



TRANS MURDERS:

Rising alongside

ANTI-TRANS RHETORIC



CHAI TIMES
 WCT talks with out EEOC Commissioner Chai Feldblum.
 Photo courtesy of Feldblum

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

An illustration used as part of a 1938 children's book *Der Giftpilz (The Poisoned Mushroom)* by Nazi propagandist Julius Streicher features a menacing-looking, burly caricature of a Jewish man confronting two young children, Else and Hans, who stare up at him in wonder as he uses a bag of caramels to entice them to come with him.

In the story, recognizing the man as a Jew, Hans runs to find a policeman who "Soon overtakes the strange man. He

handcuffs him and takes him to prison."

At home, Hans is rewarded by his mother who tells him: "A devil goes through the land. The Jew he is known to us all as [a] murderer of the peoples. The terror of children in every country, he wants to ruin the youth."

Kelley H. Szany, director of education for the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center based in Skokie, explained the significance of the image.

"[Streicher] was trying to perpetuate the stereotypes that

Turn to page 6

Top row (L-R): Crystal Edmonds, Dee Whigham, Deeniquia Dodds, Demarkis Stansberry. Middle row (L-R): Erykah Tijerina, Goddess Diamond, Amos Beede, Jasmine Sierra. Bottom row (L-R): Kedarie/Kandicee Johnson, Rae'lynn Thomas, Reecey Walker, Veronica Banks Cano.



E. PATRICK JOHNSON
 NU professor has a new post.
 Photo from Johnson



HIP-HOP AND LGBTQS
 The intersection of two communities.
 Photo of Akenya Seymour courtesy of Nina Matti



FALL MOVIE SPECIAL
 Preview includes such films as *Moonlight*.



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CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'
 A recent trip to Los Angeles (left) yielded some tourist-related treasures—and some festive individuals.
 Photo by Jerry Nunn

PARTY ANIMALS



Members of the band Bloc Party talk about coming out and group dynamics.
 Photo by Jerry Nunn

FANCY FEAST

Hundreds of people attended Chicago Gourmet, presented by Bon Appetit.

GLEE, MYSELF AND I

WCT reviews actress Naya Rivera's (Glee) book, Sorry Not Sorry.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Marc Jacobs, Marilyn Monroe and a Will & Grace reunion.

plus **DAILY BREAKING NEWS**

SWOOP, THERE IT IS



A Gaywheels assessment of the 2017 Hyundai Elantra calls the vehicle "less swoopy" and "more suave."
 Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com

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'05 Ford Escape XLS SUV	Automatic, Full Power, 83K, Blue, 15739A	\$6,995
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'06 Mercury Mariner Prem. AWD ..	Auto., Full Power, Green, 15629A	\$4,995
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Report reveals ordeals that bisexuals face

On Sept. 27, the Movement Advancement Project and a coalition of groups released a report that offers a stark picture of the unique bias and isolation bisexual people face.

While more than half of the LGBT community identifies as bisexual, bisexual people experience high rates of invisibility, societal rejection, violence, discrimination, and poor physical and mental health—often at rates higher than their lesbian and gay peers.

“Invisible Majority: The Disparities Facing Bisexual People and How to Remedy Them” examines the “invisible majority” of the LGBT community, the nearly 5 million adults who identify as bisexual as well as the millions more who have sexual or romantic attraction to or contact with people of more than one gender.

The report shows:

—Lack of societal recognition and acceptance: A recent study of bias towards bisexual men and women revealed that 14 percent of people felt that bisexuality was not a legitimate sexual orientation. Only 20 percent of bisexual people say that there is social acceptance of LGB people where they live, compared to 31 percent of lesbians and 39 percent of gay men. Only 28 percent of bisexual people say that all or most of the important people in their life know they are bisexual, compared to 77 percent of gay men and 71 percent of lesbians.

—Employment Discrimination: In a study of

the employment discrimination experiences of bisexual people, nearly two-thirds of respondents reported experiencing some form of harassment or discrimination at work, including being fired, being sexually harassed, or hearing biphobic jokes at work. The Pew Research Center found that only 11 percent of bisexual respondents reported their closest co-workers know that they are bisexual, while half of gay men and lesbians say that their co-workers know their sexual orientation.

—Violence: A 2013 CDC report found that 61 percent of bisexual women and 37 percent of bisexual men reported experiencing rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime. The same study found that 46 percent of bisexual women had been raped, as had as 17 percent of heterosexual women and 13 percent of lesbian women.

—Suicide: Bisexual youth and adults have poorer mental health and higher self-reported rates of suicidal ideation and behavior than gay, lesbian, and heterosexual youth and adults. Nearly a quarter of bisexual adults reported having attempted suicide, four times the rate of heterosexual adults. Lesbian and gay adults were more than twice as likely to report having attempted suicide as heterosexual adults.

See LGBTMap.org.

Gender-neutral restrooms at more suburban schools

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Libertyville High and Vernon Hills High have added gender-neutral for trans students or anyone else wishing to use them, Daily Herald reports.

Six restrooms were designated as gender-neutral at each school, which are part of Libertyville-Vernon Hills Area High School District 128.

“The district is committed to providing resources and accommodations that provide a safe and secure environment for all students,” said district spokeswoman Mary Todoric. She added that the restrooms “are in place for any person in our schools who wishes for more privacy in the bathroom, which could be for a number of reasons.”

The facilities came as part of an effort to make the schools and other district facilities welcoming for transgender gender-expansive students. Officials told Daily Herald that there was no controversy about the change.

Northwest suburban Township High School District 211 has been mired in controversy since late 2015, when district officials cut a deal with federal regulators, who threatened district funding after the school refused to make accommodations for a trans student. Families of other students have since filed a lawsuit over the matter.

Daily Herald’s article is at <http://bit.ly/2ds1m2P>.

Benjamin Allen, owner of Boystown nightspots, dies at 69

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Benjamin Allen, owner of the Boystown nightspots Lucky Horseshoe Lounge and The North End, passed away Sept. 13 from a heart attack after a long battle with kidney disease. He was 69.

“It is with a heavy heart that I must share the sad news of the passing of Benjamin



Ben Allen (right) and husband Micah Hilgendorf.

Facebook photo

Allen,” said his husband, Micah Hilgendorf, on Facebook. “My partner in life, love, and business will be missed greatly, and I thank you all for your warm thoughts, photos, and prayers during this emotional time.”

“It is with a heavy heart that Northalsted Business Alliance recognizes the passing of Benjamin Allen,” said Executive Director Christopher Politan. “Ben was a pillar in our community, a leader in social change and an integral part of our business family. His contributions will be fondly remembered and we offer our condolences to his partner Micah Hilgendorf during this tough time.”

A native of Richmond, Virginia, where he was raised by his grandmother, Allen was involved extensively in Democratic politics for many years, according to his obituary at Legacy.com. In addition to working for numerous presidential campaigns, he also became involved in politics at the local and state levels. In 1985, he served as executive assistant to former Illinois Attorney General Neil F. Hartigan.

“Ben was one of the most competent and efficient persons I have ever worked with. He was an absolute added value to our work in the office,” said Michael J. Hayes Sr., former Illinois deputy attorney general, whom Allen also assisted.

Allen’s Legacy.com obituary is at <http://bit.ly/2deS2PD>.

GUEST COLUMN

BY DAVID ERNESTO MUNAR



Symposium positions health equity as a pivotal social justice issue for LGBTQ people

For those in our community with an activist spirit, attending a two-day symposium on LGBTQ Health might seem like the least likely response to all that troubles our people and society.

The airwaves fill with the racist machinations of a presidential candidate. Social media reminds us daily of unbridled police terror claiming the lives of innocent Black men. And gun violence continues to climb across Chicago.

Meanwhile, conservatives everywhere fret about the public washrooms transgender people should and shouldn’t use, all the while murders among transgender people go largely ignored.

Where does a health symposium fit in the middle of a culture war?

second annual Midwest LGBTQ Health Symposium, hosted by Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center (AIMMC) and Howard Brown Health, Oct. 6-7 at AIMMC.

Geared toward activists, social service providers and healthcare practitioners, the two-day forum will share best practices in LGBTQ and HIV-related healthcare with an emphasis on trans and gender-affirming healthcare, including hormone replacement therapy. The aims of the symposium are to raise awareness of persistent LGBTQ health disparities and empower concerned activists and providers to champion health equity as an urgent social justice issue.

This year, the symposium will open with a keynote address from JoAnne

Keatley, former director for the Center for Excellence for Transgender Health at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF). The Oct. 7 plenary session will include an address by Sgt. Shane Ortega, a Marine and Army veteran, who will discuss navigating military and civilian healthcare systems for gender transition care in the midst of a changing legal landscape.

The fight to thrive

“The fight to thrive in a violent, oppressive world is complex for all of us in the LGBTQ community. By leading the healthcare field to a more inclusive and affirming approach, we take our people out of isolation and towards a path of support and safety.”

in a violent, oppressive world is complex for all of us in the LGBTQ community. By leading the healthcare field to a more inclusive and affirming approach, we take our people out of isolation and towards a path of support and safety.

For LGBTQ people—especially people of color—the war is corporal, spiritual, generational, and all too real. A world where our health and safety is threatened at every turn exacts a heavy toll on the mind, body and spirit.

LGBTQ liberation demands that our people enjoy longevity, vitality, wellness and good health so we may thrive and achieve our full potential. Without health and wellness, we cannot truly be free.

To alleviate illness, promote health and safety, and create security for our people are radical acts of resistance against an increasingly violent and homophobic world.

These are the ideals motivating the

Advocates for equity in healthcare will find this two-day symposium a valuable educational offering. Join the more than 200 practitioners to learn from local and national experts. Registration and additional information is posted at midwestlgbtqhealthsymposium.eventbrite.com.

Our very existence is resistance. Our health is grounded in resilience.

David Ernesto Munar is president and CEO of Howard Brown Health, the Midwest’s largest LGBTQ health organization.



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TRANS MURDERS from cover

were being put out by the Nazis at the time that the Jews were a danger, evil, someone who could trick your children, that they had no boundaries in what they were trying to do," she told Windy City Times. "These were all ideas that they were trying to plant particularly in children. When you create a social system in which governments, cultural, economic and educational organizations are buying into this ideology, this propaganda can be received by all ages."

In November 2015, a referendum was held in Houston on the city's Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO), which banned discrimination based on a host of classifications including gender identity.

One month prior to the referendum, an organization called Campaign for Houston, which claims to be made up of "Citizens of Houston of all races, creeds and political beliefs who believe there should be NO MEN IN WOMEN'S BATHROOMS," released a 30-second television commercial.

Produced in black and white, the sinister soundtrack, images of flickering lights, a slowly dripping faucet and a large-framed, faceless man entering a restroom are all designed to evoke a sense of terror.

"Any man at any time could enter a woman's bathroom simply by claiming to be a woman that day," the female narrator says. "Even registered sex offenders could follow women or young girls into the bathroom."

The advertisement's call-to-action included the words "Prevent danger!"

A young girl is confronted by the man in one of the restroom stalls. The video cuts to black as she stares up at him in wonder and the man closes the stall doors behind him.

HERO was ultimately defeated by over 57,000 votes; 2015 campaign finance reports listed by Houston's Office of the City Secretary showed that Campaign for Houston spent just under \$600,000.

Meanwhile, the pro-HERO organization Houston Whites Against Discrimination spent more than \$1.3 million.

By the time the Campaign for Houston advertisement aired, 19 transgender women had been murdered in the United States. By the end of 2015, the number was 22—at the time, it was considered an unprecedented high that was double the 11 victims reported in 2014.

The price of progress

A 2014 report from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) noted that "2013 was a monumental year for LGBTQ and HIV-affected communities, with a number of high-profile legislative victories and unprecedented visibility of several LGBTQ and HIV-affected issues on a national level. However, 2013 was also a year where the rights of many marginalized communities came under direct attack by lawmakers, and violence against the most marginalized LGBTQ and HIV-affected communities continued unabated."

In August 2015, a Time magazine examination of the high rate of violence against transgender individuals suggested that, "Heightened visibility has also put more people at risk of being harassed or hurt. While images of Caitlyn Jenner receiving a standing ovation accepting an award in a Versace dress might seem to herald a sunny time for transgender Americans, most of them are still greatly disadvantaged socially and economically."

However, long before Jenner publicly announced her transition, conservative legislators, right-wing and religious organizations had begun to target the transgender community.

In February 2013, the Phoenix Arizona City Council voted to prohibit discrimination in public accommodations on the basis of gender identity or expression.

In its opposition to the city council's vote, the national Christian-founded organization Alliance Defending Freedom claimed: "It's open season on young girls and grown women now



„Hier, Kleiner, bist du etwas ganz Wichtiges? Was du für mich die beste mit mir gebore...“

forced to risk their privacy—and their safety—for our society's increasingly warped sense of tolerance."

Responding to Time magazine's May 2014 Transgender Tipping Point article featuring Laverne Cox, an OpEd in the Christian media organization Charisma News stated, "It's about seducing people into a lifestyle of perversion that ultimately separates them from God. It's about mainstreaming a way of life that leaves people in bondage. And, ultimately, it's about demonizing anyone who won't tip toward the transgender point and embrace this new 'civil rights' issue."

In February 2015, HB 583 was filed in the Florida House of Representatives, "Requiring that use of single-sex public facilities be restricted to persons of the sex for which the facility is designated; prohibiting knowingly and willfully entering a single-sex public facility designated for or restricted to persons of the other biological sex providing criminal penalties; providing exemptions; providing private cause of action against violators; providing for preemption; providing an effective date."

In filing the bill, State Rep. Frank Artiles told the Miami Herald that, "My No. 1 concern is public safety."

Writing in their support of the bill, the Christian Family Coalition Florida (CFC) claimed to have documented over a dozen cases "where men have entered women's bathrooms, locker rooms and dressing rooms and have committed numerous horrible crimes such as: rape, sexual assaults and voyeurism."

"When we look at the history that we know for the 20th and 21st centuries, we see that propaganda can be a powerful tool but I think history has also shown us that propaganda can be used as a weapon to facilitate hatred, prejudice and exclusion of a particular group," Szany of the Holocaust Museum noted. "The effectiveness of propaganda depends on the openness of the audience to the message and, in particular a favorable social context and environment that exists in which this propaganda can feed upon, infiltrate and succeed."

By the beginning of 2016 anti-transgender messaging had increased exponentially. Meanwhile, the murder-rate of transgender individuals was showing no signs of decline.

2016: The murders continue

On Jan. 11, 2016 Right Wing Watch posted a video of an interview given to the global Catholic television network EWTN by then-presidential candidate Dr. Ben Carson.

In response to the question of how he would ensure that "federal funding will not be used to force school districts to require girls to shower with boys," Carson replied: "It's beyond ridiculous that you take the most abnormal situation and you make everybody else conform to it. And when we start trying to impose the extra rights based on a few people who perhaps are



The 1938 illustration by Nazi propagandist Julius Streicher for the children's book *Der Giftpilz* (left) features two children confronted by a deliberately fearsome caricature of a Jew. The image above is captured from a 2015 anti-transgender ad in Houston featuring a deliberately fearsome man confronting a child in a restroom.

abnormal, where does that lead?"

That same month, NBC News reported that, during a campaign stop in Spirit Lake, Iowa, Carson's fellow Republican candidate Ted Cruz addressed the Department of Education's Title IX protection of the rights of a transgender student in Palatine, Illinois District 211 to use the locker room in accordance with her gender identity.

When it was suggested that a transgender girl should instead use the restroom in the teacher's lounge, Cruz said "Look, I don't know the facts of that, but I'll say that inflicting—inflicting him [sic] on the teachers is probably better than sticking him [sic] in the shower with the teenage girls."

On Jan. 22, journalist Monica Roberts reported on her blog TransGriot that Monica Loera—a trans Latina woman—had been shot to death in front of her home in Austin, Texas. NBC affiliate KXAN television used Loera's birth name and male pronouns when describing the events leading up to her death.

Citing court documents following the arrest of the man charged with Loera's murder, KXAN concluded that, "During the investigation, the roommate indicated to police Loera was a 'prostitute from time to time' and sometimes would steal things from his [sic] clients."

Also on Jan. 22, a 52-year-old transgender woman of color named Jasmine Sierra was found murdered in Bakersfield, California. According to a report by local television station KBAK which misgendered Sierra, Bakersfield police found "signs of trauma" on her body.

How authority figures dealt with a transgender individual "inflicted" upon them sparked a public outcry when, on Feb. 4, police in Mesa, Arizona shot a transgender man, Kayden Clarke, to death in his home. The Arizona Republic published police reports of the incident which identified Clarke with a female name. Officers claimed that he was suicidal.

On Feb. 9, Franklin Graham, evangelist and son of Rev. Billy Graham, made a stop in Atlanta as part of a prayer rally tour of all 50 states. The Atlanta Journal Constitution reported that Graham spoke in front of "thousands outside the state Capitol."

During his remarks, Graham decried the December 2015 election of Charlotte, North Carolina Mayor Jennifer Roberts and attacked her for what he called her goal of "trying to get transgenders into the bathrooms."

"If a person wakes up in the morning and they feel like they're a woman (that's a man) and he wants to go into a ladies' restroom then they can do that," Graham continued. "And I can tell you right now that that's wicked and that's evil. Men belong in men's bathrooms and women belong in women's bathrooms and we don't need men and predators going into women's bathrooms."

Ten days later on Feb. 19, police in San Antonio, Texas found the body of Veronica Banks

Cano in a motel bathroom.

Within 24 hours, a 25-year-old transgender woman of color, Maya Young, was stabbed to death on the streets of a Philadelphia suburb. Initial press reports misgendered her.

Two people were charged with Young's murder. According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, one of the alleged killers gave the knife to her accomplice and said, "You got to finish it. You got to kill him."

More pushback

A non-discrimination ordinance passed in Charlotte's City Council Feb. 22. It allowed transgender individuals the right to use the bathroom with which they identified. While North Carolina House Republicans announced that immediate action would be taken to eliminate the ordinance, Rev. Graham went on a social media tirade.

"Are people just not thinking clearly?" he wrote. "This law would allow pedophiles, perverts, and predators into women's bathrooms. This is wicked and it's filthy. To think that my granddaughters could go into a restroom and a man be in there exposing himself ... what are we setting our children and grandchildren up for? There's not a public restroom in Charlotte that would be safe!"

One comment on Graham's post stated that liberals were "indulging pedophiles."

Another read, "We are in for a bloody summer my friends. You mark my words."

On Feb. 27, a 30-year-old transgender male of color, Demarkis Stansberry, was shot through the head in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The following day, KSLA reported that a 24-year-old man had turned himself in to the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's office. He was charged with negligent homicide.

Five days later, Kedarie/Kandicee Johnson was shot multiple times in Burlington, Iowa. The gender-fluid teenager was just 16. The Des Moines Register reported police assertions that "it was not a random act."

According to the Los Angeles Times, on March 22 transgender woman Quartney Davia Dawson-Yochum was waking her dogs in the city's infamous Skid Row when "a gunman approached and shot her in the head." A 39-year-old male was charged with her murder.

The same day the Los Angeles Times published its report about Yochum's murder, North Carolina legislators made good on their promise to take action against the Charlotte City Council vote when on March 23, they passed HB 2 and North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory signed it into law. In doing so, he nullified the nondiscrimination ordinance, instituted unprecedented restrictions on transgender bathroom use and ignited a national firestorm.

Applauding the bill, American Family Association (AFA) radio host Dr. Frank Turek wrote "How could this possibly be controversial? Are we to risk the safety of millions of women and

children in public restrooms because an extremely small number of people are experiencing a mismatch between their psychology and biology? Good public policy does not risk the physical safety of women and children for the benefit of a few men who want to use their bathroom."

Responding to the nationwide denunciations and boycotts of North Carolina from businesses, sports organizations, political leaders and celebrities, the conservative website Red State warned that a war was being waged. "We are very much in the days where good is called evil and evil is called good," Red State journalist Susan Wright asserted.

On April 10, according to CBS, transgender woman of color Shante Thompson and her friend Willie Sims were attacked by "a group of up to eight people armed with several weapons" at a Houston intersection. The Houston Press reported that Thompson had been receiving threats for weeks before her death. A 23-year-old man was charged with her murder.

Less than a week later, the body of a 22-year-old transgender woman of color, Keyonna Blakeney, was found at a Red Roof Inn in Rockville, Maryland. NBC 4 in Washington stated that she "may have been working as a prostitute." Two men were arrested and charged with her murder.

