



YEAR IN REVIEW



RIP, GEORGE MICHAEL
 Iconic singer passes away at 53.
 PR photo

17

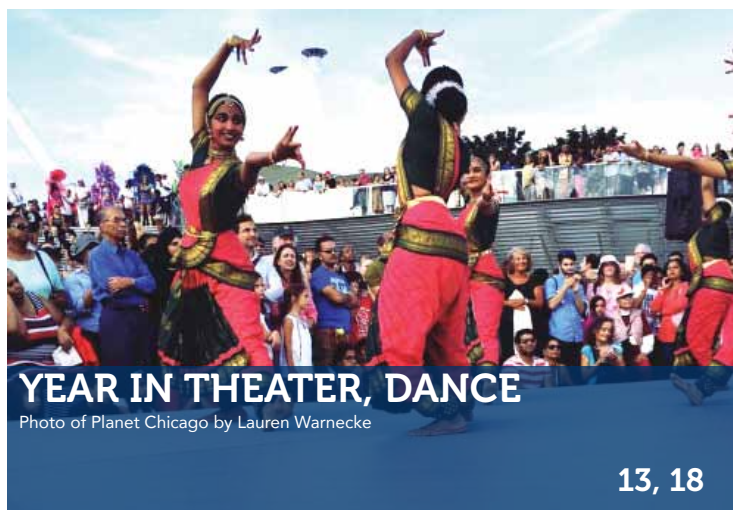


2016 was a momentous year in general, but also for LGBTQs in Chicago and around the world. From the outpouring of love and support surrounding the Orlando massacre (top) to the triumph of the film Moonlight (above, left) and the Chicago production of Hamilton (above, right), we look back as we approach the new year.
 Photo of the Orlando vigil at the 2016 Pride Parade by Tracy Baim; Moonlight photo by David Bornfriend, courtesy of A24; Hamilton photo by Joan Marcus



UPTOWN SHELTER
 Advocates march; shelter saved.
 Photo of Ryne Poelker by Matt Simonette

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YEAR IN THEATER, DANCE
 Photo of Planet Chicago by Lauren Warnecke

13, 18



YEAR IN LGBT MOVIES
 Also, Richard Knight, Jr. says goodbye.
 Photo by Ed Negron)

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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ART-FELT
Artist Monica Raye Simpson (left) talks about her childhood, social justice. Image courtesy of Simpson

SEX SELLS



Gaywheels describes the 2017 Lincoln MKZ as "a sexy beast." Photo from Gaywheels.com

BLUES TRAVELER



Bent Nights looks at shows by Foxing and blues singer Shemekia Copeland (above). Photo by Vern Hester

PURPLE REIGN

The year in music included the deaths of giants David Bowie and Prince.

THE DINER THINGS

Read the latest in dining news, such as the closure of The Drake's Cape Cod Room.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Tegan and Sara, Will Smith and Colton Haynes.

plus **DAILY BREAKING NEWS**



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'15 Toyota Camry LE	Automatic, Full Power, Black, P5384 ...\$13,995	'11 Forester 2.5x	Automatic, Full Power, Black, 15615A ...\$10,995
'13 Dodge Journey American VP	Automatic, Full Power, Grey, 16303A ...\$12,995	SUBARU LEGACYS / OUTBACKS	
'15 Toyota Corolla LE	Automatic, Full Power, White, P5385 ...\$12,995	'15 Outback Ltd.	Automatic, Moonroof, Leather, White, 16004A ...\$26,995
'15 Hyundai Elantra SE	Automatic, Full Power, Grey, P5174 ...\$10,995	'15 Outback Prem.	Auto., Bluetooth, All Weather, Silver, P5177 ...\$22,995
'11 Toyota Prius II	Automatic, Full Power 60K, Red, P5333A ...\$9,995	'14 Outback Ltd.	Automatic, Moonroof, Leather, Blue, P5204 ...\$21,995
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'07 Toyota Camry XLE	Auto., Leather, Sunroof, Silver, 14575RA ...\$8,995	'14 Legacy 2.5i	Automatic, Full Power, Silver, P5290 ...\$14,995
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'12 Hyundai Accent SE	Automatic, Full Power, White, 16349A ...\$7,995	'15 Crosstrek Prem.	Automatic, All Weather, Full Power, Silver, P5280 ...\$21,995
'05 Acura MDX Touring/Nav AWD	Loaded, Moonroof, White, 16423A ...\$7,995	'14 Crosstrek Ltd.	Automatic, All Weather, Sunroof, Silver, 15968A ...\$19,995
'11 Toyota Yaris	Automatic, Full Power, Red, P5344A ...\$7,995	'15 Impreza Prem.	Automatic, All Weather, Full Power, Green, P5394 ...\$17,995
'06 Acura TL	Automatic, 1-Owner, White, 16364A ...\$6,995	'14 Crosstrek Prem.	Automatic, All Weather, Silver, P5238A ...\$17,995
'06 Toyota Corolla LE	Automatic, Full Power, 79K, Grey, 16161A ...\$6,795	'14 Impreza Prem.	Auto., All Weather, Full Power, White, P5140 ...\$15,995
'05 Honda Accord EXV6	Automatic, Sunroof, Silver, 15870A ...\$5,995	'07 Impreza SE	Automatic, Sunroof, 84K, Black, 14981RA ...\$7,995
'01 Honda Civic EX	Automatic, Sunroof, 68K, Green, 16475A ...\$4,995	'08 Impreza Prem	Automatic, Heated Seats, Black, 16474A ...\$8,995
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Johnson HIV conviction reversed

Judges from the Missouri Eastern District Court of Appeals, on Dec. 20, reversed the convictions of gay college student Michael Johnson, who was sentenced to three decades in prison for exposing persons to HIV, and ordered that he be retried.

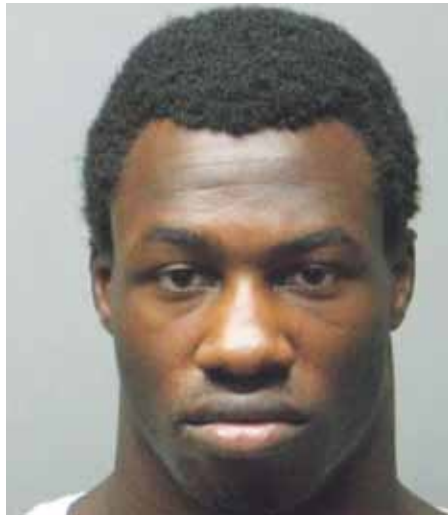
The appellate judges said in their ruling that the lower court incorrectly allowed evidence—phone calls Johnson made from jail that were not sufficiently disclosed in advance to the defense—in Johnson's trial.

Johnson was an athlete enrolled at Lindenwood University in the St. Louis suburb of St. Charles who was accused of infecting two people with HIV and exposing four others to the virus. He was ultimately convicted in 2015 of one count of recklessly infecting an individual with HIV, one count of recklessly exposing an individual to HIV, and three counts of recklessly attempting to expose an individual to HIV. His sentence was 30 years in prison.

Scott Schoettes, Lambda Legal HIV Project Director at Lambda Legal, who provided assistance to Johnson's public defender in preparation for his defense, said in a statement that his organization "is elated with the outcome at the appellate level in Michael Johnson's case, and the second chance it provides Michael. The real barrier to justice for Michael is the law itself—and we must energize efforts to change the laws and eliminate HIV-based prosecutions in the absence of the intent to harm."

Johnson refused to accept a plea bargain. His appeal also maintained that his sentence amounted to cruel and unusual punishment. The appellate court did not consider the merits for that point however, since the circumstances surrounding the inadmissible evidence were enough to warrant a new trial.

BuzzFeed extensively profiled Johnson's case,



Michael Johnson.

documenting how systemic racism, classism, homophobia and HIV stigmatization informed the athlete's investigation and prosecution.

"Living with HIV is not a crime," added Schoettes. "Except in the most extreme cases, the criminal law is far too blunt an instrument to address the subtle dynamics of HIV disclosure. Willingness to be open about HIV status will be created only by the destigmatization of HIV and policies that ensure people living with HIV are not singled out for discrimination or special prohibitions and punishments. Prosecutions like this—under antiquated laws like Missouri's—take us in the opposite direction.

"Given the outdated nature and extremely punitive nature of Missouri's law, Lambda Legal is hopeful the State will not appeal this decision, and will instead work to resolve the case without the need for another trial."

See www.courts.mo.gov/file.jsp.

graduate, is a professor of urban studies and planning at Hunter.

Miss. man pleads guilty in transgender woman's murder

Joshua Brandon Vallum, 29, of Lucedale, Mississippi, pled guilty Dec. 23 to a federal hate crime for assaulting and murdering Mercedes Williamson because she was a transgender woman.

Williamson was 17 years old and resided in Alabama at the time of her death. Vallum was charged with violating the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

U.S. District Judge Louis Guirola Jr. of the Southern District of Mississippi accepted Vallum's plea. Vallum faces up to life in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Vallum previously pleaded guilty to murdering Williamson in George County, Mississippi, Circuit Court, where he was sentenced to life in prison. While the state convicted Vallum on murder charges, the federal government was able to bring this prosecution because Mississippi does not have a hate crimes statute that protects people from bias crimes based on their gender identity.

Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch; Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Vanita Gupta, head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division; U.S. Attorney Gregory K. Davis of the Southern District of Mississippi; and Special Agent in Charge Christopher Freeze of the FBI's Jackson Division announced the plea.

Gay couple removed after Ivanka Trump confrontation

At New York City's JFK International Airport, a gay man verbally confronted soon-to-be First Daughter Ivanka Trump, 35, on a JetBlue airplane before he and his husband were removed from it.

"Your father is ruining the country," attorney Dan Goldstein (traveling with husband, college professor Matthew Lasner) said to Trump. The oldest daughter of President-Elect Donald Trump allegedly did not respond.

In a statement, JetBlue said, "If the crew determines that a customer is causing conflict on the aircraft, the customer will be asked to deplane, especially if the crew feels the situation runs the risk of escalation during flight. In this instance, our team worked to re-accommodate the party on the next available flight."

Since the incident, Trump supporters have expressed their displeasure with Goldstein. An item that some of the backers have posted reads, "What is wrong with you? You never attack a Woman, especially when she is with her children! You two pu--y's [sic] owe her an apology!" Some are also calling for Hunter College to fire Lasner, who is a professor at the institution.

However, at least one other witness has said that Goldstein did not "accost her directly," according to Yahoo! News.

Goldstein is an employment lawyer in Brooklyn, and graduated from Wesleyan University and from UCLA School of Law. According to his Twitter page, Lasner, a Harvard University

GUEST COLUMN

BY PAIGE M. STEFFEN, ESQ., CLARK HILL PLC



Know Your Rights: Ensuring Equality for LGBTQ Employees

The Corporate Equality Index ("CEI"), an annual list published by the Human Rights Campaign ("HRC") Foundation that rates workplaces on LGBTQ equality, recently released its 15th Edition, which reported that a record number of businesses are now embracing inclusive policies for LGBTQ employees.

The CEI praises the success of the nation's largest employers, stating that they have "demonstrated through their actions that LGBTQ people are not just tolerated, but welcomed in their workplaces and communities."

In a time of turmoil and uncertainty, these companies are taking the lead to ensure that their most valuable assets, their employees, are protected and treated with respect and equality.

The HRC Foundation is one of the largest advocacy groups for the LGBTQ community, and it has used the CEI as a platform to gauge companies' level of LGBTQ workplace inclusion and to encourage all employers to promote equality for all employees. Approximately 900 companies with a minimum of 500 full-time employees throughout the U.S., representing almost every industry, participated in this year's CEI. All of the involved companies were ranked with a score from 0 to 100 depending on the inclusiveness of its workplace.

The scores are calculated based upon the following categories: (1) Equal employment opportunity policy; (2) Employment benefits (equivalent spousal and partner benefits); (3) Organizational LGBTQ competency; and (4) Public commitment to LGBTQ-specific efforts. Further, if the participating company was involved in a large-scale official or public anti-LGBTQ event, that company's score would be significantly decreased.

The CEI contained encouraging reports of great successes in ensuring fairness and equality in the workplace. Notably, 517 of the CEI-ranked companies, which is up from last year's 407, received perfect scores on this year's Index. More than 40 of the CEI-ranked companies with perfect scores, including Boeing, Crate and Barrel, Sears Holdings, and several law firms are based in Illinois.

Not only is this the largest number of companies receiving top scores, it is also the largest jump in a single year. Many additional CEI-rated companies, approximately 650 in total, offer transgender-inclusive healthcare coverage, and more than 90% of the businesses have implemented both sexual orientation and gender identity employment protections.

In addition, 50% of the Fortune 500 companies participating in this year's CEI offer transgender-inclusive healthcare coverage. To put this figure into perspective, not a single Fortune

500 company provided such coverage in 2002, and less than 10% provided coverage in 2011.

Further, 387 CEI-rated companies have adopted gender transition guidelines for employees in efforts to establish best practices for transgender inclusion in the workplace. These companies have also invested in education. For instance, 86% of the CEI-rated businesses offer education and training programs that specifically include definitions of and/or scenarios on gender identity in the workplace.

As evidenced by the above statistics, the public sector has led and continues to lead the way in workplace equality. Dozens of corporations have taken strong stances and spoken publicly against federal and state bills that may retract from the progress that has been made in LGBTQ equality.

These public efforts by some of the nation's—and the world's—largest employers have reportedly helped block more than 100 laws across the U.S. that could have been detrimental to the LGBTQ community. For example, Wal-Mart, the nation's largest public employer with more than two million employees, helped defeat anti-LGBTQ laws in Arkansas. Whole Foods Market, among hundreds of other corporations, also intends to speak out against any and all Texas laws seen as hostile to LGBTQ persons.

The HRC Foundation encourages all companies to use the CEI as a guide to help develop and successfully implement inclusive LGBTQ policies and protections.

However, these companies' efforts to promote inclusive policies, practices, protections, and benefits for LGBTQ employees have been met with backlash. For instance, some retailers who have implemented supportive LGBTQ policies and made statements in support of the LGBTQ community have faced protests and boycotts from consumers. One of the most publicized boycotts came after Target pledged that customers and employees could use the bathroom of their gender identity. Additionally, there are still companies that do not recognize basic hiring protections for LGBTQ or recognize gender identity in their company policies.

While it is important to recognize the great strides that have been made in LGBTQ equality, it is equally important to understand that there is significant work to be done and that there are still barriers to full equality for the LGBTQ community.

Understanding and navigating your rights as an employee can be challenging and overwhelming. In the event that you have any questions, you may want to contact an attorney to discuss your situation.

Paige M. Steffen is an Associate Attorney in Clark Hill PLC's Chicago office. She concentrates her practice on insurance and health care law. Contact her at 312-517-7501 or psteffen@clarkhill.com.



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Dr. Brent E. Smith.

PASSAGES

Dr. Brent E. Smith

Dr. Brent E. Smith, of Bolingbrook, passed away at his home Dec. 17. He was 55.

Brent was born June 16, 1961, the son of Richard and Bessie Louise (Miller) Smith in Carthage, Illinois. He attended Carthage High School graduating in 1979. He then went on to graduate from Illinois Wesleyan College in 1983 and was a member of Sigma Pi. He then went on to receive his medical degree from the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine and practiced internal medicine for over 20 years. He was, most recently, the vice president clinical integration chief medical officer at Edward Hospital.

Brent is survived by his husband, Paul Mofett, of San Francisco; parents, Richard and Bessie Louise Smith of Carthage; and his sister, Jeana (Miles) Schroder of Danville, Iowa; a niece and a nephew, Elizabeth and Anthony Schroder.

Funeral services will be held at Saturday, Jan. 7, at 3 p.m. at First Christian Church in Carthage. Visitation will be from 2 p.m. until time of services at the church. Memorials may be directed to Illinois Wesleyan College or Pilots N Paws, 4651 Howe Road, Landrum, SC 29356. Printy Funeral Home of Carthage is in charge of arrangements.



John Joseph Manzella.

PASSAGES

John Joseph Manzella

John Joseph Manzella, a retired beautician who lived in Chicago's Lake View neighborhood, passed away peacefully on Dec. 17. He was 74.

John was the beloved life partner of 51 years to the late Carlyle John Jajko, and was the faithful companion of Kukla Chang and many other shih tzus.

John will be deeply missed by his neighbors, six of whom were with him when he died. He was regarded by many as the pipeline of the peripatetic community of Lake View.

Services are private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his name to the Anti-Cruelty Society (Anticruelty.org) or Advocate Illinois Masonic Hospice (773-975-1600).

Arrangements by Cremation Society of Illinois; call 773-281-5058.

Retail shop Blossom Boys closes

Blossom Boys, a retail flower shop at 9911 S. Walden Parkway in Beverly, closed Dec. 24, according to DNAInfo.

Owners Steve English and Ryan Steinbach opened the shop April 24, 2008. Steinbach said, "I've told some people that we are re-starting or changing our scope." English added that it has become harder to make a profit with retail flower sales.

On Facebook on Dec. 24, English posted a photo of a "Closed" sign with the caption "Thanks for the memories."

When Windy City Times profiled the business in 2010, English said, "Beverly is the safest neighborhood in Chicago. It does not 'feel' like Chicago. The feeling is quaint, warm and friendly ... almost village-like, an oasis in a fast-pasted urban city.

"We are accepted as a hardworking couple who own their own business and give back to the community."

The DNAInfo piece is at <https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20161026/beverly-blossom-boys-flower-shop-steve-english-ryan-steinbach>. The Windy City Times article is at <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Blossom-Boys-Business-blooms-on-the-South-Side/28324.html>.

dnainfo.com/chicago/20161026/beverly-blossom-boys-flower-shop-steve-english-ryan-steinbach. The Windy City Times article is at <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Blossom-Boys-Business-blooms-on-the-South-Side/28324.html>.

Judge issues decision in open meetings suit

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A Cook County judge, on Dec. 20, ruled that the Chicago City Council violated the Open Meetings Act (OMA) by not having any forum for public comment in its monthly meetings.

The partial ruling by Judge Diane Larsen comes after a lawsuit from two gay activists, Andy Thayer and Rick Garcia, who were unable to enter the May and June meetings, though they were nearly at the front of the line for the gallery. Thayer and Garcia similarly decried the lack of public comment at Council

meetings; Thayer intended to protest a \$15.8 TIF ordinance.

The Council will have to establish and record rules allowing public comment at meetings; its attorneys will report on their progress and timeframe in court on Jan. 3. The matter of spectator access to the Council chambers was not addressed in the ruling.

"While this is just round #1 in this suit, it is a crucial victory not only for affordable housing advocates, but for everyone in this City who has a beef with City Hall," said Thayer in a Dec. 21 statement. "Over the past few years we've seen the City Council pass a series of deeply unpopular measures, from phony reforms that don't really reform the police, to a whole series of increased taxes targeting mostly poor and moderate income people, increasing the chasm between the rich and the rest of us.

"Mayor Emanuel and the Aldermen are able to ram through these regressive measures in part because they concoct their Council meetings in way where no visible opposition is allowed."

