

WINDY CITY TIMES

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RACE RELATIONS

NU professor talks about 'Infectious Blackness'.

Photo of Dr. Steven Thrasher by George Aye/ Greater Good Studio



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TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Chicagans note special day.

Photo of Caprice Carthans by Matt Simonette

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SHOW TIME

Theaters unveil holiday offerings.

Promo photo of Land of Forgotten Toys from John Olson



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These Heat Holders gloves are just one of the many gift guide suggestions you should warm to this holiday season.
PR photo

PAGES 18-22

WINDY CITY TIMES 2019 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

PART ONE



TOM OF FINLAND
2020



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WINDY CITY TIMES PRINT DATES:

Dec. 11, 2019	March 4, 2020	May 27, 2020
Dec. 25, 2019	March 18, 2020	June 10, 2020
Jan. 8, 2020	April 1, 2020	June 24, 2020
Jan. 22, 2020	April 15, 2020	July 8, 2020
Feb. 5, 2020	April 29, 2020	July 22, 2020
Feb. 19, 2020	May 13, 2020	

online exclusives at
www.WindyCityTimes.com



BUSINESS CLASS

LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois held its inaugural LGBTQ+ Biz Boot Camp pitch competition event. Photo (left) by Carrie Maxwell

BRUNCH LINE



Illinois First Lady MK Pritzker attended Equality Illinois' MOMosa event at Sidetrack. Photo by Joshua Irvine

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

WCT found out about the delightful offerings of Louisville, Kentucky.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Greg Berlanti, Victoria's Secret and Lizzo.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS



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16 Audi Q3 2.0T AWD Prestige/Navit.....Leather, Sunroof, Black, 22181A\$20,995	'18 Forester Prem.Automatic, Sunroof, Heated Seats, Blue, P6436\$19,995
17 Honda CR-V LX AWDAutomatic, Full Power, White, 22898A\$19,995	'18 Forester 2.5iAutomatic, Full Power, Silver, P6374\$19,795
16 Toyota RAV-4 LE AWDAutomatic, Full Power, Black, P6380\$18,995	'16 Forester Ltd.Auto., Sunroof, Leather, 26K, Red, P6414\$18,995
16 Honda CR-V SE AWDAutomatic, Full Power, Silver, P6379\$17,995	SUBARU OUTBACKS / LEGACY
15 Acura RDX Tech/Navit.....Leather, Sunroof, Kona Coffee, 23315A\$17,995	'18 Outback Prem.Auto., Alloys, Eyesight, Grey, P6418\$22,995
14 Toyota RAV-4 XLE AWDAutomatic, Sunroof, Blue, 6420A\$16,995	'17 Outback 2.5iAuto., Alloys, Heated Seats, Silver, P6422\$20,995
12 Audi Q5 3.2T AWD Prem.Plus/Navit.....Leather, Sunroof, 223367A\$15,995	'15 Outback Ltd.Auto., Leather, Sunroof, Alloys, Silver, 23444A\$18,995
16 Chevy Chevy Trax LTAutomatic, Full Power, P6400A\$14,995	'17 Legacy Prem.Automatic, Heated Seats, White, P6409\$17,995
18 Toyota Corolla LEAutomatic, Full Power, Grey, P6288\$13,995	'16 Outback 2.5iAuto., Alloys, Heated Seats, White, 23312A\$15,995
18 Hyundai Elantra SELAutomatic, Full Power, Silver, P6286\$13,995	'14 Outback Prem.Auto., Alloys, Eyesight, Silver, P4891\$15,995
16 Honda Fit LXAutomatic, Hatchback, Yellow, P6399A\$11,995	SUBARU CROSSTREK / IMPREZA
14 Toyota Camry LEAutomatic, Full Power, Black, 23397A\$10,995	'16 Crosstrek Prem.Automatic, Heated Seats, White, 23030A\$18,995
08 Hyundai Sante Fe Ltd.Automatic, Sunroof, Leather, Grey, 223210A\$7,995	'14 Impreza Sport LtdAutomatic, Leather, Sunroof, Silver, P6280A\$14,995
09 Honda CR-V LX AWDAutomatic, Full Power, Blue, 23175A\$7,995	



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ELECTIONS 2020

Kina Collins fundraiser highlights Transgender Awareness Week

BY TIM PEACOCK

On Nov. 14, LGBTQ leaders and allies joined Kina Collins at the “LGBTQ+ All in for Kina!” party held at Cantina Laredo in downtown Chicago. The event was a part of Collins’ campaign for the 7th District Congressional in the primary election to be held early next year where she will face off against incumbent U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis.



America Powers and Kina Collins at Collins' fundraiser.

Photo by Tim Peacock

During the event Collins highlighted Transgender Awareness Week while tying in her work on adequate access to health care.

Referring to the first piece of legislation she ever wrote, HB 5544 (The IL Council on Women & Girls Act), Collins spoke of the trouble she had in getting—and keeping—language protecting transgender women into the final legislation. Both Republican and Democratic legislators attempted to remove transgender language from the bill at various points in the process.

“We do not subscribe to a politics of leaving people behind,” Collins said.

Speaking with Windy City Times, Collins offered a road map of what she’d do if elected. Part of her platform is “making sure doctors are culturally competent to the needs of the trans community and that they’re not discriminating against patients,” she said, adding, “It’s also about giving them access to the healthcare they need.”

The “LGBTQ+ All in for Kina!” event also featured entertainment by drag queen America Powers as well as endorsements from 3rd District

Congressional candidate Marie Newman (who is challenging Dan Lipinski in the 2020 primary) and nationally recognized transgender advocate Channyn Lynne Parker.

“From the moment I met her, Kina has not made exclusivity a catchphrase,” Parker said.

“There are certain individuals among us who act as defenders of the arc of justice that Dr. King once spoke of,” Parker added. “Kina Collins is a defender of that arc.”

To learn more about the Collins campaign, visit KinaForCongress.com.

ELECTIONS 2020

Pizer announces 12th District House run

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Lake View-based realtor and developer Jonathan “Yoni” Pizer, who has also been the LGBT community liaison for U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-5) for several years, announced Nov. 20 that he will be running for to occupy the seat that will likely be vacated by 12th District state Rep. Sara Feigenholtz.

Feigenholtz, a longtime ally to the Chicago LGBT community, has indicated she will be running to replace Illinois Senate President John Cullerton, who is retiring in January.

“It’s an incredible opportunity to continue the fine work that Sara has done representing the district in Springfield,” Pizer said. “She has been a leader of the Jewish Caucus and very active on LGBT issues, and I just feel that I am uniquely qualified to represent the district in those areas.”

“I’ve got a long history of political activism in LGBTQ issues, Jewish issues and [other] progressive causes. I also feel like my experiences in both fundraising and government, as well as a small-business owner, are really important and make me uniquely qualified to really hit the ground running and continue to perform the effective leadership we’ve come to expect in the district.”

Pizer will be up against Ryan Podges and Marty Malone, who had had already also entered the race for the 12th District seat.

Pizer—a native of Madison, Wisconsin—is vice-president of his husband Brad Lippitz’s Lake View real estate agency, and the couple have two sons. They’ve long been active in raising funds for local, state and national politicians.

While Illinois has strong LGBT-rights protections in place, Pizer promised that he would “fight like hell to make sure that, with all the gains we’ve achieved through Sara’s leadership—and others’ leadership in Springfield—we don’t take any steps back.”

He added that transgender and nonbinary IL-



Jonathan Pizer.

Photo courtesy of Pizer

linoisans especially need their elected officials’ “support and, quite frankly, protections.” He further noted, “Our elder LGBTQ citizens need support when it comes to healthcare and housing. I’m also a strong believer in PrEP and PEP, and

we need to make sure that they are readily accessible and affordable. I would immediately support [efforts] to make sure that we pass a bill to make sure that we make PrEP and PEP over the counter and affordable.”

Pizer further emphasized that he was concerned about HIV-transmission rates in communities of color, and said that LGBT youth experiencing homelessness would be also key issue for him.

“It’s a historic time in state government,” Pizer added. “We need somebody who’s going to be part of the solution and is going to make a difference to restore confidence and faith in our government—and let people know that people are in it for the right reasons.”

Caucus launches The Prosperity Project

Chicago Black Gay Men’s Caucus has launched The Prosperity Project—a three-year campaign to eliminate HIV among Black gay, bisexual and same-gender-loving men in Chicagoland.

The caucus is asking our Black SGL men about their strengths, weaknesses and needs. The organization is asking individuals for their stories, via a survey.

The survey is at <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5079303/CBGMCLong>. For more information, visit brandonw@chiblackgaycaucus.org.

Local AVER chapter hosts Veterans’ Day dinner

Tatyana Moaton, a former U.S. Army intelligence analyst, was the keynote speaker at the The American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) Chicago chapter’s 27th annual LGBTQ Veterans Day Dinner held at Ann Sather restaurant on Belmont.

Moaton was formerly with Howard Brown Center. She is now senior capacity building specialist at San Francisco Community Health Center. She spoke of her time in the military and her advocacy work as an openly transgender veteran.

Heather Yang, president of The AVER Chicago chapter, and Ben Saucedo, the chapter’s treasurer/vice president, welcomed the group and kicked off the evening.

The Happy Warrior Award was presented to Moaton by Yang and Saucedo. The evening closed with all standing for a performance of “America the Beautiful,” sung by Dean Ogren.



The Happy Warrior Award is presented to speaker Tatyana Moaton, center, by Ben Saucedo and Heather Yang.

Photo by Hal Baim

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NU professor talks about delving into the heart of 'Infectious Blackness'

BY ANDREW DAVIS

The tale of Michael Johnson took a turn this past July—when he released from a Missouri jail 25 years early.

In 2013, Johnson—a Black man who was a college student—was arrested in St. Charles, Missouri, on charges he had knowingly infected or exposed multiple men to HIV. He was eventually sentenced to 30 years in prison (without direct evidence he transmitted the virus to the men, who were mostly white) before his sentence was overturned.

On Dec. 3, Steven W. Thrasher, Ph.D., will present “Infectious Blackness”—a culmination of his years of coverage of Johnson’s case, pairing it with his firsthand reporting on the killing of Michael Brown in nearby Ferguson for the Guardian. Thrasher (the inaugural Daniel H. Renberg chair of social justice in reporting at Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism) discussed elements of his upcoming talk.

Windy City Times: What attracted you to the case of Michael Johnson? Was it the legal, medical, moral or philosophical aspect—or was there something else?

Steven Thrasher: Oh, it was race. It was given to me by an editor who has been a lifelong mentor, Mark Schoofs; he’s written about HIV/AIDS before there was truly an understanding of it or name for it. He knew I had a history of writing about the intersection of race and sexuality. He’d seen these salacious headlines about “Tiger Mandingo” [a nickname Johnson used], and realized no one had talked with or interviewed him.

When I saw what the case was about, it terrified me. But what drew me was that he was Black and the history of anti-miscegenation laws (I’m mixed-race)—and Mark and I were correct in deducing that the bulk of his accusers were white. But it was thinking through the history of lynching and the history of criminalized Black male sexuality that drew me in; I knew nothing about HIV criminalization, initially.

WCT: What one part of the case boggled your mind more than anything else?

ST: Well, the first conundrum for me was that there were no charges of rape or sexual assault; it was consensual sex. If everyone is consenting to sex without a condom, or being bareback, isn’t a risk of HIV part of what happens—and why is that risk [the responsibility of] one party? That



Dr. Steven Thrasher.

Photo by George Aye/Greater Good Studio

was the first thing that struck me.

WCT: What I couldn’t understand is that there was no genetic connection established by the prosecution.

ST: Yeah. They never connected the RNA—and the sentence was longer than the average sentence for second-degree murder in Missouri. If you’re talking about something in the domain of murder, the first thing you’d get is a [genetic] test. I found that shocking as well. But, also, there are limits to that technology; people could have the same strain regardless if they had sex with each other. The prosecutor said it was worse than a murder, in his mind, so it was weird they didn’t pursue that.

WCT: And in the BuzzFeed article you wrote, “Tiger Mandingo,” you noted that the original prosecutor [Timothy Lohmar] is now an ally of a bill to modernize HIV laws.

