



TALKING WITH SANDRA BERNHARD

PAGE 20

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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GENERATION HALSTED  
PAGE 10

# Marriage vote could be mere days away

BY KATE SOSIN

President Barack Obama has announced his support for marriage equality in his home state, and a vote on the bill that would legalize same-sex marriage in Illinois could be just days away.

Both faith and business leaders have thrown their weight behind the bill, which already has the backing of Gov. Pat Quinn and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

On Dec. 29, the president added his support.

White House spokesperson Shin Inouye told the Chicago Sun-Times that if the president were still in the Illinois legislature, he would back a measure to legalize

same-sex marriage.

"While the president does not weigh in on every measure being considered by state legislatures, he believes in treating everyone fairly and equally, with dignity and respect," Inouye is quoted saying in the exclusive report.

Momentum for marriage equality has been building over recent weeks, and advocates believe that a vote could happen as soon as late this week.

Support for same-sex marriage, LGBT candidates and pro-gay lawmakers in November elections appears to have spurred the effort.

Local and national LGBT activists are bound for

Springfield, and they are telling supporters to contact their state lawmakers and urge them to vote yes on marriage equality.

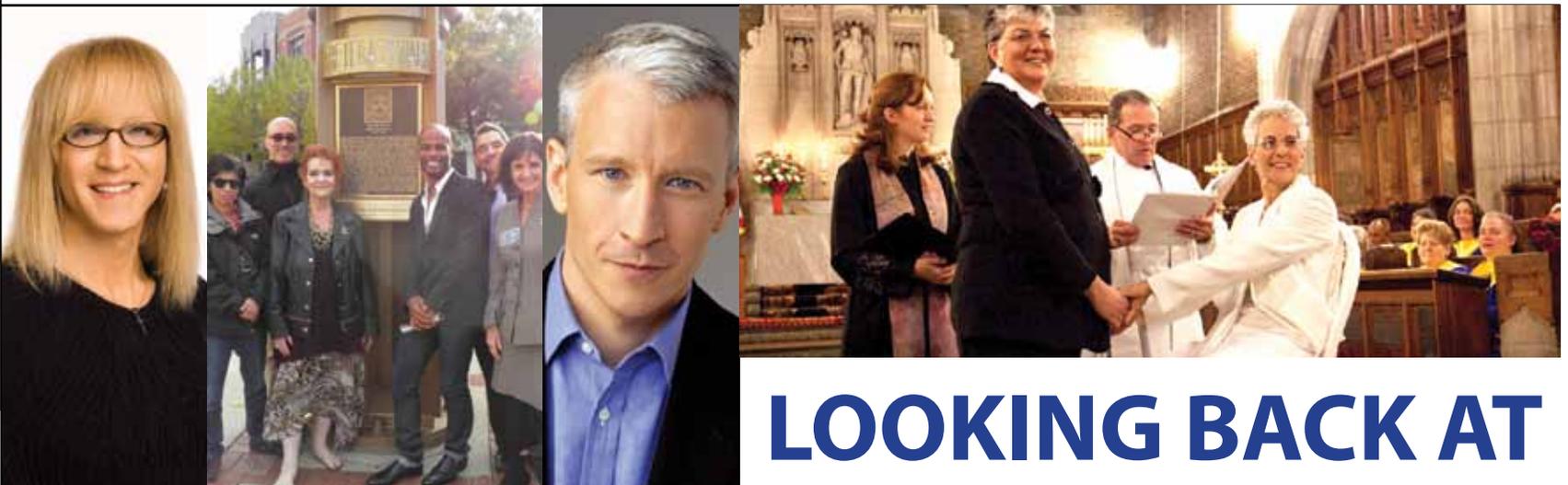
"They must call their legislators," said Rick Garcia, policy advisor for The Civil Rights Agenda (TCRA). "It really does make all the difference in the world."

Garcia said that LGBT people should call, email and visit lawmakers immediately, regardless of their stance on marriage equality. He also encouraged supporters to head to Springfield later this week to show their support.

Turn to page 5



CHATTING WITH ALAN CUMMING  
PAGE 17



## LOOKING BACK AT

# 2012

page 4

In a historic year, the local and national news scene was dominated by such stories as (clockwise, from top right) West Point's first same-sex wedding (photo from Jeff Sheng); the re-election of President Barack Obama (photo by Hal Baim); new OutServe/SLDN leader Allyson Robinson; the dedication of Halsted St.'s Legacy Walk (photo by Kirk Williamson); and the official coming out of TV anchor Anderson Cooper.



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PAGE 9



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**NEWS**

National news of 2012; passages	4
World news of 2012; marriage	5
Local news of 2012	6
Local passages of 2012	7
GLAAD; puppet; asexuals	8
Earth Pearl Collective profile	9
Generation Halsted	10
Views: Morten, Segal	13

**ENTERTAINMENT/EVENTS**

Scottish Play Scott	14
Theater highlights of 2012	16
Knight: Any Day Now	17
Alan Cumming interview	17
Dish: Club Lucky profile	18
Sandra Bernhard dishes	20
Billy Masters	21

**OUTLINES**

Real estate; classifieds	19
Calendar Q	19
Notable sports events of 2012	22

Photos on cover (left, from top): Sandra Bernhard PR photo; Generation Halsted photo by Bill Healy; Alan Cumming publicity photo; photo of Iman Crutcher and Katrina Sanford of Earth Pearl Collective by Melissa Wasserman

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**PEAKS AND VALLEYS**

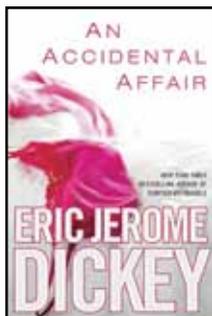
Rosie O'Donnell (left) was among those who made entertainment news in 2012. Read about the highs and lows in the world of showbiz.

Photo from OWN



Read an interview with L.A. Hair's Anthony Pazos.

Photo from WE tv



Read about the best fiction and nonfiction books of 2012.

**GOLD RUSH**

Read about a profile of Tim Gold, who's campaigning for a national LGBT museum.

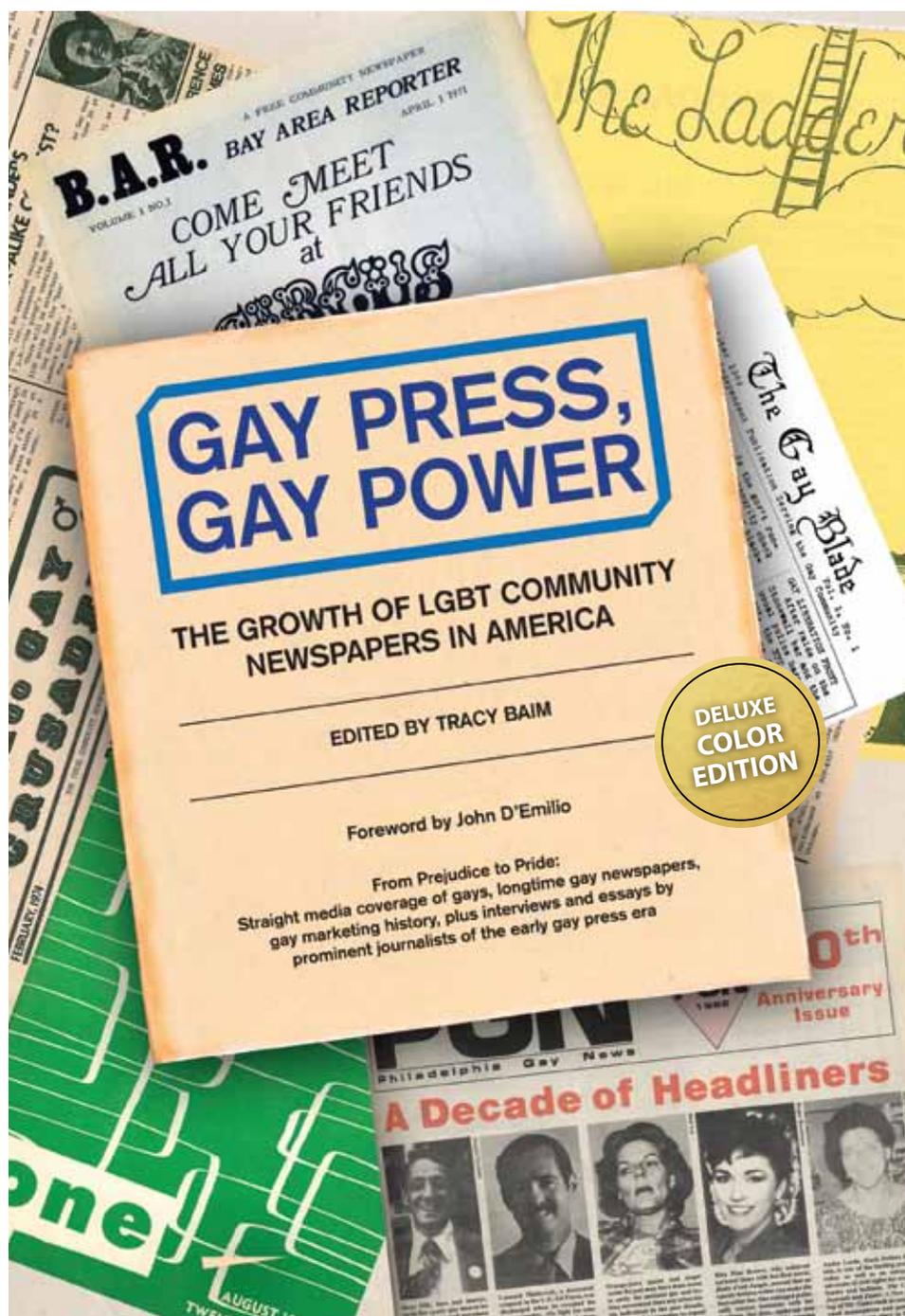
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# National news in 2012

COMPILED BY ANDREW DAVIS

It certainly was an eventful year for the LGBT community on the national front. Here is the list of national highlights and lowlights for 2012, largely in chronological order:

—**Fatal hazing:** The National Black Justice Coalition called for an investigation into the hazing death of gay Florida A&M University drum major Robert Champion Jr. Ultimately, the school offered to settle; however, Champion's parents rejected the offer.

—**Bachmann's end:** The notoriously anti-gay Michele Bachmann ended her run for president in the GOP primary. Her husband, Marcus, owns a clinic that Truth Wins Out reported practices reparative therapy, a controversial and discredited clinical method designed to "cure" LGBT people. Gradually, other candidates—including Newt Gingrich, Rick Perry and Rick Santorum—exit the race, leaving Mitt Romney as the last person standing.

—**A plan for youth:** Youth Pride Services has issued a report entitled "A National Strategy for Black Gay Youth in America." The report contained a plan called Year for (You)th. The goal of said plan "is to improve the quality of the lives of Black gay youth living in the United States."

—**Appointment:** San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee appointed Planning Commission President Christina Olague to the city's board of supervisors. The bisexual Olague first made her mark in the city's political circles as an organizer with the Mission Anti-Displacement Coalition.

—**Mayors for marrying:** Freedom to Marry, the campaign to win marriage nationwide, launched "Mayors for the Freedom to Marry" at a press conference during the U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting in Washington, D.C., Jan. 20. Among the 75 mayors supporting the initiative were Chicago's Rahm Emanuel, lesbian Houston Mayor Annise Parker and New York City's Michael Bloomberg.

—**HUD makes history:** U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Shaun Donovan announced that HUD would publish a "new regulation" in the Federal Register to ensure that any HUD-assisted housing program does not discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status.

—**Denial:** Maryland priest Father Marcel Guarnizo denied lesbian Barbara Johnson communion at her own mother's funeral. Guarnizo is no longer at the church where the incident occurred, although it's unclear if his departure is related to the situation.

—**A new leader:** The Human Rights Campaign selected Chad Griffin as its newest president. Griffin is the founder of the American Foundation for Equal Rights, the group that enlisted the legal services of some of the nation's best lawyers to launch a lawsuit against California's ban on same-sex marriage, Prop 8.

—**Death of a bill:** Tennessee's controversial "Don't Say Gay" bill died after key GOP sponsor state Rep. Joey Hensley said he decided "simply not to bring it up." The legislation—which had earlier been approved by a state House committee—stated, "[N]o public elementary or middle school shall provide any instruction or material that discusses sexual orientation other than heterosexuality."

—**Long arm of the law:** Two Kentucky men were the first individuals indicted for committing a hate crime in violation of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which expanded federal jurisdiction to include certain assaults motivated by someone's sexual orientation. They were eventually found not guilty of the hate crime, but found guilty of

kidnapping openly gay resident Kevin Pennington.

—**Ravi's sentence:** Former Rutgers student Dharun Ravi was sentenced to 30 days in jail for using a Webcam to spy on roommate Tyler Clementi, who had a tryst with another man. Days after finding out he was taped, Clementi committed suicide by jumping off the George Washington Bridge.

—**I'm coming out:** In Missouri, Christian Republican state Rep. Zach Wyatt recently came



Human Rights Campaign President Chad Griffin. Photo from HRC

out against his state's "Don't Say Gay" bill—and then came out himself. Wyatt called the measure "horrible" while adding that he was tired of anti-gay "bigotry being shown from both sides of the aisle on gay issues."

—**Texas tragedy:** In Portland, Texas, someone shot teen lesbian couple Mary Kristene Chapa and Mollie Judith Olgin. Olgin was found dead at the scene while Chapa eventually recovered. The killer remains at large, although police released a composite sketch (at [www.portlandtx.com/DocumentCenter/View/258](http://www.portlandtx.com/DocumentCenter/View/258)).

—**Giving the bird:** Chick-fil-A became the focal point of local and national controversy. Nationally, it was revealed that the chain donated more than \$3 million to anti-gay organizations like the Family Research Council and Exodus International between 2003 and 2009. There was also a national day to support Chick-fil-A, which resulted in some franchises running out of chicken.

—**Barney gets hitched:** Retiring U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., married Jim Ready in Newton, Mass. Frank, 72, met Ready, 42, at a political fundraiser in 2005. Guests at the wedding included U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the House minority leader, as well as U.S. Sen. John Kerry and Reps. Dennis J. Kucinich and Steny H. Hoyer; Massachusetts Gov. Deval L. Patrick officiated.

—**Anderson comes out:** Reporter/talk-show host Anderson Cooper officially came out in an email which openly gay journalist Andrew Sullivan unveiled on a posting of his blog on The Daily Beast. In part, the email reads, "The fact is, I'm gay, always have been, always will be, and I couldn't be any more happy, comfortable with myself, and proud."

—**Shooter indicted:** Floyd Lee Corkins II was formally charged with the shooting of the security guard at the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the conservative group the Family Research Council. A grand jury indicted Corkins on a federal charge of interstate transportation of a firearm and ammunition and two D.C. offenses. Corkins, who later received an additional charge of terrorism, had volunteered at a community

center for LGBT individuals.

—**"Cockmonster":** Maryland state House Delegate Emmett Burns has criticized Baltimore Ravens linebacker Brendon Ayanbadejo for the player's stance in favor of marriage equality. In response to Burns' action, Minnesota Vikings punter Chris Kluwe wrote to Burns, "I can assure you that gay people getting married will have zero effect on your life. They won't come into your house and steal your children. They won't magically turn you into a lustful cockmonster."

—**Funders withdraw:** Some of the Boy Scouts' biggest funders have withdrawn their support in light of the organization's anti-gay stance. United Parcel Service (UPS) took away its support, and Intel, one of the Scouts' largest corporate donors, announced that they will cease all future funding until the position changes.

—**Orlando's pride:** Orlando Cruz, a professional boxer from Puerto Rico (18-2-1, 9 KOs) who is a former Olympian, announced that he "is a proud gay man." Cruz, the first openly gay man in boxing history, then won his next bout.

—**Destruction:** Hurricane Sandy caused billions of dollars of destruction on the East Coast, especially New York—and many LGBT organizations were affected. Ali Forney Center Executive Director Carl Siciliano said in a release that "Water went at least four feet up the walls, and everything in there, including phones, computers, refrigerators, supplies, and the building floors has been irreparably damaged. I do not see us being able to return there, especially since our lease is finished at the end of January."

