—*The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?*—won another Tony. A few of his other plays include *A Delicate Balance*, *Seascape* and *Three Tall Women*, which all earned him Pulitzer Prizes.

Interviews revealed that Albee had said he knew he was gay by the time he was 8, and that he had his first same-sex experience at 12. In the 1950s, Albee was romantically involved with fellow playwright Terrence McNally for five years. Albee's partner of 35 years, sculptor Jonathan Thomas, died in 2005; Albee leaves no immediate survivors.

Chuck Kramer, of the local group NewTown Writers, said of Albee, "I found his work, his art to be dynamic center of his impact on American culture. Three Pulitzers, a Lambda Lifetime Achievement Award and numerous other awards are testimony to his genius.

"He described himself as a writer who happened to be gay and insisted a gay writer must be able to transcend self. He certainly did that and continued to work well into old age, never resting on his laurels. An important artist and a remarkable man."

Nick Patricca, a writer/playwright and Windy City Times contributor who knew Albee, stated, "Throughout his success as one of America's and the world's greatest playwrights, Edward Albee never forgot to give enthusiastic support to his colleagues in the arts. Albee knew the needs of writers and other artists and he did his best to meet those needs through his Foundation and his personal encouragement.

"In my own case, he was kind enough to read my poetry and give me feedback. For me, Edward Albee is not only a great playwright but a great example of how writers ought to treat one another."

Man challenges mandatory diversity video

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A downstate man, who works for the Social Security Administration (SSA) office in Champaign, said he fears for his job since he's refused to watch a mandatory LGBT diversity-training video.

David Hall, of Tolono, works in an information technology position and has been employed by SSA for about 14 years. In April, he and other SSA employees were notified that they would be required to view a 17-minute video on LGBT diversity, according to the (Champaign-Urbana) News-Gazette.

However, Hall said that would go against his Christian beliefs and refused to watch it. After being reminded to do so a few times over the summer, he was suspended for two days in August.

Hall has returned to work, but anticipates he'll have more disciplinary action against him, and might even face the loss of his job.

"I think this is an issue they are prepared to go to the mat with, but I'm not going to give up my faith or compromise my beliefs just to go along and get along. I don't believe God wants me to do that," Hall said.

Hall has engaged Chicago-area attorney Jason Craddock to advise him. Craddock previously represented the owners of the Timber Creek Bed and Breakfast who, in 2011, refused

to allow a same-sex couple to hold a commitment ceremony.

The original article is at <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/2016-09-08/man-would-rather-get-fired-watch-diversity-video.html>.

Mel Platzke memorial Sept. 24

A memorial for the late model/entrepreneur Mel Platzke will take place Saturday, Sept. 24, 3-5 p.m., at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

Attendees are advised to "bring your joy and stories."

Platzke died of bronchopneumonia and hypertensive cardiovascular disease on July 29 in Chicago. He was 48. He split his time between Chicago and Miami.

See "Mel Platzke Memorial Celebration" on Facebook.

Presidential debate viewing party Sept. 26

The "Presidential Debate Viewing Party: Chicago LGBTQs for Hillary" will take place Monday, Sept. 26, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

The doors to the glass and side bars will open at 7 p.m. The debate will be 8-9:30 p.m. There's no cover.

Suggested contribution levels are \$45, \$100, \$250 and \$500; event chairs are Art Johnston, Pepe Pena, Jamie Citron and Kevin Hauswirth.

See "Presidential Debate Viewing Party" on Facebook for more details.

LASHANI from page 6

"Officers responded to a call of a person shot at 5:58 a.m. Friday, July 29, in the 6500 block of South Peoria, and found the victim unresponsive, according to Chicago Police.

"Lashani was pronounced dead at the scene at 6:20 a.m., according to the Cook County medical examiner's office. He lived in the 3200 block of West Walnut in East Garfield Park.

"An autopsy found he died of multiple gunshot wounds, and his death was ruled a homicide."

The framework of that report has been repeated over 500 times this year. The only words that change are the names, dates and address.

It has left people like Zeigler wondering where it all ends.

"I don't know where to place anger," he said. "I am angry at the communities I have worked in for so long where nothing's changed. It's

made me think in a very critical way about why I am doing the work I am doing. It's made me reflect on my own sense of purpose."

"The most important things for people to know is that not everything is gang-related," Valenti said. "The media may say it is gang-related but what we happen to see a lot of the time is that the victim was not in a gang. We have lost a lot of innocent people. They were never in the wrong place at the wrong time. They were just doing what they were supposed to be doing and were preyed upon by predators."

"Behind that victim there is an entire story," she added. "There is a family, siblings who are hit the worst, friends. All of them loved that person."

"I remember I thought about MB being alone and so isolated," Zeigler said. "All of those things unfolded themselves like a bad novel that I am just trying to get through page by page."



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Project&'s 'Working in America' launches at Harold Washington

BY LIZ BAUDLER

Project& launched its Working in America exhibition with a panel discussion at the Harold Washington Library Sept. 14. Library Commissioner Brian Bannon introduced Working in America as a "contemporary, thought-provoking" tribute to Studs Terkel's 1974 book Working. Hosting the project at the library, he said it was a good way to "bring the rich culture we have in our city to everyone."

Jane Hussein Saks, Project&'s director, agreed that the library was a natural fit for Working in America. Libraries "are free, accessible and open, and always will be," she said.

Several of the subjects of the Working in America project were at the opening, including Chicagoan Riva Lehrer, a nationally honored lesbian artist. Also in the exhibit, but not in attendance, is Red Vaughan Tremmel, a trans advocate and filmmaker.

Saks introduced Alex Kotlowitz, the panel's moderator and author of *There Are No Children Here*, as "one of the most courageous voices in our city and our country."

Kotlowitz began by playing a clip of one of Terkel's interviews, joking that though Terkel was a renowned listener, the man himself was most always speaking. Over the course of the next hour, Kotlowitz urged the panelists to open up about their work: what it was that people didn't know about their work, what they did to unwind, whether they considered their work just a job or a calling.

Gary Bryner, a union rep for General Motors for 32 years, talked about the external and internal power of unions. "When the boat rises for unions, it rises for everyone," Bryner said. He also lauded the democratic nature of the organizations. "You can appeal any action, any decision of anybody. It works miracles," he said.

Ai-Jen Poo, executive director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, discussed how her work as an activist taught her much about people's complexities and the importance of story in uniting people for a cause. She worried about burning out like she'd seen colleagues

do. "It takes some intention to bring who you are to the work," she said.

Roque Sanchez, the panel's youngest member, said he felt invisible in his custodial job. "My job is just something I'm going through," Sanchez said. Yet though he looks to explore other careers such as writing, he took pride in his current work. "I care about it as if I was doing my dream job," he said.

Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Lynsey Addario had taken portraits of Working in America's 24 participants, but Kotlowitz prodded her to discuss her own work style. "The two times I've been kidnapped were the low points," the war zone reporter joked. Addario said taking pictures was the only time she felt fully present. "If I'm having a bad day, I can't work," she said.

Lucia McBath became a gun policy advocate after her son, Jordan Davis, was killed in what's been termed "the loud music case." "You don't go to school to be an activist," said McBath, who talked about how much research her work entails. Some of this research involves listening to survivors' stories, and it's there McBath said she can get overwhelmed. "Every day I wish I did not have to do this work," McBath said, citing that 91 people a day are killed by gun violence. Her family is crucial to keeping her balanced. "They remember the Lucy before the work," she said.

Jeffrey McGee, the last panelist, described his life as split in two parts. While McGee is now a facilities manager at a VA rehab center, in his past life he was a drug dealer who served time in prison. McGee talked about the compassion and focus it took to do his job every day. "It's like a crazy house," he said. "I have to bring myself to their level: I'm crazy too." He recalled finding clarity about his life while in solitary confinement. "Every time I've grown it's because of adversity," McGee said.

The audience was curious about how Working's subjects were chosen. "It's a testament to Jane's eclecticism," said Addario, speaking of the subjects' range. McBath had nothing but praise for Addario's photographic work.

"It was organic," said McBath, who noted that she'd been photographed many times in her role. "Nothing was difficult, nothing was staged."

The Working exhibit is up now at the Harold Washington Library. The exhibit, which was designed by Jeanne Gang and Studio Gang Architects, is part of a larger initiative that connects three multi-platform components. A radio series, co-produced by Saks and Radio Diaries Executive Producer Joe Richman, will profile people originally featured in Terkel's book Working and is scheduled to begin airing in September on NPR's Morning Edition and All Things Considered, with the Studs Terkel Archives as a partner.

At the exhibit, members of the public are able to upload their own stories and photographs to an online archive called "Your Working Story." "The narratives of this exhibit allow us to explore the trials and tribulations we face in our work," said Saks. "It also shows what is universal about work and illustrates how labor, in many ways, gives us a sense of purpose, a means to participate in society and becomes the tie that binds us all together."

See <http://projectand.org>.



Above: Jane Saks at the Working exhibit's opening. Below: Chicago artist Riva Lehrer, one of the 24 subjects, standing with her portraits.

Photos by Tracy Baim



Wis. court rules for same-sex couples

The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin ruled that the state of Wisconsin must issue accurate birth certificates listing both parents for the children of married same-sex couples.

Chelsea and Jessamy Torres, a married lesbian couple, live in Madison and were married in New York in September 2012. After several attempts using assisted reproductive technology, Chelsea became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Chelsea received a form from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services asking for confirmation of the information that was provided to generate a birth certificate. The form did not contain any reference to Jessamy, effectively erasing her from the family in the eyes of the state.

The opinion of *Torres and Torres v. Seemeyer* is at LambdaLegal.org/in-court/legal-docs/torres_wi_20160914_opinion.

Midwest LGBTQ health event Oct. 6-7

Howard Brown Health and Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center will host the Midwest LGBTQ Health Symposium on Thursday-Friday, Oct. 6-7, at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, 836 W. Wellington Ave.

Physicians, nurses, residents, healthcare administrators and all other medical professionals are welcome to the event.

A press release stated that the goal of the symposium is "to provide culturally competent and affirming resources to care providers who treat LGBTQ patients and provide an opportunity to exchange ideas through workshops, presentations and networking opportunities."

Keynote speakers include JoAnne Keatley, MSW, director of the University of California San Francisco Center of Excellence for Transgender Health; and Sgt. Shane Ortega, U.S. Army sergeant in the 25th Infantry Division and a trans-rights advocate.

In addition to learning best practices and challenges faced in LGBTQ healthcare, physicians and other allied health professionals will earn up to 13.5 hours of continued medical education.

For event updates, visit <http://howardbrown.org/event/mlhs2016>; to register, visit MidwestLGBTQHealthSymposium.eventbrite.com.

A Wider Bridge reception Sept. 28

On Wed., Sept. 28, Temple Shalom and Or Chadash will host a community reception for A Wider Bridge, featuring main partners on the ground in Israel, Chen Arieli and Imri Kalmann, who are co-chairs of the Aguda-Israel LGBT Task Force.

The event will take place at 6:30 p.m. at Temple Shalom, 3480 N. Lake Shore Dr.

Admission is \$18; visit <http://AWiderBridge.org/israeli-lgbt-leaders-in-chicago/>.



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Cook County Dems target Trump

At a press conference in front of Trump Tower in downtown Chicago Sept. 12, the Cook County Democratic Party announced its voter registration drive for the upcoming presidential election Nov. 8. Their efforts will include a strong push to register Latino and African-American voters by the Oct. 11 registration deadline.

Cook County Democratic Party Chairman Joseph Berrios, U.S. Rep. Tammy Duckworth, City

Clerk Susana Mendoza, Democratic nominee for State's Attorney Kim Foxx, Cook County Recorder of Deeds Karen Yarbrough, State Rep. Robert Martwick, State Senator Omar Aquino, Democratic nominee for State Representative Theresa Mah, Chair of Voter Registration Committee 35th Ward Alderman and Committeeman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, and Cook County Democratic Committeemen were among those scheduled to appear.



Above: Senate candidate Tammy Duckworth surrounded by other Democratic politicians. Below: State's Attorney candidate Kim Foxx. Left: Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa. Photos by Hal Baim



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Trevor Project educates audience on youth suicide risks

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

With anti-LGBT, and in particular anti-transgender, rhetoric on the rise during one of the most hate-filled and divisive political climates in recent history, the services provided by organizations like The Trevor Project, which has led the way in suicide prevention and crisis intervention services for LGBT youth since 1998, have never been more imperative.

On Sept. 16, the Gray Hotel in downtown Chicago was the venue for over 150 people to not only receive a poignant education about the need and effects of The Trevor Project's mission, but an intimate concert from rapidly rising star and openly gay musician Steve Grand.

The vicious dialogue emerging from religious and right-wing organizations is having such a devastating effect on youth trying to live day-to-day fighting bullying, depression and anxiety about even stepping foot into a classroom has left the staff and volunteers of The Trevor Project with a mountain to climb in order to stem the risks which, according to the CDC, have contributed to LGB students being more than four times as likely to have attempted suicide as their heterosexual peers and at least a 25 percent reported rate in suicide attempts by transgender youth.