ST: Yeah, he is. That’s one of the most concrete examples of the effect our series had. He described himself as being embarrassed by the trial. I don’t fully agree with where he’s going, but I think it’s significant that it’s the direction he even wants to go in—especially since he’s now the president of the Missouri Association of Prosecuting Attorneys. In that capacity, he’s also trying to get this group to modernize the laws.

If his mind can be changed about this, anyone’s mind can.

WCT: I agree. I saw on the CDC website that “in 19 states, laws require people who are aware that they have HIV to disclose their status to sexual partners.” I’m pretty sure I know

your answer to this, but what direction would you like to see the laws go?

ST: The number of states is actually hard to pin down, because some are HIV-specific and many are not. When I first started the story, it was 30 states, and a number had modernized since then. But a majority of these states and about 70 countries have some version of these laws.

I’d love to see zero states have this law. There’s nothing good about criminalizing HIV. I think, in the ‘80s, there was an idea that criminalizing transmission was a matter of public health. It certainly made no sense after HIV became a manageable condition. But my research shows that the laws are harmful to public health; they make it less likely that people will get tested. A majority of transmissions involve people who don’t know their status, so we need to find ways to have more people know their status and give them the medication they need immediately—not just for their health but for others as well.

WCT: You’ve had a chance to talk with Michael Johnson? How is he doing?

ST: Yes; it’s my most complicated but intimate and longstanding source relationship.

He’s doing relatively well; we’re in touch mostly by text. I was with him the first 24 hours after he got out, and we talk by phone sometimes. He has a relentlessly optimistic attitude, and he always has. I feel sad that he basically lost his 20s, but he was really optimistic about getting out. I keep an eye on him, and I also connect with him on social media. He’s doing activist work, and he’s involved with people in the criminalization modernization movement. It’s exciting to see him get involved with that.

He’s also working on getting his college degree since he never graduated. He’s also been getting physically active again.

WCT: In your talk, you’re pairing Johnson’s case with the killing of Michael Brown. What are the threads that tie those two?

ST: Johnson was arrested in October 2013. In February 2014, my BuzzFeed editor asked me to meet him to talk about this case. It took place in St. Louis, which I’d never really been to, and I was there in 2014. I started a job with The Guardian at that time, and Michael Brown was killed in August 2014. An editor heard that I was in St. Louis, and that I had been working on a story for months about race, so I was sent to Ferguson.

I called the same HIV experts I had worked with for the Johnson story, and asked them what I should be looking for. They said they had recently been nearby because Ferguson has a high rate of HIV [infection]. So I started seeing how Michael Brown’s death and the Black Lives Matter movement connected with Johnson [as well as] policing and systemic racism. I started seeing a pattern: two young men who were both affected—one fatally—by the policing of Black America. It’s no accident that these two cases happened in one area.

Steven W. Thrasher, Ph.D., will speak on “Infectious Blackness: Race, Media, and the Criminalization of HIV/AIDS” Tuesday, Dec. 3, 12-1 p.m., at Stonewall Conference Rooms, 625 N. Michigan Ave. People can attend in person or via videoconference, using BlueJeans. For more information, visit ThirdCoastCFAR.org/events/steven-thrasher-phd.

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World AIDS Day events happening in Chicagoland

This year, there will be various events taking place to mark World AIDS Day. Below is a list of some events taking place to note this special time. (All events are in Chicago unless otherwise indicated.):

—“PARAGON 9: Liberation Ball—A Chicago Center for HIV Elimination World AIDS Day Event” will take place Saturday, Nov. 30, 6-11 p.m., at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, 915 E. 60th St. Courtesy of Mario Balenciaga and University of Chicago CCH, the event is free; however, aerosols, sprays, glitter and paint will not be allowed in the venue. See ThirdCoastCFAR.org/events/paragon-9-liberation-ball, or RSVP at “Paragon 9: Liberation Ball (Free Admission and Food)” on Facebook.

—“STRUT: Annual World AIDS Day Fashion Show 2019” will take place Sunday, Dec. 1, 4:30-8 p.m., at Moe’s Cantina River North, 155 W. Kinzie St. The event will feature 15 designers and boutiques from Chicago, New York City, The Art Institute of Chicago and Columbia Fashion College. For tickets, call John at 773-779-2399.

—Also on Dec. 1, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., will have a panel of the AIDS Quilt displayed in its lobby, walk-in testing at 9:15 a.m.-4 p.m. and red ribbons for visitors as well as written information about U=U (HIV Undetectable=Untransmittable), testing, Getting to Zero and PrEP in the lobbies.

—On Dec. 1, Drew’s on Halsted, 3201 N. Halsted St., at 7-10 p.m., will host a World AIDS Day event/TPAN fundraiser with Melissa Young and Nick Sulin. Special guests will include Nathan Cooper, Russ Goeltenbodt and Chicago cabaret star Denise Tomasello. There is a \$15 cover per person, with a \$15 food/drink minimum. RSVP at 773-244-9191.

—On Dec. 1, St. Mark AME Zion Church, 4200 Alder St. (in East Chicago, Indiana) will host a World AIDS Day worship service at 10 a.m. The theme is “Communities Make the Difference.” See GaryAlumnaeChapterDST.org/event/world-aids-day-worship-2019/.

—The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) will present “2019 World AIDS Day: A Celebration of Communities and Collaboration” Monday, Dec. 2, 5-8 p.m., at Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago Public Library, 400 S. State St. The event is free, with refreshments, music and special awards. Also, CPDH will reveal more about its work and unveil its surveillance report. See <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2019-world-aids-day-a-celebration-of-communities-and-collaboration-tickets-79804135317>.

—On Monday, Dec. 2, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., to mark World AIDS Day and this year’s theme of community engagement, each school at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) will be hosting tables with resources and handouts, posters to decorate and ribbons for sale at the School of Public Health & Psychiatric Institute, 1603 W. Taylor St. Proceeds will go to support the UIC Community Clinic Network HIV Clinics in its efforts to improve awareness, testing and treatment. Contact



Model at last year's STRUT.

Photo by Brooke Nagler

Chelsea Peters at 312-355-3219 and chelseap@uic.edu, or visit PublicHealth.UIC.edu/events/world-aids-day-awareness-and-film-screening.

—At the University of Illinois’ Krannert Center, 500 S. Goodwin Ave., Urbana, at 9 a.m., Visual AIDS will commemorate the 30th anniversary of Day With(out) Art with seven newly commissioned videos by Shanti Avirgan, Nguyen Tan Hoang, Carl George, Viva Ruiz, Iman Shervington, Jack Waters and former Windy City Times 30 Under 30 honoree Derrick Woods-Morrow. These artists will consider the continuing presence of HIV/AIDS in the contemporary moment while revisiting resonant cultural histories of art and activism from the past three decades.

—On Tuesday, Dec. 3, Alexian Brothers Housing and Health Alliance will host “Bonaventure House Presents World AIDS Day” at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., 7-8:30 p.m. There will be a showcase of storytelling, music and poetry. See “Bonaventure House Presents World AIDS Day” on Facebook.

—Care2Prevent (at University of Chicago), 5837 S. Maryland Ave., will host an event Tuesday, Dec. 3, 4:30-7:30 p.m. There will be free HIV/STI testing, sexual health workshops, activities, raffle prizes and snacks. See Care2Prevent.com.

—AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) will host a free concert Wed., Dec. 4, 6-9 p.m., at The Bracket Room, 1315 S. Halsted St. Visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ahf-world-aids-day-chicago-tickets-79799397145>.

—The World of Chocolate World AIDS Day event will take place Thursday, Dec. 5, 6-9 p.m., at Revel Fulton Market, 1215 W. Fulton Market. Participating chocolatiers will include Cafe des Architectes, LondonHouse, Proxi and Sepia, The Gwen Hotel and Terry’s Toffees, among others. Admission starts at \$145 each; visit <https://chocolate.aidschicago.org/>.

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- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
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HRC plots course at 2019 Chicago gala

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, U.S. Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-Illinois) and actor Theo Germaine were among those headlining the Human Rights Campaign's (HRC's) annual gala Nov. 16 at the Fairmont Hotel.

The sold-out event also featured remarks from the national organization's newly installed president, Alphonso David, who outlined new social-justice and LGBT advocacy initiatives HRC will undertake in the year ahead.

David read the names of the known transgender and gender nonconforming individuals who have

been murdered this year, noting that the safety and liberty of transgender persons—especially those who are persons of color—are especially fraught in current times. He noted, "For Black transgender women who are living in crisis: Their crisis must become our crisis."

To that end, David added, the organization has formed an initiative focused of justice for members of the transgender community. HRC will additionally participate in voters' registration initiatives, among myriad other activities.

"At the end of the day, our liberties are only as strong as the communities who fight to protect them," David noted. "...the letters 'LGBTQ' are

more than just a label."

Lightfoot praised HRC for its continuing advocacy on behalf of the LGBT community. She also emphasized the importance of advocacy on behalf of transgender Americans.

"These are more than issues of just acceptance," the mayor said. "These are issues of life and death. ... We must fight and speak out loudly when we see hate."

Lightfoot also had a message for the U.S. president: "So Donald J., if you're listening, we're coming for you." She further promised, "Chicago will be a beacon of light."

In her keynote address, Underwood, who is a nurse, affirmed her commitment to the LGBT community and discussed her work on healthcare issues. Particularly problematic in the current political climate, she added, are proposals simultaneously disassembling the Affordable Care Act's anti-discrimination provisions and buttressing legal defenses for healthcare personnel discriminating against LGBT patients and customers.

"Nobody should be forced to face discrimination at the doctors office," Underwood said. "... These historical legal protections are under attack."

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker also sent a video message expressing his support for HRC's mission.

In their address to the crowd, Germaine, an Illinois native who is non-binary, reflected on how lucky they felt to find work both on the Netflix series *The Politician* and the Showtime series *Work in Progress*. Germaine said that, as they waited for a career break, they were unstably housed and faced numerous financial hardships. Germaine iterated a commitment to help improve the situations of transgender and non-binary persons, especially persons of color.

"Our social habit must be to pause to lift people up when the opportunity arises," Germaine said.

Kim Hunt, executive director of the Chicago-based Pride Action Tank advocacy, reflected on her life in activism as she accepted HRC's Community Leadership Award. Hunt emphasized both



Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot at the HRC Chicago gala.

Photo by Kat Fitzgerald/Mystic Images Photography

that effective social progress is most effectively deployed when persons commit to making even "bite-sized" changes that will be effective in the aggregate, and that a multiplicity of voices and ages are needed in the progressive movement.

"Don't wait for others," Hunt said. "Find your thing and do something."

Dane Hites, a technology solutions analyst for the commercial real estate brokerage Cushman & Wakefield, was honored with HRC's Corporate Champion for Equality Award for his work in establishing UNITY C&W, his firm's LGBT employee resource group.



New national Human Rights Campaign President Alphonso David at the HRC Chicago gala.

Photo by Kat Fitzgerald/Mystic Images Photography

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Chicagoans mark Transgender Day of Remembrance

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Members of Chicago's transgender community, as well as their allies, gathered at West Point Missionary Baptist Church on the city's South Side the evening of Nov. 20 to observe the Transgender Day of Remembrance.

This particular occasion was significant, noted host LaSaia Wade, because it was the first time that such an occasion was held on the South Side. Many participants additionally noted that it marked the first time in ages that they'd set foot in a church, a space in which transgender



LaSaia Wade.

Photo by Matt Simonette

and non-binary folks are often made to feel uncomfortable.

As such, West Point Baptist's Rev. L. Bernard Jakes, spoke about his church's commitment to supporting the LGBT community, noting that other related events had been held there. "Consider this place your home," he said.

An important component of the Transgender Day of Remembrance is remembering the transgender individuals who've been lost in what amounts to an epidemic of violence against the communities. The Nov. 20 event closed with the readings of the names of the individuals who'd been lost to date in 2019. But organizers also stressed the importance of remembering the accomplishments of trans persons who've worked diligently in service to the community; seven such individuals were so honored at the event, and presented with plaques from Mayor Lori Lightfoot.