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Homelessness advocates march in Uptown; shelter saved

BY MATT SIMONETTE AND TRACY BAIM

About two dozen community members gathered Dec. 23 at the viaduct at Wilson and Lake Shore Drive and marched to Preston Bradley Center, 941 W. Lawrence Ave., in a show of solidarity for persons experiencing homelessness.

The gathering, sponsored by Uptown Tent City Organizers, North Side Action for Justice, Gay Liberation Network and other local community organizations, was both a celebration of the reprieve given to the shelter, located in the Preston Bradley basement, originally scheduled to close the same day, and a call-to-action on behalf of persons living in the Uptown viaducts.

The shelter is operated by North Side Housing & Supportive Services and has 72 beds. Its closing was announced earlier in 2016; North Side Executive Director Richard Ducatenzeiler cited the state budget crisis and a persistent \$100,000 deficit as the main reasons. But a last-minute reversal came the previous day.

Ald. James Cappleman (46th Ward) posted to Twitter on Dec. 22, "Great news that the Northside Shelter will remain open thru the holidays & I am working with DFSS & Mayor to keep open indefinitely."

In a press release, the shelter stated: "The 72-bed shelter for homeless men ... will remain

open due to a large, multi-year donation from the Chicago-based Reva and David Logan foundation and renewed support from the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS)."

"This eleventh-hour donation has saved the shelter from permanently closing at the end of today, December 23, as previously announced," said Ducatenzeiler. "Support from the community during this period was overwhelming. We hope that the interest, and financial support, remains strong so we can continue to provide these critical services to our community. We will continue the fight to end homelessness in Chicago and hope that all Chicagoans will join us."

Andy Thayer of Uptown Tent City Organizers and Gay Liberation Network called the reprieve "a victory you all won. This was not the politicians. This was not the wealthy."

The shelter, which operates 365 days a year, is the only emergency shelter for men in the Uptown neighborhood. In 2016, it served more than 300 men and since the agency took over operations in 2012, more than 1,000 men have been served, they said.

Roger Fraser of Gay Liberation Network criticized the alderman for taking sole credit in the reprieve, and for thanking Mayor Emanuel. Instead, Fraser said in a letter that Uptown Tent



One of the tents moved from under the Wilson viaduct during cleaning.

Photo by Tracy Baim

City should receive credit for its role in putting pressure on the situation.

"This savvy pressure group was composed of ordinary people doing extraordinary things," Fraser said. "They learned as they went along and became more and more effective; they planned their demos carefully and made sure TV cameras were rolling and reporters were taking notes every time they confronted an embarrassed Cappleman." Fraser added that "time and again they faced down city cops intent on harassing the homeless and intimidating them out of their tents under the viaducts."

Fraser concluded: "Uptown Tent City shows us how it should be done: Organize, discuss tactics, admit mistakes, be inclusive, demonstrate, be in the streets, get the press to events. Mobilize people with the energy and foresight and modesty to do the hard and largely thankless work of movement building. We thank Uptown Tent City not only for winning a stunning victory but for showing us all the way forward in dark times."

Despite the coalition's good news this week, the organizers pointed to difficulties faced by persons forced to live beneath the viaducts. That morning, residents had to drag their belongings out from the underpass while city workers performed a large-scale cleaning, which is a weekly or biweekly occurrence. Much of the cleaning occurred at the same time as the demonstration.

"There's no doubt that these cleanings are harassment," said activist Ryne Poelker.

Maria Murray, who along with her husband Joe lives at one of the viaducts, expressed frustration with what she said was stalling by city officials over a solution.

"We're hearing, 'It's going to take time,'" she added. ... "It changes minute by minute."

Joe added, "We need support from the community, to show that they care about the

homeless."

"Two days before Christmas, this is what you do for the homeless?" asked Poelker.

The sweeps under the Wilson viaducts and other places homeless sleep through the city come under the Bryant Agreement signed in 2015 by the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless and the city of Chicago's law department. In that agreement, the city agreed to pay \$42,500 to the homeless who sued the city for taking their materials illegally in an earlier sweep.

They sued under the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and the Illinois Bill of Rights for the Homeless Act, and further alleged that the city had breached the settlement agreement in a prior federal lawsuit, *Love v. City of Chicago* (1996).

But the Bryant agreement still allows the city to come in and do periodic off-street cleaning.

In the agreement, the city designated that the homeless would be allowed to keep certain "portable" items but not other items. So in the Dec. 23 sweep, many items belonging to the homeless were thrown out by the city. There were dozens of city employees from various departments, plus city garbage trucks, and other city vehicles, used to sweep the Wilson viaduct that morning. Chicago Police officers watched over the action.

The Bryant language states: "Portable personal possessions" means that each homeless person may have only the following items with him or her in the Lower Wacker Drive Area or in the other areas covered by these procedures: a sleeping bag or bedroll, not more than two coats, not more than two pairs of shoes or boots, not more than five blankets, and not more than three bags or suitcases, and such contents as may be contained in said bags or suitcases. From October through April, homeless persons also may have up to five additional blankets and one additional sleeping bag or bedroll with them in the Lower Wacker Drive Area. "Portable personal possessions" do not include, among other items, non-air mattresses, box springs, potted plants, crates, large appliance boxes, carts, gurneys, wagons, or furniture, including, but not limited to, chairs, tables, couches, and bed frames."

People who have experienced the sweeps claim the city takes far more than they should, and in the materials being swept up Dec. 23 there were extensive items of clothing and food. Since it was just before the holidays, many people from the general public had just recently donated items to those living under the viaduct.

See the complete Bryant agreement here: http://law.alumni.northwestern.edu/s/1479/images/gid4/editor_documents/bryant_settlement_agreement.pdf?sessionId=f80a7a2c-7221-4c56-937b-8f79278e26b2.



Top: Maria and Joe Murray. Above: Sweep of those experiencing homelessness.

Top image by Matt Simonette; above photo by Tracy Baim



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Heartland official speaks on testing, PrEP outreach

BY MATT SIMONETTE

For Ed Stellan, executive director of Heartland Health Outreach (HHO), engaging Chicagoans who have, or who are especially vulnerable to, HIV infection is about “more than putting signs on a train.”

HHO is the primary healthcare provider for persons experiencing homelessness for the city, providing generalized medical, oral health and myriad other services for its clients. The larger Heartland Alliance organization has been around since 1888 and has historically worked with adults living on the margins.

“We’ve always taken the ‘latest and greatest’ when it comes to justice, housing, healthcare services, and then tried to tailor it to the most vulnerable populations,” Stellan explained.

“We also take our ‘show on the road’ and partner with medical systems and go to shelters—about 36 different shelters—in the course of the month,” Stellan said. “In addition to that, we have healthcare workers combing the streets, engaging people, especially the most vulnerable.”

The goal is that a person experiencing homelessness will reach the same health outcomes as a person stably housed. “Our undetectable rate at HHO is 89 percent,” Stellan noted. “... Right now, we’re kind of outpacing the city. I’m pretty proud of that.”

HHO case managers partner with other organizations to keep its clients on a continuum of care, he added.

“They remind them to take their meds and all kinds of ‘extras’ that provide day-to-day supports,” Stellan said.

Those community partners are especially important in offering PrEP for HHO clients who might be more vulnerable to HIV infection; Stellan noted especially their work with Chicago House and HHO’s sister organization, Heartland Human Care Services.

“[They] have recently gotten a grant to engage young men who have sex with men—and transgender folks—of color, especially on the South Side to really target transmission rates in Chicago,” he said.

With this new program, advocates are employing what Stellan called “lived experience” to reach out to populations at risk; that means doing so through transgender persons or people already on PrEP who might already have relationships built up in the the targeted populations. Many of these folks will be reaching out through social media and hookup apps, and even in real-life gathering spots.

“The idea is to get tested and get treated,” Stellan said. “If you are tested and are positive, come into HHO. Our focus is really unstably housed people, but more and more the low-



Ed Stellan.
Photo courtesy of Stellan

est income people who are really struggling. If they are not [HIV-positive] but engaging in high-risk behaviors, we will counsel them on PrEP.”

The new program is in in the very early stages, so Stellan looks forward to seeing the results. But he said that wraparound services that help persons experiencing homelessness will fill in vital gaps when it comes to eliminating new HIV/AIDS infections.

“Even without a cure, we could technically end HIV,” he noted. “We could get everyone who is positive to find out their status and engage them in care and keep them in care, and with those around them considering and engaging in PrEP, we could actually end new infections. It’s a lofty goal, but doable. What they’re finding is, the group for whom this is not especially working well is homeless young people. When you’re homeless, the last thing on your list of what’s important is going to the doctor.”

When people are stably housed, people are more likely to get and stay on anti-retroviral medications, he explained.

“That’s why we use dynamic case managers to keep people connected,” Stellan said. “We follow people. If we don’t hear from you, we’re going to find you and get you to come in.”

people access to birth control, abortion and other basic services based on moral or religious objections. Still other measures, such as anti-transgender legislation (or so-called “bathroom bills”), target specific groups and seek to shield businesses and individuals from anti-discrimination laws.

Regarding Illinois, the tracker lists 26 statutes that fall into the categories, including the Illinois Abortion Performance Refusal Act (in effect), the Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act (in effect), the Illinois Religious Freedom Restoration Act (in effect) and even the Illinois Bill Amending the Anatomical Gift Act (failed to pass).

The tracker is at <https://rewire.news/legislative-tracker/law-topic/religious-imposition-laws/>.

Thousands of Illinoisans set for D.C. march

Part of a nationwide groundswell that originated the day after the presidential elections, women and men from across the state of Illinois are preparing to join the national Women’s March on Washington on Saturday, Jan. 21—the day after the inauguration of the next president of the United States.

Illinois organizers Mrinalini Chakraborty, Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth, Amber Hummel, Julie List, Amanda Jane Long and Amanda Drenth, have been coordinating the promotion and logistics needed to make sure those Illinoisans who want to attend the march in D.C., are able to. They are coordinating buses throughout the state that marchers can buy individual seats on (through the RallyBus platform), as well as organizing efforts for sponsored buses for those marchers in need of financial assistance.

The work of the Illinois chapter has already been endorsed and aided by Chicago Women Take Action (CWTA), the National Organization of Jewish Women (NOJW) and Rainbow PUSH Coalition, among other organizations and local advocacy groups.

The next public meeting for the group is Wed., Dec. 28 at Rainbow PUSH, 930 E. 50th St., at 6:30 p.m.

The hashtags for social media are #wmwillinois #womensmarch, #whyIMarch, #hearourvoice.

On Twitter, interested persons can visit @womensmarchIL; on Instagram, it is @womensmarchillinois. People can download flyers for printing at <https://goo.gl/10wuq>.



From left: Julie List, Amanda Jane Long, Mrinalini Chakraborty, Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth (front), Amber Hummel and Amanda Drenth.
Photo courtesy of organization

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New tracking tool for religious bills launched

On Dec. 13, the daily online publication Rewire introduced a new resource, the Religious Imposition Legislative Tracker, a comprehensive and timely database of state and federal legislation that seeks to expand the reach of religious power into secular lives.

The legislative tracker details state and federal measures related to religious imposition, such as RFRA (Religious Freedom Restoration Acts), which allow those with religious objections to avoid complying with certain laws. Others take the form of conscience and refusal laws that permit civil servants, healthcare workers and others to deny

Looking back: National news in 2016

COMPILED BY ANDREW DAVIS

Oh, 2016. It was a year of (sometimes extremely) emotional highs and lows—including developments regarding what was quite possibly the most polarizing election ever as well as a mass shooting that, sadly, made the record books.

—**Trump card:** The biggest news of the year had to be the election of Republican Donald Trump—who had been known before now as a real-estate mogul, entrepreneur and reality-TV figure—as president of the United States by scoring a huge upset over Democrat Hillary Clinton on Nov. 8. The electoral result made many (especially in the LGBT community) cautious about what Trump's legacy will be. Clinton ended up in a dogfight with U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders for the Democratic nomination, while Trump contended with more than a dozen other individuals, including Jeb Bush, Rand Paul and U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz.

—**Tragedy in Orlando:** In what has now become the largest mass shooting in U.S. history, at least 49 people were killed, on June 12, when a gunman opened fire at the Orlando, Florida, LGBT nightclub Pulse—with many of the victims being Latinx. More than 50 people were also reported as injured, and the gunman also died. The tragedy was noted globally, with landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower lit in rainbow colors to show solidarity with the LGBT community.

—**Southern inhospitality:** In North Carolina, Gov. Pat McCrory signed HB2—a so-called “bathroom bill” that forces transgender people to use the public restroom that correlates with the gender they were born. Signing the bill cost the state millions in revenue, with everyone from the NBA to the San Francisco Symphony cancelling events there.

—**Reversal of fortune:** Judges from the Missouri Eastern District Court of Appeals, on Dec. 20, reversed the convictions of gay college student Michael Johnson, who was sentenced to three decades in prison for exposing persons to HIV, and ordered that he be retried.

—**Marching forward:** The U.S. Senate confirmed the nomination of an openly gay man to serve as Secretary of the U.S. Army—the first openly gay person to serve as the head of any military branch. The confirmation of Eric Fanning, by voice vote, came very quickly after U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kansas) lifted a hold he had put on the nomination.

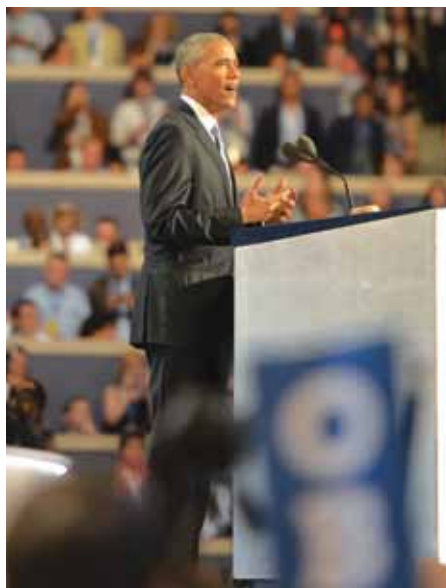
—**Denied:** In Indiana, Senate Bill 344—the so-called “LGB, no T” bill because it did not provide protections for the transgender community—died in the state Senate on Feb. 2 without a vote.

—**Rent to be:** Rentboy CEO Jeffrey Hurant pled to promotion of prostitution—a case condemned by civil-rights groups as a witch hunt targeting gays and the world's oldest profession.

—**Here comes the judge:** The Puerto Rico Senate confirmed a lesbian woman to become the next chief justice of the U.S. commonwealth's highest court. Senators approved Maite Oronoz Rodríguez's nomination by a 14-12 vote.

—**History lesson:** While Black Panther Party founder Huey Newton was a controversial figure in the civil-rights movement, he was also an early supporter of gay rights, as a 1970 speech revealed.

—**Like a Rock:** Host Chris Rock wasted no time addressing the elephant in the room—the controversy over the lack of diversity of Oscar nominees—at the 88th Academy Awards Feb. 28. Among other things, he rolled out video montages that poked fun at the lack of diversity, including one that put African-American spins on films such as *The Martian*, *Joy* and *The Danish Girl*.



President Obama.
Photo by Michael Key

—**Sister, sister:** In a Windy City Times exclusive, the second sibling of the filmmaking duo known as The Wachowskis came out as transgender. Lilly Wachowski, sibling of Lana, came out in a statement after being threatened with outing by other media.

—**Trans liaison:** President Barack Obama appointed Raffi Freedman-Gurspan as the White House's primary LGBT liaison—making her the first transgender person in the role.

—**Award:** Colonel Margarethe Cammermeyer, the highest-ranking active officer to challenge the U.S. military's ban on LGBT service members, received the 2016 Leonard Matlovich Medal for Distinguished Service by American Veterans for Equal Rights, the nation's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender veterans service organization.

—**Center of love:** Tom Swann, 58, and Guillermo Hernandez, 21, of Palm Springs, California, made history as the first same-sex couple to get married inside an immigration detention center.

—**Mississippi turning:** On March 31, U.S. District Judge Daniel P. Jordan III overturned Mississippi's ban on allowing same-sex couples to adopt children. However, in April, Gov. Phil Bryant signed the anti-gay HB 1523 into law; a judge later struck it down.

—**No solo Gio:** ABC News Correspondent Gio Benitez married Tommy DiDario April 16 in Miami. ABC News journalists, including Martha Raddatz, Rebecca Jarvis, Kendis Gibson, Cecilia Vega and Alex Perez, along with Sam Champion attended the nuptials.

—**Legal eagle:** Rachel B. Tiven was hired as the new CEO of Lambda Legal, the nation's oldest legal organization fighting for equality on behalf of LGBT people and those living with HIV. Tiven was executive director of the Immigrant Justice Corps.

—**AIDS at 35:** President Obama issued a statement on the 35th anniversary of AIDS. In part, he said, “We've learned that stigma and silence don't just fuel ignorance, they foster transmission and give life to a plague. We've seen that testing, treatment, education, and acceptance can not only save and extend lives, but fight the discrimination that halted progress for too long.”

—**Grand finale:** Obama also, in June, issued his final LGBT Pride Month proclamation. He said, “LGBT individuals deserve to know their country stands beside them. That is why my Administration is striving to better understand the needs of LGBT adults and to provide affordable, welcoming, and supportive housing to aging LGBT Americans.”

—**TUF enough:** Trans United Fund (TUF) issued the first-ever trans-focused questionnaire

to presidential candidates. TUF said that no Republican candidate's campaign responded and both the Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton campaigns committed to complete the survey, although only Sanders has initially followed through.

—**Law and order:** Edward H. Gersowitz was installed as the 49th president of the New York State Trial Lawyers Association, the largest state lawyer association dedicated to protecting the rights of consumers and advocating on behalf of injured persons. He is the first openly LGBT president of a trial lawyers association in the United States.

—**Taking care:** The Defense Department employed personnel changes, such as expanded maternity leave for female service members and medical coverage for transgender troops.

—**Ambush in Texas:** A former Army reservist who served a tour in Afghanistan went on a shooting rampage over July 7-8 during a protest over recent police shootings of African-American men in Minnesota and Louisiana, killing five police officers (including out gay officer Jesus Retana) and wounding up to nine others.

—**Yes, Michigan:** Fair Michigan—a Michigan non-profit corporation seeking to end discrimination against persons based on sex, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity—launched the Fair Michigan Justice Project, a program to assist Michigan law enforcement officers and prosecutors in solving serious crimes against LGBT persons.

—**Historical changes:** The California State Board of Education unanimously voted to adopt a new history-social science framework. The framework sets out guidelines for K-12 schools to implement content standards for history and social science instruction. Among the many changes made to the framework, LGBT people and their contributions to California and U.S. history are accurately represented for the first time.

—**Lesbian bishop:** Methodists meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona, elected the United Methodist Church's first openly lesbian bishop. Delegates at the Western Jurisdictional Conference elected the Rev. Karen Oliveto, senior pastor at Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco, on the 17th ballot.

—**Chelsea lately:** Supporters of whistleblower, transgender activist Chelsea Manning gathered in several cities around the world (including Chicago) on her 29th birthday to appeal to President Obama to commute her prison sentence to time served. Several developments centered around Manning in 2016, including reported suicide attempts and assurances that she will get gender-confirmation surgery.