"We started with a phone number that people could call and now our lifeline is available 24/7, 365-days-per-year," Trevor Project Executive Director/CEO Abbe Land told Windy City Times. "We also have Trevor Chat so young people can instant message and text with us. That's really important because not everyone wants to talk on the phone. There's a fear of talking and having someone misgender you, and also you might not want your parents to hear you talking on the phone."

Land added that The Trevor Project's work has now expanded, putting the organization in classrooms nationwide. Social media has also proved an invaluable tool to reach an international audience.

"We're in schools helping young people understand about the issue of suicide and how to be there and be a support for their friends," she said. "Trevor Space is our international program which is a Facebook-like community of young people aged 13-24. It's a community designed for you to talk to other young people. We have over 140,000 young people on there from 135 different countries."

According to Land, those who think life for LGBTQ young people must be improving in a post-marriage equality age need to understand the reality.

"We get calls every day from young people throughout this country," she said. "Thirty-five percent of calls do come from the South but we also get calls from cities like Chicago, L.A., San Francisco—places you would think were cosmopolitan and open. But when you are young and think you are different from other people, it is isolating and scary and you don't know how to navigate that. It is still very hard to come out."

Land stressed such realities to the audience with a devastating number.

"Every 95 minutes a young person takes their life," she said. "The work we do is hard. I don't think I have to remind anyone in this room about the massacre that occurred in June at the Pulse nightclub in Florida. When our staff and volunteers heard that news, even though they weren't scheduled for shifts, they came into the offices because they knew that we would, and we did, have some of our highest call volumes after that."

The cumulative effect of The Trevor Project's work was summarized in a letter the organization received from a 16-year-old.

Land read it to the audience.

"A couple of months I was completely in the closet," the author of the letter wrote. "I was feeling alone, depressed and suicidal. I finally decided to call your suicide hotline and I truly believe it saved my life. The person on the other end of the phone allowed me to, for the first time in my life, speak out about my situation and feelings. Through something as simple as just listening to me, that person saved my life. The man on the other end of the phone also gave me the confidence I needed to unveil my true self to one of my closest friends. I hope to come out to my family very soon."

When Grand took the stage, one of the songs he opened with was a cover of Elton John's Your Song.

"I hope you don't mind that I put down in words, how wonderful life is while you're in the world."

For more information on The Trevor Project, visit TheTrevorProject.org.



Above: Trevor Project Executive Director/CEO Abbe Land. Below: Steve Grand.
Photos by Gretchen Rachel Hammond



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Iowa state Sen. Matt McCoy and Victory Fund and Institute President/CEO Aisha Moodie-Mills. Photo by Carrie Maxwell

Chicago event launches Victory Fund milestone celebrations

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

The Victory Fund and Institute kicked off its 25th anniversary with a champagne reception Sept. 18 at Ignite Glass Studios in the West Loop.

Victory Fund Campaign and Institute Board Chair for the Midwest Region Eric Nelson welcomed the 150 people in attendance and spoke about Victory Fund and Institute President and CEO Aisha Moodie-Mills' vast political experience ahead of her remarks. He also noted they've endorsed 200 candidates nationwide this election cycle.

Moodie-Mills said that during a recent panel discussion she was asked what keeps her up at night. She explained that it's the false sense of power people ascribe toward the LGBT community which isn't true. Moodie-Mills indicated that in terms of LGBT elected officials (about 500 nationwide) there's been a plateau for the past 10 years and that's left the community extremely underrepresented in most parts of the country.

"The good news is we're now in a political environment where we're able to provide opportunities for LGBT candidates in parts of the country that seemed unviable just one or two election cycles ago," said Moodie-Mills.

Among the many LGBT candidates running across the country, Moodie-Mills singled out two state representative races of note—retired Navy Captain Jane Campbell, who's running for office in North Carolina, and Beth Tuura, who's running for the seat where Orlando's Pulse nightclub is located.

"Most states aren't as fortunate as Illinois," said Moodie-Mills. "You have an embarrassment of riches here. Whereas some states have few or no openly LGBT elected officials, Illinois has 28 ... Illinois is one of only 14 states rated at a high level for LGBT equality, so congratulations to you for all the work you've done."

During his keynote address, Iowa state Sen. Matt McCoy spoke about his own coming out story and how the Victory Fund impacted his first political campaign 14 years ago.

"The Victory Fund has provided me with so many tools, so much support and so much training over the years," said McCoy.

McCoy noted that his presence at the table when legislators were discussing LGBT issues matters more than one can imagine in obtaining a positive legislative result. He said that LGBT victories can evaporate overnight if anti-LGBT people are elected to statewide or national offices or appointed to the federal courts including the Supreme Court.

U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (vice-chair of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus) and Cradles to Crayons Executive Director and former Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov received the Champion of Equality Award. In addition, DOW Chemical Company received the Corporate Equality Award, with DOW USA President Pedro Suarez accepting on the company's behalf.

Illinois state Rep. Kelly Cassidy was on hand to present Cherkasov with his award while Moodie-Mills presented Quigley and DOW Chemical/Suarez with their awards.

Cassidy spoke about the work Cherkasov did to ensure equality in the state and noted Illinois is one of only a handful of states to ban conversion-therapy practices on LGBT youth.

Cherkasov chronicled his family emigration to the United States from Azerbaijan, which had an anti-Semitic government. He said his parents saw the States as the land of fairness and equal opportunity.

"We have to be able to share our own stories and make our own case for equality," said Cherkasov. "This is part of the work the Victory Fund does."

Quigley explained that in order to obtain nationwide equality for the LGBT community, it's imperative to elect Hillary Clinton as president and shift both houses of Congress to Democratic control. He noted that with Democrats in control progressive legislation, including the Equality Act, will be able to pass through both houses of Congress and be signed into law.

"This recognition is very important to us," said Suarez. "I believe that an inclusive workplace, and for that matter society, that welcomes and respects everyone is one that en-

ables citizens to thrive and economies to grow. Inclusion is the true catalyst for success."

Suarez noted that DOW will continue to work on state and federal LGBT issues because for them full inclusion is the endgame.

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner and Victory Institute board member Debra Shore received the first ever leadership award which has been named her—the Debra Shore Leadership Award. This award will be given to a person or entity each year who has demonstrated the kind of leadership Shore has done on behalf of LGBT equality. Mike Holloman, chair of the Victory Institute board, presented Shore with her award.

Shore noted that unlike other LGBT organizations, the Victory Fund has avoided mission creep by being lean and adapting as time marches on. She explained that every state

that achieved marriage equality legislatively prior to the 2015 Supreme Court ruling had at least four openly LGBT people in their state legislatures. Shore praised the work Moodie-Mills has done this past year and called on attendees to join the Victory Cabinet.

Sponsors included Barnes and Thornburg, LLC, Center on Halsted, Christy Webber Landscapes, Clark Pellett and Robert Kohl, state Sen. Heather Steans, Ronna Stamm and Paul Lehman, Jon Lehman and Zach Huelsing, Sommers and Fahrenbach, Inc., Shore, Michael Grover and Nunzio Lupo and Louis A. Vega /The DOW Chemical Company.

Receptions will also be taking place in Palm Springs, Los Angeles, New York City and Nashville in the coming weeks and months.

See <https://www.victoryfund.org/> for more information.

Plans revived for LGBT-focused school

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A symposium will be held in mid-October seeking community input for a renewed effort for an education program sensitive to the needs of LGBT students.

Bishop James E. Dukes of Pentecostal Liberation Christian Center, 6810 S. Ashland Ave., is organizing the gathering, to be held Tuesday, Oct. 18, at McCormick Theological Seminary, 5460 S. University Ave., 10 a.m.-noon.

In 2014, Dukes unsuccessfully spearheaded an effort to open a similar program. He said that, after convening with the original stakeholders, he now had support from CPS as well and the city and state, adding, "It's an exciting time."

If successful, the school would launch in fall 2017, and Dukes is looking at a location at 7400 S. Michigan Ave. initially; he would

like the school to eventually grow large enough to serve about 350 students. Organizers will be meeting with the family of the late activist Renae Ogletree to consider the possibility of naming the school after her.

In early 2013, Dukes and some of his congregants occupied a home whose owners had left after they had been intimidated by local gangs. He held a number of neighborhood meetings in the home, and local residents said that the limited resources for LGBT youth needed to be a primary concern.

"They pointed to a both a limited amount of resources and a limited amount of acceptance in the community," Dukes said in 2014. "This is a population that we need to tap into. This is not a faith-based issue; it's a human rights issue."

This will be the third attempt at an LGBT-focused school in Chicago in the past decade. Prior to Dukes' previous attempt, Social Justice High School-Pride Campus was proposed in 2008; however, those plans were shelved late that year.

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Leather Archives & Museum marks 25th anniversary

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

The Leather Archives & Museum (LA&M) celebrated 25 years of leather history Sept. 17 with an anniversary banquet at Francesca's Bryn Mawr in Edgewater and a program at the Rogers Park LA&M headquarters.

Master of Ceremonies, LA&M board member and International Mr. Leather Coordinator Jon Krongaard welcomed the 100 people in attendance and presented Randall "Bearman" Klett with the President's Award. Krongaard specifically noted Joseph Bean's (LA&M's first executive director and paid staffer, who was unable to attend that evening) contributions to the LA&M, most notably finding the building where the archives and museum is currently housed and making them famous around the world.

LA&M received two monetary gifts that evening—Sir Bruce of Leather SINS gave the organization \$33,000 while Chip Beam of Full Kit Gear gave it \$25,000.

Gayle Rubin, a scholar as well as a founding member of LA&M's board of directors, spoke about how archives and museums have moved history out in the open, where people of all economic backgrounds could access it. Rubin explained that the LA&M is a part of this evolution of making all kinds of historical things available for the masses. She noted that, in order to make this happen, organizations need archivists so their collections can be processed and cataloged for easy reference, and the LA&M has done just that by hiring its first full-time archivist and collections librarian in 2013, Jakob VanLammeren.

LA&M Executive Director Rick Storer hailed the work librarians and archivists do for the wider world and introduced Leon Grossman who noted the contributions Jeff Storer (LA&M director of operations and Rick's husband) has made to LA&M over the years.

"I never thought I'd be so blessed to begin my archival career at the LA&M, said VanLammeren. "This is a profoundly moving place ... a place for blessed memories to be exhibited and not hidden and the place I've called home for the last four years."

VanLammeren noted that during his tenure he's worked with 430 researchers, received 25 archival collections, managed 20 volunteers and interns, given 50 plus tours, created eight in-house and traveling exhibits and created over 250 catalogue records. He said that many organizations around the world have utilized the LA&M collections over the years to illuminate what they were teaching and showcasing to their audiences. VanLammeren explained that the LA&M is a sacred place that will only become more relevant in the coming years.

Two teams (consisting of three people each) played Leather Archives Jeopardy with Illinois Ms. Leather Pride 2016 winner Sarah Sloan serving as the host ahead of LA&M President Chuck Renslow's keynote address.

"I can't tell you how proud I am to stand before you tonight," said Renslow. "Twenty-five years ago I stood in the basement of our home and looked at a wall of file cabinets and a stack of boxes. My partner died that year; his name was Dom Orejudos but you probably know him better as the erotic artist, Etienne. I wondered, what should I do with Dom's artwork, with my own archives and that basement full of history. I talked to other people, including our co-founder, Tony DeBlase and in all those conversations, I never, ever, ever could have conceived we'd be where we are today."

Renslow explained that they started with Etienne's artwork, his archives and DeBlase's Drummer Magazine's and a storefront on Clark Street during the early days of the AIDS crisis.

He noted that as people in the leather community died of AIDS the archives received their documents and photos.

"With the self-realization of our own mortality, many, many members of the leather fetish communities followed suit," said Renslow. "Physical donations came flowing in."

Renslow noted that he never could've envisioned a day when the LA&M would need to move to a bigger property nor that they would own their present facility outright.

"Over the next 10 years, our collections will continue to grow," said Renslow. "We'll need a new facility ... and we better get started today including beginning a dialogue with the community and fundraising ... So you want to know my vision of the future of the LA&M ... I want to be standing in a new facility telling you what I think the next 10 years might look like."

CLAW of Cleveland, Ohio, was the principal



sponsor of the evening's festivities.

An after-party took place at leather night-spot Touche following the banquet and program.

See LeatherArchives.org/ for more information.

Left to right: Catherine Gross, Christina Court, Rick Storer, Jakob VanLammeren, Jon Krongaard, Gayle Rubin, Shane Rasmussen, Jeffrey Storer, Sarah Sloane and Mike Dags. Photo by Carrie Maxwell



Mural by Etienne, originally from Gold Coast, now housed at Leather Archives & Museum. Photos by Andrew Davis



Archival photo of Chuck Renslow.

Archival tour part of anniv. weekend

As part of Leather Archives & Museum's 25th-anniversary weekend, Archivist/Collections Librarian Jakob VanLammeren, along with intern Noah Barth, conducted interactive tours of the facility's temperature- and humidity-controlled archives on the morning of Sept. 17.

