

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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**PAGE 8**

Lamont J. Robinson Jr. (center) with mother Mary Robinson (left) and Illinois Supreme Court Justice P. Scott Neville Jr.  
Photo by Carrie Maxwell

## BUSINESS-WOMAN DIES

Marge Bellisario owned the Forest View Lounge Bar and Grill .  
Photo from Facebook

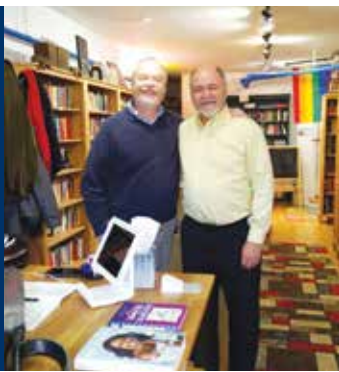
**6**



## TOME STAND

Oak Park couple start bookstore.  
Photo of Bill Fletcher and Don Moss by Carrie Maxwell

**9**



WINDY CITY TIMES **ARTS+THEATER** WEEKLY

**BETSY ODOM**  
BUTCHRAFT, LGBTQ IDENTITY AND ART  
PAGE 18

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# MAKING HISTORY

## Robinson becomes first out gay Black member of state General Assembly

# NOVEL IDEA

## Emma Donoghue's book comes alive on stage

**PAGE 14**

Emma Donoghue.  
Photo by Punch Photography



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## INDEX

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<b>NEWS</b>	
Trans-related cases and the Supreme Court	4
Ex-Gay Games organizer dies in Boston	5
Forest Park businesswoman passes away	6
Obit: Kaylem Goba	6
Families of Chicago annual dinner	7
Black gay state rep makes history	8
Gay Oak Park couple start bookstore	9
Viewpoints: King; letter from Phill Wilson	10
<b>ENTERTAINMENT/EVENTS</b>	
Theater feature: 'Dada Woof Papa Hot'	12
Theater feature: Emma Donoghue	14
<b>MOVIES: 'Rendezvous in Chicago'</b>	16
Historian/author talks gay clinics	17
<b>ART: 'Butchcraft'</b>	18
<b>NIGHTSPOTS</b>	19
Classifieds	21
Calendar	22

online exclusives at  
[www.WindyCityTimes.com](http://www.WindyCityTimes.com)



### RAPSODY IN VIEW

The 10 Questions with Vic column continues with Rapsody (left).

Photo by Chris Charles Photography

### LOOKING BACK



Windy City Times reveals the best books of 2018.

### THE MOD COUPLE

WCT talks with celebrity couple Evan Ross and Ashley Simpson about their upcoming project.

### THAT'S SHOW BIZ

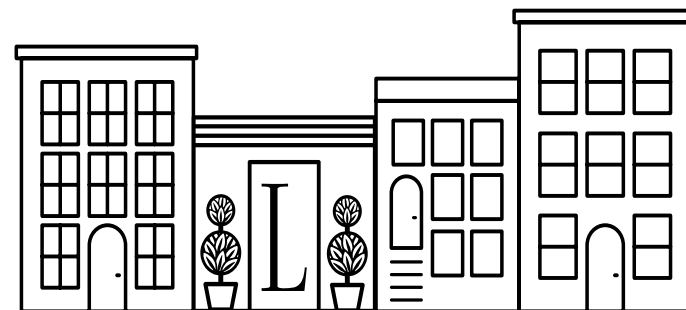
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COMPASS

# Trans-related cases queued up for Supreme Court

BY LISA KEEN  
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

LGBT legal groups told the U.S. Supreme Court last week that is simply too soon for the court to become involved in litigation over President Trump's proposed ban on transgender people in the military.

The Trump administration has asked the Supreme Court to dissolve national injunctions against implementation of its proposed transgender ban. But no appeals court has yet ruled on the injunctions. Typically, an issue reaches the Supreme Court only after being decided by a district court, then by a three-judge panel of an appeals court, and then by the full appeals court.

"The government's desire for an immediate resolution of this litigation is not a reason for the extraordinary exercise of this Court's authority to review a case before the court of appeals has rendered a decision," said a brief from the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders. The two groups are jointly representing several transgender people in two lawsuits against the proposed ban (*Stockman v. Trump* and *Doe v. Trump*).

The groups note that a district court has set a trial date of July for one of the cases, *Stockman*, in Los Angeles.

"The government offers no credible showing of urgency that justifies bypassing that careful and respectful consideration by the lower courts," states the brief.

The groups urged the Supreme Court to deny review of the injunction at this point and allow the trial on the constitutionality of the proposed ban to go forward.

Lambda Legal, which is representing transgender service members in a third lawsuit, *Kamoski v. Trump*, also submitted a brief on Dec. 24, 2018, opposing the Trump administration's request that the Supreme Court dissolve the injunction.

All three appeals are on a list of cases to be considered by the justices in private "conference" on Friday, Jan. 11. There are a number of actions the justices could take at that time, including rescheduling the cases for a later conference. But if four justices agree to hear Trump's appeal, the appeal will likely be slated for oral argument this spring.

The ACLU is representing a fourth group of service members in a lawsuit, *Stone v. Trump*. The Trump petition to the Supreme Court on Nov. 23, 2018, suggested the high court consolidate all four cases for a review of the constitutionality of the proposed ban.

President Trump announced in 2017 that he intended to ban transgender people from the military. That proposal essentially sought to reverse a policy developed under Secretary of Defense



**Shannon Minter, legal director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), which is involved in the fight against the Trump administration regarding transgender service members.**

Photo courtesy of NCLR

Ashton Carter during the Obama administration. The so-called "Carter Policy" said service members would not be discharged or denied reenlistment "due solely to their gender identity or an expressed intent to transition genders."

The administration later "revised" the wording of Trump's original proposed ban, saying that, with few exceptions, anyone with a history of gender dysphoria be banned. It also says that transgender people without gender dysphoria can serve but only if they dress consistent with the gender stated on their original birth certificates. This latter policy resembles the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that banned openly gay service members for many years and was eventually repealed by Congress.

In addition to the transgender military ban cases, the Supreme Court has before it:

—Three cases testing whether Title VII of the Civil Rights Act can be used to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Those cases were slated to be scheduled for conference Jan. 4;

—An LGBT-related case, *Aloha Bed and Breakfast v. Cervelli*, from the Hawaii Supreme Court, that asks whether the operator of a bed and breakfast can refuse to rent rooms to guests based on their sexual orientation by citing personal religious beliefs. This case, too, was on the Jan. 4 conference list;

—Another religious belief versus human-rights law case, *Klein v. Oregon*. In that case, a state court found a baker violated a state law prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination in public accommodations when she refused to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex couple. Briefs are due Friday, Jan. 25; and

—*Doe v. Boyertown*, which asks whether a

school policy allowing transgender students to use the high school restroom and locker room consistent to their gender identity violates the constitutional rights of other students. Briefs for the case are due Monday, Jan. 22.

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A.J. Petras, better known as AL, died in Boston

## Ten LGBTQ members sworn into Congress

Ten openly LGBTQ people were sworn in the 116th U.S. Congress on Jan. 3, a LGBTQ Victory Institute press release announced.

All the members are Democrats. Incumbent Tammy Baldwin (Wisconsin) and newcomer Kyrsten Sinema (Arizona) are in the U.S. Senate. Among the U.S. House members are David Cicilline (Rhode Island), Angie Craig (Minnesota), Sharice Davids (Kansas), Katie Hill (California), Sean Patrick Maloney (New York), Chris Pappas (New Hampshire), Mark Pocan (Wisconsin) and Mark Takano (California).

"A historic number of LGBTQ people will serve in the new U.S. Congress and their influence will shape the debate on equality legislation and issues moving forward," stated LGBTQ Victory Institute President/CEO Mayor Annise Parker. "In the U.S. Senate, those opposed to the Equality Act will now need to look two openly LGBTQ Senators in the eyes and tell them their lives are not worth protecting. In the U.S. House, Speaker Pelosi will have eight LGBTQ Representatives to consult about how various healthcare or criminal justice reform policies uniquely affect our community.

"The relationships these LGBTQ lawmakers will build with their colleagues on Capitol Hill are transformative, and with an unprecedented number of women and people of color also joining the 116th Congress, equality issues will finally receive the attention they deserve."



**U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin.**  
Official head shot

## 'San Antonio Four' have records cleared

Four Texas women who were imprisoned almost 15 years after being wrongfully convicted of sexually assaulting two young girls have finally had their criminal records expunged, by state District Judge Catherine Torres-Stahl, NBC News reported.

Elizabeth Ramirez, Cassandra Rivera, Kristie Mayhugh and Anna Vasquez were convicted in 1998 and served out their entire sentences before the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals exonerated them in 2016.

Ramirez's nieces—then ages 7 and 9—accused the four women of assaulting them during a 1994 weekend visit. One niece later recanted her testimony, saying family members coerced her to lie because they were upset about Ramirez being lesbian.

Southwest of Salem: The Story of the San Antonio Four, a 2016 documentary, details the women's journey.

The NBC News item is at <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/judge-clears-records-wrongfully-convicted-san-antonio-four-n943751>.

## Court sides with Trump on trans military ban

On Jan. 4, the the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit overturned a lower court's ruling blocking President Trump's ban on transgender people serving in the military from taking effect, according to The Hill.

"Although today's decision is not a final determination on the merits, we must recognize that the Mattis Plan plausibly relies upon the 'considered professional judgment' of 'appropriate military officials' ... and appears to permit some transgender individuals to serve in the military consistent with established military mental health, physical health, and sex-based standards," the three-judge panel concluded.

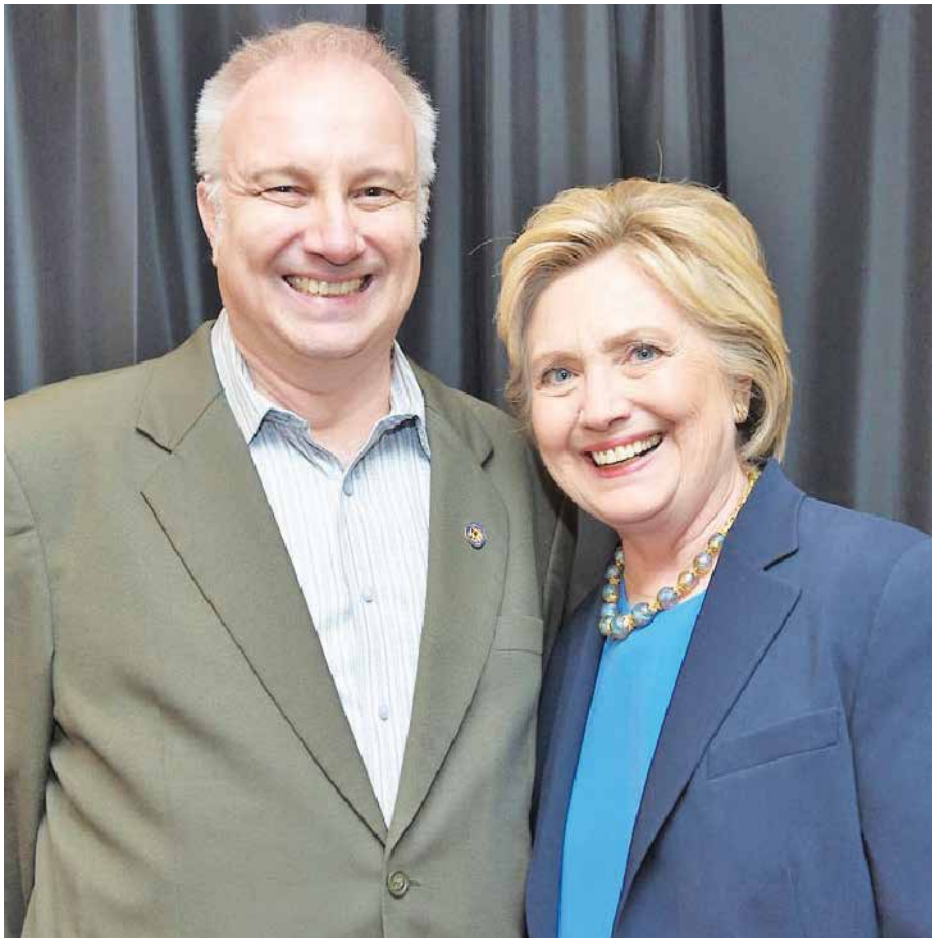
However, the policy still cannot take effect because of three other nationwide injunctions.