Wade said, "We wanted to let some people know that we see you."

Among those honored were Wade and activists Caprice Carthans, Tatyana Moaton, LaToya Tinch, Channyn Lynne Parker, Reyna Ortiz and Courtney McKinney. Antonio King of Chicago Department of Public Health presented the awards.

Carthans and Moaton each gave speeches about their experiences and transgender rights, as did Angelina Nordstrom. Nearly all the participants stressed the importance of transgender and nonbinary folks being able and unafraid to advocate for themselves. In her remarks, Carthans emphasized, "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu," later adding that everyone in the community must "show up where the space [for trans people] is."

AIDS Garden to unveil Haring sculpture

On Nov. 14, the Chicago Parks Foundation announced that the first phase of the new AIDS Garden Chicago will be complete this fall with the unveiling of a specially commissioned 30-foot-high sculpture, "Self-Portrait," by the late HIV/AIDS activist and artist Keith Haring.

The precise installation date will be announced. However, the sculpture has been hoisted into place.

AIDS Garden Chicago is the city's first public monument to memorialize the early days of Chicago's HIV epidemic and to honor those who continue to fight against the disease today. The new public lakefront garden is located along Lake Michigan just south of Belmont Harbor, at the original site of the Belmont Rocks—a space where the local gay community gathered between the 1960s and 1990s.



Haring sculpture at AIDS Garden Chicago.

Photo by Owen Keehnen

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viewpoints



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MOMBIAN

Childhood stories of LGBTQ, other social justice activists

Every social justice hero was once a child. Some became activists as children; others did so as adults because of things they experienced when they were young. A new middle-grade book from the prolific Robin Stevenson explores the childhoods of activists in the LGBTQ, racial, disability, labor, immigrant, and women's civil rights' movements, among other areas, offering young readers both information and inspiration.

Kid Activists: True Tales of Childhood from Champions of Change (Quirk Books) includes biographical sketches of 16 diverse activists, focusing on how their early years influenced their commitment to social justice. Stevenson is smart to blend heroes of the past (Frederick Douglass, Alexander Hamilton) with more contemporary figures (Malala Yousafzai, Janet Mock), giving readers both a sense of the long, rich history of activism and a way to find current resonance. In accessible but never patronizing prose, she sketches the stories of her subjects' childhoods, deftly setting the scene for each one and providing informative details, engaging quotes, and sometimes humorous anecdotes. (Did you know that Martin Luther King Jr., once played a practical joke on his piano teacher? Or that when water protector Autumn Peltier was invited by email to speak at the U.N., her mother thought it was a scam and almost deleted the message?) At the same time, Stevenson does not shy away from mentioning the challenges they encountered. In fact, her exploration of their many early failures is one of the great strengths of the book, and should give young readers confidence that they, too, can fail and then succeed. She also notes when some of her subjects were victims of violence or assassination, but avoids graphic detail.

At the end of each of the 16 main profiles is a page noting one or more additional people connected to the primary figures in some way, or who were active



in the same social justice movements. After Harvey Milk's profile, for example, we read briefly about lesbian activists Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, who had helped pave the way for Milk and the later LGBTQ rights movement. After reading about Dolores Huerta's childhood, we learn a bit about Cesar Chavez, her partner in starting the United Farm Workers. Much as I would have loved to read full profiles of all these figures, I understand that the economics of publishing (and attention spans of younger readers) necessitate some picking and choosing. Nevertheless, Stevenson has done a wonderful job of making her main profiles engaging and informative while also whetting readers' appetites to know more. Cartoon illustrations by Allison Steinfeld enliven the pages, but this is not a picture book. The biographies are thoughtful and feel substantial for their length. That's not an easy trick, but Stevenson pulls

it off. Even adults will likely find themselves learning something.

If Stevenson's name sounds familiar, that's not surprising. A queer mom herself, who lives in British Columbia with her partner and their son, she's the author of numerous books for all ages, including *Pride Colors*, a board book for tots; *Pride: Celebrating Diversity and Community*, a middle-grade book that blends a history of the event with a broader look at LGBTQ identities and the struggle for LGBTQ equality; *My Body My Choice: The Fight for Abortion Rights*, which gives teens a look at the past, present, and future of the movement; and *Ghost's Journey: A Refugee Story*, a brand-new elementary grade picture book about two gay refugees and their cat.

Stevenson's latest book is part of the publisher's Kid Legends series, which also includes books about the childhoods of famous artists, athletes, authors, scientists and U.S. presidents. They may be on to something. Another children's publication, *Kazoo* magazine (coincidentally founded by another queer mom), offers advice, ideas, and inspiration from outstanding women in STEM, the arts, politics and other fields. Instead of depicting them as grownups, dispensing advice from on high, *Kazoo* shows images of them as children, so readers can more easily see themselves in these role models. Rather than giving children the message that people must be adults to make a difference in the world, Stevenson and *Kazoo* are each reminding them that every famous person started out as a child. Some became famous as children; others used the experiences from their childhoods to guide them later in life. Either way, it's an empowering approach. *Kid Activists*, with a focus on people who fought (and in some cases, are still fighting) for social justice, should find many fans—and just might inspire a few new “champions of change.” Seems like our world could use all it can get right about now.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (Mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.

**Send columns or letters to Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com.
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MANAGING EDITOR Matt Simonette

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212-242-6863

THEATER AND DANCE EDITOR Catey Sullivan

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WEB HOSTING LoveYourWebsite.com (lead

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PRESIDENT Tracy Baim

(773) 871-7610 FAX (773) 871-7609

Editorial: andrew@windycitymediagroup.com

Sales: terri@windycitymediagroup.com

Calendar: calendar@windycitymediagroup.com

Circulation: jean@windycitymediagroup.com

Art/ad copy: kirk@windycitymediagroup.com

Theater: cateysullivan25@gmail.com

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Arienne Mandi in *The L-Word: Generation Q*.
Photo by Hilary Bronwyn Gayle/Showtime

THE L-WORD: GENERATION Q

AIMS FOR SEX,
LAUGHS, DRAMA
AND DIVERSITY

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THEATER REVIEW

The First Deep Breath

Playwright: Lee Edward Colston II
 At: Victory Gardens Theatre at the Biograph, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.
 Tickets: VictoryGardens.org and 773-871-3000; \$31-\$65
 Runs through: Dec. 22

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Don't begrudge Lee Edward Colston II his play's running time—three acts of one hour, each separated by an intermission. As August: Osage County recently demonstrated, some stories require extensive time and space to be told fully, and Colston is nothing if not thorough in his effort to ensure that all questions are answered and all arguments explored before we decide what path our author means us to follow.

In the first 10 minutes, we are informed by the Rev. Albert Melvin Jones III, pastor of Philadelphia's Mother Bethel Baptist Church, that the next year marks the sixth anniversary of his beloved daughter Diane's untimely death, that his loyal wife Ruth is gradually succumbing to Alzheimer's disease, and that his elder son Abdul-Malik (formerly Albert Melvin Jones IV) is to be released after serving a six-year prison sentence for the crime of sexual assault. If the clergyman hoping to expand his ministry is uneasy at the trials that beset his claim to leadership, though, his kindred—matronly Aunt Pearl, teenage son AJ and neighboring bestie Tyree, twin daughter Denise and her fiance Leslie—likewise chafe un-

Clinton Lowe, David Alan Anderson, Melanie Loren in *The First Deep Breath*.
 Photo by Liz Lauren



der the secrecy necessary to maintain the appearance of perfection demanded by the unforgiving clan patriarch.

Such quandaries are rarely resolved quickly. As of opening night, Colston was reported to still be making changes to his script, as any playwright might, but this world premiere performance nevertheless revealed a multiplicity of parables addressing diverse social problems current today, examined in language encompassing proverbs so articulate, they should be stitched on framed samplers ("Before you meet bravery, you must first shake hands with fear") as well as romantic declarations poetic enough to pair with roses and engraved stationery.

It's not just sermonizing, however: The characters' progress includes scenes of music (vocal, instrumental and terpsichoral), simulated sex (gay and het) and two grand operatic full-cast melees

leaving the stage furnishings in shambles. In a crisis where even the dead (whose ashes command a formal shrine within the household decor) are held to account, only through acknowledgement of responsibility can the contagion afflicting the filial community be lifted and a lasting peace accomplished.

The complexity involved in deploying eight performers over a three-level interior could easily reduce traffic patterns to slapstick chaos, but director Steve H. Broadnax III and an array of astute designers have familiarized the cast with the infrastructure of their dramatic environment to render them aware of every staircase, door-latch and impediment (a Norman Rockwell Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings, for example) concealing potential to upset the equilibrium of actors less physically and mentally agile than those assembled for this noteworthy production.

OPERA REVIEW

Don Giovanni

Score: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart; Libretto: Lorenzo Da Ponte
 At: Lyric Opera of Chicago, 20 N. Wacker Dr.
 Tickets: 312-827-5600 or LyricOpera.org; \$39-\$299
 Runs through Dec. 8

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

When opera companies revive old productions, the original director typically doesn't return to work with the new cast or conductor. But the Lyric Opera of Chicago has bucked that trend twice so far this season.

Leonard Foglia powerfully restaged his 2002 production of *Dead Man Walking* for its Lyric premiere. And now Tony Award-winner and Goodman Theatre artistic director Robert Falls revisits his 2014 take on *Don Giovanni*.

Mozart and Da Ponte's 1787 masterpiece is about a serial seducer nobleman who gets gets a supernatural comeuppance. It holds a special place with the Lyric as the company's first-ever production in 1954, and Falls' updated 1920s-era version was created for the Lyric's 60th anniversary.

Five years on, Falls' dark jazz-age approach still makes for a dramatic and thoughtful production—especially when placed in its historical context marking the waning influence of an

Lucas Meachem in *Don Giovanni*.
 Photo courtesy of Kyle Flubacker



corrupted aristocrat before the cataclysm of the Spanish Civil War. Conductor James Gaffigan leads the Lyric Orchestra in a fleet reading of Mozart's score to bring the drama to the fore.

U.S. baritone Lucas Meachem brought a cocky jock swagger to the title libertine, thanks to his powerful voice and hulking physique. This is a *Don Giovanni* who revels in swanky clothes and cocaine when he's not involved in kinky sexual entrapments. (Italian baritone Davide Luciano takes over the role in December.)

Meachem worked well with British bass Matthew Rose as Leporello, the flunky manservant who both reviles and reveres his boss. There's also a great frisson in Meachem's scenes with the conflicted Donna Elvira of American soprano Amanda Majeski (her character wants revenge on and/or to be reunited with her ex).

There's more lovely singing from the other romantic couples. American soprano Rachel Willis-Sørensen brings an aching nobility to the mourning Donna Anna, while American tenor Ben Bliss was solid as her stalwart suitor Don Ottavio.

The jealous squabbling and sweet reconciliations between the peasant newlyweds of Zerlina (Chinese soprano Ying Fang) and Masetto (American bass-baritone Brandon Cedel) were also lots of fun.

This is a very respectable revival, even with some early-on staging sloppiness on opening night.

The post-sexual assault struggles between Donna Anna and the "in-disguise" *Don Giovanni* were confusing and not in the moment. Then *Don Giovanni*'s deadly fight with her father, The Commendatore (the vocally booming Finnish bass Mika Kares), felt far too careful. (Thankfully, fight director Nick Sandys' later work in the production was far more convincing.)

On the whole, the Lyric's *Don Giovanni* still holds up as a sleek and stylish production. Now's your chance to see it if you missed it the first time around.

THEATER REVIEW

Lindiwe

Playwright: Eric Simonson;
 music by Ladysmith Black Mambazo
 At: Steppenwolf Theatre Company,
 1650 N. Halsted St.
 Tickets: 312-335-1650; Steppenwolf.org;
 \$20-\$114
 Runs through: Jan. 5

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

There are hints early on that one of the lovers—Lindiwe and Adam—is dead, confirmed in Act II when one realizes this world premiere is an ornate retelling of Orpheus and Eurydice, with roles reversed: it's Eurydice who sings so sweetly she charms Death. No wonder Ladysmith Black Mambazo is there, definitely a Greek chorus commenting on the action and participating in it. No wonder, too, that Collette Pollard's massive set is a temple of the arts; an old, crumbling proscenium arch theater (it would be perfect for Sondheim's *Follies*). This is an ancient tale, after all, of artists and the power of art.