Attendees got to touch, read and/or view ephemera, vertical files, magazines, T-shirts and other items that covered various events, movements, influential people, organizations and nightspots connected with leather, kink, S&M, fetishism and other alternative ways of living.



Jakob VanLammeren.



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More than 500 at WERQ! LGBTQ Job Fair Sept. 16

More than 500 people came to seek jobs from the more than 70 major corporations, small businesses, government agencies and nonprofits participating in the Windy City Times WERQ! LGBTQ job fair Sept. 16, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, Chicago.

There were also four workshops focused on youth, seniors, transgender rights in the workplace, and making a good first impression.

The event, which was free and open to the public, was hosted by Windy City Times with Center on Halsted, Pride Action Tank, Chicago House, Association of Latino/as Motivating Action, Affinity Community Services, TransTech Social Enterprises, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Out & Equal Chicagoland, Lambda Legal, LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, Northalsted Business Alliance and the Human Rights Campaign. Additional support from Ann Sather Restaurant.

Exhibitors, in addition to the sponsors, included:

- AARP
- About Face Theatre
- AON
- AT&T
- Aunt Martha's Health & Wellness
- Betancourt Realty
- Blue Plate Catering
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma & Texas
- BMO Harris Bank
- Chicago Commission on Human Relations
- Chicago Lakeshore Hospital
- Chicago Marriott
- Chicago Women in Trades
- Christy Webber Landscapes
- Cook County Health and Hospitals System
- Department of Children and Family Services
- Elevate Energy
- Experis/Manpower Group
- Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
- Gap Inc. and Old Navy
- Goode Plumbing
- Google
- Groupon
- Heartland Alliance
- Hilton Worldwide
- Howard Brown Health
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- The John Marshall Law School
- KPMG
- Lyric Opera
- Mariano's
- MB Financial Bank
- Metropolitan Family Services
- Morningstar
- Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago
- Navy Pier
- Northern Trust PLC
- Northwestern Department of Medical Social Sciences
- Pace Suburban Bus Company
- Paul Mitchell The School
- Planned Parenthood of Illinois
- Primerica
- Redbox
- Renewal Care
- The Ritz-Carlton, Chicago
- Roxy Insurance
- Senior Helpers
- Speciality's Cafe & Bakery
- State of Illinois Department of Rehabilitation
- Takeda Pharmaceuticals U.S.A.
- Test Positive Aware Network
- Thresholds
- TransUnion
- Trunk Club
- Tyson Foods
- Uber
- United Airlines
- Uptake
- Walgreen Co./Walgreens
- WBEZ
- Z-axis Factory
- Zurich North America

This is the second WERQ! LGBTQ Job Fair. The first focused primarily on youth experiencing homelessness.

The Illinois Secretary of State Mobile Services Unit was on-site to assist attendees with acquiring or renewing state identifications, driver's licenses, and other state registrations.

See <https://www.facebook.com/LGBTQJobFair/?fref=ts>.



Left: Google. Right: Chicago House.



Seniors panel.



Trans panel participants.



WERQ! attendees.



Left: MB Financial. Right: Groupon.



**Safe Schools Alliance
hosts annual benefit**

The Illinois Safe Schools hosted their annual benefit brunch Sept. 18 at Christy Webber Landscapes on Chicago's West Side. This was their first benefit under the leadership of new Executive Director Owen Daniel-McCarter.

Kim Hunt received the Safe Schools advocate of the year award; Harlem School District 122 received the ally of the year; and Alex McCray was named activist of the year.

Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)



Kim Hunt.



Owen Daniel-McCarter.



xxx.



Alex McCray (left).



in the LIFE
Cassey Brick
 TEXT BY ROSS FORMAN
 PHOTOS COURTESY OF BRICK

- **Age**
29
- **Hobbies**
Football, basketball, lifting, arts and crafts, and anything outdoors
- **Residence**
Schaumburg
- **Orientation**
Lesbian
- **Job title**
EMT for Superior Ambulance Services
- **Favorite TV show**
Grey's Anatomy
- **Favorite movie**
Dirty Dancing
- **Favorite Chicago restaurant**
Wildberry Pancakes & Cafe
- **Favorite NFL player**
Peyton Manning
- **Favorite app**
Snapchat
- **Little-known fact**
"In third grade, I had to get 38 stitches in my forehead from playing a game of hide-and-seek."

Cassey Brick has a solid sporting background that just continues to grow. She started playing basketball in fourth grade, and played through college. Brick as a senior at Costa Mesa High School in California in 2004, was named the Athlete of the Year, and she was the team captain for her junior and senior seasons. She then was the team captain at both Irvine Valley College and California State Polytechnic University of Pomona. Brick also competed in track and field in high school and ran on the cross-country team. And then there's her football career, which is still filled with highlights. Brick started playing tackle football in 2009 with the California Lynx. She moved to the Pacific Warriors in 2010 and was a First-Team All-

to play for him was a great experience and I wanted to learn more from him, so, in order to do so, I needed to move to Chicago and play for the Force. I ended up making the drive from Southern California to Chicago in late January 2015," she said. Brick said the 2012 National Championship Game, played at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh, and the 2013 stint with Team USA have been her football highlights, so far. "Football is a very physically demanding sport," she said. "You will be sore. There may be injuries, some more serious than others, but there's a difference between boo-boos and injuries. As a running back, we get hit a lot. So you push through the pain."



American. She played for the Central Cal War Angels in 2011 and again was a First-Team All-American. Brick played for the San Diego Surge in 2012 and 2013, even claiming the MVP of the National Championship Game in 2012. And that's when she certainly caught the eye of the Chicago Force. Brick and the Surge defeated the Force in that 2012 title game. "I absolutely love playing tackle football," Brick said. "The physicality, the competitiveness, the camaraderie ... did I say the physicality? Ha, my favorite is the adrenaline rush I get after getting hit." In 2013, Brick was one of the 45 women selected to represent the U.S. in the Women's World Cup in Finland. Force head coach John Konecki was the head coach for the U.S. National Team, too. "Having the opportunity

"The level we play at is the highest out there for women's tackle football. It's not for the light-hearted. There's a lot of preparation and preseason training that goes into making a successful season. That means training on your own outside of practice to keep yourself game ready." Brick added, "I've enjoyed playing different sports growing up, but nothing compares to the amount of fun I have playing football. My love for the game far exceeds the love I had for playing basketball, and basketball was my sport growing up. I tried walking away from football back in 2014, [but] something about the game just draws me to it. It's not only the sport, but it's also the sisterhood and bond you create with so many great women who share your love for the sport. "My life would be so different if I hadn't tried out back in 2009."

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viewpoints



**Jonathan
ABARBANEL**

Remembering Edward Albee

He wouldn't correct you if you said it wrong, but if you wanted to earn his respect you needed to pronounce his name the way he preferred: Edward All-bee and not Al-bee. Widely regarded as "America's Greatest Living Playwright" following the death of Arthur Miller, Edward Albee died Sept. 16 after a short illness. He was 88. Albee's partner of 34 years, sculptor Jonathan Thomas, died in 2005.

Albee was famous for his acerbic wit, intellectual disdain for those who could not understand his work and a seriousness of attitude sometimes bordering on priggish. In a writing career spanning six decades, Albee enjoyed a meteoric rise to international success in the late 1950s and 1960s, winning the 1963 Best Play Tony Award for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolfe?* and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama twice for *A Delicate Balance* (1967) and *Seascape* (1975). Nonetheless, much of his work in the 70s, 80s and 90s met with popular and critical failure within mainstream commercial theater. He came roaring back, however, with late-career successes which won him a third Pulitzer in 1994 for *Three Tall Women* and another Best Play Tony in 2002 for *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?*

Three Tall Women was his most autobiographical work in which he created an openly homosexual character for the only time in his career, although one who does not speak. It's a son dealing with his formidable mother who is seen as three different women at different ages. Nonetheless, a gay undercurrent can be detected in a number of his works, sometimes bordering on the overtly homo-erotic. One can look to his early short plays such as *The American Dream* and *The Sandbox* as examples, featuring an athletic young man in bathing trunks. Several later works confront sexual ambivalence, repressed homosexuality and alternative sexuality among them *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolfe?*, *Malcolm*, *Tiny Alice* and *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?*

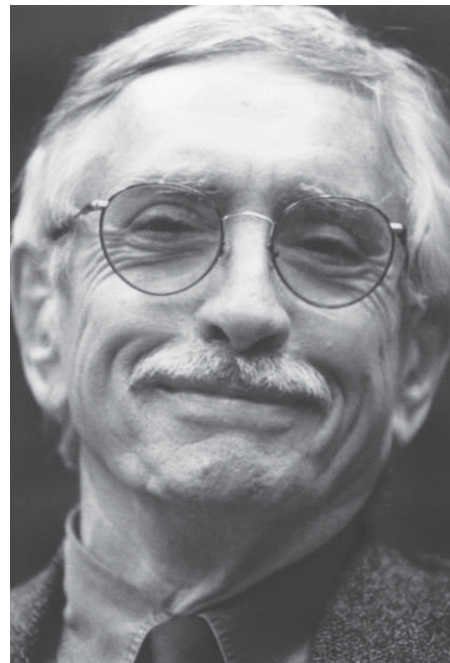
Despite his reputation for aloofness and acidity, Albee was generous with both time and money in his support of fellow artists. With his substantial earnings from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolfe?* he established a foundation in 1967 which still functions in support of *The Barn*, a center in Montauk, New York, providing residential support for artists of all disciplines. Albee was at *The Barn* when he died. In addition, he was for many years a member of the governing council of the Dramatists Guild, and he had a long teaching association with the University of Houston. He also gave active sup-

port to several theatre festivals honoring his work, notably a far-afield annual fest in Valdez, Alaska which Albee attended four times.

To be accepted as a peer by Albee—and worthy of his warmth, consideration and keen sense of humor—did not require one to be as famous or successful as he was, but only to be an artist laboring seriously in the vineyards of theater. I learned this myself over several decades.

I first met Edward Albee in August 1968, during the raucous Democratic National Convention in Chicago. I was 21, just weeks out of college, a newly-graduated theater major and I was a press assistant in the campaign of anti-Vietnam War candidate Sen. Eugene McCarthy. Albee supported McCarthy and came to Chicago to speak to McCarthy delegates and campaign workers. My boss, completely unaware of my theater interest, assigned me to host Albee for an evening.

I met him at his hotel, took him to a local Dixieland jazz club (as I was told to do) and dropped him at his hotel a few hours later. Albee, then 40 but boyish, still looked and dressed conservatively (he later let his hair



Edward Albee.

Photo courtesy of the Edward Albee Society's Facebook page

grow shaggy and sported a moustache) and was on the wagon (he had alcohol issues which he eventually controlled). He wasn't looking for conversation. My efforts to talk about anything, especially theater, were met with answers of a few words or less. He expressed interest in me and my thoughts only once the entire evening. I had studied theater in London that academic year (Sept. 1967-July 1968), and just before I returned to America the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) announced they would present the British premiere of Albee's prize-winning *A Delicate Balance*. I brought this up. "I don't know if I'm going to let them do it," he said to me. "What do you think of the RSC?" My answer was the only time that evening that Albee paid

attention to me. I was not his peer.

Cut to 1982. As well as being a theater critic, I then was a member of the Dramatists Guild, the national association for professional playwrights, composers and lyricists. I'd had a few shows produced in Chicago, Milwaukee and one Off-Broadway, and I did unpaid work for the Guild organizing workshops and seminars in Chicago. Several members of the Dramatists Guild Council came to town for a three-day series of events, Edward among them. At the end of the first day, I found myself having dinner with Edward and Jimmy Kirkwood (*A Chorus Line*) at the Pump Room. I told Edward that we'd met before and recounted my story . . . and he apologized to me! "I'm so sorry. How could I have behaved that way? How terrible of me!" and he meant it! I now was his peer.

The next night, even better, was dinner at the long-gone Corona Café with Edward, John Guare, fellow Chicago critic and writer Albert Williams and the distinguished Welsh actor and playwright, Emyln Williams. Stories flooded the table over dinner and wine, dominated by Edward and Emyln—a smart and warm old pixie then almost 80 years old. Emyln (who picked up the check) brought something out in Edward, who was more personable that evening than I ever saw again.

My last conversation with Edward was over the phone a few years ago when I did an interview with him for WBEZ Public Radio. I made the mistake of referring to some of his plays as full-length and others as one-acts. "All my plays are full length plays," he corrected me, "but some of them aren't as long as the others." He was being acerbic, but I also knew he was teasing me just a bit. He rewarded me with a chuckle when I referred, moments later, to one of his "short full-length" plays.

Arranging that interview, Edward and I also exchanged phone messages on our home answering machines. It was October, and—as is true each year—my message began with me saying "The frost is on the punkin," a favorite line of my dad's. What I didn't know is that it was the first line of a classic piece of 19th Century American verse by Hoosier poet James Whitcomb Riley. Edward knew, and recited the complete first stanza of the poem in leaving me a message!