Then, on April 19, Target announced that their stores would "welcome transgender team members and guests to use the restroom or fitting room facility that corresponds with their gender identity."

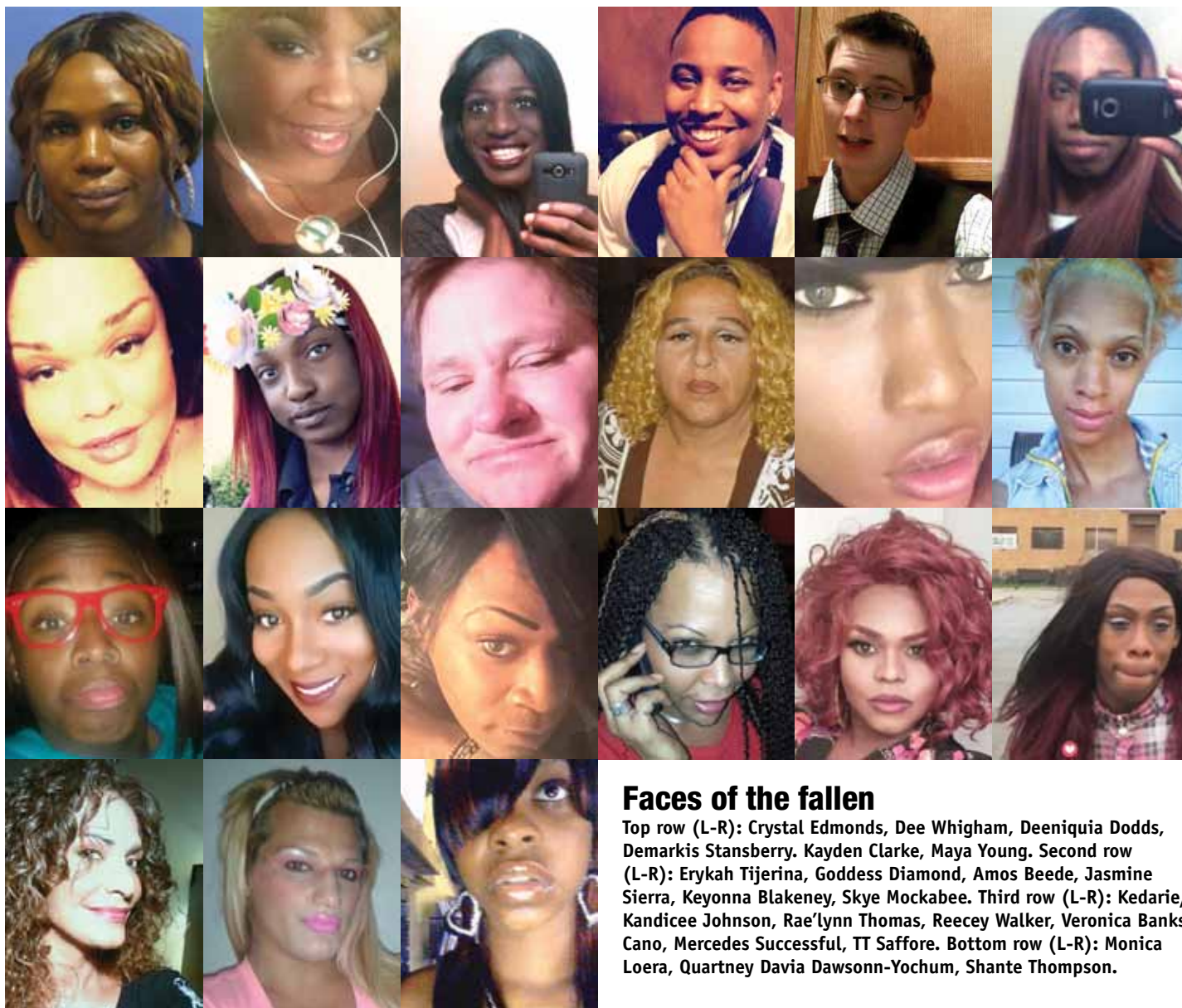
The AFA began a campaign to boycott the company. "Target's policy is exactly how sexual predators get access to their victims," The AFA stated. "And with Target publicly boasting that men can enter women's bathrooms, where do you think predators are going to go?"

On April 22, the Dallas Observer reported that GOP candidate for Denton County sheriff Tracy Murphree posted on Facebook, "If my little girl is in a public women's restroom and a man, regardless of how he may identify, goes into the bathroom, he will then identify as a John Doe until he wakes up in whatever hospital he may be taken to."

Media Research Center President Brent Bozell III and director Tim Graham wrote, "Gender isn't simply wished away. Surgeons can amputate body parts, but even then, gender assigned at birth remains a biological fact that can't be overruled by psychological-wishful thinking or political intimidation."

In reporting the May 1 stabbing death of transgender woman of color Reecey Walker in Wichita, Kansas, KWCH 12 used male pronouns. A 16-year-old boy was arrested for the crime.

On May 15, Black trans performer Mercedes



Faces of the fallen

Top row (L-R): Crystal Edmonds, Dee Whigham, Deeniquia Dodds, Demarkis Stansberry, Kayden Clarke, Maya Young. Second row (L-R): Erykah Tijerina, Goddess Diamond, Amos Beede, Jasmine Sierra, Keyonna Blakeney, Skye Mockabee. Third row (L-R): Kedarie/Kandicee Johnson, Rae'lynn Thomas, Reecey Walker, Veronica Banks Cano, Mercedes Successful, TT Saffore. Bottom row (L-R): Monica Loera, Quartney Davia Dawson-Yochum, Shante Thompson.

Successful was shot to death in a Haines City, Florida parking lot. On TransGriot, Roberts wrote, "I'm beyond sick and tired of being sick and tired of this crap happening. The conservative movement's facts-free anti-trans rhetoric and transphobic hatred has real world costs."

A week later in Milton, Vermont, a transgender man, Amos Beede, was beaten to death in a homeless encampment. The Burlington Free Press stated that Beede had informed the police of threats made against him prior to his death. The newspaper also cited court documents describing the attack "as lasting two to three minutes. 'Stop! Stop!' Beede yelled at his attackers, according to the documents. 'Shut up,' one of them responded."

Beede died from his injuries on May 25. Four

people were charged with his murder.

Five days later, in a World Net Daily opinion piece, Focus on the Family Founder Dr. James Dobson said President Barack Obama's May 13 directive to public schools instructing them to allow transgender students to use facilities in accordance with their gender identity "made me furious, and then sick to my stomach!"

"I pray you will protect your little girls from men who walk in unannounced, unzip their pants and urinate in front of them," Dobson wrote. "If this had happened 100 years ago, someone might have been shot. Where is today's manhood? God help us!"

In reporting the June 5 discovery of 20-year-old transgender woman of color Goddess Diamond in the passenger seat of a burning ve-

hicle, the New Orleans Advocate stated that the Coroner's Office "described Diamond as male." She had died from blunt force trauma. Her mother believed she might have been the victim of a hate crime.

On July 4, transgender woman of color Deeniquia Dodds was shot in the neck and left for dead in Washington, D.C., according to NBC 4. The report included a statement from LGBT civil-rights activist Earline Budd who said, "Her murder reminds us all of how often the transgender community is targeted for violence in our society."

Dodds died of her injuries on July 13.

Turn to page 15



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Feldblum reflects on being first out EEOC commissioner

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Chai Feldblum, the first openly lesbian commissioner on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), has admitted that, since she doesn't have biological children, there are certain laws that have become her "kids."

Among those are the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), both of which she had a hand in authoring.

President Obama nominated Feldblum in 2009, and he named her as a recess-appointment in April 2010. The Senate confirmed her appointment in December of that year. Feldblum was confirmed for a second term in December 2013; the term expires in July 2018.

The EEOC is the most important federal agency for LGBT people facing discrimination in employment, she said.

"The EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal law prohibiting discrimination on a number of characteristics, including sex," she added. "In fact, the way the law is set up, everyone who wants to bring an employment discrimination claim in court has to come through our doors first. ... Everyone has to come to us, and when they do come to us, sometimes we can resolve the claims before they ever have to go to court."

LGBTs really weren't able to meaningfully access the EEOC's resources until about the past five years, according to Feldblum. The commission has recently argued that gender identity and sexual orientation are categories protected

under the larger umbrella of sex-discrimination.

"One of the things I've been able to do at the commission is have the commissioners say, 'We already have the law that can be used,'" she explained. "It's like this older sibling that's been around the whole time having been ignored, Title VII. When that was first passed, gay people and transgender people came forward, and the federal courts then carved out what was essentially a 'gay exception.' As a matter of common sense, we should have been included from Day One. There is nothing but sex to take into account when we are discriminated against as gay or transgender people."

The United States Supreme Court will likely be the final arbiter of whether the EEOC's interpretation can stand. If not, the matter can likely be resolved should the Equality Act be passed. That law, proposed in 2015, would ratify sexual orientation and gender identity as being under the sex-discrimination category of protections. The Equality Act would also offer protections in public accommodations and housing as well as employment.

Feldblum explained that the first draft of what became ENDA was not just about employment, but was, rather, a similarly full-fledged omnibus bill covering other realms as well.

"We had the debacle of losing our gays in the military fight," she continued. "When that fell, we lost so much momentum that the law that was ultimately introduced was employment-only. It was an omnibus bill, then an employment-only bill, then an employment-bill with exceptions added and exceptions that were



Chai Feldblum.

Photo courtesy of Feldblum

there all along. Obviously I was committed all the way through. But I'm very happy that ENDA has been superseded by the Equality Act. It's very much a 'Back to the Future' moment for me. Now it's an omnibus bill, as it always should have been, but I couldn't be happier about the fact that some of the actions I've been involved in for the last six years might make huge portions of [the Equality Act] unnecessary."

She characterized the EEOC as "an excellent agency," admitting her bias since she is in the Democratic majority on the five-commissioner panel. But she noted that the atmosphere is an agency that has not been "poisoned by partisanship."

"To be honest, it's something that's been shaped by the personal friendship and respect that my Republican colleague [Commissioner] Victoria Lipnic and I have for each other," Feldblum added. "We actually knew each other before we came to the commission because of work I had done in labor. She was assistant secretary of labor under Bush II for seven years. Neither of us sought the commission; the White House sought us out. We didn't come with a commitment to partisanship. We came with a commitment to governing."

Feldblum said that in order for the LGBT community to make real progress in the workplace,

writing and interpreting laws are not enough; there needs to be significant shifts in workplace daily practices as well as the attitudes and beliefs of workers.

"We need a level of absorption of the climate of the law into the sinews and the muscles of the workplace," she further explained. "As for beliefs, you can have the best workplace practices, but if co-workers still think that gay people should not be open in the workplace, or that someone designated as male at birth should stay that way forever, it's going to be difficult to get full inclusion."

She added that while lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals have made great strides in the workplace, "I think we're hopefully moving rapidly on changing people's attitudes about transgender people, but we have to continue working on that."

Feldblum has not only been a vocal activist for LGBT rights, but disability rights as well. She's also been open about a disability she lives with, generalized anxiety disorder.

"It's incredibly important that each of the commissioners has an incredibly passionate commitment to equal employment opportunity for all people protected under employment laws," she says. "In terms of my passion for equality that goes for all the categories we enforce ... However, I think it's important for the commission to reflect the diversity of the American population. People ought to think about race, sex and national origin. But it's also important to remind people that that diversity also includes being LGBT and having a disability."

Feldblum added that the anxiety disorder had not adversely affected her professional life but she found it important to "identify as a member of the disability community just to help reduce the stigma of psychiatric disabilities. In the seat that I hold, there have been other people with disabilities; I just think I bring a varying diversity to that."

A real concern for the LGBT community should be legislatures and courts carving out exceptions accommodating the beliefs of religious people who believe that LGBT individuals are inherently sinful, she said.

"A personal piece that I bring to that question is that I grew up as a very orthodox Jew," she said. "I come from a very long line of orthodox rabbis, so I have a very deep respect for religious people and for their sense that the ground has shifted beneath them. ... I feel that I bring a compassion and understanding to that issue. But even though law cannot change what people believe, law can set parameters about how people must behave in the workplace, public spaces, in commerce. I think that's going to be a challenge, and I hope we meet that challenge as LGBT people with dignity and respect."

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Court rules for trans Wisconsin boy

A federal court ruled Sept. 20 that a Wisconsin school must immediately halt its discriminatory policy of singling out a transgender boy, Ashton Whitaker, and forcing him to use a restroom separate from all other students.

Whitaker—with Transgender Law Center and Relman, Dane & Colfax PLLC, representing him—asked for the preliminary injunction so that he could use the restroom during his senior year of high school.

U.S. District Judge Pamela Pepper held that Whitaker would continue to suffer irreparable harm if Kenosha Unified School District (KUSD) continued to deny him access to the boys' restroom during his senior year. The complaint in *Whitaker v. Kenosha Unified School District No. 1 Board of Education* alleges that KUSD's policy of denying Ash access to the boys' restrooms and other discriminatory actions violate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Illinois HIV+ people urged to take quiz

Illinois HIV Care Connect has introduced the HIV #StayinCare Quiz to raise awareness of the topic of staying in care, also known as "retention in care," Business Wire noted.

By taking this quiz, people living with HIV in Illinois can measure their offhand awareness and knowledge of why staying in HIV care is important. At the end of the quiz, they are informed of the correct answers and directed to educational resources.

This autumn, Illinois HIV Care Connect will publish educational content about the importance of staying in HIV care on its website. People living with HIV in Illinois will be asked to retake the quiz after reviewing the campaign information, so that Illinois HIV Care Connect can compare the pre- and post-campaign quiz results.

The quiz can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/jz7g6re>.

The Business Wire item is at <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20160824005209/en>.



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AfterEllen fires editor, future in question

BY SARAH TOCE

Former AfterEllen Editor-in-Chief Trish Bendix was fired from her post Sept. 19 after 10 years with the lesbian/queer-focused website. She spent the last two years in her current role managing content and editorial functions daily to keep the site relevant.

The website's owners say they will keep the site online and use freelancers at some point for new content.

"I always thought that when I left, it would be on the good hand," Bendix told Windy City Times. "I'm not so much sad for me, but for the community. It's a real low—a real loss—for the community to lose the site."

Bendix said she was affected so severely by the blow that she had to let her audience know what really happened. She wrote a blog post titled "Eulogy for the Living" on her Tumblr account explaining, in detail, what she felt occurred.

"Over the last 10 years, I've published a lot of very personal things on AfterEllen," she wrote. "I've written things people didn't agree with. I've written reviews of work created by peers that they didn't necessarily love. I've written about being married and then not. I've published interviews that were painful to get through and worse to relive during the transcribing and writing process. But nothing has been as difficult as what I've had to write today. After 14 years, AfterEllen as we know it will be effectively shutting down as of Friday."

Bendix next recounted the reasoning behind the controversial decision.

"Here are the facts: Evolve Media purchased AfterEllen from Viacom two years ago," she wrote. "They gave us two fiscal years to become their LGBT property and profit in that space, and they found we are not as profitable as moms and fashion. And, yes, 'they' are mainly white heterosexual men, which is important to note because not only is this the story for us, but for a lot of other properties—large-scale media outlets, lesbian bars out-priced by neighborhoods they helped establish, housing in queer meccas like Portland that is being turned into condos and AirBNBs."

ALMA announces scholarship

The Association of Latino/as Motivating Action (ALMA) Chicago has announced its annual ALMA Young Latino Leaders for Creating Change Scholarship.

This scholarship was developed in order to provide financial assistance to outstanding Illinois Latino LGBTQ youth leaders and youth allies to attend the annual Creating Change Conference. With ALMA, Comcast and other donors sponsoring, two young leaders will be awarded a scholarship to attend the Creating Change 2017 conference in Philadelphia, and the event also includes the Union Equals Fuerza: Latino Institute.

The application submission deadline is Wed., Nov. 30; award recipients will be notified by Wed., Dec. 7. Creating Change will be Jan. 18-22, 2017.

Applicants must be 18-25; must be residents of Illinois; have demonstrated previous LGBTQ-related activism/advocacy; show that Creating Change participation will not disrupt work or school; and must be willing and able to commit to one year service on ALMA's Youth Advisory Board (January-December 2017) for approximately five to 10 hours/month.

See ALMAChicago.org and CreatingChange.org.

She closed the post with, "I am sorry they would not let me post this on AfterEllen and hope that everyone who needs to find this explanation will."

Following Bendix's post, Evolve Media immediately published their retort, cut Bendix from her final two days of work, and eliminated her severance package, which had been just three weeks pay. In the blog post "False Rumor: We Are Not Shutting Down!" Emrah Kovacoglu, general manager of TotallyHer Media, a subsidiary of Evolve Media, wrote: "I'd like to set the record straight and let you know what is happening. Evolve Media acquired AfterEllen.com from Viacom in October 2014 and proceeded to up the investment in the site by creating new features, franchises, and content to grow the site and its advertiser base. Unfortunately, those efforts did not result in increased audience or enough advertiser support to justify continuing to invest at the same levels. Therefore, we decided we could not keep Trish Bendix on as the full time editor-in-chief."

Kovacoglu further wrote, "Rest assured that you will still be able to access the site, all of its content, and communicate with others through the forums. We will continue to work with our freelancers and contributors to cover the many topics and news that are important to the LGBT community."

Bendix concurred that the site would not have any regular staff.

"There may be periodic freelancing appearing, but it is not going to have anyone regularly editing or publishing posts," Bendix said. "I'm not going to be there anymore either so I'm not sure what that's going to look like. It's going to be a definite change."

The staff changes began in 2015.

"About a year ago I lost my staff editor, Dana Piccoli. When I started there were four of us full-time. That was when Viacom owned the site," she said. "When the first person left they said, 'Okay, three people can do this amount of work.' Then when that person left it was, 'Okay, two people can do this amount of work.'"

A year later, it was down to just one person running the ship—Bendix.

"It was definitely difficult. I spent a lot of nights and weekends waking up on East Coast time and working all the way through to 5 p.m. Pacific time," she said. "With as much queer women media that's been happening, it's almost impossible to keep up—even with all of the work I've been doing and that the freelancers have done."

Bendix said looking back she could see what was to come.

"The bummer is that I didn't know, it was very much a surprise [that they were going to let me go], but looking back, it does appear to me that the fiscal year timing was [up]," she said.

She said "fashion, beauty and the space for mothers" was more profitable for Evolve Media and that the owners had decided to focus on those topics primarily.

According to their website, Evolve Media owns the following brands: ComingSoon.net, Wrestle Zone, The Fashion Spot, totalbeauty, SuperHeroHype, Hockey'sFuture, Momtastic, RealityTea, ShockTilYouDrop, Destructoid, Makeup & Beauty Blog, GameRevolution, NESN, Dogtime.com, WagBrag, PlayStationLifeStyle.net, What Culture, CatTime, ModernMom, ActionTrip, Cheat Code Central, beautyR!ot.com, EverydayFamily.com, Liveoutdoors, EDM.com, The Grio, SheroDog, Crave, and TotallyHer.

Former Expedia search engine exec Sarah Warn created AfterEllen in April 2002. She passed the editor-in-chief torch seven years later to Karmen Kregloe. Kregloe then passed it to Bendix.

Warn told Windy City Times of the news, "AfterEllen.com's readers are some of the most



Trish Bendix.
Facebook photo

passionate and invested women on the internet. Thanks to all the readers, writers, vloggers, and other contributors to AfterEllen.com over the years who helped us create a truly unique place for queer women online. What's happening with AfterEllen.com now just underscores the need for minority groups to financially support content aimed at them, so please do! And don't use adblockers."

For her response, Kregloe tweeted, "End of an era. Thanks to all who kept this big ship afloat for yrs in a sea of misogyny. You made the world better!"

Former AfterEllen staff started a crowdfunding campaign to assist Bendix financially dur-

ing her transition from AfterEllen to her next post. The goal is \$5,000, with anything above that threshold being donated to lesbian website AutoStraddle and "other queer/lesbian media sites of the staff's choosing."

Bendix discusses her firing at <http://trish-bendix.tumblr.com/post/150695653921/eulogy-for-the-living>.

The crowdfunding campaign is at TheFayth.net/2016/09/feed-lesbians-support-trish-bendix-fund.html.

The Evolve Media statement is at <http://www.afterellen.com/general-news/514543-false-rumor-not-shutting>.

Controversial NU professor can return to teaching

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A lesbian Northwestern University political science professor who was, this summer, banned from campus and student contact was, on Sept. 19, given the go-ahead to return to her job.