The plaintiffs—the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) and GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders—promised to keep fighting the ban.

In addition, GLAAD CEO Sarah Kate Ellis tweeted, "This ruling is a slap in the face to qualified service members who only are seeking to serve this country."

The Hill's article is at <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/423862-appeals-court-sides-with-trump-on-transgender-military-ban>.





Al Petras with Hillary Clinton.

Photo courtesy of Janet Ferone

## Former Gay Games organizer Al Petras dies in Boston

A J Petras, better known as Al, died in Boston Jan. 1, 2019 of a massive heart attack.

Petras served two years as co-chair of the original organizing committee that brought Gay Games VII to Chicago in 2006. He moved back to Boston before the second bid successfully won the right to host the Gay Games that year. Formerly, he was a co-chair of the New England Committee of the Human Rights Campaign and a board member of Dignity/Boston.

Chicagoan Mona Noriega, who served as co-chair with Petras during the first Gay Games Chicago bid, said: "Al was generous in heart and skill. When we trying to launch the Gay Games bid, with no idea of how to adequately use technology, he magically and effortlessly made it happen. I will always remember him as a special and warm loving man, who showed up when he said he would, and gave much of himself. His gentle spirit will be missed, especially by those who were fortunate enough to have him in their lives."

Petras served on the board of several other

community organizations. Most notably, he was a founder and principal organizer of Pride in Scholarship, one of the first scholarship programs to fund college students who have made a difference in the GLBT community. Al was the first openly gay Big Brother in Massachusetts—and, possibly, the nation.

Petras recently retired as a senior vice president at Bank of America (BoFA). For his last 11 years, he managed the technology relationship with their Chinese partner bank. This effort was noted by the Chinese government as a "model" for cooperation between Chinese and western financial institutions. He was also the team's business manager whose duties included material preparation, translation, legal review, travel and logistics for the 30 to 50 senior leaders his team would annually bring to China.

Previously, he managed large-scale, high-risk projects for the bank. He was responsible for building the required infrastructure for the bank's new customer information system. It was brought on line in a single weekend having successfully

converted tens of millions of customer and account records and then re-linking several dozen pre-existing applications to the new system. He also converted all of the legacy Latin America technology infrastructure to BofA standards, and did the same for legacy infrastructure of some of the banks acquired by BofA.

He was a prominent expert in electronic messaging, having been a featured speaker at many large conferences. He served as the PC Week magazine business partner for email for two years. His was among the first businesses to implement wireless email. Petras worked in the financial, public utility (NStar), printing (RR Donnelly), and insurance (Prudential and John Hancock) sectors. While at RR Donnelly, CIO magazine recognized him as one of the most successful Y2K transition managers.

His career provided him with work experiences in North and South America, Asia and Europe.

Early in his career, Petras served as a legislative aide as well as campaign field aide for two gubernatorial and one presidential campaigns. He was a contract production assistant for ABC Wide World of Sports.

Petras received his education at Boston University (B.A. in English) and Mercer County Community College (A.A.S. in Visual Arts). In 2016, he was one of three people and the sole alumnus awarded an Honorary Scarlet Key, which is given to alumni, faculty or staff who have made substantial contributions over their lifetime to student life at BU. At Mercer, he was elected president of the student government.

Recently, Petras volunteered as a docent and program coordinator at the Quincy Homestead (a



Al Petras.

Photo courtesy of Janet Ferone

local National Historic Landmark). He conducted seminars for the U.S. State Department's Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship program (Fulbright scholars from developing countries), the Center for the Study of Asia and the Center for Emerging Social Media.

His memorial service will be held Saturday, Jan. 12, at 11 a.m. at Marsh Chapel, Boston University, 735 Commonwealth Ave., Boston. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Waltham House, Home for Little Wanderers.

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# Lesbian suburban businesswoman Marge Bellisario dies

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Margaret "Marge" Bellisario died Jan. 3 of complications from ovarian cancer. She was 50.

At the time of her death, Bellisario lived in Forest View, Illinois. She became the sole owner of Forest View Lounge Bar and Grill in Forest View following the death of her life partner of 16 years, Donalou Hendon, on Nov. 10, 2017. On Oct. 26, 2018, Bellisario decided to close the establishment due to her own declining health.

Bellisario was born April 25, 1968, in Berwyn, where she spent most of her life. She went to J.S. Morton High School and Morton College where she got an associate's degree in art. Bellisario was also featured in the online publication Voyage Chicago in July 2017.

She is survived by her parents Elaine and Paul Bellisario, brother Paul (Amy), nephews Paul and John Bellisario, and extended family and friends.

Elaine told Windy City Times that her daughter was always well liked by the people in her neighborhood and would always help people who were being picked on throughout her life. She also explained that her daughter had a love of animals from an early age and wanted to rescue them whenever she found one without an owner.

"I experienced Marge as a giver," said Holy Covenant MCC Pastor Martha Daniels. "She opened Forest View Lounge to our church as a venue for our Drag Queen Bingo nights, a popular fundraiser for, not only our members, but for the western suburban LGBT+ community in general. It was intimate and friendly, with the usual banter between queen/caller and players made more intense by their knowledge of each other.

"We were all friends. It was a Cheers-like atmosphere, which put an interesting twist on drag queen bingo. Marge helped us and we tried to help her. We would come early for dinner and order snacks or an extra round to make sure she made her numbers that night. Some folks came over other nights as well. She will be greatly missed, not simply because of the bingos, but because of her heart and her generosity."

"I have known Marge since sixth grade and my husband Tom has been friends with her brother for nearly 30 years," said longtime friend Paula Chyna. "If I had not met Marge, then I would never have met my husband and have our two beautiful children. You will always be in our thoughts and forever in our hearts. Rest in peace Marge."

"Marge, please know that the people you leave behind all have a piece of you inside them," said another longtime friend, Pamela G. "You will always be on this earth dwelling in the hearts and minds of those who loved you. We will not say goodbye. We will simply put our hands over our hearts and feel your larger than life presence. With all my love and also for the goofy nickname, Melvin."

"After losing my mom to the same type of cancer that Marge had and not being ready to go anywhere for a year after losing my mom, I finally decided to go to Marge's bar," said friend Debbie Lucas. "If it was not for Marge, I do not know where I would be today. She pulled me out of a slump and became one of my dearest friends and I will never forget her. I am eternally grateful.

"Marge had a way of making everyone feel comfortable. She was such a unselfish and generous person who always put herself before everyone



Donalou Hendon and Margaret "Marge" Bellisario. Photo from Facebook page

else. Marge gave people nicknames that are forever branded on us. Some not the most flattering, but very comical. That was her way. She was one in a million."

"I am remembering everything we experienced while growing up," said longtime friend Victoria Rangel. "Working together, delivering newspapers. The Saturday afternoon you explained to your dad, in front of your brother and his friends, that there was a man jerking off standing in the front yard of a house on Wenonah Ave. Riding bikes, playing Fat Albert ball and playing softball as the Lollipopps. After practice getting picked up in a limo. My list could go on and on.

"The support you gave me while my mother was ill meant so much to me. Although life took us in different directions, you were always there when I came back into town. My prayers go out to you. Love ya girl."

"Thank you, Marge for accepting and welcoming me every time I came to your bar, even when I felt that I was not welcomed from others," said patron and acquaintance Kim Overby. "You and Donna always did your best to make customers feel like family or good friends. I will miss your laugh and the warmth of your acceptance. Be at peace now and hold your love once again. You are missed by many and we will all hold you and Donna in our hearts and memories."

Per Bellisario's request, she will be cremated, and no funeral or memorial service will be held.

In lieu of flowers, the family has asked that people donate to animal rescue organizations in her memory.

To read more about Hendon, visit <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/PASSAGES-Local-lesbian-businesswoman-Donalou-Hendon-dies/61099.html>.

## PASSAGES

### Khuleklani Diogricious 'Kaylem' Goba

Durban, South Africa-born Khuleklani Diogricious Goba (nicknamed "Kaylem"), of Chicago's Uptown neighborhood, passed away unexpectedly at home Dec. 22, 2018. He was 31.

He was the beloved husband of Anthony Brent Goba; faithful papa to Princess Margaret Rose, the English chocolate lab. He was also the cherished son of Khulakani Koo Khumalo and Barbrar Lindiwe Goba; brother of Lindo, Sihle and Wenzel Goba; and dear friend of Frank (Paul Blackwell) Willis and so many others.

Kaylem earned his associate's degree from Truman College and was studying Western literature at DePaul University. He was gifted with the ability to learn languages easily (as he spoke Spanish, French, Dutch, Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho) and was terrifically proud of his Zulu heritage.

After serving in the customer-service field, Kaylem worked as a CNA with the Illinois Dept. of Public Health. He shone brighter than others and was often overdressed but didn't pay any mind—even when covered in sequins at a casual engagement. His heart stretched the span of time and space.

A celebration of his life is being planned.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his name to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (<https://afsp.org/>; 888-333-AFSP).

A memorial mass was held Dec. 31 at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church, 708 W. Belmont Ave. Arrangements by Cremation Society of Illinois, 773-281-5058 or [Cremation-society.com](http://Cremation-society.com)



Kaylem Goba (right) and husband Anthony Brent Goba. Photo from Cremation Society of Illinois



# Families of Chicago banquet held at Ida Noyes Hall

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

The third annual Families of Chicago (FOC) Save Our Scene banquet, Third Time's a Charm, took place Jan. 5 at the University of Chicago's Ida

Noyes Hall.

Ahead of the event, FOC Committee Member and University of Chicago School of Social Work Ph.D. candidate Lance Keene said, "it is really important to provide a space like this event so



FOC committee members (from left) Joel D. Jackson, Tobias Spears, Gregory Wintour, Lance Keene and Blondie Kardashian.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

our FOC youth can experience fellowship and support among each other and to reaffirm the central values of the scene—love, care and kinship. This event is also a way to celebrate each other. It is really important to me as a University of Chicago graduate student that the institution has partnered with us and provided space to hold this annual event."

FOC Committee Member and University of Chicago Hospital's Department of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Assistant Director Joel D. Jackson opened the festivities with a brief history of the past two banquets. He also emphasized how important it is for FOC members to gather together at least once a year to celebrate who they are and

their individual talents.

During the legends, statements and stars showcase various members of the family scene were invited by emcee Denim Carter to show their dancing and runway moves to the crowd with music provided by DJ Darryl Garcón.

Following the showcase, Jackson called for a moment of silence.

Savannah Carter performed her signature brand of comedy while Denim Carter introduced performing groups The Big 3 (Honey, JT and Jamiyah) and The Chasities (Karma and Amya) to close out the evening's festivities.

The Chicago Center for HIV Elimination at the University of Chicago was the event's sponsor.

## Equality Illinois names winter gala honorees

LGBTQ-rights organization Equality Illinois has named Danny Wirtz, Channyn Lynne Parker and the Illinois AFL-CIO as its honorees at the annual winter gala, which will be held Saturday, Feb. 2, at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave.

More than 1,200 attendees, including more than 100 political figures and community VIPs, are expected to celebrate the accomplishments that advanced LGBTQ civil rights over the last year and hear about Equality Illinois' work ahead in 2019.

Wirtz—described as "a long-standing ally of the LGBTQ community in Illinois," according to a press release—is vice-chairman of Breakthru Beverage Group. Parker, a transgender-rights advocate, manages the youth drop-in at Howard Brown's Broadway Youth Center. They each will receive the Equality Illinois Freedom Award.

The Illinois AFL-CIO will receive the Equality Illinois Organization Leadership Award, "given annually to organizations that demonstrate re-

markable vision, courage, and leadership in the effort to achieve full equality for LGBTQ individuals in Illinois."