Did I erase it? Not on your life! Edward's poetry recitation remained a treasure of my answering machine for several years until a thunderstorm electrical outage wiped out everything. I still record the first two lines of the poem in my message every October. This year they will have extra meaning for me, and perhaps a touch more sadness at how quickly time marches on.

With Edward Albee's death, there isn't an obvious heir to the title of "America's Greatest Living Playwright." It should have been August Wilson, but Wilson died prematurely in 2005, only 60 years old. The long line of overlapping careers that encompassed Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and August Wilson—a full century of glory in American drama—comes to an end with the passing of Edward Albee.

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(773) 871-7610 FAX (773) 871-7609
 e-mail: editor@windycitymediagroup.com or Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com

www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com
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 5315 N. Clark St. #192, Chicago, IL, 60640 U.S.A.
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WINDY CITY TIMES

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WCT reviews the production *The Parachute Man*.

Photo by Joel Maisonet

SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Solo variations

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Chicago isn't at a loss when it comes to prominent solo shows. It's interesting to note that many current productions and upcoming revivals give a variety of voices to members of the LGBTQ community.

Two shows previously seen in Chicago in 2014 are Fawzia Mirza's *Me, My Mom and Sharmila* and Steven Strafford's *Methhtacular!*, both of which get prime (if brief) showcases in the new 1700 Theater as part of Steppenwolf Theatre's eclectic Lookout Series. Both are very personal portraits of the artists' lives. Mirza explores her Pakistani Muslim family history in Canada before she came out as a lesbian, while Strafford takes a comical approach to his three sex-fueled years as crystal-meth addict more than a decade ago in Chicago.

Two other solo shows are premieres featured in the Greenhouse Theater Center's ambitious Solo Celebration series: Sarah Myers' meditation on Jewish heritage and modern marriage in *I Do Today*, and playwright Philip Dawkins, who performs a thoroughly researched look at one of his mother's family stories tied to Disneyland in *The Happiest Place on Earth*.

Just why these artists chose to do solo shows differs. In some cases, it's the classic notion of actors writing their own material to provide themselves with work along with the added bonus of artistically creating works to give voice to underrepresented minorities.

In other instances, the playwrights chose the theatrical form of a solo storyteller because that's what was best suited for the material.

"Part of creating my own work was to cast myself," said Mirza, who has been increasingly branching out into screen work like her feature film *Signature Move* and her involvement with Eve Ensler's Emmy-nominated trans TV series *Her Story*.

"For me, this is an opportunity to tell stories and put Muslim women who also identify as queer," said Mirza about *Me, My Mom and Sharmila*. "These are stories that you don't see enough of and put them all in one place and I think it's a really great opportunity to defy the idea of what any one of those minority groups looks like or acts like or sounds like."

There's also an educational, plus cautionary, aspect to Strafford's *Methhtacular!* As part of his rehabilitation process, Strafford wrote out stories of his life as an addict and they ironically proved to be so entertaining that many therapists and friends encouraged him to craft them into a solo show.

"I didn't think it was a good idea because

telling the world you were a meth addict isn't necessarily great for cast-ability as an actor, but it turned into something bigger than me," Strafford said, noting how his show has received great acclaim when it was previously staged in New York and Chicago. "I'm telling a dark part of my life to show people that shame isn't worth it."

For Mirza, creating a solo show meant that she could take it anywhere and mount it as simply as possible. She was very proud to note that *Me, My Mom and Sharmila* has played multiple locations ranging from university classrooms to international theater festivals (including one where the famed Bollywood star in her play's title, Sharmila Tagore, actually saw her perform it live).

But for Myers and Dawkins, the creation of their solo shows were just as complex as a full-fledged production. Both cited how vital directors, dramaturgs and even other actors are (or

were) involved in the collaboration process.

For instance, Dawkins wrote *The Happiest Place on Earth* with the intention that someone else would be performing his play (this will happen later when it receives a July 2017 production at the Hub Theatre in Fairfax, Virginia). Dawkins was later talked into performing the piece by Sideshow artistic director Jonathan L. Green following an early workshop reading.

"It sounded really hard and scary, so I said, 'Yes,'" Dawkins said. "The balance between what is storytelling and what is performing and where is the almond in that Venn diagram—it's one thing to write a character and know how it should be performed and able to recognize it when someone is accomplishing that, and it's another thing to write it, know how it should be performed and then hope you're doing that thing."

Myers opted not to perform her show *I Do Today*, and that didn't have to do logistically with the fact that she lives in Minneapolis. But she's glad that Chicago actress Caren Silkaitis has found so many commonalities with the piece and the character Myers created to represent "herself."

"My own identity is a shifting one. I have certainly identified as bisexual and I still do," said Myers about why she was compelled to

write *I Do Today*. "But this play is about a kind of link to in addition to my sexual identity, a gender non-conformity that looks normative on the outside because I'm married to a cisman at this point in my life, but I've had many different kinds of queer relationships throughout my life."

Fawzia Mirza's *Me, My Mom and Sharmila* plays 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 23 and 24, at Steppenwolf's 1700 Theatre, 1700 N. Halsted St. Tickets are \$15. Also playing the same venue is Steven Strafford's *Methhtacular!* at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Nov. 11 and 12. Tickets are \$20. Call 312-335-1650 or visit Steppenwolf.org.

Sideshow Theatre's co-production of Philip Dawkins' *The Happiest Place on Earth* continues at 8 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays with 2:30 p.m. matinees through Sunday, Oct. 23, as part of the Solo Celebration at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave. Also playing the same venue is Sarah Myers' *I Do Today* at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays with 2 p.m. matinees through Sunday, Oct. 9. Tickets to both shows are \$42-\$48; call 773-404-7336 or visit GreenhouseTheater.org.



Left: Fawzia Mirza of *Me, My Mom and Sharmila*. Right: Philip Dawkins of *The Happiest Place on Earth*.
Mirza photo by Janna Giacompo; Dawkins photo by Nicole Radja

THEATER REVIEW

In the Heights

Music & Lyrics: by Lin-Manuel Miranda

Book: by Quiara Alegria Hudes

At: Porchlight Music Theatre at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: PorchlightMusicTheatre.org; \$43-\$51

Runs through: Oct. 23

BY ERIC KARAS

Porchlight Music Theatre opens its 22nd season with Lin-Manuel Miranda's award winning musical *In the Heights*.

His musical *Hamilton* is the talk of the nation, but this was the show that brought him national attention—and in this raucous joyous production you can see why. A neighborhood bodega owner (Jack DeCesare) and his cousin (Frankie Leo Bennett) run a neighborhood gathering place in a Hispanic neighborhood going through changes. While selling chips, candy and coffee, they see the lives of their friends and neighbors revolve around them. Some musicals suffer from being in small spaces by local theater companies, but a show like *In the Heights* actually improves. Being surrounded by this neighborhood actually enhances the experience for the audience (hat tip to scenic designer Greg Pinsoneault).

The entire company, with choreography by Brenda Didier and Chris Carter, keeps the show moving and hopping. Lucia Godinez—as Nina

Missy Aguilar in *In the Heights*.

Photo by Gretchen Kelley

the girl, with the expectations of an entire neighborhood on her shoulders—is excellent with a great belting voice. She's matched by the pipes and smooth performance of Stephen Allen as Benny, the ambitious African-American cab/limo driver who works for her dad. Controversial casting aside, Jack DeSare's Usnavi is so charming and self-deprecating, you wish the loud music would get out of his way sometimes. Frankie Leo Bennett, as his cousin, is very funny and a crowd pleaser. Michelle Laut—as Venessa, the girl who wants to escape the neighborhood—has a nice voice and you

like her so much you wish she had more to play in the script.

To round out the neighborhood, you have emotional performances by Jordan BeBose and Keely Vasquez as Nina's parents and Isabel Quintero as the aging matriarch of the neighborhood. Missy Aguilar, as Daniela the overdramatic owner of the salon, really entertains. Leah Davis (Carla) has the thankless role of the ditzy salon worker but makes the most of it. Stan DeCwikiel Jr., as the neighborhood piragua (shaved ice & fruit syrup) salesman, brings joy to the stage and brings color to the barrio.

Overall, this is one of Porchlight's finest productions. The show never stops moving and is emotionally on target. By the time the cast is singing "96,000" (about them dreaming of winning the lottery) the energy is jumping off the stage.

You can save the hundreds of dollars going to see *Hamilton* and check out Miranda's original incredible musical of family and neighborhood. This cast and production has the energy, spirit and talent needed to bring it to life.

THEATER REVIEW

A Comedical Tragedy for Mister Punch

Playwright: Kara Davidson

At: House Theatre of Chicago at the Chopin, 1543 W. Division St.

Tickets: \$30-\$35

Runs through: Oct. 23

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Grotesque human representations exercise a curious power, changing in seconds from objects of amusement to a source of menace.

On the creepiness scale, puppets generally rank below clowns and ventriloquists' dummies—with the exception of England's own Lord of Misrule, the 374-year-old Mister Punch.

Bearing virtually no resemblance to his Italian ancestor, Pulcinello of the Roman Commedia, the glove puppet with the crescent-moon profile and cudgel ever at the ready embodies the anarchy lurking beneath the veneer of civilization, offering—along with his companions—a dangerous role model for impressionable spectators.

The protagonist of Kara Davidson's fable is one of these—an orphan preteen street urchin named Charlotte whom a haircut transforms into a boy named Charley so thoroughly as to never again require comment. The barber is Pietro Bologna, a puppeteer who agrees to take on the young vagrant as an apprentice to his traveling Punch-and-Judy show. From that point on, Davidson's play progresses on three levels of consciousness: the early-Victorian world of weary barmaids, crooked constables and blind beggars; the make-believe world of

the puppets, whose brutal injuries—usually administered by Mister Punch, who then proclaims his triumph with a defiant "That's the way to do it!"—are dismissed as inconsequential; and the world of Charley's imagination, where these two spheres converge in disturbingly vivid detail.

Vivid detail is House Theatre's stock-in-trade. From the moment we are greeted by Kevin O'Donnell's cello-heavy musical score—later augmented by John Fournier's original songs, reflecting a mix of period styles and Broadway romanticism—we are immersed in a dramatic universe at once nebulous and pinpoint-specific. As is House custom, characters frequently cross the fourth wall to remind audience members that they are watching a play, reinforcing our orientation within its multiple dimensions—did I mention the sly historical references, scrambled though they may be?—

so that nothing interrupts the narrative flow, but is instead quickly absorbed in the dazzle of the fantasy conjured by puppet designer Jesse Mooney-Bullock and her associates.

Director Shade Murray's nine-actor ensemble gallops apace with the speed and stamina of greyhounds for the two hours of the play's duration, led by former 500 Clown Adrian Danzig, whose portrayal of the volatile Pietro deftly conveys the dual nature of the artist, himself, and as he is revealed through his creations, the latter brought to life by the always-appealing House players. The spotlight, however, goes to newcomer Sarah Cartwright, whose delicately focused performance ensures that we share in every step of Charlotte/Charley's discoveries on the path to "the way to do it."

THEATER REVIEW

Grizzly Mama

Playwright: George Brant

At: Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Ave.

Tickets: \$32-\$35

Runs through: Oct. 15

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The same audiences who make the mistake of assuming they are watching another quickly-dated political-themed comedy during its first act will be the ones howling in outrage when the stakes get serious—very, very serious—in its second. George Brant's reputation is based in his sleight-of-hand narrative, however, and playgoers gulled by his snappy repartee and physical hijinks have nobody but themselves to blame.

The prologue introduces us to soccer mom Deb Marshall in her cozy kitchen, cooking up a recipe requiring her to don a gas mask upon its completion. In the next scene, we hear her describe her neighbors' funeral for the family dog. Soon we learn that the unfortunate canine met his demise after accidentally eating the poisoned cake Deb baked for its owner.



Grizzly Mama. Photo by Michael Brosilow

Since we are in Alaska, and the intended victim is a female front-runner for government office bearing an uncanny resemblance to 2012 vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin (a deliberate distraction on the playwright's part), we chuckle—even applaud—our plucky housewife honoring the memory of her feminist-activist mother by turning assassin.

We also laugh as Deb, clearly out of her element, staggers clumsily around the room wearing a single snowshoe, plucks gingerly on a guitar while crooning a tone-deaf rallying anthem and acquires high-powered firearms. We nod approval when she destroys both her own and her (another distraction) daughter's communication devices—smartphone-addicted teenagers need to interact more with their

immediate environment, right? We are so busy guffawing when she insists that young Hannah—who wants no part of her mother's deranged scheme—summon up a commensurate hostility by immersing herself in the enemy's manifesto ("Mama bears protect their cubs! Let me hear you ROAR") that we barely recognize in this regimen hints of the indoctrination known as brainwashing. When Deb's obsessive schemes grow to include her foe's adolescent offspring, though, we suspect that this might not end well, but by then, it's too late.