—**Election day:** Nov. 6 was a historic day on several fronts, politically speaking. President

Obama easily won re-election over Mitt Romney, and almost 80 percent of the LGBT candidates who ran for office across the nation won—including Tammy Baldwin, who became the first U.S. senator to represent the LGBT demographic. In addition, marriage-equality advocates prevailed in all four states where initiatives were on the ballot: Maryland, Maine, Minnesota and Washington state.

—**Historic wedding:** Army Veteran and OutServe-SLDN Board member Brenda S. "Sue" Fulton married longtime partner Penelope Dara Gnesin at the Cadet Chapel at West Point, marking the venue's first same-sex ceremony. Fulton is also the Executive Director of executive director of Knights Out, an organization of LGBT West Point graduates and allies.

—**Sheriff's situation:** In Arizona, GOP candidate Paul Babeu overcame publicity from a messy split from an ex-boyfriend to be re-elected sheriff of Pinal County. Babeu originally ran for Congress; however, a story ran in February in which Babeu's ex, Jose Orozco, accused him of asking Orozco to sign a confidentiality agreement about their relationship—and allegedly threatening him with deportation after he didn't sign.

—**Hear, hear:** The U.S. Supreme Court announced that it will review both the Prop 8 case concerning a statewide ban on same-sex marriage and a Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) case concerning a ban on federal recognition of same-sex marriages. However, no specific date had been pinned down.

To see the full list of national news, see [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

## Passages in 2012

COMPILED BY ANDREW DAVIS

—**Etta James:** The iconic singer who had hits such as "Something's Got a Hold on Me" and "At Last" died at 73. James overcame a heroin addiction, but also opened for the Rolling Stones, won six Grammys and was voted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

—**Whitney Houston:** The legendary singer/actress ("I Will Always Love You," "Didn't We Almost Have It All?" and many other hits) died at 48 in a Beverly Hills hotel. The official cause was listed as "drowning and effects of atherosclerotic heart disease and cocaine use."

—**Bob Green:** Green became famous thanks to then-wife Anita Bryant, as they campaigned against gay rights in the 1970s. He died in Miami at 80.

—**Olga Vives:** Vives was the National Organization for Women's executive vice president from 2005 to 2009, and action vice president from 2001 to 2005.

—**Adrienne Rich:** The lesbian feminist poet died March 27 at her home in Santa Cruz, Calif., of complications from rheumatoid arthritis. Rich was one of the first mainstream poets to write from a lesbian point of view.

—**Maurice Sendak:** Author Sendak, best known for writing and illustrating the kids' book *Where the Wild Things Are*, died May 8 at the age of 83. Sendak had a companion of 50 years, Eugene Glynn, who died in 2007.

—**Donna Summer:** Legendary disco queen Summer died at age 63. Summer ("Bad Girls," "She Works Hard for the Money") had a long battle with cancer. Summer reportedly believed she contracted the disease after inhaling toxic particles after the Sept. 11, 2001, attack in New York City.

—**Rosemary Keefe Curb:** Keefe Curb, 72, co-editor of one of the bestselling lesbian books of all time, *Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence*, has died of complications from lung surgery. Before retiring and moving to Albuquerque, N.M., Keefe Curb was dean at the University of Wisconsin-Superior.

—**Erik Rhodes:** Gay-porn star Rhodes—who had worked with Falcon, Mustang and Raging Stallion studios—passed away at the

age of 30. The cause of death was a heart attack. *Frontiers LA* reported that Rhodes appeared to be in a very dark place after reading his blog, in which he candidly talked about using drugs and steroids.

—**Sally Ride:** Physicist Ride, 61, a pioneering woman in space, died of pancreatic cancer July 23. She is survived by her partner of 27 years, Tam O'Shaughnessy. NASA chose Ride as an astronaut candidate in January 1978, and she was a mission specialist on her historic ride on STS-7, which launched June 18, 1983.

—**Gore Vidal:** Literary legend and political activist Vidal died at age 86 of complications of pneumonia. Vidal wrote 25 novels, including *The City and the Pillar*, which featured openly gay characters, and *Myra Breckinridge*; he also penned the Tony-nominated play *The Best Man*.

—**Sahara Davenport:** Davenport, who competed on the second season of Logo's *RuPaul's Drag Race*, died at age 28. Davenport was partner to fellow *Drag Race* participant Manila Luzon.

—**Lou Rispoli:** The gay activist was fatally beaten in a brutal attack. Rispoli, 62, was "hit in the head with a blunt object with such force that neighbors who heard the assault but did not see it thought he had been shot."

—**William Brandon Lacy Campos:** Poet/activist/author Campos passed away in New York City at the age of 35. Campos, who had been HIV-positive for the past 10 years, was the co-executive director of *Queers for Economic Justice* and a prominent figure within the country's social-activist and "artist" communities.

—**Josh Weston:** Gay-porn star Weston died from HIV-related complications at 39. Weston—who was featured in numerous films from Falcon Studios, *Hot House*, *Colt* and *C1R*—got his start as a dancer in San Francisco at the Nob Hill Theatre, where *Chi Chi LaRue* discovered him.

—**Spencer Cox:** Cox was an AIDS activist who helped spearhead research on lifesaving protease inhibitors, died of AIDS-related causes in New York City at age 44.

To read *Windy City Times'* full list of passages, see [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

# World news in 2012

COMPILED BY ANDREW DAVIS

—**D-I-V-O-R-C-E:** The Canadian Department of Justice told a court in Ontario that a lesbian couple from the United States and England who obtained a marriage license there in 2005 should not be granted a divorce because they were not legally married in Canada. The government eventually introduced an amendment to the Civil Marriage Act that addressed same-sex divorce.

—**Uganda's bill:** The week of Feb. 6, a highly controversial anti-gay bill was re-introduced in the Ugandan Parliament by conservative MP David Bahati Then, the bill dropped the death penalty for the "crime" of "aggravated homosexuality," but retained provisions that require citizens to report LGBT people to the proper authorities or face prosecution themselves. However, a stiffer version of the measure—which would sentence LGBTs to death—was being considered as of December.

—**Russia's anti-gay bill:** In Russia, St. Petersburg legislators officially adopted a bill that would impose fines of up to \$16,700 for the "promotion of homosexuality." The bill criminalizes reading, writing, speaking or reporting on anything related to LGBT people.

—**"Tomboy" killings:** The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission wrote to the government of Thailand to demand an immediate investigation into the pattern of gruesome murders of lesbians and gender variant women—those who identify as "toms," between 2006 and 2012.

—**There she is:** Jenna Talackova—the first-ever transgender contestant to compete in the Miss Universe Canada pageant—lost the contest. Talackova, 23, was initially denied entry to the pageant because she was not born female; however, that decision was overturned.

—**Arrested in Nicaragua:** Plans to build Ni-

caragua's first gay resort community were suspended following the arrest of the project's two proprietors, Francis DeFranco, 50, and Jan Van Den Broek, 50, of Belgium. In addition, a 55-year-old Canadian, a 65-year-old U.S. citizen and the hotel's 18-year-old bartender were arrested and detained as well.

—**Let's talk about sex:** In South Korea, actor Hong Seok-cheon, 41, became the first out gay man in the country's history to discuss sex and sexuality on television. Hong was once the host of children's show that was the country's equivalent of Sesame Street.

—**Disturbing situation:** Luka Rocco Magnotta, a Canadian gay-porn actor, was accused of killing and dismembering Lin Jun, a Chinese international student, and then mailing the victim's limbs to the offices of Canadian political parties and to elementary schools in another province. He was apprehended in an Internet cafe in Berlin while reading news stories about himself. His preliminary hearing is slated to begin in March 2013.

—**No salvation:** In Australia, Major Andrew Craibe—a senior official with the Salvation Army—said that non-celibate LGBT individuals should be put to death. Truth Wins Out reported that the Army later apologized to the LGBT community, saying that Craibe's answers were a "miscommunication."

—**Games people play:** London's Summer Olympics featured at least two dozen out participants—the most ever. Among those were four lesbians on the Dutch field-hockey team; cycling German Judith Arndt, who won a silver medal; American Lisa Raymond, who won a bronze medal with partner Mike Bryan in mixed-doubles tennis; and 2008 gold medal-winning diver Matthew Mitcham of Australia, who failed to medal this time. In addition, singers such as George Michael and Annie Lennox were featured

in the Games' ceremonies.

—**Banned for a century:** In Russia, a city court in Moscow upheld a decision to ban LGBT pride parades for the next 100 years. The decision affirms a Moscow municipal government ruling that bans the events until May 2112. Gay-rights activist Nikolay Alekseyev said he planned to appeal.

—**Riot cooled:** A Russian judge found three members of the punk band Pussy Riot guilty of hooliganism and they have been sentenced to two years in jail. The women were arrested in March after a guerrilla performance in Moscow's main cathedral calling for the Virgin Mary to protect Russia from Vladimir Putin. The members of the group include Yekaterina Samutsevich, described as a 30-year-old computer programmer interested in LGBT issues.

—**The great walk of China:** More than \$20,000 was raised at the first AIDS walk in China. The event took place along the Great Wall near Bei-

jing and raised funds for the Chinese Foundation for the Prevention of STD and AIDS. More than 100 people took part, walking in teams or individually along the wall at Jinshanling.

—**Bad meth:** Olympic diver Matthew Mitcham, a gay Australian, revealed in his new autobiography, *Twists and Turns*, that he battled an addiction to crystal meth in the years leading up to the London Olympics. Eventually, he became addicted; he recovered with the help of Narcotics Anonymous, a drug rehabilitation clinic, hypnotherapy and the support of his inner circle.

—**Blood brothers:** Mexico reportedly became the first country in the Eastern Hemisphere to allow gay people to donate blood. Under the new law, the only people banned from donating blood would be HIV-positive individuals or their partners, people with hepatitis and people who engage in "risky sexual practices," regardless of their sexual identity.

## MARRIAGE from cover

Rep. Greg Harris, who introduced the bill, has said that sponsors would not call the measure to a vote unless it had the votes to pass.

Garcia said that the latest reports indicate that the votes are close and that a push on the measure could come sooner rather than later.

"We are very close to having the necessary votes to call it," Garcia said. "When the votes are there, we call the bill."

LGBT advocates believe that a move on the bill could come as soon as Thursday or Friday. Some have said that they believe Harris and state Sen. Heather Steans will call the bill early in the lame-duck session, while others have predicted that a vote could come Monday, Jan. 7.

Garcia warned against premature celebration, and said LGBTs should not assume that the heavy lifting is done.

"There is a good chance that the bill will be called, but don't freak out if it isn't," Garcia said.

Still, momentum suggests that legislators believe the bill could pass as soon as this week.

Last week, a group of more than 200 faith leaders released a letter in support of marriage equality in Illinois.

According to the Chicago Tribune, major business players are also poised to announce their support for the bill. Those include Google, Groupon, Morningstar, PrivateBank-corp Inc.

Windy City Times will be posting breaking stories on the marriage push all week. Check [www.windycitymediagroup.com](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com) for ongoing updates.

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# Local news in 2012

COMPILED BY KATE SOSIN

National activists have hailed 2012 as a landmark year for LGBT rights, and Chicago has been no exception. The Windy City had its fill of LGBT triumphs (and some tragedies) over the past year. Here are our biggest headlines from 2012:

—**Marriage momentum:** Marriage equality in Illinois is the prediction for 2013, after a stunning year of progress by LGBT advocates. State Rep. Greg Harris is poised to call for a vote on a bill that would legalize same-sex marriage in Illinois.

Also pushing for marriage equality are Lambda Legal and the American Civil Liberties Union. Both organizations filed suit against Cook County Clerk David Orr, seeking to overturn the ban on same-sex marriage on behalf of 25 couples. Orr refused to defend the ban as did State's Attorney Anita Alvarez and Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan. Five other county clerks are intervening to fight the lawsuits.

—**Health assurance:** Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC) continued to recover its finances and its reputation, more than two years after the discovery of misused grants rocked the organization. HBHC settled its debts with federal funders, paying out \$715,000. The organization remains in "good standing" with the federal government.

Questions were raised about whether or not the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study would remain at HBHC following a dispute with Northwestern University over the release of patient information. Broadway Youth Center announced it was moving from its old home at Belmont and Broadway.

Staff changes continued to sweep the organization, including a change in leadership. Embattled CEO Jamal Edwards stepped down. Former Board Chair Karma Israelsen is filling in while HBHC conducts a new leadership search.

—**Election gains:** LGBTs fared well in local elections this November. In one of the most-watched races among LGBT Illinoisans, Sam Yingling became the first openly gay rep elected outside of Chicago, besting Republican Sandy Cole. Openly gay Rep. Deb Mell carried a strong leader over Republican challenger Antoinette "Toni" Puccio-Johnson. Judge Andrea Schleifer, another out gay candidate, bested Republican James Pieczonka for the Cook County 12th Subcircuit Rochford vacancy.

John Dalton became the first openly gay judge elected outside of Chicago, defeating Republican John Waters in the race for the 16th Circuit seat in Kane County. John Ehrlich, an openly gay judicial candidate, ran unopposed for the Cook County 8th Subcircuit Cole vacancy. Debra Shore, the out gay commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, led a pack of eight

in both city and Cook County elections and will be staying in office.

—**Playing chicken:** Chicago became the most-watched battleground in a seemingly unending national debate over chicken sandwiches and homophobia this summer. After Chick-fil-A head Dan Cathy stated that his company was "guilty as charged" of opposing gay marriage, Chicago Ald. Proco "Joe" Moreno vowed to block the chain from moving into his ward until the company ceased donations to anti-gay groups and announced anti-discrimination policies. Moreno later declared victory, but Chick-fil-A said it had not changed policies.

—**TransLife center:** Renowned HIV service organization Chicago House announced that it would be serving a new population in the coming months: transgender people. The organization is in the process of opening new housing in the city's Edgewater neighborhood. The organization will also offer myriad transgender services in the house's lower level. Chicago House staff have all been trained to better serve transgender people, and the organization has added transgender voices to its board.

—**From the Hart:** Chicago's LGBT library moved from Edgewater to Rogers Park, but not without difficulty. A Windy City Times investigation revealed that Gerber/Hart Library and Archives had become estranged from the community that built it, while questions about its compliance with non-profit law emerged.

Karen Sendziak, former board president, stepped down amid the controversy, and the library adopted new bylaws that stripped member voting rights. The organization held a closed annual meeting in December, but that meeting did not include board elections. The library has yet to reopen, as its new home is under construction.

—**TGIF:** Chicago saw its first-ever transgender pride event in 2012. "Transgender, Gender Non-conforming Intersex Freedom" debuted in Union Park in July. The afternoon picnic featured performances by transgender people, tabling and a rally. Lead organizer KOKUMO has said the event will be an annual tradition.

—**Healthy Chicago:** City officials unveiled a new plan that aims to improve LGBT health. The "LGBT Community Action Plan" will target prevalence of smoking, lack of culturally competent medical care, hate violence against transgender people, HIV and obesity. The plan is part of the city's "Healthy Chicago" initiative.

—**Coming to one's census:** The Chicago Community Trust and the Morten Group presented data from the LGBT Needs Assessment, providing the first study of Chicago's LGBT community in nearly a decade. Access to healthcare, unemployment and underemployment, access to government rights and services, discrimination and safety were among the top issues facing the community.



Howard Brown Health Center underwent many changes in 2012. Photo by Andrew Davis

—**LPAC:** Billing itself as the first of its kind, the Lesbian Political Action Committee (LPAC) launched June 11 with the backing of prominent Chicagoans. Cubs co-owner Laura Ricketts, Chicago-area native Jane Lynch and Chicagoan Sarah Schmidt, whose family owns U.S. Venture, were all involved.

—**Homo-grown:** In September, the Chicago Housing Authority approved a major contract for upcoming LGBT-friendly senior housing in Lakeview, totaling \$29,124,000 over 30 years. The award went to Heartland Housing and Center on Halsted, which are collaborating to bring 79 LGBT-affirming units to 3600 N. Halsted St. The project has been years in the making and is expected to open in late spring of 2014. The property houses the former historic 23rd Dist. Town Hall Police Station, which will be persevered.

—**Equality's expansion:** LGBT-policy organization Equality Illinois announced an expansion to Springfield and Chicago's western suburbs. The organization is opening two satellite offices in Springfield and in DuPage County.

—**Proud control:** Chicago's Annual Pride Parade kicked off without a hitch this year with a new route and the heaviest attendance in its more than four-decade history. Officials had fretted over whether or not the new route would curb overcrowding problems seen in 2011.