Of course, writer Eric Simonson (also co-director with Jonathan Berry) has modernized the myth, setting it in present day Chicago and Durban, South Africa, the home of Ladysmith Black Mambazo (LBM) and fictional Lindiwe (Nondumiso Tembe), who sings with them as they tour the USA. In Chicago they visit the Kingston Mines blues club, where Lindiwe and drummer Adam (Erick Hellman) fall instantly in love. Soon they cross oceans for each other, Lindiwe spending four months in Chicago and Adam joining her in Durban, where Lindiwe's musical career soars. Yeah, there's a touch of *A Star is Born*, too. Alas, one of the dark gods is jealous: Lindiwe reminds the Keeper (Yasen Peyankov) of his own lost love.

Rare for theater these days, Lindiwe offers a mostly positive spin on life despite the presence of death and lovers' quarrels. Tembe, as Lindiwe, entrances with a killer smile, big eyes, a bigger voice and warmth. You wanna' hug her. As Adam, actor and drummer Hellman has boyish charm (although he's not a boy) and confidence; he's cool without being arrogant. As for Ladysmith Black Mambazo, these winners of five Grammy Awards could make the phone book sound gloriously rich, naturally musical and effortlessly smooth. They could sing songs of violence and make them sound just as smooth and soothing, but they don't. Music is as natural as breath to these nine gentlemen. Chicago veterans Cedric Young and Jennifer Engstrom capably complete the cast in supporting roles.

Like cotton candy, Lindiwe is sweet but melts away quickly. You'll enjoy familiar blues tunes "Sweet Home Chicago" and "Caledonia," and you'll want to take home LBM home; however, the show's message and even its dramatic conflict are slight, making the production's intermission unnecessary. Lindiwe and Adam are a Black/white couple, but that's neither the story nor message. And Ladysmith Black Mambazo is in a supporting role. Indeed, you may be disappointed that they sing mostly snatches of songs rather than complete numbers.

CRITICS' PICKS

Every Holiday Show Ever!: Your favorite theater and/or neighborhood troupe probably is doing a money making holiday show. It's treacle and shameless commerce, but don't be a Scrooge/Grinch and go see one! Most (not all) are kid friendly. *JA*

Sunset Boulevard, Porchlight Music Theatre, through Dec. 8: You can love or hate composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, but this classic story is strong and ya' gotta' love Hollis Resnik pouring heart into desperate, dangerous, deranged Norma Desmond. *JA*

Laura and the Sea, Rivendell Theatre, through Dec. 8: When a co-worker offs herself at the company picnic, the office memorial blog rivals Rashomon in its contradictory versions of what happened. You think anyone will change their ways? *MSB*

P.Y.G., Jackalope Theatre, through Dec. 21: When a bubblegum rocker hires rappers to teach him black hip-hop style, the resulting cultural appropriation cuts both ways in Tearrance Arvelle Chisolm's raucous new satire, energetically staged by Lili-Anne Brown. *JA*

—By *Mary Shen Barnidge*
and *Jonathan Abarbanel*

THEATER REVIEW

The Inheritance (Part One & Part Two)

By: **Matthew Lopez**

At: **Ethel Barrymore Theatre,**
243 W. 47th St., New York

Tickets: 800-447-7400 or

TheInheritancePlay.com; \$39-\$349 per play

Runs through: **March 1**

BY **SCOTT C. MORGAN**

Can gay writers born an ocean and nearly a century apart inspire and learn from each other? U.S. playwright Matthew Lopez passionately thinks so, and his two-part stage drama *The Inheritance* is an ambitious affirmation.

Lopez's gay opus recently opened on Broadway following its triumphant 2018 world-premiere run in London, scooping up multiple Best Play awards along the way. By taking the 1910 novel "Howards End" by closeted British writer E.M. Forster (1879-1970) as his inspiration, Lopez crafts *The Inheritance* into an expansive retelling of recent gay American history.

Lopez even conjures up Forster himself in the play as a storytelling guide named "Morgan" in *The Inheritance*. Morgan (Forster's middle name) provides encouragement to Lopez's modern gay American characters, who each are tested by the ongoing fallout of the deadly AIDS crisis and the shock of the 2016 elections.

The main relationship of *The Inheritance* is be-



Jordan Barbour, Darryl Gene Daughtry Jr., Kyle Soller, Arturo Luís Soria and Kyle Harris in *The Inheritance*.

Photo by Matthew Murphy for MurphyMade, 2019

tween an online social justice worker named Eric Glass (Olivier Award-winner Kyle Soller), and his hot-shot, social-climbing writer boyfriend, Toby Darling (Andrew Burnap). With marriage on the horizon, all seems initially well for this happy New York couple in their 30s.

The lacking-in-self-confidence character of Eric sticks closest to the plot mechanics of *Howards End*. Like the Margaret Schlegel character (which won Emma Thompson a Best Actress Academy Award for the 1992 Merchant-Ivory film version), Eric becomes enamored of a contested country house that the audience knows should rightfully belong to him.

Toby is more of a contemporary creature. He's on the cusp of an artistically fulfilling writing career as he adapts his young adult gay novel,

"Loved Boy," into a play. But Toby also suppresses a traumatic childhood by telling lies about himself and getting into embarrassing situations.

For instance, Toby shares a story of drinking too much at a modernistic Hamptons home owned by gay Republican billionaire Henry Wilcox (John Benjamin Hickey) and his rather saintly longtime companion, Walter Poole (Paul Hilton, who also doubles as Morgan).

Later Toby develops an obsession with a handsome young actor named Adam McDowell (Samuel H. Levine). Toby's fascination turns dangerous for a near doppelganger of Adam, a male hustler named Leo (also played by Levine), who falls under Toby's destructive thrall.

Turn to page 16

WHO WRITES YOUR HISTORY?

THE NICETIES

WRITTEN BY **ELEANOR BURGESS**
DIRECTED BY **MARTI LYONS**

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Photo from
John Olson

THEATER FEATURE

Here come the sugarplum shows!

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

It's the sugarplums and treacle season when theaters large and small, city and 'burbs, non-profit and commercial grow jolly, holly, happy, sappy, snowy, glowy and Doc with holiday shows, this year more than ever before, with at least 40.

Many are repeat annual events, among them *The Other Cinderella* (updated version) at Black Ensemble Theater, *The Nutcracker* by Joffrey Ballet, *The Nutcracker* by Salt Creek Ballet, the ballet-free *Nutcracker* at the House Theatre, *A Christmas Carol* at the Goodman Theatre, *A Christmas Carol* at Drury Lane Oakbrook, *It's A Wonderful Life* as a radio play at American Blues Theater, *Midsommer Flight's Twelfth Night* at the Lincoln Park Conservatory and *The Beatrix Potter Holiday Tea Party* at Chicago Children's Theatre (and suitable for very young ones).

But this year there also are many new holiday offerings—silly to spiritual and straight to gay—and these are our focus. Here are a dozen listed by dates of performance, with some already up and running. FYI: this is not a comprehensive list so check around.

—**A Very Bloody Christmas Carol, A Musical**, Greenhouse Theater Center, through Dec. 18: Scrooge is a new, reformed man but the London banking system isn't. Scrooge crashes the market, London burns and Tiny Tim is kidnapped. This new 60 minute show has book and lyrics by Aaron Wegner and music by Chris Gierymski. Details: GreenhouseTheater.org

—**The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley**, Northlight Theatre (Skokie), through Dec. 22: Award-winning playwright Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon imagine the lush world of Jane Austen's *Regency England* as the Darcys and Bennets—post *Pride and Prejudice*—celebrate Christmas upstairs while the servants downstairs hold scandal at bay; a world premiere. Details: Northlight.org

—**Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish**,



Netta Walker and Luigi Sottile in *Christmas at Pemberley*.

Photo by Liz Lauren

Greenhouse Theater Center, through Dec. 29: DMT Productions and the Greenhouse offer this family-friendly (kids 3+), 65 minute holiday musical about Eleanor, a ragdoll resident of Santa's place at the North Pole; written by Denise McGowan Tracy and Kathleen Gibson. Details: greenhouseetheater.org

—**The Land of Forgotten Toys**, CPA Theatricals @ The Greenhouse, through Dec. 29: Described as a show for teens and tweens, this new musical by Dylan Marcaurele (music) and Jaclyn & Jennifer Enchin (book, lyrics), based on Larry Little's story concerns a young woman in a dead end toy store job in Sheboygan. Will she ever escape? Details: GreenhouseTheater.org

NOTE: The Greenhouse also has a third new holiday musical.

—**Deck the Hallmark**, The Second City, through Dec. 31: A new Xmas offering (one of several) from The Second City, this one presented at the Up Comedy Club. It's a parody of a 1960s type made-for-TV holiday movie, presented by the famous greeting card company. Details: SecondCity.com

—**Twas the Night Before... Cirque du Soleil**,

Chicago Theatre, Nov. 29-Dec. 8: The first ever Christmas show from Cirque du Soleil is here for 17 world premiere performances at the ornate Chicago Theatre. What happens before Santa and his eight reindeer pay a visit? Details: CirqueDuSoleil.com (and most ticket brokers). NOTE: Cirque tickets are not cheap.

—**A Xmas Cuento Remix**, 16th Street Theater (Berwyn), Nov. 29-Dec. 29: Maya Malan-Gonzalez offers a modern, Latinx take on *A Christmas Carol*. No Scrooge and Tiny Tim, but hard-ass Dolores, who runs a bar, and her evicted niece. With music by Emiliano Valdez and Daniel Valdez, this world premiere is "para toda la familia." Details: 16thStreetTheater.org

—**America's Best Outcast Toy**, Pride Films and Plays, Nov. 29-Jan. 12, 2020: This world pre-

miere musical by Cindy O'Connor and Larry Todd Cousineau picks up the tale of the redeemed Outcast Toys, returning to their island to compete in reality challenges requiring singing, dancing, modeling, fashion design and a bake off! Details: PrideFilmsAndPlays.com

—**Cold Town/Hotline**, Raven Theatre, Nov. 30-Dec. 22: Eli Newell's 80 minute world premiere comedy is set over a freezing holiday weekend in 1983, when volunteers at a holiday hotline (to fight holiday blues) deal with an unexpected visitor and transform their humble hotline into a home for the holidays. Details: RavenTheatre.com

—**Grace and the Hanukkah Miracle**, Chicago Immersive Theater at Grace Lutheran Church (Evanston), Dec. 1-Jan. 5: This kid friendly, one hour Hanukkah musical is an interfaith look at family traditions, with puzzles to solve! Details: ChicagoImmersive.com. It's by the creators of *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins*, which repeats at Strawdog Theatre, Dec. 8-28).

—**Christmas Time at Lost Pines and This Is Not a Christmas Cabaret**, Curious Theatre Branch @ Prop Thtr, Dec. 6-14: Chicago's institutional experimental theater troupe announced a holiday repertory of two new shows, but when we checked the Curious Theatre Branch and Prop Thtr websites, we found no info or confirmation and neither troupe had a working phone.

—**The Christmas Foundling**, Pride Films and Plays, Dec. 7-Jan. 5, 2020: Norman Allen's play with music is set in California's rugged Sierra Mountains in 1859, where two miners living as a couple take in and raise an orphan boy. Traditional and original music (by Michael McBride) is sung a capella by the cast. Details: pridefilmsandplays.com

Several of our major musical theaters also are offering familiar, kid friendly shows as holiday treats. Among these are *Annie* (Citadel Theatre, Lake Forest, through Dec. 22), *Mary Poppins* (Drury Lane Oakbrook through Jan. 19), *Beauty and the Beast* (Paramount Theatre, Aurora, through Jan. 19) and *White Christmas* (from the movie, Cadillac Palace Theatre, Dec. 10-15).