Tables and individual tickets for the 2019 Equality Illinois Gala are now available at <https://www.equalityillinois.org/2019-gala/>.

## Wis.: Trans surgery included in insurance

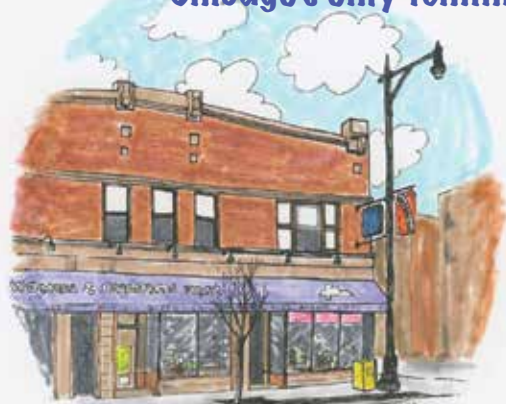
As of Jan. 1, an insurance exclusion for transgender surgery for Wisconsin state employees has been removed, WPR.org reported.

In August, the state's Group Insurance Board reversed itself to vote in favor of hormone and gender-surgery coverage for state employees.

The board approved the coverage in 2016—but later reversed course at the request of then-Gov. Scott Walker. However, the board reconsidered the policy after two state workers sued and a federal judge ruled in a different lawsuit that the state could not ban Medicaid funds for gender-reassignment surgery.

The article is at <https://www.wpr.org/exclusion-barring-state-employees-transgender-surgery-coverage-be-removed-jan-1>.

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# First out Black gay General Assembly member is sworn in

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Lamont J. Robinson Jr. became the first out African-American LGBTQ Illinois General Assembly member following his swearing-in ceremony as the 5th district representative Jan. 2 at Matthew House.

Matthew House is, according to its website, "a nonprofit community-based organization that provides food, shelter, housing and supportive services to individuals who are homeless or about to become homeless."

Robinson's swearing-in came a week ahead of his and the rest of the General Assembly members being sworn in for the new term Jan. 9. Robinson won the seat vacated by Juliana Stratton Dec. 31, 2018 ahead of her own swearing-in ceremony as Illinois' lieutenant governor alongside Gov.-elect J.B. Pritzker Jan. 14.

Ahead of the ceremony, the 5th Representative District committeemen, led by Committeewoman Pat Dowell, unanimously approved of Robinson filling this vacancy.

Illinois Supreme Court Justice P. Scott Neville Jr. administered the oath of office for Robinson, 36, whose mother, Mary Robinson, held the Bible.

Robinson thanked his family, staff, Stratton and the community for their support. He also recognized Matthew House Executive Director Dr. Sanja R. Stinson for the work she and her staff does to help those in need.

"It was important for me to have my swearing-in ceremony at Matthew House to bring notice to this great organization that is a safety-net in our community," said Robinson. "It is important to me to bring resources to organizations like Matthew House so they can continue their work."

Robinson said his number-one priority is to bring economic development and jobs to the 5th District. He also emphasized the need to put money into the local public schools and the ongoing pension crisis.

Also in attendance were Cook County Board President and mayoral candidate Toni Preckwinkle, former Illinois Appellate Judge John Steele, state Sen. Mattie Hunter, Ald. Michelle Harris and Ald. Sophia King.



From left: Mary Robinson (Lamont's mother), Lamont J. Robinson Jr. and Illinois Supreme Court Justice P. Scott Neville Jr.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell



From left: Ald. Michelle Harris, Scott Neville, state Sen. Mattie Hunter, Toni Preckwinkle, Lamont Robinson Jr., Ald. Sophia King, Mary Robinson, Ald. Pat Dowell and Dr. Sanja Stinson.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

## Mayoral candidate Green withdraws

On Dec. 31, Chicago mayoral candidate and Black Lives Matter activist Ja'Mal Green said that he was withdrawing from the race, The Chicago Tribune reported.

Businessman/minister/fellow mayoral candidate Willie Wilson's campaign had challenged Green's signatures. After the press conference, Green said Wilson's campaign depleted his resources.

Longshot contenders Conrein Hykes Clark, Sandra Mallory and Richard Mayers are also no longer in the race. Former federal prosecutor Lori Lightfoot and current Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza are still on the ballot after Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle dropped her challenges to both.

Also, as of Jan. 3, Roger Washington was removed from the battling, whittling down the number of those vying for the seat to 16.

The Tribune item is at <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/politics/ct-met-ja-mal-green-mayors-race-20181231-story.html>.

## LGBTQ mayoral forum Jan. 19

An LGBTQ mayoral forum will take place Saturday, Jan. 19, 2-4 p.m., at the Second Presbyterian Church, 1936 S. Michigan Ave.

LGBTQ community organizations Affinity Community Services, the Association of Lati-

nos/as Motivating Action, the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, the Equality Illinois Institute, the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, Pride Action Tank and Windy City Times are hosting the forum.

The mayoral election is on Tuesday, Feb. 26.

See <https://www.equalityillinois.us/events/lgbtq-forum-with-the-chicago-mayor-candidates/> to register and to view more information.

## ELECTIONS 2019

### EqIL PAC backs incumbent aldermen

Highlighting the importance of LGBTQ representation in local government, the Equality Illinois PAC endorsed the five LGBTQ incumbent aldermen of the Chicago City Council.

Endorsed are Aldermen Raymond Lopez (15th Ward), Deb Mell (33rd Ward), Carlos Ramirez-Rosa (35th Ward), Tom Tunney (44th Ward) and James Cappleman (46th Ward).

According to a press release from the PAC, "The five aldermen have led on ensuring full and equal access for transgender people to places of public accommodations through their sponsorship of the Chicago Equal Access Ordinance in 2016.

"They have also challenged the Trump administration's anti-trans agenda by opposing the President's ban on military service by brave and courageous transgender people and the recent policy proposal to erase transgender people from federal civil-rights protections.



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# Gay couple talk relationship, new Oak Park bookstore

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

When gay couple Bill Fletcher and Don Moss moved from suburban Seattle to a 100-plus-year-old house in Oak Park, Illinois, six months ago, they brought thousands of books with them.

There were so many books the couple had to rent a storage space but they wanted to do more—so they decided to open a specialty used bookstore, Jake's Place Books, at 142 Harrison St. in the Oak Park Arts District.

"At first, I had no idea we were going to open a bookstore but I walked past an open storefront in our neighborhood and the light dawned," said Fletcher. "Jake was my first dog as an adult, a yellow Labrador, and I had done some online sales years ago and used that name. We like it because it sounds friendly and gets the dog's

things up."

They have also gone beyond the store and donated pop-up books to Edward K. Duke Ellington Elementary School in Oak Park and are planning on more of these endeavors in the future.

Fletcher explained that they moved to Oak Park because, unlike the Seattle area, it was easier to get around without driving. Moss said they wanted to live in the Chicago area because of its diversity, theater options, good food and variety of public-transportation options.

The couple met through an online dating service and had their first date at a Starbucks in Carnation, Washington, five years ago. They have been together ever since and were married at their home in Carnation in 2015.

Moss was born and raised in Brooklyn, and got his bachelor's degree in English at the University



Bill Fletcher (left) and Don Moss.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

name in there."

One of the features of the bookstore is its policy of giving away two children's books each to every kid who comes into the shop, with Fletcher telling Windy City Times the couple's goal is to get kids to read and what better way than giving them free books. Moss explained that, recently, young adult books have been donated to the store and they are now giving one book away to anyone who wants them.

"It is important that the store have a mission beyond sales," said Fletcher. "I do not know that everyone has access as easily as we may think. Plus, we love having kids in the store. It stirs

of Rochester and medical degree from the University of Rochester Medical School. He did his psychiatry residency at Yale University.

"After my residency, I entered the Air Force during the Vietnam War and served at a base in Colorado," said Moss. "Later on, I became the director of mental health services at the University of Maryland and did that job for 20 years. I retired from that post to move to Washington state where I lived for two decades."

While living in Washington, Moss was a psychiatry consultant for a group of psychologists and social workers for three years before retiring fully from medicine.

"Although medicine was my career, I was always interested in teaching and reading and wanted to share my love of that with others so the bookstore is the culmination of the dream," said Moss.

Fletcher was born and raised in Rochester, New York. He got his bachelor's degree in social sciences from Emmanuel College in Boston. Fletcher later went to Vanderbilt University to get his master's degree in sociology. He taught for five years at Nashville's Belmont University and worked as the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic director of healthcare analytics for three years before moving to the Seattle area.

Currently, Fletcher works as the director of performance and quality improvement at the Roman Catholic children's institution Maryville Academy in Des Plaines, Illinois. Maryville helps children who have experience any form of trauma.

## Annual 'Burning Bowl' Jan. 12 at Morgan Park

Affinity Community Services is hosting its annual kick-off event, Burning Bowl, on Saturday, Jan. 12, 2019, 1-4 p.m., at Morgan Park UMC at 11030 S. Longwood Dr.

The theme this year will be "Ever Ours: Resisting with Purpose to Thrive in the New Year."

As always, the event will highlight a community "burn" as a symbolic way of leaving behind negativity in order to confidently move into the future.

In addition, Kim Hunt will be honored with the Robbie Smith Award. The Barbara "Robbie" Smith Award of Excellence is given to someone who exemplifies leadership, perseverance, strength, compassion and integrity.

For more information, contact imani@affinity95.org.

## Report: Immigrants one-third of city's entrepreneurs

A new report from New American Economy (NAE), produced in partnership with the Chicago Mayor's Office of New Americans, revealed that immigrants represented 36 percent of Chicago's entrepreneurs and generated \$659 million in business income in 2016.

The report also shows that immigrants also held nearly a quarter of the spending power among the city's residents, earned nearly \$17 billion in household income and paid \$6 billion in taxes in 2016. The report was released at a press conference with Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

The 36 percent was achieved despite immigrants only composing 20.7 percent of the overall population.

Chicago is one of 44 communities selected for the Gateways for Growth Challenge, a competitive opportunity from New American Economy and Welcoming America where local communities receive tailored research on the contributions of immigrants, direct techni-

Fletcher explained that because of his work at Maryville he has become more aware of the need for early learning and that includes literacy skills. This was another reason for them wanting to give books away to kids who come to their store.

Both Fletcher and Moss said the most interesting and surprising thing they have found since moving to the Chicago area is how friendly everyone is.

"The weather has not been as bad as I was led to believe it would be," said Moss.

"Some people are maniac drivers, which I love because of living in Boston for a time," said Fletcher.

Fletcher said he is very happy to be running the bookstore with Moss and encourages film and theater lovers to come check out their selection of books on those topics.

See <http://www.jakesplacebooks.com/>.

cal assistance to develop multi-sector plans for welcoming and integrating immigrants, or matching grants.

The full NAE Cities Index is at [NAECities-Index.org](http://NAECities-Index.org). More on Chicago's numbers is at <https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/new-americans-in-chicago/>.

## LGBTQ officials call on Congress to act on equality goals

More than 150 openly LGBTQ elected officials and newly elected officials from across the nation recently called on the incoming U.S. Congress to act on four key initiatives related to LGBTQ equality.

A letter was drafted after a closed-door convening of LGBTQ elected officials at LGBTQ Victory Institute's International LGBTQ Leaders Conference.

The conference is the largest convening of LGBTQ elected officials in the world, with more than 140 elected officials from 26 countries, as well as 400 other advocates and leaders.

The letter called on Congress to:

- Pass The Equality Act to expand non-discrimination protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity;

- Reduce HIV/AIDS by forming an advisory commission, advocating a "Getting to Zero" goal, and taking proactive measures to address disparities in communities of color;

- Protect trans people from anti-trans Trump administration policies and other measures; and

- Improve LGBTQ rights globally by supporting asylum claims and ensuring LGBTQ rights is a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy.

Officials from Illinois who signed the letter included state Rep.-elect Lamont Robinson; Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago Debra Shore; Cook County Board Commissioner Kevin Morrison; and Chicago Alds. Raymond Lopez, James Cappleman and Carlos Ramirez-Rosa.

The complete letter is at <https://victoryinstitute.org/116congressletter/>.