—**HIV totals:** A report recently put out by the Chicago Department of Public Health shows that HIV rates among men who have sex with men rose in 2011 but that testing and linkage to care did as well. HIV prevalence rates among MSMs in 2011 were 20.9 percent, up from 2008, when the rate was 18.1 percent.

—**Police trans-formation:** After two years of pushing by local activists, the Chicago Police Department quietly adopted a general order in August that mandates the respect treatment of transgender by police. Activists celebrated the new policy but said they want significant improvements to the document as well as better oversight to make sure it is followed.

—**Mayors for marriage:** Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel signed onto a nationwide campaign in support of same-sex marriage, joining more than 70 other mayors to do so in a massive push for marriage equality. The "Mayors for the Freedom to Marry" launch Jan. 20 at the Conference of Mayors meeting in Washington, D.C.

—**Gimme shelter:** A far North Side Church announced its intention to open a shelter for LG-BTQ youth. Unity Church, 1925 W. Thome Ave., began planning for the shelter this summer after a pastor there met LGBTQ homeless youth in Lakeview and said he felt moved to act.

—**Velvet Rope fire:** Popular Oak Park gay bar, the Velvet Rope, was ravaged by a suspicious fire in June. Officials said that anti-gay graffiti was found spray-painted in the bar, and they ruled the fire arson. Rumors have swirled about the source of the fire, but Oak Park police have yet to announce an arrest.

—**Crossroads:** Chicago's Dykes on Bikes organization became an official chapter of the San Francisco Dykes on Bikes, making the riders a non-profit organization. The group had been

working as an unofficial entity since 1987. The name "Dykes on Bikes" is a registered trademark of the San Francisco organization.

—**Re-birth day:** Illinois was forced to update its process for allowing transgender people to change their birth certificates after the American Civil Liberties Union slapped the state with a lawsuit on behalf of three trans people. Genital surgery is no longer a requirement for updating one's birth certificate, but surgery of some kind is still mandated.

—**Shelter from the storm:** Vida/SIDA open Chicago's first LGBTQ-specific youth shelter this March. El Rescate transitional housing, located in Humboldt Park, was designed to house a dozen youth ages 18-24.

—**Repair therapy:** Illinois became latest battleground state in a nationwide fight over "ex-gay" therapy in October when The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health and the American Psychoanalytic Association announced that they filed a licensing board complaint against a mental health professional practicing reparative therapy, a practice purported to change sexual orientation. The complaint, filed with the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, advocates for the investigation of Paul McNulty, a Bloomingdale Illinois social worker.

—**Flip-flop:** An Aurora school district attracted national headlines after it changed course on plans to adopt a transgender student policy three times. East Aurora School District 131 adopted the protections this fall, voted to undo the policy just days later, set up a committee to re-write the protections and then disbanded that committee. LGBT advocates argue that the district caved to pressure from the Illinois Family Institute, an anti-gay group that strongly opposed the protections.

—**Trans Rights Project:** The Civil Rights Agenda announced its new Transgender Rights Project, a transgender-led group dedicated to policy advances and education. The group could become the only policy-focused transgender entity in the state; Illinois Gender Advocates, which currently fills that role, is considering disbanding.

—**Testing behind bars:** Cook County Jail resumed HIV and STD screenings, after years of pushing by AIDS advocate and Commissioner Bridget Gainer. Before 2007, the jail only provided tests to those who asked but discontinued that practice. The jail had initially announced that it would be providing opt-out testing in 2010. Two years later, the testing finally resumed with a new 22-room intake facility.

—**Walk of names:** In a historic moment for Chicago's LGBT community, the Legacy Walk, an outdoor walking LGBT history museum, was dedicated this October. Currently, 18 plaques tell the stories of LGBT leaders and other LGBT triumphs. The museum is the first of its kind. Hundreds attended a dedication ceremony of the plaques.

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# Local passages in 2012

COMPILED BY KATE SOSIN

—**John Pennycuff:** A nearly indefatigable LGBT activist and community figure, Pennycuff died Jan. 29 following a two-month illness. He was 47. Pennycuff and partner Robert Castillo were at the forefront of countless LGBT causes. Pennycuff served on the Chicago Commission on Human Relations Mayor's Advisory Council on LGBT Issues, was a member of Queer Nation Chicago, was office manager of Windy City Media Group for several years, and had worked for the Logan Square Chamber of Commerce and for 35th Ward Ald. Rey Colon.

—**Jeff Geiger:** Geiger, a longtime employee of Charlie's Chicago and the face of drag persona Minerva Rex, died June 4 of a heart attack. He was 48. Geiger raised thousands of dollars for local organizations like Vital Bridges and Autism Speaks by performing as Minerva Rex at benefits, and he used his drag talents almost solely for charitable causes.

—**Sasha Valentino:** The legendary Chicago-based female impersonation performer, passed away on Dec. 26 after a long battle with dementia. She was 40. Valentino was a nationally known pageant performer, whose titles were many and whose chosen family was extensive.

—**Merry Mary, aka Mary Featherston:** A longtime LGBT ally, Mary died Dec. 30 after a short battle with cancer at age 77. Mary was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame as a Friend of the Community in 2005.

—**Harold Mandel:** Mandel, 58, the flamboyant owner of an equally flamboyant vintage clothing store, Flashy Trash, died Oct. 22 of complications from AIDS. Flashy Trash, a store located most recently at 3524 N. Halsted, closed several years ago, but its customers—from LGBTs to North Shore heterosexual women to Hollywood elites—remember it for its wide range of clothing, reinforced from Mandel's 500,000-object, 5,000-square-foot warehouse collection.

—**Mark Aguhar:** A celebrated local visual and performance artist and poet, Aguhar died March 12 at age 24. Aguhar was in the M.F.A. program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. According to an artist statement on her website, her work was a "continuous exploration of queer expression and what it means to have grown up gay on the Internet."

—**Gene Janowski:** One of small group of people who planned Chicago's annual Pride Parade, Janowski passed away suddenly in November. He was 68. Janowski was involved in several local LGBT organizations, and he wrote columns for GayLife Newspaper, Windy City Times and Gay Chicago Magazine.

—**Steve Starr:** Renowned photographer Steve Starr, a fixture on Chicago's social scene and a man who celebrated old Hollywood, passed away Nov. 12 after collapsing outside the Drake Hotel, according to the Chicago Sun-Times. He was 65. Starr was planning a party next month to mark

45 years in the business.

—**Ann-Kirstine "Stina" Rogal:** Rogal, a larger-than-life personality whose dance lessons at Charlie's bar kept Chicago's LGBT community two-stepping for 15 years, died April 3 after a battle with esophageal cancer. She was 55.

—**Paige Clay:** Paige Clay, a transgender woman who many believed to be a rising luminary in Chicago's ball scene, was found shot to death on Chicago's West Side in April; she was 23. Clay's murder spurred a national conversation about violence against transgender people.

—**Tiffany Gooden:** Tiffany Gooden, a 19-year-old transgender woman, was found murdered this August, three blocks from where Paige Clay, another trans woman, was killed. Gooden and Clay had been close friends, and their murders prompted local activists to begin organizing efforts to cut down on violence against transgender people.

—**Martin Dorsey:** Dorsey, a young man who fought the stereotyping of LGBT youth of color in Chicago, died July 18, just two days before his birthday. He was 20 years old. In 2009, Dorsey started working on the Youth Pride Services' Code Red project, which was formed to highlight the voices of Black gay youth who were opposed to the perceived increase of violence in Lakeview.

—**Maurice "JacJac" Blandin Jr.:** Blandin, died in late April at age 21. Blandin was active in Chicago's ball scene and had a large community of friends, many of whom stayed at his South Side home on weekends.

—**Mike Barnes:** A longtime pharmacist at the Walgreens in Lakeview, died unexpectedly after an emergency colonoscopy in early December. He had been a bowler in local gay leagues since the 1980s. He was 56. His late partner Bart Rarick also died earlier in the year.

—**Melvin "Mel" Earl Koschnitzki:** A retired cosmologist/hairstylist and veteran of the U.S. Navy and Reserves, Koschnitzki passed away unexpectedly at home Dec. 4; he was 72. He is survived by his partner of 26 years, Thomas Firestone.

—**Fred M. Zucker:** a retired gallery director at Merrill Chase and Sears Vincent Price Art Galleries, opera aficionado, dedicated bicyclist and member of Chi-Town Squares—passed away peacefully Oct. 8. He was 88. In an interview with Zucker recorded on ChicagoGayHistory.com, he discussed the Center on Halsted, his identity and community involvement (joining the Matachine Society in the 1960s, and many other groups subsequently).

—**Gary Skala:** Chicago gay activist Gary Skala passed away Nov. 6. In Chicago, he was active with the Metropolitan Community Church, the Night Ministry, and theaters including Bailiwick Repertory.

—**Barbara Ann Schon-Lundberg:** Schon-Lundberg, a longtime LGBT advocate and PFLAG activist died Oct. 28 at age 62 of brain cancer.



John Pennycuff.

During her life, she worked with AIDS patients at Chicago House, BE-HIV: Evanston, The Names Project, and Safe Schools Illinois, and the Northern Illinois PFLAG Council, acting as President at the time of her diagnosis. She lobbied for Marriage Equality with Equality Illinois and many other LGBT issues.

—**Jay Miller:** Jay Miller, the longest-serving executive director of the Illinois chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), died Jan. 3 of complications related to emphysema, according to the Chicago Sun-Times. He was 83.

—**Rev. David Holzhauer:** Holzhauer, the former pastor of Holy Covenant Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) in Hinsdale, passed away March 19. Holzhauer most recently served as assistant pastor at King of Peace MCC in St. Petersburg, Fla., but he led Holy Covenant MCC in the western Chicago suburbs from 1987 to 1989.

—**Catherine "Geege" Borovina:** The longtime Chicago activist and businesswoman died Aug. 19 after a brief illness. Borovina and her partner, Leslie Fisher, owned a popular bar in Old Town. They have been supportive of a wide range of community causes, and were part of the gay bowling leagues for many years.

—**Frank Sieple:** Frank Sieple, a longtime HIV/AIDS activist with ACT UP/Chicago, passed away suddenly Jan. 5 at age 51. Sieple was an early leader of ACT UP/Chicago, participating in actions throughout Chicago with Danny Sotomayor, Tim Miller and others who protested the government's silence as AIDS ravaged Chicago's gay community.

—**Marilyn C. Urso:** A "second mother" to many HIV-positive Chicagoans through her nursing at Howard Brown Health Center, Urso died Jan. 10 after a short battle with lung cancer. A Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame inductee, Urso was best known in Chicago's LGBT community as a longtime medical coordinator with the

Multi-site AIDS Cohort Study (MACS), the world's largest and longest-running HIV study.

—**Kevin Evans:** Evans, a longtime Chicagoan and well-known poet, musician and artist, died Jan. 13 after a battle with non-alcohol-related liver disease at age 47. Evans was a scriptwriter, guitar player, poet, editor, graphic artist and video producer.

—**Cynthia Pallick:** Pallick, a gay parent and former Calumet City alderman, died April 16. She was 53. She served as Calumet City's 7th Ward alderman for six years. Pallick is survived by her son, Jacob Horvath, and partner, Cindy Horvath.

—**Ernest "Ernie" T. Kramer, R.N.:** Kramer, a retired longtime rehab nurse at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago; deacon at Lakeview Presbyterian Church; and a member of Center on Halsted's SAGE group and Lakeview AARP, passed away peacefully April 14. He was 74.

—**Allen Curtis "Curt" Clapper:** Clapper, passed away March 18. Clapper, who was gay, was a longtime supporter of LGBT causes. He spent many years in the retail book industry, including as partner in People Like Us Books, a gay and lesbian bookstore.

—**Randall Wayne Williamson:** Williamson, a member of the Chicago chapter of the American Veterans for Equal Rights (gay veterans), died Jan. 29. Williamson served in the U.S. Navy from 1963 through 1969 and had been active with AVER Chicago for many years.

—**David Wellington Hopkins:** Hopkins, 56, of Edgewater, passed away April 18, after a long illness. He served as the Lincoln Park Lagooners' Chairman of the Board for several terms, during which time they were inducted into Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame.

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by Nora Ephron**

**Tuesday, Jan. 8  
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Book Group: Mules and Men  
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## GLAAD project comes to Illinois

BY KATE SOSIN

Just days ahead of a possible vote on same-sex marriage in the state, national LGBT organization GLAAD has announced that its "Commentator Accountability Project" now includes Illinois figures.

The project, which aims to educate reporters about vociferously anti-gay leaders who tend to be quoted in media, now includes profiles of two Illinois commentators.

David Smith and Laurie Higgins, both of the Illinois Family Institute, are profiled.

Smith grabbed attention recently with an NBC Chicago interview during which he predicted that same-sex marriage would not pass in Illinois. He also said that LGBT activists had deceived Illinoisans when civil unions were called to a vote, stating that activists denied that civil unions were a stepping stone to marriage. (LGBT advocates refute that claim.)

In recent weeks, Higgins has been vocal against efforts by East Aurora School Dist. 131 to adopt transgender protections.

Already included in the project was Peter La-Barbera, the Illinois-based founder of Americans for Truth About Homosexuality.

A statement put out by GLAAD announcing the new Illinois entries said that the organization does not want to keep those listed out of the media.

"But if a reporter is interviewing someone who insinuates that his or her political opponent is controlled by the devil, it's the reporter's journalistic responsibility to put that person's opinion in perspective," the statement reads.

## Puppet riles LGBT activists

BY KATE SOSIN

A group of Chicago LGBT activists has joined a widespread call to axe a controversial Puerto Rican puppet after the character made comments that many perceived to be inappropriate.

La Comay (roughly "the Godmother," in English) has long been controversial among LGBTs and Puerto Ricans. Activists have called for the removal of the puppet, played by of Kobbo Santarrosa WAPA TV's show SuperXclusivo in the past.

Following the high-profile murder of 19-year-old Jorge Steven Lopez Mercado three years ago, La Comay found herself in hot water for comments that many perceived to be homophobic. Others have said her comments are racist and xenophobic.

Now, LGBT Chicagoans are urging WAPA to pull the plug on La Comay after the character speculated that a Puerto Rican murder victim, Jose Enrique Gomez, brought death on himself by frequenting an area known for male and female sex work.

A Facebook page calling for a boycott of La Comay quickly garnered 75,000 supporters by Dec. 28, and appeared to be growing.

In Chicago, a list of LGBT leaders and Latin@ politicians has joined that call. Among those listed on a letter honoring Enrique and calling for an end to La Comay are Illinois Sens. Iris Martinez and William Delgado; Rep. Toni Berrios; Alds. Rey Colon and Joe Moreno; Cook County Commissioners Edwin Reyes and Jesus "Chuy" Garcia; and Cook County Assessor Joe Berrios.

LGBT groups such as the Association of Latino Men for Action, Equality Illinois, Center on Halsted and Vida/SIDA also appear on the letter.

Ruben Feliciano, an organizer of Chicago efforts against La Comay, noted the city's large Puerto Rican population and the impact that

could have on efforts against the puppet.

"I think this time they finally went overboard," he said. "It was the final straw for a lot of people."

In a statement sent to Windy City Times, WAPA president Jose E. Ramos said that the station, show and character respect viewers. "We sincerely regret if comments made on the show are ever a source of pain for anyone," Ramos said in the statement.

The statement notes that WAPA worked with LGBT advocates the last time such an issue arose and went on to say that WAPA will not be canceling the show as requested.

"However, as responsible broadcasters, we have decided to implement a brief tape delay on SuperXclusivo to ensure the show continues to provide entertainment while upholding the values of the station at all times," the statement concludes.

## Trans woman reflects on working with transgender seniors

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Born and raised on the South Side of Chicago, Christine McClinton has been aware of her gender identity since the age of 8. At 20, she began taking hormones; in 2006, she changed her name to Christine McClinton.

Throughout her life, McClinton has had no support from her family or friends. Family members, McClinton noted, became very angry with her and told her she was crazy when she began to take hormones and changed her name. They refused to use her chosen name and told her if ever wore women's clothing on a visit she wouldn't be welcome.

In 2008, McClinton learned about the services that the Howard Brown Health Center provides and began seeing their medical staff for medical and hormonal treatments. From there she was referred to a therapist, Carolyn E. Gehle, LCSW, for help with her transition.