Megan Carney directs a trio of actors navigating Brant's shivery boundaries between slapstick farce (high marks to violence designer David Blixt) and stranded-in-the-woods horror with never a misstep—in particular, Taylor Blim as the textspeaking (again, a distraction) Hannah, whose unswerving rationality eventually leaves her no alternative but to take decisive—and fatal—action. Tara Malen's Deb retains a matronly dignity even in her extremity, and Jenna Ebersberger emerges a suitably clueless rebel-by-expediency, but Blim delves the hidden recesses of her stereotypical persona for intimations of the resolve exercised by youthful conviction. Antigone was a teenager, too, remember.

CRITICS' PICKS



Distance, Strawdog Theatre Company at Factory Theater, through Oct. 1. Even families in crisis deserve their dignity, and Jerre Dye endows his characters with remedies, preventatives and a chance to have their say in Strawdog's triumphant return. MSB

Don't Dress for Dinner, Buffalo Theatre Ensemble at College of DuPage's McAninch Arts Center in Glen Ellyn, through Oct. 9. After a two-year hiatus, this professional suburban theater company is back with solid laughs in a production of Marc Camoletti's acclaimed and adultery-filled French farce. SCM

Naperville, Theater Wit, through Oct. 16. It's not a suburb, this little town to our southwest, but a full-service community with caffeine depots dispensing fortification and fellowship to courageous people facing uncertain futures just like those of their pioneer forebearers. MSB

A Red Line Runs Through It, Second City e.t.c., in an open run. Laugh at all the timely sketches focusing on trending topics like Black Girl Magic, controversial local news and drag tips for straight men. SCM

—By Barnidge and Morgan

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THEATER REVIEW

Julius Caesar

Playwright: William Shakespeare

At: Writers Theatre

325 Tudor Ct., Glenview

Tickets: 847-242-6000 or
writerstheatre.org; \$35-\$80

Runs through: Oct. 16

BY DAVID MCCANN

Theatergoers will recognize the title of this Shakespearean tragedy and perhaps shudder at the memory of studying it in high school.

However, this new, streamlined, 90-minute version of the Bard's 400-year-old drama opens the company's 25th season. It's co-adapted and co-directed by Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and Scott Parkinson, and is unbelievably fresh and timely. With the political race in full swing, one can't escape obvious comparisons to the campaign style of one particular candidate. The nine talented ensemble members—most of whom take on multiple roles—are each strong, fully committed and articulate, making Shakespeare's dialogue and intent understandable and relatable.

This masterpiece, based on Roman history, is about power struggles. It examines tyranny and ambition while exploring friendships, loyalties, secret betrayals, patriotism and honor.

The ominous opening scenes lead perfectly toward Caesar's assassination; however, it's Brutus' psychological struggle with Cassius, Mark Antony and himself that drives the second half of the play.

Directed with a sense of foreboding, every character is a real, flesh-and-blood individual. Caesar, as played by Madrid St. Angelo, exudes a commanding arrogance in public while relaxing his guard in private around his wife, Calphurnia, whom Christine Bunuan plays with spirit and devotion. This dichotomy gives the emperor real humanity instead of simply being an historical figure. Brutus, magnificently portrayed by Kareem Bandealy, takes us on a soul-searching journey that ultimately leads to his own downfall. Brutus' relationship with Cassius, sensitively played by Scott Parkinson, seems more than mere friendship, a common ancient Roman lifestyle. Transgender actor Sydney Germaine plays Octavius, Caesar's adopted son, with strength and dignity. United with Thomas Vincent Kelly's Mark Antony, the two become strong adversaries.

The dystopian look of this production is courtesy of Courtney O'Neill, Mike Tutaj and Jesse Klug, with their epic scenic, projection and lighting designs. Costumer Mara Blumenfeld exquisitely adorns her cast in black and blood red, making this excellent production a feast for both the eye and ear.



Scott Parkinson (left) and Kareem Bandealy in Julius Caesar.
Photo by Michael Brosilow

THEATER REVIEW

Parachute Man

Playwright: Mando Alvarado

At: Teatro Vista at Victory
Gardens Biograph, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.

Tickets: 773-871-3000;

TeatroVista.org; \$18-\$30

Runs through: Oct. 16

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

When his father died, 9-year old Eric decided he must be the protector of his mother and kid brother, Andrew. When Mom remarried and had another son, Eric repressed his anger but savagely beat his half-brother at least once. He abandoned the family at 25 when Mom committed suicide on Christmas day. After five years without any contact, Eric (J. Salome Martinez) comes home to Pearl City, Texas, on Christmas Eve. Like a bull in a china shop, he's angry that life has continued without him, that Andrew (Eddie Martinez) now owns the house, that his bedroom has become a recording studio for half-brother Eli (Tommy Rivera-Vega) and that stepdad Angel (Adam Bitterman) still lives there.

Wait—there's more. Angel is a recovering junkie. Eli, now 21, suffers from what appears to be Asperger's syndrome. Andrew, a local policeman, still loves his lesbian former wife. All three brothers are sexually frustrated—Eric in various inappropriate ways, and Eli because he's 21 and virginal.

That's a lot to pile on a play's plate, and considerably more than can be fully explored and resolved even in the two-and-a-half-hour running time (with intermission). Having obtained this well-presented world premiere, author Mando Alvarado now must make tough choices—not so much about length (trimming 10-15 minutes would be easy) as about focus. I learned coincidentally that Parachute Men is highly autobiographical, which explains why Alvarado has poured so much into it. But not everything in life makes a good play. Right now, Alvarado tries to give all three brothers equal attention, to the detriment of building up a single hero, and the brothers indulge in emotionally repetitive behaviors.

For example, several scenes involve Andrew and his ex, Cori (Maggie Scramtom), but the play isn't about Andrew and Cori, it's about three brothers. Cori needs to go because her character doesn't affect the outcome in any way, nor does she have any relationship with Eric. Then, twice in Act I the brothers directly



Eddie Martinez and Maggie Scramtom in The Parachute Man.

Photo by Joel Maisonet

address the audience, but not in Act II. The non-realistic device calls attention to itself, so either extend it or remove it. I could offer additional examples and that's good: Parachute Men is well-crafted enough for one to see the details.

There's no question about Alvarado's ambition and ability. He creates strongly-drawn and highly-individual characters demanding bravura acting, but controlled bravura. The Teatro Vista ensemble meets the challenge with flying colors under director Riccardo Gutierrez. However, the play walks a line between comedy and seriousness and doesn't always signal when it's OK to laugh. Some small directorial adjustments might unlock the play's ample humor, which would be good. FYI: there's nothing particularly Latino about this family; it's just another dysfunctional American family, dealing.

Joffrey starts Eatherly memorial scholarship

The partner of the late dance publicist Eric Eatherly, Jay Leibovitz, has joined Eatherly's mother, Nancy Follis, to launch a new scholarship for pre-professional male dancers at the Joffrey Academy of Dance.

Eatherly—who was a publicist (vice president with The Silverman Group), writer (including with Windy City Times) and dancer—died in a car accident in his native Tennessee on Dec. 29, 2014, at age 35.

Donations to the Eric B. Eatherly Memorial Scholarship Fund will support the tuition for a male student on a professional track at the Academy of Dance, to be selected by Joffrey Ballet Artistic Director Ashley Wheeler, with a new recipient to be named annually.

Contributions are fully tax-deductible. Interested persons can visit Joffrey.org/support and include "Eric B. Eatherly Memorial Scholarship Fund" in the "Notes" field. Other options include calling 312-386-8974; or mailing a check to The Joffrey Ballet, 10 E. Randolph St. (with the fund on the memo line).

**SPOTLIGHT**

Flash back to the 1980s with the Chicago return of interactive comedy hit **Tony 'n Tina's Wedding**. That's right—there's now a nostalgia angle applied to the largely improvised event show that ran and ran for a long time off-Broadway and in the Windy City. Tony 'n Tina's Wedding returns starting Thursday, Sept. 22, for the ceremony at Resurrection Church, 3309 N. Seminary Ave., with a full meal at the reception at Vinnie Black's Coliseum (Chicago Theater Works), 1113 W. Belmont Ave. Performance times vary on Fridays, Saturday and Sundays through Friday, Dec. 30. Tickets are \$75, which includes an Italian-style buffet dinner, a 1980s dance reception and a champagne toast. For more information, call 773-327-3778 or visit TonyLovesTina.com.

Caption: Hannah Aaron Brown and Mitchell Conti star in the Chicago return of the interactive theatrical event Tony 'n Tina's Wedding. Photo courtesy of Chicago Theater Works





Above: Kate McKinnon at the Emmys. Below: Jill Soloway.

'Transparent,' Paulson among Emmy winners

The LGBT community was well-represented Sept. 18 at the 68th Primetime Emmy Awards. First, Amazon series *Transparent* (which had 10 nominations going into the ceremony) had a couple winners, including Jeffrey Tambor (Outstanding Lead Actor, Comedy Series) and newly out lesbian Jill Soloway (Outstanding Directing, Comedy Series). Tambor took time to urge producers to give more roles to transgender actors: "To you people out there ... please give transgender talent a chance. Give them auditions. Give them their story. Do that. I would not be unhappy were I the last cisgender male to play a female transgender on television. We have work to do." Soloway said, "We need to stop violence against transgender women and topple the patriarchy. Topple the patriarchy!" Actress Sarah Paulson—who has been in everything from the 1990s series *American Gothic* to the current show *American Horror Story* to the movie *Django Unchained*—won the Outstanding Lead Actress, Limited Series or Movie award for portraying attorney Marcia Clark in *The People v. O.J. Simpson*. Paulson apologized to Clark (who accompanied her to the ceremony) for having preconceived notions—and also professed her love to her partner, actress Holland Taylor (TV's *Two and a Half Men*). Speaking of "O.J. Simpson," out executive producers Ryan Murphy and Nina Jacobson were a significant part of the night, as it won the Outstanding Limited Series Emmy, with several actors winning as well; the series had 22 nominations. Jacobson thanked her wife during her acceptance speech. Lesbian actor/comedian Kate McKinnon became the first SNL cast member to win a supporting Emmy in a comedy category. First-time winner Tatiana Maslany received the lead actress in a drama award for playing multiple human clones (including a lesbian) in the BBC America series *Orphan Black*. Louie Anderson, known for his stand-up comedy, took home an award for Outstanding Supporting Actor, Comedy Series, for his role in the FX series *Baskets* as the mother of Zach Galifianakis. In addition, transgender actress Laverne Cox was a presenter, and she also called for more opportunities for trans actors. In non-LGBT news, Julia Louis-Dreyfus broke a record with her sixth win for best actress in a comedy series (*Veep*); during her speech, she thanked her father, who passed away Sept. 16. Also, HBO's *Game of Thrones* broke a record of its own; it now has 38 Emmy victories, overtaking *Frasier* as the winningest scripted show in the award show's history. Jimmy Kimmel hosted the event.



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Hugo Weaving in The Dressmaker.
Still from Broad Green Pictures/Amazon Studios



MOVIES

Hugo Weaving: 'Dress'-ed for success

Actor Hugo Weaving on wearing a dress (again) for *The Dressmaker*, the Wachowskis' gender transition, and the *Priscilla* sequel that could happen yet...

BY LAWRENCE FERBER

Hugo Weaving likes to frock around.

The Sydney-based actor first made his name starring alongside Guy Pearce and Terence Stamp as a drag queen crossing the Aussie outback in a silver bus in 1994's LGBT classic, *The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert*. He full-on swapped genders as a hulking, tyrannical nurse in the Wachowskis' 2012 epic, *Cloud Atlas*. And today sees Weaving again return to the outback with frock fever as a cross-dressing, queer police sergeant in the darkly comic, genre-hopping, 1950s-set vengeance tale *The Dressmaker*.

Directed by Jocelyn Moorhouse, whose acclaimed 1991 drama *Proof* put Weaving on the map for his turn as a blind photographer, *The Dressmaker* stars Kate Winslet as Tilly Dunnage, a sophisticated and worldly dressmaker who returns to her rural outback hometown after

being exiled years back, at age ten, for allegedly killing a boy. Reuniting with her prickly, alcoholic mother (Judy Davis), Tilly soon encounters residents both old and new, including handsome young soccer player Teddy (Ian Hemsworth) and police sergeant Horatio Farrat (Weaving), who soon grows fond of Tilly's exquisite handiwork—and can't wait to put it on!

Best known stateside for playing snarling Agent Smith in *The Matrix* films, Red Skull in *Captain America*, and half-elf Lord Elrond in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* trilogies, the West Africa-born Weaving also played gay in 2005's *Little Fish* (for which he won Australia's Oscar equivalent, an AACTA) and lesbian director Rose Troche's 1998 comedy *Bedrooms & Hallways*. Via telephone from Australia, Weaving discussed *The Dressmaker*, drag, a *Priscilla* sequel, and whether Agent Smith had the hots for Neo.

Windy City Times: So what are the biggest differences between *The Dressmaker's* Farrat and Tick from *Priscilla*?

Hugo Weaving: They're very different creatures.