Prof. Jacqueline Stevens was banned from contact with colleagues and students in late July in response to an exchange with a colleague that took place the previous March. Stevens maintained that the ban came in retaliation for her campus activism and relative "non-conformity" with her departmental colleagues. Some colleagues and officials maintain, however, that Stevens has been contentious with them as well as students.

Stevens contended that Professor Alvin Tillery screamed at her and slammed the door to his office, and she subsequently filed a complaint against him. He in turn threatened to sue, and asked that his office be moved away from Stevens', saying that he felt threatened by her behavior.

Tillery told the Daily Northwestern that Stevens "does speak aggressively and she is threatening in every interaction in the department." He has the support of their department chair, who has accused Stevens of spinning conspiracy theories.

Weinberg College of Letters and Sciences Dean Adrian Randolph notified Stevens that she could return to teaching, but the matter does not appear to be closed in the eyes of the university. Randolph's letter exhorts Stevens to "improve the quality of [her] teaching" without going into specifics as to how, and reminded her to use discretion in handling student information. It also says that Stevens bullied fellow faculty members, staff and students.

"Full professors must live up to high standards of conduct, especially when dealing with individuals who are lower in rank or in various ways dependent on them and therefore vulnerable," Randolph wrote. "I do understand that you may not be aware of the

effect you have on others, but this cannot now continue to be an excuse. I ask that you acknowledge this problem as a first, important step towards reconciliation."

Stevens had to undergo a psychiatric evaluation and have her office moved.

"What I think is going on is a kind of 'allergy' to non-conformity," said Stevens, who attributed the episode to "academic mobbing," wherein academicians targeted colleagues for perceived differences through bullying and other forms of abuse.

"People who are critics of people in authority somehow end up being painted as bullies," she said. "The trendy term is 'mobbing.' Other members of the workplace who are more docile are incentivized by the people in power to go against the critics."

She maintained being "an out, butch lesbian" contributed to the dynamic. "Had I had a different temperament, I could have made more efforts to blend in. It was not quite fitting in demographically but also choosing to exercise my voice as a tenured professor that drew this kind of attention, and made my colleagues feel like they could turn tenure into a popularity contest. That kind of activity is also encouraged by university administration."

Stevens has taken public stands in highly visible campus episodes, most notably opposing the appointment of Karl Eikenberry, a retired lieutenant general, to head a global studies institute at Northwestern; Eikenberry ultimately withdrew himself from consideration. She thinks that opposition was a key factor in her recent difficulties.

Although Stevens can go back to the classroom, she was not sure what other issues may arise in the future and has been weighing her legal options. In the meantime, she is relieved to return to teaching.

"I'm really thrilled that I'm going to be able to teach this quarter and that I'm going to be able to do my research collaborations with students," she said.

Final Trans Talk offers education on trans living

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

In order to combat the dramatic upsurge in anti-transgender rhetoric over the past two years, many advocates agree that an increase in transgender education and ally-building is urgently required.

It was therefore encouraging to see a packed room at Lake View's Center on Addison Sept. 22 for the third and final in a series of Thursday Trans Talk events that Center on Halsted Direc-

because folks aren't out as trans or gender nonconforming doesn't mean that they are not proud."

However, even the proudest trans life is one replete with challenges in every aspect of society that cisgender individuals take for granted, whether in education, the workplace or even a simple visit to the doctor.

"For someone who is accessing medical services, finding a good doctor is probably the biggest challenge," Swenson noted. "Doctors

not are all rooted in the idea that we're not human."

"The situations in North Carolina and in Texas have highlighted that the heavy hand of regulation is not the way to achieve social change," McCann said. "The trans community needs to be able to get away from the stereotype that the only reason that somebody wants to use the bathroom is because they are a sex pervert."

George added that the weight of these issues has severe ramifications within the transgender community itself.

"There ends up being a fair amount of inter-community negativity and fighting, George said. "When you have a lot of external pressure on a community, it's going to rupture internally."

With increased visibility, those pressures may have increased. However, they have also allowed for invaluable opportunities for education such as those provided by Trans Talk.

"This panel wouldn't have happened 10 years ago," George noted. "It is amazing how hard we are pushing. This month's issue of Cosmopolitan has a photo shoot of Laverne Cox celebrating her Black female heroes. It is mind-blowing that you can pick up Cosmo and there's a gorgeous photo shoot of a Black trans woman."

"The opportunity today is for all members of the trans and LGB community to have a chance to be themselves," McCann said.

"It's for us to be able to say who we are and the things that we've been able to reclaim," Swenson asserted. "That we will no longer be left behind."

For more information on Center on Halsted programs, visit CenterOnHalsted.org.

IVI-IPO hosting Glynn Sudberry Awards Oct. 7

IVI-IPO, the Independent Voters of Illinois-Independent Precinct Organization, will host its annual Glynn Sudberry Awards Friday, Oct. 7, 6:30 p.m., at Lazo's Tacos, 2009 N. Western Ave.

The emcee will be Illinois state Rep. Kelly Cassidy.

Activist awards will go to Rev. Kevin Tindell and Marixta Vida, while the business award will go to Tracy Baim, publisher of Windy City Times. A joint political award will go to former state Rep. Tom Cross, former state Rep. Ron Sandack and state Rep. Ed Sullivan.

In addition, a special service award will be given to Rich Whitehead.

Glynn Sudberry was an executive director of IPO before IVI and IPO merged in 1978. He was active in the Near North Chapter working for Dawn Netsch and other independent leaders. Sudberry decided to devote himself to his community and left traditional politics and worked in Chicago's gay and lesbian community.

The Glynn Sudberry Awards honor activists and leaders today who, like Sudberry, identify with and support the LGBT community. Sudberry died early in the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

See IVIIPO.org.

From left: Ing Swenson, Pamela McCann and Kelly George.
Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond



tor of Trans Relations and Community Engagement Vanessa Sheridan hosted and moderated.

The audience was as enthusiastic as it was hungry for the insight on living openly as transgendered individuals provided by the event's three panelists: Live Oak psychotherapist and Roosevelt University adjunct professor Kelly George, retired Chicago Department of Public Health Office of LGBT Health administrator Pamela McCann and Center on Halsted Associate Director of Behavioral Health Ing Swenson.

"For years and years I was pushing back against the forces against me," McCann said. "When I transitioned I found that I was better able to address issues, life decisions and I felt more confident in how I made particular choices."

"Having a non-binary identity, my path has not always been a straightforward one," George noted. "When I first moved to Chicago, I was part of the drag king community and being able to play around with gender and see what felt comfortable and what didn't was meaningful to me to understand that gender could be fun, creative and expressive verses binding, controlling and uncomfortable."

"Part of being trans requires a certain amount of self-reflection and self-discovery," George added. "That process builds strength, character and resiliency. Even though the journey has not always been comfortable, it has developed character and insights I wouldn't have had otherwise."

"We exist, we are human beings and we are out there in the world," Swenson said. "Just

sometimes really suck in this area. Navigating that has been super hard."

"You have to be out to medical providers," McCann asserted. They have to know your biological sex. Not everybody is able or willing to provide gender appropriate responses. Gender is not biological, it is social."

McCann also described educational and employment opportunities for the transgender community as "hideous."

"For me, identifying as non-binary sometimes feels like I am trying to convince people that unicorns exist," George said. "They keep not seeing me. It's frustrating to constantly feel like I have to prove that I exist and the emotional toll that takes is a lot."

Another major theme the panel raised was the omnipresent shadow of violence under which the transgender community lives.

"Trans women of color are being murdered," Swenson said. "There are numerous folks just this year whose lives have been taken senselessly and just because [they're] trans. How do we get folks to get on board with the fact that we're humans and we need to be able to exist?"

"Having people acknowledge that we are human beings who deserve rights would immensely help with issues related to violence, unemployment, homelessness—all of these major things that significantly impact trans people [more] than they do cis' folks," George agreed. "When you look at the laws that are on place, when you look at North Carolina, Tennessee; laws about bathrooms, about doctors being able to choose whether to treat you or

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Left to right: Jonathan D. Lovitz, Robin Hicks, Jeff Kessler, Michael Gooding and Billy Stevenson. Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

LGBT business event focuses on supplier diversity

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

Law firm Baker & McKenzie hosted a Sept. 22 City Wide Pride event alongside the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois.

Four panelists addressed a standing-room only audience made up of representatives ranging from growing local businesses to worldwide industry titans on the topic of "Squaring the Supplier Diversity Circle."

Baker & McKenzie Senior Manager of Global Business Development Jeff Kessler was moderator for panelists including LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois Board Chair Billy Stevenson, Grainger Senior Channel Development Manager Michael Gooding, British Petroleum (BP) HSSE Reporting and Investigations Lead Robin Hicks and National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce Senior Vice President Jonathan D. Lovitz.

The question at issue was the inclusion of LGBT-owned businesses in supplier diversity efforts (targeted programming and policies designed to boost or intentionally include the use of socially or economically disadvantaged groups, minority-owned and small businesses in business procurement practices) as the next frontier for the LGBT community to make further advancements in the wider business world and global marketplace.

"Former Congressman Barney Frank said something that sums up what supplier diversity is all about," Lovitz said. "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu. Without supplier diversity, we're not at the table. We don't have our foot in the door. It's a chance for an LGBT or other diverse-owned business to win a contract on merit—because you're a really good business and you just happen to be diverse. What these programs help you do is cut through the old, white, straight male boys club of the CFO's golfing partner always getting a contract because they go way back. It's not supposed to work like that. Everyone's supposed to have an equal shot."

"The LGBT community's 'pink dollar' is \$917 billion," Lovitz added. "But what does that mean if we don't put it to use helping each other? It's as simple as making sure that every dollar that every ERG [employee resource group] spends or that every one of us chooses to do with our own money thinks 'could I make a choice that actively supports my own community?' We've got big municipalities saying that it's time that LGBT be included alongside everybody else because it's not just the right thing to do, it's really good business-sense."

Gooding made the distinction between the use of an ERG and a business resource group (BRG).

"An employee resource group is typically more of a networking function," he said. "So there is not a business imperative that they're designed to solve. A business resource group is supposed to align to some pillar or some function that the company is saying 'we need you to do this because there's a problem'"

Hicks described her company's BRG in evolutionary phases.

"We started as an affinity group and then it became an ERG and then it became a BRG," she said. "Just as it's a journey to become a BRG, it's a journey to engage in supplier diversity, too."

She admitted that it was difficult to keep people engaged in a BRG.

"Everybody's got a different hot button," she said. "What's important to them today, might be different tomorrow."

Lovitz dramatically illustrated why the journey towards supplier diversity is, in some cases, a life-or death issue.

"LGBT economic empowerment means something different in places where our rights are not the same," Lovitz said. "Lest we forget that, in 80 countries around the world, it is still illegal to say that you're gay. Eight where you can be put to death right now. One of the best ways to fight back against that is to arm our community with money. It's a lot harder to

oppress a community when they've got skin in the game in a local GDP [gross domestic product]."

Gooding noted that, in the United States, federal contractors are required to "Submit a subcontracting plan every year to the federal government to say 'of the amount of business that I'm going to buy stuff for, I'm going to try and meet these socio-economic goals. You negotiate with the government on what those goals are going to look like.'"

Lovitz quoted federal government estimates

of 1.4 million LGBT business owners in America. However, he acknowledged those figures did not take a lot of people into account.

"It's great to say that the whole country is wonderful but we know that there are pockets that are not LGBT-inclusive yet, so let's make Chicago the best place to do business," he said. "So that it spills over to the next state."

For more information about the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, visit <http://lgbtcc.com>.

Legacy Walk dedication to honor Sylvia Rivera, Vito Russo

Dedicated in 2012, Chicago's Legacy Walk is the world's only outdoor LGBT history museum. This half-mile installation features bronze biographical memorials celebrating the lives of people like Leonard Bernstein, Audre Lorde, Sally Ride, James Baldwin, Jane Addams, Rudolf Nureyev, Frida Kahlo and Alan Turing.

The Legacy Walk's markers serve as an "outdoor classroom" for bullied LGBTQ youth who come for guided tours in order to learn about historically significant positive LGBT role models whose contributions have made an incalculable difference in the world we share.

On Saturday, Oct. 15, they welcome two LGBT iconic activists to the Legacy Walk—transgender icon Sylvia Rivera, from the Stonewall era; and gay film activist/historian Vito Russo, who co-founded both ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) and GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation). Their considerable legacies will soon be added to the 35 stories of achievement that already line the streetscape.

This all-day tribute will feature legendary gay activist Cleve Jones, Chicago transgender spokesperson Myles Brady-Davis, Emmy-winning writer-producer-actor Bruce Vilanch and trans pioneer Judy Bowenwiener, a close personal friend of Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, from the post-Stonewall era. Bowenwiener will be talking about their involvement as three trans women in New York's Gay Activist Alliance (GAA). She will be joined by Phillip Raia, who worked with both Russo and Rivera in GAA in the 1970s. Never have all these people been brought together for a celebration quite like this.

The event will be in three parts:

—1-3 p.m.: Opening Reception and Program, at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.



Vito Russo. Photo courtesy of Victor Salvo

Transgender activist Myles Brady-Davis of Howard Brown Health, gay activist Cleve Jones and NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt will be featured in "Reflecting on the Evolution of Activism across the Decades."

—3-4 p.m.: Legacy Walk Induction Ceremonies at the Northalsted streetscape, featuring the LGBTQ youth from Lyons Township High School.

Sylvia Rivera Bronze Memorial Dedication, 3656 N. Halsted St.: Personal reflections of Judy Bowenwiener and Phillip Raia, Sylvia Rivera's friends

Vito Russo Bronze Memorial Dedication, 3411 N. Halsted St., with personal reflections of Bruce Vilanch, Emmy Award-winning writer-producer-actor

—4-6 p.m.: Celebration Party, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., "Building a New Legacy for the Future of Our Past."

Tickets for this multi-part event are available for \$30, \$50 and \$100, and include light appetizers and variable bar service. There will also be raffle prizes and door prizes. LGBT people from throughout the metropolitan area are expected to turn out to celebrate this unique Chicago cultural institution—built by our community, for our community—in this salute to the contributions of LGBT people.

Tickets are available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/legacy-walk-dedication-v-tickets-27530936773>.

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://prideactiontank.org/>.



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Howard Brown Health medical director discusses new South Side clinic

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Maya Green, M.D., medical director of Howard Brown Health's Englewood clinic, calls her new role "a whirlwind of fun and challenges. It's been a great experience in teamwork, community and sharing."

The clinic opened in May of this year, and represents an effort by Howard Brown Health to both expand its services to Chicago's South Side and alleviate overcrowding in its North Side flagship.

Green is a South Side native and is excited to serve South Side residents "in the manner that I believe they should be served," she said. "A lot of times when I see how systems operate, and I disagree with it, sometimes I think it's not my place to say anything. But, in this case, this is a place to create opportunities, where

we can create options and service-styles."

She defined those service styles as ones that embrace inclusiveness and supportiveness and serve clients without bias. "The question [facing patients] is not whether or not they should take their lives in a certain direction," Green explained. "The question is, 'How do we assist them in an optimum manner in this process?'"

Green, who was previously a provider with the Ruth Rothstein CORE Center, also consulted with Howard Brown Health for about three years. She and Chief Clinical Officer Magda Houlberg would frequently discuss the need for expansion to the South Side, she recalled, so she was gratified when the organization was able to take action to bring culturally-inclusive care there.

"In a way, that's what Howard Brown does," Green said. "Since 1974, we have been advo-



Maya Green, M.D.

Photo by Matt Simonette

ating for the LGBT community, specifically a community in need of healthcare delivery in a way that helps them along their path in life. ... The fact that they are coming to the South Side is wonderful, but there was an expressed need. It's great that patients on the South Side don't

have to travel up north for LGBTQ services, but also we've opened up for people with HIV or who need primary care, or routine care."

The timing of the clinic's opening at first presented Green and her staff with their biggest challenges, she recalled. They got access to the space in the first week of May, then opened their doors to patients the third week.

"The time during which we could adjust the clinic to the way we wanted to operate was difficult," she said. "But the great thing was, in that time, we discovered the next great challenge: space. Now as we build, we have demand and must find the capacity to grow. We have the demand from the community to grow. It's exciting—if you'd asked me before I started, if this would be happening so quickly, I would have told you no. It goes to show that, on everybody's path and journey, there's always a plethora of opportunity and space to grow."

The clinic celebrated its grand opening with an open house in early September. Green said that, so far, "no day has been like the next one."

She also has been gratified that the clinic has been embraced by the community. "I'm excited to see where this journey goes," Green added.

Syphilis infection rates on the rise

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A new report released Sept. 22 shows that syphilis infections are on the rise in men who have sex with men (MSM) in the United States, jumping 15 percent from 2013 to 2014.

The same report showed that Illinois, in 2015, had about 311.9 cases per 100,000 persons, slightly higher than the national MSM rate of 309 cases per 100,000 persons.

The data was released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at the STD Prevention Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The report, which aggregated data made available from 44 states, said that infection rates were especially high in southern and western states. According to a CDC press release, the rates were developed using preliminary 2015 national syphilis case report data and 2014 population estimates of the number of adult MSM by state.

Another CDC report indicated that more MSM were being screened for syphilis. In 2014, about 49 percent of respondents had been screened for the infection; that was up from 37 percent in 2008. But researchers say that not enough individuals at risk are being screened.

Chad Hendry, director of HIV/STI prevention at Howard Brown Health, said that Howard Brown saw about 415 cases of syphilis in 2014, then 635 in 2015.

"Syphilis is referred to as 'the great imitator,'" Hendry said, noting that its symptoms can mirror those of other conditions. "It's very easy to get infected. The main mode of transmission is skin-to-skin, through sores or

lesions on your genitalia. Condoms do protect you in some cases, but the best protection is to get tested regularly every three to six months."

The infection is easily treated, and is usually cleared up with a series of injections, he added.

"I always implore with people to get tested and make it a regular part of their health screenings," Hendry said.

Chicago House launching TransWorks mentorship Oct. 19

Chicago House is launching the organization's 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.

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 Scheinplug at 773-248-5200, ext. 367, or at jscheinplug@chicagohouse.org.

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/>.

'Bi the Way' talk Sept. 28 at Center

As part of its Chats series, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., will host "Bi the Way" Wed., Sept. 28, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

September is Celebrate Bisexuality Month, Marla Depew (comedian, JDA Comedy) and Adrienne McCue (president and executive director, AJW Foundation) to discuss everything bisexual—including common misconceptions, bi+ erasure, community resources and more.

There is a \$5 suggested donation. Register at <https://community.centeronhalsted.org/Chats>.

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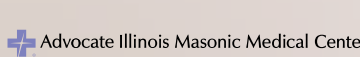

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E. Patrick Johnson now heading NU's African-American studies

BY M. SHELLY CONNER

E. Patrick Johnson, Carlos Montezuma Professor of African-American Studies and Performance Studies, has been named the new chair of the African-American studies department at Northwestern University.

Johnson is no stranger to university administrative posts, having previously served as the chair and director of graduate studies for the Department of Performance Studies. He replaces colleague and African-American Studies scholar Martha Biondi whose work he cites in illustrating the creation of Black studies departments by Black student protests in the 1960s and 1970s.

The history is an appropriate one, as the country currently witnesses universities and communities mired in race-related protests; faculty of color embattled in tenure disputes



E. Patrick Johnson.
Photo courtesy of Johnson

and continued struggles to integrate predominantly white departments; and the ever-present racist and culturally appropriated actions of college co-eds, including blackface, recorded racist chants and slurs. It is a heavy atmosphere for a newly appointed chair to enter, even if the aforementioned incidents are not associated with his particular institution.

As a performance scholar, Johnson's work centers around the lives of Black gay men in the South. (*Note:* This journalist first encountered his work in the Black Queer Studies Anthology that he edited with Mae G. Henderson. Also, this writer was inspired by his essay "Quare" Studies, or Almost Everything I Know About Queer Studies I Learned from My Grandmother.) Johnson's performance work includes Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South—both a collection of narratives and a one-man show based on the collection—and its follow-up, Honey Pot: Black Southern Women Who Love Women.

Talking about the impact of this new position on his work to Windy City Times, Johnson said that it is about "African-American studies is an interdisciplinary field, which means I get the pleasure of working with and learning from colleagues trained in various disciplines such as sociology, religion, literature, anthropology, history, political science and theater. Despite these disparate fields and methodologies, how-

ever, what we all have in common is a focus on race as a key category of analysis. I don't take that lightly, as many traditional departments don't [bestow the] privilege or even account for race in the same way. Having a safe space to conduct research without having to justify the importance of race as a category of analysis or demonstrate why race matters is something that I don't take for granted. At the same time, because African-American studies is so interdisciplinary that I still can be pushed by my colleagues to think about different ways of analyzing race and, particularly, blackness."