A few years later, in 2011, McClinton suggested to Gehle that they start a support group focusing on MTF women over 40 since that is the group that McClinton identifies with. Their goal was to provide resources and support for older transgender people since the resources and support they found were geared towards young transgender people.

The group—called "MTF Trans Women Over Forty Social Group"—began in November 2011 with McClinton serving as a peer leader for the group. The meetings provide a venue to discuss a variety of topics and do a variety of activities.

With the group being newly formed, attendance has varied from month to month. They have contacted the Center on Halsted and the Howard Brown Health Center to get the word out and those organizations have referred a few people to the group.

Of the group, McClinton said, "We hope, most of all that the group will continue to grow and provide transgender women a resource to turn to, a place to be accepted, validated and supported. If the group grows, we would need a bigger space to meet. We would also like to partner with other people, groups or institutions in Chicago and neighboring cities who share our goals."

The group meets the first Thursday of each month from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at 4753 N. Broadway, Ste. 928. For more information, contact Gehle at 773-472-6615 or McClinton at 773-710-0824.

To help finance McClinton's gender-reassignment surgery, Gehle has organized a fundraising effort through the GiveForward site ([www.GiveForward.com](http://www.GiveForward.com)). To donate, visit [www.giveforward.com/christinemcclintonsurgeryfund](http://www.giveforward.com/christinemcclintonsurgeryfund).

## Asexuals make presence known, seek LGBTQ allies

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

"An asexual person is a person who does not experience sexual attraction." That's the first thing you'll read on [www.asexuality.org](http://www.asexuality.org), the home of the Asexuality Visibility and Education Network (AVEN). For asexuals, that barely begins to describe their sexual or romantic orientations, but for society at large, it can be a big step forward.

Becky, 33, who requested Windy City Times not use her surname, lives in Lakeview and identifies as an a-romantic asexual. To her, that means she has no inclination to be sexually or romantically intimate with either men or women.

It sounds simple enough, but it took Becky the first 26 years of her life (when she discovered AVEN) before she had even considered it.

"I assumed that I was gay and I came out to myself and my family three different times, but I never really wanted to do anything about it and I never managed to meet any girl I was attracted to," she said.

She said there was a time that she thought she must be repressed, afraid of intimacy and of being vulnerable or dealing with some kind of psychological trauma. After exhaustively searching the Internet, she found AVEN and hundreds like her, and things began to click.

"That's the place where most asexual people start when they come to our community, is that there must be something wrong with them," said David Jay, who founded AVEN in 2001. "We live in a culture that assumes that if you're not sexual enough that you're broken."

Jay, who is also the subject of the 2011 documentary "(A)sexual," struggled with his own sexuality in high school, and after identifying and coming out as asexual, wanted to meet and talk with others like him.

"I knew that there were other people out there like me and I wanted to find them," he said, "both to tell them they were okay—because it had taken me a long time to realize I was okay—and just to have a conversation and connect to them."

Results of a 2004 probability study of 18,000 people in the United Kingdom suggest 1 percent of the population self-identifies as asexual.

Unlike celibacy, asexuality is not a choice, but an orientation; asexuals don't have an intrinsic desire to make sexuality a part of how they connect with others.

It can be a difficult concept to understand. Jay said the most common obstacle to making sense of asexuality, in his experience, is that people have see a lack of sexual attraction as a problem, not a sexual identity.

"People say, 'Oh that can't be a valid explanation of who you are; there must be something wrong with you,'" he said. "There must be some explanation for why you're not sexual, because [for them] the notion that there's a person who's not sexual who could be okay is impossible to fathom."

Consequently, Becky said she is careful about when and to whom she uses the word "asexual."

"The word 'asexual'—people don't know what it is and they have a lot of misconceptions about it," she said. "I've had enough negative times of having it come back to hurt me that it has put me in a very defensive stance."

Because Becky and other asexuals many times feel the need to conceal their identity, they feel a strong connection to the LGBTQ community. Becky said she finds that when



AVEN at San Francisco Pride 2011. Photo from Becky

she comes out to gays and lesbians, they tend to be more accepting.

"People who have gone through their coming out journey I think tend to recognize in other people the signs that they have also been through that period of reflection and they respect that and they tend to take what I say with more respect," she said.

As such, Jay and other leaders among the asexual community have been working hard at forging partnerships with LGBTQ organizations in order to help meet the immediate needs of visibility and better education on asexual issues.

"More than anything, we want to integrate what we know about the asexual experience into [the LGBTQ] mechanism of education and support," Jay said.

Jay said that plan involves reaching out to gay-straight alliances, mental health groups, and groups doing public education work so that youth and mental health professionals not only understand what asexuality is, but recognize why talking about asexuality can help raise public awareness about sexuality in general.

AVEN also became part of the annual Creating Change Conference last year and attendance was so great at their session that at next year's conference in January, it will host three workshops.

"There are LGBT organizations around the country that have asexual members, that have asexual members in their leadership, that have asexuals coming to them and asking for support all the time and those organizations are really looking for resources," Jay said.

According to Becky, there are currently no community resources in Chicago for asexual individuals. Having attended programs at places such as Center on Halsted, she said acceptance from the LGBT community would be a big step. The mention of asexuality in advertising for LGBTQ events, for example, would make a difference.

"I know people get tired of that because the [full LGBTQ] acronym is about 15 letters long, but by including asexuality in those spaces, I think it also helps get other non-asexual but not straight people to consider opening their hearts to asexual people too and understanding," she said.

Jay said that he recommends communities host screenings of "(A)sexual" to start a dialogue about asexuality if they are interested in a way to immediately help improve visibility.

"I think that as soon as you begin to seriously talk about asexual people and our experiences, then that assumption (that there's something wrong with asexual people) begins to erode and I think that's a valuable thing for everyone, not just asexual people," Jay said.

For more information and resources on asexuality, visit [www.asexuality.org](http://www.asexuality.org).

# Earth Pearl Collective seeks to lead queer Black womyn

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Teaming to lead the outlet for queer Black womyn known as Earth Pearl Collective, Iman Crutcher and Katrina Sanford sat down for an interview with Windy City Times to discuss their involvement with the group along with its focus



Iman Crutcher (left) and Katrina Sanford of Earth Pearl Collective. Photo by Melissa Wasserman

and various activities to aid and entertain the community.

## Windy City Times: What's the idea behind Earth Pearl Collective?

Katrina Sanford: We thought there's a lot going on and we could use help and want to collaborate with people, so we've been reaching out to all these organizations around the city. We don't collaborate enough in our community.

Affinity Community Services, they've been a huge supporter since the beginning. So it's nice to have some kind of support within the community as well, not just an outsider's point of view, which is fine because the point is to have more people who are in the community know about the community or want to be involved with the community so it's not so segregated.

[However,] neither of us is from here; she's from Tennessee and I'm from Virginia, so we're transplants. So there's that whole other element. I think it's actually kind of a good thing that neither of us are from here because with our work so far we're realizing how segregated the city is; but neither of us are from here, so we don't have that mentality.

Iman Crutcher: That mentality to say, "we have to do events on this side of town..." we do events where it's convenient, where the price is good, and hope that everybody comes out. I think that's the good thing about us. We don't belong to a particular group or a particular anything. It's just like here we are, people don't know who we are, so come find out. Come check it out!

## WCT: What is the overall mission?

KS: We're a social justice/arts collective and our primary goal is to promote and showcase queer womyn of color. We're a community that's silenced a lot and I think a lot of people don't

understand the talent and "amazingness" that comes out of this queer womyn of color community. So we want to promote womyn, we want to showcase these womyn and educate outside our community.

Actually, a good example is that we've been working on trying to get the vote out. We did voter registration and we've been trying to educate people on who's running here, who's running federally and their platforms. So educating our community, educating communities outside our community so they know that these are the issues we're dealing with—we're here, too, and we want to be more visible. We just want our community to be more visible.

IC: More visible as all of those identities. Not just we'll just put you with womyn, we'll just put you with the Black people, we'll put you with the gay people. By recognizing if you are queer, you are Black and you are a womyn—if you are those things, there are certain elements of your life, certain issues that you deal with that nobody else has to deal with.

It might have to do with a little bit of this and a little bit of that, but there's the combination of all of that, it's intense. It's intense for the people involved and it's easy for everybody else to say, "you're fine." That's what we want to make people more aware of, but not to be like, "We're more oppressed than you." Not at all! We are, too; let's all work together and we can talk about these things. We should be able to put it out on the table without there being so much backlash. All the communities have a voice and it doesn't matter what that voice says; it's their voice.

## WCT: So it's a welcoming place for people who are in those categories?

IC: We use the terms "queer," "Black" and "womyn" very broadly. When we say, "queer," we don't necessarily mean just lesbians. Definitely bi, definitely questioning, definitely whatever the wind blows in. When we say, "womyn," we are including trans womyn or womyn on the line, or womyn who are just saying "I want to be involved in your movement." When we say, "Black," it's mostly "of color" and if you have some sort of African ancestry. When we say, "Black," we're using it very broadly. You can identify with these things.

KS: We don't want exclusivity. In general, people need to work together, whether it's in a particular community or outside that community.

## WCT: Can you tell me about the Earth Pearl Collective performances?

IC: There was a collaboration between Earth Pearl and [weekly spoken-word venue] POW-WOW and it was "The Revival Tour"—an all-womyn's group. It was salon-style performance; they were from Atlanta, D.C. and New York and they've been touring around literally in a van going to different cities across the U.S. and in Canada.

That's the kind of collaboration we want to do. Just somebody says, "Hey, you're doing this? I know this group, they can help you out." So they came, they sent us some flyers, we made sure to get the flyers out, put it on the website, put it on our e-blast and we sent it out to everybody, making sure that people came to see these talented womyn do their thing. You have to see it to believe it. There's so many talented womyn just in Chicago, but to have somebody coming from out of town—it's like, "Look what else is out there. We're not alone; look at this group, look at this next project." It's like, "You want in on this, you want to do something, you want us to help you with something? Let's go."

## WCT: How's the experience been with the

## organization overall?

KS: It's been absolutely amazing. Both of us are also in school. Earth Pearl is a full-time job we're trying to do with all this other full-time stuff that we have. It keeps us busy, but I absolutely love it because I'm in graduate school right now and I'm almost out and I'm thinking what am I going to do with my life after this. We're doing Earth Pearl and it merges the art and it merges psychology with that. We'll have our artistic side of it and then I can bring in the psychology—it's a perfect match.

IC: She's in school for psychology and I'm in school for massage therapy, so it keeps getting wider and wider, as far as the things that we're going to be able to do in the next few months.

## WCT: How did you come up with the name "Earth Pearl"?

IC: The original womyn who was working with me on minor details, we were at the beach one day. It had been one of those bad days, so we decided to go for a walk on the beach. We were walking and started picking up rocks and saying, "Oh, this one's nice; this one's nice." So we started picking up pebbles and like every pebble we picked up was just beautiful. It was like, "Oh my God, these are beautiful. I wish I could drill a hole in them, I want to wear them." She said, "These are like Earth's pearls." And I was like that should be the name of something. That sounds wonderful. It was just beautiful rocks and beautiful weather kind of erasing all the negativity we were going through at the time. Just being in this moment—natural, beautiful, Earth Pearl Collective, let's go.

## WCT: Are there any current events that interest you, especially in relation to your work with Earth Pearl?

IC: The elections are something we want to come after hardcore. Just because of all the issues dealing with womyn in general that are going on in elections this year. I wouldn't say Earth Pearl is political at all, but because of all the issues that came about within this year we had to. Especially in our community, just go-

ing out and talking to people we realized how many people were like "Oh, no. Basically since Bush got elected last time I voted, I don't vote anymore because I felt like my vote got thrown out." The amount of people we talked to when we were trying to get people registered to vote who had thoughts like that and ideas like that, it's like "Oh, you haven't been able to hear what's going on and why it's so important." We really wanted to go out of our way to write down detail. Katrina did all kinds of research to say, "This is your candidate and these are the issues."

KS: State and federally.

IC: Things locally, we would like to be able to do more stuff as far as mentoring with youth. We have amazing womyn who have some amazing skills with youth as far as mentoring, teaching, dance classes, acting classes, vocal lessons, all this stuff. It's definitely an avenue we'd like to get more into.

For more information on Earth Pearl Collective visit [www.earthpearlcollective.com](http://www.earthpearlcollective.com).

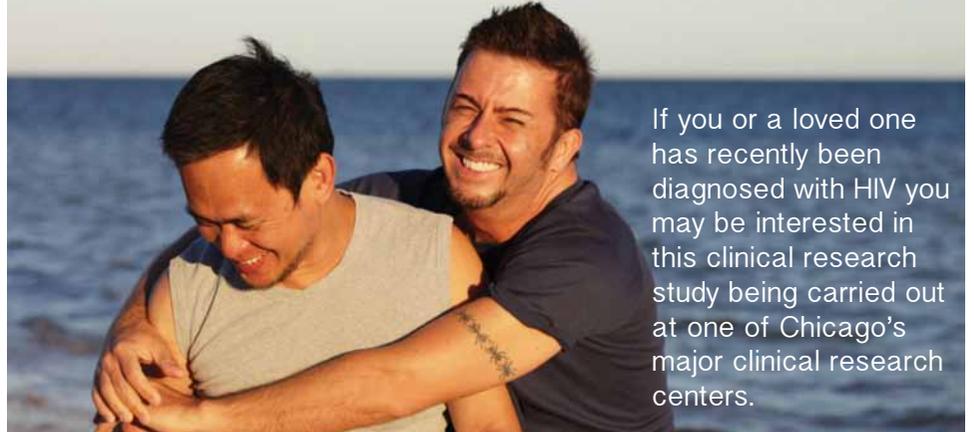
## Meetings for recovering addicts start Jan. 7

SMART Recovery meetings for gay men wanting to abstain from crystal meth/cocaine will be held on Monday nights, 7-8:15 p.m., at the Center on Halsted (3656 N. Halsted St.), Room 205, starting Jan. 7.

The goals of the meetings are abstinence and applying the tools of SMART Recovery to address any irrational beliefs people hold regarding sex, relationships and body image.

Email [smartchicagonorth@gmail.com](mailto:smartchicagonorth@gmail.com) for more info.

## ARE YOU HIV POSITIVE AND NOT TAKING ARTS?



If you or a loved one has recently been diagnosed with HIV you may be interested in this clinical research study being carried out at one of Chicago's major clinical research centers.

This study is being conducted worldwide with patients who have been diagnosed with HIV and are not taking any ARTs.

### YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW MAY QUALIFY IF:

- At least 18 years of age
- Diagnosed with HIV
- Has not previously taken anti-retroviral therapies

### QUALIFYING PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE—AT NO COST TO YOU OR YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY (YOU DO NOT NEED INSURANCE TO QUALIFY):

- Study drug
- Study-related medical care, including doctor physical exams, lab tests, and ECGs.

You will receive up to \$850 in cash compensation for your participation in this study.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS IMPORTANT HIV RESEARCH STUDY AND TO SEE IF YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR THIS PROGRAM PLEASE CALL ICCT RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL AT 312-988-4500.

# GENERATION HALSTED

LGBTQ Youth Series from **WINDY CITY TIMES**

## Generation Halsted

is an eight-week series that seeks to capture youth voices not typically represented in Windy City Times and other media. The young people portrayed have many housing situations, gender identities and sexual orientations. The series looks primarily, but not exclusively, at Boystown, where an influx of young LGBTQ people has been a source of controversy. Windy City Times will continue to explore the issues raised here beyond this series.

## Kasmiere and Safaria: Chosen family, chosen support

BY KATE SOSIN

Kasmiere knows that she has to be present for her gay daughter no matter how tired she is. It's something her own mother taught her.

"She'll force me to pick up the phone like it's my real child," Kasmiere says. "She'll say, 'Nuh-uh, I didn't do that to you, say like I'm hungry, I'm tired, I just got off work.'"

Kasmiere also feels that responsibility. Safaria, 20, is her chosen gay daughter, a common relationship between LGBTQ young people and their mentors or closest peers. In reality, the two are nearly the same age, and they're best friends. They're also transgender.

The two met by chance a little over a year ago in Lakeview. Safaria was just starting to deal with her sexual orientation and gender identity when she spotted Kasmiere along Halsted Street.