## viewpoints


**Mark S.  
KING**

## What 5,000 phone-sex calls taught me about gay men

The number might be a little low. Over the course of my “phone fantasy.” career in the 1980s, I spoke to as many as 10 customers in a given day, numbering in the many thousands over the years. That’s a lot of heavy breathing.

It began when I was a struggling actor in Los Angeles and needed income. I went to work for a gay phone sex company, the kind that doesn’t really exist anymore, that predates hook-up apps or even the internet. Customers responded to ads in the gay skin magazines and, for what we would now consider an outrageous fee of \$42 per call, received a call back from the man of their dreams. I became everything their suspension of disbelief would allow.

As it turns out, I had a way with words. My disembodied voice became so popular that I soon opened my own company, Telerotic, and it would become one of the largest gay phone sex companies in the business. I transformed my soothing tones on the line into whatever man a customer desired when they placed the order. A competition bodybuilder. A leather daddy. A surfer dude. A retired minor league

baseball player who now works as a volunteer firefighter.

It gave me enormous insight into the minds and desires of gay men. It provided a window into the lives of men around the country and sometimes the planet, and into sex, intimacy and the loneliness experienced by gay men decades before marriage equality or Will & Grace would change the landscape.

It might be easy to reduce the calls to something frivolous, and often they were. But the need to be treated as a complete human being, capable and worthy of affection and sex that wasn’t perverse or ugly or pathological was desperately needed, particularly for men who were isolated outside of major metropolitan areas of the country. Trust me, in the early 1980s—and most especially during the dawn of AIDS—sexual fulfillment and genuine self-love was a lot harder to come by.

The podcast Sexing History recently invited me on the show to discuss the phone sex industry, intimacy, gay desire, and how HIV/AIDS altered everything. It is the first time in many years that I have spoken about my career a lifetime ago and how it affected me.

Beyond the tricks of the trade I shared—the bulging Rolodex of customers and their fantasies, the gay (and sometimes straight) men who called, how my employees and I manipulated the calls themselves—we also discussed what it meant to be gay during this period, and the insight and pure anthropological fascination the calls brought me.

That insight would serve me well, when during the height of my company in Los Angeles the AIDS crisis began. Only after selling the company and going to work for an AIDS organization did I realize how valuable my former career had been. It’s easier to

design HIV prevention programs when you have a damn good idea about what motors gay desire.

And what is that desire, exactly? Those thousands of calls taught me that gay men share the same human need as everyone else: to be taken care of. Almost without exception, customers wanted men who were “more.” than they were in every respect. More muscle, more size (yes, that too), more masculine, and more capable of being in control. Regardless of what their sexual preferences may have been in reality, customers wanted to be carried off and ravaged, perhaps, but ultimately, they simply wanted to be cared for by someone with the strength to do it.

Some of the men were regular callers, over years, and we talked about life and love and regrets beyond the prime objective of our calls. While my persona was counterfeit, so much of their human needs were not.

When I sold the company in the late 1980s, saying goodbye to regular customers wasn’t easy. I will never forget the plaintive urgings from some of them, trying to convince me to continue calling them anyway. I had become more than a sexual outlet. I was a lifeline through which they lived vicariously, a gay man in the big city living large with confidence and pride. It was wrenching to say goodbye.

There are more secrets revealed in the Sexing History podcast (at Soundcloud.com), and it’s worth a listen.

For more, check out my memoir *A Place Like This*, detailing my experiences living in Los Angeles during the dawn of the AIDS epidemic.

**Mark S. King is a GLAAD Award nominee for his blog, *My Fabulous Disease*, and author of *A Place Like This*, his memoir of Los Angeles during the dawn of AIDS.**

## letters

### Saying goodbye

Dear friends:

Dec. 28, 2018

Ecclesiastes 3:1-4 says, “For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose. A time to be born, and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to sow, a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.”

Twenty years ago, I called a few friends to ask them to help me actualize a dream that my best bris-ter—brother and sister—Reggie Williams and I had been working on for 10 years. We wanted to start an organization to engage Black people in efforts to confront the AIDS epidemic in ways we had not previously been engaged.

We knew two things:

- (1) Black People were dying, and
- (2) Nobody could save us, but us.

Reggie and I knew when Black people understood the science of HIV—the epidemiology, the biomedical, and the behavioral—we would be better able to protect ourselves; more likely to get tested; more inclined to seek, adhere, and to stay on treatment; and less likely to engage in stigmatizing behavior.

With, as my grandmother used to say, [with] “nei-

ther a pot to piss in, nor a window to throw it out of,” the Black AIDS Institute (BAI) was born. Like Lynn Manuel’s Hamilton, we were “young, scrappy, and hungry.” Our mission then, as it is now, was to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in our communities by engaging and mobilizing leaders, institutions, and individuals in efforts to confront HIV/AIDS in local communities with global impact.

Our small band has expanded to chapters and affiliates in 20 cities and 17 states. The Black AIDS Institute has been involved in every HIV/AIDS advancement over the last 20 years. As the only national HIV/AIDS think tank in the United States focused exclusively on Black people, we disseminate information, interpret and make recommendations on public and private sector HIV policies, conduct training, offer technical assistance and capacity building, and provide advocacy mobilization from a uniquely and unapologetically Black point of view. This year, in partnership with St. Johns Well Child and Family Center, we started providing direct clinical care by launching A Clinic for Us, a network of comprehensive care clinics providing Black centric care, community-based health care.

This I know: In order for BAI to endure, we needed to plan for the future. A movement that does not prepare, embrace and insist on young leadership is destined to fail. An organization that does not pre-

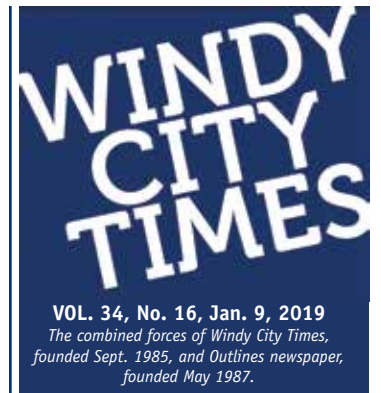
pare for succession is a hobby. A leader who assumes he or she is irreplaceable is a fraud.

That brings me to the point of this letter. I want to introduce you to BAI’s next president and CEO, Ms. Raniyah Copeland. I can’t imagine a better choice to lead the Institute into the future. Raniyah is beautiful, bold, brave and brilliant. She brings a vigor and vision to the AIDS movement that—given the current political environment—is desperately needed. Raniyah began working at BAI in April of 2008 as the training and capacity building coordinator. She worked her way up to a senior coordinator, a manager, and currently serves as the director of programs. There is no aspect of the organization that she does not know and understand. She is the right person at the right time for this job.

For the last 20 years, the Black AIDS Institute has provided me with an opportunity to try to make a difference. And, for that, I am eternally grateful. As I close this chapter of my life, and BAI starts the next chapter of its work, all I have to say is, “Thank you!”

In the meantime, please take care of yourselves and your blessings.

*Yours in the struggle,*  
Phill Wilson  
Founder  
Black AIDS Institute



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**BETSY ODOM**  
BUTCHCRAFT, LGBTQ  
IDENTITY AND ART

PAGE 18

Betsy Odom.  
Photo by Kelli Connell



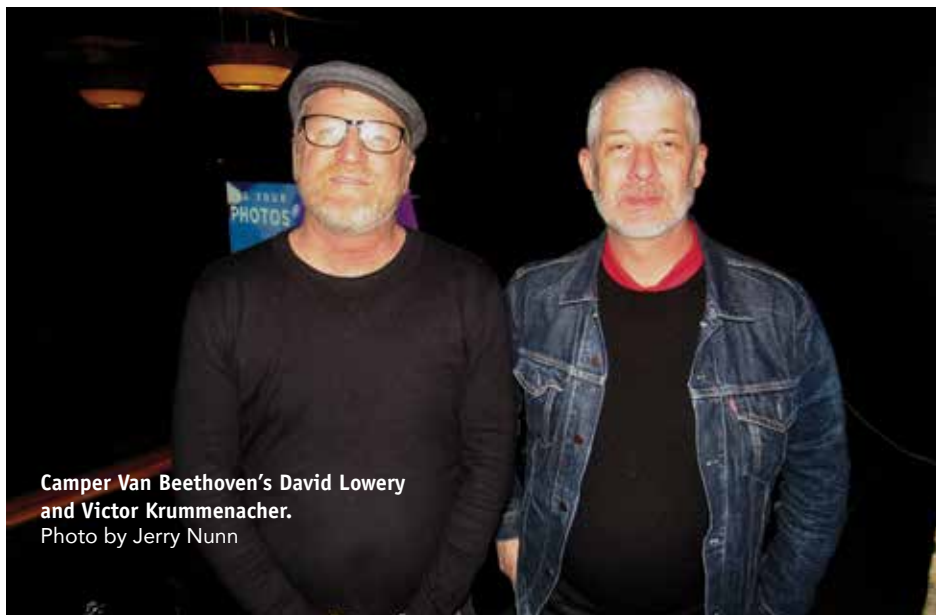
# Camper van Beethoven members on coming out, performing

BY JERRY NUNN

Alternative rock band Camper Van Beethoven broke into the music scene with "Take the Skinheads Bowling" and enjoyed major success with a cover of "Pictures of Matchstick Men."

After disbanding, lead singer David Lowery formed the group Cracker, David Immergluck joined Counting Crows and several others, including gay vocalist and guitarist Victor Krummenacher, formed Monks of Doom.

Before performing together at a recent sold



Camper Van Beethoven's David Lowery and Victor Krummenacher.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

out show at Lincoln Hall in Chicago, Lowery and Krummenacher sat down to discuss their history together.

**Windy City Times: David, are you originally from Texas?**

David Lowery: I was born in Texas. My father was in the Air Force so we moved all over the place. I have actually spent more of my life now on the East Coast.

Victor Krummenacher: I was born in Riverside, which is about 15 miles from where David and I met. I went to Santa Cruz [and] then San Francisco, until this year, [when] I moved to Southern California.

**WCT: How did you two meet?**

DL: He met through my sister for bass lessons, then we just decided to start a band together.

VK: I met you at a party talking about the Buzzcocks.

DL: We bonded over some seven inch music singles that my English cousins had given me.

**WCT: I saw Camper Van Beethoven open for 10,000 Maniacs in 1989 in Nashville. Was the band originally meant to be experimental?**

## MUSIC

DL: I had been in a band before that with a bunch of people playing the wrong instruments we wanted to learn. It fell apart, but it was what we did with Camper. I would switch to guitar and Victor was learning bass. It was experimental in the way that we were learning what we could play. It limited the chords and melodies we could play, so we did ska and instrumental things.

VK: We all had other serious bands in the '80s.

When Camper would play there would be more people there.

DL: We would get a six pack of beer and do the Camper rehearsal. It was us having fun. We developed all these songs and started playing live shows.

**WCT: "Borderline," from Key Lime Pie, was my driving song.**

DL: I was just trying to figure out the chords to that and bring it back into the set. It is very complex the way it changes.

**WCT: How did you come out as gay to the band, Victor?**

VK: It was awkward. I was aware, like a lot of people, pretty young. I think a lot of people were aware as well.

DL: We kind of knew, but then thought, "Maybe not..."

VK: I had a lot of girlfriends. I just hung out with one of my exes last night. I have managed to maintain friendships with most of them.

Frankly, it was anticlimactic because everyone in the band simply said, "I love you." It was very

Turn to page 13



Shane Kenyon, Lily Mojekwu and Benjamin Sprunger.  
Photo by Anna Gelman

# About Face heats up January with 'Dada Woof Papa Hot'

BY JERRY NUNN

## THEATER

Hot from the hands of writer Peter Parnell and director Keira Fromm comes a new About Face Theatre (AFT) take on modern families called Dada Woof Papa Hot.

Beginning Thursday, Jan. 10, at Theatre Wit, this new play explores marriage and parenting topics while showing how they both can affect identity. The question is raised in the play if gay people should subscribe to heteronormative relationships and childbearing now that the community can be married and have children. (The title refers to a daughter's first four words describing things in her life.)