REVIEW from page 15

Lopez also touches upon class inequities, political divisions and cultural appropriation to give extra relevancy to *The Inheritance*. It emerges as a moving and redemptive tale of a chain of gay lovers who connect, separate and questionably recouple.

With so much to explore, Lopez unapologetically takes his sweet time over the course of a six-and-a-half hour running time divided into two plays with two intermissions apiece. *The Inheritance* has weight dramatically ruminates over gay societal successes and tragedies that affect the larger LGBTQ and allied communities.

For some audiences, *The Inheritance* will be too sprawling and too male focused. That's despite Steppenwolf Theatre ensemble member Lois Smith making an important and devastating arrival in Part Two. But overall *The Inheritance* hums along thanks to Lopez's multifaceted storytelling that pays homage to *Howards End* while also veering away from Forster's engaging template.

The Inheritance is also blessed with Tony Award-winning film and stage director Stephen Daldry (Billy Elliot; *An Inspector Calls*) at the helm. Daldry's Olivier Award-winning direction is stark, and always places its emphasis on the amazing acting company.

There is plenty of actor doubling going on, and the cast spins out a masterful array of believable and often very funny characters. Jon Clark's sophisticated and Olivier Award-winning lighting design frames and transforms the action, which ranges from sex and drug-fueled Fire Island parties to a secluded, centuries-old upstate New York home that possesses a tear-jerking secret.

With *The Inheritance*, Lopez creates an artistic dialogue with Forster that fascinatingly spans decades and compares the hard-won freedoms of today with memories of past repressions.

Lopez also uses *The Inheritance* to ponder the different kinds of legacies that get lost or passed down among successive generations of gay men. It's a deserving history, and Lopez isn't at all ashamed to give it the epic treatment.

BOOK REVIEW

A Song for You: My Life with Whitney Houston

Author: **Robyn Crawford**

\$28; Dutton; 319 pages

REVIEW BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

You saw that coming.

It was easy to anticipate because the signs were there. It was plain as day, couldn't have been easier to see if it was flashing neon. You knew what was going to happen next—or, you would've, if you were paying attention. Take, for instance, author Robyn Crawford. In her new book *A Song for You*, she tells of spotting a star.

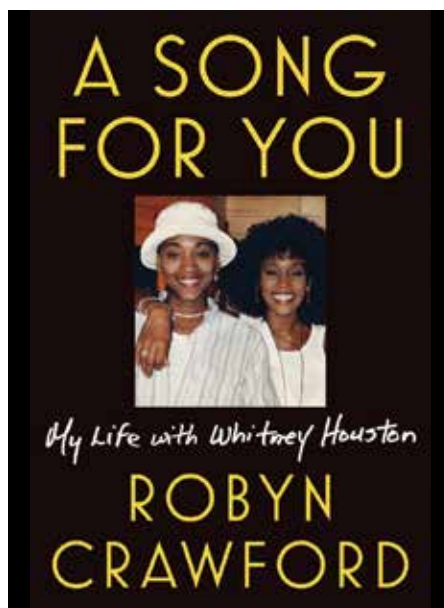
When Coach Clark called, you responded.

That's why Crawford rose early that morning in 1980: Her basketball coach needed help registering counselors for summer programs. Crawford was 19 and thinking about college, but 17-year-old Whitney Houston was one of the people waiting to register—and Crawford was smitten.

In the following days, as the two got to know one another, they became "inseparable." Crawford liked "having fun with a new friend" but, she says, "something more was growing between us."

Before the summer was over, they were lovers.

It was "a typical teenage relationship, with ... the exception of cocaine," although they never named their love. Houston introduced Crawford



to her world of music; Crawford attended church with Houston, and Houston caught Crawford's basketball games. Sometimes, they had to sneak around to be together and they talked on the phone every night when Crawford was at college. Soon after, Houston's modeling career rose and she was on her way to being a star in the music industry.

On the day she signed her first recording contract, Houston told Crawford that she thought they "shouldn't be physical anymore."

The end of the love affair, however, didn't signal the end of their bond, and Crawford gave her life over to Houston. She was Houston's assistant, chauffeur, manager, record-keeper and sounding board. She propped Houston up when Houston needed it—sometimes literally, watching and



Robyn Crawford.
Photo by Marc Hom

helpless, unable to save Houston from her addictions. And then came the day, says Crawford, when "I realized that I needed to save myself."

Be honest: You are only the smallest bit surprised at all this. Houston's cocaine problem was pretty common knowledge, and it's not a stretch to imagine the rest of what's inside this book. Even so, Crawford has a few secrets to tell you.

That, however, doesn't seem to be the reason behind *A Song for You*.

"All Whitney, all the time" is perhaps a good way to describe this memoir; indeed, while it's about Crawford's decades-long relationship with Houston, it often appears that Crawford is secondary in her own story here. That comes across as selflessly joyful but it also seems, at least initially, to be fraught with fear, as if Crawford

recognizes something that's incredibly fragile. As this book progresses, that fear runs alongside a shrieking siren that announces the inevitable, the approach of which, even now, is impossible to stop watching.

For fans still looking for scandal, know that it's there and you'll be happy with *A Song for You*. If you're not necessarily looking for gossip, though, try it anyhow. You can still anticipate a good read.

Want more? Then look for *Remembering Whitney*, by Cissy Houston and Lisa Dickey; or *Whitney Houston! The Spectacular Rise and Tragic Fall of the Woman Whose Voice Inspired a Generation*, by Mark Bego.

Open house Dec. 7 at Wright Home and Studio

The Frank Lloyd Wright Trust will present a holiday open house at the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio, 951 Chicago Ave., Oak Park, on Saturday, Dec. 7, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

The home will be decked for the holidays with a tree decorated with traditional German glass ornaments, poinsettias, fresh flowers, evergreens and wreaths in keeping with the Wright family tradition. Guests will enjoy family craft-making activities in Wright's studio, and savor hot chocolate and cookies.

Admission is free, but registration is required. Register at FLWright.org/programs/homefortheholidays; for more information, visit FLWright.org.

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Cara Marie Gary & Graham Maverick, photo by Cheryl Mann.

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WINDY CITY TIMES 2019 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE PART ONE OF TWO

Feel the heat

We all know the polar vortex may be revisiting sooner rather than later, so be ready with **Heat Holders** socks and gloves (various prices; HeatHolders.com). The socks, specially developed with cashmere-like acrylic yarn, are said to be seven times warmer than their cotton counterparts—and they certainly feel that way.

Name that tune

Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS is out with the annual holiday CD Broadway's Carols for a Cure, featuring the casts from the top Broadway musicals singing seasonal songs, both classic and new. This year's compilation, **Broadway's Carols for a Cure Volume 21** (\$25; <https://broadwaycares.stores.yahoo.net/caforcucds.html>), features 18 tracks from the companies of Hadestown, Beetlejuice, Dear Evan Hansen, Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma! and more.

Beauty mark

"As if" is a phrase from the movie Clueless; however, **as|if** (AsIfByNassif.com) is a line from renowned Beverly Hills plastic surgeon Dr. Paul Nassif that aims to work wonders on skin. The line includes the #GetWoke exfoliating cleanser and mask; #AreWeClear? Skin refining essence; and the #YouFeelMe? hydro-cream moisturizer. It may be rare time hashtags are connected with glowing skin.



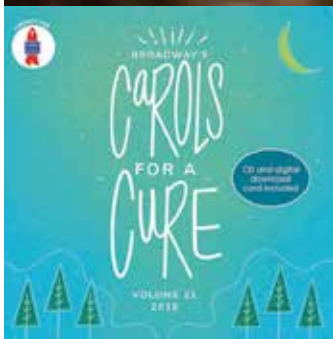
It's a mystery to me

Favorites Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries, A Place to Call Home, A Discovery of Witches and Midsomer Mysteries are just some of the offerings from **Acorn TV**—and now you can get DVD/Blu-ray sets (various prices; Acorn.tv). Another option is getting a gift subscription if your gift recipient may not know what a DVD is.



Snack attack

Chicago's **Garrett Popcorn Shops** (GarrettPopcorn.com) have pretty much been a holiday tradition for seven decades. This year, there are Garrett Mix (the original Chicago-style popcorn), the return of Hot Cocoa CaramelCrisp®, and new Blue Holiday Spruce Tin Design and Gift Sets. The only drawback is that you might be wracked with indecision trying to decide what to purchase.



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Dark energy

In **Dark Tears: LGBTQ Resilience in Latin America** (\$21.99; amazon.com), Argentinian photographer/performance artist Claudia Jares exploring the reality of queer experience in Latin America, and beyond, marrying questions of sexuality, religion and identity with her trademark raw eroticism. The result is a powerful book that details the determination of a beleaguered demographic and beauty of queer sexuality.



The Shane event

Shane Co. (ShaneCo.com), the nation's largest family-owned jeweler, offers some intriguing items. Among them are the stunning blue topaz and diamond pendant (\$190) and the fetching 14-karat yellow gold ball necklace (\$145)—but Shane has a lot more than that going on, for sure.

Second to none

The newly revised and expanded version of **The Second City: The Essentially Accurate History** (\$40; AgatePublishing.com or Amazon.com) collects rare photos and profiles to take you behind the scenes of Chicago's Second City—possibly the most influential comedy theater in the world. With a foreword from Emmy-nominated actress Catherine O'Hara, this book is perfect for any fan of theater, comedy and/or celebrity—which is pretty much everyone.



Coasting along

The **marble puzzle coaster set** (\$205; IndustryWest.com) is a functional conversation starter. The coasters look stylish when put together, and offer an upscale way to keep those rings off your table.



Boxed in

I instantly felt better after experiencing what's in **TheraBox** (MyTheraBox.com), a self-care subscription box. Every box includes a happiness activity meant to be practiced throughout the month (or longer!) in addition to six to eight full sized, high-quality wellness items for the mind, body and soul worth more than \$100 in total value. Plans range from a month to a year, and start at \$30.99/box.

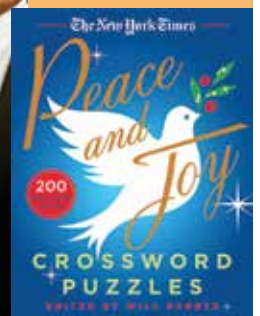
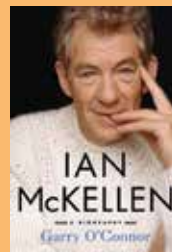


Amber alert

Amber (\$46/month, or \$549 total; MyAmberLife.com) is the world's first AI-powered tech storage device designed specifically for modern families. The device stores photos and videos on a secure private home cloud network that is completely safe from today's increasingly invasive hackers. It is comparable to the size of a small speaker and provides up to 4TB of storage space.

Book it

St. Martin's Press (us. macmillan.com/smp) has books for practically everyone on your list. Among them are Ian McKellen: A Biography (\$29.99), **Downton Abbey: The Official Film Companion** (\$29.99), **Extraordinary Dogs** (\$27.99) and **The New York Times Peace and Joy Crossword Puzzles** (\$18.99). Calling all bibliophiles!



Flying high

The **iFLY travel luggage and kit** (various prices; iFLYLuggage.com) combine great quality, smart functionality and style, at an affordable price. Just one of the items is the Admiral, and you'll appreciate its hard shell when other mangled bags come down the conveyor belt—and your stylish bag luggage, intact.