—**Hello, Harvey:** A Congressional notification indicated that the U.S. Navy would name a ship after the late openly gay San Francisco politician/gay-rights leader Harvey Milk. The notification, which Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus signed, indicated he intended to name a planned Military Sealift Command fleet oiler the USNS Harvey Milk.

—**Injunction junction:** A U.S. District Court judge issued a preliminary injunction against the federal government's guidance to public school districts regarding their legal responsibility to allow transgender students to use the same restrooms as other students. The ruling came in the multi-state lawsuit *Texas v. United States*.

—**Mayor marries:** Jackie Biskupski, the out mayor of Salt Lake City, married her partner at a private ceremony officiated by their longtime friend, Kate Kendell, executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights. The ceremony was held at the Log Haven Restaurant in Salt Lake City on Aug. 14.

—**Family ties:** In a major ruling for same-sex and other non-traditional couples, New York's top court ruled that non-biological and non-adoptive parents can seek visitation and custody if a couple splits. Until the ruling, the courts have held that non-biological and non-adoptive parents had no legal standing when it comes to parenting.

—**Kate expectations:** Amazon series *Trans-*

parent scored two wins at the Emmys, including Jeffrey Tambor (Outstanding Lead Actor, Comedy Series) and newly out lesbian Jill Soloway (Outstanding Directing, Comedy Series). Also, Sarah Paulson won Outstanding Lead Actress, Limited Series or Movie award for portraying attorney Marcia Clark in *The People v. O.J. Simpson*; and lesbian actor/comedian Kate McKinnon became the first SNL cast member to win a supporting Emmy in a comedy category.

—**Bi anxiety:** A new report previewed at the White House in a groundbreaking policy meeting found that while more than half of the LGBT community identifies as bisexual, bisexual people experience alarming rates of invisibility, societal rejection, violence, discrimination, and poor physical and mental health—often at rates higher than their lesbian and gay peers.

—**After all:** Former *AfterEllen* editor-in-chief Trish Bendix was fired from her post 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.

—**Moore or less:** Alabama's Court of the Judiciary—saying Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore violated judicial ethics when he ordered judges not to respect the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark ruling on same-sex marriage—unanimously decided to suspend him for the remainder of his term in office. Moore appealed; however, he recently interviewed for U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions' seat, as President-Elect Donald Trump nominated Sessions for attorney general.

—**Making news:** For the first time, Fox News anchor Shepard Smith publicly acknowledged that he is gay—and it happened during National Coming Out Month. Smith did it while speaking about Fox News head Roger Ailes, who was ousted in a major sexual-harassment scandal.

—**In the club:** *Icandy*, a popular gay bar in Philadelphia, was protested by activists after video surfaced of its owner referring to its Black patrons using the N-word. During a 21-second exchange filmed three years ago, proprietor Darryl DePiano is heard saying the slur while conversing with another man; DePiano has apologized, but that was not enough to quell the anger of LGBT people of color.

—**Released:** One of the men convicted in the brutal 2002 murder of transgender teen Gwen Araujo was approved for parole after serving 14 years in prison. Jose Merel (sentenced to 15 years to life) was convicted of second-degree murder in the 2002 beating death; he and another young man killed the 17-year-old after discovering she was transgender.

—**About Time:** Transgender student-rights activist Gavin Grimm, *CoverGirl*'s first “cover boy” James Charles and bisexual *The Hunger Games* actress Amanda Stenberg made *Time* magazine's annual list of “The 30 Most Influential Teens.”

—**Changing of the guard:** Jean Hodges, chair of the PFLAG National Board of Directors, announced that Executive Director Jody Huckaby would step down in December after serving in this role since January 2005.

—**Exonerated:** On Nov. 23, four Texas lesbians were exonerated of the heinous crime of the gang rape of two young girls. The so-called “San Antonio Four” (Elizabeth Ramirez, Cassandra Rivera, Kristie Mayhugh and Anna Vasquez) were accused in 1994 of sexually assaulting Ramirez's young nieces, and were convicted in 1998.

—**GLAAD to be here:** GLAAD launched the Trump Accountability Project (TAP). TAP is a resource for journalists, editors, producers and other news makers reporting on the Trump administration that catalogs the anti-LGBTQ statements and actions of Donald Trump and those in or being considered for his administration.

—**No protection:** Judge Todd Hernandez of the 19th Judicial District Court struck down Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards' executive order protecting LGBTQ state workers and contractors from discrimination.

Deaths in 2016

COMPILED BY ANDREW DAVIS

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

—**David Bowie:** Superstar British singer/songwriter David Bowie died at age 69 after a sustained battle with cancer. On Sept. 23, 2014–Jan. 4, 2015, almost 200,000 people visited the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago to see its “David Bowie Is” exhibition, setting attendance records.

—**Antonin Scalia:** Antonin Scalia—the U.S. Supreme Court justice seen by some as most hostile to equal rights for LGBT people—died, resulting in the court being reduced to eight members. It stayed that way through 2016 because of a Republican Congressional stalemate against President Obama’s choice, Merrick Garland.

—**Harper Lee:** Nelle Harper Lee—who won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1961 for her book *To Kill a Mockingbird*—died at age 89 in her hometown of Monroeville, Alabama.

—**John Gagnon:** John Gagnon—a sociologist who shifted the ground in sex research by proposing that sexual behavior could better be understood by looking at social forces rather than biology or psychology—died Feb. 11 in Palm Springs, California, at age 84. His wife said the cause of death was pancreatic cancer.

—**Dr. Quentin Young:** Dr. Quentin Young, known for his civil-rights activism, passed away March 7 in Berkeley, California. Among other achievements, Young participated in one of the historic 1965 Alabama marches from Selma to Montgomery, and co-founded and was national chairman for the Medical Committee for Human Rights.

—**Prince:** Rock superstar Prince, whose music and work inspired many in the LGBT community—even as he courted controversy with them—died April 21. He was 57. His body was found in an elevator his Paisley Park compound in Minnesota.

—**Jack Evans:** Gay Dallas advocate Jack Evans—who made national headlines when he and his partner of 56 years became the first same-sex couple to legally wed in Dallas County—passed away at age 86 after a battle with lung cancer. Evans and Harris—who met in 1961—founded the North Texas GLBT Chamber of Commerce, and were involved with The Dallas GLBT History Project.

—**Jeffrey Montgomery:** Michigan LGBTQ-rights activist Jeffrey Montgomery, the founding executive director of the Triangle Foundation, died July 18 at age 63. In 1991, Montgomery, Henry D. Messer and John Monahan co-founded the foundation, which later merged with Michigan Equality to become Equality Michigan.

—**Michelle Cliff:** Michelle Cliff—a Jamaican-American writer/activist/professor who was the



Jeanne Cordova.

widow of Adrienne Rich—died of liver failure June 12 at age 69. Cliff published “Notes on Speechlessness” in *Sinister Wisdom*, a feminist journal of lesbian culture that she and Rich edited and published in the early 1980s.

—**Phyllis Schlafly:** Arch-conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly—who bitterly opposed LGBT rights, pro-choice rights and the Equal Rights Amendment, among other causes—died Sept. 5 at age 92. In 1992, her son, John Schlafly, was outed as gay just after his mother debated a gay Republican at the 1992 GOP convention. A staffer at his mother’s organization, the Eagle Forum, he continued to support her in her causes.

—**Juan Gabriel:** Mexican singing superstar Juan Gabriel died of a massive heart attack in Santa Monica, California, on Aug. 28 at age 66. Fans and media outlets have long said Gabriel (who had four children but never married) was gay, but he has only answered the question once formally, telling a Univision reporter, “Don’t ask about something that is obvious.”

—**The Lady Chablis:** Transgender figure The Lady Chablis (also known as Brenda Dale Knox)—who became famous in John Berendt’s best-selling book *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*—passed away Sept. 8 in Savannah, Georgia at age 59. In 1996, Chablis penned her autobiography, *Hiding My Candy*, and went on to play herself in Clint Eastwood’s 1997 movie adaptation of “Midnight.”

—**Edward Albee:** Edward Albee—considered by many to be among the top U.S. playwrights for at least a generation—died Sept. 16 at his home in Montauk, New York, at age 88 after a short illness. Among his lasting works are *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?*; and *Three Tall Women*.

—**Alexis Arquette:** Transgender personality/activist Alexis Arquette died Sept. 11 at age

47. Her transition was documented in the film *Alexis Arquette: She’s My Brother*. Her siblings include Richmond, Rosanna, Patricia and David.

—**Janet Reno:** Janet Reno—who then-President Bill Clinton selected to become the country’s first woman U.S. attorney general—died Nov. 7 of Parkinson’s disease at age 78. Reno was involved in some of the biggest crises in the 1990s and early 2000s, ranging from the FBI siege of the Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Texas; to Clinton’s relationship with intern Monica Lewinsky; to the arrest of sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, who was connected to the 1993 World Trade Center bombings; to the saga of Elian Gonzalez, a 6-year-old boy who federal agents seized and returned to his father, who took the family to Cuba.

—**Fidel Castro:** Controversial longtime Cu-

ban leader died at age 90. When it came to LGBT rights, Castro was not known for his liberalism, as he sent thousands of gay men to labor camps. (He apologized for the camps in 2010.)

—**George Michael:** British-Greek singer George Michael—who launched his career with Wham! in the 1980s and later continued his success as a solo performer—died at age 53 on Christmas Day. Michael, who was openly gay, had previously dealt with depression and drug addiction, and almost died from pneumonia in 2011. Among his hit singles were the title song, “Father Figure,” “Praying for Time,” “Careless Whisper” and “I Want Your Sex.”

This article features national and international individuals. See next week’s issue for coverage of deaths of local LGBTQ figures.

HB2 repeal fails

During a special session Dec. 21, North Carolina legislators failed to repeal House Bill 2 (HB2)—the state’s so-called “bathroom bill.”

Signed by outgoing Republican Gov. Pat McCrory in March, HB2 bans people from using public bathrooms that don’t correspond to their biological sex, as listed on their birth certificates. Backlash against HB2 caused huge economic losses for the state, such as musicians (including Demi Lovato, Nick Jonas, Bruce Springsteen and the San Francisco Symphony) canceling shows and the NBA moving its all-star game from Charlotte to another city.

The state law was passed in response to a Charlotte city “nondiscrimination ordinance” that allowed transgender people to use bathrooms that correspond with their gender identity. However, on Dec. 19, the Charlotte City Council rescinded its nondiscrimination ordinance—apparently in exchange for a special session by the legislature to repeal HB2.

Lambda Legal and the ACLU issued a joint statement condemning the repeal failure. “It is a shame that North Carolina’s General Assembly is refusing to clean up the mess they made. The support for the LGBT community from political leaders, faith leaders, businesses, and everyday people that has emerged this year will not fade. These attempts to expel transgender people from public life will not be tolerated,” said James Esseks, director of the ACLU’s LGBT & HIV Project. “The legislature may not be willing to undo their unconstitutional overreach and respect the rights of LGBT people, so we’ll just have to see them in court.”

National Center for Transgender Equality Executive Director Mara Keisling said, “This is unacceptable. The legislature’s actions today have proven that the people of North Carolina—particularly transgender North Carolinians—cannot have any faith in their shameless lawmakers.”

“We continue to stand with the people of North Carolina, particularly the transgender people who have been harmed by HB2 and their own lawmakers’ actions, and we will continue to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with them until this shameful legislation is repealed in its entirety.”

The legislature will meet again Jan. 11 for a regular session of the General Assembly, at which time they could discuss repeal again.

More information about the case is at LambdaLegal.org/in-court/cases/nc_carcano-v-mccrory.

Bar groups address hate-motivated acts

The Affinity Bar Associations released a statement regarding the recent increase in hate-motivated violence and harassment.

In part, it says, “In the aftermath of this particularly divisive presidential election, there has been a surge of bias-motivated and hate violence across the nation targeting many groups, including Muslims, immigrants, women, members of the LGBTQ community and African-Americans. We call on lawyers across the country and our elected officials to denounce and take action against this hate.”

“To assist our members who may be part of or work with communities affected by hate violence, we have created a Hate Crimes Resources Toolkit, which has information about reporting incidents, supporting community organizations, offering legal services, and coordinating with government agencies.”

The toolkit is at NAPABA.org/page/Hate-CrimeResources.

The Affinity Bar Associations consist of the Hispanic National Bar Association, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA—the source of the toolkit), the National Association of Women Lawyers, the National Bar Association, the National LGBT Bar Association and the National Native American Bar Association.



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2016: The local LGBT year in review

BY MATT SIMONETTE

This was a tumultuous year for many in the LGBT community. There were numerous “highs,” such as local advancements of pro-trans ordinances and dramatic expansions of healthcare services in the city. But there were “lows” too, especially as residents were impacted by national events such as the Pulse nightclub shooting and the uncertainty surrounding Donald Trump’s impending presidency. Here are just a few of the high-points and low-points of the local year in LGBT news.

New director: On Jan. 9, Imani Rupert-Gordon was announced as the new executive director of Affinity Community Services.

Kirk support: U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Illinois), on Jan. 19, became the first Senate Republican to sign on as a co-sponsor of the Equality Act, which would guarantee explicit and permanent protections for LGBT Americans in areas such as employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs and jury service. Kirk lost his re-election bid in November after a tumultuous race against U.S. Rep. Tammy Duckworth.

Priest comes out: A Chicago priest, Michael Shanahan, on Jan. 31, publicly came out in the pages of the Washington Post. Shanahan initially wanted to remain anonymous, but knew that coming out might have a meaningful impact on LGBT people or their family members.

Birth certificate bill: State Rep. Greg Harris (D-Chicago), on Feb. 11, introduced a new bill that would make it easier for transgender Illinois residents to amend their birth certificates. The bill, HB 6073, would amend the state’s vital records act so that a declaration by a physician that the individual is undergoing medically appropriate treatment would be the main requirement to change the gender-marker on a birth certificate.

Anti-trans legislation: Illinois state Rep. Thomas Morrison (R-Palatine), on Jan. 20, led legislation that explicitly required school pupils to use restrooms and changing facilities that correspond with the gender assigned at birth. The bill, HB 4474, would amend the School Code to require that facilities designate their facilities by sex, and mandate that students can only use the facilities of the sex that they were assigned at birth.

Change turmoil: The 2016 Creating Change, sponsored by the National LGBTQ Task Force, took place in late January at the Hilton Chicago. But the changing nature of activism, as well as the intersecting stakes of progressive issues, proved to offer formidable challenges for organizers. First, participants balked when officials from Immigration Customs Enforcement were invited (they were subsequently dis-invited), then a large scale-protest ensued at a reception organized by A Wider Bridge (AWB), a San Francisco-based organization that tries to foster relationships between Israel and the LGBT community.

Rush benefits: Chicago’s Rush University Medical Center announced in January that it will provide comprehensive transgender health care benefits to all employees enrolled in the organization’s health-care plan.

PrEP campaign: The Chicago PrEP Working Group (CPWG) launched PrEP4Love, a citywide, sex-positive media campaign designed to increase awareness of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), a daily HIV prevention pill for HIV-negative people. Photography with the tagline “One pill. Once a day. Protect against HIV” has been displayed in ads throughout Chicago on CTA trains and buses throughout the year.

Pelosi speaks: Democratic House leader U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi spoke Feb. 6 at Equality Illinois’ gala celebrating its 25th anniversary. The LGBT-rights organization announced a re-branding this year, and longtime-head Bernard



State Rep. Greg Harris.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

Cherkasov left for a new post. He was replaced by Brian Johnson.

New institute: Northwestern University officials announced, on Feb. 29, the launch of the Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing, which will be the first university-wide research institute in the U.S. focused on LGBT Health.

Brewster opposition: A group of anti-gay activists in the Dominican Republic in March posted a petition on the White House’s website demanding the ouster of the openly gay U.S. ambassador to that nation. The anonymous petition, said that Ambassador James “Wally” Brewster promoted “an LGBT agenda inconsistent with the Christian cultural values and tradition of the Dominican Republic” in his official duties. The White House supported Brewster.

Collette lawsuit: A Chicago man, Colin Collette, filed a federal lawsuit against the Archdiocese of Chicago in March, claiming that he was unlawfully fired in 2014 from his position at an Inverness church because he became engaged to his same-sex partner.

Howard Brown expands: Howard Brown Health, on March 10, announced that it would be taking over management of the HIV practice formerly operated by the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) at a clinic at 641 W. 63rd St. Howard Brown Health also announced a new location for its Broadway Youth Center (BYC). Latonya Maley, formerly BYC’s youth HIV/STI prevention manager, was selected as its new director.

New name: The Chicago Area Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, marking its 20th anniversary, changed its name to LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois.

Focus on rights: The Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago became the first of its kind in the United States to adopt a program and policy initiative safeguarding the civil rights of transgender and gender-nonconforming youth.

Tulasi arrest: Chicago-based queer filmmaker Moses Tulasi was arrested March 22 alongside more than 30 students and faculty members on the campus of Hyderabad Central University located close to the outskirts of the Southern India city.

NC bans: Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced in April that he would not only prepare an order banning travel to North Carolina for non-essential city business, but he’ll use the passage of virulently anti-LGBT legislation as an opportunity to recruit businesses from the Tar Heel State. The Cook County Board of Commissioners, on April 13, passed similar bills

boycotting North Carolina and Mississippi for non-vital city business.

Alliance change: Anthony Papini, the former executive director of Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, stepped down from his post in order to take a new job in his native Washington State, he said April 6. Owen Daniel-McCarter was named as his replacement.

Investigation report: A task force commissioned in December by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, in the wake of the protracted investigation and prosecution of the Laquan McDonald shooting, released a frank and critical assessment of the Chicago Police Department (CPD) on April 13. The Chicago Police Accountability Task Force was headed by Chicago Police Board Chair Lori Lightfoot, who is openly lesbian. The report acknowledged widespread distrust of CPD from city residents, and presented numerous disturbing statistics.

Center initiative: Center on Halsted announced, on April 21, that it was accepting applications for its Youth Housing Initiative. The program is part of the Center’s two-pronged Youth Housing Strategy, which it developed in 2015.

School lawsuit: A federal lawsuit was filed against the government and a Northwest suburban school district May 4 over that district’s rules allowing a transgender student to use the locker room facilities of the gender with which she identified. Alliance Defending Freedom and the Thomas More Society filed suit on behalf of 51 area families against the United States Department of Education, United States Department of Justice and Township District 211.

CPS guidelines: Chicago Public Schools, on May 3, issued revised guidelines pertaining to its transgender students, staff and volunteers, tackling head-on questions surrounding restroom and locker room use that vexed school districts across the country in 2016.

New CEO: Following an extensive national search, the Chicago House Board of Trustees approved Scott Ammarell as the next CEO of the agency. Ammarell replaced outgoing CEO Rev. Stan Sloan.

Target lockdown: A Bourbonnais, Illinois, Target store and its neighboring businesses were placed on lockdown for two hours, on May 2, after a man created a disturbance over the retail chains’ restroom policies for its transgender customers.