AFT artistic associate and grant writer Benjamin Sprunger plays Rob, one of the central couples in Dada Woof. He just wrapped up performing Into the Woods at Northwestern University for Musical Theater Works before taking on this new project. The openly gay actor has worked with AFT for more than 20 years, starting with the show Whitman.

Sprunger admitted to having conversations with his partner of 12 years about this same story in real life and they have talked about having kids in the past.

He spoke of the storyline that raises questions such as, "What are the pitfalls of parenting that we are not thinking about? Will we abandon who we are as gay men and lesbians just to make a heteronormative family unit during child rear-

ing?"

There are both straight and gay couples in Dada Woof, allowing audiences to see how they perceive one another while watching the story unfold. It takes place during a time of marriage equality, allowing the plot to explore relationships evolving in current times.

"There are generational things going on in the play," Sprunger said. "The couple I am in is older than the other younger, gay couple. For the older couple they didn't even think they could marry, much less raise children. The younger couple always imagined it would happen. It also pits us up against heterosexual couples who had these plans already in place."

Another AFT artistic associate involved with Dada Woof—this time as a director—is Keira Fromm, who has worked with the theater group before in Bull in a China Shop and Significant Other. She grew up in New Jersey, went to school on the East Coast and moved to Chicago for grad school at DePaul University. The openly queer director said she always wanted to direct while studying theater in school. She became a company member of AFT in 2015 and has worked as a casting director for many of the theater troupe's productions. This has led to directing a show almost every year leading her now to Dada Woof. As

Turn to page 13



**CAMPER from page 12**

reinforcing. When I came out to my family, my dad had a hard time, but my mom said she knew since I was 12. It was a like a classic coming out 1980s movie. My uncle who was a nuclear engineer asked if I wanted a martini. He said, "Everybody knows, so let's have a drink and continue on."

I have known people that had horrible experiences.

DL: In retrospect, there wasn't a place for people to come out in those days. It was just announcing it to us. It was word of mouth.

When I was dating someone they got me mixed up with Victor and thought I was gay. People confused us in the grapevine of bands.

VK: I went to the same gym as Bob Mould from Husker Du and Grant Hart from that band was bisexual so we hung out regularly. Michael Stipe and I never talked about it. We talk about being gay now and wonder why we didn't deal with it then. Nobody was really dealing with it.

I had just come out and it turned out to be the last Camper tour. We were playing the Electric Ballroom and Pete Shelley from the Buzzcocks came up and kissed me. He was such a huge hero for me and just started flirting with me. I don't know what was going on there, but I was shocked.

**WCT: I once asked 10,000 Maniacs singer Natalie Merchant if she knew about R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe being gay and she said no—that they were just dating each other and were happy.**

VK: Michael was pretty fluid. That was how it was.

**WCT: It just means a lot to me after listening to the music for so long that there's a gay member in Camper Van Beethoven all this time.**

VK: Last night, my friend Patrick Goodwin—who is the guitar player in Pansy Division—came to the Denver show and I just saw Luis Illades, the drummer, who I dated for a time. It was 1998 when we were going out. They were opening for Steve Albini and Green Day. It was a completely different world back then. I felt like the old guy hanging out!

**WCT: What advice would you give to new bands?**

DL: It seems simple, but just play the stuff they enjoy playing. If you don't like a song then you end up carrying it around like an albatross for the next 30 years.

The object is not really popularity. It's finding

people who like the same thing that you like. We found that out by accident.

**WCT: What songs are an albatross for you?**

DL: There are only a handful of them. We never play "No More Bullshit" and several Camper songs that are throwaways. There is one song in my Cracker catalogue that I think is too mean so I won't play it.

VK: It is interesting that you bring it up because the band has been together 36 years now. We were in Seattle and there were a lot of kids at the show. It is bigger than us now and there's a responsibility to it. When I watch people respond I see how important it is to them. In some ways it's more important to them than it is to me. I like to respect that.

**WCT: How do you narrow down a set list from a big catalogue?**

DL: Carlton Owens from Cracker is playing drums with us on this tour, so he's been learning songs and throwing them at us. He will learn songs and it is completely passive for us to do them when he is ready. It's cool though, because it represents a view point that isn't from the inside. It's from the outside.

Oh, another bit of advice I give young bands is to have a compound. We didn't even achieve Ween's level of success. You have to have a compound!

**WCT: What's one thing you want to be remembered for?**

DL: We always leaned toward the Turkish instrumentals. A Greek pop star did his version of "Opening Theme" from Key Lime Pie to begin his album in the '90s. That went completely full circle. We are doing our fake version of Greek music and here he is covering us!

**Look for more CVB and Cracker concert dates at CrackerSoul.com.**

**ABOUT FACE from page 12**

a recently married person, Fromm said she knows how to address the questions and struggles in the current show. "I bring in many things from life and that is one of the pleasant things with working for About Face," she said. "This play really delves into some issues that gay men and women are dealing with now and facing today, myself included."

Fromm described the play as very funny and moving, saying, "The playwright does a very good job of balancing savvy, smart New Yorkers dealing with heavy issues. It is peppered with a lot of humor. It's about being a successful human while parenting. I think people will enjoy the sense of comedy and connect with the characters. This is not a gay rights play, but instead what do we do with those rights play. How do we navigate this world once gay culture is normalized?"

Sprunger said he wants to encourage people, gay or straight, who are considering having kids to come see the show. "People that have children already will see themselves in what is happening onstage. It is funny, sexy and of-the-moment," he said.

Dada Woof Papa Hot runs Jan. 10-Feb. 16 at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. Tickets are \$15-\$38; visit AboutFaceTheatre.com or call 773-975-8150.

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**CRITICS' PICKS**

**Familiar**, Steppenwolf Theatre, through Jan. 13. The wedding party includes three generations, two races (one, South African immigrants), it's snowing and everything still ends happily—what better way to welcome the new year? MSB

**Women of Soul**, Black Ensemble Theatre, through Jan. 27. If you're hoarse from caroling and Auld Lang Syne, let the powerhouse divas of Black Ensemble do the vocal work (but get your hands ready for some aerobic applause). MSB

—by Mary Shen Barnidge



Emma Donoghue.  
Photo by Punch  
Photography

## Novelist's fascination with history comes alive on stage

BY SARAH KATHERINE BOWDEN

Novelist Emma Donoghue has had a long and rewarding relationship with Regency historical figure Anne Lister.

Lister created a series of coded diaries that documented her love affairs with women while operating as part of the landed gentry in mid-1800s Yorkshire. Donoghue first read these diaries in the 1980s, and adapted the Englishwoman's life story for the stage while working towards her doctorate in 1990s Dublin. Her play, *I Know My Own Heart*, receives its U.S. premiere from Pride Films & Plays this January. The Irish-Canadian author, who identifies as a lesbian, credits her fascination with Lister for sparking a love of writing about history and historical figures.

"Anne Lister changed my life and career," Donoghue said. "I had just started writing fiction as a student, and I came across her diaries in a bookstore. I related to how passionate she was as a person, and yet how different she was from me. She was quite a snob, and I couldn't see myself in that." This mixture of relatable desire and an undesirable trait propelled Donoghue to publish essays about Lister, as well as write her first dramatic script about Lister's relationships with a few of her lovers.

Lister was nicknamed "Gentleman Jack" for her use of masculine dress. Although she found the sobriquet embarrassing, she was audacious in taking on romantic partners. She wrote in her diary that she would "love and only love the fairer sex." Donoghue found her boldness original. "I don't think it occurred to her not to hit on everybody," she told *Windy City Times*. "A lot

of women over the centuries passionately held hands, but women like Anne Lister were rare, and they showed what was possible."

Lister even defied institutional conventions concerning the church. She took communion with heiress Ann Walker during an 1834 mass in Goodramgate, York, at Holy Trinity Church, which led to the ladies' conviction that they were married. Donoghue has visited Holy Trinity. The church has "highback pews that look like a chocolate box with the lid lifted off," and the historical event confirmed for Donoghue that the tension between public and private life was clear to Lister. "You can tell her diaries were written with an eye to the future," she stated. "I wanted to literally let her stand out, and be acted out. Anne Lister should be strutting in her boots across the stage."

Elizabeth Swanson, director of *I Know My Own Heart* for Pride Films & Plays, said she finds the play clarifying for the audience. "I think Emma did a really smart thing which is live in the question of Lister's identity," she said. "None of the words that we have today, homosexual, much less even trans, existed in her time. She is able to imagine for herself what she might want when there's no institutional or structural support for what she might want. The play is a 'What do I want?' story, rather than a 'Who am I?' story."

The play itself is split between dialogue scenes between Lister and her lovers, and passages performed from Lister's diary. Swanson has cast actors with facility for classical language, and she treats the diary entries as direct address monologues to the viewers. "This way, the conclusions live in the audience," Swanson said.

## THEATER

She also cast actors across a wide variety of ages, as stigmas surrounding age and choice in society have shifted since Lister's day. She cast Vahishta Vafadari as Anne specifically because the performer understood both Lister's taciturn nature and had the stamina to survive the marathon nature of the piece, given that Lister exits the action onstage only once.

Donoghue is perhaps best known for her contemporary-set novel about motherhood and survival, *Room*, which she recently adapted for the screen and the stage. But she has also written eighteenth and nineteenth century-set novels that often center around queer or marginalized women, such as *Slammerkin*, *The Sealed Letter*, and *Frog Music*. And she grew up participating in theater through weekly classes, so she understands the value of performance.

"I acted all through my teens. It was the most useful thing I ever learned, for the business of being a public writer" she said. "Actually, in the first production of *I Know My Own Heart* at school, I ended up playing Tiv. I had to step in and save the day. After every play I see, I think acting is the most thrilling thing there is."

She finds the gender play and heightened

nature of theater a good fit for telling historical stories, and in particular, for telling stories of queer women like herself. "It's freeing," she stated. "It's great to know that there are women going through the same things as me, so there's solidarity across millennia. This lets you know you're from a tribe. You're not actually an ugly duckling. You're a swan."

Donoghue is happy to see the play mounted in Chicago, so that Americans can be introduced to Lister's life. "It's so lifting to get back into the theater," she said. "What I remember about the play's research process, is that it got me started on historical plays, novels and short stories. Anne Lister's work was the wardrobe that led me to Narnia. The past reached up out of that book and shouted like the evil queen, 'Make me famous!'"

*I Know My Own Heart* opens Sunday, Jan. 13, at The Buena, Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway. Tickets are available now at [PrideFilmsAndPlays.com](http://PrideFilmsAndPlays.com), or at 866-811-4111 and 773-857-0222.

Also, "Conversation with Emma Donoghue" will take place Sunday, Jan. 13, at 4:30 p.m. at The Buena. (*Windy City Times*' Catey Sullivan will moderate the discussion.) Admission is free, but reservations are recommended; call 773-857-0222.

## LGBT-focused Golden Globes full of surprises, snubs

The Golden Globes is known for starting the awards season with surprises and revelry—and it certainly lived up to at least the first half of that with the 76th annual show that took place Jan. 6 on NBC.

Cases in point: The Freddie Mercury/Queen-based film *Bohemian Rhapsody* won for best dramatic film and Glenn Close won for best actress (drama) in a movie for her titular role in *The Wife*—and both wins were at the expense of expected winner *A Star Is Born* (and that film's lead actress, Lady Gaga).

In fact, "Star" only had one victory: for best original song ("Shallow"). Bradley Cooper lost in the best actor and director categories as well, as Rami Malek (*Bohemian Rhapsody*) and Alfonso Cuarón (*Roma*) prevailed in those contests, respectively.

However, LGBTs definitely made their presence known. In addition to "Rhapsody," which had two wins, *American Crime Story: The Assassination of Gianni Versace* had two victories in the area of television—for best television limited series and best performance by an actor in a limited series (Darren Criss, who had made news a few days prior by saying that, as a straight actor, he would never take another gay role).