"I said, 'Hey girl, dang, what's your tease?'" Safaria recalls. "And she said, 'Girl, I love your hair.' And I think, 'Oh girl, thank you.'"

The two were fast friends. Three weeks after that first meeting, Kasmiere told Safaria she wanted Safaria to be her gay child. Safaria said she wanted Kasmiere to be her gay mother in return.

They talk a lot about what they call life's most important things: clothes, shoes, jewelry and boys. They take turns reciting that list over and over, each giggling as they talk over each other. As is often the case, the pair finishes each other's sentences.

In a half empty church parking lot, Kasmiere helps Safaria change clothing and gender presentations. She arrived in baggy jeans, a sweat-shirt and a baseball cap. Underneath it, she sports a leopard print one-piece. A short brown

wig arrives from out of a book bag. A red velvet dress will also make an appearance. Safaria poses for a journalist's camera in each outfit, seemingly celebrating each different expression. She likes to have her picture taken, she says.

Safaria's biological mother doesn't accept her gender identity or sexual orientation, Safaria says. She still loves her mother, she notes, but having a gay mother gives her a different support system.

Last year, Safaria was almost mugged in Boystown, but Kasmiere came to her aid.

"She was coming down the street," Safaria remembers. "She was like, 'Nuh-uh, you all leave my daughter alone!'"

"I remember that," Kasmiere says. "That was so long ago."

It was a defining moment for Kasmiere.

"When you say you're someone's gay mom, you don't really know how much you care for that person until you see that person in trouble. Then, it's like momma bear," Kasmiere says. "I was so surprised, how immature my modes (sic) is sometimes. I was really responsible."

Kasmiere recognizes that not many people will understand her relationship with Safaria. A gay mom is not exactly a friend or a mom, she says. Gay moms tell their gay kids to be safer or to stop drinking or doing drugs. But in the case of Safaria and Kasmiere, the two are also peers with equal footing.

Kasmiere describes that relationship in a way she does many things—she talks about jewelry. "You know how women is with diamonds?" she says. "Like they will do anything they is so obsessed with diamonds. That is how our relationship is. We is crazy over each other. We is best friends for life."



Kasmiere (left) and Safaria. Photos by Kate Sosin.



## Youth builds new family in Lakeview

BY ERICA DEMAREST

When Ilene Cameron first visited Boystown four years ago, she was hoping to find acceptance. What she got was a family.

The then-18-year-old had been living in a group home following a litany of family issues.

"My [biological] family—they're not very accepting of the fact I'm bisexual," Cameron said. "They call me names, make fun of me, say a lot of things that I really don't like. My mom calls me a faggot. I'm downright dirty to have a relationship with a guy and a girl. I'm stupid, and I shouldn't be part of the family."

A good friend told Cameron about Boystown, the city's LGBT-designated corridor, and promised to show her around. Cameron soon met dozens of youth just like her. Many identified as LGBT; some were homeless or precariously housed; still others had been disowned after coming out to their families.

For the first time in years, Cameron felt at home.

"I always felt very alone," she said. "I was in middle school and high school, and nobody liked me because I would always try out for the boys' teams—football, basketball. They used to

judge me, make fun of me, for how I dressed and everything. I had nobody I could depend on. I'd go home to my mom or my foster parents, and I'd still get judged."

Before she knew it, the lifelong South Sider had built a 'chosen family' in Lakeview—designating certain friends as siblings, aunts or parents.

"They've been with me through my rough ages—when I was drinking because I felt bad about my family. They helped me with a lot of things out here, took me into [their apartments] when I didn't have one... Out here, we're all respectful to each other. We count on one another. We don't argue that much. If someone gets hurt, we'll be at the hospital until they get better."

Cameron recalls hitting a rough patch about a year-and-a-half ago. She was just coming out of an abusive relationship and had suffered a miscarriage. Her health was poor, her asthma had been acting up, and though she has a GED, Cameron couldn't find work.

"Everybody came up with money so I could buy my inhaler, my iron pills and my vitamins," Cameron said. "They bought it for me and everything."

Cameron beams when talking about her cho-

sen family, but says life can be tough in Lakeview.

"Mostly every night we have trouble with the police because some of the LGBTQ kids are homeless, and some of us don't really have bus fare to get on the trains," said Cameron, who lives in a West Side transitional housing program. "We help each other on trains—put our money together to buy bus fares."

She said police often stop her for no reason or harass young people near CTA stations, having made assumptions about whether the youth are riding legally.

It's also common, Cameron said, for Lakeview residents to make snide comments as they walk past her and her family.

"I just want [people] to know that we're all the same people," she said. "We might be a little bit different from you with our sexuality or whatever, but we're just the same. We go to school together. We're all in the same community. We ride the same bus, trains, everything. You shouldn't judge us for what we like, what we do or how we act."

for more  
**GENERATION HALSTED**

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**GENERATION HALSTED**

**LGBTQ Youth Series from WINDY CITY TIMES**

**“People even today can’t fathom the idea that young people are homeless on the streets. It’s just ridiculous to think it happens. That’s why it’s such a big issue... The idea—it’s like aliens riding the Red Line.”**

*— Nomi Michaels Devereaux, LGBTQ homeless youth advocate*

Photo by Kate Sosin



# Generation Halsted: Recommendations

Throughout the “Generation Halsted” series, many readers have asked how they can help LGBTQ street-based youth in Chicago.

The best answer might be for community members to pose that question to organizations already serving youth: The Night Ministry, Broadway Youth Center, UCAN’s LGBTQ Host Home Program, Youth Lounge, Center on Halsted, Affinity Community Services, Taskforce Prevention and Community Services and others.

Based on our work throughout the series, here’s what we suggest:

**For the community**

—Get to know Chicago’s LGBT street-based youth

Over the last few years, conversations in Boyston have been ripe with assumptions about LGBT youth who access Lakeview services. But as much as people talk about youth, few seem to talk with them. Young people have ideas about how to improve their communities, and their voices should be amplified. Windy City Times found that LGBT youth in Lakeview were open and eager to share those ideas.

—Create opportunities for youth to shine

LGBTQ street-based young people are the Lakeview community’s greatest underutilized resource. Most have a deep desire to contrib-

ute to and be needed by the community around them. Throughout the course of the “Generation Halsted” series, many young people shared with particular pride that they had internships with Lakeview Action Coalition. Others held leadership positions they earned through work with service organizations.

—Support the LGBTQ Host Home Program

Of all the services for LGBT youth in particular, Host Home Program is one of the only that focuses on long-term solutions to homelessness. Further, it is one of few programs for youth that does not institutionalize them, instead allowing the young people to make their own decisions and live as part of the community while they get back on their feet. Those who want to change the circumstances of street-based youth

should consider hosting a young person. Those who cannot volunteer should consider donating money to UCAN.

—Support The Crib

The Night Ministry’s youth shelter provides what most agree is the only safe nightly shelter for LGBT youth people. Its services are crucial and unparalleled. Community members can contribute money, in-kind donations and volunteer hours to support it.

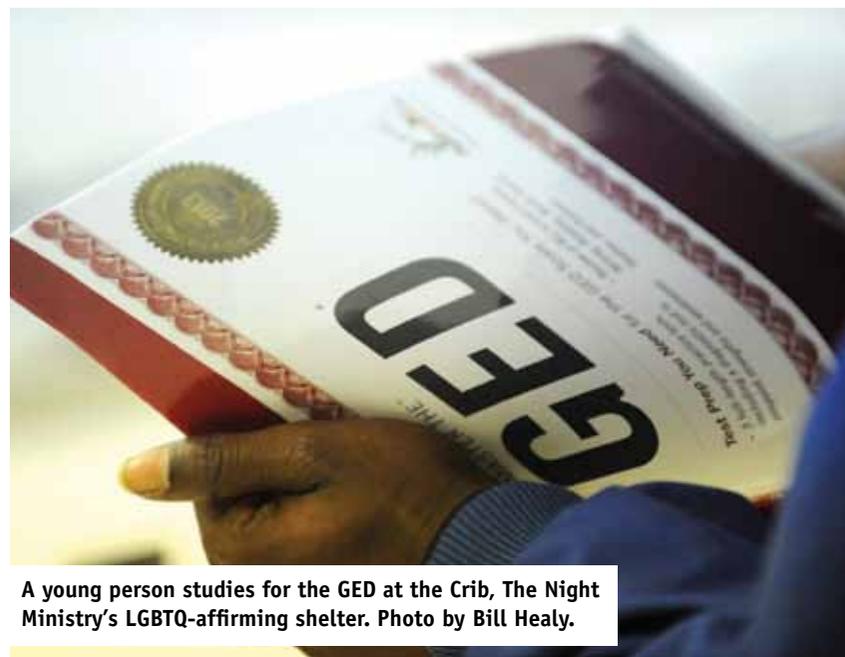
Those looking for other meaningful ways to engage and celebrate LGBT youth should talk with organizations that already serve youth, such as Broadway Youth Center, The Night Ministry and UCAN’s LGBTQ Host Home Program.

—Small in-kind donations make a big difference

Think about all the things we use or wear on a daily basis: clothing, shoes, socks, underwear, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, razors... The list goes on. Broadway Youth Center and The Night Ministry regularly distribute these items to street-based youth. Donations of these unused items go directly to young people. Also helpful are CTA fare cards, which allow youth to get out of cold for several hours.

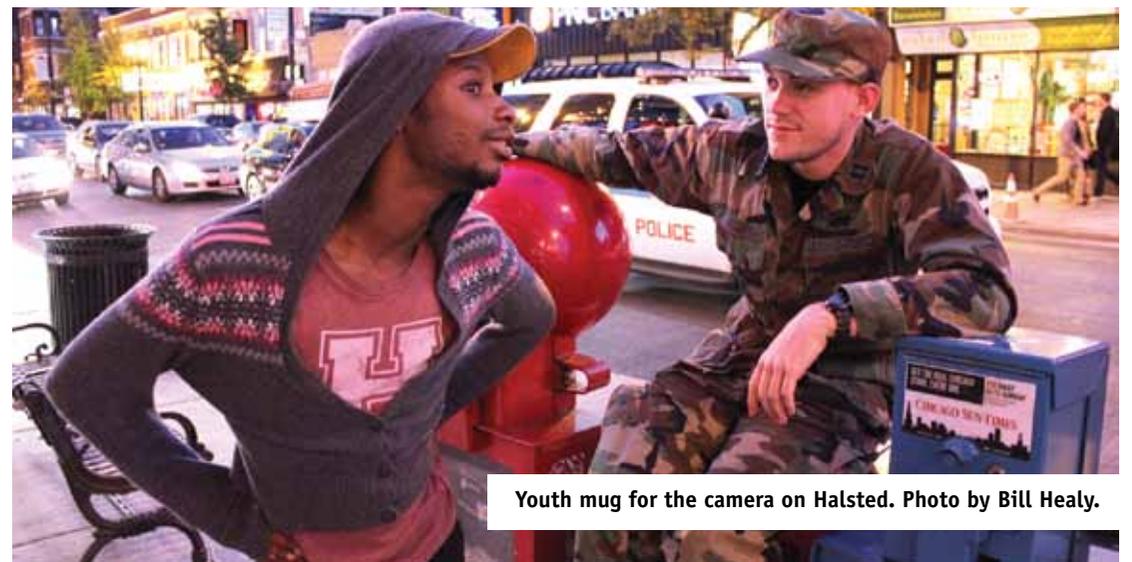
—Push for LGBT resources and funding on the South and West Sides of Chicago

LGBTQ-specific services on the South and West Sides of the city are few and far between. Those that do exist are underfunded. As a result, many young people have to travel far to get services, and others go without services altogether.



A young person studies for the GED at the Crib, The Night Ministry’s LGBTQ-affirming shelter. Photo by Bill Healy.

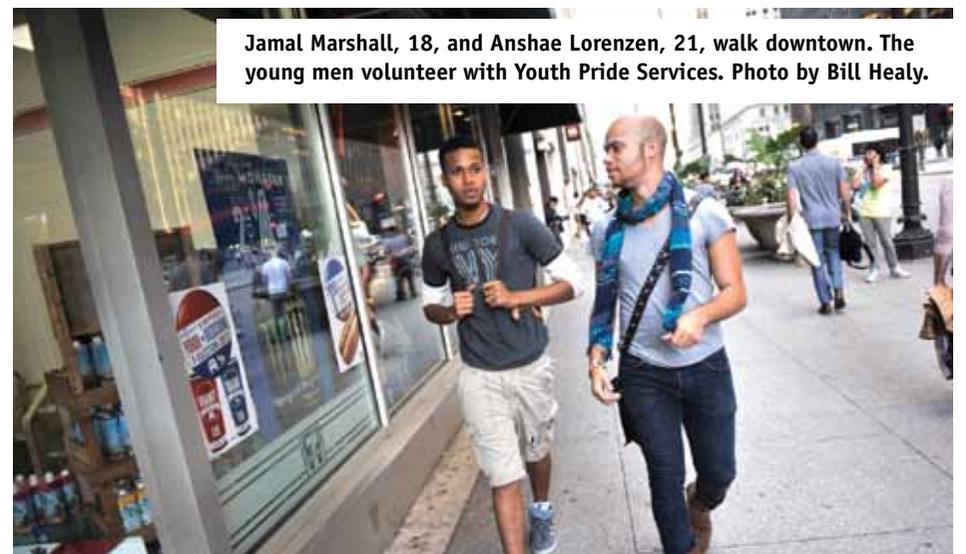
## More recommendations on page 12



Youth mug for the camera on Halsted. Photo by Bill Healy.



Drakera, 20, gets her nails done at the Crib. Photo by Bill Healy.



Jamal Marshall, 18, and Anshae Lorenzen, 21, walk downtown. The young men volunteer with Youth Pride Services. Photo by Bill Healy.

## GENERATION HALSTED

LGBTQ Youth Series from **WINDY CITY TIMES**

### Recommendations from page 11

#### For Service Providers

"It's about standing in solidarity, not in charity."-- Bonnie Wade, longtime LGBTQ housing advocate

—Young people need a long-term fix

There is a dire absence of programs and services for LGBTQ youth that offer long-term solutions to homelessness. One youth interviewed for this series likened that fact to "bad parenting," stating that street-based youth need more than a constant flow of piecemeal services. Service providers should focus on how to transition youth out of homelessness, in addition to offering day-to-day assistance.

—Service providers need to sustain programs beyond the grants that create them

LGBTQ service providers frequently reference the number of youth they serve when they make fundraising pitches. But often, many of their youth programs are funded entirely through grants. That means when grants dry up, so do youth programs. Broadway Youth Center's transgender programs in particular have been hard-hit by this reality in recent years.

The Crib, The Night Ministry's youth shelter, has also faced this challenge as the city grant it operates on only covers part of the year. The Night Ministry tries to keep The Crib open by raising private funds to fill in that gap. When it was unable to raise enough this year, local churches stepped up to help supplement some of those services.

Grant-based programming is, of course, inevitable. But wherever possible, service providers should prioritize services for their most vulnerable. That means budgeting for services most direly needed by the community so that those services continue regardless of grants.

—Center on Halsted should re-evaluate its policies and practices surrounding youth

Center on Halsted youth staff do great work that is often overshadowed by the organization's strict policies on youth. Banning large numbers of youth only exacerbates the challenges facing youth, Lakeview residents and the Center itself. The Center has stated that it practices "restorative justice," a model for dealing with conflict and harm by healing rather than punishing those involved. What the Center has truly implemented, however, appears only to be a mediated process through which youth are forced to apologize in order to get back into the Center. This leaves little room for the Center to understand its own challenges and shortcomings in dealing with youth.

Center on Halsted staff and security should all receive comprehensive conflict de-escalation training. Security guards should stop publicly handcuffing LGBTQ youth in a Center that is meant to serve as a safe haven, especially in situations where youth are not acting violently in the moment. Further, the Center should reconsider its decision to employ armed off-duty police, which may make as many LGBTQ people feel scared as it does make others feel safe.

#### For Business owners

—Lakeview business owners should form partnerships with service providers through which young people can find work

Street-based youth in Lakeview largely want to find work and genuinely want to feel included in the community around them. Business owners can dramatically improve the circumstances for street-based LGBTQ youth by providing them safe and supportive work opportunities. Broad-



Photos by Bill Healy.



way Youth Center and Center on Halsted already work with youth on career development. Business owners should work with the organizations so that youth who are ready, can find work in the community.