LGBT housing: Logan Square residents, politicians and other stakeholders gathered May 21 at Congress Pizzeria, 2033 N. Milwaukee Ave., to learn about a new affordable-housing development, intended to be welcoming for LGBT individuals. The complex, to be named The John Pennycuff Memorial Apartments at Robert Castillo Plaza, was financed through the use of TIF funds from the existing Milwaukee-Fullerton Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district, as well as Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) funds, tax credits and private funding. It was approved by the City Council in December.

Plank stays the same: After a contentious debate, the Illinois State Republican Party voted May 20 at its convention in Peoria to retain a plank preserving its 2012 language that said marriage should be between a man and a woman.

Synagogue folds: Congregation Or Chadash, which had primarily served Chicago’s LGBT Jewish community announced in May that it was closing as an independent synagogue. Or Chadash, which opened in 1975, merged with Temple Shalom in July.

Target support: Trans activists, the Gay Liberation Network and allies organized a demonstration designed “to support Target and the trans community” at the Uptown Target store on June 4.

Chicago pays tribute: About 300 Chicagoans gathered in Lake View at the corner of Halsted and Roscoe June 12, in memory of victims of the mass shooting at an Orlando LGBT nightclub early that morning. A second rally was held concurrently in Andersonville, where Midsommarfest was being celebrated, and attended by many LGBT Chicagoans and visitors. Mayor Emanuel, along with Chicago politicians,



Rabbi Cindy Enger leads Congregation Or Chadash’s final Pride Shabbat.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

clergy, activists and artists, were among those who, on June 13, spoke at a vigil at Center on Halsted.

Measure passes: The Chicago City Council, on June 22, approved a measure that removed a provision in the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance requiring individuals to show a government-issued ID upon request when trying to access restrooms and other public accommodations.

Chicago celebrates: The 47th Annual Pride Parade June 26 began with a moment of silence. The 2016 event opened with a procession of individuals holding up photos of the 49 persons murdered at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando just two weeks earlier. City officials estimated attendance to be at about one million spectators. Security was heightened this year in light of the shootings; Chicago Police said additional officers and 160 private security personnel would be used. Parade officials had previously announced that the number of parade entries would be limited to 160, so the parade could end earlier.

New leadership: Center on Halsted announced new leadership within the organization. Kim Fountain, joined the organization in a newly formed chief operating officer position, while longtime LGBT-rights activist Richard Turner was chosen to chair the board of directors.

Meetings lawsuit: LGBT- and housing-rights activists, on July 14, announced they were filing a lawsuit against the Chicago City Council for violation of the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Activists contended that, despite being first in line—and arriving about 90 minutes early—for the May and June monthly meetings of the City Council, they and others were denied entrance.

Senior discrimination: Lambda Legal, on July 27, announced that it was filing a federal lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois against a Chicago-area senior housing facility for discriminating against a resident because of her sex and sexual orientation.

Madigan brief: Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, on July 28, joined with the attorneys general of 12 other states to issue a brief in support of Obama administration policies that protect transgender individuals, among them transgender students.

Conversion therapy suit: An ad hoc group of

Gay-marriage proposal takes place at Chicago Bulls game

BY ROSS FORMAN

Jake Conrad scored an NBA Championship-worthy marriage proposal, thanks to a huge assist from the Chicago Bulls who, on Dec. 8, were playing host to Conrad's favorite team, the San Antonio Spurs, at the United Center.

The Bulls defeated the Spurs 95-91 that Thursday night, and Conrad officially scored the love of his life, Michael Holtzman, who he has been dating for almost three years after they met—brace yourself—on Grindr.

Holtzman is a lifelong Bulls fan, though he had never been to a game, and one of his long-term goals was to simply attend a game so he could see the life-size Michael Jordan statue that is outside the arena.

"Michael has been a fan of Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls' [championship-winning] dynasty from the 1990s all his life. He often reminisces [about] turning on WGN-TV and watching every game with his brother," Conrad said.

Holtzman's infatuation with former Bulls great Jordan is seen in Holtzman's email and multiple personal passwords which even incorporate Jordan's famed jersey No. 23 or No. 45, which Jordan also wore, Conrad admitted.

Holtzman even won the Wisconsin State Art Show in high school for a pointillism picture of ... you guessed it, Jordan.

"My original [marriage proposal] plans were to try to meet Michael Jordan, or to do a flash

mob at the [Jordan] statue," Conrad said.

The Bulls made the proposal so much bigger, better and surprising—for Holtzman—and the world has been able to witness the magical moment and the cheering crowd via social media. The team's cheerleading team, known as the Luvabulls, changed their routine to showcase Conrad and Holtzman, and the team's mascot (Benny The Bull) played an integral role, too—and then cheered and pumped his fists in support when Holtzman said, "Yes."

"I never imagined the Chicago Bulls preparing such a magical moment," Conrad said. "I had seen other proposals, I just didn't believe that was something a same-sex couple could do. It still feels like a fairytale. Here we were at the Chicago Bulls game because of an organization that we have always deeply admired, and they took a giant step towards inclusion, acceptance, and equality putting together an unbelievably special moment in front of 21,000 people.

"The Chicago Bulls offered Michael and me a lifetime memory, but what they offered the LGBTQ community is an opportunity to experience love fully, equally, without shame, and without compromise."

Conrad said the post-proposal response has been "incredibly heartwarming."

"We are a sucker for a great love story; we both love the movie Silver Linings Playbook," he said. "We all must realize how fortunate we are to live in a society that embraces us



Jake Conrad and Michael Holtzman.

Photo courtesy of Conrad

and has shared this moment with us. Thank you for your kindness and support. It has been amazing to see how many people care. We are touched by the fabulous work of the Chicago Bulls and those that have shared our moment. We have yet to see any negative reactions."

Conrad, who played college volleyball at Lewis University and also has coached that sport, said that players he coached more than five years ago have shared his proposal video on social media and been re-connecting.

"It is always great to be a part of the village that raises kids. Reconnecting with them in their adult life is the best," he said.

Conrad and Holtzman got to meet Basketball Hall of Famer Scottie Pippen, the legendary Bulls' teammate of Jordan. They got a photo with him, too. "I truly think meeting Scottie Pippen may have outshined the proposal for [Holtzman]," Conrad joked.

Conrad and Holtzman also were given tickets to another Bulls game, a gift they weren't expecting when they drove to the United Center for the Spurs game.

Mary E. Linford of Goldmine Design Jewelers reached out after the proposal and inquired about the ring-pop that was part of their on-court proposal. Goldmine Design (goldminedesignjewelers.com) offered to make rings for both as a gift.

Holtzman will, no doubt, look for a friendly, loving revenge on Conrad's shocking national-spotlight proposal, and he isn't shy about what it will entail: getting Conrad to meet his idol, Ellen DeGeneres.

To watch the Conrad-Holtzman marriage proposal at the Bulls game on Dec. 8, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHTqefX8IA>.

religious personnel, calling itself Pastors Protecting Youth, on Aug. 11, filed a federal lawsuit against the state of Illinois, arguing that the Youth Mental Health Protection Act infringes on the rights of individuals offering pastoral counseling. The Youth Mental Health Protection Act, which was passed in Aug. 2015, bans so-called conversion therapy that purports to "cure" individuals of their homosexuality from being practiced upon minors. Plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

Marriage milestone: On the morning of Wed., Aug. 31, Cook County Clerk David Orr's office issued the 10,000th marriage license to a same-sex couple.

Humana suit: AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC), on Sept. 6, filed a formal complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights (OCR) against Humana, charging that the insurance giant routinely denies coverage for or limits access to HIV medications through prohibitively high cost sharing requirements.

Trans murder: Trans woman T.T. Safore was found murdered in the Garfield Park neighborhood on Sept. 11. She was the 20th trans person murdered in 2016.

PrEP expansion: Cook County Health & Hospitals System (CCHHS), on Sept. 15, announced an initiative to increase access to pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, for its patients. The new program funds staff in additional locations on the city's West Side, along with CCHHS' Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center, to assist patients in obtaining PrEP.

School symposium: A symposium held in mid-October sought community input for a renewed effort for an education program sensitive to the needs of LGBT students. Bishop James E. Dukes of Pentecostal Liberation Christian Center organized the gathering.

Hively suit: The U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, on Oct. 11, granted en banc review in Hively v. Ivy Tech Community College, mean-

ing that the entire court will hear the employment discrimination appeal of Kimberly Hively. Hively was denied full-time employment at Ivy Tech Community College in South Bend, Indiana, six different times and maintains she was eventually terminated because she is a lesbian.

Man's Country closing: In Oct., Man's Country owner Chuck Renslow announced that he was closing his Andersonville business.

Westboro protest: About 50 Uptown residents and other community members staged a counter-protest the morning of Oct. 21, when members of Topeka, Kansas-based Westboro Baptist Church staged an anti-LGBT protest at Weiss Memorial Hospital.

Haunted house: A Far South Side grade school did not participate in a haunted house that contained, among other depictions, a representation of the June shootings at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, as was originally planned.

Cher stump: On Oct. 30, superstar Cher continued to stump for Hillary Clinton with the "Love Trumps Hate" tour that stopped in Chicago at Revel Fulton Market, 1215 W. Fulton Market.

Iowa trip: On Nov. 5, the "Hillary LGBTQ Bus Trip to Iowa" took place, with approximately 90 local volunteers making the trip to the swine state.

Trump protest: Thousands of protesters marched through the streets of Chicago Nov. 9, chanting against the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president. There were many rainbow and bisexual flags.

Brewster resigns: Openly gay U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic James "Wally" Brewster, on Nov. 23, announced that he would be resigning from his post, effective Jan. 20, 2017.

Rogers Park opening: Howard Brown Health, on Dec. 5, inaugurated its Rogers Park clinic, at 6500 N. Clark St., 9:30-11 a.m., with elected officials and invited guests.



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MOMBIAN LGBTQ families: Preparing for the year ahead

My family parties from Thanksgiving through New Year's. I'm Jewish, my spouse is Protestant (though neither of us is particularly observant), and my family of origin has always celebrated Thanksgiving as our biggest family gathering, which means we start with turkey and pies at the end of November and don't stop making merry until we raise our champagne glasses on Jan. 1. This year, the first night of Hanukkah was also Christmas Eve, creating a combined celebration the likes of which we hadn't seen since the great Thanksgiving conjunction of 2013.

The holidays may stem from different traditions, but share a theme of hope and of light in the darkness. That message seems particularly poignant right now as we head into a year that ushers in a new federal administration and an era of uncertainty for LGBTQ people and our families.

Will the new administration try to take away the rights of LGBTQ people and families? Rumors abound—but while we can't predict the future, we can do a few things to prepare for it. Here's what's on my list.

Be as out and visible as we feel we safely can. No matter what happens over the next four—or eight—years, LGBTQ people aren't going anywhere. We are neighbors, colleagues, relatives, and friends, and must continue to remind people of our presence. No need to

always wear "Dad 1" and "Dad 2" T-shirts or bedeck your baby stroller in rainbows (unless that's your thing, in which case have at)—but being active in our communities and talking openly about our families and identities can do a lot to spread understanding. We should temper this with an awareness that our children may sometimes wish to come out about their families in their own time—but setting an example of openness can help children become similarly comfortable, I believe.

Make sure our legal ties are as secure as they can be—including getting second-parent adoptions for children even when both parents are married and on their birth certificates. In an October legal memo on behalf of four married lesbian couples petitioning a New York court for second-parent adoptions, Lambda Legal explained that even when both spouses are on the birth certificates, there have been and could be times "in which the parentage of a child born to a married couple (same- or different-sex) or conceived using assisted reproductive technology has been litigated." Earlier second-parent adoptions could have avoided this entirely, they said.

Stand with people of marginalized groups not our own in whatever way they may need our support. Be generous, too, to those in need, through monetary donations, contributions of goods, or offering your time, either to individuals or charities. It remains unclear what the impact of the new administration will be on those most vulnerable in our society, but a little extra effort to help them can't go amiss. Same goes for our environment and the organizations working to protect it.

Support the publication of quality, LGBTQ-inclusive, diverse children's and young adult books and other media, by buying them, supporting Kickstarter and other funding efforts from independent publishers, requesting them from local libraries (and encouraging the libraries to stock them if they are not in circulation), and spreading the word on social media. If you have the talent and time, too, write your own tales!

Stay informed by reading respected and reliable news sources both mainstream and niche—and crosscheck facts across several sources to avoid spreading misinformation. Take the time, too, to occasionally read niche news sites or blogs that focus on identities not your own. I've found this is a great way to gain perspective, and I hope it helps me be a better ally.

Continue writing and calling our elected officials about issues that matter to us. USA.gov is one easy way to look up federal, state and local officials and their contact information.

Talk with our children (if they are old enough) about their ongoing feelings around the election and the incoming administration. I know my son hears things from classmates and sees headlines that could be frightening. I want to assure him that not everyone thinks the same way, that we do have a system of checks and balances, and that his family will be here for him no matter what.

I have been thinking this week, too, of a line from the Talmud, the compilation of Jewish oral law, which says, "You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it." There is much that needs tending in our world, but no one person can do it all, especially when raising a child is one of those things. We must strive for balance as we work to make a difference.

Even if you have not been celebrating either Christmas or Hanukkah this past week, perhaps you will find similar inspiration in your own faith. And if you are not a person of faith (or even if you are), perhaps other stories and myths from our human heritage will also provide insight and hope for the coming year. Personally, one of my New Year's resolutions will be to reread Harry Potter for exactly that reason.

It may not be the easiest time to be part of an LGBTQ family in America, but we have lived through tough times before. However you celebrate the season, may you and your families find joy, light, and hope for the year ahead.

What can queer people expect from Pope Francis? Not much

BY MARIANNE DUDDY-BURKE

Pope Francis has made headlines worldwide for his conflicting statements and actions when it comes to LGBTQI people. In famous off-the-cuff remarks, he stunned many by asking "Who am I to judge?" when asked about gay priests. He also had a reportedly warm meeting with a transgender man and his fiancée, and even said that the Catholic Church owes an apology to gay people. On the flip side, he worked to advance a referendum to prevent same-sex marriage and adoption by gay people in Slovakia, he bowed to pressure to remove positive statements about gay people and same-sex couples from a report during the global Synod on the Family, and he has called teaching about transgender people and gender theory a "global war" against the family.

On Dec. 8, the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy promulgated a new set of guidelines for the selection and training of Catholic priests. This document, which states it was approved and ordered to be published by Pope Francis, states that the church "cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called 'gay culture.'" It states that such people are unable to have appropriate relationships with women or men and warns against "the negative consequences that can derive from the ordination of

persons with deep-seated homosexual tendencies," an allusion to the hierarchy's claims that it was gay priests who are to blame for the decades of sexual abuse of children.

The pope's endorsement of this document sends a clear signal to those of us in the LGBTQI and ally community who follow church politics. Despite the pope's tendency to say reasonable things about us in unscripted moments, when he is acting for the institution of the church, he shows no willingness to disrupt the status quo. This means that those who saw the Franciscan papacy as a time when official Catholic teaching on gender identity and sexual orientation might be changed are likely to be deeply disappointed.

In the case of the new guidelines for priests, the way that gay men are described is rooted in the church's belief that human relationships are and should be rooted in "complementarity," a belief that women and men have different, divinely ordained roles rooted in biology. Anything other than that is "objectively disordered" in the technical language of the church. This thinking establishes a hierarchy that puts gay and transgender people in a degraded position, and it seems that this is where we are going to stay, at least when it comes to Pope Francis and most other members of the church's hierarchy.

The fact that church leaders cannot accept the wide variety of human expression and relationships has far-reaching implications. It impacts social policy, educational systems, health care delivery, and cultures in many countries around the globe. Their willful ignorance about healthy sexuality and gender puts countless people at risk of violence, imprisonment, mental and physical health problems, social isola-

tion, and increased poverty. This is shameful, sinful even.

It is also a perversion of the core of the Catholic faith, which teaches inclusion, equality, compassion, and love. Fortunately, solid majorities, at least of Western Catholics, reject church teaching on homosexuality and gender identity. They realize that LGBTQI people should be accepted in the church and in society for who we are, and many are actively resisting harmful teachings and practices. Some do this by withdrawing support from or even leaving the Catholic Church, and others strive to work from within, leading by example and resisting practices with which they disagree.

How long will it take before the voice of this majority influences the Vatican? That is the great and too often tragic unknown. In the meantime, it is the unfortunate truth that despite being drawn to Pope Francis's commitment to responsible environmental stewardship and many who are pushed to the margins of society, our community will continue to experience misunderstanding and rejection from him. DignityUSA, the organization I represent, has long called for Pope Francis and other church leaders to engage in deep and open conversation with LGBTQI people and our families to learn the reality of our lives, our relationships, our struggles, and our strengths. We believe they must listen in the spirit of humility. We continue to believe that this step is a necessary beginning to the process of beneficial change for our community and families.

Marianne Duddy-Burke is the executive director of Dignity USA. This op-ed originally appeared on Advocate.com. Dignity/Chicago is the local chapter of the national organization, DignityUSA.

WINDY CITY TIMES

VOL. 32, No. 15, Dec. 28, 2016

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

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MANAGING EDITOR Andrew Davis
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Matt Simonette
BUSINESS MANAGER Ripley Caine
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SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES Terri Klinsky, Kirk Williamson, Amy Matheny, Gretchen Rachel Hammond, Scott Duff, Monika Pickett, David Strzepek
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e-mail: editor@windycitymediagroup.com or
Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com

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WINDY CITY MEDIA GROUP,
5315 N. Clark St. #192, Chicago, IL, 60640 U.S.A.
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Windy City Times Deadline every Wednesday.
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Windy City Times reviews Honky Tonk Angels.

Photo of Leryn Turlington by Adam Veness

SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Reflecting on 2016

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The close of the calendar year is typically a time to reflect. So here's a look back on some notable Chicago-area theater news stories and trends of 2016.

Hamilton in Chicago

Lin-Manuel Miranda's wildly acclaimed hip-hop and pop musical *Hamilton* may have had a 2015 debut in New York, but the sold-out Broadway show made waves locally this year when a dedicated Chicago company set up shop at The PrivateBank Theatre. The fact that *Hamilton*'s producers chose Chicago for an open run and not just a launch for a national tour is a sign of the Windy City's strength as a theater town.

Miranda's exploration of this country's founding fathers is not only notable for commanding stratospherically high premium ticket prices, but also for its non-traditional casting. The inclusiveness of *Hamilton* is one of its strengths, and its message has become even more vital.

"Whitewashing" accusations

Diversity in casting, or the lack thereof, became a huge point of contention in 2016. Actor Bear Bellingier took to social media to criticize the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire for the lack of Latino and Latina actors hired for its revival of *Evita*.

Meanwhile, Porchlight Music Theatre was taken to task for hiring actor Jack DeCesare to star as the leading man Usnavi De La Vega for its hit production of *In the Heights*—particularly once word got out that DeCesare was actually of Italian heritage rather than being Latino. Many arguments over "white washing" in the casting of minority characters erupted, and it's likely that the debates will spill over in 2017.