In addition, *Green Book* won three awards: for Best Supporting Actor (in a motion picture, musical or comedy) for Mahershala Ali, Best Motion Picture Musical/Comedy and Best Screenplay. Ali portrays jazz great Don Shirley—who, in the film, is depicted being caught in a same-sex encounter.



Olivia Colman in *The Favourite*.  
Photo by Atsushi Nishijima

Openly queer actor Ben Whishaw won for supporting actor in a TV series/limited series for Amazon's *A Very English Scandal*—which centers on a real-life gay situation. Event co-host Sandra Oh also won for Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series—Drama in role in which she spars with a queer female assassin, besting competitors such as Elisabeth Moss (*The Handmaid's Tale*) and Julia Roberts (*Homecoming*). And Olivia Colman won for best actress (film, musical or comedy) for portraying Queen Anne in the lesbian-centric *The Favourite*.

Some of the nominees who are LGBT or had roles in LGBT projects included Billy Porter (*Pose*), Debra Messing (*Will & Grace*), Lucas Hedges (*Boy Erased*), Emma Stone and Rachel Weisz (*The Favourite*), Hugh Grant (*A Very English Scandal*) and Richard E. Grant (*Can You Ever Forgive Me?*).

In addition, queer musician Janelle Monáe introduced *If Beale Street Could Talk* while out actress/producer Lena Waithe presented an award with Halle Berry.

Carol Burnett received a new Golden Globe award named for her, while Jeff Bridges was honored with the Cecil B. DeMille Award for his cinematic achievements.

Oh and Andy Samberg hosted the ceremony.



## BOOK REVIEW

## The Rest of It: Hustlers, Cocaine ... 1976-1988

by Martin Duberman  
\$27.95; Duke Univ. Press;  
242 pages

REVIEW BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Parts of your life are missing.

Maybe you've forgotten, purposefully or by accident. You were overwhelmed and didn't look, too influenced by love, anger, or adult beverages to take full notice. Sometimes, you wonder what's missing but in the new book *The Rest of It: Hustlers, Cocaine, Depression, and Then Some 1976-1988*, by Martin Duberman, one man's gaps are filled.

Having penned other books of memoirs, Duberman said that people often ask him why he's omitted roughly a decade of his life story. Once noted, he realized that "the mid-seventies to the mid-eighties ... were the most painful years of my life."

They began with his mother's illness in late 1976, and her surgery for cancer that was initially said to be non-cancerous, but that was finally diagnosed as malignant melanoma. Duberman had had a complicated relationship with his mother and they'd made their peace; still, hers was a horrible death and it plunged him into his work, and



### The Rest of It: Hustlers, Cocaine, Depression, and Then Some 1976-1988

MARTIN DUBERMAN

a bout with depression.

For years, Duberman had been involved in the LGBT community as an activist, and "in the wake of my mother's death I hadn't jumped ship, hadn't abandoned academia or run off to join the circus." Still, he looked for ways to cope: he had his "circadian chart" read and he used a fair amount of cocaine and pot. He immersed himself in projects, both of the literary kind and for the

gay community, and he picked up his political engagements. Duberman worried that the stress was bad for him—and he may've been right, because he had a few health scares, including a heart attack, and another bout with depression and "desperation."

Still, he continued to write. It was a time "of a flowering of gay culture" when many gay literary giants were publishing—and that included Duberman himself. It was a time when bath houses dotted New York City, AIDS was emerging as a crisis, and Duberman was celibate and addicted.

It was a time when he had nearly hit bottom before he found help and love.

You may be thinking that "The Rest of It" is on the self-contemplative side—and you're right, though it could also be argued that many memoirs are such. No matter; what keeps you reading isn't the biography that author Duberman offers here.

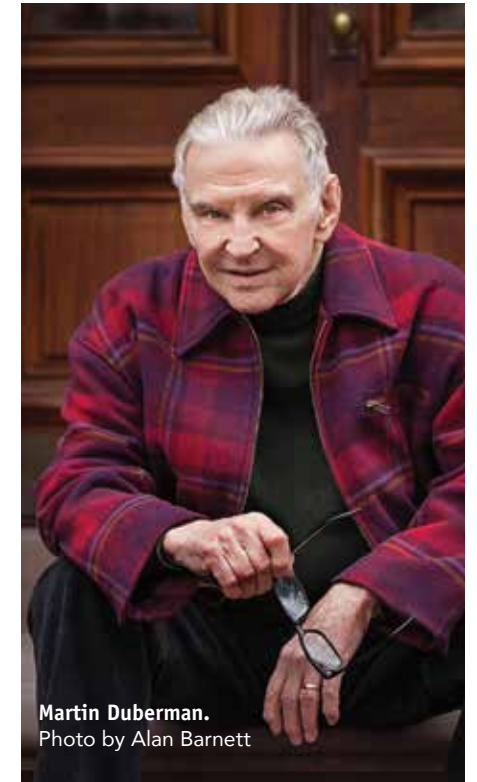
It's what's behind it.

Duberman's life was keenly interesting in the dozen years between 1976 and 1988, but so were then-current events, which he carefully recounts. This book shows an emergence of gay culture on a larger scale, growing activism, and the dawn of AIDS; his voice is occasionally snarky as he takes on the medical establishment of the times, gay nightclubs and bathhouses, and Reagan politics. In these ways, his deeply-personal memories, mixed with what happened when, are vastly more appealing than if this book were mere memoir.

Although it may not attract casual readers under a certain age, this book is perfect for older readers who remember these times. Also, for his-

torians' bookshelves, "The Rest of It shouldn't be missing.

Want more? Then look for *Jews Queers Germans: A Novel/History and Stonewall*, both by Duberman.



Martin Duberman.  
Photo by Alan Barnett

**aft** ABOUT  
**FACE**  
THEATRE

CHICAGO PREMIERE

# DADA WOOF PAPA HOT

BY PETER PARNELL  
DIRECTED BY KEIRA FROMM  
THROUGH FEB 16  
Photo by Anna Gelman

**PEOPLE SAY KIDS CHANGE EVERYTHING,  
BUT WHO KNEW IT WOULD BE LIKE THIS?**

A tender comedy about two gay couples in a circle of friends trying to find their way in the fast-paced world of modern parenting. As friendships deepen and vulnerabilities are exposed, the foundations of both gay and straight relationships get shaken. Now that marriage equality is the law of the land, what happens next and what gets left behind?



**Rashaad Hall Matthew Sherbach** in *Rendezvous* in Chicago.

Still by Michael Glover Smith



## Queer actors play gay couple in 'Rendezvous'

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

Call Me by Your Name left an impression with Michael Glover Smith—but maybe not the one a viewer might think.

The Chicago filmmaker “didn’t buy the chemistry” between the leads. “I went home and Googled, ‘Is Armie Hammer gay?’ [and] ‘Is Timothee Chalamet gay?’” said Smith, who is straight. “I didn’t want people to have that question while watching my movie.”

*Rendezvous* in Chicago—Smith’s third feature film that he wrote and directed—chronicles a relationship’s beginning, middle and end through three different segments. The second, “Cats and Dogs,” follows Andy and Rob, a gay couple who have recently moved in together. As they walk through Rogers Park, a nervous Rob marks time before proposing.

Smith wanted “the film’s most romantic segment” to feature two gay men. “If an alien studied our movies and TV, they would come to the conclusion that we don’t have many gay people,” he said. “Making these characters queer was my attempt to be a good ally.”

He also didn’t audition straight hopefuls for Rob and Andy. “We had a really great casting director, Clare Cooney. I told her I only wanted to see queer actors and she was able to funnel them my way.”

Enter Rashaad Hall, who’s appeared at Goodman and Victory Gardens and acted in the Emmy-nominated webseries *Brown Girls*.

“Being a queer man of color, it puts me in an-

## MOVIES

other category,” Hall said via phone while out of town with his partner Isaac Gomez, whose play *La Ruta* is currently running at Steppenwolf. “When we think of queer or gay characters, we think of one kind. So I’m really thankful to Michael for casting me in this way, and giving me an opportunity to show there are multitudes of representation.”

“Rashaad immediately owned the character of Andy,” said Smith. “I had done bios for each character and described Andy as cool and laid-back. Rashaad was just perfect.”

When casting Rob, the director said, “it became a question of who had the best chemistry with Rashaad.”

That was Matthew Sherbach, who had previously worked with Hall. “Part of why the script appealed to me is that [it] is very simple,” said Sherbach, who’s acted in Chicago for the past 13 years. “It’s a sweet, heartfelt story about people who truly get along. I find that extremely compelling, especially for a queer narrative.”

As an actor, Sherbach often found himself pigeonholed. “In my twenties, I kept getting called in for roles that were all about gay teenagers who were hyper-precocious and using their sexuality as a weapon,” he said. “My agent and I were like, first of all, I’m 27, and why is this a recurring theme?”

Sherbach called Rob and Andy’s storyline

“deeply refreshing” in that “two gay male characters live their lives. Heterosexual narratives get to have that a lot, and I feel like every time a queer story gets told, it’s only one type. And we contain multitudes.”

During the two-day shoot, Sherbach and Hall had to generate believable chemistry. Director Smith had to illustrate a gay relationship, which he has never experienced. Thankfully, all were ready to work.

“I said to Rashaad and Matt, like I say to all my actors, if something doesn’t sound right, we’ll change [the words] to make them more authentic,” Smith said.

“I’m a natural worrier, and I didn’t worry about Rashaad,” said Sherbach. “I felt confident that I had a good partner, that I was safe in his care. We wouldn’t have to act the warmth between our characters—that already existed.”

“Matthew is a phenomenal actor,” Hall said. “He’s also hilarious as a person. In between takes, we would be cracking up at our off-kilter, very goofy sense of humor.” Shared jokes went a long way: “[W]e were able to dive in and shake off the nervous energy.”

Both actors complimented their director’s active listening.

“Working with Michael was a pretty collaborative process,” Hall said. “I might say a line slightly differently than [he’d] written, and he’d run over and say, ‘I like that better.’ He really works in the moment and allows our voices to shine through.”

“It doesn’t escape my attention that a straight,

white cisgender male wrote and directed this film,” said Sherbach. “But Michael wasn’t trying to impose his vision on who this couple was and what it was like to be gay,” he added. “Which, hopefully, is why that scene seems real. I think it’s a credit to Michael that he gave us the floor.”

*Rendezvous* in Chicago has already won awards at the Adirondack and Strasburg Film Festivals, as well as “Best Ensemble” from the website Indie Outlook. Hall couldn’t be more excited for what this means in terms of representation.

“It’s a blessing folks are vibing with it,” he said, “and aren’t batting an eye to see a queer couple just living their lives like everyday people.”

*Rendezvous* in Chicago will open in February at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St. For more information, follow the film on Facebook or the director’s website at <http://whitecitycinema.com>.

## ‘OUT on Stage’ Jan. 17 on Dekkoo

*OUT on Stage: The Series* will debut Thursday, Jan. 17, on LGBT subscription-based streaming network Dekkoo.

Zach Noe Towers hosts the show, which features a line-up of renowned LGBTQ stand-up comedians.

“I don’t think comedy is an easy field for anyone, but it can sometimes be especially difficult for those of us with unique, diverse voices,” Towers said in a press release. “We’re a much smaller percentage of the population, stage time can be harder to come by, and often times audiences aren’t as willing to give us a chance. Even our peers can present a challenge. Open mics are often peppered with the voices of less progressive people, some of which find humor in homo/transphobic material.”

“I would even be willing to bet that every queer comic out there has had to sit and listen to someone turn their life into a punchline. And this is why projects like *OUT on Stage* are so important. It not only provides a platform for new queer voices on the rise, but it brings us together. It creates a space for diverse voices to flourish and it’s so important to have this kind of representation available.”



**OUT on Stage: The Series’ Zach Noe Towers.**

Image from Jonah Blechman



# Historian Batza talks gay clinics' origins at book launch

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

On Jan. 4, Women & Children First welcomed a standing-room-only crowd for the launch of Before AIDS, historian Katie Batza's book about gay health clinics in the early 1970s.

Singles, couples and even children hung on to Batza's every word as she discussed Boston's Fenway Clinic, Los Angeles' The Center and Chicago's Howard Brown Health.