Yet positions of more authority don't necessarily mean that these analyses can more easily make their way into institutional policies and procedures. Johnson said, "A chair cannot necessarily implement procedures or policies that address social issues due to academic freedom."

"A chair can use the bully pulpit of the office, however, to reach out to communities beyond the university to stand in solidarity against racism and other social forms of discrimination," Johnson added. He said he fully intends to use the office and continued legacy of Black studies scholarship and activism coupled with Northwestern's resources "to speak out against institutionalized racism, sexism, homophobia, classism and other forms of oppression."

Johnson added that he hopes to facilitate continued discussion among faculty as well as to provide opportunities for students most affected by social and racial injustice to control their own narratives. "Since they are the ones who are most affected by these concerns, I think that it's important to empower them to create their own events that address those concerns," he said.

As for Johnson's legacy for the department, he said, "I never think about such leadership positions as creating a legacy. I believe my job as chair is to build on the success of the past to carry the department into the future. That is something that is done with the good will of colleagues and with resources from the administration.

"The department was in good shape when I became chair and, hopefully, it will be in even better shape when I step down in three years. If anything, I want to create an even safer space for faculty, staff and students to share their ideas and experiences about race without fear of retaliation, threat or condescension. And, I want the department to be a space of laughter—lots and lots of laughter!"

Midwest LGBTQ health event Oct. 6-7

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

Medical professionals are welcome to the event.

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 hours of continued medical education.

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

L & A Healing Studio: A business and personal partnership

BY LIZ BAUDLER

Just more than a year old, L & A Healing Studio is fast becoming a South Loop destination. "People say, 'it feels like you guys have been here forever,'" but we got the keys on July 6 of last year and we were open the week of July 25," remembered Leo Gonzalez, the "L" of "L and A."

His partner, Alex Agudo, is the "A," and his and Gonzalez's space represents a unique fusion of their interests. Gonzalez is a massage therapist with over 10 years of experience; Agudo makes jewelry and has a background in art therapy. The shop's front is full of eclectic pieces of jewelry and clothing, often made of recyclable materials like old couches and saris. Eighty percent of the artists represented are local.

"We have artists from the West Loop, from Bucktown, from Chatham, from Bronzeville, from Englewood, from the South Loop, from Humboldt Park, Lincoln Park, Logan Square, the suburbs," Agudo said.

The next room is an exercise room, equipped with a trampoline and suitable for yoga, Pilates and dance. In the back are a massage area and a relaxation room with a couch and magazines—and perhaps even one of the couple's dogs. The connection between these spaces, according to Gonzalez, is the feeling these activities give you.

"Whenever you go shopping, you feel happy. You buy something that's nice, you feel good. You work out, you feel good, you get deep tissue massage, you feel good afterward," Gonzalez explained. "A lot of times people walk into the space and they say, 'it feels like home.'"

This friendly atmosphere is crucial to both partners. "This is a political-free, religiously free ... you come in here, there's neutral ground. It doesn't matter where you come from, you're in here, you're in L & A and you're part of the family. We don't exclude anyone," said Agudo.

Neutral ground is also important as the couple negotiate their business and personal relationship.

"Anything we have stays outside the door," said Agudo. "Not just being partners in life but partners in business, we have to learn to forget things very quickly. We can come in here talking about what we didn't like about each other in the morning, but as soon as we walk in the door, it's all business."

So far, it's been a fulfilling arrangement. "I think we're both learning from each other a lot. Leo is the driving force when it comes to getting things done: I tend to be more of a procrastinator. We balance each other out," said Agudo.

"We're seeing our weaknesses and our strengths," Gonzalez added. "Alex is one of the friendliest people I've ever met. He's good with the clients, he treats them with respect."

"I love to chat with people," said Agudo, with a laugh. "You make eye contact with me, I'm expecting a conversation." Agudo's warmth influences how he sells art. "If somebody buys a product, say a necklace, the person is not just buying the necklace, they're buying a piece of the personality of the artist," Agudo explained.

Gonzalez, who's more introverted, connects to his clients in his own way. "Sometimes I have people get massages and they're quiet," he said. "And then you have those people who like to talk, and that's their therapeutic release. A lot of clients, it's a stressful world out there, and they don't have anyone to talk to. They're looking for that intimacy. You have to build a rapport with them."

The South Loop has proven a good fit for

L & A. "I think the South Loop is very fresh. It's what, 20 years old? So it's still building its identity, compared to other places around the city," said Gonzalez. The couple say people wave at them as they pass by the shop windows and check on them if they leave the space early. They also want to inspire community among those they work with by host-



Leo Gonzalez (left) and Alex Agudo.
Photos from Gonzalez and Agudo

ing monthly artists meetings and looking for teachers with good communication skills. These practitioners help with the myriad of classes L & A offer, all of which have the same goal of relaxation and making the body feel good.

"Dance, yoga, fitness, pilates—it's a whole combination," said Agudo, who's taught jewelry making classes for 12 years. "I always saw how clients came in stressed out and a little bit uptight, but once we started chatting and making jewelry, everything went away and they would leave feeling so relaxed. I truly believe in art therapy. Whether you just sit down and scribble or make a piece of jewelry, you just need some time for you to make it."

Agudo is particularly excited to run kids' classes, which include art, yoga, and even Latin ballroom dance.

"We're not just teaching them how to make something. They're learning languages, they're learning metalsmithing, they're learning how to use their hands. They're also learning critical thinking," Agudo explained. "A well-rounded child is going to do better when they're exposed to different things. These camps help them not only develop friendships, but they feel free when they're in the store. And they make really nice things."

Future plans include expanding L & A's services to include acupuncture and herbs, since Gonzalez is finishing up his degree in Chinese medicine. In April, L & A hosted a coffee fest that brought over 100 people from all over the city to the shop, and they're looking to do something similar with an upcoming global music night. It's a lot for a two-man show, and that's what L & A is for the moment.

"He's up until 2 a.m., and I'm up until 4 a.m.," said Agudo about his partner and himself. Yet they feel the community they've built is worth their efforts. "A lot of the clients, they treat us like family, said Gonzalez. "They're like, you guys need to get rest, don't burn yourself out. They've brought us food. They say 'thank you for being here.'"

"We have clients who come in, have a cup of coffee and we're chatting about their day, or they'll come in and bring a bottle of wine," said Agudo. "We just want people to be happy here. Honestly, I wouldn't have it any other way."

Find out more about L & A Healing Studios at LAHealingStudio.com.

TRANS MURDERS from page 7

Politics of paranoia

Five days later at the GOP Convention in Cleveland, the party's platform was adopted by delegates. Including input from Family Research Council President Tony Perkins, the platform declared that "bureaucrats and the current President of the United States are determined to reshape our schools—and our entire society—to fit the mold of an ideology alien to America's history and traditions."

On July 23, transgender woman of color Dee Whigham was discovered stabbed to death in a Best Western hotel room in St. Martin, Mississippi. A 20-year-old Navy seaman was arrested for her murder. The Sun Herald reported that local law enforcement were investigating whether or not it was a hate crime.

A 26-year-old transgender woman of color, Skye Mockabee, was found dead on the morning of July 30 in the same city which hosted the GOP convention.

With 17 transgender individuals now dead, national news began to pay some albeit brief attention.

Speaking to NBC news, transgender activist Chernobiko stated, "We need love, we need freedom, we need protection."

On Aug. 2, the Vatican released the transcript of a conversation between Pope Francis and bishops at a private meeting in Krakow, Poland. In the same speech during which he said that "what is absolute is a welcoming heart," Pope Francis went on to describe a moment he called "the annihilation of man as the image of God."

"Today children—children!—are taught in school that everyone can choose his or her sex," he said. "These forms of ideological colonization are also supported by influential countries. And this is terrible!"

On Aug. 8, the body of a trans Latina woman, Erykah Tijerina, was discovered by neighbors in an El Paso, Texas apartment complex. A statement from El Paso Police Public Affairs, which used her birth name, said that there were "obvious signs of foul play."

Only two days later a transgender woman of

color, Rae'Lynn Thomas, was shot to death in Columbus, Ohio. Local station 10TV reported that her mother saw Thomas gunned down.

"Mom, I love you. Tell my sisters and my brother I love them," Thomas was reported to have said. "Tell my family I love them. Mom, I'm dying, I'm dying, please don't leave me."

On Sept. 11, Windy City Times reported the death of transgender woman of color T.T. Saffore in Chicago's Garfield Park neighborhood. Misgendered by the Chicago Police Department and some media in their reports of her death, Saffore had been stabbed in the neck. Her close friend Jaliyah Armstrong told Windy City Times that she had been threatened by another transgender woman days earlier. The CPD said they are investigating.

easy targets in an increasingly antagonistic political and religious climate.

For Channyn Lynn Parker, project manager of the TransLife Center at Chicago House, there is no doubt about the connection.

"It is a major, if not the major contributing factor to the dehumanization and the stripping of personhood that trans people are experiencing that is ultimately causing them to lose their lives both physically and in the sense of being able to navigate society," she said.

Emily Waters is the senior manager of national research and policy at the New York City Anti-Violence Project (of which the NCAVP is a program.)

"The [anti-transgender] rhetoric oftentimes is a form of violence itself," she told Windy City

a contributing factor.

"The bills are rolling back protections in the places where we find queer and trans people are experiencing violence in places like schools, work and housing," she said. "Those are the places where we should be increasing protections, not decreasing them."

In order to promote these bills, or defeat those which offer civil rights protection for transgender individuals, anti-trans advertising campaigns such as those utilized by the Campaign for Houston in 2015 have proven to be effective.

"They are essentially using fear," Waters said. "It's an unfortunate but incredibly smart strategy and it's not the first time that it has been used."

Historian and retired University of Illinois at Chicago professor John D'Emilio recalled the 1977 anti-gay Save Our Children campaign launched by Anita Bryant in Florida.

"The rhetoric was grotesque," he said. "But three weeks after the vote in Dade County, gay pride marches around the county were larger than they had ever been before."

"The Supreme Court decision in 1986 in the Bowers v. Hardwick case is a second example," he added. "The language used in the majority decision and opinions upholding sodomy laws was so gratuitously homophobic, it was designed to provoke. But you can argue that the Hardwick case helped make the March on Washington the following year, the largest that had ever occurred."

The march drew more than a half million people.

Despite these positive effects, D'Emilio said that "inflammatory language from public officials can provoke individuals to take truly hateful and, perhaps in some of these cases, violent action. No one can excuse that."

"With any propaganda, particularly if you are looking for it to facilitate a hateful, exclusionary message and really use it as a weapon (and I mean it that strongly), you tend to direct your propaganda to those audiences that you know will be the most receptive to either the

Turn to page 30

"I'm beyond sick and tired of being sick and tired of this crap happening. The conservative movement's facts-free anti-trans rhetoric and transphobic hatred has real world costs."

— *Monica Roberts, TransGriot*

On September 16 in Baltimore, Maryland transgender woman of color Crystal Edmonds became the 21st murder victim this year. She had been shot through the head.

Do the dots connect?

While it is difficult to make a direct correlation between the dramatic increase in anti-transgender rhetoric over the past two years to any one of the 43 documented U.S. murders in 2015 and 2016, the question remains as to whether the verbal or written attacks against the community by politicians, commentators and on social media along with clear threats of violence have dehumanized transgender individuals to a point where they have become

Times. "We have a pretty broad definition of violence. It doesn't just include physical forms but also slurs and transphobic language. The rhetoric incites a fear of transgender people, that they are the problem and that they need to be contained. It creates an environment where people think that violence against trans people is justified in some way."

"That could very well be leading to this increase in violence," she added. "Although I can't say that it is directly related. We don't have the statistics or the data to support that at this point."

Waters noted that anti-transgender legislation that has been or is currently proposed in state capitols across the country could also be

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viewpoints



Lee
LYNCH

THE AMAZON TRAIL Affectional preference

Hey, world, big news! Gay people are more than our sexuality.

I am really, really tired of the focus on the third syllable of the term homosexual. It's annoyed me for 54 years that I am defined by one part of my humanity.

Please tell me why, for example, that the minute a perfectly intelligent, well-educated, otherwise apparently open-minded adult male realizes I write lesbian books, he will only speak of my work as erotica.

Or why one of the more free-thinking non-gay women in my town can't talk to me without mentioning her friendship with a lesbian couple in another state with whom I have nothing in common except being lesbian. Or why Ms. So-and-So needs to talk about her evolution toward accepting me and my kind.

You know what? I don't give a rip. Those are their problems, accepting me, rejecting me, struggling, poor things, to understand homosexuals. What the heck is the big deal that they have to exert themselves so hard to figure out? Struggle away and excuse me for changing the subject.

I may live in rural America, but I am not a walking, talking letter "Q" for queer. Not an advertisement for a lifestyle. Not a representation of what-dykes-look-like. Not an object of study or fascination. Not a target of foul words, flung mud, or physical violence.

I am a lover of women, but that encompasses a heck of a lot more than sexual expression.

When I was younger even I didn't know that was true. I didn't know I could love a woman friend without intimate touch. I believed the homo-hating hype that coming out made me one-dimensional.

My life crusade has been the creation of fully realized gay fictional characters and their efforts to discover who they are. The reason I want to accomplish this? So our people have someone, even on paper, who has made the journey through an unpleasant obstacle course and emerged whole. We read at least in part to find ourselves and I want readers to have a chance to do exactly that.

Thousands of us have worked with the same goal in mind. As a consequence, the generations after us will be increasingly emotionally healthy because some of us have written, others established resources such as shelters and support groups and hotlines, and still others have fought to teach our history or create music and art for and about us.

Today, we can see photos of people like us who are unencumbered by stereotypes. We watch gay people become champion athletes, T.V. and film and theater stars, heads of corporations, politicians. I like to think all our efforts have helped to provide solid groundwork for gay lives to be fulfilling.

It is time to look at how language continues to be one of our stumbling blocks. Change is already happening. Little by little a majority of Americans are becoming respectful of gay people, are realizing they need not focus conversation on gay matters. They are finding out that we are not threats and that we have more in common with them than not.

Both gays and non-gays need new language for the concept that we are the family next door, the gal who pumps gas, the transgendered head of the corporation. We need to move beyond words that mark us in a solely sexual way.

I've been using the phrase affectional preference. While I enjoy the company of some men, mostly gay men, my closest friends and family are women. If I'm going out somewhere, I

go with women. If I join an organization, it's more likely to be woman-centered than co-ed. If I exercise or swim, I like to do so in the company of women. I do business with women, preferably gay.

There is no sexual component in any of those activities. Why am I the only one with a sexual label in a room full of non-gay women who've gathered for lunch? I have affection for these women, not attraction to them.

In my marriage, of course there is the kind of intimacy that scares straight boys. Their biological imperative wants to defend potential mates. But really, there are enough children in the world. Resources are becoming scarcer: water, food, housing. Give it a rest, all you presumably straight guys riding the subway or voting on bills in state capitols. We'll lower the blinds and turn off the lights now if you don't mind.

As a matter of fact, we're probably sitting in our living room discussing our day and reading. Or cooking dinner and doing the dishes. We might even be doing the laundry, cleaning the toilets, filling the bird feeders. So call us bird lovers, cooks, readers. Our passion for birds and books have nothing to do with sexual preferences. We simply like to share everyday life together as two loving women.

We had houseguests this week. We worked long hours. I went to the cobbler. Saturday we'll visit the Farmer's Market. Sunday I'll change the kitty litter while my sweetheart vacuums. It's exasperating to know there are people out there who see us behind our shopping cart and think sex.

Let's stop sexualizing ourselves and come up with words that reflect the greater percentage of our days and ourselves—if we have to be labeled at all. Please note, it's not the sex itself I want to eliminate, it's the restrictive branding.

My affectional preference is for female companionship. Let's see the churches, the social conservatives, the spawn of Scalia, make that illegal.

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September 2016



Dr. Margo
JACQUOT

Five ways to help your child who is being bullied (with special tips for LGBTQ parents)

As kids return to school, some kids will be billed because their parents identify as LGBTQ. We know that bullies are always on the prowl and that, sadly, many, many kids will be bullied at school. Being bullied is always painful, but when the bullying revolves around your family, whom you love, the pain can run even deeper.

Parents who are LGBTQ will naturally have a lot of feelings about their child being bullied due to their (the parents) identity. They may feel angry, hurt, protective and may even want to lash out at the bullies. Parents may feel triggered by their own memories of being bullied when they were in school. These feelings might be amplified if they were bullied themselves for

being LGBTQ.

When bullying of this type happens, everyone in the family might be feeling raw and vulnerable. So what can parents do to be of help to their children?

Check your own emotions and reactivity.

Your child needs you to be grounded, supportive and compassionate toward *them*. This issue is about them right now. You need to have your feelings and have productive ways to deal with them, but do not mix that in with what your child needs right now. Don't make your child feel like they have to take care of you because you are so upset. They will likely try and dismiss the issue and not tell you next time something happens. They don't want to upset you.

Listen.

While this sounds easy enough, if we have not achieved item number one, we won't be very effective at listening. Listening, really listening is compromised when the emotional centers of our brains are activated and we are upset. Breathe, breathe, breathe.

Be an ally for your child in a way that respects what your child needs.

Being an ally means I am behind you, supporting you, not in front leading the charge. Find out if your child is open to having you intervene in any way. Perhaps this will mean

speaking to the other parents (although this is rarely what the child will want). Perhaps this will mean contacting the school and speaking with the principal, dean or another administrator.

Offer to help the school be more knowledgeable about being LGBTQ.

If your school does not have education for teachers, staff and students about being LGBTQ, ask them if you can help them find written and/or in-service resources. Provide the school with names of community groups who will come to the school and provide education.

Join the PTA and offer to spearhead a diversity committee.

Unless your child is OK with you doing so, do not be the face of LGBTQ parents in the school. This will likely draw more unwanted attention to your child.

Most importantly, remember that your child needs your support and love. You are their most valuable, emotional resource.

Dr. Margo Jacquot is founder and director of The Juniper Center. Jacquot is a licensed clinical psychologist, certified supervisory addictions counselor and board-certified expert in traumatic stress. She is also a local and national lecturer on trauma recovery, substance abuse, LGBTQ issues and working with couples.

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WCT reviews the production Wonderful Town.

Photo by Liz Lauren

SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Deadly homophobia in 'Man in the Ring'

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Plays have often inspired the creation of operas, but it usually doesn't happen the other way around. *Man in the Ring* by Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright/director/actor Michael Cristofer (*The Shadow Box*, *Gia*, *Mr. Robot*) is an exception.

Man in the Ring is a drama inspired by the tragic life of gay Black boxer Emile Griffith (1938-2013), a world champion in the welterweight and middleweight classes. It's now enjoying a world premiere run at Chicago's Court Theatre.

But Cristofer's first approach to dramatizing Griffith's life came via his libretto for composer Terence Blanchard's 2013 opera *Champion*. It was Blanchard who decided on the subject matter of Griffith's life for a joint commission by Opera Theatre of St. Louis and Jazz St. Louis.

Blanchard had approached Cristofer to write the libretto to *Champion* after the two collaborated together on the 2001 film *Original Sin* that starred Angelina Jolie and Antonio Banderas. And though *Champion* has gone on to have successful productions in St. Louis and San Francisco (Washington National Opera will produce it next at the Kennedy Center in 2017), Cristofer wasn't entirely satisfied with his dramatization of Griffith's life.

"A libretto for a two-and-a-half-hour opera is about 40 to 50 pages. There's not a lot of language—the concentration is on music, obviously," Cristofer said. "There was a lot about Emile that I had not been able to get into the opera."

So Cristofer is eternally grateful for actor Kamal Angelo Bolden who helped to facilitate Court Theatre's commissioning of *Man in the Ring*. Though the Court has built its reputation on producing the classics of theater, Cristofer feels his *Man in the Ring* fits in part to its structure which is partially drawn from ancient Greek theater.

"The play is structured, like the opera, around this older man looking back at his younger life," said Cristofer, also emphasizing the large amount of Caribbean music also incorporated into *Man in the Ring* to reflect Griffith's youth in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"We've got, in a referential way, what is like a Greek drama with a chorus and singing. There's a rhythmic accompaniment to scenes," Cristofer said. "So the overall all feeling to the production is quite joyous even though the story that we're telling is not the happiest."