Certainly, both films are set in the outback somewhere, so the landscape plays a key part of the environment and beauty, but Tick is a

drag queen so he's making a political statement. "Look at me," there's a show and face and political act. Farrat's a country cop in the 1950s with a secret. Behind closed doors he has a wonderful wardrobe of beautiful dresses he's made and tries on, but doesn't want anyone to know about it. Even his sexuality might be totally different. I'm not sure it's clear for Farrat, whereas Tick has been married, has a child, and is at least bisexual. Farrat's sexuality is possibly hidden, even to himself. Both men wear frocks, but are entirely different creatures living in different eras.

WCT: The Dressmaker draws from plenty of genres style-wise—including westerns, thrillers and romances—although the big theme is the settling of scores. Have you ever sought revenge?

HW: I don't like to, because it'll probably come right back and revenge will be taken on you. I do feel *The Dressmaker* has more in common with Jacobean drama than almost anything else, though. I think it's a fantasy and revenge is the key to the film, like the gunslinger comes into town with her sewing machine and unearths all the secrets and lies that caused her to be expelled when she was young. But personally, revenge isn't something

I would choose to get involved in because it will backfire on you.

WCT: On a side note, the past few years have seen a bit of gender-bending in popular culture, including men with facial hair and dresses like Conchita Wurst, so the mustachioed Farrat is right on trend. Did Kate dig the 'stache?

HW: Yeah. [Laughs] She called me "Hairy."

WCT: Were you surprised by the Wachowskis' [gender] transition?

HW: I'm not in the least bit surprised, actually, and my relationship with them both has been very good. I'm hugely fond of both Lana and Lilly, although I haven't seen Lilly since she became Lilly.

I would love to think that sometime in the future I can work with them again. I don't think another *Matrix* movie will arise, but if I think the reason to do something is a good one—not just to make money—it's something I would consider. But I don't think that will happen.

WCT: Did Agent Smith have the hots for Neo? Lots of tension going on there and he kept trying to, er, enter him.

HW: I suppose in one way they're one in the

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Bianca Del Rio in Hurricane Bianca. PR still

MOVIES: REELING

Hurricane Bianca (Del Rio) blows into the Windy City

BY JERRY NUNN

Roy Haylock's alter ego, Bianca Del Rio, took home the crown on the sixth season of RuPaul's Drag Race. Combining humor with bright costumes, she snatched the title and is notably the first and only Latino winner of the hit Logo show.

Afterward, Del Rio has returned for appearances on Drag Race as well as the second season of RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars. Bianca's Rolodex of Hate was filmed of her doing stand

I moved to New York City 12 years ago and I met Matt Kugelman, who just moved there a year before me. He was one of those go-getter people. He makes things happen. We did a series of commercials to enter contests to win money. I was his muse in those videos that I probably wouldn't have done if he wasn't pushing me to do it.

One day, he had an idea for this movie. I had no idea that in 29 states people can be fired for being gay. (This was before Drag Race.) We started a crowdfunding and it did pretty well.



Roy Haylock (Bianca Del Rio) and Rachel Dratch in Hurricane Bianca. PR still

up comedy for Logo TV and also toured around the world.

Now a new storm is brewing with the movie Hurricane Bianca. This has Haylock and Del Rio both starring in the story about a Texas teacher fighting discrimination in a small town. There are guest stars galore with Alan Cumming, Margaret Cho, Rachel Dratch and RuPaul, among others.

Windy City Times: I just wanted to tell you how funny you were at the RuPaul's Drag Race premiere for season eight with Lady Bunny here in Chicago.

Bianca Del Rio: Anytime you can work with Bunny it is always fun, because she might be there physically but may not be there mentally—so it creates a wonderful situation for me.

WCT: Now you will be back in town. How did you get involved with this movie Hurricane Bianca?

BD: It is one of these weird, strange things.

insane that a gay person in a small town can be fired because of who they sleep with or sexual orientation. I thought the topic was important and the way he wrote it was genius.

WCT: Are you wearing drag to the opening event in Chicago?

BD: Yes, I will be wearing drag. I'm not that grand where I can say "no" to drag. The movie is called Hurricane Bianca, not Hurricane Roy!

I will be showing up in drag and it is a great way to meet all the people that support the film. People have been asking, "When is coming out?" I tell them, "It's not Star Wars. I don't have that kind of money!"

I'm excited to take pictures with people and do a Q&A at the film festival in Chicago. That is also Matt Kugelman's hometown.

WCT: Great. So I have an eyelash question. Are those inspired by Liza?

BD: It is one of those things. When you are not a pretty queen you have to add more shit to disguise yourself. I was never a coifed, feminine beauty. The clown approach was some-

thing I started with. If you look at younger photos it has definitely gotten bigger, kind of like Bunny. For every two pounds she gains, she adds a wig, so I do the same thing with lashes.

WCT: What was the reason that you weren't in the photo with all of the RuPaul winners on season eight?

BD: They filmed the season rather quickly in Los Angeles. I was notified two weeks prior and they were very cryptic about what it was. I wasn't available because I was in Texas filming the movie. Those 18 days were already scheduled that I had to film. There was no drama involved. I just couldn't leave set to fly to LA. They were very understanding. They told me their idea and I thought it was pretty funny to add the clown.

My response to everyone else was, "Well, some of us were working."

Later on, I got to do my bit part at the end. Ru did a cameo in this movie for me so it was

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When I got on Drag Race I had to be quiet for a year when we filmed. People may have assumed I took off to Mexico with the dollars we raised! We did another crowdfunding after Drag Race and we raised almost \$170,000 to make the movie happen. It has been quite the process.

It truly was the effort of my friend Matt, who was the genius to write it. His motto is, "It never hurts to ask," which is how RuPaul is involved along with Margaret Cho, Alan Cumming and the amazing Rachel Dratch. She is so goddamn funny in this movie.

WCT: I think people are craving another Too Wong Foo movie these days.

BD: I also think there is a fine line in gay films. Usually they are so campy that you can't deal with it or something that is so serious that it doesn't represent your life. This is a serious topic but done in a comedic way, which is why I wanted to do it. I don't like to do preachy things or get too political. It is pretty

REELING from cover

working for his girlfriend's father; a young man working at a gay establishment while living at home with his unsuspecting parents; choosing between life on the farm or being out in the world—but I freaked out when I watched "The Landscape Within" and "Esteros" back-to-back and estuaries (look it up—I had to) played a significant role in both. The coincidence was too much!

For complete festival information, including special guests, special events and updates, and to buy tickets, visit ReelingFilmFestival.org. For more detailed versions of the reviews, go to WindyCityMediaGroup.com.



Connor Jessup in Closet Monster.
Duncan de Young/Strand Releasing

—Closet Monster (☆☆☆) (Sept. 23, 7 p.m.)

The relatable tale of a young man, Oscar Madly (Connor Jessup), struggling not to be gay, mixes with fantasy (Buffy, the talking hamster) in Stephen Dunn's new twist on an old coming-out story. You may not like Oscar but you'll root for him.

—Suicide Kale (☆☆½) (Sept. 23, 7:15 p.m.)

With a teased suicide note lurking in the background, four lesbians spend half the movie having boring, irrelevant conversation over lunch. The concept has potential but it's lost in the execution of a film that's as unappetizing as its title.



Jasika Nicole and Brianna Baker in Suicide Kale.

—Fair Haven (☆☆☆) (Sept. 23, 9 p.m.)

James (Michael Grant, excellent) returns home from conversion therapy to his family's Vermont apple orchard, but wants to leave his widowed dad (Tom Wopat), his old boyfriend (Josh Green) and the preacher's daughter, to go to music school in Boston. The film's on our side but is fair to everyone.



Bennett in Real Boy.

—Real Boy (☆☆☆) (Sept. 23, 9:15 p.m.)

In an upbeat, positive look at the transgender experience (without glossing over difficulties), Shaleece Haas has created a documentary that plays like a narrative film. It follows Rachel's transition to Bennett with the help of two amazing friends, one in identical circumstances and one who's been there and done that.

—The Slippers (☆☆½) (Sept. 24, 1 p.m.)

With Hollywood nostalgia like Turner Classic Movies on steroids, this film shows how four pairs of ruby slippers Judy Garland wore in "The Wizard of Oz" jumpstarted the movie memorabilia industry. A great hourlong documentary is stretched into a good hour-and-a-half feature.



Cem Alkan in Where Are You Going, Habibi?
Duellmann Filmproduktion

—Where Are You Going, Habibi? (☆☆½) (Sept. 24, 3 p.m.)

Ibo (Cem Alkan) can't get a good job because of German prejudice against his Turkish descent, so he works in a gay sex shop. He befriends Ali (Martin Walde), a homophobic (but flexible—but how flexible?) criminal. There's a lot that's hard to believe here, but I enjoyed it.

—Slash (☆☆½) (Sept. 24, 5 p.m.)

Neil (Michael Johnston), 15, and Julia (Hannah Marks), 16, make an unconvincing "bisexual" couple as they bond over a mutual interest in writing erotic fan-fiction—his gay, hers straight. They both just need to meet the right guy.



Michael Johnston and Hannah Marks in Slash.

—Retake (☆☆☆) (Sept. 24, 7 p.m.)

"Vertigo" meets "Pretty Woman" when middle-aged Tuc Watkins hires young hustler Devon Graye to ride with him from San Francisco to the Grand Canyon, role-playing his lost love in a recreation of their last trip together. Life isn't as simple as movies but "Retake" combines the best of both.

—Heartland (☆☆☆) (Sept. 24, 7:15 p.m.)

My new favorite actress Velinda Godfrey gives a stunning performance as Lauren, who returns to her mother's Oklahoma home after her partner's death and gets involved with her brother's girlfriend (Laura Spencer). What follows isn't the heart of "Heartland," but a lot of it's good and Godfrey's great.



Juliet Stevenson in Departure.
Motion Group Pictures

—Departure (☆☆½) (Sept. 25, 1 p.m.)

Pretentious and depressing but not bad, Andrew Steggall's drama features terrific young English actor Alex Lawther as Elliot, who crushes on a local boy, Clement (Phénix Brossard), while visiting France with his mum (Juliet Stevenson), whose marriage is falling apart. Looks great if you're in the mood for Art.

—Jonathan (☆☆½) (Sept. 25, 3:15 p.m.)

Jonathan is a gay love story, but not the one you expect. Despite our hopes, the handsome title character (Jannis Niewohner) is straight. He's surprised to learn his dying father isn't, when Dad's old lover visits. Gay seniors who spent most of their lives in the closet will relate.

—Upstairs Inferno (☆☆☆) (Sept. 25, 7 p.m.)

Robert L. Camina's LGBT horror movie details the 1973 fire that destroyed the Upstairs Lounge, a New Orleans gay bar, claiming 32 lives (33 counting the suspected arsonist's later suicide). Activists confronting official apathy remind older LGBTs and inform younger ones how things were 43 years before Pulse.



Rev. Troy Perry in Upstairs Inferno.
Camina Entertainment

—Before The Fall (☆☆½) (Sept. 25, 7:15 p.m.)

It borrows character names but not wit from "Pride and Prejudice," and mixes classes most un-Austen-tatiously. Gay lawyer Ben Bennett (Ethan Sharrett) falls for straight-ish, working-class alcoholic Lee Darcy (Chase Conner), while a woman snatches up the new stud in town and everyone hikes in the Virginia mountains.



Chase Conner and Ethan Sharrett in Before the Fall.
Washington House

—Spa Night (☆☆½) (Sept. 25, 9:15 p.m.)

While his immigrant parents lose their Koreatown restaurant, David (Joe Seo) works toward losing his virginity at the local spa, where strange things happen after dark. Seo is so emotionless and the activities so coyly shown, the parents' story is more interesting than David's.

—bwoy (☆☆☆) (Sept. 26, 7 p.m.)

Brad (Anthony Rapp) in the better of his two festival films strikes up an online flirtation with Yenny (Jimmy Brooks), a Jamaican half his age, and doesn't realize he's being played. John G. Young's drama unfolds largely through texts and videochats, but it's much better than that sounds.

—The Landscape Within (☆☆) (Sept. 26, 9 p.m.)

I'd recommend 30 minutes about the work of (presumably gay) Filipino artist Eric Estampador Cabales, who paints and costumes bodies, then photographs them; but the other 50 minutes of this feature show him mourning his late grandfather and dying uncle with little context to make us care.



The Landscape Within.

Award winners featured at Reeling

Award winners from the big summer festivals that are showing in Reeling include:

—Frameline (San Francisco):

—Audience Award Best Documentary: Real Boy
—Jury Award Outstanding First Feature: Jonathan
—Jury Award Outstanding Documentary: Southwest of Salem: The Story of the San Antonio Four
—Jury Award Honorable Mention for Special Contribution to Queer History: Upstairs Inferno

—Outfest (Los Angeles):

—U.S. Documentary Audience Award: Major!
—Audience Award Best First U.S. Dramatic Feature: Suicide Kale
—U.S. Grand Jury Prize: Spa Night
—Grand Jury Award Best Documentary: Southwest of Salem: The Story of the San Antonio Four
—Grand Jury Documentary Special Mention for Excellence in Filmmaking: Major!
—Grand Jury Special Mention for Outstanding Performance: Joe Seo in Spa Night

—Do You Take This Man (☆☆) (Sept. 26, 9:15 p.m.)