Alleged abuse

The Uptown-based Profiles Theatre quickly disbanded in June following a Chicago Reader cover story investigating allegations of abuse from actors who had worked with the company. A Chicago theater support group called Not in Our House emerged in the fallout as a resource to prevent potential future abuses of power.

In the aftermath, *Pride Films and Plays* took up residence of the former two Profiles Theatre spaces at 4139 and 4147 N. Broadway and renamed them the *Pride Arts Center*. The first official *Pride Films and Plays* large-scale production in the *Pride Arts Center* is *Priscilla Queen of the Desert The Musical*, which opens in January.

Trans stories

Transgender stories and artists received a lot of Chicago attention in 2016.

Early in the year actress Delia Kropp starred in David Valdes Greenwood's world-premiere drama *Raggedy And* about a transgender poet for *Pride Films and Plays*. She later became the first trans performer to star as East German survivor Charlotte von Mahlsdorf in *About Face Theatre's* reconceived revival of Doug Wright's 2003 drama *I Am My Own Wife*. by *About Face Theatre*.

Trans performer Sydney Germain also got plenty of stage time this season, which could be a sign that Chicago casting directors are making strides to be more inclusive. In 2016, Germain played Minnie Fay in the Goodman Theatre's non-traditionally cast production of Thornton Wilder's *The Matchmaker*, Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for First Folio Theatre in Oak Brook and the roles of Cinna and Octavius in *Julius Caesar* at Writers Theatre in Glencoe.

The *Living Canvas* and *Nothing Without a Company* recently teamed up for the dance-theater piece *[Trans]formation*.

Also big news was the appointment of trans artist Will Davis as the new artistic director of American Theater Company. Davis' first season begins in January with the Chicago premiere of Jaclyn Backhaus' gender-fluid historical drama *Men on Boats*.

Taking Manhattan

Quite a few shows that made their debut in Chicago also made the journey to New York. Others are in the New York pipeline for 2017.

Stephen Karam's *The Humans*, which had its world premiere in Chicago at American Theater Company in 2014, triumphed on Broadway with four Tony Awards including Best Play. Karam's Thanksgiving-set drama shined a dispiriting modern light on a family's economic and emotional anxieties.

Another 2014 drama that made it to New York was *Exit Strategy* by gay playwright Ike Holter. Originally created for Jackalope Theatre, Holter's CPS school-closing play made it off-Broadway following a regional run at Philadelphia Theatre Company.

Though it originally debuted in Canada, the macabre theme park disaster musical comedy *Ride the Cyclone* also made it off-Broadway this year. It's the same Chicago Shakespeare Theater production by Jeff Award-winning director Rachel Rockwell.

The Goodman Theatre went out of its way to reshuffle its season to host a summer run of the new musical *War Paint*, especially since it came attached with two-time Tony Award-



Hamilton (above) made quite an impression on the theater scene in 2016.

Photo of Michael Cervantes as Alexander Hamilton in the Chicago production of *Hamilton* by Joan Marcus

winner Patti LuPone and Christine Ebersole respectively starring as sparring cosmetics titans Helena Rubinstein and Elizabeth Arden. Box-office records were broken, and it was no surprise that a Broadway berth was later announced for *War Paint*, a documentary-style musical by the creators of *Grey Gardens*. Also be on the lookout for Andrew Hinderaker's acclaimed gay drama *The Magic Play* to appear in New York at a Roundabout Theatre Company venue.

Tough times

Condominium construction on Broadway south of Sheridan Road severely impacted three strong storefront theaters. Rather than seeking out a new home, Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company chose to shut down rather than relocate. Oracle Productions also recently announced that it will cease operations by the end of the year.

Yet Strawdog Theatre is still making a go of it as an itinerant company. Strawdog has been staging its productions like Jerre Dye's *Distance* and Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* at the new-ish Factory Theatre in Rogers Park.

Other distressing news is that financial issues are forcing *The Hypocrites* to cut short its 2016-17 season. Planned productions of *The House of Martin Guerre* and *Las Meninas* have been cancelled, while the winter run of *Wit* has been shortened from Jan. 20 through Feb. 19.

In passing

Gay playwright Edward Albee, a titan of U.S. theater, passed away at 88. Some of his acclaimed and prize-winning works include: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *Three Tall Women* and *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?*

Locally, GayCo co-founder and longtime Second City instructor Judy Fabjance died from cancer in August at the age of 41. Fabjance fought through her cancer diagnosis by creating comic theater pieces like *Are You There, Judy?* *It's me, Cancer* and *Tales of a Stage 4 Cancer*.

Cancer also claimed the life of First Folio Theatre co-founder and artistic director Alison C. Vesely at the age of 59. Vesely and her husband, David Rice, founded the professional theatre in Oak Brook 20 years ago.

THEATER REVIEW

The Phantom of the Opera**Music:** Andrew Lloyd Webber**Lyrics:** Chris Hart, with additional lyrics by Richard Stilgoe**Book:** Richard Stilgoe and Andrew Lloyd Webber**At:** Cadillac Palace Theater**Tickets:** BroadwayInChicago.com: \$50-140**Runs through:** Jan. 8

BY ERIC KARAS

Watch out for falling chandeliers!

Phantom is back in Chicago for a four-week engagement at the Cadillac Palace. This is the reimagined staging and scenic design version for the tour, not the Hal Prince version that is the longest-running Broadway musical on Broadway. Most people won't notice the difference and it's the same famous Webber score.

The beginning of the original Phantom is one of my favorite parts, as the broken chandelier comes to life and reassembles to its former glory over the audience. In this version, it isn't quite as grand. However, when it's time for its dramatic decent later I totally liked that moment. Yes, I'm reviewing the chandelier—it is Phantom, after all.

The other "let down" from the original is the masquerade number. Usually, it's on a big staircase full of a huge cast; in this production, it's the cast in masks in front of a mirror—and it's not quite as dazzling. Also, the phantom's en-

trance here is also not as exciting. This is one change I didn't like at all. The other change that doesn't work is in the graveyard. Usually, the phantom is up above the couple, threatening them; here, he is on the same level they are—making the threat very, um, non-threatening. You're waiting for Raoul to just punch out the phantom.

Now that those negatives are out of the way, let's get to the positives. This production is very sumptuous and you feel you get your money's worth. There is a very cool spinning tube-like structure that lots of the staging comes from, and I enjoyed watching it. Also, the descent of the staircase to the sewers of Paris was fun, and we get our iconic boat-in-the-dry-ice moment. I also loved the dramatic way the opera house spun together.

The music is the beloved Andrew Lloyd Webber score. There's not much to say about it except the scenes where all the people are on stage together. Singing different things at the same time remains confusing and gets old fast. He's much better with the ballads. The funny thing is the Phantom of the Opera song really betrays when it was written. Its 1980s synthesizer sound stands out like a sore thumb from the score. It's a moment that is funny but also so iconic I wouldn't have it any other way.

Derrick Davis, as the phantom, seemed less menacing or creepy than others who have performed in the same role. In his favor, his phantom seems sweeter and more vulnerable. You can understand Christine's compassion for him. Katie Travis plays Christine as the sleepwalking victim she is. It's a challenging role and she hits the right notes literally. Jordan

Derrick Davis and Katie Travis in The Phantom of the Opera.

Photo by Matthew Murphy



Craig—as her love interest, Raoul—has a masculine charm and never veers into camp, which could easily be done. Trista Moldovan was a fine opera diva as Carlotta, but she could chew the scenery a little more for my tastes.

Overall, it's a very lush production with great sets, costumes and effects. It's nice to see after so many recent projection disappointments

or simply set musicals. The whole affair is so iconic that it makes for enjoyable entertainment. Like seeing the King of Siam waltz or Professor Harold Hill lead a children's band, sometimes you want to see a broken-hearted phantom and a vertically challenged chandelier. If you're a fan, go see it.

THEATER REVIEW

Honky Tonk Angels**Playwright:** Ted Swindley**At:** Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre**at the No Exit Cafe,****6970 N. Glenwood Ave,****Tickets:** \$34-\$39**Runs through:** Jan. 29

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

There's these three young women hoping to make it in show business, see. Since Angela is from East Texas, Darlene from West Virginia and Sue Ellen from Houston by way of Los Angeles,

"show business" means Nashville, and since they are all church-raised girls, their fortuitous meeting in a Greyhound station is viewed as a Sign From Above, even before their voices are discovered to blend in perfect Appalachian harmony. Sure enough, by Act Two, durned if they aren't performing together under the collective label of—you guessed it—the Honky Tonk Angels, as in "It Wasn't God Who Made [Honky Tonk Angels]."

Ted Swindley's premise is recycled from a thousand Hollywood musicals, so it should come as no surprise that his plot and characters are cobbled together out of lyrics from the featured repertoire: Angela is a housewife, weary of standing by her man and his coming home a-drinkin' with lovin' on his mind, who decides that her boots were made for walking.

Sue Ellen has abandoned working nine-to-five to reconnect with her childhood home. Darlene was born a coal miner's daughter, but after Billy Joe MacAllister jumped off the Tallahatchee Bridge, she packed up her guitar and set out to fulfill the dream they shared.

What elevates this gynecentric fantasy above fan-fiction level is the infectious charm conveyed by our Dixie Bells (two imitation and one authentic) who warble, croon and chicken-walk through a staggering 28 honkers in just over two hours, wearing smiles that light up the room like a Kentucky sunrise. The score ranges from trad favorites like "Barroom Habits" and "Almost Persuaded" to crossover hits like "Harper Valley PTA" and "Calling All Angels" with forays into novelties like "Cleopatra, Queen of Denial" and a delightful mash-up of

an upbeat "Time For Me to Fly" and the gospel hymn "I'll Fly Away." The stageside band led by musical director Jeremy Ramey at the ivories gets its moment in the spotlight, too, ripping it up on the bluegrass show-stopper "Rocky Top."

If your previous impression of country music is one of sexist ditties like "Getcher Biscuits in the Oven and Yer Buns into Bed" (that's not made up, by the way), Theo Ubique offers an opportunity to become acquainted with a genre you may be surprised to learn that you know better than you thought. Adam Veness and James Kolditz's decor make the No Exit Cafe cozy enough to make you forget it's winter outside and newly hired chef Tal Caspi will even feed you sweet-potato pie at intermission.

THEATER REVIEW

The Hunter and the Bear**Created by:** PigPen Theatre Company**At:** Writers Theatre,**325 Tudor Court, Glencoe****Tickets:** 847-242-6000 or**WritersTheatre.org; \$35-\$80****Runs through:** Jan. 22

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Supernatural forces are at eerie play in *The Hunter and the Bear*, a world-premiere ghost story by PigPen Theatre Co. at Writers Theatre in Glencoe. Many theatrical flourishes are also deployed that wow in the moment but, upon reflection, ultimately outshine the play's tragic denouement.

PigPen Theatre Co. is the talented troupe behind the hit 2013 run of *The Old Man and The Old Moon* in Writers' previous intimate Tudor Court home. With *The Hunter and the Bear*, PigPen is working on a much bigger canvas in the sparkling new expanse of Writers' Nichols Theatre.

Technically, PigPen handsomely dresses up the theater space with woody multi-level sets by designer Collette Pollard. Her many

**Ben Ferguson in The Hunter and the Bear.**

Photo by Michael Brosilow

hollowed out trunks are nicely accentuated by the alternately spooky and fiery lighting designs of Bart Cortright. There's also clever use of puppetry styles ranging from shadow play to bunraku throughout, all ingeniously worked into the staging's fabric by designer Lydia Fine.

And there are no qualms in regards to the talented ensemble who navigate through multiple roles under the skilled direction of Stuart Carden. In one moment they're simply eager actors, then folksy musicians. Other times they're puppeteers or on occasion Foley artists creating convincing sound effects like a crackling campfire.

But ultimately *The Hunter and the Bear* gets lost in the woods due to an unsatisfying story conclusion. There's no single credited

playwright for the production—just the PigPen ensemble. So that could explain why the promising mystery that gets so frighteningly built up ends with a so-so fizzle.

The Hunter and the Bear centers around a band of 19th century frontier explorers looking to build a logging company in the Pacific Northwest. But things get creepy when they encounter the haunted wanderer Lewis (Dan Weschler) and his ghost stories that bear more truth than myth.

Part of the problem is that audiences are led to expect that *The Hunter and the Bear* will be an ensemble piece involving all the frontiersmen facing down a supersize and supernatural bear in a climactic big battle. But that showdown never comes as the play ends on a sad personalized note between the title hunter of Tobias (Ben Ferguson) and his young puppet-rendered son, Elliot (Ryan Melia).

This shift leaves the rest of the ensemble feeling under-defined, though not underutilized since they're in constant motion in the background to accentuate the story. Perhaps if *The Hunter and the Bear* could be refined in subsequent runs elsewhere to tighten the plot or build to a bigger climax. Then the story itself will feel more equal to the grand scale of PigPen's assured theatrical storytelling.

CRITICS' PICKS



Crazy for You, Drury Lane Theatre, Oakbrook Terrace, through Jan. 8. The late, great Gershwin brothers' showtunes are once again put to expert and escapist use for anyone still suffering post-election blues in this solid revival. SCM

Pygmalion, Remy Bumppo Theatre Company at Greenhouse Theater Center, through Jan. 8. The musical might have been a romance, but Shaw's source play was a comment on class warfare and the price of upward mobility—still a relevant topic, even a century later. MSB

The Nutcracker, Joffrey Ballet at Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, through Dec. 30. Time is running out to catch Christopher Wheeldon's new Chicago-centric take on the classic Tchaikovsky Christmas ballet in its triumphant world-premiere run. SCM

Uncle Philip's Coat, Solo Celebration at Greenhouse Theater Center, through Dec. 31. The season isn't all holly and ivy—Matty Selman's tale of immigrant survival will warm your heart like the ancient garment protecting his eccentric mentor through a century of chaos and confusion. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan



Brad Armacost and Dan Waller in *The Weir*. Photo by Emily Schwartz

THEATER REVIEW

The Weir

Playwright: Conor McPherson
At: Irish Theatre of Chicago
at The Den, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Tickets: \$26-\$30
Runs through: Jan. 22

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Our locale is a tavern in rural Ireland, close enough to seaside Ulster counties to attract summer vacationers, but this is not the nostalgic-mythic Ireland beloved of tourists.

Pubkeeper Brendan may live on the premises—indeed, own the surrounding farmland—but his customers are equipped with modern accoutrements like cars and telephones. To be sure, Valerie, the lone woman among the regulars on this off-season night, is a city girl—hence her chic ski pants and high-heeled boots—escorted by real-estate agent Finbar, from whom she has just purchased a nearby house. Upon their arrival, local tradesmen Jack and Jim proceed to entertain their new neighbor with shivery tales of the region’s paranormal activity.

Conor McPherson’s play premiered in 1997, but audiences—and actors too, for that matter—are still puzzling over a text seemingly composed of nothing more than five selections from its author’s stockpile of monologues. The men engage in some male-bonding horseplay, but overt flirtation is not the province of bachelors who care for aged mothers, nor does Valerie’s arrival presage any changes in the social order beyond wine being served at the front

bar and the ladies’ lavatory being rendered functional. Theatergoers anticipating violent action or cataclysmic plot reversals, however, will be blinding themselves to the dynamic in progress.

Our first story, you see, is Jack’s third-hand account of unexplained noises witnessed by a long-dead ancestor. Our second is Finbar’s anecdote of a spectral sighting by a personal acquaintance—an incident having an influential effect on his own life. The third is Jim’s first-hand recollection of having, himself, encountered a revenant spirit. None of the gallant raconteurs—who are quick to suggest possible rationales for the eerie occurrences, lest they frighten their guest—are prepared to hear the circumstances driving Valerie to seek a ghost-friendly environment, though. Some are discomfited by her revelation, but ultimately, Jack and Brendan assure her that she is not the only one in the room to be haunted by regret-inspired visions.

Irish Theater of Chicago lives up to its baptismal name of “Seanachai” (Gaelic for “storyteller”) under the deft direction of Siiri Scott, who ensures that no moment is wasted in actorly posturing nor any narrative advancement rushed to its conclusion (despite the performance time spanning a mere 90 minutes). Three of the cast members—Sarah Wellington, Jeff Christian and Brad Armacost—reprise their roles from the company’s 2010 production, joined by Bradley Grant Smith and Dan Waller (the latter growing nicely into character parts). On dark winter nights when winds howl and restless souls walk, playgoers will find welcome refuge in this shabby oasis tucked into Wicker Park’s Den Theater.

‘The Dolphin Show’ running ‘Little Shop’ Jan. 20-28 at NU

The Dolphin Show—advertised as this country’s largest student-produced musical—announced that *Little Shop of Horrors* will be its 75th annual (“Diamond Dolphin”) show at Northwestern University.

Little Shop of Horrors is directed by Northwestern School of Communication senior Maggie Monahan and co-produced by School of Communication senior Janie Dickerson and Weinberg School of Arts and Sciences senior Bailey Sutton, with support from a cast and team of more than 150 students. It will run for five performances on Jan. 20-28, 2017, at Cahn Auditorium, 600 Emerson St.

Since its beginning as a swimming-pool fundraiser for the Dolphin Club in 1940, The Dolphin Show has produced more than 70 musicals, with teams of more than 150 Northwestern students, each year.

Tickets are on sale; visit NUDolphinShow.org, call 847-491-3787 or stop by the auditorium’s box office.

LGBT-inclusive ‘Kiki’ set for 2017

Laugh Factory Chicago, 3175 N. Broadway, is presenting *The Kiki: Queer Comedy with Variety*—an evening of Chicago’s queer comics, storytellers, spoken word artists and improvisers.

This brand-new showcase—produced by Eric Lewis-Baker (iO), Erin Diamond (Paper Machete), Scott Duff (Laugh Factory, OUT CHICAGO) and Peter Kim (Second City)—will be an extension of Laugh Factory Chicago’s current hit LGBT show, *Chigaygo*.

The monthly show, performing at 5 p.m. the second Sunday of every month, will fea-

ture video clips, audience interaction, games and, of course, comedy. The premiere of *The Kiki* will feature Chicago favorites Gwen La Roka and Allison Reese as well as Diamond, Duff, Kim and Lewis-Baker.

All shows are for those 18 and older; visit LaughFactory.com or call 773-327-3175.

‘Rip Nelson’ to run through Dec. 30

Hell in a Handbag Productions is running David Cerda’s world-premiere comedy *The Rip Nelson Holiday Spectacular* through Friday, Dec. 30, at Mary’s Attic, 5400 N. Clark St.

Handbag ensemble member Ed Jones stars as Rip Nelson, a mash-up of iconic television celebrities Paul Lynde, Rip Taylor and Charles Nelson Reilly. Joining Rip on this bizarre holiday romp is his trusted make-up woman, Gladys (Lori Lee) and a cavalcade of stars circa 1982, including: Dom Deluise (Tommy Bullington), Bruce Jenner (Chazie Bly), magician Doug Henning (David Lipschutz), Liza Minnelli (Alexa Castevecchi), Patti LaBelle (Robert Williams) and Nelson’s archrival, Kermit the Frog (Scott Merchant).

Tickets are currently available at Handbag-Productions.org or 800-838-3006.