Griffith is notorious for a deadly title match with Benny Paret at New York's Madison Square Garden in 1962. At the weigh in, Paret publicly mocked Griffith by making homophobic remarks and gestures in front of the press. Griffith won the match by knockout, but Paret slipped into a coma and died 10 days later in the hospital.

"It was a time when the press did not reveal things like that about a public figure, they were more reticent about what happened," said Cristofer about the media's reluctance to go into details about Paret's homophobic taunting.

Griffin didn't publicly identify as gay in his

lifetime, preferring to go by the label of bisexual when questioned later in life by the press. Yet Cristofer said that once Griffith died in 2013, his surviving partner (and adopted son for legal purposes), Luis Rodrigo Griffith, clarified that their relationship was a loving one.

"He went back and forth about identifying himself and he was loathe to put himself into a category," Cristofer said. "A lot of the play is about acceptance of yourself and the ability to be intimate and how that ability is hampered by not being able to accept yourself. Emile was in a long relationship with Luis for many, many years and the play does explore that, too."

Cristofer said Griffith's manager tried to pressure him to leave boxing because he could see that it was taking a toll on his mind and body. Griffith suffered dementia late in life likely due to his boxing career, but also from a vicious 1990s gay bashing when he was set upon by men with baseball bats after leaving a gay bar in the Times Square area of New York.

Cristofer feels that *Man in the Ring* is par-

ticularly timely, especially with so much attention in the media about how certain sports like boxing and football might be causing future debilitating brain injuries. But there's also personal affinity for Cristofer, too.

"As a gay man, I think that it's also my connection to the material that I'm of an age where I'm looking back at my life and wondering about the things I did do and the things I did not do and you get to a point where you want to make peace with all the events of your life. Also because Emile and I came up through those same years," Cristofer said. "I have personal knowledge of what the world was like and that was another reason why I was attracted to the story."

Man in the Ring continues through Sunday, Oct. 16, at Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis Ave. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays, 8 p.m. Fridays, 3 and 8 p.m. Saturdays and 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$45-\$65; call 773-753-4472 or visit CourtTheatre.org.



From left: Allen Gilmore, Kamal Angelo Bolden and Gabriel Ruiz in *Man in the Ring*.

Photo by Michael Brosilow

THEATER REVIEW

The Happiest Place on Earth

Playwright: Philip Dawkins

At: Solo Celebration (in conjunction with Sideshow Theatre Company) at the Greenhouse, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.

Tickets: \$42-\$48

Runs through: Oct. 23

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Communicative dissonances are often evidenced when novelists attempt to write plays, but no less so when a playwright steps out of his comfort zone. There is no denying Philip Dawkins' talent for spinning complex yarns populated by diverse and vividly etched personalities, but documentary accounts mandate different rules of discourse than fiction, just as third-person narratives demand differences in structure from real-time live-action re-enactments.

Dawkins' entry in the Solo Celebration series contains the material for a good story—three or four, in fact. First we are introduced to three generations of his family—specifically, his grandmother, grandfather, aunt and four female cousins—augmented by references to husbands, fathers, stepfathers, sorority sisters and his own place in the hierarchy. The story itself recounts how these characters united in condolence after their beloved clan patriarch died suddenly and untimely of a brain aneu-



Philip Dawkins in *The Happiest Place on Earth*. Photo by Michael Brosilow

rysm during his sports broadcast in full view of his television audience. To ease the trauma suffered by the deceased's children, a relative suggests a visit to the then-new, innovative and much-advertised amusement park called Disneyland.

This in itself would make for an entertaining 90 minutes, since we warm immediately to the feisty Steel Magnolias of the Dawkins clan, but their chronicler also feels it important to provide us with a historical time line co-ordinating his kin's personal journey with national events (Kennedy's assassination, etc.), along with extensive quotes from Walt

Disney's conceptual manifesto for his "magic kingdom"—data presented reverently at times, satirically, on other occasions—as well as the author's own musings on the coincidences/ironies arising thereby. Oh, and in addition to the exhaustive research necessary for reconstruction of events occurring previous to his own birth, Dawkins shoulders the task of parading the results of his industry before an audience.

So many intriguing threads, coupled with the largely unigender cast of characters—particularly in a culture fond of assigning double names to daughters (e.g. "Betty Sue" "Mary Lynn") that may be amended in adult life—

risks inducing vertigo in that same audience as it struggles to remember ages, birth orders, relationships and location. Dawkins strives to assist our orientation amid the welter of abrupt transitions and at least three false endings with a plentiful supply of vintage photographs and identifying voices, but ultimately, a tale more suited to the leisurely configurations of a Ragtime-styled novel or a cycle of interconnected plays like those of August Wilson proves too much to absorb all at once. It's kind of like going to Disneyland.

THEATER REVIEW

Wonderful Town

Score: Leonard Bernstein;

Lyrics: Betty Comden & Adolph Green;

Book: Joseph Fields & Jerome Chodorov

At: Goodman Theatre,

170 N. Dearborn St.

Tickets: 312-443-3800 or

GoodmanTheatre.org; \$20-\$106

Runs through: Oct. 23

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Die-hard New York historians are likely to be very unhappy with director Mary Zimmerman's joyously buoyant take on the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical comedy *Wonderful Town*. But everyone else probably won't care about the displeasure of these fact-sticklers, since there's so much to recommend in this

superlative and big-hearted Goodman Theatre production.

Wonderful Town was written as a rush-job 1953 stage vehicle tailored to the talents of Hollywood star Rosalind Russell—hence the very low singing range for one of the musical's leading ladies. The show reunited *On the Town* collaborators composer Leonard Bernstein with lyricists Betty Comden and Adolph Green, while book writers Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov adapted their earlier 1940 play *My Sister Eileen* (which was drawn from 1930s New Yorker stories by Ruth McKenney).

Wonderful Town plays up the comical exploits and setbacks of transplanted Ohio sisters Ruth (Bri Sudia) and Eileen Sherwood (Lauren Molina), who respectively try to make it big in New York City as a writer and actress. But *Wonderful Town* is also a celebration of the alternately squalid and idealized Greenwich Village neighborhood the Sherwood sisters settle in, plus

their boisterous bohemian neighbors.

What will enrage historians is the decision of Zimmerman and her design team to update *Wonderful Town* from the 1930s to the 1950s. This makes many of the tongue-twisting lyrics referenced in Ruth's exasperated production number "Conga!" very dated, while the explosive comic business of subway tunnel construction wouldn't have been an issue.

Nonetheless, the cartoonish look of Todd Rosenthal's cut-out skyscraper sets with the bright period costumes of Ana Kuzmanic sonically match the jazzy New York score of *Wonderful Town*. Many of the scenic transitions with choreographer Alex Sanchez are also marvelous design collaborations to make audiences gasp in awe and delight.

But even more crucially, Zimmerman has inclusively cast *Wonderful Town* with expert comic actors in smaller character parts and throughout the ensemble. Everyone contrib-

utes to make the sometimes creaky script feel fresh and spontaneously silly.

Sudia and Molina have great chemistry together and they have a knack for their characters' respective sarcasm and blissful naiveté. Other standouts include the cool-cat club owner Speedy Valenti of James Earl Jones II, Jordan Brown's butch yet occasionally feminine football player Wreck and Wade Elkins' hilariously gawky Walgreens manager Frank Lippencott.

Another major reason to see the Goodman's *Wonderful Town* is to relish the big and jazzy orchestral sound curated by music director Doug Peck. Productions this expert of a lesser-known show like *Wonderful Town* are few and far in between, so don't miss out on your chance to experience it—even if historians loudly grumble.

THEATER REVIEW

You on the Moors Now

Playwright: Jaclyn Backhaus

At: The Hypocrites at the Den Heath Mainstage, 1329 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Tickets: \$36

Runs through: Oct. 30

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Unreconstructed jokesters who still derive amusement from invoking the so-called "battle of the sexes" may well consider retiring that divisive wheeze after viewing a *genuine* gender-war, where those of Heart both Faint and Stout are wounded, sometimes going so far as to die, and nobody "wins" Fair anything.

Our heroines, in this case, are drawn from 19th-century literature: Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennett, Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, Emily Brontë's Catherine Earnshaw and Louisa May Alcott's Josephine "Jo" March. We meet them just after all four have received proposals of marriage that they are reluctant to accept. United in sorority, they flee to the wild moors of England, pursued by suitors Darcy, Rochester, Heathcliff and Laurence, whose



Deanna Myers in *You on the Moors Now*. Photo by Evan Hanover

distress at being rejected soon gives way to indignation. Fugitive escape-and-evasions ensue, abetted by peripheral characters from the respective narratives, and culminating in confrontations ending in a truce only after blood is shed. A decade later (though looking more like two hundred years), veterans on both sides reunite at the memorial commemorating their service.

Jaclyn Backhaus' script initially leads us to anticipate an Aaron Posner-styled deconstruction. We giggle at dialogue combining text lifted verbatim from the novels and modern expressions like "do you think I'm a robot, you dickhead?" Auxiliary personnel—Bennett, March and Rivers siblings, Mssrs. Bingley and Linton, Marmee and grandfather Laurence—are played as broad caricatures. Battlefield formations mimic basketball, four-

square, break dance and video games. Death has no place in courtship, however, and when Rochester is mortally wounded and Catherine fatally stabbed, Heathcliff declares, "I don't want to play any more!"

Thus it is that in the *Battle of the Moors* museum (founded by Darcy) at its anniversary celebration (hosted by Amy March Laurence), we may chuckle at, say, astronaut Jane arriving gravity-lagged only hours after landing, but our smiles fade when presented with Rochester's elegant Ray-Bans concealing his blind eyes. As the one-time lovers recount their post-armistice activities, the wisdom of discovering your own destiny before attaching it to another's becomes manifest. Even the still-angry Heathcliff comes to accept the loss of his fallen comrade.

Intrigue operating on this many levels simultaneously isn't easy to absorb in a single sitting—especially when alley-staging impairs audibility in scenes played on the perimeter of the Den's first-floor room—but under Devon De Mayo's vigorous direction, a 14-member ensemble led by Tien Doman, Emjoy Gavino, Deanna Myers and Brittney Love Smith swarms over the expansive space with gleeful enthusiasm reflecting youthful convictions as yet unaware of the ironic paradox rendering romance sweetest when tempered by experience.

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

Fefu and Her Friends, Halcyon Theatre, through Oct. 8. An imperfect production of an unusual play, but definitely worth seeing. Maria Irene Fornes examines women and self-image. JA

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, Marriott Theatre, Lincolnshire, through Oct. 16. Oh sure, the office politics and retrograde views on women are all politically incorrect in Frank Loesser's tuneful 1960s Pulitzer Prize-winning musical comedy. There's still a lot to laugh at in this silly corporate satire, though. 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

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

★ ★ ★ 1/2 (OUT OF 4) **“REALLY FUNNY”**

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



THEATER

Collaborating on 'Julius Caesar'

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

For years, Writers Theatre co-founder and artistic director Michael Halberstam had wanted to tackle Shakespeare's Roman history play *Julius Caesar*.

So when it came time to pick out the first play in the company's 25th-anniversary season (and its first full one in the new multimillion-dollar Studio Gang Architects-designed performance venue), Halberstam turned to a veteran of many previous *Caesar* productions to co-adapt and co-direct the production.

"I've known Scott for twentysomething years," said Halberstam of his *Caesar* collaborator Scott Parkinson.

Saying that Parkinson did the bulk of the heavy lifting on the adaptation, Halberstam added, "He's my best friend and in many ways I say he's my muse because how much I love his acting and how much his acting inspires me."

Halberstam told Parkinson that he was interested in creating an intermission-less *Caesar* production that felt both timely and timeless. Hence the production's then-now hybrid look

via power ties beneath togas and by the notion of how social media might have swayed the public in ancient Rome.

"We were struck by the amount in the play about the supernatural and about omens and portents and signs of impending doom that are happening in Rome," Parkinson said. "At first we were thinking about getting rid of those things as part of our streamlining process, but because things started feeling very resonant with everything that is happening in the world right now in the news, I did feel like there was some kind of 'end of the world happening' is occurring somewhere. So I decided to take that idea and make it the central theme of the adaptation."

Another interpretation that Halberstam and Parkinson explored a little more deeply is an ambiguous and ultimately unrequited homosexual longing between assassination conspirators Cassius (played by Parkinson) and Brutus (Kareem Bandyaly).

"There's nothing overt in the way that we portray it—not because we're afraid of the subject matter—we're both gay," Halberstam said.

"We wanted to keep the palate open so the audience could bring their own interpretation or desire to experience."

Halberstam and Parkinson also made a very conscious choice to specifically seek a diverse ensemble for the production.

"We didn't set out with specific racial quotas or 'this role should be played by such-and-such ethnicity,' we wanted to have a very open casting call," Halberstam said. "The really exciting result was we saw a lot of fantastic actors that we maybe had to work a little bit harder to bring into our process because they hadn't necessarily been seen for Shakespeare or they didn't have it on their resume."

For example, Parkinson and Halberstam cite the inclusion of transgender performer Sydney Germaine, who doubles in the roles of Cinna and Octavius Caesar, the adopted protégé of *Julius Caesar*.

"We were thinking what if one actor were able to play Calpurnia and also Octavius—Calpurnia being a woman and Octavius being a man," Halberstam said. "They might be able to straddle both worlds, and when Sydney came in

we, we realized we were having too much of a binary conversation and then actually, wouldn't it be interesting if we made Octavius trans? In real life, Octavius and Mark Antony ended up being quite the rivals, which you see continued in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. So we thought perhaps nothing could confuse Antony more than if we were to go gender-bending and cast a woman to make Octavius 'Octavia,' but how much more interesting if we were to cast a trans actor and allow gender fluidity to inform the relationship. I think it's a successful evocation."

Halberstam and Parkinson both feel that the new space for Writers Theatre has expanded the scope of what the two can tackle theatrically, especially with their streamlined take on *Julius Caesar*. They're also somewhat alarmed at how timely the play feels now.

"We couldn't have known back in November/December back when we were talking about programming *Julius Caesar* that the election was going to be quite the one it is," Halberstam said. "It certainly has been, alas, a prescient choice because its proximity to the current political situation is closer than one would have liked it to have been."

Halberstam added that he is also looking forward to the rest of the season, which includes racially charged revivals like Eugene Lee's *East Texas Hot Links* and the musical *Parade* by songwriter Jason Robert Brown and playwright Alfred Uhry. There's another puppet-filled collaboration with PigPen Theatre Company called *The Hunter and the Bear: A Musical Folktale*, plus prominent productions of Theresa Rebeck's dark comedy *The Scene* and Bathsheba Doran's modern romance *The Mystery of Love & Sex*.

"One of the things about putting together a season is I look for passion projects with the artists I most care about and most want to collaborate with, and most passion projects tend to emerge out of the zeitgeist," Halberstam said. "In this season, there is a fair amount to do with social justice, [and] racism certainly forms a centerpiece of several of the plays. Plus political conversation and gender identity are always going to be issues."

Julius Caesar continues through Sunday, Oct. 16, at Writers Theatre, 325 Tudor Court, Glencoe. Tickets are \$35-\$80. Call 847-242-6000 or visit WritersTheatre.org for more information.

Susan Werner kicks off Auditorium's season

BY VERNON HESTER

On Sept. 22, the Auditorium Theater kicked off its 2016-17 season with an intimate performance from out singer-songwriter Susan Werner. Celebrating her ninth appearance at the Auditorium Theater, Werner, per her custom, turned the historic performance space into an intimate cabaret setting by having the audience seated on stage with her.

Starting the show with stand-up bassist Curt Bley and percussionist Mayra Casales at her side, she had the audience laughing from the start with the new "Pabst Blue Ribbon" and the chestnut "Chicago Any Day." Then she ventured into her album, *Hayseed* (on Sleeve Dog Records), which focused on her rural upbringing in humorous ways. "City Kids," "Plant the Stars," "Egg Money" and "Herbicides" (which she blamed for making her lesbian) were featured in this segment. She closed out the first part of the show with the new "What Did You do to Your Face" and her mildly mocking rip on the conservative right with "Our Father (The New Revised Edition)," in which she pleaded to God to "deliver us from those who think they are You."

The second half of the show was loaded with surprises, starting with two songs from her recent musical adaptation of *Bull Durham*. "Every Woman Should Wear White" and "The Damnedest Season" were received enthusiastically. However, Werner managed to top herself with an engaging reading of "My Different Son," a snappy version of "Kicking the Bee Hive" and selections from an unrecorded work in progress that she called *An American in Havana*, inspired by her recent Cuban vacation. This section of the concert included "Havana Moon," "Stray Dogs" and "Comadito," and was accented strongly by Casales' percussion work.

For an encore, she sang "Help Somebody," which featured a surprise performance from tap dancer Lane Alexander.

Werner's upcoming release, *Eights Unnecessary Songs* (and *One Odd Little Hymn*), will be released in October on Sleeve Dog Records. The show was presented as part of The American Music Series. For further information regarding future events, go to AuditoriumTheatre.org.



Susan Werner.
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Eddie Jemison in *Life Sucks*.
Photo by Liz Lauren

THEATER REVIEW

Life Sucks

Playwright: Aaron Posner
At: Lookingglass Theatre,
Water Tower Pumping Station
Tickets: 312-337-0665;
LookingglassTheatre.org; \$35 and up
Runs through: Nov. 6

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Life Sucks is a beautifully performed, visually lovely, and amusing yet thoughtful show—together a really good night out.

It's playwright/director Aaron Posner's contemporary reworking of Anton Chekhov's Uncle Vanya, following the success of Posner's Stupid Fucking Bird, based on Chekhov's The Seagull. True, Posner reduces the mighty Russian to Chekhov lite—he cuts/combines characters, simplifies story and eliminates subtext, spelling everything out in simple-minded fashion—but the pleasures of Life Sucks are more important than literary analysis.

First, it's laugh-out-loud funny as members of an extended family measure who/where they are in life against not-so-distant hopes and expectations. Invariably disappointed with professional and personal pursuits, let alone achievements, they express themselves via pique, self-absorption, hopeless love and jealousy. That's not funny if it's happening to you, but it can be very funny when observed in others. Hey—it's *schadenfreude*. Even the play's young characters suffer emotionally, victimized by love either unrequited or unsought. As one character remarks at a moment so bleak one can only laugh, "Life, life, life! You can't live with it, you can't..."

Even without the precision mood modulations of director Andrew White, the seven-person cast would be extraordinary. They are among Chicago's most skillful and pleasing players and, unusually, all but one are from outside the Lookingglass ensemble. First among equals is Eddie Jemison as middle-aged Vanya (one of two character names retained from Chekhov), an itch of a man you can't help scratching. Bitterly funny and sadly hilarious, Jemison is a brilliant study in comic portraiture. Next, one rejoices at the return to off-Loop theater (after 20 successful years in LA and New York) of master actor Jim Ortlieb as The Professor (no, not Gilligan's Island); he's self-absorbed, smug, frightened and sourly droll throughout the production.

In fact, drollness and bone-dry delivery are strengths of the entire troupe, which is completed by Chaon Cross (Professor's beautiful, much-younger wife), Danielle Zuckerman (his daughter by his late first wife), Phillip R. Smith as Vanya's best bud Dr. Aster, and Barbara E. Robertson and Penelope Walker (playing a lesbian character definitely not in Chekhov) as intimate family retainers.

They all come, go, pout, pontificate, long and lust on a dreamy set bathed in golden lighting—both by Brian Sidney Bembridge—a cozy old house on a North Woods lake, surrounded by birch trees, bird houses, cattails, and colorful leaf litter reflecting the autumnal spirit of the play.

Chekhov didn't create villains. He loved his characters enough to allow them to behave foolishly, as we all do in life. Posner respects that profound sense of the human comedy, but imbues it with such a light touch that you wouldn't know it was Chekhov, unless you knew it was Chekhov.

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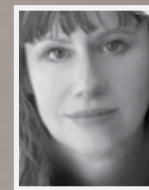
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SPOTLIGHT

Shakespeare's tragedy Hamlet gets transported to a mythical ancient China by the Shanghai Jingju Theatre Company's visiting production of **The Revenge of Prince Zi Dan**. See how the gorgeous costumes and acrobatics of Peking Opera get adapted to tell this classic tale of a prince who becomes disillusioned once he has discovered that his uncle has murdered his father and then seduced his mother. It's one of the many productions featured in the year-long Shakespeare 400 Chicago celebration. The Revenge of Prince Zi Dan plays two shows only at 7:30 p.m.



Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 28 and 29, at Millennium Park's Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St. Tickets are \$37-\$72; call 312-595-5600 or 312-334-7777 or visit ChicagoShakes.com or HarrisTheaterChicago.org.