With one of the worst screenplays ever brought to the screen, it doesn't help that there's negative chemistry between the leading men, Daniel (Anthony Rapp) and Christopher (Jonathan Bennett), who give a dinner for family and close friends on the eve of their wedding. It's a painful viewing experience.



Anthony Rapp and Jonathan Bennett in Do You Take This Man?
Andrew Hreha/Modern Love

—Tomcat (☆☆½) (Sept. 27, 7 p.m.): This award-winning Austrian film is about a handsome, loving couple (Philipp Hochmair and Lukas Turtur) whose relationship takes a drastic turn when a horrific event takes place that involves their much-loved cat, Moses. The acting (even by the cat) is pretty convincing—but the movie draws out some aspects and includes an unnecessary subplot about another couple. The movie is two hours, but could be at least a half-hour shorter. [Note: Andrew Davis reviewed this film.]

—First Girl I Loved (☆☆☆) (Sept. 27, 7:15 p.m.)

Yearbook photographer Anne (Dylan Gelula) is crushing on softball superstar Sasha (Brianna Hildebrand), but Anne's best friend Clifton (Mateo Arias) reacts badly because he's had a crush on Anne all this time. Relive the agony and ecstasy of your first same-sex crush, with Kerem Sanga's novel narrative style providing surprises.

Note: Nearly 60 short films will be screened across nine themed shorts programs, with many filmmakers in attendance. Among them is the 18-minute Learning to Recognize Myself Again (showing Sept. 25), an episode of the web series America in Transition that features Chicagoan and Transgender Oral History Project founder Andre Perez as director.

Musician/ex-pro athlete Sami Grisafe talks Etheridge, Trump, Clinton

BY SARAH TOCE

Lesbian former professional athlete Sami Grisafe is aware of the fact that she sounds like another familiar voice when she sings—and she's fine with it.

"I am honored to be compared to Melissa Etheridge," Grisafe said. "She has such a strong voice, both as a singer and songwriter. I am inspired by her choice to use her platform to bring people together and create change for the better. Whether it be 'I Need To Wake Up' or 'I Run For Life' or her latest song inspired by the recent tragedy in Orlando, 'Pulse,' she

divisiveness."

Not to name names, but it's apparent who she's talking about throughout the song. Even so, she has fighting words for one Mr. Donald J. Trump—as any former pro athlete might.

"I don't hate you and I'm not delusional to think that I am in a place to give anyone political advice," she shared. "For me, it all boils down to this: 'What message will we send to young people in our country about what it means to be a leader?' We need to take a hard look at what we want to role model for our children. This is not a reality show. This is our future."



Sami Grisafe.
Photo courtesy of Grisafe

creates music that shines a light on issues we can no longer ignore. I hope to have the same impact with my voice."

Grisafe not only hopes to have a similar impact as Etheridge—she already does. Her single "All-Un-American" has surprised all expectations, hitting the 50,000-view mark on Facebook and continuing to rise.

"I wrote 'All-Un-American' as a love song to the United States of America. Yes, I knock a certain somebody in the song, but that's because I believe his campaign is threatening the very things that make this country great," she said. "Yes, we have an unsavory history, as many nations do, but what we stand for, what we strive for, the words that we have chiseled in monuments and woven into our fabric are our moral compass. We should be working to get closer to achieving these proclamations, not recklessly abandoning them."

The songs asks a simple question: "Who do we want to be as Americans?"

"The song resonates with me, because America has lived up to being the land of opportunity for me. As a woman, I was given the opportunity, because of Title IX, to play football in high school which would later lead to playing for my country," Grisafe said. "As a lesbian, I have the freedom to marry, just as my straight friends do. As an artist, I have the freedom to write songs like this and not be persecuted. I love this country and I would rather fight for our potential, than cower to fear-mongering

Speaking of the future, Grisafe works tirelessly to sculpt her own.

"Music helps me find clarity and peace," she said. "Anytime I am faced with something difficult in my life, I know it is just a song away from being understood. Sometimes it's through the process of writing a song that I can understand an obstacle, and sometimes someone else's song enlightens me. Either way, music clears my mind and fills my heart."

The former footballer broke the glass ceiling in her own life as a young adult.

"Football is a microcosm of life. You have big and small goals," she shared. "You put together a plan to achieve those goals. You have to work with people to execute your plan. Sometimes everything goes your way, sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. I have never met an obstacle in life that I couldn't solve from my experience playing football. We're all trying to win at life, but like football, when it's all over and the clock reads zeros, all that matters is that you prepared to the best of your ability, gave it your maximum effort, learned from your mistakes, embraced your teammates and respected your opponents."

Football taught her many lessons, including: "One, think bigger than yourself. Two, hard work pays off. Three, fight for your dreams like you're inches away from them, because you just might be."

Grisafe's upcoming passages have roots in a

list she builds on every single day.

"Every time I scratch something off of my to-do list it feels like five more things have been added in its place," she said. "I want to connect with millions of people all over the world through music, write books, act in thought-provoking films, produce documentaries that tell inspiring stories, mentor young people, help create a world that is more aware, proactive, and kind. I have many more goals, but that should keep me pretty busy for a while."

Well, that and re-inventing the internet with her music.

"It's hard to anticipate any kind of traction on the internet," she said. "You never know what will 'hit' and what won't. At the same time, I had confidence in the talent of the musicians, the producers involved and the quality of production, both the song and video. Working with producers Colin Wolfe (Dr. Dre, Michael Jackson, Madonna) and Evan Ryan as well as the incredibly talented musicians (Evan Ryan, Keaton Simons, Edouard Korvin) and videographer, Zach Ginnever, was a powerful experience."

The video for "All-Un-American" itself made for quite the entrance.

"The music video features archival footage of the Rosa Parks and the fall of the Berlin wall as well as recent events including a Black Lives Matter march and Chicago's 2016 Pride Parade with pictures of those murdered at the Pulse Club in Orlando. I knew that we had a strong song musically as well as a provocative message within the lyrics and visually through the music video."

Mission accomplished.

And her message to the countless families left behind following the Orlando Pulse nightclub attack?

"We've never met, but I know you. You are my parents, my brother, my grandparents, my girlfriend," she said. "You are the people in my life I love with all my heart. Your tragedy is our tragedy. Our tragedy as a community, our tragedy as a nation, our tragedy as the human

race. May we all learn from your strength and love. May we remember your loved ones for the beautiful people they were, not as nameless victims."

Make no mistake about it, Grisafe will be voting for Hillary Clinton in the 2016 General Election.

"I am pro-Hillary," she shared. "Full-disclosure: I was a Bernie supporter at the beginning of this election. I was inspired by his dedication to the people and his unwavering tenacity to stand up for the hardworking American. I don't believe his campaign ended in vain because Bernie's ideas are now influencing some of Hillary's plans. Hillary Clinton has made mistakes in her career, but so has every person who has been put in a position to make difficult decisions. It's easy to stand back and criticize someone's work in the comfort of our ignorance, righteously in hindsight. None of us know what she knew: the pressure, the consequences, the options she had in the heat of the moment."

Then, she came up with an analogy only Grisafe could pull off.

"I liken it to the Monday morning quarterback, which pales in comparison to running a country, but a subject I feel comfortable with none-the-less. Every quarterback is criticized about decisions they make in a game. 'Clearly, that receiver was open, why didn't you throw it to them?!' The fact of the matter is every leader wants to do a good job. They want to win the game. But there is so much more happening during in the moment than the bystander knows. There are personal dynamics, history, stat quotas, and the ever-ticking clock. The point is, if we are going to have someone lead our country, I would much rather play a quarterback who has lost a couple championships than someone who has merely watched a game from the box seats."

Learn more about Sami Grisafe and listen to "All-Un-American" here: <https://www.facebook.com/SamiGrisafeMusic>.

Sky playoff game on Sept. 25

The Chicago Sky will play its first WNBA playoff game of the 2016 season in the second round at noon, Sunday, Sept. 25 at All State Arena.

Each of the first-round games (Indiana Fever vs. Seattle Storm; Phoenix Mercury vs. Atlanta Dream) are single-elimination games. The number of playoff rounds increases from three to four. The top two seeds receive a bye to the semifinals (third round), and the third and fourth seeds receive a bye to the second round.

The Sky have clinched the number-four seed. The playoffs begin Wed., Sept. 21.

See WNBA.com.

stARTup Art Fair Sept. 23-25

The new art market stARTup Art Fair will take place Sept. 23-25 at the MileNorth Hotel, 166 E. Superior St. It will be the first time it will happen in Chicago.

An intimate group of 22 artists from across the country will transform their respective hotel rooms into solo exhibitions of their current practices and projects.

See StartUpArtFair.com/CHI.

'From Selma to Stonewall' Sept. 24

From Selma to Stonewall: Are We There Yet? will screen at Kerasotes ShowPlace ICON Theatre, 150 W. Roosevelt Rd., on Saturday, Sept. 24, at 7:30 p.m. as part of the Chicago International Social Change Film Festival.

In the movie, a Black straight preacher

and a white, lesbian activist form an unusual bond as they seek to find the intersection between the Black civil- and LGBTQ-rights movements of today.

After the film, there will be a Q&A with producer Ky Dickens and assistant director Benjamin Ledell Reynolds.

See ChicagoSocialChange.org.

Project Elevate red carpet Sept. 29

AIDS Foundation of Chicago's Project Elevate will host a red-carpet and presentation for six short video vignettes addressing abandonment, bullying, sexual abuse and other issues.

The event will take place Thursday, Sept. 29, at Hyde Park Art Center, 5220 S. Cornell Ave., 5-8 p.m.

Prior to the vignettes being shown a reception will be held featuring music by DJ Tess and dance performances by The Hittas. The vignettes feature personal stories of two transgender women, two cisgender women and two same-gender-loving men. A panel discussion of the video vignette creators and audience Q&A will follow.

Registration is required at AIDSChicago.org/RedCarpet.

Nick Jonas film in Chicago in Sept.

GOAT—a film that stars Nick Jonas, Ben Schnetzer and James Franco—will open at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave., on Friday, Sept. 23.

The movie focuses on a fraternity pledging ritual that threatens to divide two brothers, portrayed by Jonas and Schnetzer.

Andrew Neel directed the movie.

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Bar Toma class; Cider Bash

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Making a good pizza isn't easy.

That was the lesson several people learned during a recent pizza-tossing class with Chef Tony Mantuano (also a chef/partner at Spiaggia and a couple other spots) at **Bar Toma** (110 E. Pearson St.; BarTomaChicago.com).

Among the many nuggets of wisdom Mantuano and the Bar Toma crew provided were that pizza dough at this restaurant is prepared during a two-



Shrimp diavolo pizza at Bar Toma. Photo by Andrew Davis

day process that involves, among other things, a huge mixer (imported from Italy) called "The Monkey" as well as using a wood-fired oven that can accommodate up to six pies. (The other oven is used for toppings, etc.)

After the class members exhibited various degrees of success tossing pizza dough, attendees dined on pizzas such as speck and egg, shrimp diavolo (a spicy item), four-cheese and artisan pepperoni (which was adorned with smoked garlic,

fresh mozzarella and tomato sauce); chopped and beef-and-fennel salads; zucchini; and a chocolate-banana pudding topped with a few grains of sea salt.

However, Bar Toma has more to offer than just great food. The eatery's famed pizza-tossing class actually involved more than we did, with attendees splitting into teams to create their own customized pizzas. There's also "Unwine Your Senses," during which guests try to identify the aromas of various varietals of wine. There are also The Amazing Mini-Race and Bar Toma Team Trivia. There's also an event space that can accommodate more than 100 people.

Jake Melnick's Cider Bash

On Sept. 15, **Jake Melnick's Corner Tap** (41 E. Superior St.; JakeMelnicks.com) offered a fall preview with its annual Cider Fest.

In the keg room and patio, the restaurant offered dishes such as smoked apple BBQ wings, hot links with cider-braised onions, applwood-smoked pork-loin sliders, BBQ chips and house-baked apple pie.

Approximately 40 people appeared at the event.

nightspots

the big TO-DO

OUR WEEKLY PICKS TO PLAN YOUR NIGHTLIFE CALENDAR

Laughs in the Lounge



Wed., Sept. 21, 9 pm
Rogers Park Social,
6920 N. Glenwood Ave.

The September showcase features comedians Adam Bindert, Alex Dragicevich, Laura Hugg, Vikram Pandya, Cynthia Shur Petts and host Marla Depew (pictured).

Mel Platzke Memorial Celebration



Sat., Sept. 24, 3-5 pm
Sidetrack,
3349 N. Halsted St.

An afternoon of remembrance, laughs, art, music and love, celebrating the amazing life of Mel Platzke. His humor, fashion style, big heart, artistic creativity and charm were all one-of-a-kind and managed to bring so many people together.