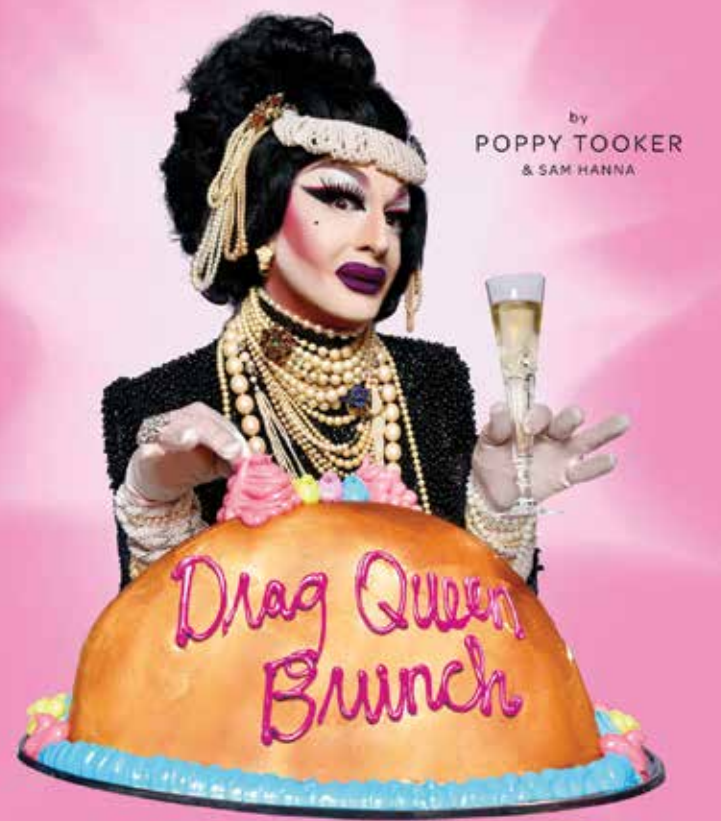
Looking smart

Ekster (various prices; Ekster.com) doesn't make your typical wallet, by any stretch of the imagination—as it now has the first voice-activated smart wallet to date. Owners can now ring their wallet, find it on a map or even make use of the Chipolo® community to help locate their missing belongings. Alas, the wallet can't instantly provide more money when you need it—yet.



Queen, eggs and ham

Drag queen brunches are the rage these days, so it's quite topical that author/TV personality/radio host Poppy Tooker has released the book **Drag Queen Brunch** (\$29.99; RainbowRoadPress.com). Centered around New Orleans, this book has everything from profiles to recipes (of brunch and cocktail items, of course).



Tom, thanks

Tom of Finland has a variety of enticing items, ranging from the well-known organic vodka (TomOffFinlandVodka.com) to the even more popular calendar, artwork and jewelry—and more decadent offerings (various prices; TomOffFinlandStore.com).

**TOM OF FINLAND
2020**



In good spirit

Oscar-winning filmmaker Steven Soderbergh is known for great movies such as *Traffic*—but now he's in the spirit market with the Bolivian liquor **Singani 63** (\$29.99; singani63.com). While filming the movie *Che*, Soderbergh discovered the 500-year old national spirit of Bolivia, and now the drink is available in this country. Bottoms up!

Ready to wear

Stephen David Leonard has unveiled a menswear line (various prices; StephenDavidLeonard.com)—and there are some beauties there. (I'm talking about Stephen's items, not the models.) The quality metal and/or leather goods include messenger bags, wallets, belts, and even bracelets and rings. It's practically impossible to go wrong with any of them. (And Lisa Leonard offers women's jewelry on the affiliated website LisaLeonard.com.)





Skin tight

Local business **Scratch Goods** (847 W. Randolph St.; ScratchGoods.com) is a one-stop shop for feeling good. Not only did the skin-care products help me look better, but the food-grade ingredients are safe enough to eat. However, while you're there, try the mask bar (or you can reserve a spot).



Sweet relief

New York-based mochi ice cream company **Mochidoki** (Mochidoki.com) is known for some innovative versions of the Japanese-inspired treats. Flavors such as espresso and peanut butter and chocolate complement and offer tasty alternatives to the cool original varieties. Be sure to get the 24-piece Signature Collection; you and/or someone else will want to indulge.



Topping it off

Odds are you know someone who's into football—believe it or not. To that end (and with cold weather already here), why not consider getting that sports nut a knit top from **New Era Cap** (\$29.99; NewEraCap.com). It might be the only silver lining to enduring this season with the Bears.



Glass action

Lushy Wino (various prices; LushyWino.com), as you might guess, offers wine-themed apparel and glassware—some pretty whimsical. From the “Be Kind, Re-Wine” glasses to “Official Wine Taster” T-shirt, this company has something that may make your favorite oenophile laugh.

Brew-ha-ha

Steeped Coffee (Steeped.com) is a different breed than your standard java—and the raves I personally heard about it are enough to recommend it. What sets it apart is its proprietary brewing method that does not require machines or brewing equipment, so it's made much like tea. The coffee comes in single-serve bags that are nitro-sealed to ensure absolute freshness—and absolutely happiness from your favorite coffee drinker.



Twist and shout

Offering a cool approach regarding the typical flashlight, the **Nanotorch Twist** (\$59.99; GetKeySmart.com) has a rotating swivel head that can go in any direction. In addition, it has five light modes, a rechargeable battery and hands-free use. You'll wonder why you didn't get one sooner—for someone else and yourself.

How sweet

More and more items are combining style and functionality—with Exhibit A being the **Big Sweety diaper bag** (\$129.95-\$149.95; BigSweety.com). This bag really does look like upscale handbags; as the company says, “Motherhood has never looked so chic.”





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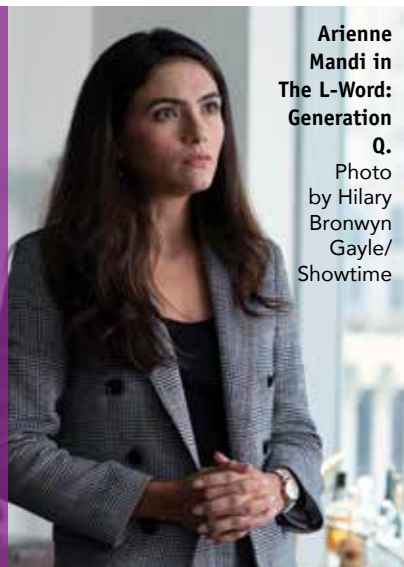
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TELEVISION

'The L-Word' follow-up aims for sex, laughs, drama and diversity

Arienne Mandi in The L-Word: Generation Q.

Photo by Hilary Bronwyn Gayle/Showtime



BY LAWRENCE FERBER

During 2004-09, Showtime's *The L-Word* offered a Sapphic-centric L.A.-set successor to *Queer As Folk*.

While groundbreaking, audacious and sexy—with more than 110 sex scenes during its run—creator Ilene Chaiken and her creative teams were responsible for both one of the most loathed main characters on cable TV: Jenny Schecter (Mia Kirschner), whose unsolved murder served as a framework and point of contention during the show's final season, and a well-meaning but unflattering, inaccurate, cringeworthy trans rep-

resentation in Max (Danielle Sea).

On Sunday Dec. 8, Showtime will premiere a follow-up, *The L-Word: Generation Q*, with Marja-Lewis Ryan as showrunner. The new series attempts to acknowledge and make up for the sins of the past, with ethnic diversity both in front of and behind the camera, including Latinx screenwriters Tatiana Suarez-Pico (Parenthood) and Nancy Mejia (Vida); authentic trans representation; and socially aware storylines involving both the original's characters and a fresh batch of new "Gen Q" faces.

Today, Bette Porter (Jennifer Beals) is running for mayor while raising teenage daughter Angie

(Jordan Hull), who may be nursing an adolescent queer crush on a bad influence bestie, Jordi (trans actress Sophie Giannamore). Alice (Leisha Hailey) has a new, Ellen-ish TV talk show, and is dating Gigi (Sepideh Moafi), a realtor with kids and a meddlesome ex-wife. And wealthy lesbian lothario hairstylist Shane (Katherine Moennig) has just returned to L.A.

As for the show's Gen Q components, Sophie (Rosanny Zayas) is a producer on Alice's show and lives with girlfriend Dani (Arienne Mandi), a PR executive working for her father's lucrative yet opioid-related business. The couple's transgender roommate, Micah (Leo Sheng), is an adjunct professor with the hots for a new gay neighbor, Jose (Freddy Miyares), while Sarah (Jacqueline Toboni), an Olympic swimmer turned assistant on Alice's show, parties hard while cozying up to her wishlist mentor, Shane. Other openly LGBTQ actors popping up in this 8-episode season include Olivia Thirlby, Fortune Feimster and Jamie Clayton (Sense8).

Windy City Times spoke with Zayas and Mandi, both of whom are single and identify as pansexual. ("I'm open to falling in love with someone's personality and how we connect as people," Zayas specified.)

Windy City Times: Dani is described as "complicated." Can you elaborate, and hint at what's in store for her?

Arienne Mandi: Dani is born into a family that she worked very hard for, and is really bound to her father. It's just been them against the world. During the course of the season, she's experiencing the feeling that maybe everything she assumed and thought would be her world isn't what she wants. I can relate to being told something your whole life, and having your thoughts change about the world and people, and what drives you and what you're passionate about—making your own opinions and really honoring what you want and who you are as a person.

WCT: How about Sophie?

Rosanny Zayas: I believe Sophie's a hard worker and always had big dreams and goals. One of them is to help Alice create a show that's relatable, queer, open, and honest, about how Alice lives her life today, which is really cool.

When *The L-Word* first came out, you saw Alice finding herself. Now Alice has her own show and she's killing it, and Sophie [is] helping her step into her voice even more.

WCT: And what is Sophie and Dani's dynamic like as a couple?

RZ: I think you'll see the ups and downs, and Dani's character is a very strong person, forward in what she wants. You see Sophie as the heart of the relationship, and a lot of times [is] having to take on the emotional life and confronting things Dani doesn't want to talk about. You'll see how much they love each other, and how much they will be there for each other, just like any other relationship.

AM: Sophie is Dani's anchor throughout the course of the season, and we experience changes together.

WCT: Do you relate personally to your respective characters and their relationship?

AM: Yeah. I pulled a lot from my own life, and some things from my mother. I grew up in L.A. My mother is Chilean and my father is Iranian, and

Dani [has a] mixed ethnicity, too. The cultural upbringing is very much me. And I think I'm a lot like Dani. She keeps a lot of things very close to her, and I'm the same way. I'm not quick to divulge. It was really visceral to go through some of the things she does.

RZ: Well, I'm a Dominican from New York, and Sophie is too, and I think that Sophie's heart is my heart. The writing has been so amazing.

WCT: Is there a correlation between the Gen Q newbies and original's characters? Like is one the new Shane, the new Alice, etc.?

AM: I think what's great about the new Gen Q is we're so diverse, but if I had to relate Dani to somebody else, it would be Bette. We're very different in our backgrounds, but we struggle with family issues and we're both powerful and calculating in the same way. But all the new characters sort of speak for themselves and are very original and fresh.

RZ: I think Sophie's a new creation. There were Hispanic characters on the show before, but I don't think they've been as specific as being Dominican from New York. Even when it comes to the ethnic food she eats, that's something that wasn't specifically in the show before, but you get to see now."

WCT: How did the new and original casts go about getting to know each other? Was there a lot of bonding?

AM: We call them "the OGs." Kate, Leisha and Jennifer really extended themselves to us and actually organized a dinner the first week of shooting. We sat at dinner for hours and talked. We made it a point to hang out outside of work, and they really opened their doors to us and made sure we felt super comfortable, but also experience things on their own like they did. It felt like a family."

RZ: As just a fan of the show, you don't get to see how the OGs are in real life, but it's been so awesome to see how well they connect. They actually do love and take care of each other, and fight for each other during the process of making the show. It's been a learning experience for me, and I've been admiring them every day, wanting to be more and more like them.

WCT: Would you ever bring up Jenny and how she died, or is it like Candyman, Beetlejuice and Bloody Mary and nobody dares intone that name for dread of summoning her?

AM: Oh my God. She wasn't my favorite character—that's for sure. I do like the actress, Mia Kirschner, but Jenny's character was definitely not my favorite! I feel like there are online forums for just bashing poor Jenny. She definitely pumped up the drama.

RZ: All of us are fans of the show, so there are always questions about Jenny and what happened. I think I'll leave that up to the writers.

WCT: Will we see Pam Grier's Kit Porter again?

AM: I don't know. I can't answer! There will definitely be special guest appearances. I'm not saying from the past [series], but a lot of guest appearances, which is really exciting.

The L-Word: Generation Q premieres Sunday, Dec. 8 on Showtime.