—Local businesses can be resources for youth

Where do street-based youth get haircuts? What happens if a youth has a dental emergency? These are questions that Lakeview businesses could help service providers answer. And businesses that create positive relationships with youth also build goodwill between Lakeview's business community and its street-based population.

#### For lawmakers and policy advocates

—Transgender people need access to gender-affirming medical care

Access to gender-affirming medical care, including hormones and surgeries, would drastically reduce harmful situations facing transgender people in Chicago. Many transgender people choose to engage in sex work to fund gender-related healthcare because that care is so expensive that people are left with few other options. (It is important to note, however, that people engage in sex work for myriad reasons). Others turn to silicone pumping, a relatively inexpensive and extremely dangerous practice wherein an uncertified professional injects silicone into the body to create desired curves.

#### For Police

Recommendations for police are too numerous and serious to name, and addressing the many problems police have in serving LGBTQ young people would require a radical change in the culture of the Chicago Police Department. That said, here are a few small suggestions:

—Police urgently need training in LGBTQ issues

Reports about police interactions with transgender people are largely horrific, ranging from verbal harassment to outright physical abuse and discrimination. CPD lacks adequate training that would educate officers about transgender issues. Still, lack of understanding is not an excuse or reason for police to treat transgender as less than.

—Chicago Police leaders need to educate the force about the new transgender general order

This August, CPD adopted a general order that mandates more respectful treatment of transgender individuals. CPD leadership needs to create a culture in which abuses against transgender people are not accepted.

—Youth should be able to ask police for help without fear of rejection or reprisal

Reporters for this series heard from many youth who said that police ignore their requests for help or assistance when they try to report harassment. Others said that police accuse the young person of being engaged in illegal activity in response to their request for help. LGBTQ street-based youth are far more likely to be victims of crime than the general population. Their requests for assistance should be taken seriously.

#### For all of us

Organizations regularly hold forums where youth can learn from community leaders about their rights. Community leaders, however, have much to learn from young people. Service providers, funders, elected and non-elected officials, should convene a forum where youth voices are placed center. Windy City Times will gladly assist.

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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**"Windy City Media Group generated enormous interest among their readers in this year's LGBT Consumer Index Survey. Out of approximately 100 print and online media partners who participated in the survey, Windy City was the best performing regional media in the U.S. Only survey partners with a nationwide footprint were able to generate a greater number of responses." —David Marshall, Research Director, Community Marketing, Inc.**

 Community Marketing, Inc.



## VIEWPOINTS



**MARY MORTEN**

## Finding my brother, Miss Gay Black America

In the past few decades, a divide has emerged in the LGBT population, between the transgender and gay communities. The transgender community is seen as "other," and often as a novelty, particularly in the case of female impersonators or drag queens. What many people in the LGBT community often forget (or never knew to begin with) is that the transgender community have put themselves on the front line in the battle for equal rights.

When the Stonewall Inn was raided in June 1969, female patrons of the bar were taken into the women's bathroom to have their genders "checked." Of course, some of the patrons who were dressed as and appeared to be female were not, and these men became some of the first of many to fall victim to the fight for equality. Though this would not be the last time that the transgender community took the first hits from the population at large, its spirit was never broken, and as years have gone by, it has grown stronger and evolved into what it has become today.

Transgender people are often dismissed as not being a part of the gay community, but what many people forget is that while we as gay men and women do not necessarily wear our gayness on our sleeves, the transgender community is not always afforded the option.

Ronnie Reed was the youngest of four brothers and two younger sisters on the south side of Chicago. He taught his sisters how to wear make up, made their prom dresses, and showed them how to style their hairpieces just right. An effeminate Black boy in the 1970s, Ronnie stuck out from other men in his community on the South Side, and suffered prejudices and harass-

ment until he was old enough to move away and pursue his interests in hair styling.

While working in hair salons, Ronnie fell in love with the entertainment industry. Soon, Ronnie became drag performer Terri Livingston and began touring around the country and the world with his act, often focusing on the persona of singer Shirley Bassey. Over the course of his hairstyling career, Ronnie worked with such personalities as Stephanie Mills and Maurice Hines, while also serving a tour in Vietnam.

Ronnie soon became so enthralled by the entertainment and hair styling industries that he would not contact his family for months at a time. His mother died in 1981 and since his family had no way of reaching him, they endured the tragedy without him. He did not find that his mother had passed away until several months later when he called home.

Terri was known in the drag community nation and worldwide; she performed at clubs across the country and was a regular at the Miss Continental Contest at the Baton Show Lounge in Chicago. In 1989, Terri was crowned as the first Miss Gay Black America at Club 21 in Indianapolis, Ind. Unfortunately, Terri had contracted HIV,

which had developed into AIDS in 1987. He was living in Indiana by that time, and refused to come home to be a burden, against the wishes of his sisters and brother, who wanted to take care of him. By the time of the pageant, he was so sick that he was unable to complete the competition, but was still crowned queen.

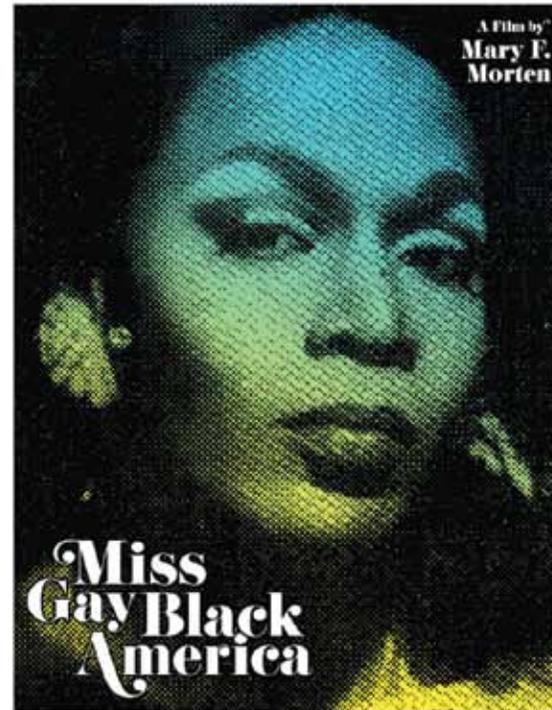
Terri Livingston was my brother. I was one of the little girls whose hair he did, whose clothes he made, who he taught how to wear makeup. It didn't seem at all wrong; we just assumed that this was how Ronnie was. He moved away from the prejudices of the South Side of Chicago as soon as he could, falling into a world of drag performance that I really knew nothing about except when I found my eighth-grade graduation shoes in his closet. Since he got very sick right after we reconnected and continued to travel when he could, I never got to ask him so many things about his life that I wanted to know. My family was not one to have prejudices against our brother—his illness wasn't an issue, regardless of its origin. He was our brother, he was sick, and we were going to take care of him.

I am currently in preproduction for a film that I am calling *Miss Gay Black America: The Terri Livingston Story*, which will explore Terri's unique life through interviews both with his old friends and fans and the owners and managers of clubs in which he used to perform. The film will also examine the evolution of the culture and public perception of female impersonation, specifically its evolution since the 1980s as well as the drag community's reaction to the AIDS epidemic.

*Miss Gay Black America: The Terri Livingston Story* is a tribute to my brother Terri Livingston—an amazing performer, and an amazing person. Throughout this project, I hope to get to know the man, and woman, that I didn't get to know when he was alive.

If you knew Terri—as a performer, friend, or anything else—please e-mail me at [admin@mortengroup.com](mailto:admin@mortengroup.com). I would love to hear any stories that you have about my brother and interview you for the film.

**Mary F. Morten is the director of *Miss Gay Black America*.**



**MARK SEGAL**

## Not a banner, but a historic LGBT year

Do you appreciate the watershed moment in LGBT history we are witnessing? If any of you doubt that we are living in historic times for LGBT equality, just note what you're about to witness in the next few weeks and months. The first president of the United States who campaigned openly and often on the issue of LGBT equality and won is about to be inaugurated for a second term, and most likely somewhere in that second term will nominate the first out cabinet member, as well as host a landslide of equality initiatives. The first out elected U.S. senator, Tammy Baldwin, will be sworn into of-

fice, along with the largest-ever delegation of our Congress members. The Supreme Court will hear debates on marriage equality and will rule by the summer. More out state and city elected officials throughout the nation will take office than ever before. Do you feel it yet?

Not yet? Then take a look at the issues and actions that started to take flight in the last 12 months. One that I'm particularly proud of is the nation's largest LGBT capital building project that is taking place in Philadelphia. It's called the John C. Anderson Apartments, an LGBT-friendly senior community. The 56-unit building will house and give dignity to LGBT seniors. And that's the point: LGBT seniors are one group that we, as a community, have not begun to adequately address the needs of. We know from the few studies on LGBT seniors that their number-one concern is housing. Philadelphia hopefully will start a new wave of building across the nation. At present, the next to break ground is in Chicago, and San Francisco is looking at 2015.

Still not there? How about the advances in immigration for LGBT couples or the threat of foreign aid being withheld if Uganda enacts its proposed "kill the gays" bill? Has anyone noticed the host of Republicans quickly trying to change their positions on marriage equality? Or

the assistance the Department of Health and Human Services is giving to build and increase health services to LGBT communities around the nation? Or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development increasing its efforts to combat LGBT discrimination in housing? It would be hard to find an area that has not improved toward equality in the last 12 months.

A year ago, this column predicted that it would be a good year. The stock market may use the term that I had "inside information," and while I had high expectations, nothing was a done deal when that column was written. And while there were issues that were on my mind as it was being written, never in my wildest thoughts would I have expected how great a year 2012 was—for the community, for the body politic and, I'm happy to say, personally. And, of course, we promised to make some predictions for 2013, some of which might actually happen. If you haven't noticed, those predictions are in the first paragraph.

**Mark Segal is the publisher of *Philadelphia Gay News*. He can be reached at [mark@epgn.com](mailto:mark@epgn.com).**

## GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo courtesy of Cathy Taylor

## DISHIN' WELL

The Other Cinderella (above) is one of Windy City Times' theater highlights of 2012. See page 16.

## DISH

**Good Lucky.**  
Page 18.

Photo of Club Lucky  
by Ed Negron



## THEATER

**'Heart' felt.**  
Page 15.

Photo from Purple Heart  
by Jan Ellen Graves



## SPORTS

**'12 highlights.**  
Page 22.

Photo of Megan Rapinoe  
by Mel Ferrand



## SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

## Simply the fests

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The New Year may have just begun, but three Chicago theater festivals are already set to launch again this January.

Both the 16th annual Fillet of Solo Festival (produced by Lifeline Theatre taking up the reins from Live Bait Theater) and the 12th annual Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival (a.k.a. Chicago Sketchfest) commence Thursday, Jan. 3. Then on Saturday, Jan. 12, Curious Theater Branch's 24th annual Rhinoceros Theater Festival (a.k.a. Rhinofest) kicks off a month's worth of fringe theater productions.

All three festivals offer diverse lineups, which also include troupes and performers delving into LGBT issues. Based upon surmised perusing on each of the festivals' websites, here are a few shows that might be of interest to LGBT audiences:

**Fillet of Solo Festival**

The inclusion of Chicago's LGBT comedy troupe GayCo is what immediately stands out for out audiences in the Fillet of Solo Festival, which features 11 performance troupes and solo shows by Amanda Rountree, Kim Morris and Eric Warner.

While other Fillet of Solo performers may touch upon LGBT themes or issues in their storytelling and live literature pieces, none are quite as out as GayCo is in its festival description. GayCo performs at 8:30 p.m. Thursdays, Jan. 3 and 10, and Saturday, Jan. 19, at the Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave. (Another Fillet of Solo Festival venue is the Heartland Studio Theatre, 7016 N. Glenwood Ave.) Tickets are \$10 per show for this festival, which runs Thursdays through Sundays until Jan. 20. Visit [www.lifelinetheatre.com](http://www.lifelinetheatre.com) for

more information and a full performance schedule.

**Chicago Sketchfest**

Of the 169 shows jam-packed onto four stages and into eight days for the Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival at Stage 773, quite a few cater to LGBT crowds while others tackle issues tied to gender norms.

Troupes overtly dealing with LGBT issues include (who else?) GayCo with a 10 p.m. show on Friday, Jan. 11. But GayCo isn't the only queer Chicago kid on the block.

Comedy team Quixotic is represented with a 3 p.m. show on Sunday, Jan. 6, while Philip Markle revives his Annoyance Theatre show Sparkle Hour! at 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 6, for another musical journey into queer fabulousness. Also flying the queer Chicago flag is Wig Bullies (The Girl With the Drag Queen Tattoo, It Takes a Village, People!) with an 8 p.m. show on Sunday, Jan. 6. The Alliance Sketch Group also represents queer Windy City with its musical Threat Level Rainbow at 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 13.

Although not specifically LGBT, at least two other troupes promise gay themes in their shows. The Toronto troupe British Teeth promises lesbian mothers somewhere within its 8 p.m. shows on Friday and Saturday, Jan. 11 and 12, while Chicago's Cell Camp appears to be luring lurid audiences in for its 8 p.m. show on Thursday, Jan. 10, with a description featuring "raunchy language, nudity, gay sex, regular sex, cartoon violence, awkward situations, dated humor and less!"

Quite a few troupes also feature women challenging and questioning gender roles.

Ever Mainard and Alicia Queen will perform all of Shakespeare's women through a modern lens



**Off Off Broadway.**  
Photo courtesy of the company

in a revival of their sketch comedy-influenced show Shakespeare's Female Women at 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 5.

Parody burlesque is back with the troupe Off Off Broadway, performing 11 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 12, while "Mr. Liz McArthur and Mr. Jill Valentine" serve up Feminine Gentlemen at 10 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 10.

And just for a chuckle (or a cringe), let's not forget the all-female Chicago sketch troupe known as Heavy Flo, which offers a visit this month at 7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 6.

All Chicago Sketchfest shows run from Thursday, Jan. 3, through Sunday, Jan. 13, at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave. An all-festival pass is \$150, while prices for individual shows vary (largely under \$20). For more information and a full schedule, visit [www.chicagosketchfest.com](http://www.chicagosketchfest.com).

**Rhinofest**

Be on the look out for LGBT characters or themes in these fringe shows:

Playwright/director Karen Yates and Sky Area Ten update a classic Greek tragedy with American Bacchae, which focuses on a young suburban mayor (and webcam porn addict) who attempts to combat a new religion and its traveling global followers. Workshop performances are at 9 p.m.

Sundays and Mondays, Feb. 3, 4, 10 and 11.

Playwright Barry Cole offers up a work-in-progress reading called Clumsy Sublime, which focuses on the unconventional friendship between a 15-year-old girl and a newly unemployed gay man approaching his 50th birthday. Performances are at 3 p.m. Sundays, Feb. 10 and 17.

A drag queen who helps revive American passenger pigeons through music is just one of the characters featured in Derek Lee Barton's piece The Extinction Project for The Side Project, running 9 p.m. Fridays from Jan. 18 to Feb. 15.

Souls experiencing true fluidity and freedom are explored in Ned O'Reilly's piece Identity Cruxes, which is presented by Yavamaya Wurms & Broom Street Theatre at 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 2, and 7 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 3.

Sweetback Productions serves up a double bill: R.J. Tsarov's Mantuary and Cornell Woorich's Hot Water. The former is about a woman taking a dark, surreal look at relationships and gender differences, while the latter play is a 1940s film noir romp. Performances are at 7 p.m. Fridays from Jan. 18 to Feb. 15.

Ron Simonian's The Soul Collector is billed as "an offensively comic evangelical rock musical" where a money grubbing evangelist hawks items ranging from Rapture Rations to a Homo-Stun-Gun. Performances are at 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 16, and at 7 p.m. Sunday Feb. 17.

Gay poet W.H. Auden is just one of the artists featured in Dmitri Peskov's one-man show Tales Told by an Idiot. It consists of short stories focusing on a political prisoner, an old man in a box and two men exploring a very unique relationship, among others. Performances are at 2 p.m. Saturdays, Feb. 9 and 16, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 17.

All Rhinofest shows play between the Prop Thtr, 3502 N. Elston Ave. Tickets are \$15 or pay what you can at the door, or \$12 in advance online. Call 773-492-1287 or visit [www.rhinofest.com](http://www.rhinofest.com) for more information.