Ed Jones as Rip Nelson. Photo by Rick Aguilar Studios



ERIC LEWIS BAKER ERIN DIAMOND SCOTT DUFF PETER KIM GWEN LA ROKA ALLISON REESE

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SUNDAY, JAN 8 AT 5PM
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Laugh Factory Chicago 3150 N. Broadway
WWW.LAUGHFACTORY.COM

SPOTLIGHT

Pride Films and Plays teams up with members of the Chicago Cabaret Professionals to see out 2016 and look toward 2017 with the revue **525,600 Minutes: A Cabaret**. Denis McGowan hosts the show with Beckie Menzie at the piano. Confirmed artists for the evening include Joan Curto, Tom Michael, Hilary Feldman and more. Also on the bill is Jordan Phelps, a star of Pride Films and Plays’ forthcoming production of *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert*. *525,600 Minutes: A Cabaret* plays 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 30, at The Broadway at the Pride Arts Center, N. Broadway. General admission tickets are \$25 and VIP tickets are \$35 (includes a reception with prosecco and sweets); call 800-737-0984 or visit PrideFilmsAndPlays.com.

Beckie Menzie is the accompanist for *525,600 Minutes: A Cabaret* at the Pride Arts Center. Photo by Michael Calas



KNIGHT at the movies



BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

The best movie of the year—and a final farewell

Last year, it was easy to put together a Top 10 LGBT Movie list.

With titles like *Carol*, *Grandma*, *Tangerine*, *The Danish Girl* and others to choose from, it was actually a no-brainer. This year was not the same. Increasingly, queer-themed movies—and there are still a lot of them being made—go the LGBT film-festival route, followed by streaming and DVD release. Other than those festival screenings it's become a rarity to find queer films in a movie theater though the smaller, independent houses still take chances on them. That doesn't mean you shouldn't seek them out; quite the opposite. It's more important than ever that Our People support the movies that reflect our lives.

With that in mind, keep your eyes peeled for these terrific LGBT movies: *AWOL*, *bwoy*, *Certain Women*, *Closet Monster*, *First Girl I Loved*, *Henry Gamble's Birthday Party*, *The Handmaiden*, *King Cobra*, *Lazy Eye*, *Major!*, *Memories of a Penitent Heart*, *Miles*, *Other People*, *Paris 05:59*, *Pushing Dead*, *Retake*, *Slash*, *Southwest of Salem*, *Spa Night*, *Tomcat*, *Upstairs Inferno* and *Viva*—for starters. All of these queer-themed movies—narratives and documentaries alike—will reward your attention.

So will things like Andrew Haigh's *Looking: the Movie*; Jill Soloway's *Transparent*; Tig Notaro's *One Mississippi*, Amazon's tremendously queer, fantastically entertaining dual web series; and a number of other TV shows with prominent LGBT characters. And your financial support will encourage producers to greenlight more queer-themed projects—something that's going to be progressively more important as we head into this conservative regime and find ourselves under the gun from all sides.

This year, although not a great one in general for movies, did see the release of the cinematic equivalent of a revolution for Our People, albeit a rather quiet, elegiac one. This was *Moonlight*, from writer-director Barry Jenkins—whose adaptation of *In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue*, a never produced story by the Black gay playwright and actor Tarrell Alvin McCraney (a Steppenwolf company member)—is justifiably heading multiple top-10 lists and is

Alex Hibbert and Mahershala Ali in *Moonlight*.
Photo by David Bornfriend, courtesy of A24



an awards favorite. *Moonlight* focuses on Chiron, a young Black boy whose life is seen in three defining stages—as the quiet, watchful boy we first encounter, as the cautious teen eager to fit in and as the life-scarred man in his 20s. The film is split into these three sections, with a trio of actors—Alex Hibbert, Ashton Sanders and Trevante Rhodes—playing Chiron.

As I wrote in my review of the film earlier this fall: “*Moonlight* is a deeply lyrical work but unfussy in its approach and the director is helped immeasurably by the stellar performances, without a false note among them. In Dee Rees’ lovely *Pariah* mainstream filmgoers were given glimpses of the interior life of a young Black lesbian and now we have, at long last, its male twin, though *Moonlight* goes much further; digs down much deeper. How long have audiences subconsciously (and consciously) been waiting for this kind of sensational film? I can’t recall a film since Marlon Riggs’ 1989 polemic *Tongues Untied* that has examined so closely and with such insight the life of a gay Black male. I’m glad, as a queer film fan and critic, that I lived long enough to see this extraordinary movie and what I sincerely hope will be a game-changer for cinema.”

As I penned my review I was contemplating my own game-changer—moving from writing about movies to making them. I took my first step in that direction in 2012 with *Scrooge & Marley*, the modern-day gay version of Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* (executive-produced by Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim).

Now, the opportunity to continue writing and directing my own projects has proved irresistible. Over the years, I’ve reviewed hundreds of films and interviewed dozens of filmmakers and actors—all from my inherent queer sensibility

which has made this labor of love that much lovelier. My enthusiasm for film, in general, and for LGBT-themed ones, in particular, is just as strong as when the first Knight at the Movies column appeared in May of 2004. But after 12-and-a-half years as cinema writer for Windy City Times, the time has come for me to move on (although my work with my non-profit, the Queer Film Society, will continue). I express my deep gratitude and thanks to Tracy Baim for giving me the opportunity and to her and Andrew Davis, my managing editor, for their constant support and encouragement throughout the many years.

It feels appropriate to sign off this final Knight at the Movies column with an overview of a list of my Best LGBT Films since I’ve had the privilege of being film critic for WCT. Anyone wishing to explore the multifaceted world of queer cinema will find these movies a great starting point. In closing, I am happy to have this opportunity to also thank my loyal readers. I sincerely appreciate your avid support throughout the years.

2004—*A Home at the End of the World* and *Tarnation* (a tie)

2005—*Brokeback Mountain* and *Capote* (another tie!)

2006—*Shortbus*

2007—*Before I Forget*

2008—*Milk*

2009—*A Single Man*

2010—*The Kids Are All Right*

2011—*Weekend*

2012—*How to Survive a Plague*

2013—*Valentine Road* and *Cloudburst* (a tie)

2014—*Love Is Strange*

2015—*Carol*

2016—*Moonlight*



2013: *Cloudburst*.
Image from Sony Classics



2014: *Love Is Strange*.
Image from Sony Classics



2015: *Carol*.
Image from The Weinstein Company

Artemis Singers show on Michigan Womyn's Music Festival in Jan.

Artemis Singers, Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus, will present “Wanting the Music: A Choral Musical of the Michigan Festival,” Saturday, Jan. 28, and Sunday, Jan. 29, 2017.

The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival was a woman-only event held in the woods of Michigan for just one week every year from 1976 through 2015.

The festival was also controversial because of its definition of “woman,” which was not inclusive of trans women. Though organizers claimed in later years not to enforce any formal policy banning trans women, there were years-long protests and boycotts based on the

fest's approach to trans women.

The concert format connects songs from festival artists, including Cris Williamson, Ferron, Melissa Ferrick and Toshi Reagon, with an original story and songs by Artemis Singers members Allison Downing and Loraine Edwalds.

“Having the festival end in 2015 was a deeply emotional experience for women who are part of the lesbian community,” explains Edwalds, who attended the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival for 27 years. “With this performance, we honor the musicians who formed the heart of the festival community over the years.”

“Our lives changed so much in the years that we had Michigan,” Edwalds recalled. “How lesbians are accepted, how they're able to have children, the expectations they have for their relationships are very different now than when the festival started. I hope by cre-

ating this fictional story we can remind women of all we've been through.”

Several Artemis Singers members and composers from other feminist choruses created the arrangements of iconic festival songs. Rachel Alexander, lead carpenter for MichFest for many years, arranged Nedra Johnson's “August Moon,” a song written specifically about the festival in 2014.

Vendors who participated in the festival over the years will have booths in the balcony that people can visit before and after the January 2017 show. There will also be a wall where concert attendees can share their memories of the festival, which will be shared on the Artemis Singers website after the performances complete.

Artemis Singers will perform at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 28, 2017, and at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 29 at the Irish American Heritage Center, 4626 N. Knox Ave., Chicago.

Tickets for “Wanting the Music” are a suggested donation of \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door for adults. Tickets for seniors age 65 and older and for children age 12 and younger are a suggested donation of \$15. To purchase tickets, go to <http://artemiswantingthemusic.brownpapertickets.com/>

For additional concert information, directions to the venue, or to volunteer to be a part of the event, email info@artemissingers.org or call 773-764-4465.

Founded in 1980, Artemis Singers is composed of women with diverse backgrounds who are dedicated to effecting positive change in cultural attitudes towards lesbians and women artists. Performances highlight historical, political and personal events important to women.

See ArtemisSingers.org.

George Michael dies at 53

British-Greek singer George Michael—who launched his career with Wham! in the 1980s and later continued his success as a solo performer—has died at age 53, according to multiple sources, including the BBC.

Authorities said Michael “passed away peacefully at home” and that there were no suspicious circumstances.

Michael, who was openly gay, had previously dealt with depression and drug addiction, and almost died from pneumonia in 2011.

In a statement, the star’s publicist said: “It is with great sadness that we can confirm our beloved son, brother and friend George passed away peacefully at home over the Christmas period.”

ITV reported that Michael’s 1990 album *Listen Without Prejudice Vol. 1* had been set to be reissued, accompanied by a new film featuring Stevie Wonder, Elton John and the supermodels who starred in the video to his hit single “Freedom! ‘90.”

His 1987 debut solo album, *Faith*, sold more than 20 million copies worldwide. Among his hit singles were the title song, “Father Figure,” “Praying for Time,” “Careless Whisper” and “I Want Your Sex.” Michael and Andrew Ridgeley formed Wham!, and they dominated the 1980s



George Michael.
PR photo

with songs such as “Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go” and “Everything She Wants.”

On Twitter, Ridgeley posted, “Heartbroken at the loss of my beloved friend Yog. Me, his loved ones, his friends, the world of music, the world at large. 4ever loved. A xx.” Other celebrities, including Elton John and Ellen DeGeneres, conveyed their shock at Michael’s passing.

‘Writers Resist’ event Jan. 15

On Sunday, Jan. 15, writers across the United States and in Europe will come together for Writers Resist, a “re-inauguration” of their shared commitment to the spirit of compassion, equality, free speech, and the fundamental ideals of democracy.

Chicago #WRITERS RESIST organizers are planning readings Jan. 15 all over the Chicago area. Neighborhood readings are planned for Hyde Park, Humboldt Park, Albany Park/Old Irving Park, Logan Square, Pilsen and now Evanston. See <http://slagglasscity.tumblr.com/tagged/WRITERSRESIST> for updated list of events.

The Loop event will take place 12-3 p.m. at Open Books, 651 W. Lake St.

The event will include writers and community organizations from around Chicago. The growing list of readers includes Audrey Niffenegger, Audrey Petty, Barrie Jean Borich, Brian Kornell, Daniel Borzutsky, Janet Burroway, Juan Martinez, Kelli Ellis, Mark Turcotte, Peggy Shinner, Quraysh Ali Lansana, Rachel Galvin, Rebecca Hazelton, Roger Reeves, Ruben Quesada, T. Clutch Fleischman, Toni Nealie and Tyehimba Jess.

Chicago #Writers Resist community events will run from midday into the evening on Sunday, Jan. 15, beginning with the noon Loop event:

—Noon-3 p.m.: Loop at Open Books in the West Loop, 651 W. Lake St.

—1 p.m.: River West at Woman Made Gallery, 685 N. Milwaukee Ave. “Inauguration: Affirmation, Empowerment & Resistance.”

—2 p.m.: Pilsen, at Flor del Monte, 1951 West 22nd Place.

—2:30 p.m.: Albany Park/Old Irving Park, at Café Urbano, 4176 N. Elston Ave.

—4 p.m.: Evanston, at Bookends and Beginnings, 1712 Sherman Ave., Alley #1.

—6 p.m.: Logan Square, at Cole’s, 2338 N Milwaukee Ave, 21+, Speak Up/Warm Up to benefit the Logan Square Neighborhood Association.

—7 p.m.: Humboldt Park, at La Bruquena, 2728 W. Division.

—TBA: Hyde Park.

All events are free and open to the public.

Co-sponsors for Writers Resist Chicago include ACLU-Illinois, Big Shoulders Books, Chicago Book Expo, Chicago Review of Books, Chicago Women in Publishing, Curbside Splendor, Guild Literary Complex, Haymarket Books, In These Times, Open Books, Packingtown Review, Poetry Center of Chicago, Read/Write Library, Rose Metal Press, Seminary Coop Bookstore, Slag Glass City, South Side Weekly, StoryStudio Chicago, UnAbridged Books, Windy City Times and Women & Children First.

See <http://slagglasscity.tumblr.com/tagged/WRITERSRESIST> and <http://writersresist.org>.

GLAAD report reveals mostly good news

GLAAD recently released its annual “Where We Are on TV” report.

“Where We Are on TV” analyzes the overall diversity of primetime scripted series regulars on broadcast networks and assesses the number of LGBTQ characters on cable networks and streaming services for the 2016-2017 TV season. This marks the 21st year that GLAAD has tracked the presence of LGBTQ characters on television.

The report found the highest percentage (4.8 percent) of LGBTQ regular characters on broadcast television since GLAAD began tracking all broadcast regular characters 12 years ago. Other encouraging findings include a record-high percentage of Black series regular characters on broadcast television (20 percent of all series regulars) and a record-high percentage of regular characters with disabilities on broadcast television (1.7 percent).

However, on the flip side, lesbian representation dropped dramatically on broadcast television, down 16 percentage points to 17 percent of all LGBTQ characters. Lesbian representation is also down on cable, to 20 percent— from 22 percent reported last year.

Bisexual representations on broadcast rose to 30 percent, up 10 percentage points from last year. The number of regular and recurring transgender characters across all three platforms tracked has more than doubled, from seven characters last year to 16.

The report is at GLAAD.org/where-weareontv16.

Items come to life in ‘Toys R She’

IT presented Toys R She, a holiday party sponsored by This Free Life Dec. 23 at Annoyance Theatre.

The special planned guest was Manila Luzon, of RuPaul’s Drag Race’s season three. There were DJs, performers, fashion, go-go dancers and more. The venue was decked out with art displays revolving around toys from Chicago’s up-and-coming artists, and favorite childhood toys and decorations in every room.

People brought donated items, including toys, to benefit The Pediatric Oncology Treasure Chest Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides for joy and happiness children and teens diagnosed with cancer.

Photos by Kat Fitzgerald



Attendees at the Toys R She event.

Photos by Kat Fitzgerald; more online at WindyCityMediaGroup.com



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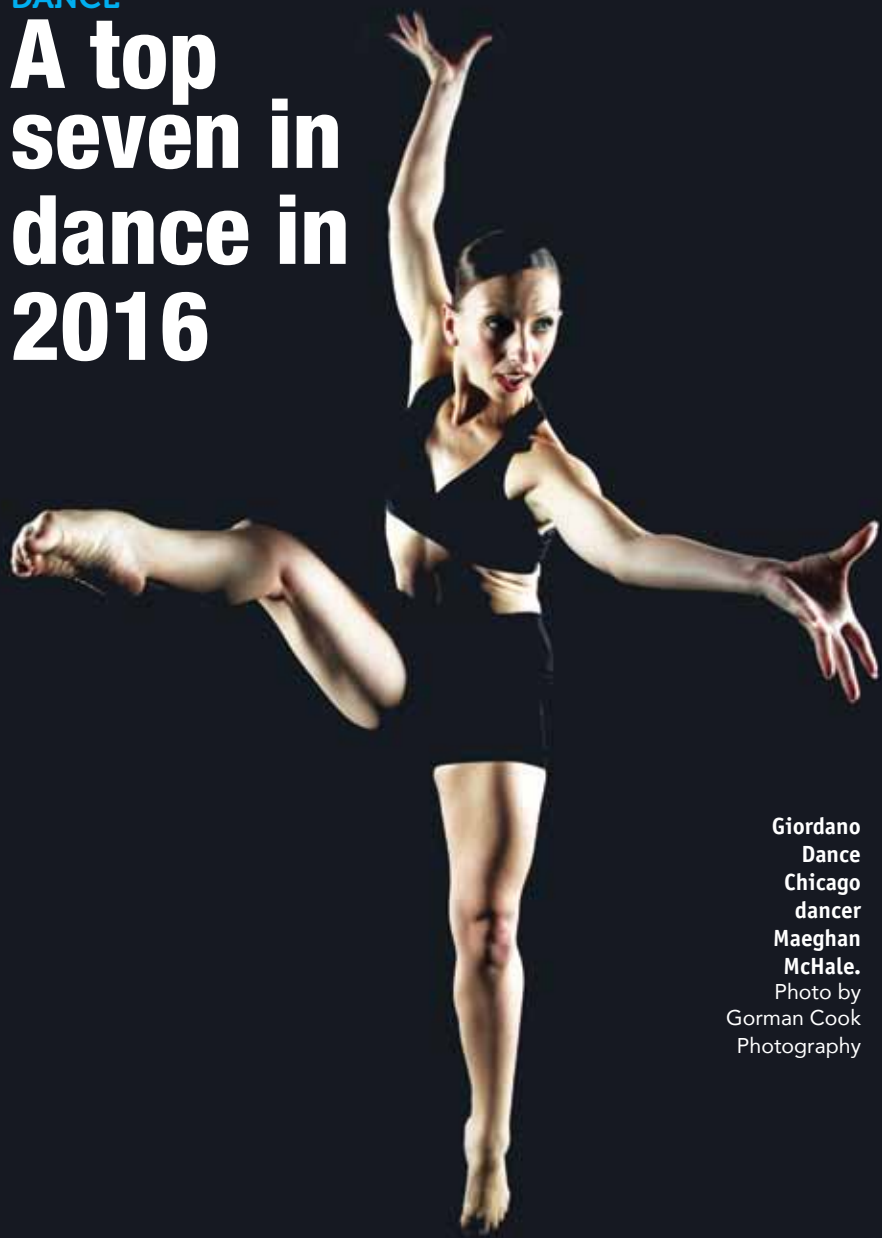
www.windycitymediagroup.com

CULTURE CLUB



DANCE

A top seven in dance in 2016



Giordano
Dance
Chicago
dancer
Maeghan
McHale.

Photo by
Gorman Cook
Photography

BY LAUREN WARNECKE

It's been an interesting year for Chicago dance.

Exciting, big-budget initiatives propelled our city into national and international dance dialog, while favorite local traditions are changing, shifting, evolving, and in some cases ending. Choosing a top seven, rather than "the" top seven, seemed appropriate in a year that was full of surprises, and from which the only clear winner was us: dance audiences. This is by no means an exhaustive list, and doesn't even begin to cover the storefront dance scene (which I'm saving for another publication). I've chosen these seven companies because they made notable contributions to dance that were especially apparent this year.

—After a year of waiting, **The Joffrey Ballet's** brand-new *Nutcracker* was finally unveiled this December, with choreography by superstar Christopher Wheeldon and his top-notch design team. Most of the details were kept under wraps until the world premiere a few weeks ago, and Wheeldon's Chicago-centric ballet took artistic liberties that make this anything but "just another *Nutcracker*."