Project Run-a-way: Season 7



Sat., Sept. 24, 4-9 pm
Fantasy Nightclub,
3641 N. Halsted St.

A mix of top fashion, model, and drag reality TV shows. Contestants are asked to create a garment (without professional sewing equipment) in an extremely short time frame. This year's event benefits Project Fierce Chicago and the homeless LGBT youth that they support.

Presidential Debate Viewing Party



Mon., Sept. 26, 7 pm
Sidetrack,
3349 N. Halsted St.

Hosted by Chicago LGBTQ for Hillary. Doors open to Glass Bar at 7, debate 8-9:30. No cover. Event chairs Art Johnston, Pepe Peña, Jamie Citron and Kevin Hauswirth hope you will make a financial contribution to keep the Hillary Victory Fund moving full steam ahead!



SIDETRACK

Photos by Jed Dulanias



Sleater-Kinney.



Juliette and the Licks.



Death Cab For Cutie.



Joey Bada\$\$.



Bad Religion.



Morrissey.



Dee Snider.

RIOT FEST 2016

Photos by Jerry Nunn



"I would not be unhappy were I the last cisgender male to play a female transgender on television."—**Jeffrey Tambor's** acceptance speech after winning the Emmy for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series.

Anyone who still thinks our community isn't visible on TV clearly didn't watch this year's Emmy Awards, which kicked off with **Louie Anderson's** win for playing the mother on *Baskets*. "I have not always been a very good man, but I play one helluva woman," he said. That was followed by **Jeffrey Tambor's** second Emmy for *Transparent*. And I'm always happy when **Holland Taylor** is acknowledged. This time, the mention came from partner **Sarah Paulson**, whose plus one was the real **Marcia Clark**. I believe she was wearing a Columbian necklace.

The given at any awards show is that there will be notable exceptions to the In Memoriam sequence. This year, the names **Beth Howland** and **Pat Harrington** spring to mind—to say nothing of **Big Ang** and **Chyna**. I guess they had to make room to acknowledge the great television careers of **Glenn Frey** and **Prince!**

Would you date a hooker? Or a porn star? It's a silly question for me to answer—I refuse to sleep with anyone who I can't check out on video first! But for the average guy, it's a reasonable concern, and one he probably wouldn't even think to ask when going on a TV dating show. After all, there's an assumption that the network has checked everyone out, right? So I'm not surprised the guys from *Finding Prince Charming* are speaking out now that they've learned about the escorting past of their "Prince," **Robert Sepulveda Jr.**—someone who not only escorted but engaged in quite a bit of questionable (and unhygienic) behavior on videos which can be seen on *BillyMasters.com*.

The most prevalent allegation is that Logo knew exactly who Robert was when they cast him, and perhaps leaked information about his past themselves in order to gain publicity for the show. One of the contestants came right out and said, "I don't believe the network was blindsided. I don't think anyone believes that." Another revealed that all of the guys "had to go through rigorous background checks for three weeks, and another three days before the show even started taping." Yet another was sure he recognized Robert from a gay porno film: "As soon as I left the house and got my phone back, I Googled 'Robert Sepulveda' and the words 'sex tape' and there it was. I didn't even need to scroll down."

This brings up a crucial point—allegedly each cast member had to sign a contract stating they didn't appear in sex tapes or have nude photos that show their faces. The guys feel the same rules should have applied to Sepulveda—although I hasten to add that in most of the videos, his face is the least-featured part of his anatomy. Now that the guys have seen the videos, they're appalled. "There are videos of Robert out there that are quite disgusting," one said. "Now, I'm associated with him. Try explaining that to your mother." Another was more to the point: "If I wanted to date a hooker, I'd hire one. I'm beyond livid!" While I'm all for these guys speaking out—they should and it's their right—don't hide behind the moniker of "unnamed contestant." Say who you are and own it. I suspect they're contractually unable to speak on the record until the reunion show, which has not yet taped.

History was made last week when a gay woman competed for Miss America. **Erin O'Flaherty**, the reigning Miss Missouri, is the pageant's first openly gay contestant—and she got to strut her stuff



Billy has more on the life of Alexis Arquette.

Facebook photo

during the Parade of States on the live telecast. She was cut when the top 15 were announced. But there's still enough to celebrate—she's also the first openly gay woman to ever win a state pageant.

Many of you have written in asking for details about the death of **Alexis Arquette**. According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, Alexis was living in a West Hollywood apartment building run by The Actors Fund, which provides low-income housing for actors who are HIV-positive and have an annual income of \$17,400-\$29,000 per year. Reportedly, Arquette had been HIV-positive for two decades, but toward the end refused to take certain medications that would have potentially been life-saving. We're told that an untreated liver infection spread throughout Arquette's body. As to the bigger question of gender, Alexis was always unwilling to talk about what surgeries had or had not taken place. **David Arquette** said, "It was like, 'Yeah, sometimes I'll be a man, sometimes I'll be a woman. I like to refer to myself as gender-suspicious.'" David said he was confused—are you my sister or my brother? In pure Alexis form, the response came quick: "It depends on how I'm dressed!"

Apropos of **Rami Malek's** Emmy win for *Mr. Robot*, our "Ask Billy" question comes from Jason in Baltimore: "I was reading some of your old columns on *BillyMasters.com* and saw the photo of **Zayn Malik's** penis. It got me thinking, do you have any nude photos of Rami Malek from *Mr. Robot*? He's way hotter! Tell me he's gay."

Alas, the new Emmy winner is not gay, but he has played gay before. Back in 2005, he was on the show *The War at Home*, in which he was the neighbor who had a crush on the son, played by Jackson Rathbone. As for seeing him nude, while he previously showed his ass in *Need for Speed*, he recently showed even more on *Mr. Robot*. In one scene, he is strip-searched by an officer who says, "Bend over; spread your ass." How could you even think I wouldn't post that video on *BillyMasters.com*?

When Rami is showing us where to plug in a hard drive, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Since I'm just home from the Emmys (and exhausted), I barely have the strength to remind you to check out www.BillyMasters.com, the site that never sleeps. If you have a question for me, I'm always here for you. Just send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before **John Travolta** gets cast as Louie Anderson's sister on *Baskets!* So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

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Jen Richards.

Photo by John Sturdy

Trans actress joins 'Nashville'

Trans actress Jen Richards has joined the cast of the CMT television series *Nashville*.

The Emmy-nominated writer, actress and producer (*Her Story*; *Doubt*) is set to join the cast in the recurring role of Allyson Del Lago, a physical therapist who helps a character.

Richards is playing CMT's first transgender character and is the first out transgender actor on the network. Richards' television credits include being series regular on E!'s *I Am Cait*, Logo's *Beautiful As I Want to Be* and AOL's *True Trans* with Laura Jane Grace.

ABC canceled *Nashville* after four seasons, and it will debut on CMT on Thursday, Jan. 5.

'Before Stonewall' series Oct. 11, 18

The series "Before Stonewall: The LGBTQ Experience in the '50s and '60s" series—which the Lincoln Park Village, Gerber/Hart Library, Howard Brown Health and Lake View Presby-

terian Church are presenting—will take place Oct. 11 and 18.

This two-part lecture and discussion will focus on the history of the LGBTQ community before the Stonewall Rebellion on June 28, 1969, which led to the gay liberation movement and modern fight for LGBTQ rights in the United States.

—Part 1: Lecture by Tracy Baim, publisher and executive editor of *Windy City Times* on Tuesday, Oct. 11, 3-5 p.m., at Gerber/Hart Library, 6500 N. Clark St.

—Part 2: Panel discussion by four members of the LGBTQ community on what it was like living in the '50s and '60s.

The four panelists: Bill Gordon, a Lincoln Park Village member, retired executive director of the American Library Association (representing gay men); Martha Smith, a former allied medical professional (representing lesbians); David Matteson, professor emeritus from Governors State University (representing bisexual individuals); and Gloria Allen, currently working with trans youth at the Center on Halsted (and representing trans individuals). The discussion panel will be held Tuesday, Oct. 18, 3-5 p.m., at Lake View Presbyterian Church, 716 W. Addison St.

This series is free and open to the public, but registration is required. For more information and registration, visit LincolnParkVillage.org or call 773-248-8700.

Lincoln Park Village is an innovative, member-driven community of older adults living throughout Chicago's North Side neighborhoods, who together are inventing a different, better future for life after 50. Village members enjoy community, connection, engagement, and fun—plus mostly volunteer-provided supportive services if needed. Using our talents, wisdom and skills we have become an important asset to our communities and to each other and are creating a much-needed change in both the perception and the reality of life after 50.

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BIANCA from page 23

not scandalous like some people thought it was.

WCT: Are you interested in filming more movies?

BD: Sure. At this point I have done clubs, theater, porn—why not?

WCT: Is another comedy show in the works?

BD: Yes, I am actually starting my tour, "Not Today, Satan" on Sept. 28 in Seattle. We are going to 29 cities in the U.S. You can find all that information at TheBiancaDelRio.com. I am excited after traveling last year with my show and I will be in Chicago Oct. 9 at The Vic. In February, I will be touring Europe.

I have a couple of other secret projects out that you will find out about in the fall.

WCT: Where did the expression "Not today, Satan" come from?

BD: It was something my friend and I used to say years ago. It was like saying, "Don't mess with me today, bitch." You would have to go to church and rebuke Satan for the moment, because that was who was testing you. It has come in handy.

I forgot I even said it on RuPaul's Drag Race then it came out months later and caught on.

WCT: When will Hurricane Bianca be released on video?

BD: It will be released digitally on Sept. 23

WEAVING from page 22

same, just bound together in eternal conflict. If one dies the other does, and if one comes into existence the other must. In that sense there's an attraction and repulsion between them.

I always found Agent Smith very amusing, and Keanu and I did have a lot of laughs over all the things you could write for those characters. I would have liked a song and dance routine for Agent Smith, doing his own chorus line with all the clones, like Fred Astaire in top hats. He's crooning and singing and Neo could be watching and they could have a fight in the theater. The possibilities are endless.

WCT: Speaking of possibilities, Priscilla's writer-director Stephan Elliott essentially wrote a sequel some years back when taking a crack at the stage musical version, but it was scrapped. Do you stay in contact with Guy and Terence and would you consider a sequel?

HW: Oh yeah. We talked about it at the time, and there were a lot of ideas about what the sequel might be and where they might go and

on Amazon, iTunes [and] Vimeo, and available globally on WolfeOnDemand.com the same day. We have lots of international fans from Drag Race, which is wonderful. The DVD is released Oct. 18 in the US and Canada.

WCT: Have you been surprised by the international appeal of Drag Race?

BD: I am so happy that RuPaul won the Emmy [at the Creative Emmys Sept. 11]. He is wonderful at what he does and been at it a long time. It is a merit to how fabulous the show is and that people are watching. It is insane that in my youth I never thought I would be on an international television show dealing with drag queens. It is amazing that it is so mainstream.

I am so grateful that two and a half years after winning that I am still getting exposure. In London my show sold out in a day, which is crazy. With streaming and online ways to see the show there are new opportunities to watch it around the world.

WCT: I look forward to saying hi at the premiere.

BD: Bring your porn. If it is sticky use some disinfectant first!

Look for star Bianca Del Rio and writer/director Matt Kugelman at opening night for Reeling Film Festival at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave., on Thurs., Sept. 22. Visit ReelingFilmFestival.org/2016/ for more information on other screenings.

what might happen. The best idea I've heard was Tick, Bernadette, and Adam go to the moon in a rocket. They go into space to some wonderful planet somewhere. That's great—you can explore all sorts of fantastical worlds and if the script was brilliant enough it might be perfect. It would be an entirely different genre.

I actually saw Terence in London last year and it was lovely to catch up and reminisce about the wonderful thing that was the Priscilla shoot. Similarly, I talked to Guy this year, about, "Imagine those three old drag queens now and what they would be up to if they had a reunion." I don't think it'll happen, but stranger things have.

WCT: Wrapping up with another drag-related question, do you watch RuPaul's Drag Race?

HW: No, but I remember RuPaul from years ago and really good drag is the most fantastic entertainment and political statement. I should check that out.

WCT: Hell, you should be a judge! Shall we let RuPaul know you're game?

HW: OK!

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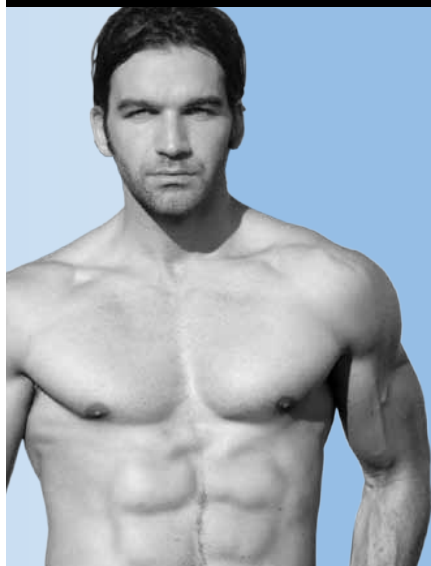
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