Batza—an associate professor of women, gender and sexuality studies at the University of Kansas—addressed the misconception that clinics originated during the AIDS crisis, when they were actually in full swing by then. She talked

## BOOKS

about her initial fascination with Howard Brown, when she was a PhD student at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

"The Howard Brown building was an important windshield at the end of a very cold commute," Batza said, laughing. "I started imagining how the clinic took shape: a movement of people coming together and fighting an epidemic. Turns out, I was wrong."

Batza also spoke of the "VD van" that pre-dated the clinic. She described the Winnebago that would tour gay bars and offer free STI testing to



Katie Batza with Before AIDS book.  
Photo by Lauren Emily Whalen

patrons, funded by the late Chuck Renslow, owner of Chicago's then-largest bathhouse Man's Country.

"Chuck did a really good job paying off the Chicago police," Batza said, when asked if cop harassment was an issue. "He was definitely in the machine."

The highlight of the launch was Batza's colorful description of Wanda Lust, the drag queen who is featured on Before AIDS' cover. Lust would stand outside the "VD van" wearing six-inch heels and say, "Come on, sweetheart. Get tested or I won't let you screw me tonight!"

When asked who would play Lust and Renslow in the movie of Before AIDS, Batza was ready: "Dolly Parton and a young Burt Reynolds."

A woman piped up with her two cents: "I think Brad Pitt!"

Before AIDS is available online and at Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Ladies Lazarus

\$16; Tarpaulin Sky Press;  
128 pages

REVIEW BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

Piper J. Daniels is many things: a Columbia College Chicago graduate, a Michigan native, a queer intersectional feminist, and a professional ghostwriter. Impressive bio and city connections aside, she's a survivor, as all women are. Let's face it: Everyone who's not a straight white cis man commits a radical act by leaving the house to face a world that, more often than not, doesn't want them.

Ladies Lazarus is Daniels' stunning debut book, a collection of poetic essays on literature, suicide culture, body image and the aftermath of hometown terror. (In addition, the essay collection has been nominated for the PEN/Diamonstein-Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay.) Although Daniels tends to heavily quote and name-drop her literary heroes, almost to the point of saturation, her writing is both evocative and clear. Her queerness, her feminism, her self are present in every single syllable. When it comes to voice, hers is unmistakable, and memorable.

Anyone triggered by mentions of suicide should probably stay away from Ladies Lazarus, but those who have struggled with mental illness and self-harm could find these essays very therapeutic. The collection's title originates from Sylvia Plath's iconic poem "Lady Lazarus," which contains the lines "Dying/Is an art, like everything else./I do it exceptionally well." Plath, of course, committed suicide as a young wife and mother, and she wasn't alone: Anne Sexton and Kurt Cobain, both of whom Daniels quotes, also went early and of their own volition. In "Epistle for Suicided Mothers," Daniels pays homage to four female writers who have gone before her, including Virginia Woolf ("[l]ike every sentence penned, your death was perfect") and fellow Midwesterner Sara Teasdale ("[i]n the tub, in the warm water, your skin takes on that pinking pallor").

However, Ladies Lazarus doesn't focus exclusively on suicide; rather, its main thrust is the business of existing. In the collection's title essay, Daniels explores her mother's own illness, as well as what really happens in the Biblical story of Lazarus. As Daniels astutely points out, "[h]ow Jesus [sic] was aware of Lazarus's illness, but waited until he'd been entombed for four days before doing anything about it." This pulling aside the curtain is a touchstone of



the entire book: Daniels is intent on removing the stigma of mental illness, surviving sexual assault and dealing with one's past once and for all.

In the book's strongest essay, "The Twist," Daniels unpacks the murder of two preteen girls in her small Michigan hometown—when Daniels was their same age. She describes the ensuing paranoia and victim-blaming, the trial and the strangely hands-off attitude her formerly overbearing parents took toward Daniels and her younger sister. "The Twist" lays it all out in Daniels' unflinching narrative: society's fascination with young murdered girls, and how it affects the actual surviving girls in the vicinity. The events Daniels writes of in this essay laid the groundwork for the adult she would become, and the picture she paints is unforgettably haunting.

Ladies Lazarus isn't just for female readers. Anyone who loves books and knows fear is an ideal match for Daniels' debut essay collection. Though reader never meets author—only catches glimpses throughout the short 128 pages—by the final piece, they will feel like they know her.

## CULTURE CLUB

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**Betsy Odom.**  
Photo by Kelli Connell

## ART

BY ADA CHENG

Chicago-based artist Betsy Odom will have her first museum solo exhibit at DePaul Art Museum, along with artist Karolina Gnatowski. Their collaboration will highlight themes on weaving, sports, and LGBTQ identity. They are among the growing list of Chicago artists being featured at this museum.

The title for Odom's exhibit can be both enchanting and bewildering depending on the audience: "Butchcraft". She summed up her artistic practice with one sentence: "My art is queer because I create art in a butch way."

For Odom, butchcraft carries the double meanings of queering her craft (the butch way of doing things and using masculine-suggestive materials) as well as queering the content of her art.

"I try to do everything as butchly as possible," said Odom. "In my studio practice, it means that you try as hard as you can, using butchest techniques, using power tools, using woodcarving, using airbrushing and leather-tooling, and using materials associated with masculinity. With an attempt to be impressive and show my bravado. Show the butch pride."

In that sense, butchcraft is about heightening some aspects of the butch culture/identity, performing gender, taking on the façade of masculinity, and expressing a certain type of desire and attraction (the butch-femme dynamics). "I remake objects as a way to queer moments in culture," Odom explained.

In addition to queering her craft, there is also the queering of her art. For Odom, it means that her art work often includes objects, symbols, and references that have come to represent certain stereotypes about the butch culture, the butch identity or butch dykes more specifically. Many of the materials she uses, such as Birkenstock sandals and handkerchiefs, are codes of gender for her or access points for understanding gender for the general public.

Women's sports and sport items for women

then provide great entry points to raise questions about our cultural assumptions about gender and about our social discomfort with the female masculinity. "I am especially interested in sporting goods: women's sport is fascinating to me. It is still relatively rare to experience women's physicality," Odom added.

In highlighting these stereotypes and heightening their association with masculinity, Odom's exhibit serves to question our current state of gender inequity and/or to subvert our inequitable practices of gender. "At the end of the day, I am not a big fan of gender. I think it is a pretty obsolete concept. I do think there needs to be room within the female gender for the butch lesbian. Rather than feeling like I have to get out of femininity because I am too much of a man, there should be a place in femininity for me." She hopes that her art work can provide some impetus for discussions and reflections on our current gender politics, both within and outside of the art world.

In this exhibit, Odom's art work will be arranged as if they were on display for sale. She would like to invite the audience to consider these objects' utilitarian functions as well as their intrinsic value as art.

Odom also wants to raise questions about taste, consumption and sexuality. As she explained, "The exhibit will be about 30 feet long with about 30 pieces of artwork. I was thinking about thrift stores or antique malls, with dozens of objects on the shelf. None of them have anything to do with one another. What connects them is the connection that you make. They are connected through your desire. In my show, I want you to think about why it is that you desire certain things but not other things. This brings out the whole conversation about taste, about what you are into, and why you are into something."

DePaul Art Museum is at 935 W. Fullerton Ave. Hours are 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The museum is closed Monday and Tuesday. Admission is free. Additional information at <http://artmuseum-depaul.edu> or 773-325-7506.

## Betsy Odom: Butchcraft, LGBTQ identity and art



**Bulldog hat (left); Birkenstock.**  
Photos by Tom Van Eynde



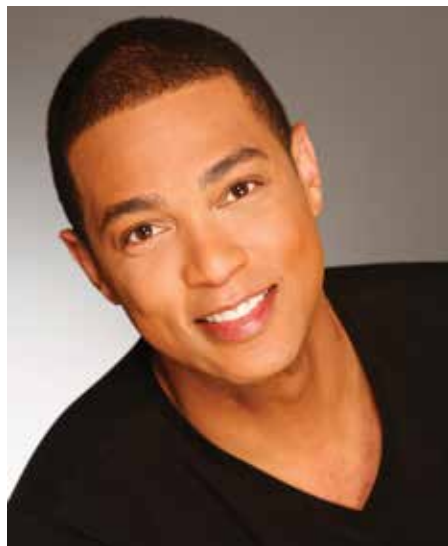


## BILLY Masters

"I think she just has really tiny hands!"—**Pete Davidson** at his New Year's Eve show at Chevalier Auditorium in Medford, Massachusetts, while discussing **Ariana Grande's** quip about him having a "big dick."

Welcome to 2019—officially. And to kick it off, we're reporting on the Golden Globes, even though I'm not there. I know you count on me to be your eyes and ears everywhere, but I had pressing business elsewhere. I did send my minions to report back to me and, well, even they were bored. Some quick quips: I don't know who looked more annoyed to be there—**Billy Porter** or **Johnny Galecki**; every once in a while, you think **Sam Neill** is dead and then, poof, there he is; much like **Keith Urban**, I wouldn't let anyone near me with a flu shot; **Dick Van Dyke** had firmer footing than **Michael Douglas**; **Christian Bale**, comedy genius; and is there anyone more breathtaking than my pal **Justin Hartley**? It's important to note that these awards are less about who won than who was snubbed. That's all.

If the Golden Globes taught us anything, it's that not just anyone can host. The Oscars may be more than a month away, but they are still host-less. So, **Ellen DeGeneres** decided to flex her considerable power to strong-arm **Kevin Hart** back into the job—and strong-arm the viewing audience into accepting him. Apparently, Ellen and Kevin are good friends, and she thinks his past homophobic rants should not preclude him from the job. In what was presented as a spontaneous interview on her show, Ellen asked Hart about the controversy and why he stepped down. He then rambled on and on about ... well, really, about nothing. She then allegedly surprised him by saying that she spoke up on his behalf to The Academy. I don't know who she spoke to at The



**Don Lemon** put his two cents in the Oscars/**Kevin Hart** situation.

Photo courtesy of Farrah Gray Publishing

Academy—it may very well have been a receptionist, or even a temp. "We want him to host, whatever we can do, we would be thrilled, and he should host," said whomever answers the phone at The Academy.

This pissed off many people—specifically gay people. Who was Ellen to speak on behalf of the gay community? **Don Lemon**—whose opinion is germane if for no other reason than he is a Black, gay man—said he doesn't think Hart should be allowed to host. Lemon said Hart's past "jokes" actually do represent the views of many Black fathers of gay children. "That is a joke to Kevin. But the truth is, that is a reality for many little boys in the United States. Somewhere, a Black dad is beating his Black son." Lemon added, "Apologizing and moving on does not make the world a better place for people who are gay or people who are transgender. Being an ally does."

Let me say I don't have a dog in this fight. I really don't have any strong feelings about Kevin Hart—although I stand by my earlier statement that if you aren't tall enough to get on Space Mountain, you can't host the Oscars. Beyond that, I have no idea in the heart of Hart if he is homophobic or not. What I do know is that comics will say anything for a laugh—and I suspect Kevin Hart's core audience would laugh at homophobic comments. The real question is, "Can people evolve?" I suppose they do. Politicians do. People like Obama and Clinton changed their stance on gay marriage as their view "evolved" (although, like comics, I think politicians play to their audiences). Ultimately, I believe in the free market. If The Academy wants Kevin Hart to host and he wants to host, he should host. And if people don't like him, believe he is homophobic, or don't buy his apology, they should not watch the Oscars. Kevin solved the problem for us—he (again) took himself out of the running to host ... for now.

**Madonna** made a surprise appearance at NYC's Stonewall Inn on New Year's Eve. Perhaps it wasn't a complete surprise—the day before, the inn posted on Instagram, "We are insanely proud

Turn to page 20

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# the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in  
WINDY CITY TIMES

## SAVOR

### Bistro Campagne brunch; Chicago Restaurant Week

BY ANDREW DAVIS

I have to admit I was a little concerned going to **Bistro Campagne** (4518 N. Lincoln Ave.; [BistroCampagne.com](http://BistroCampagne.com)) for brunch.