Opinions about the reimaged holiday classic vary widely, and I certainly have mine. While I wouldn't count the libretto among my top picks this year, it's impossible to deny Joffrey's productivity and grit this season in bringing its ambitious new production to life—even if you don't consider the fact that they put up an entirely different full-length ballet for October's fall series in the middle of the process. So, this nod is for Joffrey, if not for its

Nutcracker. In fact, a mixed response for the new ballet is perfectly in line with the company's founders: risk-taking "mavericks of dance" who challenged their audiences and brazenly pushed the form to new places.

—**Chicago Tap Theatre's** June one-nighter at the Athenaeum Theatre called "We Will Tap You" was an all-out spectacle honoring the music of Queen. Set to a live onstage band playing Kurt Schweitz's arrangements, and featuring rock-star vocalists Nick Davio and Elisa Carlson belting classic Queen hits, the ever uncouth Mattrick Swayze (AKA Matthew Hollis) and his "Swayzettes" emceed while managing a myriad of costume changes and helping direct traffic for pretty much every pride organization in Chicago (the most notable of which were the Lakeside Pride Marching Band, the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, and the Chicago Spirit Brigade).

The stakes were high in coordinating the company's biggest endeavor in its 13-year history, and fortunately this tap-dance-glam-rock-musical-spectacular-summer-Pride-extravaganza actually worked, and was totally awesome. Plus, there are a few rumors floating around that CTT may continue to produce a Pride-themed show on an annual basis (yes, please!).

—**Dance for Life** celebrated its 25th anniversary this year with a stunning gala and record-breaking attendance at the annual concert which raised \$425,000 for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago and the Dancers' Fund. All the usual suspects were there: Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Chicago Human Rhythm Project, Giordano Dance Chicago, and the Joffrey Ballet, which performed a stunning revival of

Gerald Arpino's 1983 "Round of Angels." The two wild-card spots went to Chicago Dance Crash and Visceral Dance Chicago, who easily filled the aesthetic gap once occupied by River North Dance Chicago in an evening that remembers the impact of HIV/AIDS on Chicago's great dance community.

Attendees would later find out that the fundraiser's silver anniversary would also be Anthony Guerrero's swan song, as he later announced he was leaving his post as executive director of the newly-formed Chicago Dancers United, an umbrella organization supporting ongoing programs and projects including Dance for Life and the Dancers' Fund, an emergency grant program for dance professionals experiencing financial distress due to chronic illness.

—Seeing **Giordano Dance Chicago (GDC)** at the Dance Center last February was an extraordinary treat. After a 37-year absence, the longest running American jazz dance company took to Columbia College's intimate 278-seat dance venue, performing audience favorites from the past few seasons and a few Giordano classics that are best viewed up close.

The powerhouse GDC dancers, not typically known for subtly, were challenged to make necessary adjustments that come with being just feet from the front row. This, perhaps, was a harbinger of things to come. Back at the massive Harris Theater for their fall series a few months ago, a new work by Peter Chu asked the typically emotive dancers to wipe their faces free of any expressions. After more than 50 years, it's refreshing to see GDC stretch by maintaining and revitalizing dances by the company's founder while simultaneously pushing beyond S-curves and kick-ball-changes to explore the edges of the form.

—In March, **Chicago Repertory Ballet's** ambitious full-length ballet modelled on the story of *MacBeth* was a new direction for the fledgling ballet company lead by Thodos Dance Chicago expat Wade Schaaf. The brilliance here was in the collaborations: namely Schaaf's creative partnerships with projection designer John Pobojewski of Thirst Design and lighting designer Sarah Lackner, who together literally transformed and elevated the typically drab Ruth Page Center for the Performing Arts.

The immersive visual environment and Schaaf's unique mix of classical and contemporary vocabulary generally kept to the Shakespeare tragedy's plotline, but the setting was

situated in an ambiguous era that was part Elizabethan, part World War II, part apocalyptic future. Alluding to the timeless nature of Shakespeare, it was a similar approach to Krzysztof Pastor's take on *Romeo & Juliet* (presented for a second time by the Joffrey Ballet in October), although far more effective.

—The year it premiered, **Hubbard Street Dance Chicago's** "The Art of Falling" appeared on every "best of" list—except mine. Last summer's revival was my first glimpse at the masterful collaboration between Hubbard Street and The Second City. Laugh-out loud and at times bittersweet, "The Art of Falling" revealed the humanity of a world-class company that is otherwise super serious.

Also worth a mention is the November Fall Series, which highlighted yin and yang in Jiri Kylian's amazing duo of works for Hubbard Street's women and men: "Falling Angels" and "Sarabande," respectfully. I personally prefer the two pieces in the reverse order, but I'll take them however I can get them, and the same goes for Alejandro Cerrudo's gorgeous world premiere, "Niebla." If this weren't enough, Hubbard Street gave us the first taste of Brian Brooks' much discussed choreographic residency at the Harris Theater, for which the NYC-based choreographer will create a series of works over the next year.

—**The Chicago Dancing Festival** recently announced that it would not enter its second decade, deeming the project "complete" and likely clearing the way for new initiatives similar to the aforementioned Brooks residency. The loss will be felt across the city—who now will miss out on the chance to see world-renowned local, national, and international companies for free. The cut is all the more deeper having gotten a glimpse at a new direction this season—one that I had hoped would become an annual tradition: Planet Chicago.

The outdoor mini-fest at Navy Pier featured local dance companies performing an array of world dance in a parade-style format that included *Bharatanatyam* (Natya Dance Theatre), African dance (Muntu Dance Theatre), Brazilian capoeira (Gingarte Capoeira Chicago) and charming student performances in tap, jazz, and footworking. Planet Chicago showed off Navy Pier, it showed off Chicago, it showed off dance and it challenged valid criticisms that the festival wasn't Chicago-centric or diverse. Also important: it was really, really fun.

Joffrey in NYC March 29-April 2

The Joyce Theater Foundation, Inc. will present the New York City return of The Joffrey Ballet, performing the New York premiere of its production of Krzysztof Pastor's *Romeo & Juliet* at Lincoln Center's David H. Koch Theater on March 29-April 2.

A special gala performance of mixed repertory will take place Thursday, March 30. This benefit for The Joyce Theater Foundation will include the New York premieres of *Bells*, by Yuri Possokhov, and *Body of Your Dreams*, by Myles Thatcher. Christopher Wheeldon's *Fool's Paradise* will complete the evening's program.

Under the artistic direction of Ashley Wheeler, The Joffrey Ballet recently celebrated its 61st anniversary since its 1956 founding by Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino in New York City. Twenty-one years ago, the company moved to Chicago, where it has been based ever since.

Tickets are at DavidHKochTheater.com or 212-496-0600.



Joffrey
Artistic
Director
Ashley
Wheeler.
PR photo

Art Institute, Filmmakers among NEA grant recipients

For its first major grant funding round of fiscal year 2017, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) announced more than \$30 million will be awarded to nonprofit organizations and individuals across the country for grants in the areas of Art Works, Art Works: Creativity Connects, Challenge America and Creative Writing Fellowships.

These grants cross all artistic disciplines, reach 48 states as well as Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and also support partnerships between the arts and non-arts sectors.

Forty-eight grants (totaling \$1.43 million) have been recommended to Illinois organizations. A few of the grant recipients include 3Arts, Inc (\$15,000), Art Institute of Chicago (\$70,000 on behalf of the institute; \$10,000 on behalf of the Gene Siskel Film Center), Chicago Architecture Foundation (\$35,000), Chicago Filmmakers (\$25,000), Columbia College Chicago (\$30,000), Facets Multimedia Incorporated (\$65,000), Joffrey Ballet (\$20,000), Lookingglass Theatre Company (\$20,000), Snow City Arts Foundation (\$20,000) and Steppenwolf Theatre Company (\$60,000).

The full list of organizations is at <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/fall-2016-grant-announcement-state-listing.pdf>.

Chicago's top LGBT sports memories

BY ROSS FORMAN

It was an award-winning, record-setting, grand coming-out 2016 for Chicago's LGBT sports scene, with cheers, jeers and tears.

The year was, arguably, the best-ever locally, such that, ranking the Top 10 events—or Top 16, to coincide with the year, 2016—was, without question, the most difficult list to compile of any year that Windy City Times has offered a ranking list of the year's top local LGBT Sports Moments/Events.

There were, easily, five or six options for the No. 1 spot from 2016, whereas in past years, it's been a battle between, maybe, one or two, or possibly a third, moment/event for the top spot. Heck, I'll admit, I went back and forth on the top three for quite some time.

That said, the top spot on the Top 16 List of Chicago LGBT Sports Moments/Events goes to the Chicago Smelts, who became back-to-back state champions in the annual state meet, held in mid-April.

About 75 percent of the Smelts are LGBT, said the team's head coach Christopher Politan, who is gay. About 80 Smelts competed in the State Meet and they faced more than 20 other teams.

"Winning the title was an affirmation of the success that we experienced in 2015," Politan said. "Illinois is one of the most competitive swimming states in the country, with our state meets often being one the largest meets in the nation. Winning that first State Meet was historic both for the team and as an LGBT team. Winning this second State Championship demonstrated just how deep and talented the Smelts are as a team. During this past State Meet, 100 percent of the team contributed to the victory, which is an amazing feat. More impressive, however, were the brand-new Smelts, who invaluablely contributed to the team's success."

Politan has lived in Chicago for five years. Prior to that, he lived in New York City, where he also coached an LGBT team: Team New York Aquatics.

"I think that we as a team take great pride as Smelts regardless of our identity," Politan said. "There is an incredible amount of diversity in the most robust sense of that word, and it is central to the team's success. Indeed, I believe that one of the best things about the Smelts is that swimmers of all ages, skills, speed and sexual orientation are welcomed, embraced and valued. Being a predominantly LGBT [team] and winning a second State Meet is a wonderful achievement, but being a team that is focused on acceptance and friendship is even more incredible."

Politan said that winning back-to-back state championships was a thrill. And this year, they won by an increased margin.

"Winning [again] in 2016 was really icing on the cake," Politan said. "It takes a tremendous amount of energy and commitment by everyone on the team, be they competitive swimmers, or not. Truly, winning the second time demonstrated that team-wide commitment to working hard, having fun and celebrating both individual and team success."

"Having coached masters' swimmers in some capacity for the past 15 years or so, these past two years have been remarkable. I am constantly amazed by the amount of work that masters' athletes are willing to put into the pool. Indeed, after a long day at work or sometimes even before a long day, these athletes arrive at the pool ready to swim hard and push themselves, their teammates and their friends. It is truly inspiring. Moreover, central to the Smelts is a commitment to camaraderie, with

athletes not simply being lane mates, but indeed great friends—making these accomplishments of late, all the sweeter."

Also in 2016, the Smelts registered a new national record in the Women's 18+ 400 Medley Relay. The team of Julia Green, Allison Lloyd, Gabrielle Chang and Anna Miller bested the old national record by several seconds and in doing so, "set a great new mark that will hopefully endure for a little while," Politan said.

So, how does the threepeat look for 2017?

"The team is as strong as ever, with new additions joining us regularly," Politan said. "Winning a meet of this size is really about having swimmers at every level and at every age. We are thrilled that in addition to gender diversity, we have a vast range of ages and swimming experience. Last year's winning team featured an 18 year-old and an 83 year-old, both of whom were instrumental to the team's success. As we look ahead to the State Meet in April, we are focused not necessarily on a third State Championship, but rather on individual performance goals. I am looking forward to April, not necessarily for the State Meet, but really for the payoff from the next few months of work. To see folks excel in workouts and translate that, should they choose, into competition, is really a great honor. I will say that one competition goal that I have for the forthcoming season is to have 8 to 10 women on our team break one minute in the 100-Free, which would be an astounding feat."

Politan said a key to the team's success in 2015 and 2016 was a variety of team leaders, "who make sure that the team runs smoothly both in and out of the pool." Plus, the team's volunteer coaches who wrote thoughtful and challenging workouts throughout the season, made preparing the team for the State Meet an easy endeavor, he added. Those folks include Steve Gilberg, Seth Hoff, Heidi Kafka, Chris Layton, Adam Parker, Dan Perkey, Heather Saylor, Matt Trauner and Rob Welcher.

Chris Mosier, the incredibly talented transgender athlete, put up a stiff fight to the Smelts for the No. 1 ranking—and some may question how he didn't grab the honor.

Mosier, after all, finished in the top third among his competitors at the Sprint Duathlon World Championship in June. Then, in November, Mosier had a third-place finish at the Sprint Triathlon World Championship qualifier.

Mosier in 2016 also appeared in ESPN The Magazine's Body issue, becoming the first openly transgender athlete to be featured in that special issue. And, Mosier was the first transgender athlete to be featured in a Nike advertisement.

And to top off Mosier's 2016, he was named Outsports' 2016 Person of the Year.

Mosier, who is the founder of transathlete.com, now lives in New York, but was born in Chicago. Mosier grew up in northwest suburban Lake Zurich and lived there until high school, and then attended graduate school at Loyola University in Chicago in 2004.

The Top 16 Chicago LGBT Sports Moments/Events From 2016:

1. Chicago Smelts win second consecutive State Championship.

2. Chris Mosier has amazing run(s) on international stage.

3. Pride Bowl named National Tournament of the Year at the annual Compete Sports Diversity Awards, held in mid-November to recognize athletes, teams, leagues and organizations for their commitment to sports diversity and inclusion. The 10th Pride Bowl flag football tournament will be held in Chicago in late June, 2017.



Chicago Smelts.

Photo courtesy of Doug Murphy

4. College swimmer honored: Ayrton Kasemets, a Chicago-area native swimming for Oakland University, received the school's Courage Award at the annual Black and Gold Awards Ceremony, held in the spring. Kasemets, who competes in the breaststroke and individual medley (IM), was recognized for being openly gay. He graduated from Mundelein High School in 2014.

5. Chicago Dragons shine on international stage: In the prestigious Bingham Cup, held in Nashville in late May, the rugby club brought two teams for the first time ever. The A-side participated in Division 1 and the B-side participated in Division 3. The B-side won the Challenger Julep, marking the first time in Dragons history that they left the Bingham Cup with hardware.

6. WNBA star comes out: Elena Delle Donne of the Chicago Sky announced she is engaged to a woman, Amanda Clifton, and the two will be married. Delle Donne was the 2015 WNBA MVP and is a multi-time WNBA All-Star.

7. Christina Kahrl gets promoted: Kahrl, who has lived in Chicago's western suburbs and South Side as well as Rogers Park (the latter since 2007), announced in late 2016 that she is moving to Bristol, Connecticut, to work at ESPN's corporate headquarters. She has been a writer-editor for ESPN.com, but has been promoted to senior editor.

8. Jake Conrad proposes to his boyfriend, Michael Holtzman, on-court during a timeout in the Chicago Bulls' game Dec. 8 against San Antonio. Holtzman said "Yes," and the video of their surprise engagement went viral.

9. Tribune sportswriter comes out: Chris Hine, the Chicago Blackhawks hockey beat writer for the Tribune, came out as gay. Hine lives in West Lake View and previously has covered University of Illinois football and basketball and University of Notre Dame football and basketball. Hine was named Honorable Mention for Outsports Male Hero of the Year.

10. CMSA Hall of Fame honorees named: The Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association announced its latest inductees: Frank Kisner, Brian Kupersmit, Mark Liberson (sponsor inductee), Mark Sakalares, Brian Sommer and Leslie Wallin.

11. Boystown rides wave of Chicago Cubs success: Gay bars do incredible business in October and early November as the Cubs claimed the team's first World Series title in 108 years.

12. Ride For AIDS Chicago success: The 14th annual Ride, held in July, featured 190 riders going 200-miles and 12 participants in the inaugural 100-mile Ride. The 2016 Ride raised more than \$485,000, which was over \$50,000 more than the 2015 Ride. The Ride, run by the Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN), raises funds for HIV services and is the Midwest's only back-to-back century ride.

13. Chicago Force rolls through regular season: The women's tackle football team finished with a 7-1 mark in the regular-season behind quarterback Rasan Gore and others. Lesbian Linda Bache is the team's owner. The Force will kick off its 2017 season in the spring.

14. Switching Sports: Brian Sommer stepped down as the first and only commissioner for CMSA's successful kickball league, and he will assume the commissioner role in 2017 for dodgeball.

15. CMSA Ultimate shine: Jessamine Finch won the annual CMSA Ultimate Spirit of the Game Award, voted by every team and player, and CMSA Field Day was extremely successful.

16. Scantly clad runners—for a cause. The annual Santa Speedo Run, held in early December, was a 1-mile run through the heart of Chicago's Boystown neighborhood, with most wearing only a Santa hat and Speedo—and shoes. The 2016 event raised about \$50,000 for Center on Halsted's Youth Housing Initiative.

Amber Stocks is new Sky coach/GM

After an extensive six-week process in which the organization interviewed over a dozen strong candidates, the Chicago Sky has selected Amber Stocks as its head coach and general manager.

As an assistant coach for the Los Angeles Sparks, Stocks helped turn around a franchise that went 14-20 in 2015 to 26-8 in 2016. Stocks was key in scouting and strategy preparation, spurring the Sparks' run to 2016 WNBA champions.

Single-game tickets for 2017 Chicago Sky home game are on sale, starting as low as \$18. To purchase tickets, call 866-SKY-WNBA or visit Ticketmaster.com.

Gay Games raising scholarship money for 2018 event

The international Federation of Gay Games is raising funds to send athletes and artists to #ChangeTheWorld at Paris 2018 Gay Games 10.

San Francisco's Martha Ehrenfeld and Carla McKay are matching the funds received by Dec. 31, 2016—up to \$20,000. See <https://www.gofundme.com/fggsscholarship>.

The Gay Games is largely funded by participants. Donations will help fund more scholarship applications.

Also, see <https://gaygames.org/wp/2016/11/01/please-give-to-the-gay-games-scholarship-fund/>.

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR Top spots of 2016

BY ANDREW DAVIS

In 2016, I had the opportunity to visit a lot of area restaurants, ranging from fast-food places to very upscale spots. Below are some of the ones that stood head and shoulders above the others.

—**Analogue** (2523 N. Milwaukee Ave.; AnalogueChicago.com): Don't be fooled by the lunchtime cafeteria trays. Analogue is a relatively simple, relaxed site with Southern fare that's simultaneously straightforward, traditional (although with the occasional twist) and more complex than you might think.



2016 highlights include the ramen at Arami (above), the work of Analogue chef Alfredo Nogueira (left) and the lounge at Travelle (below).

Arami photo by Andrew Davis; PR photos of Analogue and Travelle



Sidetrack's OUTspoken! Series: January's featured storytellers



Liz Baudler



Ann Marie Carrothers



Lily Jean



Peter Kim



Paul Lisnek



Ezra Solomon

The January edition of OUTspoken! LGBTQ storyteller series takes place Tuesday, January 3, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St. Doors open at 6 pm, stories begin at 7.

See www.outspokenchicago.com for more info.