Caption: The Revenge of Prince Zi Dan (Hamlet) by the Shanghai Jingju Theatre Company visiting Millennium Park's Harris Theater for Music and Dance. Photo by EFE/Leopoldo Smith Murillo

LezPlay Contest finalists named

Pride Films and Plays has announced the results of its 2016 LezPlay Contest.

From nearly three dozen entries, five finalists have been selected to receive staged readings of their scripts during LezPlay Weekend, which runs Oct. 7-9 at the Hoover-Leppen Theatre of Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

The finalists are *Bold As Love*, by Geraldine Inoa; *The Days Are Shorter*, by Corinne J. Kaweck; *Fraying Live Wires Tend to Give Off Sparks*, by Lena Wilson; *To Bury a Stranger*, by Ann L. Gibbs and Judith Allen; *Watch Me Burn*, by Rae Binstock. (All are full-length plays except *To Bury a Stranger*.)

Admission is pay-what-you-can, with a \$10 suggested donation. See PrideFilmsAndPlays.com.

GayCo marking 20 years on Oct. 15

On Saturday, Oct. 15, at 7:30 p.m., GayCo Productions returns home to The Second City at the UP Comedy Club for its 20th Anniversary extravaganza *GayCo XX: Gay for Play*.

GayCo XX: Gay for Play is a one-night-only event that will feature GayCo luminaries from past and present performing the best scenes, songs, tributes and memories from GayCo's two decades of game-changing LGBTQ sketch comedy.

GayCo has produced dozens of revues in its first 20 years, including the smash hit shows *Weddings of Mass Destruction*, *Everything's Coming Up Rosie*, *The Audacity of Nope* and its debut *Whitney Houston, We Have a Problem*.

The event will feature GayCo alumni, including Andy Eninger, Butch Jerinic, Homer Marris, John Loos, Mandy Price, Robin Treviño Clay

Goodpasture, Kathy Betts, Martin Garcia (*Blackish*, *The Mindy Project*), Jim Bennett (Lambda Legal, Chicago Gay Hall of Fame member) and Celeste Pechous (*Hot in Cleveland*, *Workaholics*, *Stranger Than Fiction*). Queer comedy dozent Clay Goodpasture will host.

See GayCo.com.

Aurora gets tax credit for arts center

The City of Aurora has received a tax-credit award worth more than \$15 million from the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) toward the development of the Aurora Arts Center at the former Waubensee Community College Building downtown.

The \$35-million project will be developed by The Community Builders Inc., and will consist of a restaurant as well as a Paramount School for the Performing Arts.

In addition, the Joseph Corporation building at 32 S. Broadway would receive a major capital upgrade. The Waubensee building has been vacant for about five years and is located directly next door to the Paramount Theatre at Galena Boulevard and Stolp Avenue. Invest Aurora purchased the building earlier this year for \$350,000 in order to facilitate the development of the Arts Center.

Teddy Pendergrass musical Sept.-Oct.

Black Ensemble Theater, 4450 N. Clark St., continues the 40th-anniversary season ("The Season of Greatest Hits") with *I Am Who I Am* (The Story of Teddy Pendergrass). The production runs through Oct. 30.

Tickets are \$55-\$65 each; visit BlackEnsemble.org or call 773-769-4451.

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NUNN ON ONE

Actor/musician David Pevsner shows versatility

BY JERRY NUNN

Performer David Pevsner is full of surprises. Not only is he a talented actor in films like 300: Rise of an Empire and Joshua Tree, 1951: A Portrait of James Dean, but he's been an erotic model for 20 years. Television credits include Modern Family, Criminal Minds, and Grey's Anatomy.

He just released a comedy album called Most Versatile with songs like "Straight Guy" and "The Gay Old Times."

Windy City Times talked to Pevsner recently about the new music and his acting projects.

Windy City Times: Hi, David. You are originally from Skokie?

David Pevsner: Yes. I was born and raised in Skokie, Illinois.

WCT: Did you study music or theater?

DP: I went to Niles East High School. I did a million shows when I was there. That is where my desire to do it desired and blossomed. I went to college at University of Michigan but it was too difficult to do theater. I wanted to major and really couldn't there. I went to Carnegie-Mellon after that for four years, then moved to New York.

WCT: Did you perform theater professionally in Chicago?

DP: I didn't until I started performing in national tours. I did a couple of those in the late '80s. I toured South Pacific and Fiddler on the Roof that went to Chicago.

WCT: How did Naked Boys Singing happen?

DP: I was in an off-Broadway show called When Pigs Fly. I loved it and wanted to try to write some songs. I just started writing dirty lyrics to melodies just for fun. My friend told me about someone in Los Angeles putting a nudity themed show together. I sent in four songs and he picked three of them.

WCT: Naked Boys Singing ran forever here in Chicago.

DP: It did have a long run there, and is still actually running in New York 17 years later.

WCT: You used one song on your new album Most Versatile, didn't you?

DP: Actually there are two: "The Naked Maid" and "The Perky Little Porn Star." That is the first song I ever wrote.

WCT: How did you decide which songs to put on the album?

DP: I have written a whole bunch of songs. Almost all of them have found their way onto shows I have written or this movie I wrote. I whittled it down to songs that could live on their own that were not part of a plot from the shows. My producer and I came up with 13 of them. They are funny, dirty little ditties. There are a few surprises and musical theater-type songs. It is a fun romp.

WCT: I saw Jim J. Bullock guests on your record.

DP: Yes, we have been friends since the Los Angeles production of When Pigs Fly. He's truly one of the best people I know period and one



David Pevsner. PR still

of the funniest people I have ever met. He can really sing. He's playing a character on the CD so you might not be able to tell, but he just dove in.

WCT: What is the movie you have written?

DP: It's a movie called My GFF (My Gay Film Festival). It is ten short films directed by ten different directors. It is all different genres. There is a comedy, drama, animated, documentary, and a porn. It will feel like a whole gay film festival in 90 minutes. It will star all gay and gay friendly actors, like the ones that we see at Reeling and Outfest. It will be directed by recognizable directors in the gay community. We are just looking for the financing of it right now.

It is really fun and I am totally dedicated. It a project I have worked on over the years.

Once I get settled back in LA I am going to get back into it.

WCT: How were you cast in the movie Scrooge & Marley?

DP: I auditioned. It was on a website called

Actors Access. I wanted to shoot a movie in Chicago because it is where my parents still live. I sent in a tape. They wanted me to be in Chicago for the callback. I went and was offered the role. The funny thing was my daddy picked me up from the audition to take me home!

WCT: It was like your first day of school. How was being in the Lifetime movie Liz & Dick?

DP: Oh, gawd. When they said Lindsay Lohan was exhausted, she really was. They didn't have much of a budget and kept moving. By the time I shot my scene, they had been shooting for two weeks so everyone was pooped.

I said the worst line I have ever said in a film. Someone asked me [playing a doctor] what was wrong and I said, "Well, I am not saying it is colon cancer" just out of the blue. It was random and ridiculous.

I couldn't be in Glitter or Valley of the Dolls, any of the great bad movies, but I am in Liz & Dick!

WCT: Do you have more acting planned?

DP: I have a couple of movies. One is called Open. It is a gay romantic comedy. I shot a movie called Flying Cars. It is about the remote control car movement.

WCT: What are your plans for the new music?

DP: I want to start going out performing benefits somewhere. I just want people to listen and laugh. I hope other performers will take on these songs as well.

WCT: Maybe you could perform at some of the great cabaret spaces in Chicago.

DP: I have a one-man show called Musical Comedy Whore. I have done it in Palm Springs and LA but maybe I could do it all over. I would love to do it in Chicago. Then I could sell my CD outside after doing my show. I just need to figure it all out. I have a lot of irons in the fire but there is a lot of work to be done!

Go to DavidPevsner.com and click on "Most Versatile" to buy the new album and follow his new work.

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Photo of Kamal Angelo Bolden by Joe Mazza.

KNIGHT at the movies



BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Fall LGBT movie special

The end of September means that fall movies and award season is just about here. This year, the studios have a couple of excellent LGBT contenders that may very well end up in the winner's circle. Read on for some highlights from the fall movie season.

Late September

King Cobra—Reeling, Chicago's LGBT film festival (of which I'm the co-programming director), closes its eight-day festival with this highly anticipated, advance screening of our writer-director Justin Kelly's screen adaptation of the true-life crime thriller—the story of gay-porn twink Brett Corrigan (played by former Disney channel star Garrett Clayton), whose value to two competing porn producers (James Franco and Christian Slater) leads to murder. It plays at the Landmark Century Centre Cinema (2828 N. Clark St.) at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 29. Clayton and Kelly will attend the screening. <http://reelingfilmfestival.org/2016/films/king-cobra-closing-night/> Sept. 29 only

Deepwater Horizon—It's a dramatic re-enactment of the explosion aboard the oil drilling rig that was one of the worst man-made disasters in the world. Mark Wahlberg heads the cast. Sept. 30

Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children—Tim Burton's latest is a big-screen adaptation of the young adult best-seller—the dark fantasy adventure of a teenage boy who discovers a magical place and begins to suspect that the fairy tales his grandfather told him as a child are actually coming true. Eva Green, Asa Butterfield, Allison Janney, Rupert Everett, Terence Stamp, Samuel L. Jackson and Judi Dench co-star. Sept. 30

October

Pause of the Clock—Twenty years after leaving behind his first film, Chicago-based author/film critic Rob Christopher (a member of the Queer Film Society) returned to finish what he started. The film focuses on the relationship between two roommates, Dylan and Rob, who are film students in the midst of making a film in Colorado. When Dylan discovers and reads Rob's diary, the relationship between the two takes a decided turn. Christopher will appear at the screening, which takes place at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., on Monday, Oct. 3 (SiskelFilmCenter.org/pauseoftheclock).

American Honey—A teenage girl joins a band of other outsiders (which includes a lesbian) on the road, selling magazine subscriptions by day as they travel throughout the Midwest and partying hard at night. Shia LeBeouf is Jake, the leader of the group, and the film features a star-making performance from Sasha Lane in the title role. Oct. 7

The Birth of a Nation—A remake of D.W. Griffith's controversial classic about the political awakening of a Black slave has become mired in controversy itself. The movie received tremendous reviews after previewing at Sundance but then it was revealed that writer/producer/director/star Nate Parker and his co-writer had been charged with rape in 1999. Though later acquitted, Parker's discussion of the charges in the media received an overwhelmingly negative response. Oct. 7

The Girl on the Train—Emily Blunt stars in this big-screen adaptation of the best-sell-



Kristen Stewart in *Certain Women*.
PR still

ing mystery crime thriller by Paula Hawkins. Helmed by out director Tate Taylor (*The Help*) and co-starring Justin Theroux, Allison Janney, Lisa Kudrow, Luke Evans and Rebecca Ferguson. Oct. 7

Howards End—Gay director James Merchant's glorious 1992 adaptation of the beloved 1910 E.M. Forster novel cemented the movie stardom of Emma Thompson, who won the Oscar, as the elder of the two Schlegel sisters (Helena Bonham Carter plays the younger) whose fates are unexpectedly entwined with a wealthy family headed by a stern patriarch (Anthony Hopkins) and his gentle but chronically ill wife (Vanessa Redgrave) and the family's bucolic country home. The ultimate Merchant-Ivory film will be presented by the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave., in an eye-popping new 4K Restoration. <http://www.musicboxtheatre.com/features/howards-end/>; Oct. 7

The Music Box of Horrors—The 12th annual 24-hour marathon of non-stop fright flicks returns to the Music Box Theatre with its usual diverse line-up of classic chillers, splatter flicks and recently unearthed finds (including one of my all-time favorites, *Eyes of Fire*) on the bill. <http://www.musicboxtheatre.com/festivals/music-box-of-horrors-2016/>; Oct. 15-16

The Chicago International Film Festival—The Cadillac of the Windy City's film festivals, the Chicago International Film Festival returns for its 52nd edition Oct. 13-27. The fest's Outlook section spotlights queer cinema and this year includes Miles from out writer-director Nathan Adloff (a Columbia College graduate), *Being 17* (the latest from French director Andre Techine), the ultra-sexy *Paris 05:59*, the lesbian black comedy *Women Who Kill* and several others. The fest also features the Chicago premiere of Barry Jenkins' *Moonlight*, the story of a gay Black man observed at three stages of his life that has won unprecedented critical acclaim on the festival circuit along with tributes to Geraldine Chaplin and filmmakers Steve McQueen and Peter Bogdanovich. ChicagoFilmFestival.com; Oct. 13-27

Certain Women—The latest from female mumblecore writer-director Kelly Reichardt (*Meek's Crossing*, *Wendy and Lucy*) features a triptych of female driven stories including a lesbian themed one. Kristen Stewart, Michelle Williams, Laura Dern and Lily Gladstone co-star. Oct. 16

King Cobra—Justin Kelly's film arrives in select theatres and VOD after its Chicago premiere as the closing night of Reeling (see details above). Oct. 16

Moonlight—Barry Jenkins' film arrives in theatres after its Chicago premiere as part of the Chicago International Film Festival line-up (see details above). Oct. 28

The Handmaiden—The visual splendor of director Park Chan-wook (*Stoker*) meets a 1930s set Gothic thriller with strong lesbian over-

tones. It won the Palme d'or at Cannes. Oct. 23

November

Trolls—The beloved—and sometimes reviled (take your pick)—wild-haired toys get their own 3-D animated musical adventure. The film features the voices of Anna Kendrick, Justin Timberlake, Zoey Deschanel, Russell Brand, James Corden, Gwen Stefani and Transparent's Jeffrey Tambor. Nov. 4

Doctor Strange—The Marvel Studios universe expands once again with this new superhero action franchise starring Benedict Cumberbatch, Chiwetel Ejiofor (*Kinky Boots*, *12 Years a Slave*), Rachel McAdams and Tilda Swinton. Nov. 4

Almost Christmas—A dysfunctional family gathers for Christmas following the death of

Indie bookstores respond to Amazon store in Chicago

In response to news that Amazon will open a brick-and-mortar store in the Lake View neighborhood of Chicago next year, independent bookstores of Chicago and the Chicago area united to issue a joint statement that, among other things, warns of a loss in local revenue.

"The Amazon announcement represents an opportunity to expand the conversations indie booksellers have been having for years with customers about sustainable publishing, bookselling, and retailing, as well as sustainable communities. Sarah Hollenbeck, co-owner of Women & Children First in Andersonville, explains that 'Chicago's independent bookstore community works hard to bring authors to Chicago, as well as to highlight local authors and work with local businesses. Events held in our stores strengthen community bonds, as well as provide safe spaces where people can meet, share ideas, and debate issues.'

"Whereas Amazon's initial choice to sell books was largely for the purpose of collecting customer data, independent bookstores pride themselves on serving customers who read voraciously and eclectically and on using books to create a conversation with customers and their communities.

"Amazon is known for its low prices and convenience. However, as booksellers at Bookends & Beginnings in Evanston point out, 'What's largely invisible is the price we're really paying for that kind of convenience, if we ignore the likely consequences of Amazon's snowballing monopolistic practices.'"

Some of the business who issued the re-

their mother. Kimberly Elise, Omar Epps, Danny Glover, Romany Malco, Gabrielle Union and Mo'Nique are among the stars. Nov. 11

Arrival—An elite team is brought together to look for answers when mysterious space craft land on earth. Advance word on this movie is that director Denis Villeneuve (*Sicario*) has created an instant sci-fi classic. Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Forest Whitaker and Michael Stuhlbarg co-star. Nov. 11

Loving—A reenactment of the story of Mildred and Richard Loving, the couple who fought against laws prohibiting their interracial marriage all the way to the Supreme Court in 1967. Nov. 11

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them—Eddie Redmayne stars as Newt Scamander, a wizard from Hogwarts, arrives at a conference for magicians in New York City, armed with an expanding briefcase filled with all manner of dangerous creatures who naturally escape, threatening to expose wizards to Muggles. J.K. Rowling's first screenplay looks to expand the Harry Potter universe into yet another fantasy franchise. Nov. 18

Moana—Disney's latest bid for an animated classic is this South Seas Island tale about Princess Moana who sets sail in search of a fabled island. Dwayne Johnson is the most famous of the voices, many of them performing songs penned by Hamilton creator Lin-Manuel Miranda. Nov. 23

Rules Don't Apply—Warren Beatty returns to the screen as elusive billionaire Howard Hughes in this romantic dramedy about a young starlet and a businessman who work for Hughes in the 1950s but are prevented from becoming romantically involved because of Hughes' outrageous rules. Beatty also wrote, directed and produced. Nov. 23

Allied—During World War II, while on assignment in Africa, assassins Brad Pitt and Marion Cotillard fall in love, marry and discover that one of them is a double agent who must be eliminated. This is the movie that may be responsible for ending Brangelina! Nov. 23

lease included 57th Street Books, Unabridged Books, Women & Children First, Lake Forest Bookstore and The Book Cellar. The full statement is at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Arts Alliance names new ED

Arts Alliance Illinois has named Claire Rice as its executive director.

Rice brings almost two decades years of professional experience in non-profit and corporate sectors to Arts Alliance Illinois. Since 2012, Rice has built capacity and resources for cultural ecosystems around the country as national program director of Harvard University's Sustain Arts Project, a cultural data, research and policy initiative.

Prior to her role with Sustain Arts, she held several roles with the University Musical Society of the University of Michigan.

Rice holds a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Poetry fellowship recipients announced

The Poetry Foundation and Poetry magazine have announced the five recipients of the 2016 Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowships: Kaveh Akbar, Jos Charles, Angel Nafis, Alison C. Rollins and Javier Zamora.

Among the largest awards offered to young poets in the United States, the \$25,800 prize is intended to encourage the further study and writing of poetry and is open to all U.S. poets between 21 and 31 years of age.

Charles is a trans poet and the author of *Safe Space*, published by Ahsahta Press in 2016.

Reeling continues to entertain, enlighten until Sept. 29

BY STEVE WARREN

The second-oldest LGBT film festival in the world continues in Chicago, as Reeling: The Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival continues in Chicago through Thursday, Sept. 29.

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

—**Lazy Eye** (***) (Sept. 28, 7 p.m.)

Lazy Eye sounds dreadful but it isn't. Dean (Lucas Near-Verbrugghe) and Alex (Aaron Costa Ganis) reconnect after 15 years, have a quickie, and talk. And talk. And talk. But the guys are real, their situation intriguing, the dialogue interesting; and writer-director Tim Kirkman (Loggerheads) knows how to make a movie.

—**Southwest Of Salem: The Story of the**

San Antonio Four (** 1/2) (Sept. 28, 7:15 p.m.)

The "San Antonio Four" are lesbians who were wrongfully convicted of gang-raping two little girls in 1994. This real-life "Children's Hour" lets us know the women, whose eventual early release didn't shorten three of their sentences by much. Their story could be told better—but it needs to be told.

—**Taekwondo** (**) (Sept. 28, 9:15 p.m.)

Taekwondo is the teasingest movie ever, gay or straight. Fer (Lucas Papa) invites dreamy-eyed Germán (Gabriel Epstein) to an Argentine spa, where seven often-naked but mostly straight dudes are in residence. Talk about a chorizo party! Germán lusts after Fer and the camera stays in everyone's crotch, torturing the audience.

—**King Cobra** (** 1/2) (Sept. 29, 7 p.m.)

The closing-night feature is King Cobra, based on the true story of Brent Corrigan (played by



Esteban Masturini and Ignacio Rogers in *Esteros*. Still courtesy of Outplay Films

Disney Channel alum Garrett Clayton) who is the subject of a professional tug-of-war (between gay-porn producers portrayed by James Franco and Christian Slater) that leads to murder. The juicy subject matter and the big names (including Franco, Slater, Molly Ringwald and Alicia Silverstone) will draw the masses; however, for me, the movie is a strange mix of fascinating elements and disjointed segments. [Note: This review is by Andrew Davis.]

—**AWOL** (***) (Sept. 29, 7:15 p.m.)

This seemingly simple romantic lesbian melodrama is full of surprises. Joey (Lola Kirke) is joining the Army until she meets Rayna (Breeda

Wool, a younger Uma Thurman), a hot, older blonde whose truck-drivin' husband is away a lot. By and about women, AWOL kept this male reviewer emotionally involved.

—**Esteros** (***) (Sept. 29, 9:15 p.m.)

Matías and Jerónimo, young teenagers on a farm in Argentina, are reunited a decade later when Matías and his girlfriend arrive on vacation from Brazil. Jerónimo is openly gay, the guys obviously still have feelings for each other; it's not a question of if but when. No surprises, no complaints.