Read the full interview at www.windycitytimes.com

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BILLY Masters

"Well, I used to jerk off to Leonardo DiCaprio."—**Pete Davidson** in *Paper* magazine. He clarifies, "Uhh, like his acting. I used to have a HUGE crush on Leonardo DiCaprio. I had this huge poster of him from *The Beach* in my room." Well, that clarifies ... err, nothing.

While the impeachment hearings limp to an end, one question remains: Did Hope kill Thomas by pushing him into a vat of acid? These preemptions have made it impossible to follow *The Bold and the Beautiful*. The one thing I'm certain of is that if Thomas did end up in boiling hydrofluoric acid, he's neither bold nor beautiful.

The original Broadway cast of *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife* reunited for a special reading to benefit Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. The idea for the reunion was sparked by **Linda Lavin**, the leading lady of the original Broadway production. When she recently staged the play at her North Carolina theater company, she played the role of the leading lady's mother, Frieda (played on Broadway by the late Shirl Bernheim).

Linda knew that playwright **Charles Busch** always coveted the title role, so why not assemble the rest of the original cast and have Charles play Linda's role while Linda played the mother? Charles was in, but said that since Lavin played the role to perfection, he'd have to play it the way she did—"in homage. There will be times Linda's going to feel like she's acting with herself." While Busch slipped into the title role effortlessly, Lavin still stole every scene of which she was a part. As I quipped to Linda, "I can't think of another actress who returns to a play in which she stole the show 20 years ago, plays a different part, and steals the show again!" The event proved what a phenomenal piece of writing Busch's play is—it may even survive the proposed film version starring **Bette Midler** and **Sharon Stone**.

Just a few blocks away, the Roundabout Theatre was doing its own benefit reading on the same night. Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* starred the formidable **Angela Lansbury** as the meddling Lady Bracknell. I'm told that Angela gave a terrific performance—obviously, I wasn't there because, contrary to popular belief, I cannot be in two places at the same time. (I can, however, be with two men at the same time, should that ever be relevant.) Everyone says Angie seemed thrilled to be back onstage. The audience loved her, and she looked positively elated at the endless curtain calls. Two benefits for two great causes—only in NYC.

Elsewhere in the Big Apple, **Celine Dion** turned up at drag karaoke, and why not? She's probably the most convincing Celine Dion the place has seen!! Miss Dion went to Lips to celebrate the release of her latest CD, *Courage*, saying, "I'm so excited, and I'm so honored that you're here tonight. I want to thank you so very much for your support through the years." Celine also entered the karaoke competition by singing a new song, *Flying On My Own*. Watch the video on Bil-



Leonardo DiCaprio (above, in *The Great Gatsby*) was once the object of Pete Davidson's ... admiration, Billy says.

Photo from Warner Bros.

lyMasters.com and let me know if you would have voted for her or not.

While voting hasn't happened yet, **Lil Nas X** has already made Grammy history. Last week, Nas got nominated for Artist of the Year, Album of the Year, Best New Artist, Best Pop Duo/Group Performance, Best Rap/Sung Performance and Best Music Video. In short, this is an unprecedented number of plaudits going to an openly gay singer. You can check out his 12-inch on BillyMasters.com—free membership for all Grammy voters!

Jussie Smollett made good on his promise to sue the City of Chicago and the lead officer for how they handled his purported "attack." The suit really is a response to the City of Chicago asking that he pay back the \$260K it cost to investigate. Instead of paying the bill (assuming he has the money), Jussie filed a countersuit claiming economic losses, legal bills, mental anguish and distress. I say we start a class action suit charging mental anguish and distress for the handful of us still watching *Empire*. Talk about cruel and unusual punishment!

You know what I'm thankful for? That the Dallas Straight Pride Parade attracted two people! It was actually the two guys holding the banner, which probably makes them the organizers. In that case, NO PEOPLE showed up for the event. On the flip side, about 20 counterprotesters showed up. Look, I'm all for exercising free speech, but why didn't the protesters just laugh and walk away? Haven't those poor straight people suffered enough?

I'm also thankful that *Fresh Off the Boat* has been cancelled. Far be it from me to wish unemployment to Asian actors working in this industry. But thank God that **Constance Wu** can finally become the huge star she says she's destined to be. Apparently the only thing holding her back was being on a hit sitcom. Good luck, Wu. See you at the Oscars ... perhaps as a seat filler.

When daytime dramas are being pre-empted

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by the biggest soap opera of all, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Since this is our Thanksgiving column, let me tell you what I'm thankful for. First and foremost, I'm thankful that certain parts of my anatomy can bring so much pleasure to so many people. I'm thankful for the ability to laugh at others' misfortunes. I'm also thankful I'm not in therapy, where it would be pointed out that laughing at others' misfortunes is not healthful. But, most of all, I'm thankful for all of you who have been reading this column for close to 25 years—you really are the best part of this job. Thanks to the many papers who continue to publish me—even in these days when all print media is in jeopardy. Lastly, thanks to the staff at BillyMasters.com—the legal eagles who keep me out of prison and the proofers who make sure that my penis is the only thing dangling. Should you have a question, a query or a Quiznos sandwich you'd like to share (I'm partial to footlongs), get in touch with me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I ever again write the word "Wu". So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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the DISH

Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Stockton brunch; Equality Illinois wine-tasting

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Stockton (1009 N. Rush St., second floor; StocktonChicago.com) is in the space that the upscale Japanese restaurant Jellyfish occupied—but it definitely has established its own vibe since opening in October.

Unfortunately, very few people are apparently witnessing Stockton's offerings and atmosphere, as a recent brunch attested. My friend and I witnessed no more than five people—although, in the Gold Coast spot's defense, the brunch only started a few weeks ago (although the brunch



Stockton's French toast tower.
PR photo

menu wasn't on the website when I last checked).

And like any new restaurant, there are aspects that need work. A drink called the Hangover Vanilla Latte was bitter for me, while the espresso martini didn't work for my dining companion, so we switched. And service was mostly good but occasionally lagged, even though very few

patrons were there. And the salmon bagel was delicious—but costs \$20.

However, there were moments when Stockton shone. The French toast tower is a delicious Jenga-esque work of art, with vanilla ice cream and housemade chocolate syrup, while the avocado toast was better than most I've had. The lobster mac was mostly good—although it's made with blue cheese, and a little of that goes a long way.

Stockton is not without its faults. However, for me, the pros outweigh the cons—and it's worth nibbling on that French toast tower while taking in the sights of Rush Street and Mariano Park (aka the Viagra Triangle).

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

Equality Illinois holding wine-tasting Dec. 4

Equality Illinois will hold a holiday wine-tasting Wed., Dec. 4, 6-8:30 p.m., at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

Attendees will taste wines and spirits from around the world, and sample light hors d'oeuvres. Tickets are \$25-\$40 each; visit EQIL.org/wine-tasting.



BEHIND THE NAME

"I was stressing about finding the perfect drag name and I finally just asked my roommate what it should be and she goes 'I don't know, Travis? Yeah, do Travis' and then went back to eating her sandwich. And Travis stuck. Fiero was just fun to say and reminded me of fire."

FIRST DRAG PERFORMANCE

"I was trying to figure out my gender identity and there were a lot of complex emotions attached to it. Luckily, my best friend at the time, who also still does drag under the name Bambi Banks, was also experimenting with drag, so our journeys began to merge and by our senior year of college we were running a very successful drag show at our school. Our first show was my first performance and it was 'White Wedding' by Billy Idol."

DRAG INSPIRATION

"Recently, I've been getting a lot of ideas from abstract sculpture and avant-garde fashion, and I have been experimenting with body painting."

GO-TO NUMBER TO SLAY THE CROWD

"'The Black Parade' by MCR or 'Thnks fr the Mmrs' by Fall Out Boy—they're high-energy, they're nostalgic, and I have known the words and the emotions behind those songs for decades, so I know that there is no way I can get into my head about."

BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT YOU

"That I am an extrovert—I am a social person for sure and I love being out and being with people; but in order to do that I spend hours and hours alone recharging. Literally, I spend hours just thinking in my bedroom or alone in coffee shops. For me, solitude is necessary for creation."

WHERE CAN WE CATCH YOU

"I've been taking gigs more selectively lately to work on some underground projects and photo shoots. But every month I host Flannel Fridays on the first Friday of the month at Hamburger Mary's."

SOCIAL MEDIA

Instagram: @travis.fiero

Twitter: @FieroTravis

Facebook: Travis Fiero

Photo by
Who Is She



And they're off ... Santa Speedo Run returns to Boystown

The December chill will be no match for the hot participants in the annual Santa Speedo Run Boystown, Saturday, December 7. This ninth annual run, presented by Miller Lite and Sidetrack, will raise money to support Center on Halsted's mission of advancing community and securing the health and well-being of the LGBTQ people of Chicagoland.

Over 300 participants will don their gay apparel for a one-mile run through the heart of Lakeview, clad in nothing more than Santa hats, speedos and other holiday attire. Last year's event raised over \$80,000 for Center on Halsted and the vital services the Center provides. The event draws a crowd of thousands each year, as well as drawing national and international media coverage.

The event will be held at Sidetrack Video Bar, 3349 N Halsted. Check-in and registration start at noon and the one-mile run begins promptly at 2 p.m. The run is followed with merriment, entertainment, and prizes hosted by Debbie Fox and an "afterparty" hosted by Sidetrack's own Dixie Lynn Cartwright).

Everyone is encouraged to wear holiday attire such as a Speedo or other holiday undergarments, and a Santa hat, but it is not mandatory.

Runners are asked for a minimum \$25 donation to participate. Donations may also be made directly to Center on Halsted. The full donation for the event will support Center on Halsted.

For more information, or to register in advance, visit events.centeronhalsted.org/speedo2019.

Photos of 2018's Santa Speedo Run Boystown by Joseph Stevens Photography



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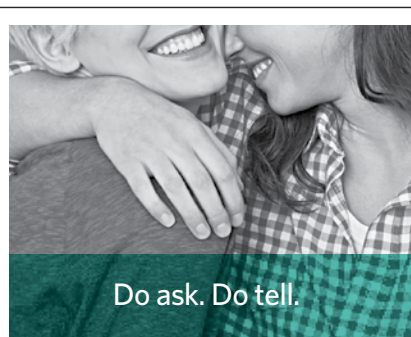
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TECHNICAL SUPPORT

WEBSITE AND DATABASE assistance from Anna Naden. Experience: set up WordPress for Gerber/Hart LGBTQ library, maintained WordPress for FrontRunners and New Town Alano Club. Coded websites and databases for Accenture. Text 224-254-7343 or email phoenix13technical@gmail.com 24/7 for information. Call evenings for free needs assessment or a visit to your place of business. Phoenix Technical Services (12/25/19-4)