—**Liz Baudler** is—depending on the day—a queer agender journalist and submarine tour guide. Her work appears in Windy City Times and New City. She co-hosts Sappho's Salon, a monthly performance series about gender, sexuality and feminism at Women and Children First Bookstore, and has performed at various shows around the city. She runs on coffee and Facebook.

—**Ann Marie Carrothers** is an award-winning singer, comedian, digital educator and filmmaker. Ann Marie has participated in every aspect of the theatre scene, from sketch comedy and playwriting to Chinese opera and Turkish shadow puppet theatre. You can see her around Chicago performing stand up at the i0 and Second City and teaching kids how to do awesome things with robots.

—**Lily Jean** is all about embracing weirdness and has been working as a performer of all things slightly left of up since returning to Chicago in 2014. As a company member with Movement Revolution Dance Crew, Modet Dance Collective, and Gorilla Tango Burlesque, their work is interdisciplinary and explorative. They most recently appeared in the collaborative project "[Trans] formation" and modeled for The Rational Dress Society.

—**Paul Lisnek** is the political analyst for WGN-TV and hosts Politics Tonight, a live nightly talk show covering the political scene on CLTV. He also hosts Broadway In Chicago Backstage and Newsmakers for the Comcast Network and hosts Behind the Curtain, a podcast which can be heard at WGNPlus.com

—**Peter Kim** is a Chicago-based writer, performer, comedian and bad boy. Recent credits include Zanies, The Laugh Factory, The Second City National Touring Company, and The Second City e.t.c. - where he was nominated for a Jeff Award in the critically acclaimed revue, A Red Line Runs Through It. He can currently be seen hosting The Moth at Lincoln Hall and The Kiki at The Laugh Factory.

—**Ezra Solomon** is a graduate student in journalism at Northwestern University. He is an openly LGBT writer who sometimes doubles as a photography model and a fiction editor. Above all else, he likes to tell a good story, and he's always had a bit of an entertainer in him. He loves creating things and collaborating with other journalists and artists whenever he can.

DANCING ABOUT ARCHITECTURE

BY MARC 'MOOSE' MODER



George Michael's eight most iconic moments

With the death of pop icon George Michael, many in our community felt a loss akin to Bowie or Prince. But with only a smattering of singles over the past 15 years, there are many of us who only recognize random singles from pop culture or (gasp!) their parents. It's with great sadness and reverence that we break down GM's eight most important recorded moments for the lovers and the newbies.

—**1982, "Wham! Rap!"** It made no impact as their debut single, but was groundbreaking when 19-year-old George Michael pushed forward with a still-underground black genre into the UK market. Only Blondie's "Rapture" pre-dated him in a white audience's exposure to hip-hop. It wouldn't be until the following year, when it was reissued, that it would finally chart in the UK, and then again with a new version in 1986.

—**1984, "Careless Whisper/Last Christmas"** By now Wham! was a phenomenon on both sides of the pond with "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go," but "Careless Whisper" and "Last Christmas" helped the band cross over from teenie-bopper girl favorite to a cross-gender contender. Both singles represented something more mature, even though Michael wrote "Careless Whisper" in high school. It

—**Charlatan** (1329 W. Chicago Ave.; CharlatanChicago.com): With cuisine labelled as "Italian countryhouse meets Midwest farmhouse," this spot has items like goat cheese-stuffed chicken breast and sports phrases such as "Che cazzo fai?"

—**Oyster Bah** (1962 N. Halsted St.; OysterBah.com): Being from the Chesapeake Bay area, I'm normally a bit skeptical of Chicago's seafood offerings. However, this spot has some of the best seafood I'd had in a long time. Don't skip the stuffies!

—**Arami** (1829 W. Chicago Ave.; AramiChicago.com): This Japanese spot has a rather nondescript exterior—but the interior (decor- and cuisine-wise) is the total opposite. Maki, ramen, sashimi—they're all excellent.

—**Travelle Kitchen + Bar** (330 N. Wabash St.; TravelleChicago.com): Chef de Cuisine Ricardo Jarquin offers some stunning dishes at this Langham Chicago spot (in the former IBM building). Some of them include the chilled English pea soup (with lump crab, cucumber and yuzu), pork and clams, and the banana-and-peanut butter pot de creme.

—**LondonHouse Chicago's rooftop bar** (85 E. Upper Wacker Dr.; LondonHouseChicago.com): This is the city's only tri-level rooftop venue—and boasts everything from imaginative cocktails to tasty dishes to an unforgettable view from the 23rd-floor cupola.

—**Green Zebra** (1460 W. Chicago Ave.; GreenZebraChicago.com): What do you mean you don't like vegetarian fare? Green Zebra will change your mind, thanks to items like the beet (not beef) tartare and pumpkin pot stickers.

Runner-ups include **NaKorn**, **Nonnina** and **Cafe Spiaggia**.

Here's looking forward to 2017!

Note: Restaurant profiles are based on invitations arranged from restaurants and/or firms.

would go on to be the anthem for every school dance, and "Last Christmas" is a modern holiday classic that rivals Mariah Carey's crown any day.

—**1986, "A Different Corner"** Released on Wham's last album, "A Different Corner" was really Michael's coming out as a solo artist. When the single came out, it was listed as George Michael, not Wham!, and he never looked back. It was not only written solo, but performed and produced solo, something only Stevie Wonder and Prince were doing at the time.



—**1987, "I Want Your Sex"** After the mournful, delicate "Corner" was turned, Michael turned us all out with a song so brazenly sexual, it was banned by the BBC and some US stations, which, of course, pushed it to the top of the charts and helped set the table for the diamond-selling Faith LP, which blew away any of his past group achievements with ease. At this point, the gay icon was still pushing his heterosexuality onto us with his nude girlfriend in the video, but we all knew ...

—**1990, "Freedom '90"** Three years, ten million albums, and seven Top Ten hits later, George was ready to put his music in the spotlight (instead of his tight bum) by shunning the peak of the music video craze. After refusing a video for the previous single, "Praying For Time," "Freedom '90" rounded up the hottest collection of the queens of supermodely to stand in for George, lip-synching his cut and

Turn to page 22



"I don't vote with my vagina—this is bigger than that."—Susan Sarandon. So if you've got a problem with how the election turned out, reach out to Sarandon. Apparently her vagina is big enough to grab.

As we look back on 2016, I want to start—selfishly, perhaps—with a story about me. Many people were taken aback when I discussed my decision to go on PrEP as a form of HIV prevention. For me, it was a no-brainer; I tell you everything (well, almost everything). I don't understand all this PrEP-shaming. Here's how I look at it: Maybe someone who wouldn't typically read a medical article got some information from my weekly scribbles. I am heartened by everyone who wrote in—even those of you who felt it was mistake. At least you're paying attention.

Even in our darkest hour, there is some light. Most of us were horrified as news of the massacre at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando trickled in. But immediately following the tragedy, JetBlue offered to fly affected family members to Orlando for free. Disney donated \$1 million to the OneOrlando Fund. Other companies reached out. But perhaps most impressively, Seth Rudetsky and hubby James Wesley corralled dozens of Broadway luminaries to record "What the World Needs Now Is Love" and raised not only money but awareness. Bravo.

I love the summer Olympics. Lots of hot muscular guys showing lots of rippling flesh—what's not to like? In a first, an Olympian was actually robbed of a medal due to the size of his penis! Hiroki Ogita almost cleared the 5.3-meter pole he was attempting to vault when his protruding penis pushed the pole. That was topped by Brazilian gymnasts **Arthur Zanetti**, **Arthur Mariano** and **Sergio Sasaki**, who all made nude videos. Mariano's was the most impressive, since he was nude, fully erect and hanging around the team bathroom! Then there's Britain's **Louis Smith**, who was filmed polishing his javelin, if you catch my drift. You can see all on BillyMasters.com.

My favorite Olympic-related story is that General Mills finally put the legendary **Greg Louganis** on a box of Wheaties. Louganis said, "Back in '95, I wasn't expecting to live very long because we thought of HIV-AIDS as a death sentence. So to be here today, now 56, the box means so much more to me than it would have then because I feel like I'm being embraced as a whole person, not just for my athletic achievement."

Like it or not, we must mention Logo's Finding Prince Charming. Talk about being between a rock and a hard place—it's a show nobody but gay men has ever heard of, and yet one which almost no gay men admit to watching! It was a bold experiment gone tragically wrong. Logo touted it as the first gay bachelor show, discounting Bravo's Boy Meets Boy—which was far superior, despite its own icky twist. But nothing could be ickier than Logo's "prince," **Robert Sepulveda Jr.** Look: Nobody loves a hooker more than me. But once there are videos of you drinking someone's semen out of a used condom or shoving a shampoo bottle up your ass, I think you've lost the right to the holier-than-thou attitude—to say nothing of the title "prince." Logo missed a great opportunity for product placement. Picture it: Finding Prince Charming,



In 2016, Greg Louganis had his Wheaties, Billy Masters noted.
Photo from Louganis

brought to you by Head & Shoulders!

Now that the season is over, Sepulveda is more than happy to not only talk about being a hooker, but also make some money off it ... 'cause that's what hookers do. His latest venture is a 2017 calendar called "Rented," in which he "gives the recipient a glimpse into the harsh reality many sex workers face." Forget "prince"—the man is a saint. He's the Mother Teresa of prostitution! In the calendar, we see such telling photos as him counting the money left on a nightstand—I never saw Terry do that in Calcutta! To prove he hasn't left behind the world's oldest profession (many claim he's still escorting), the calendar costs a whopping \$50. Lest you think he's pocketing that money, au contraire. Allegedly, all of the proceeds will go to SexWorkersProject.org. If this is handled anything like his Atlanta Rainbow Crosswalks "charity," next year's calendar might be called "Incarcerated!"

There were lots of celebrity nudes. On BillyMasters.com, you can find people like **River Viiperi**, **Will Wikle**, **Orlando Bloom**, **Justin Bieber**, **Alex Bowen**, **Lewis Bloor** and **Brandon Myers**. Those last few are quite well-endowed British reality stars definitely worth checking out. Still, the top dog is **John Barrowman's** husband, **Scott Gill**—who is also a Brit. Scott nearly broke the Internet when he wandered by naked while Barrowman was doing a live web chat from their Palm Beach pool. You can see why Johnny is always so happy on our website.

What would a Billy Masters column be without a Fayewatch item? We have bookend items about **La Dunaway**. Near the beginning of the year, she was seen at a popular West Hollywood grocery store wearing plastic surgical gloves and talking to the tomatoes. It would really be a story if the tomatoes spoke back! As the year drew to a close, I ran into Faye in the most unlikely of places. While I can't share too many details, she looked quite frail and was sporting a soft cast on her right foot. When I asked her about it, she said, "Well, I had a little run-in with my refrigerator—but that's not how this happened." She then hobbled off as I said, "Huh?"

When Faye is speaking in riddles, it's time to wrap up another year of columns. As we go to press, we're shocked to learn that it was **George Michael's** last Christmas. But even with that sad news, I had to smile when I read **Sarah Michelle Gellar's** Twitter tribute: "Do you really want to hurt me? I guess you do 2016. #ripboygeorge." Always on the cutting edge, Buffy! That's why you get your news from BillyMasters.com, the site with a finger on the pulse of anyone with a pulse! If you'd like to reach out to us, drop a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before the next celebrity death. Thanks for yet another great year. And, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Thursday, Dec. 29

Nutcracker Director Ashley Wheeler brings unique, inclusive perspective on dance, reflecting the diversity of America with its company, audiences, and repertoire. Through Dec. 30 7:00pm The Joffrey Ballet 10 E Randolph Chicago <http://www.joffrey.org>

Bi Discussion Group Every other Thursday group chat about upcoming bisexual events, concerns, and answer each other's questions about the community. Bring snacks or a good book to share. 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

Friday, Dec. 30

Charles III Charles. Camilla. William. Kate. Harry. One family holds the future Of Great Britain in its hands. But what will it be? 2015 Olivier Award: Best New Play. Through Jan 14. 7:30pm Chicago Shakespeare Theatre 800 E Grand Ave Chicago 312-595-5600 <http://chicagoshakes.com>

525,600 Minutes: A Cabaret Pride Films and Plays welcomes members of the Chicago Cabaret Professionals. Year-end show includes host Denise McGowan Tracy, Joan Curto, Beckie Menzie at the piano, Jordan Phelps, currently one of the stars of PFP's production of PRISCILLA: Queen of the Desert, Peter Rugar, Sarah Conrad, Filipe Carrasco, and Joseph Alvey. \$35/\$25 7:30pm Pride Arts Center, 4139 N Broadway, Chicago, 1 800 737 0984 <http://pridefilmsandplays.com>

Purity Ball White Party Neverland presents. All-white attire, high fashion end of the year celebration- bringing to-

**AT '17 Saturday, Dec. 31**

Ring in the new year at spots all over Chicagoland.

Photo from @mosphere in 2015 by Jerry Nunn

gether dance, music and drag. 11:00pm - 5:00am Fantasy Nightclub, 3641 N. Halsted St., Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/events/1782013268732846/>

Saturday, Dec. 31

Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance (LGBTQ) Support meeting to talk about illnesses, symptoms, treatment, doctors, and personal issues such as dating, relationships and work. Every Saturday. 11:00am - 12:30am Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com>

First Night Evanston New Year's Eve Wristband admits you to dozens of performances of music, dance, poetry, and a story slam. \$10 - \$100 1:00pm

- 12:00am Multiple Indoor Venues and Raymond Park, 1427 Chicago Ave., Evanston, Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/first-night-ewanston-new-years-eve-gala-dozens-of-performances-plus-kids-teen-shows-tickets-29917244283>

Black & White Party! Back Lot Bash & The L Stop present women's NYE countdown 7:00pm Lark, 3441 N Halsted St., Chicago Tickets: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2721532>

New Year's Eve Celebration at Sidetrack Champagne Toast at midnight. \$25 advance tickets available from bartender or online. Doors open 7pm. 7:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago <http://www.sidetrackchicago.com/>

Legacy Project New Year's Eve Benefit General Admission Ticket Registration includes guaranteed entry, party favors, and a complimentary champagne toast at Midnight 7:00pm - 1:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/new-years-eve-at-sidetrack-with-the-legacy-project-tickets-29709451770>

D.S. Tequila NYE 2017 Bash Each ticket includes access to the patio, southwestern buffet, 4 hour open bar, party favors, DJ, and more! 8:00pm - 3:00am DS Tequila Company 3352 N Halsted St Chicago Tickets: http://www.dstequila.com/nye-2017.html?mc_cid=d7180c9221&mc_eid=2a3c8a2949

Bisexual Queer Alliance Chicago Meet-up, Ring in the New Year Free event will also celebrate HM's 10th anniversary. Food, drink, good company, a great combination to ring in 2017! 8:00pm Hamburger Mary's and Mary's Attic, 5400 N Clark St, Chicago <http://www.hamburgermarys.com/chicago>

Sunday, Jan. 1

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

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Asians & Friends Dim Sum Each first Sunday of the month 12:30pm Furama 4936 N. Broadway Chicago <http://www.afchicago.org>

Wed., Jan. 4

Feminist Craft Circle! Pussyhat Project The Pussyhat Project is collecting one million handmade pink pussyhats for protesters to wear at the Women's March on Washington D.C. on January 21st. 7:00pm - 8:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago

Thursday, Jan. 5

Bowie Ball Celebrate the legend, the chameleon, and the man... David Bowie. Glam it up, dress like a dandy and love the alien with some glitter on top. Performances by: Lucky Stiff, Discord Addams, Queerella, Kat Sass. Mistress of Ceremonies: Lucy Stooole. DJs Heaven Malone, Mae West. Bowieoke at midnight. Reduced cover till 11pm 10:00pm - 4:00am Berlin Nightclub 954 W Belmont Ave Chicago Tickets: <http://BowieBall.com>

AVER Monthly Meeting Chicago Chapter of American Veterans for Equal Rights, the national organization of LGBT veterans formerly known as Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA). 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.averchicago.org/>

Holiday Coloring Book Extravaganza This event is BYOB & BYOCB! All of the coloring books and colored pencils will be on sale during the event. 7:00pm - 8:45pm Women & Children First Book-

store 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/happy-new-year-coloring-book-extravaganza>

Friday, Jan. 6

Qigong and Tai Chi Classes Francesca Segal will be offering tai chi classes (for beginners and up) on Friday mornings. 9:00am - 10:00am Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago

Mozart's The Magic Flute Through January 27. 7:30pm Lyric Opera Civic Opera House 20 N.Wacker Dr. Chicago 312-827-5600 Tickets: <http://lyricopera.org>

Saturday, Jan. 7

Affinity Burning Bowl 2017 Affinity Community Service's annual event dispenses with the old by setting it to flame, providing the fuel for the future. 1:00pm - 4:00pm St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 5700 W Midway Park, Chicago <http://www.affinity95.org>

Patricia Keporos Windy City Gay Idol winner with Bob Solone. 9:00pm Coq D'or restaurant/bar, Drake Hotel, Chicago <http://www.thedrakehotel.com/dining/coq-d-or>

Art AIDS America Groundbreaking exhibition underscores the deep and unforgettable presence of HIV in American art with more than 100 significant contemporary works in a wide range of media. Brought to Chicago by the Alphas Foundation, culminating a U.S. tour which included Tacoma Art Museum in Washington State, the Zuckerman Museum in suburban Atlanta, and the Bronx Museum of the Arts in New York City. Free admission with timed tickets. Runs from World AIDS Day through Sunday, April 2, 2017. 11:00pm - 8:00pm Alphaswood Gallery, 2401 N. Halsted St. <http://ArtAIDSAmericaChicago.org>

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DANCING from page 20

burning his iconic jacket. The video was bigger because of his exclusion. However, with less avenues of promotion, the superior second solo album didn't live up to Faith's success, but remains to this day the fan favorite.

—1991, "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me" with Elton John. Recorded at Live Aid, this was the third charting version of this classic. It would go on to dominate the singles chart that year, but would be known as George's final

number one US hit, as well as his return MTV.

—1996, "Fastlove" Six years had passed since Listen Without Prejudice Vol. 1, and Vol. 2 was a mystery. Since then, George had battled his record company and showed how it aged him with the obviously mature album, Older. But despite the title, the second single was decidedly youthful. Rick Astley may have kept the disco flame alive, but George Michael set it on fire by making it relevant and new (along with Jamiroquai) for a permanent comeback. Pop and dance owe so much to the style and

production of "Fastlove" and we owe George for slowly coming out with his first two very gay singles. Unbelievably, this was George's last charting US single, period.

—1998, "Outside" As gay as some of Older was, it wasn't until "Outside" and getting caught having public sex that George Michael really did come out. While we all knew—and he should have come out fully a decade or so before—we loved that he not only made a video addressing it, but also embraced his "outdoor" activity and made light of it. The video, with

its disco urinals, is a thing of cheapness and beauty! After that cork had been pulled, he had no issue speaking his mind and releasing the music he wanted to on his terms, though with decreasing frequency and consistency.

Recently, rumors of new material with Naughty Boy gave us all new hope, and with that hope maybe we can get our iconic George Michael back on the charts for "One More Try."

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