For more about Reeling, see ReelingFilmFestival.org.

Chicago Int'l Film Fest hosts celebratory event

The Chicago International Film Festival held a celebration at GreenRiver on Sept. 19. The 52nd year for the festival opens with a musical called La La Land, starring Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone, that runs Thursday, Oct. 13. Festival founder and artistic director Michael Kutza announced that celebrities and directors will be on the red carpet throughout the run until Thursday, Oct. 27.

This year's festival includes Outlook, a special program of films with LGBTQ interest. Films included in Outlook range from the Netherlands' Strike a Pose, which goes behind the curtains of Madonna's controversial 1990 Blonde Ambition tour to meet her backup dancers, to France's Being 17, which focuses on a bitter rivalry between high school boys which cools when one must stay with the other's family.

For complete information on Outlook and the rest of this year's festival, visit www.chicagofilmfestival.com

Text and photos by Jerry Nunn.



Chicago International Film Festival founder/artistic director Michael Kutza (left).



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Hip-hop and LGBTQs: The intersectionality of two communities

BY TARINA HARGRAYS

"I hold hip-hop in such a high regard and expect so much of it because it is music that has very revolutionary roots." This is what artist Akenya Seymour said when asked about the LGBTQ community's possible growing alliance with the hip-hop community.

Akenya Seymour is a 23-year-old music artist from Chicago who identifies as queer and has been a musician since she was a child. "People tell me I sang myself to sleep as a baby," Seymour said. Like her, 22-year-old Chicago rapper Linzy has also been passionate about music since she was younger and identifies as queer. The two Chicago artists can often be found performing at different open mics around the city.

Being a part of the hip-hop community and the LGBTQ community sometimes go hand and hand for the artists.

I asked the two if they ever feel the need

hip-hop community seem to be more accepting of the LGBTQ community, but people in general. Seymour said she believes that this is because it is "inevitable." She added, "Our generation having access to the internet and different forms of communication has caused a lot of people to speak up and speak out."

Even though acceptance in hip-hop is becoming easier to come by, Seymour said the community is still a "boys' club." According to Linzy, female rappers still have to be aggressive, yet sexy. Seymour added she believes the hypersexualization may also be the reason the hip-hop community is lacking gay, male rappers.

"Every form of oppression feeds off of each other. You can't have homophobia without patriarchy. You can't have any of those things without sexism. Oppression is profitable," Seymour said.

Both Linzy and Seymour said that it hurts



Akenya Seymour.

Photo by Nina Matti

to rap about their sexual identities. The two answers were similar, yet different. When Linzy raps, she usually strays away from the typical heterosexual topics that are so often seen in the hip-hop community. However, she told Windy City Times she doesn't feel the pressure to talk about her sexual identification much because it is something that just comes naturally.

However, as natural as Linzy's raps come to her, so does her anxiety. She said that this is because she never knows how her audience is going to perceive her raps—as well as her as an artist. Linzy said that if she doesn't know her crowd, she doesn't know how people will accept the content she performs, which usually has a lot to do with the LGBTQ community.

"It's a make-or-break thing for me. With some people it can make them feel very uncomfortable," Linzy said. However, she said this hasn't stopped her from receiving a lot of positive reviews.

Seymour—who raps and sings mostly about love, peace and spirituality—said she doesn't feel the pressure to rap about her identity at all. "There are more intrinsic pieces to me," Seymour said.

Both artists believe that not only does the

when some of their favorite rappers use homophobic slurs in their raps.

"America has a long history of homophobia. A lot of that is steeped in the patriarchy," Seymour said. Linzy said this is the reason we don't usually see LGBTQ rappers in mainstream hip-hop.

"Same way you get bullied in high school, you can get bullied in the industry," said Linzy regarding the LGBTQ community's marginalization in the hip-hop community.

Linzy said that the ingrained homophobia is disappointing because "These are the people I idolize and they have something negative to say about the person I am."

Even with all of this being said, according to Linzy, "People are becoming more [aware]." She said that hip-hop has a lot of growing to do and that she would like to see rappers being held accountable in the future for homophobic slurs (even if it is internalized).

Regarding the future of the hip-hop and LGBTQ community's intersectionality, Seymour said that the optimism in her hopes our society "is moving toward a more unified connected state. The potential is there. The more people become aware and talk about their experiences publicly, the better I think it's going to get."



Tim Murphy.

Photo by Edwin Pabon

Author Tim Murphy, filmmaker Kellee Terrell on Sept. 29

City Lit Books will host a reading by Tim Murphy, author of *Christodora*, followed by a discussion moderated by filmmaker/journalist Kellee Terrell. The event is Thursday, Sept. 29, at 6:30 p.m. at 2523 N. Kedzie Ave.

In *Christodora*, Tim Murphy follows the lives of a diverse cast of characters who reside in and around an iconic apartment building in Manhattan's East Village, *The Christodora*. Constructed in the 1920s, *The Christodora* has stood through New York City's various cultural shifts, from the AIDS epidemic to the Tompkins Square Riots of the 1980s, from the destructive effect of hard drugs to the gentrification of a beloved Manhattan neighborhood. Murphy moves kaleidoscopically through these times and into New York City in the not-too-distant future in this portrait of sex, drugs, art and activism in this ever-changing city.

Murphy has dedicated the last 20 years to reporting on HIV/AIDS. He's written on the subject for *Out*, *Advocate* and *New York Magazine*, where his cover story on the new HIV-prevention pill regimen PrEP was nominated for a GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Magazine Journalism. He also covers LGBT issues, arts, pop culture, travel and fashion for publications including the *New York Times* and *Condé Nast Traveler*.

Terrell is an award-winning filmmaker and journalist whose work focuses on race, feminism, HIV/AIDS, health disparities and LGBTQ issues. Her articles and interviews have been featured in *Al Jazeera*, *BET.com*, *Hello Beautiful*, *Essence*, *The Root*, *The Grio*, *The Advocate*, *Colorlines*, *Positively Aware*, *Ebony* and *The Huffington Post*, to name a few.

She is also the former news editor of *TheBody.com* and the former associate editor of *POZ Magazine*. Her two short films "Goodnight My Love" and "Blame" have screened in more than 60 film festivals around the world and she was recently named a 2016 Outfest Screenwriting Fellow for her first feature script, *Gemma*. Follow her @kelleent.

Author to promote 'Bobby Kennedy'

Author Larry Tye will be at various Chicago spots to promote his latest book, *Bobby Kennedy: The Making of a Liberal Icon*.

The book—which Tye says has strong LGBT- and civil-rights angles—tracks former U.S. Sen./Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy's journey from the conservative 1950s

to a liberal activist.

Stops will include:

—Sept. 28, noon: Private lunch-learn talk by Temples Solel and Sukkat Shalom, Standard Club, 320 Plymouth Ct.

—Sept. 28, 7 p.m.: Talk at Old St. Patrick's Church, 700 W. Adams St.

—Sept. 29, 11:30 a.m.: Talk to International Press Club, at Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Blvd.

—Sept. 29, 7 p.m.: Talk at Irish American Heritage Center, 4626 N. Knox Ave.

—Sept. 30, 12:15: Talk at University of Chicago Institute of Politics, 5707 S. Woodlawn Ave.

—Sept. 30, 8 p.m.: Talk at Temple Emanuel, 5959 N. Sheridan Rd.

See LarryTye.com.

'Express Yourself' gala on Oct. 2

Nothing Without a Company and The Living Canvas are hosting The Express Yourself Gala and Fashion Show, a fundraiser for [Trans]formation, on Sunday, Oct. 2, at Evanston's Crystal Ballroom and Lounge, 529 Davis St., 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Attendees will celebrate diversity and gender expression through fashion, as members of the Chicago LGBTQIA+ community dance down the catwalk and feature binary-smashing outfits that local designers create. Dirty Devlin of Vaudezilla and Ryan Tang of The Fly Honey Show will host the event, which will also include performances from the cast members of [Trans]formation and the LGBTQIA+ community. In addition, there will be a cash bar.

Early-bird admission (through Sept. 24) is \$25-\$50, and standard admission is \$30-\$60; visit <http://expressyourselfgala.brownpapertickets.com>. More about [Trans]formation is at NothingWithoutACompany.org.

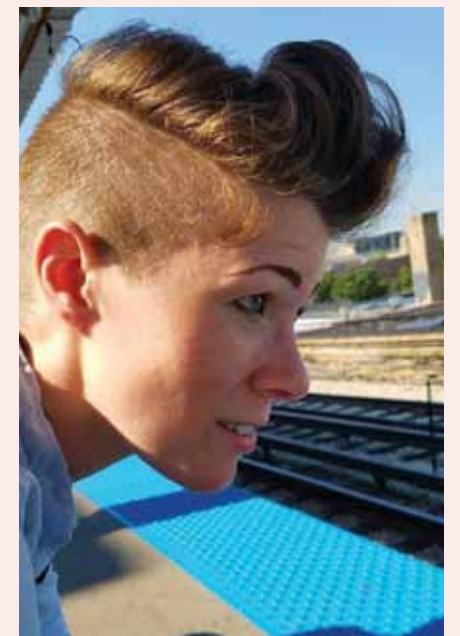
Holly Amos, Matt Kelsey on Sept. 30

Poets Holly Amos and Matt Kelsey will read at Evanston's Brothers K Coffeehouse, 500 Main St., on Friday, Sept. 30, 6-8 p.m.

Amos is an animal-rights advocate and vegan. She is the author of the full-length poetry collection *Continual guidance of air from H_NGM_N BKS*. Also, she is the editorial assistant for *Poetry* and a poetry editor for the online journal *Pinwheel*.

Kelsey teaches at Everett Community College and for the University of Washington's Robinson Center for Young Scholars. His writing has appeared in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Best New Poets* and elsewhere.

See "RHINO Reads! Open Mic & Feat. Readers Holly Amos & Matt Kelsey" on Facebook.



Holly Amos.

Facebook photo



"I swallow mine."—Robert Sepulveda's explanation to the contestants on Finding Prince Charming. He was answering the question of shouldn't you spit out wine at a wine tasting. As we know, swallowing is something Sepulveda specializes in.

We filed our last column on the heels of the Emmy Awards. But there's still some unfinished business. One of Jimmy Kimmel's running bits was about the much-lauded Dame Maggie Smith, who has never shown up at an Emmy ceremony—despite having been nominated nine times, and winning three times. So Kimmel made a vow—to win the award, you had to be present! "If you want an Emmy, you better hop on a plane right now and get your Dowager Count-ass over here." When Dame Maggie did inevitably win, Jimmy stormed the stage saying, "No, No, No—we're not mailing this to her. Maggie, if you want this, it will be in Lost and Found." Maggie Tweeted: "I was very astonished and pleased to win the award. I feel the Emmys have been overly generous to me. If Mr. Kimmel could please direct me to the lost and found office I will try and be on the next flight. Love, Old Maggie."

Everyone wanted to know the identity of Kevin Spacey's fetching young date, who was wearing what appeared to be a cowboy hat (all the easier to ride the bull later). He is 43-year-old Evan Lowenstein—a name which I'm sure means nothing to you. But I vividly remember the now-talent manager as a member of the hot duo Evan and Jaron, identical twins who had a minor hit CD in 2000 that I still have.

I'm a big fan of Billy Gilman. Over the years, I watched him on the annual Jerry Lewis Telethon and saw him develop into a fine young man with a good voice—and he wasn't so bad to look at. While the perception is that he hasn't had many opportunities since coming out, that isn't quite true—the offers dried up long before his queer revelation. He's now resurfaced on The Voice singing Adele's "When We Were Young." He was great, and all of the judges vied for him (with him choosing Adam Levine as his mentor). While I'm happy for him, aren't these competitions designed for unknowns to get a break? American Idol didn't let people compete who previously had a recording contract. So Gilman is in a lull. Does that make it fair for him to compete against unknowns? What's next? Barbara Mandrell wanting to get away from her sisters and the County Fair circuit? Reba McEntire crying about her dead band again? We all have problems. While I'm rooting for Billy, I'm not completely sure it's fair.

Bradley Cooper was a guest on Ellen when Michelle Obama was co-hosting the show. Bradley said that when he was getting ready to attend a state dinner, the tux he had was a little snug. "So, I decided last minute to 86 the underwear." Ellen jumped in, "Because if it should rip, it's much better to not have underwear on." To which Michelle said, "It's good for us. Right, ladies?"

BTW, Cooper also confirmed that his long-gestating remake of A Star Is Born is going forward with Lady Gaga not only co-starring but also writing some new songs for the film. They are slated to begin filming early next year, which I presume means Gaga is out of the long-delayed Streisand-connected Gypsy—which may or may not ever happen.

Because this is a presidential election year, many stars are putting themselves on the line—but no one more so than Mark Ruffalo. He's so committed to Hillary (and so vehemently opposed to Trump), he's made a vow: If Trump loses, he'll



Out singer Billy Gilman is making a comeback—although Billy is not sure it's fair.

Lost in Translation Photography

go full-frontal nude on the big screen. That's what we call a win/win.

Whoopi Goldberg dropped a minor bombshell last week. During an appearance on The Wendy Williams Show, she was asked about her future with The View. Whoopi was vague and talked about other things she'd like to do. "So in September, when everyone comes back for the new season, you might not be there?" asked Williams. "No, probably not," said Whoopi. "I have to move on baby, because I have to go and grow. I got stuff to do, I got movies I need to direct, I got books I got to finish." You heard it here first ... er, OK, second.

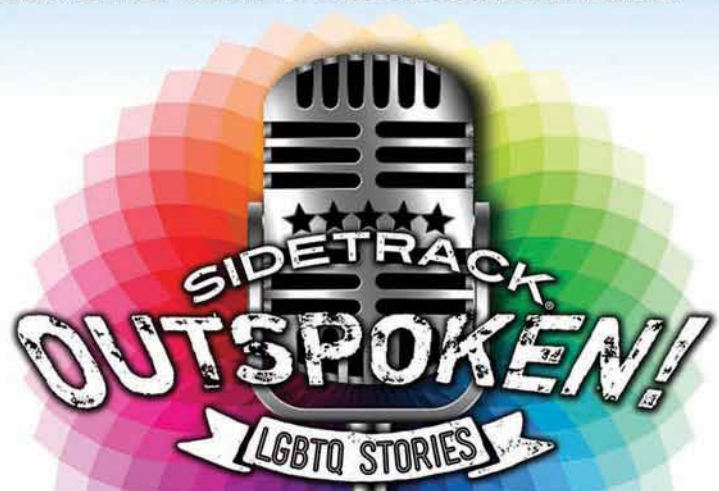
Our requisite "Ask Billy" question about Finding Prince Charming comes from Trey in Laguna Beach: "I just want to know who at Logo Robert blew to get this gig? Someone must have known. I do love watching how when he is alone with each of them he makes them each feel good about themselves. Well of course he does—it's how he made a living. A whore is the perfect choice for a show like this ... which is why I think someone must have known."

You're certainly onto something. As I've said, the hooker mentality is pretty close to the reality-star mentality—you're selling a product, and it's all about romancing the right people. Does he have something more to offer? It's getting less and less likely. Aside from the numerous nasty videos of him you can find on BillyMasters.com, we now learn that prior to being cast on Finding Prince Charming, Sepulveda was served with eviction papers for failing to pay at least three months of rent on his one-bedroom apartment (the rent was \$2,200—a good rent for New York). I guess business was slow, and he didn't want to ask Marc Jacobs for help. He was forced to vacate once the judge ruled against him. So, he's not only looking for love—he's looking for a home!

Could it be that a certain Emmy winner (kinda) is spiraling down the drug drain? So say people who were shocked at the emaciated form this performer exhibited onstage during said win. Afterwards, this person was completely out of it and not sure about upcoming plans for the show. Here's how I think the next season will begin—at the funeral of the glue that held the motley crew together. After all, who wants to see all that suffering?

When Spacey's "young date" is 43, it's definitely time to end yet another column. We ran SO long this week, I barely have time to remind you to check out www.BillyMasters.com, the site that always delivers. If you have a question for me, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Maggie Smith appears on Jimmy Kimmel Live! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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Reeling Film Festival opens with Bianca Del Rio



Bianca Del Rio (left) with Naomi Smalls.
Photos by Jerry Nunn



A movie running in Chicago Filmmakers' Reeling 2016: The 34th Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival brought director Matt Kugelman and Hurricane Bianca herself, Bianca Del Rio, into town for the debut of the film on Sept. 22 at the Music Box Theatre. The line stretched down the street for the popular RuPaul Drag Race winner.

There were many surprise guests attending the red carpet in front of the venue, like RuPaul's Drag Race's Naomi Smalls. Both director Carly Usdin and star Brittanni Nichols, from the movie Suicide Kale, showed up before the screening.

Tickets and schedule can be found at ReelingFilmFestival.org/2016/. Films running this week include the real-life crime thriller King Cobra, which stars James Franco and Christian Slater.

Photos and text by Jerry Nunn



Director Carly Usdin and star Brittanni Nichols, from the movie Suicide Kale.

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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Nonnina

BY ANDREW DAVIS

I have to admit that I cried inside when I heard that Piccolo Sogno Due was closing earlier this year. The Italian restaurant—a spinoff of the famed eatery Piccolo Sogno—had two things patrons could count on: great food and the smiling face of Chef Tony Priolo.

Well, a few months later, another Italian restaurant has sprouted at Due's spot—and, fortunately, those two items are still there. At **Nonnina** (340 N. Clark St.; NonninaChicago.com), Priolo and co-business partner **Ciro Longobardo** have brought in Executive Chef/Partner **Chris Macchia**. (Also, the effervescent **Ricardo Brizuela** is there as a general manager/partner.)

By the way, make no mistake: Nonnina is nothing like Due—a fact Priolo emphatically stated during a recent visit I made. And, certainly, Nonnina—in terms of decor—is nothing like its pre-



The Neopolitan at Nonnina.
Galdones Photography

decessor. The area that was a bar in Due has been transformed into a more casual space with items to go; in addition, there's a row of velvet booths in the main dining area, and there's a sleek bar that fronts depictions of Priolo's, Longobardo's and Macchia's grandmothers (or "nonnas").

The cuisine is also unlike Due's, as the menu reflects the nonnas' old-school cooking techniques and offers what people would expect during a Sunday Italian dinner. (In another nod to the restaurant's name, even the cocktails are named after past and present staffers' grandmothers.)

Lunch started with a wonderfully dry Franciortata Brut prosecco as well as tasty appetizers in the form of baked artichokes and arancini moderni. The arancini were especially delicious, with pasta replacing the rice on the inside, almost giving the

balls a quality of creamy mac 'n' cheese.

For entrees, my friend and I ordered, respectively, veal involtini and bucatini carbonara. The veal was a solid performer, and the bucatini lived up to similar dishes I've had at other restaurants (although it didn't surpass them).

Last, but certainly not least, we concluded with Nonnina's fine desserts. The budino di cioccolato (dark-chocolate mousse, extra virgin olive oil, sea salt, white chocolate shavings and fiori di latte) was lovely, both in terms of vision and taste. However, the crostata di arance rosse (blood-orange curd tart, whipped meringue) was the superior dessert, with just the right amount of tang.

So, diners, take heart. Piccolo Sogno due is gone—but be thankful Nonnina is here.

DANCING ABOUT ARCHITECTURE

BY MARC 'MOOSE' MODER



Someone special on your twelve-inch

The history of the extended (12") 33 RPM version of the traditional 45 RPM 7" single is ironically not as long as its mini forefather, but with much more depth. Since its birth in the '70s with Donna Summer's "Love to Love You Baby," the

obscurity.

Before **Madonna** signed to Sire and catapulted to fame with her self-titled debut, she hung around the studio with then-boyfriend **Jellybean Benitez**, with whom she recorded the classic "Sidewalk Talk." When Jellybean was asked to remix **Naked Eyes**' "Promises Promises," someone had to deliver the actual promises on which Naked Eyes complained. About three-quarters of the way through the 12", that familiar voice chimes in with a list of promises sweetly delivery with all the coo she could muster.

Afterwards, Madonna's fame gave her the clout to get any special guests she could possibly round up, and she went right to the top. While it's relatively common knowledge that **Prince** duetted with her on Like a Prayer's atrocious "Love Song" and played keyboards on the playful "Keep It Together," it's not as commonly known that the Purple One played guitar solo on the title track. That's because, unless you paid attention enough to the opening of the video (that version not released on vinyl), or were a DJ, you didn't hear it. In the video, at the very start you hear a bit of it, you get a double whammy on the DJ-only 12". Not only does the B-side, "Act

the 12" version is an epic jam tonally night-and-day removed from the version you know: A giant extended jam session featuring the wonderful Sheila E. and her band plus Wendy. Besides the commercial extended jam, if you dig deep on the web, you can find the 26- and 31-minute versions as well, if you want to be tortured or pleased.