Purple Heart. Photo by Jan Ellen Graves

## THEATER REVIEW

## Purple Heart

Playwright: Bruce Norris

At: Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.

Tickets: 773-728-7529;

www.redtwist.org; \$25-\$30

Runs through: Jan. 27

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

After a playwright wins the Pulitzer for a drama crafted in the classic tradition, it's easy to forget that they once wrote in less lofty modes. (Compare Tracy Letts' epic *August: Osage County* with his brutal *Killer Joe*.) Audiences expecting this early play by Bruce Norris to deliver the historical footnotes and social commentary of the award-winning *Clybourne Park* will have to look hard to find them in this lesson on the pitfalls of writing on commission for a pre-cast ensemble—in this case, the Steppenwolf company circa 2002.

Our story is set in 1972, a few days after Army wife Carla Larson has received word that her husband has been killed in Vietnam. All the bereft spouse wants is solitude to sort out her mixed feelings about the loss of her abusive partner, but instead she is beset by her pious mother-in-law, her withdrawn preteen son and a hoard of well-wishing "vampires and vultures." There is nothing unusual about this situation: military marriages are frequently troubled, soldiers' sons often display a morbid fascination with wartime atrocities, and we have all encountered civilians who revel in sentimental patriotism.

Into this welter of family tension comes a stranger—a disabled GI whose laconic temperament allows him to shift allegiances with never a pause or stumble—and suddenly the play like-

wise shifts into Albee/Pinter mode. Is Cpl. Purdy an angel of life, come for a second annunciation? Is he an angel of death, and if so, what is the target of his mission? Then again, could he be an everyday stalker, preying on vulnerable women? Theatergoers uninterested in these questions may also track the intricate network of catch-phrases that wax and wane in their significance as the plot demands (the old "Will I be able to play the piano?" joke, for example, which becomes a bonding password for Purdy and Carla).

This atmosphere of unseen menace may have been suited perfectly to Laurie Metcalf's heebie-jeebie mannerisms, but the close quarters of the Redtwist storefront dictates an intimacy that renders Norris' enigmatic symbolism more annoying than threatening, especially since Redtwist company member KC Karen Hill makes Carla, not a congenital neurotic, but a victim of crisis, exacerbated by the bullying of alleged comforters whose attentions make a pervert offering escape, while still a pervert, look downright attractive by comparison. When we care about a character, authorial cleverness can do nothing but get in the way.

## CRITICS' PICKS

**The Book of Mormon**, Bank of America Theatre, through June 2. The creators of *South Park* and a co-creator of *Avenue Q* have concocted a hilariously blasphemous and frequently raunchy Broadway musical that smartly takes on Mormon culture and African superstitions. Yet the musical also stresses the importance of faith, friendship and belief, so the show carries an emotional heart along with being a cutting equal-opportunity offender. SCM

**Metamorphoses**, Lookingglass Theatre, through Jan. 6; Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of myths old (mostly) and new remains a visual feast and a dream-like, sensual experience with a fine balance of humor, sentiment, sexiness and surprise. JA

**The Other Cinderella**, Black Ensemble Theater, through Jan. 6. Jackie Taylor's musical reimagining of the poor-girl-makes-good fairy tale is hip enough for adults but still family-friendly, and you won't find an old-school blonde-Barbie princess or cuddly rodent in it anywhere. MSB

**War Horse**, Cadillac Palace Theatre, through Jan. 5. The brilliant stagecraft of this international hit drama is a must-see. And don't be surprised if you find yourself moved to tears as you follow the often horrific experiences of a young man and his beloved horse during World War I. SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

## SPOTLIGHT



Although its stints in London, on Broadway and off-Broadway weren't as long as producers might have hoped, **Million Dollar Quartet** continues to thrive on a national tour and at Chicago's Apollo Theatre. In fact, this long-running Tony Award-winning musical has entered its fifth year in the Windy City. So see why Chicagoans have embraced this show that is inspired by the night in 1956 that brought Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Elvis Presley all together for a historic jam session at Sun Records in Memphis. *Million Dollar Quartet* is currently booking through April at the Apollo Theatre, 2540 N. Lincoln Ave. Performances vary, but are largely at 2 and 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, 8 p.m. Fridays, 5 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, and 3:30 and 6:30 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$25-\$85; call 773-935-6100 or visit www.milliondollarquartetlive.com. Photo by Paul Natkin

## OPERA REVIEW

## Hänsel und Gretel

Score: Engelbert Humperdinck;

Libretto: Adelheid Wette

At: Lyric Opera of Chicago,

20 N. Wacker Dr.

Tickets: 312-332-2244 or

www.lyricopera.org; \$34-\$239

Runs through: Jan. 19

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It took the Lyric Opera of Chicago an unconscionable 47 years to finally produce *Hänsel und Gretel*. Engelbert Humperdinck's classic 1893 opera finally made it to the Lyric in 2001 via an Olivier Award-winning co-production directed by Richard Jones and commissioned by then Welsh National Opera general director Anthony Freud.

Twelve years later for *Hänsel und Gretel*'s first Lyric revival, Freud is now general director of the esteemed Chicago company and Jones' take on Humperdinck's masterwork has also become the version of choice for New York's Metropolitan Opera (albeit in an aggrandized and slightly softened 2007 production that made the dream pantomime chefs more cherubic than creepy).

The Lyric return of *Hänsel und Gretel* was perfectly timed to coincide with last year's 200th anniversary of the Grimm Brothers' first publication of *Kinder und Hausmärchen* (*Children and Household Tales*), which helped popularize this dark folk tale of starvation and cannibalism. And Jones' production once again shows its dark brilliance with often scary and surreal hunger-inspired imagery (starkly and ruddily dreamed up by production designer John MacFarlane) mixed with plenty of food-splattering humor in the

Witch's oversized industrial kitchen.

This time around, Eric Einhorn has been enlisted as stage director, and the cast is truly top-notch.

As the respective title siblings, Ryan Opera Center alums Elizabeth DeShong and Maria Kanyova cavort around convincingly as naughty kids while also showing off powerful voices that can cut through the romantic and thick Wagner-inspired orchestration.

As the siblings' parents, Julie Makerov's short-tempered Mother is appropriately agitated, while Brian Mulligan's jovial and drunkard Father shows a physically violent dark side. Also of vocally bright and brief note are soprano Emily Birsan as the Sandman (returning here in puppet form) and soprano Kiri Deonarine as the 1950s platinum-blond and perfect housewife-inspired Dew Fairy.

Both DeShong and Kanyova's *Hänsel und Gretel* more than meet their match in the Witch of Jill Grove, who takes on extra layers of padding and prosthetics to appear as a rolly-polly Granny with a demented TV chef personality (quite a comic change from her depraved and powerfully sung Klytämnestra in *Elektra* earlier this season).

Conductor Ward Stare leads a beautifully majestic take on the score, which is only enhanced at the end by the rescued gingerbread children sung by members of ANIMA—Young Singers of Greater Chicago.

If there is one complaint, the lighting of designer Jennifer Tipton is too dark in the Act II forest scene. But then again, this production appropriately reinjects plenty of the Grimm Brothers' dark horror that was made less menacing in its Victorian-era libretto.

Far from being candy-coated like many typical productions, the Lyric's production certainly has a sharp and smart bite.

Sandy Hook benefit  
Jan. 6 at Victory

Victory Gardens Theater will present *The Warriors for Newtown*, a benefit to support the Sandy Hook Elementary Victims Relief Fund Sunday, Jan. 6, 2013, at 7:30 p.m. at the Victory Gardens Zacek McVay Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.

The evening will include a one-night-only reading of *The Warriors* by Evan Linder (featuring Will Allen, Cora Vander Broek, Matthew Brumlow, Cliff Chamberlain, Mary Hollis Inboden and Kristina Valada-Viars), followed by a community conversation.

Tickets are \$15; all proceeds will go to the Sandy Hook School Support Fund. Tickets are available at the Victory Gardens box office; 773-871-3000 (TTY: 773.871.0682); or www.victorygardens.org/thewarriors.



Hänsel und Gretel. Photo by Dan Rest/Lyric Opera of Chicago



Hit the Wall. Photo by Ryan Baroque

## Twelve faves from '12

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Why limit my favorite memories of 2012 theater outings to just 10 choices? Here are a dozen of my personal 2012 picks in no particular order. Please note that some shows are still running so you can still see what the fuss is all about.

**War Horse**, Cadillac Palace Theatre, now through Jan. 5. This is a magnificent show that must be seen to be truly believed. South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company and the forces of the National Theatre of Great Britain have teamed to create an emotionally resonant and theatrically magical drama about a British boy and his beloved horse experiencing the horrors of World War I. The ending may betray its source as a children's novel by author Michael Morpurgo, but don't be surprised if you're moved to tears throughout the show.

**The Book of Mormon**, Bank of America Theatre, now through June 2. If you love the Comedy Central series South Park, then you have got to see this hilariously blasphemous and equal opportunity-offending musical. South Park co-creators Matt Stone and Trey Parker have collaborated with Avenue Q co-creator Robert Lopez on a show that lovingly spoofs musical theater as it tells the tale of two young missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reacting to the squalor and violence of Uganda. The Book of Mormon definitely deserves to become the next Loop long-running hit, like Wicked and Jersey Boys.

**The Iceman Cometh**, Goodman Theatre, April 21-June 17, 2012. One of the theatrical events of the year was this revival of Eugene O'Neill's epic tavern drama of New York lowlifes facing up to their untenable illusions. Director Robert Falls returned to the piece again with star Brian Dennehy, though this time he took on the disillusioned anarchist Larry Slade while Nathan Lane assumed the pivotal role of a newly sober Hickey. Lane may not have fully satisfied in his climactic confession scene, but the rest of the ensemble truly worked together wonderfully.

**Good People**, Steppenwolf Theatre, Sept. 13-Nov. 17, 2012. Director and Steppenwolf ensemble member K. Todd Freeman directed the perfect cast for Pulitzer Prize-winner David Lindsay-Abaire's comic and hard-hitting look at economic and class disparities in Boston during the recent "Great Recession."

**Elektra**, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Oct. 6-30, 2012. Director Sir David McVicar stunned the audience's senses with a new production of Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal's hulking 1909 operatic take on ancient Greek tragedy. Soprano Christine Goerke truly wowed in the marathon title role, and she was admirably supported by Jill Grove as the murderous mother Klytämnestra and Emily Magee as her "good-girl" sister, Chrysothemis.

**Three Sisters**, Steppenwolf Theatre, June 28-

Aug. 26, 2012. Some people complained that Tracy Letts' adaptation of Anton Chekhov's classic drama sounded "too modern." But I felt that Letts brought a breath of fresh air to this sobering tale of three sisters who face a lifetime of wasted ambition and dashed hopes. Director and Steppenwolf ensemble member Anna D. Shapiro drew out rich performances from the cast.

**A Little Night Music**, Writers Theatre, May 12-Aug. 1, 2012. Director William Brown led a powerhouse cast, including Tony Award-winner Deanna Dunagan and Shannon Cochran, in an exquisitely and intimately staged production of Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler's sophisticated and romantic 1973 musical.

**My Kind of Town**, TimeLine Theatre, May 1-July 29, 2012. Veteran investigative journalist John Conroy drew from his many years of reporting on the Chicago Police torture scandal to create this powerful world-premiere drama that questions the ethics of coerced confessions and prods audiences to think what they might have done if they were in the characters' conflicted situations.

**What's the T?**, About Face Youth Theatre, July 13-Aug. 4, 2012. Playwright Sara Kerastas and the About Face Youth Theatre ensemble devised a very timely comic drama that explores many of the up-to-the-minute issues facing minority youths who hang around Chicago's Boystown neighborhood.

**Sunday in the Park with George**, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Sept. 26-Nov. 11, 2012. Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's Pulitzer Prize-winning musical inspired by the life of post-Impressionist artist Georges Seurat triumphantly returned to Navy Pier, this time in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's Courtyard Theater space in a new production directed again by Gary Griffin. Co-stars Jason Danieley and Carmen Cusack powerfully sang and performed their respective roles of Georges/George and Dot/Marie.

**Disgraced**, American Theater Company, Jan. 27-March 11, 2012. Ayad Akhtar's world premiere examined the struggles of a modern Muslim-American lawyer who must re-examine his identity once his seemingly successful life comes crashing down around him. This acclaimed production directed by Kimberly Senior laid the groundwork for its subsequent production for New York's Lincoln Center Theater.

**Hit the Wall**, The Inconvenience at Steppenwolf Garage, Feb. 3-April 22, then at Theater on the Lake, July 25-29, 2012. Ike Holter's world-premiere hit drama skillfully played with the mythologies that have grown up around the 1969 Stonewall Riots and combined them into a powerful theater piece about the birth of the modern movement for LGBT rights. Hopefully, a daring New York theater (preferably the Barrow Street Theatre in Greenwich Village), will snap up Hit the Wall and present it near its historic roots.

## Curtain calls: Local theater highlights of '12

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The Mayans didn't know it at the time, but their world ended when the Spanish ships landed. For drama critics in 2012, however, there were many other reasons to count it a landmark in Chicago theater history. After all, it was the year that:

1. **Actors showcased their versatility.** Called "stretching" in trade jargon, hard-boiled Steve Pickering played a sensitive romantic in Seanachai's Moon For The Misbegotten, boyish Patrick Blashill took on the patriarchal duties for Eclipse's Long Day's Journey Into Night and wholesome Rashawn Thompson got his sexy on as Marvin Gaye in Black Ensemble's Don't Talk About My Father, while Sally Murphy and Mariann Mayberry put their spunky-teenage-hoyden days behind them forever in Steppenwolf's Time Stands Still and Good People.

2. **Longtime favorites proved themselves ageless.** Black Ensemble's The Other Cinderella premiered in 1976, Goodman's A Christmas Carol opened in 1978, Late Nite Catechism convened classes in 1993 and The Christmas Schooner first sailed in 1995. They're all still running, but each production is as fresh as if minted yesterday.

3. **Classics got new attitudes.** Mary-Arrchie's Glass Menagerie (still playing through Jan. 20) restored the dreamlike dimension

and Christine Adair in The Oxford Roof Climber's Rebellion as well as their fellow dialect consultants and voice coaches for putting the "audio" in "audience."

6. **Tech designers made flying carpets in tiny rooms.** Like genies in bottles, Theatre Wit's Trainspotting, Victory Gardens' Oedipus El Rey, Mary-Arrchie's Glass Menagerie and Lifeline's Pride And Prejudice immersed us in sensory landscapes reflecting worlds beyond our immediate experience and widest expectations.

7. **We could smell the sweat.** Red Orchid's The Opponent put us right at ringside for boxing lessons, Cor Theatre's Skin Tight confronted us with a marriage fierce in every sense of the word, and The Inconvenience's Hit The Wall threw us out on the Greenwich Village streets for the Stonewall Riots.

8. **Maturity was cool.** Ian McDiarmid stripped to the buff for Chicago Shakespeare's Timon of Athens, as did Charin Alvarez for Oedipus El Rey. Howard Witt in Fish Men and Mike Nussbaum in Freud's Last Session kept their clothes on, but were still the most interesting men on the stage. (Eat your heart out, Dos XX.) Oh, and the Remy Bumppo company, after being almost hijacked by faddish foppery, renewed its mission to provide for adult sensibilities.

9. **The animals stole the spotlight.** Playgoers cheered and chewed hankies for the



The Glass Menagerie. Photo by Emily Schwartz

that Tennessee Williams wrote into a script too long relegated to classroom exercise, The Hypocrites' Romeo Juliet pared down the story of star-crossed lovers to four actors, and Oracle's Antigone explored civil disobedience in 1960s America. Ruckus' Common Hatred and Commedia Beauregard's Corleone spanned chronological and cultural boundaries, while Mary-Arrchie's Superior Donuts found its perfect home.

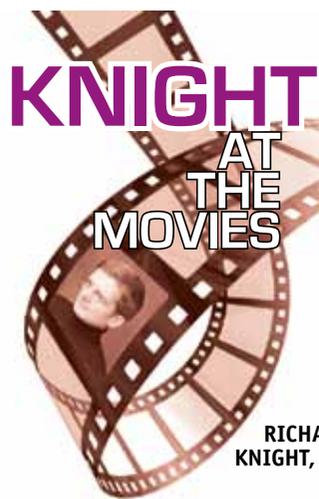
4. **Great new plays made their debut.** Jon Steinhagen's Blizzard '67 invoked bunker-drama tension from a legendary Chicago meteorological disaster, while Andrew Hinderaker's I Am Going To Change The World spoke to all the young Americans facing severely diminished career prospects in a changing economy.