The reason? Bistro Campagne has a new executive chef (Adam Grandt), who was most recently at Chop Shop—a place that serves decidedly different fare than what patrons receive at the French restaurant.

However, my worries were unfounded. Grandt has graciously and deliciously picked up where Luke Creagan left off—while adding his own touches. (The dinner menu, for example, now has bacon-wrapped whole trout with spinach stuffing, potato confit and lemon-caper brown butter.)

While I could appreciate the French countryside appeal/decor, my dining companion was less convinced—and I actually pointed out to her one idiosyncrasy that she picked up on: the music. While I like Aretha and Marvin Gaye music as



#### Bistro Campagne's Croque madame.

Photo by Anthony Robert LaPenna

much as the next patron, I'm not sure it fit at the bistro; however, my friend gladly sang along with the songs, as I got my own personal karaoke.

Another aspect that struck my friend as un-Gallic was something that is featured in a lot of U.S. spots: the large portions. (In fact, a couple from Nice recently told me that they were overwhelmed by the sizes of dishes.) However, I certainly don't mind leftovers—especially when the quality of the food is like that of Bistro Campagne's.

After a refreshing Mimosa Campagne, we had a wonderful Salade Lyonnaise that had everything from baby spinach and frisée to pork belly and a perfectly poached egg. The quiche (another delicious dish that was possibly my favorite item of the meal) featured tantalizingly fluffy eggs.

In addition, the croque Monsieur had well-cooked ham and was covered with enough Gruyere to satisfy any cheese lover (and had



#### New Bistro Campagne Executive Chef Adam Grandt.

Photo courtesy of  
Bistro Campagne

crispy pommes frites). And the pain perdu (French toast) was a solidly balanced dish, with almond frangipane, Mick Klug Farms blueberry-lavender compote and honey oat granola—and, somehow, it wasn't too sweet, which is what I prefer.

So add Bistro Campagne to your brunch list—and I can't wait until summer, when the Lincoln Square spot's atmospheric patio will be open.

#### Chicago Restaurant Week

Chicago Restaurant Week will be here before you know it.

Chicago's world-class culinary scene will once again be in the spotlight during the 12th annual Chicago Restaurant Week, Jan. 25- Feb. 7. (Yes, it's technically two weeks, but "Chicago Restaurant Fortnight" doesn't have quite the same ring.)

Produced by Choose Chicago, reservations for the annual culinary celebration are now open at [eatitupchicago.com](http://eatitupchicago.com), featuring menus for participating Chicago-area eateries. A record

number of Chicago restaurants—395!—will take part in 2019's Chicago Restaurant Week. (More than 600,000 diners took part in 2018.)

Chicago Restaurant Week will launch with First Bites Bash, featuring Joe Flamm, executive chef of Spiaggia and Cafe Spiaggia, and Chicago mixologist Jarmel Doss, assistant bar director of The Aviary, as First Bites Bash hosts, on Thursday, Jan. 24, 6-9 p.m., at the Field Museum, 1400 S. Lake Shore Dr. More than 70 of Chicago's most famous chefs and restaurants will be represented at the event, which allows participants to preview tasting portions from their respective Chicago RestaurantWeek menus. For a complete list of participating restaurants and to purchase tickets to First Bites Bash, visit [firstbitesbash.com](http://firstbitesbash.com).

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

#### BILLY from page 19

to announce Madonna is a Stonewall Ambassador supporting Stonewall Day + the 50th anniversary of Stonewall!" On the night, Madonna resembled the fun, kicky Material Girl we all grew up loving. She had a crazy bow in her hair and lots of clunky, dangling jewelry. She donned glasses to read her lengthy remarks about how the Stonewall Inn is the birthplace of Pride. And then she sang an acoustic version of "Like a Prayer" with her son David playing guitar, which almost made you long for the days Madonna showed off her guitar skills. You can see the video on [BillyMasters.com](http://BillyMasters.com).

I was terribly sad to hear about **Derek Keeling's** passing. You may remember this talented (and gorgeous) man from the reality show to find stars for the Broadway revival of Grease. In addition to Grease, he also toured in All Shook Up, Million Dollar Quartet and Happy Days: The Musical. Rest in peace.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Gary in Detroit: "We know you always watch Lindsay Wagner movies on New Year's Eve. What vintage Wagner works did you watch this year?"

Believe it or not, **Lindsay Wagner** is ALWAYS working. We started with Samson, a Biblical epic that was actually released in some cinemas in 2018. Lindsay was Samson's mother—lest you forget she was bionic. Her son was played by newcomer **Taylor James**, who has a body of Biblical proportions. The second flick came courtesy of the Hallmark Channel. Mingle All the Way featured Lindsay alongside the luscious **Brant Daugherty**, who I know almost nothing about. I vaguely remember him from Dancing with the Stars a while back. Brant is a charming and appealing actor—who perhaps comes off somewhat gay ... not that there's anything wrong with that!

When we're coming off very gay, it's definitely time to end yet another column. We ran long and it's late, so we'll quickly remind you to check out [BillyMasters.com](http://BillyMasters.com)—the site that welcomes gays and straights alike. If you have a question, dash it off to [Billy@BillyMasters.com](mailto:Billy@BillyMasters.com) and I promise to get back to you before someone from The Academy asks me to host the Oscars! So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.



## JACKHAMMER

Happy NYE w/Monica BH!  
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## SIDETRACK

Slip into the  
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## HOUSE CONCERTS

**KENNETH GRIGG IN CONCERT** Sunday, January 20, 2019 at 7:15 p.m. Kenneth Grigg, piano, performs works by Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Ravel, Mozart, Bill Evans, and Chopin in a house concert in Rogers Park. **Tickets available (advance sales only) at <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3593975> (1/9/19-1)**

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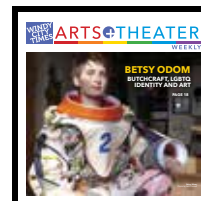
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by Greg Fox



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# WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Wed., Jan. 9

**SketchFest 18th Annual Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival** Starring each hour local favorites, award-winning international ensembles, veterans, and fresh talent. Through Jan. 20. Single tickets \$15. 6:00pm - 10:00pm Stage 773 1225 W Belmont Chicago Tickets: <http://www.Stage773.com>

**Fantastic Mr. Fox** Fantastic Mr. Fox-Roald Dahl's tale of a clever fox who outsmarts mean humans. 7:00pm Victory Gardens Theater 2433 N Lincoln Ave Chicago <http://www.emeraldcitytheatre.com>

**ROMA** on 70mm Alfonso Cuarón's masterpiece exclusive 70mm on wall-to-wall 36-foot screen through Jan. 13. \$15 (\$12 for Music Box Members). First show 7 p.m. 10:00pm Music Box Theatre 3733 N Southport Chicago <http://www.musicboxtheatre.com>

## Thursday, Jan. 10

**Peer-led Grief and Loss Support Group** Coping with loss is an ongoing process. Peer lead support. Free and open to seniors over 55. No registration required. 12:00pm - 2:00pm

**Silver Fork orientation** Silver Fork is a 9 week culinary arts and job readiness program hosted by Center on Halsted. It is ideal for adults who want to enter or re-enter the hospitality industry and experience a fresh outlook on their career potential. Questions [silverfork@centeronhalsted.org](mailto:silverfork@centeronhalsted.org) 12:00pm - 4:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chi-



## BURN NOTICE

Saturday, Jan. 12

Affinity's Burning Bowl will take place at Morgan Park United Methodist Church.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

cago 773-472-6469 <http://centeronhalsted.org>

**Community Cave** Peer-led Community Group every Thursday for individuals that were Assigned/Designated Female at Birth (A/DFAB) AND ALSO who identify as trans, i.e., as anything other than cisgender. Free. Questions to [communitycavechicago@gmail.com](mailto:communitycavechicago@gmail.com) 6:30pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N

Halsted Chicago <http://www.CommunityCaveChicago.org>

**In Deep: How I Survived Gangs, Heroin, and Prison to Become a Chicago Violence Interrupter** Angalia Bianca, an authority on violence prevention Linda Beckstrom in conversation with Linda Beckstrom 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

**I Know My Own Heart** Inspired by the secret coded diaries of Yorkshire gentlewoman Anne Lister, 'Gentleman Jack'. Through Feb. 10 7:30pm Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway Tickets: <http://web.ovationtix.com>

## Friday, Jan. 11

**El Angel** Wild-child teen teams up with a working-class dandy for a runaway crime spree in this picaresque tale. Through Jan. 17 2:00pm Gene Siskel Film Center 164 N State Chicago <http://www.siskelfilmcenter.org/el-angel>

**Queer Genre Fiction Book Group** Each second Friday 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org>

**Jules Massenet's Cendrillon (Cinderella)** Lyric Opera-produced with with the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Theatre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels and Opera de Lille 7:00pm Lyric Opera Civic Opera House 20 N.Wacker Dr. Chicago <http://www.lyricopera.org>

**TeansWorks Poetry Reading** With Chicago House's TransWorks Mentorship Program and Literature for All of Us. Monthly. 7:00pm - 8:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

**PFLAG DuPage screening The Miseducation of Cameron Post** Movie night will begin with food at at 6:30 p.m. RSVP

[bandr.pflag@gmail.com](mailto:bandr.pflag@gmail.com) 7:30pm St. Paul Lutheran Church, 515 S. Wheaton Avenue, Wheaton <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt6257174/>

**Chicago Leather Women's Cruise** Wear leather, rubber, latex, fetish. All women, butch, femme and non binary welcome. 8:00pm - 10:00pm Starts at Touche, 6412 N. Clark <http://touchechicago.com>

## Saturday, Jan. 12

**Burning Bowl: Resisting with Purpose to Thrive in the New Year** Community "burn" as a symbolic way of leaving things that are no longer serving us so that we can move confidently into the future. Honoring Kim Hunt with the Robbie Smith Award of Excellence. Hosted by Affinity Community Services. 1:00pm - 4:00pm Morgan Park United Methodist Church, 11030 S. Longwood Dr., Chicago <http://www.eventbrite.com>

**Creative Minds Talks with Renee Fleming, Chance the Rapper** Conversation onstage concerning activism, philanthropy, entrepreneurship, and the future of education. Doors open 6 p.m. 7:00pm Lyric Opera Civic Opera House 20 N. Wacker Dr., Chicago <http://creativemindstalks.com>

**Finding Vivian Maier, Dyke Delicious Fim Series** Intriguing documentary goes from New York to France to Chicago with the life story of the late career nanny whose previously unknown cache of 100,000 photographs has earned her a posthumous reputation as one of America's most accomplished and insightful street photographers. 7:00pm Chicago Filmmakers 5243 N Clark Chicago <http://ChicagoFilmmakers.org>

## Sunday, Jan. 13

**A Conversation with Emma Donoghue** Oscar nominated screenwriter to appear in conjunction with U.S. premiere of I Know My Own Heart, 4:30pm Pride Arts Center, Buena Theater, 4147 N Broadway, <http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com>

**Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association Annual Meeting/Brunch** Celebrating 30 Years of Action. Paid members, no cost to you to attend. Join before to avoid paying for membership at the brunch. Reserve at [brunch2019@yahoo.com](mailto:brunch2019@yahoo.com). 12:00pm - 2:00pm Trattoria 225, 225 Harrison, Oak Park <https://opalga.org>

## Monday, Jan. 14

**Gay Fathers of Greater Chicago Network** of gay men who have children living with us or apart from us. Second Monday of each month. Free. Questions to [gfgchi@yahoo.com](mailto:gfgchi@yahoo.com) 7:30pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

## Tuesday, Jan. 15

**Meshell Ndegeocello** Ndegeocello, protest, funk, soul, jazz, hip hop, reggae and rock. Doors 7pm. \$28-\$75 8:00pm Thalia Hall, 1807 South Allport St <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/meshell-ndegeocello-thalia-hall-tickets-52377335019>

**Cathy Richardson VoiceBox** with Cathy Richardson, story and song \$10 8:00pm Fitzgerald's 6615 Roosevelt Rd. Berwyn, IL 60402 <http://www.fitzgeraldsnightclub.com>

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