The Pet Shop Boys are probably the most prolific in the format, taking cuts like David Bowie's "Halo Spaceboy," Rammstein's "Mein Teil," Bloodhound Gang's "Mope" and Blur's "Girls and Boys" and completely re-recording them with their vocals dubbed into and over for great effect and club consumption.

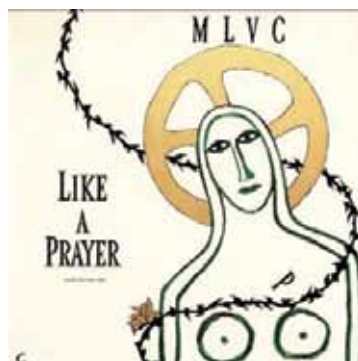
But not all extended mix guest spots are for the dance floor. **Marc Almond** needed a boost for his cover of the **Gene Pitney** song from the album *The Stars We Are*, so for the extended single he got the original '60s crooner to duet with him, giving the Soft Cell singer his first solo #1 hit in the UK with "Something's Got a Hold Of My Heart."

And for probably the biggest and gayest guest of them all, look to **Boy George and Culture Club**, who got the one **Dolly Parton** to toss

MARC ALMOND



Something's Gotten Hold Of My Heart
Featuring Special Guest Gene Pitney
GENE PITNEY



12" went from a DJ-only necessity (due to time constraints) to a music nerd go-to for special versions "not pop enough" for the passive music fan and an enticement for you to buy one more version of your favorite song. While it's more common for songs to be remixed and extended by DJs for 12" mixes, the tradition created in the first decade of the format was a complete re-recording of the track (see Duran Duran's "Night Versions"), sometimes with special guests. These re-recordings yielded some interesting star appearances you may have overlooked in their

of Contrition," feature his distorted jam, but the rare Extended Immaculate contains a more traditional solo at the eight-minute mark of the A-side's nine-minute epic, rarely heard outside the club who dared to play it.

Prince himself also loved to mess around with the format and none was more glorious or unexpected than "I Would Die 4 U." The 7" was what it was, as you know from its top 10 success, but the 12" was a completely different song. Not re-recorded post-success, but given to Warner Brother from his rehearsals for tour,

in her co-lead vocals on their 1999 comeback single, "Your Kisses are Charity." Unlike Marc Almond's attempt, Dolly did nothing to assist Boy and friends in their road back, but it was a fun ride. Like all these guest shots, it was lost to time, leaving us who do the work for our musical pleasure motivation to dig deeper in the crates.

DJ Moose spins these and other nuggets at Kylon's 12" DILF, this Saturday at 9 pm at The Sofa Tap.

nightspots the big TO-DO

OUR WEEKLY PICKS TO PLAN
YOUR NIGHTLIFE CALENDAR

Touche presents fifth annual Club Rush Party

Fri., Sept. 30, 10 pm
Touche,
6412 N. Clark St.

Touche proudly announces the 5th annual Leather/Fetish Club Rush Party, to be held Friday, September 30, at 10 p.m. Besides being home to the Leather Archives & Museum and International Mr. Leather, Chicago boasts over 15 local leather/fetish clubs, some for play, others strictly social. This Club Rush Party allows those interested in the club scene to meet members from many of these clubs and talk about their group's activities and membership.

Chicago has had a vibrant leather and fetish community for many years prior to IML and the "coming out" of leather that followed in the success and growth of the contest each Memorial Day weekend. A few of these clubs have been in existence for many years, while others came together in recent years as interests in other fetishes, such as rubber and puppy play, have developed.



Participating clubs include
(clockwise, from top left) Chicago
Water Buddies, Windy City Boys
Troop, Trident International Windy
City, M.A.F.I.A., Windy City Bondage
Club, ONYX and Bluf Chicago.

Club activities vary greatly: Some clubs are focused mainly on sexual play; others are more socially oriented. Either way, these clubs do offer their members opportunities to connect with others of similar interests locally and across the country. A few of these clubs take a leading role in our community, spearheading fundraising and food drives and providing volunteers for other events around Chicago.

Touche has been a home bar for many clubs, past and present, and has hosted visiting clubs as well. The back bar area of Touche is named The Club Room and the walls are lined with the colors of past and present clubs in Chicago and across the Midwest.

Traditionally, leather clubs are men-only, but a few have opened their membership to all, men/women and gay/straight. Anyone that may be interested in the leather scene should check out the local clubs that are a big part of our community.

For more information, contact David Boyer at touchechicago@gmail.com

—From press release

WINDY CITY TIMES

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Sept. 28

A Conversation with Theaster Gates Chicago-based artist Theaster Gates has developed an expanded practice that includes space development, object making, performance and critical engagement with many publics. Registration required. 6:00pm Harold Washington Public Library 400 S State St., <http://www.chicagopublic>

Bi the Way: Center on Halsted Chat With Marla Depew (Comedian, JDA Comedy) and Adrienne McCue (President & Executive Director, AJW Foundation) to discuss everything bisexual - common misconceptions, bi+ erasure, community resources, and more! 6:30pm - 7:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=12762>

A Wider Bridge reception 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. \$18. 6:30pm Temple Shalom of Chicago 3480 N. Lake Shore Dr. <http://tinyurl.com/awiderbridge-org>

Screening: Relationships Can Be Complicated, A Dyke Delicious program Lesbian relationships can be, well, complicated. Whether it's juggling a long-distance relationship in ALLO?; planning a family with your brother's sperm in SPUNKLE starring Dyke Delicious favorite Fawzia Mirza; re-connecting with an old flame in GREAT ESCAPE; re-enacting loving moments with an ex in FAKE IT; embarking on a forbidden relationship with a teacher in THE CRICKET AND THE ANT; or living with lesbian house-mates



WALK IT OFF Saturday, Oct. 1

The annual AIDS Run and Walk will take place at Soldier Field.

Photo from 2015 event by Hal Baim

in ANGELINO HEIGHTS starring Guinevere Turner. 9:00pm Landmark Century Centre Cinema 2828 N Clark Chicago <http://reelingfilmfestival.org>

Thursday, Sept. 29

Project Elevate Free red-carpet premiere featuring cisgender, transgender and same-gender loving men storyographies, 6-8-minute video vignettes addressing abandonment, bullying, sexual abuse. In partnership with the Prep4Love campaign in support of a robust HIV and STI prevention program. Reception first with DJ Tess and dance performances by The Hittas. Registration required online. 5:00pm - 8:00pm Hyde Park Art Center 5020 S. Cornell Chicago Tickets: <http://>

aidschicago.org/redcarpet
Chicago Abortion Fund annual Fall Fundraiser Celebration, reproductive justice and community. Light appetizers and drinks. \$50, \$25. 6:00pm - 8:00pm University of Chicago's Arts Incubator, 301 E Garfield Blvd., Chicago. Tickets: <http://www.eventzilla.net/web/event/chicago-abortion-fund--fall-fundraiser-and-awards-celebration-2138850485>

Bi Visibility Month - Chat series focusing on the Bi+ Community Center On Halsted's monthly chat series focuses on the Bi+ Community for September. Lively moderated conversation with outspoken voices in Chicago's Bi+ community. \$10 suggested donation 6:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

Tim Murphy here, author of the novel "Christodora" and queer filmmaker/writer Kellee Terrell About 40 years of LGBT life and the AIDS epidemic in NYC from 1981 to 2021. 6:30pm City Lit Books 2523 N. Kedzie Blvd. Chicago <http://www.citylitbooks.com/event/author-event-tim-murphy-author-christodora>

Friday, Sept. 30

House of Torment Halloween haunting employs 75 actors, 25 front end and event grounds staff, 50 stunt personnel, control room staff, runners, and iconic characters who will greet and entertain guests. Through Nov. 5, 2016 4:00pm 8240 N. Austin Ave., Morton Grove <http://thirteenthfloor.com/presale/houseoftormentchicago/>

Black Education Matters Teacher and activist Jesse Hagopian will discuss the role U.S. education plays in maintaining institutional racism and the school-to-prison-pipeline for young black people. 5:00pm Old Main Room, Bone Student Center, Illinois State University, Normal <https://news.illinoisstate.edu/2016/09/jesse-hagopian-ties->

black-lives-matter-campaign-to-education/

LGBTQ Gallery Opening: Tamara Fraser and Birdo Beaverhausen LGBTQ Artists Gallery Opening occurring every 6-7 weeks throughout the year, as Center on Halsted opens its doors to community artists 6:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St. <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

Saturday, Oct. 1

Annual AIDS Run and Walk This year's AIDS Run & Walk Chicago, emphasizing the importance of unity and partnership in responding to health crises, supports a broad array of Chicago-area partners that build their own teams, fundraise collaboratively and get 90% of money raised by their teams. Registration \$30 in advance, online ends Sept. 25. Event day registration \$60. 8:00am - 12:00pm Soldier Field 1410 Museum Campus Dr Chicago 312-334-0946 <http://aidsrun-walk.org>

OPALGA Gala 2016: Celebrating the Power of Civic Engagement Cocktails, socializing, silent and live auction, OPAL Awards, sit-down dinner, and dancing. 6:30pm Carleton Of Oak Park, Oak Park www.opalga.org/gala

TallGrass Guild's Publishing Party for 21st Annual 'Black-and-White' Anthology Entertainment from musicians Willa Moore and Ron Scroggin, contributors' presentations from the anthologies, and free light refreshments. Copies of HOME (poetry, fiction, essays on various meanings of 'home') available for \$18.95. Free 1:00pm Sulzer Regional Chicago Public Library 4455 N Lincoln Ave Chicago Tickets: <http://outriderpressATsbcbglobalDOTnet>

Sunday, Oct. 2

Express Yourself Gala and Fashion Show: A Fundraiser for [Trans]formation Nothing Without a Company and The Living Canvas, celebrating diversity and gender expression through fashion as members of the Chicago LGBTQIA+ community dance down the catwalk and feature binary-smashing outfits created by local designers. VIP 11am 12:00am - 12:00pm The Crystal Ballroom, 529 Davis St., Evanston <http://www.nothing-withoutacompany.org> Tickets: <http://expressyourselfgala.brownpapertickets.com>

October Women of All Colors Together (WACT) brunch hosted by Laura Stempel Bring a dish to share. Expect vibrant conversations and joyful sharing. 2:00pm - 5:00pm Contact organizer for location 773-339-0393

Tuesday, Oct. 4

Intersex Chicago A peer-led, casual conversation group for those who identify as intersex or think they might be. Also open to significant others, family, friends, allies, and anyone with questions. 6:30pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=11242>

Wed., Oct. 5

Gay Liberation Network organizing meeting Monthly planning meeting of Chicago's multi-issue direct action group that promotes the rights of LG-BTI people. Through demonstrations and advocacy, GLN changes the social and political situation of police brutality, labor, immigration, and more. Oct. 5, Nov. 2, Dec. 7. 7:00pm Berger Park Cultural Center 6205 N. Sheridan Rd Chicago <http://www.gayliberation.net>

OUTspoken features variety of storytellers Oct. 4

The monthly OUTspoken LGBTQ storytelling series at Sidetrack, held the first Tuesday of each month, always features an eclectic mix of voices, and the Oct. 4 program is no different. The event is free, located at 3349 N. Halsted, doors open at 6 p.m., stories at 7 p.m.

This month's featured performers are:

—**Karen Genelly**, a native Chicagoan who loves to tell stories. Since retiring from the

dencies from the Red Lodge Clay Center, Lambda Literary Writers Retreat, Napa Valley Writers' Conference, Vermont Studio Center, Santa Fe Art Institute, Squaw Valley Community of Writ-



Ruben Quesada.

ers and CantoMundo. He is working on a collection of poetry about Latinos in media and art, and also he is editing an anthology of essays on Latino poetry and poetics.

—**Jackie Boyd** is the owner of The Care Plan, the country's first LGBTQ-focused healthcare management company. She also is co-founder of Project Fierce Chicago, which creates housing opportunities for LGBTQ young people, and director of music with Broadway United Methodist Church.

—**Kate Hawbaker-Krohn** is a bespectacled and bow-tied poet, playwright and performer with roots in the Midwest and the Deep South. Exploring the mythology of family and Southern Queer Girlhood through her storytelling,



Jackie Boyd.



Kate Hawbaker-Krohn.

Hawbaker-Krohn brings high-energy, deep-feels and performance to savor slowly.

—**Bryan McHenry** has been a geek from birth. In seventh grade he was forced to stand up in front of the class and explain that he would be unable to attend band camp because he had to stay home and work on his robot. McHenry has a master's in Music from the University of Memphis and a master of fine arts in directing and screenwriting from Columbia College. He is a writer, director, teacher and performer who has worked in film, television, opera, theater and even the occasional standup gig. He is currently writing, directing and ed-

iting for a TV start-up in Chicago and trying to figure out how to turn years of expensive therapy into a screenplay that might actually pay for itself.

—**Kenneth Corrigan** is a lifelong bookseller who works in the rare and vintage department for a major online bookseller. Besides book selling, he has worked on environmental issues and urban gardening, likes yoga and bicycles, and keeps the poetry he writes in the filing cabinet.



Bryan McHenry.



Kenneth Corrigan.



Karen Genelly.

Chicago Public Schools she has been traveling the world, writing personal narrative stories, taking classes and telling stories at such venues as This Much is True, Homewood Stories, Do Not Submit, Tuesday Funk, Is This a Thing, You're Being Ridiculous, The Moth and of open mics throughout the city.

—**Ruben Quesada**, an editor, critic and scholar, serves as the essays editor for The Rumpus and senior editor for Queen Mob's Teahouse. He has received fellowships and resi-

TRANS MURDERS from page 15

image, phrasing or message," Szany said. "So children, for instance, are considered to be innocent and able to be influenced. It preys upon the fears of parents that this could happen to their children."

Dr. Jeff Temple, Ph.D. is an associate professor and psychologist at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB).

"From a psychological standpoint, people like to have shortcuts to be able to understand something," he told Windy City Times. "If they have no understanding or appreciation of what it means to be transgender or if they are suspicious of transgender folks, when they hear rhetoric on the news that dehumanizes trans folks or makes them look like predators, they start to quickly fill in the blanks and begin to think of them of predators or perverts out to get their wives and children."

"Unfortunately, humans haven't evolved as much they like to believe that they have," Parker said. "Humans are pack creatures in search of a leader. When you have an individual on a major platform and they are dehumanizing any group of people, of course other individuals are going to follow suit."

"It legitimizes this type of fear and suspicion [people] have of the transgender community," Temple noted. "I would say that it probably does relate to the increase in violence."

"Here at the museum, we always talk about how you are not born to hate, you are taught to hate," Szany said. "If that hatred is being facilitated at home and, on top of that, facilitated by messages in the media, you are filled with this echo chamber of hateful propaganda."

It is an echo chamber that has also resounded within the transgender community itself.

Internalized hate

"The anti-transgender rhetoric is profound," said Shannon Minter, legal director at the National Center for Lesbian Rights. "It has a terribly negative impact directly on the transgender people who hear it and see those images, particularly younger people. There is no way that a transgender person can hear that rhetoric or see those kind of images and not feel diminished as a human being."

"For some of us, the impact is much more serious," Minter added. "Some people are damaged to the core of their being by hearing rhetoric like that. For a young person who may be just coming to terms with being transgender and struggling to understand and accept themselves, that kind of depiction of transgender people as dangerous, deviant, sick and outside the boundaries of social acceptability can be devastating. That really can just go right to the heart of a young person and forever affect the way they see themselves and do a kind of damage that is never fully undone."

Regardless of the damage it does, such rhetoric is protected under the First Amendment.

But what about threats that have been made against the transgender community by figures like Dobson, Murphree and in comments made on a Facebook post April 26, 2016 by conservative commentator Glenn Beck ("If an obvious man, even if he claims to self identify as a woman, walks into the ladies room after my wife or daughter, I will self-identify as the tooth fairy and hand him all his teeth")?

"Threats of violence are not protected by free speech," John Paul Stevens Professor of Law and Professor of Political Science at Northwestern University Andrew Koppelman told Windy City Times. "For a law enforcement officer [like Murphree] to threaten violence against a citizen for conduct that is not unlawful, is unprofessional, reprehensible and, quite possibly criminal."

On the other hand Koppelman pointed out that, "There is no category of unprotected hate speech. There are some countries where hate speech is prohibited. The United States is not one of them. It is possible in general to say all kinds of hateful things and they are constitutionally protected. You can say the nastiest



Channyn Lynn Parker, project manager of the TransLife Center at Chicago House.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

things about transgender people. What you are not allowed to do is threaten them with violence."

Parker has witnessed both violence against and the criminalization of transgender people of color first hand.

"We live in a climate right now where every threat is being looked at with the potential of terrorism" she said. "If I am in an airport, I can't make a joke like 'if this plane doesn't start moving soon, I am going to blow it up.' If I am in a space and I even say something about a government official that potentially sounds like I am a threat, I'm going to be detained. So why is it that we have people who can spew rhetoric that threatens transgender people and not be investigated? That doesn't make sense to me."

Making a threat against the President of the United States is considered a felony. Those who post online sympathies for terrorist groups like ISIS or warnings of attacks in their name are immediately investigated.

Windy City Times reached out to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as to whether they investigate threats toward the transgender community.

A spokesman responded: "Whether language is considered a threat is not a FBI decision alone, but made in coordination with prosecutors. Anytime we investigate, we do so thoroughly."

"The FBI has forged partnerships nationally and locally with many civil rights organizations and community groups to share information, address concerns, and cooperate in solving problems," he added. "The FBI conducts hundreds of seminars, workshops, and training sessions for local law enforcement, minority and religious organizations, and community groups to promote cooperation, reduce civil rights abuses, and provide education about civil right statutes."

"Making a threat specifically targeting groups of people by saying that you are going to use violence against them as a form of protecting others definitely crosses the line," Waters said. "The whole online narrative around any type of violence is something we are starting to have real conversations about—recognizing the consequences of the spaces we have created online for folks to be able to anonymously share their violent biases."

These biases are presently focused against a tiny minority of the American population.

The new bogeyman

A June 2016 study from the UCLA think tank the Williams Institute estimated that 1.4 million adults or 0.6 percent of the U.S. adult population identify as transgender. How is it that political and religious leaders believe such a minority to be a ubiquitous threat to society?

"In a sense, [transgender people] have become the new bogeyman," Temple said. "For a while it was African Americans and, when people started to realize that interracial couples weren't a bad thing, they moved away from that. Then it was the LGB population. Now that people can see that friends and family members who are gay are not predators, we've moved away from that. Trans people may be the new acceptable target."

There is historical precedent.

It occurred in Germany following the Wall Street Crash of 1929.

"There was a complete economic, social and political depression," Szany said. "Within that, you saw a number of different political parties begin to vie for having the solution to help address fears that people had about finding a job, the Communists or the Jews. They need someone to scapegoat for all their ills. What's surprising for people to know is that less than a half percent of the German population were Jews."

The 1938 Streicher illustration is therefore not so far removed from the caricatures currently presented about the transgender community.

Organizations like the Transgender Law Center and the National Center for Transgender Equality along with film-based projects such as the Emmy-nominated Her Story and Emmy-winning Transparent are trying to counter that image.

Co-founded by the Transgender Law Center and Equality California, Transform California is on a mission to "promote respect, understanding and safety for the transgender and gender nonconforming community."

"They are using media campaigns to challenge the fear-based rhetoric by humanizing transgender people," Waters said. "We have

more visibility than ever around transgender and gender nonconforming issues. My sense is that, while there is this terrible violence being perpetrated against transgender people, we are having more conversations about what it means to be trans in our society and how we can support trans people."

"I think history always wins," Temple said. "Even looking at Germany today. I would like it to happen sooner than later. From an intervention perspective, I would really like to see education starting when people are younger, before they can get inundated with negative rhetoric about trans folks. Healthy relationship programming should include information on the trans community."

"I think we need more public education and messaging," Minter agreed. "We had so much public education around marriage equality and that's exactly what we need now—an all-hands-on-deck, mass movement and mobilization around public messaging around transgender people. For those of us who are transgender, when we can, we must tell our family members, employers and neighbors how we are affected by negative messages. It's scary, demeaning and it hurts."

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