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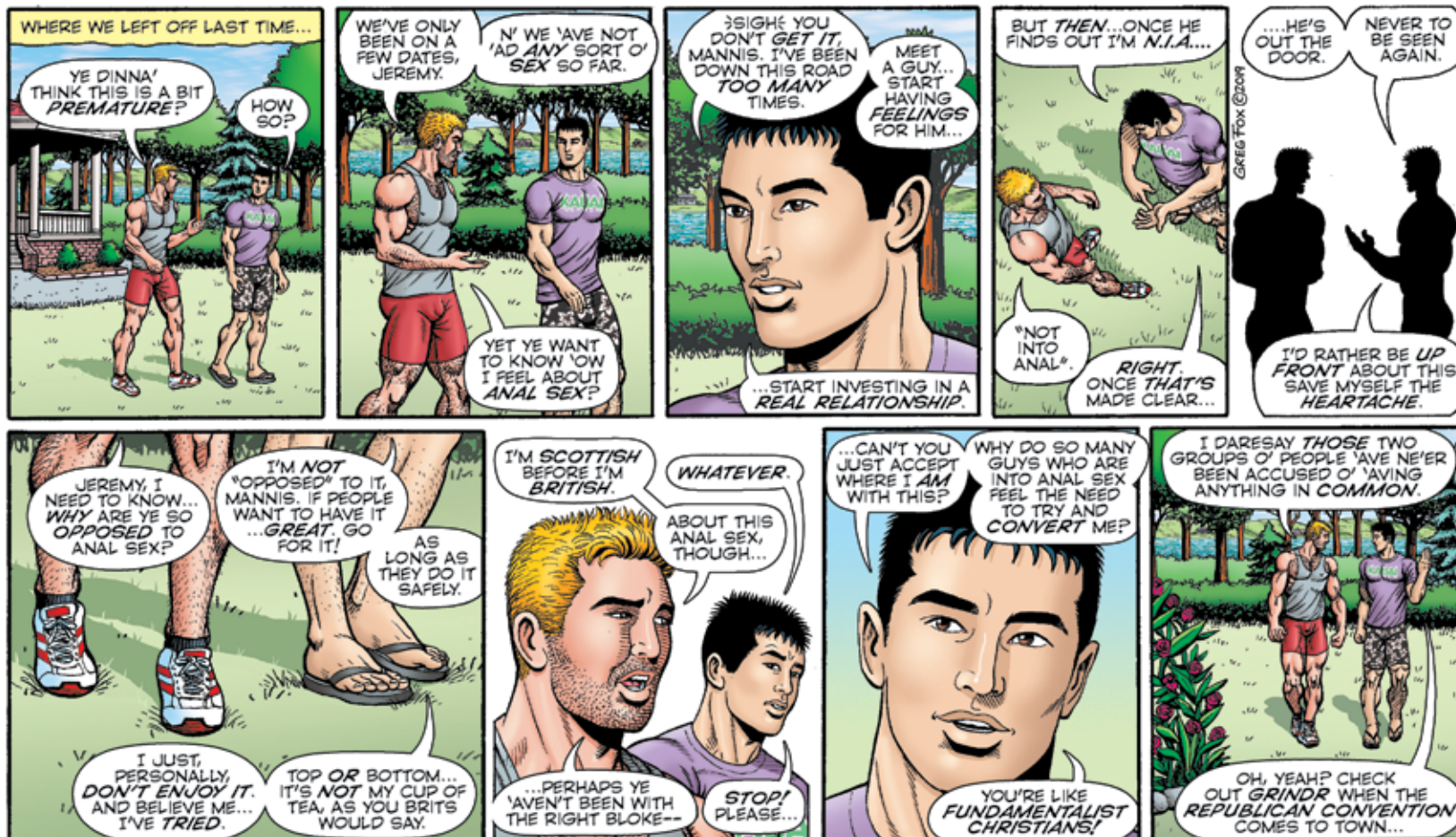
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KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST

by Greg Fox



WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Nov. 27

THE GOLDEN GIRLS: The Lost Episodes Hell in a Handbag Productions presents The Holiday Edition, Vol. 2 with new episodes through Dec. 28. 7:30pm Mary's Attic 5400 N Clark Chicago <http://www.handbagproductions.org>

Thursday, Nov. 28

Thanksgiving Edition, Pop Rocks After you've stuffed yourself with Turkey and Pie, get Sidetrack'd with Dixie & Saya for a night of Drag, Games and your favorite Pop hits. Doors open Thanksgiving Thursday at 7 p.m. No cover 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Sidetrack 3349 N. Halsted St.; <http://sidetrackchicago.com>

Friday, Nov. 29

The Second Arrow Through Dec. 1 exhibition in recognition of World AIDS Day. Focus on artists' experiences around HIV. The title comes from the Buddhist metaphor of reactions to difficult events, the second arrow representing choice and responses to the first event. Dec. 1 reception with artists 1:00pm Las Manos Gallery 1515 W. Foster Ave. 773-398-8278 <http://VisualAids.org>

Chicago magician Dennis Watkins, The Magic Parlour Intimate evening of classic magic, floating candy canes, feats of mentalism, Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, all designed to dazzle and inspire audience members of all ages. \$89 includes drinks. 4:30pm Palmer House



HOW SWEET Thursday, Dec. 5

AIDS Foundation of Chicago's annual World of Chocolate will take place at Revel Fulton Market.

Photo by Kat Fitzgerald/Mystic Images Photography

Hilton 17 E Monroe Chicago (773) 769-3832 <http://www.themagicparlourchicago.com/>

America's Best Outcast Toy Pride Arts presents an oddball holiday reality musical. Through Jan. 12 7:30pm The Broadway, Pride Arts Center, Broadway Theatre at 4139 N. Broadway <http://PrideFilmsAndPlays.com>

Singer Greyson Chance Out musician known for his performance of Lady Gaga's "Paparazzi," a viral success on YouTube, gaining more than 65 million views. Doors 7 p.m. 8:00pm The Bottom Lounge 1375 W. Lake St Chicago Tickets: <http://bottomlounge.com/events-archive/greyson-chance/>

Saturday, Nov. 30

Small Business Saturday Complimentary refreshments plus special giveaways. Spend \$150 or more and get exclusive 40th Anniversary tote bag designed by local artist Molly Costello 10:00am - 5:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Sunday, Dec. 1

World AIDS Day testing hours Extended testing hours 9:15am - 4:15pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/HIV.html>

The Second Arrow reception Exhibit reflects upon artists experiences around the HIV pandemic, remembers those we've lost, pays tribute to long-term survivors. Conversation and refreshments with the artist 12:00pm - 4:00pm Las Manos Gallery 1515 W. Foster Ave. Chicago <http://LASMANOSGALLERY.BLOGSPOT.COM>

Women of All Colors Together brunch WACT is a brunch and social support organization or all lesbians and bisexual women. We are especially interested in meeting and befriending each other across ethnicities, ages, incomes, etc. Toi Williams at torlene@comcast.net 1:30pm - 5:30pm Contact organizers for location

Monday, Dec. 2

Trans/HIV+ Military Panel Panel with Congressman Mike Quigley and LGBTQ community leaders who are former service members. Free 1:30pm The Pritzker Military Library 104 S. Michigan Ave. <http://pritzkermilitary.org>

Tuesday, Dec. 3

Transfemine Alliance Chicago (T-FEM) Peer-led discussion group for anyone who was assigned male at birth and identifies as female, feminine of center, or questioning their gender. Meets every Tuesday in Room #200. Free. Gearah Goldstein, tfemchicago@gmail.com 7:00pm - 8:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.tfem-chicago.com>

Wed., Dec. 4

AHF Presents World AIDS Day AIDS Healthcare Foundation commemorates World AIDS Day every year to remind the global community that the fight to end HIV is far from over. Honoring local community members who have made an impact in the movement. Performances by Opal Staples Orchestra & Manon Voice. Food, drink. Free, limited capacity. RSVP on Eventbrite 6:00pm - 9:00pm Bracket Room, 1315 S. Halsted St., Chicago Tickets: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/ahf-world-aids-day-chicago-tickets-79799397145>

Thursday, Dec. 5

Cirque du Soleil's Alegria tickets on sale Signature songs, stunning acrobatics, memorable characters and enchanting artistry June 5-28, 2020, at Soldier Field South Lot. Tickets online now. 7:00am Soldier Field 1410 Museum Campus Dr

Chicago <http://cirqueclub.com> Tickets: <http://cirquedusoleil.com/alegria>
World of Chocolate World AIDS Day event raises funds and awareness for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. Light buffet and Chicago's best restaurants, hotels and bakeries will showcase their signature sweet delicacies, savory bites and craft cocktails. 6:00pm - 9:00pm Revel Fulton Market, 1215 W. Fulton Market, Chicago 312-334-0935 Tickets: <http://chocolate.aidschicago.org>

Friday, Dec. 6

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus presents HO-LIDISCO Disco renditions of beloved holiday favorites and parodies of disco standards. Three venues in the Chicago-land area. 6:00pm - 8:00pm The Athenaeum Theatre 2936 N Southport Ave Chicago Tickets: <http://cgmc.org/holiday> (Continues Dec. 8 at the Beverly Arts Center)

Artemis Singers part of Dreamboat LG-BTQIA+ improv show Members of Artemis Singers, Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus will perform "The Christians and the Pagans," about what happens when a lesbian couple eats holiday dinner with Christian relatives, "Lesbian Picnic" and "Fishing." 8:00pm The iO Theater, 1501 N. Kingsbury St. Tickets: <http://ArtemisSingers.org>

Saturday, Dec. 7

Santa Speedo Run Boystown 2019 One mile race in Boystown. Post-fun party at Sidetrack. To benefit Center On Halsted 2:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St. See "Chicago Santa Speedo Run" on Facebook.

Local designer Richard Dayhoff brings gender neutrality to collection

BY VEE L. HARRISON

One thing that makes Chicago's fashion scene distinct is the variety of designers and their own signature styles.

Richard Dayhoff is one of several designers in the Windy City, but he cannot be mistaken for any other. Born in Rockford, Illinois, Dayhoff (a member of the LGBT community) is known for his elegant designs—even when it comes to his line of performance men's underwear. For more than 20 years, his designs have been sold in more than 300 retail stores across the country, including Nordstrom and Saks Fifth Avenue.

Dayhoff's designs have been featured in Elle, Glamour and Men's Style, to name a few publications. In addition, he's earned the bragging rights of dressing industry icons like Oprah Winfrey and co-hosting the NBC show Fashion Police. He's not new to the industry. Yet, he always seems to stay abreast with what the industry needs.

Recently, Dayhoff has debuted an element in fashion that will change the game and is definitely what the industry needs: He has begun to create clothes that are gender-neutral, and created a platform for the LGBTQ community to immerse and identify freely with his designs.

"People are just more comfortable as time goes on," Dayhoff told Windy City Times. "When you look at fashion, it really does say where we are as a culture. People are more comfortable expressing themselves. There are more choices."

He recently made this conclusion while debuting some of his designs at the Runway Latino X fashion show, a Latino-focused event in Chicago.

"The runway at this show was about transformation. The message was to transform and uplift and that resonated with me," said Dayhoff.

At the show, Dayhoff made an impact using his minimalist designs and featuring new models who had never walked the runway before, including transgender men and women.

Richard Dayhoff.
Photo by Damien Thompson



"As a society, we've been educated," said Dayhoff. "Me being a gay man, I see all the work we've done through the years to create platforms and let people know. I think it's just a time where I think we had to address where there wasn't just black and white. There is all this gray area. Just like sexuality. There's straight, there's gay. But there's a lot of in between. As a society we only recognized black or white. Now we realized that there's a lot of in between stuff. So, it's interesting times for fashion. It's fun."

Dayhoff said he believes that creating opportunities for the LGBTQ and non-conforming people is important as a designer.

He said, "As an artist, you can play around with a lot more things, and do a lot more things on the runway that maybe in the past you wouldn't. We can shake it up a little bit. It's okay—that model is transgender; let's put that person on the runway. Why not?"

"I always consider my designs as a prop. You then use that to turn it around to be able to benefit others in some way by being able to provide a platform where people can take note and listen."

To explore more of Dayhoff's designs, visit RichardDayhoff.com.

CONNEXIONS

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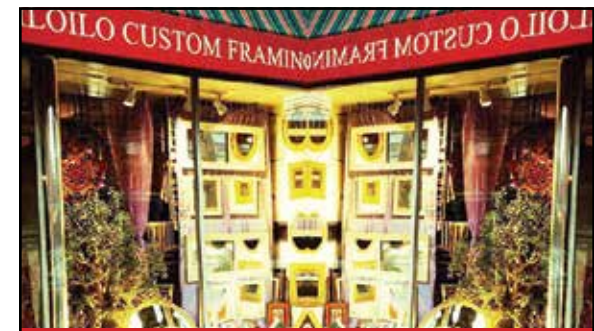
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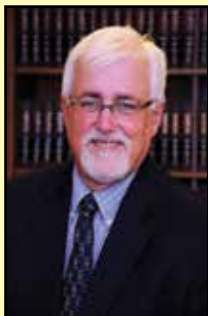


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**Wrightwood 659 will be open on Buy Nothing Day,
Friday, November 29 (aka Black Friday).**

Take a break from the shopping crowds and see show the New York Times calls a "must see" this fall, and Hyperallergic says is "...one of the most engrossing presentations of contemporary painting to have been shown in the United States in many years."

The first U.S. retrospective of the paintings of Japanese cult-artist Tetsuya Ishida is on view through December 14 at Wrightwood 659 in Lincoln Park.

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