5. **We could understand every word.** Accolades are due Eva Breneman in Absolute Hell

Handspring Puppet Company's equine hero in the touring production of War Horse, and oohed and cooed over Jude Roche's Harry Bear in Chicago Shakespeare's Elizabeth Rex. However, the live goldfish in Death and Harry Houdini and the mouse in The Woman In White deserved earned their own bows as well.

10. **The big horses ran, too.** "Caballo grande, ande or no ande"—"Whether it runs or not, it's certainly a big horse." Contrary to the proverb, Goodman's The Icemen Cometh, Chicago Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream and House Theatre's Iron Stag King not only trotted along with alacrity, but also a grace and agility belying their size.

Last year may have seemed fraught with contention, but the finish of one year means the beginning of another, and admit it. Won't it be kinda fun to see what happens next?



BY  
RICHARD  
KNIGHT, JR.

## Any Day Now; film notes

"In the 1970s, a drag queen and his closeted lover fight in court to adopt a child with Down Syndrome." It sounds like a synopsis for a TV movie, right? Or a plotline from a prequel to "Queer As Folk." And in writer-director Travis Fine's hands, **Any Day Now**, the movie from which this plot derives, is a bit stereotypical and a bit TV movie-ish, to be sure. But Alan Cumming's go-for-broke performance as the drag queen is sensational and Garret Dillahunt, as his lover, is so quietly effective that both transcend the plot. Here's a movie that embraces melodrama and is elevated by its willingness to do that.

We first meet the tough, no-nonsense Rudy Donatello (Cumming) as he is performing in a tatty gay bar in 1979 on the West Coast. He catches

in the district attorney's office, to help him get Marco back. The two then move in together and visit Marianna in jail where she signs temporary custody papers. In court before a stern judge (Frances Fisher), Rudy and Paul pretend to be cousins, knowing that if their true relationship were revealed, they'd never get custody. They become Marco's foster parents and again everything's peachy keen. Rudy, with Paul's encouragement (and the gift of a reel-to-reel tape recorder), is making singing demos and to one of them—the upbeat "Come to Me," sung to a sultry jazz piano accompaniment—we see the trio in a home movie montage becoming a loving family.

Fate intervenes when Paul is strongly urged to bring Rudy and Marco to a social gathering by his conservative boss, Lambert (Gregg Henry). During the outing, Lambert picks up on the true nature of the relationship between the outspoken Rudy and the closeted Paul; very quickly, events overtake the duo. Marco is removed from the home, Paul is fired and in court the irate judge, now knowing the true relationship of the couple, shows them no mercy—or lack of prejudice. In a final humiliation, Marianna returns to reclaim Marco. Rudy, knowing this spells the end for the boy, is beside himself and emotionally berates the judge in open court, leading to a tragic conclusion that given its time and place, seems sadly inevitable.

In a moving finale, Rudy is shown performing Bob Dylan's "I Shall Be Released," a song no doubt inspired by Bette Midler's glorious rendition of it from the time period. (Gay men have ever since embraced it as an anthem for our cause.) It's a canny choice that allows the character a chance to declare his determination to rise above his station in life and to emotionally break free from society's constraints and from

movies—something that to my way of thinking is sadly overdue. It's wonderful to see Cumming taking the risk in what one can only hope is a new trend toward an older style of acting that the movies have sorely missed.

### Film notes:

—**A second helping of melodrama:** Critics were wildly divided over out director Lee Daniels' melodramatic and audacious **The Paperboy**, a Southern-fried gothic if there ever was one. Nicole Kidman plays the trashiest of white-trash vixens, out to free prison pen pal John Cusack with the aid of a closeted gay journalist (Matthew McConaughey) who's into really rough trade on his off hours and his sexed-up little brother (Zac Efron), who has a habit of dancing around the house in his skin-tight skivvies. The actors go for broke, with mixed results, but Kidman's the real deal and Daniels really captures the drive-in, exploitation feel of '60s B pictures that he was going for (and in which time period

the film is set). The movie didn't sit well with audiences but is getting a second helping with a run at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., on Wed., Jan. 2, and Thursday, Jan. 3.

—**At last:** After a long year of winning raves on the festival circuit and receiving critical kudos in its theatrical run, **The Wise Kids**—from out writer-director Stephen Cone and one of my top 10 LGBT film choices for 2012—is finally coming to DVD Jan. 8 from Wolfe Video. A delicate coming-of-age story, the movie follows three young teens as they grapple with issues of faith, family, friendship and sexuality. Cone himself is marvelous in a key supporting role.

Check out my archived reviews at [www.windycitymediagroup.com](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com) or [www.knightatthemovies.com](http://www.knightatthemovies.com). Readers can leave feedback at the latter website.

Also, check Windy City Times' website for reviews of **The Guilt Trip** and **Parental Guidance**, which star, respectively, **Barbra Streisand** and **Bette Midler**.

### MOVIES

## Alan Cumming on Liza, 'Any Day Now'

BY RICHARD KNIGHT JR.

I last spoke with Alan Cumming—actor, writer, director, singer, noted queer activist and all-around Renaissance man—in 2010 when he was in Chicago as the first recipient of the Chicago International Film Festival's OUTrageous Award for Artistic Achievement. As usual, since then Cumming has been busy with a myriad of projects—the most prominent being his regular television appearances on *The Good Wife* and, now, in his moving lead performance in writer-director Travis Fine's *Any Day Now*.

Cumming stars as a drag queen who works the bar scene in the late '70s and aspires to a singing career. He partners with a closeted and rather fetching lawyer (Garret Dillahunt) and, in a rather strange turn of events, the two become the de facto parents for an abandoned boy with Down Syndrome. When the boy's drug-addicted mother returns to the scene a heart-wrenching court battle ensues. The movie, distributed by locally based Music Box Films, has won raves for Cumming on the festival circuit (it made my top 10 list as well) and opens at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave., on Friday, Jan. 4.

**Windy City Times: You helped to develop the material for *Any Day Now*, correct?**

Alan Cumming: I was on board quite early. I wouldn't say I developed it but I got to offer my thoughts on the various drafts and certainly helped to develop traits about the character—you know, things that I thought should be changed a little. And the script did change quite a bit in the three or four drafts that I read to be sure. It was exciting to be part of that and have those discussions because you don't normally get involved.

**WCT: (SPOILER ALERT) It changed from a happy outcome to a much more tragic kind of piece, right?**

AC: There was a more upbeat ending, yes, when I first read it.

**WCT: One thing that I loved about the movie—and I don't know if this was intentional or not—the story was very true to the gay experience in the '70s but it's also true to '70s cinema—that downbeat thing. Did you and Travis discuss that?**

AC: The look and feel of it?

**WCT: Yes—and the downbeat ending, which is a hallmark of '70s cinema.**

AC: Yeah. I think it definitely was. I know that Travis watched a lot of movies from the

'70s and definitely that kind of aesthetic of those movies I think was in play when it comes to the look and feel of the film. And for me it really helped us that it was a period piece which takes it one step away from complete naturalism and you can really go for it. There's a grittiness to it that is perhaps something we associate with films from that period rather than present day things—certainly that would be the case with gay stories.

**WCT: I've read that you hesitated because it was a drag-queen character but because it was also a period piece, was that a mark in its favor?**

AC: When I first read it I just thought, "Oh, of course it's a drag queen," which is slightly stereotypical in terms of a story about a gay man. But actually it wasn't so much the '70s thing but it was his voice—that's what I thought was really interesting about doing the drag bit. I didn't want to do a negative stereotypical thing and there was a big potential for that so I was concerned more about that than anything else. And that's what was so heartening about working with Travis because every step of the way he confounded my worries by cutting stuff or by the way he treated the character. I think he's incredibly moving.

**WCT: And there's certainly a very theatrical element inherent in the character and the story—drag queen adopts Down Syndrome child, drag queen shares jail cell with homophobic revolutionary ala *Kiss of the Spider Woman*—that kind of thing. I think it was pulled back when it needed to be. I also loved, having seen you perform in concert here at the Harris Theater, that the singing became such a part of this character. Was that developed after you came in specifically for you?**

AC: No, it was always there. That wasn't me.

**WCT: But that must have been thrilling for you, as an actor and a vocalist, to be able to emotionally encapsulate everything in song.**

AC: Yes. I have sung in films before, that's true but I've not sung in this way where I am singing as a performer but also as being sort of the narrator at certain points—especially at the end. I think that's really interesting and was appropriate.

**WCT: It was very true to the period. Using "I Shall Be Released" the Dylan song**

Turn to page 23



Garret Dillahunt (left) and Alan Cumming in *Any Day Now*.

handsome but shy Paul Fleiger (Dillahunt) giving him the eye onstage and, afterwards, the two hook up. Paul is recently divorced and just beginning to have sex with men while Rudy, with his Bronx accent and attitude to match, takes charge sexually and emotionally. The attraction between the two is instant.

Rudy's neighbor in his scuzzy apartment building is trappy drug addict Marianna (Jamie Anne Allman), who has a son with Down Syndrome. Rudy first encounters the 14-year-old Marco (Isaac Leyva) when he knocks on Marianna's door to protest her ever blaring rock music. Finding the door open, he enters and finds the teenager curled up in a corner. The plight of the boy melts Rudy's heart and when Marianna is arrested for drug addiction, Rudy becomes Marco's surrogate father.

For a while everything's okay, but then Rudy's irate landlord reports him to family services, who take Marco away. Rudy implores Paul, who works

his heartbreak. Fine's movie, with its downbeat look and feel (along with the ending), mirrors the urban cinema of the '70s—it has the gritty feel of the era—that augments the emotional mileau it traffics in.

Although inspired by real life, the events here are purposely pushed to the dramatic hilt and Cumming—in daring to go all out, certainly at the behest of his director—is going to catch a lot of flack for eschewing a more naturalistic approach to his character. Bette Davis and Susan Hayward—prime scenery-chewers each—played a lot of histrionic characters like Rudy Donatello, and we revel in these performances decades after they were made.

Which brings me to the question: When did melodrama at the movies become a dirty word? Perhaps *Any Day Now*, along with the over-the-top work of the ensemble in Lee Daniels' *The Paperboy* (see note below), will lead the charge in bringing back larger-than-life acting to the

# the **DISH** WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN WINDY CITY TIMES

## Club Lucky

BY ANDREW DAVIS

**Club Lucky** (1824 W. Wabansia Ave.; www.clubluckychicago.com) has been around for more than two decades because it's steeped in tradition.

The eatery itself is the business equivalent of comfort food. It's a family-friendly establishment that serves traditional Italian fare and features exceptionally friendly staff. There's even a jukebox that plays everything from traditional holiday songs to Marvin Gaye tunes. Recent holiday decorations included numerous lights and snowflakes hanging from the ceiling.

General manager Tom Kleiner talked with Windy City Times and co-owner Jim Higgins talked about Club Lucky's history. "We've had the same owners [during Club Lucky's entire run]: Jim Higgins and Bobby Paladino," Kleiner said. "We've been a family-owned and -operated restaurant for 23 years. We treat staff as a family, and we do activities and events that focus on



Images from Club Lucky. Photos by Ed Negron.

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point. We started off with a mix of grilled and fried calamari; I could've nibbled on those all night. My dining companion also liked the minestrone, which was the soup of the day. The antipasti were a variety of tasty cheeses and meats, including a prosciutto that was an unmitigated standout. (Club Lucky has an extensive list of appetizers and salads, including stuffed artichoke, little neck clams and meatball insalata.)

The entrees were even better. I tried the grilled chicken with whole-wheat penne—a combination that was so good it felt sinful even though it's relatively healthy. (The chicken is char-broiled, and marinated with lemon, herbs and spices.) My friend immediately gave his chicken with creamy pesto sauce a thumbs-up; I took a bite and had to concur. As with the appetizers, Club Lucky offers a cornucopia of entrée items, ranging from shrimp scampi to grilled pork chops to homemade lasagna. Also, if you can somehow make room for dessert, do so (or you can do what I usually do—order dessert to go); offerings include buttermilk chocolate layer cake, cannoli and even warm tollhouse cookies (a la mode with caramel cream and hot fudge).

A seasonal cocktail I tried was the Sleigh Ride (which contains, among other things, Captain Morgan's spiced rum, and features a cinnamon-sugar rim and a chocolate "cigarette")—and it was absolutely heavenly. ("It's a take on the Mexican horchata," Kleiner said.)

One of Club Lucky's handcrafted cocktails is the award-winning Six Corner Fizz, which is named after the North/Milwaukee/Damen intersection in Wicker Park. "The Wicker Park/Bucktown Chamber of Commerce named this its official drink," said Kleiner. "It contains a myriad of different alcohols, juices and garnishes to reflect the history of the communities of Wicker Park and Bucktown." With more than 10 ingredients (including dragonfruit and Gran Gala), I'm inclined to believe him.

Although tradition is a huge part of the establishment, Club Lucky has changed a little: Its menu now also features the aforementioned whole-wheat penne as well as wheat- and gluten-free spaghetti made from organic quinoa. There are also specials each day that allow the chef, Alfredo Anaya, to put his spin on classic dishes. What hasn't changed is that Club Lucky is open for lunch and dinner seven days a week.

I enthusiastically recommend Club Lucky—especially for those who want to take a break from the trendy eateries and just enjoy delicious comfort food in a relaxed atmosphere.

the community and our staff as one entity—as a family.

"The recipes [for most of the menu items] came from our grandmothers. [Even] the way we prepare the noodles reflects what's been passed through generations, and our food reflects that. We're not this new, fancy dining place; this is sitting at grandmother's table having a hearty meal, and it's meant to make you emotionally happy. It's not about pushing ourselves in a

new, trendy direction. We often have two or three generations sitting at the same table."

Club Lucky also has ties with the LGBT and HIV/AIDS communities. "We have been a major supporter of Dining Out for Life [an annual event that benefits HIV/AIDS organizations]," Higgins added. "The past two years, we have been the number-one restaurants in terms of raising money for that event."

Then, there's the food, which does not disap-

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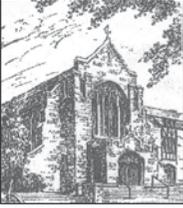
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# calendar

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### Wed., Jan. 2

**Gay Liberation Network meeting** Chicago's multi-issue, LGBT direct action group calling attention to equality and liberation for LGBTs, against America's wars, supporting labor and immigrant rights, and more. Chicago's multi-issue, LGBT direct action group; 7pm-9pm, 773-209-1187, Berger Park Cultural Center, 6205 N. Sheridan Rd., **www.gayliberation.net**

### Thursday, Jan. 3

**Coming-out support group** This coming-out support group is for women who find themselves attracted to other women, or may be questioning their sexual identity and are looking to discuss issues of sexuality in a safe and confidential space. 6pm-7:30pm, 773-388-1600X3319, Howard Brown, 4025 N. Sheridan Rd., **www.howardbrown.org/lccp**

### Friday, Jan. 4

**Sandra Bernhard Live** Hybrid of stand-up comedy and rock 'n roll; a raucous mix of political satire, pop culture commentary and cabaret. Since starting her career in the '70s, the out lesbian has written and starred in numerous one-woman shows, acted in movies and on television, recorded albums and authored books. Through Jan. 5, \$45, \$65, all ages. 8pm-10pm, 312-733-WINE, City Winery, 1200 W. Randolph St., **www.citywinery.com/chicago**

### Saturday, Jan. 5

**Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance (GLBT)** A weekly peer support group for members of the LGBTQ community with depression, bipolar disorder, or other psychiatric illnesses. Free of charge. Community Room. 11am-12:30pm, 872-216-3272, Howard Brown Health Center, 4025 N. Sheridan Rd., **www.dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com**  
**CAKE Chicago - Queer Music Showcase**

Featuring Dalice Malice (alt-country) and Carrie Lydon. \$5. 9pm, 773-274-5463, Red Line Tap, 7006 N Glenwood Ave., **www.facebook.com/ckechicago**

**9 to 12 No Tap Bowling League** LGBT bowling on the first Saturday of the month from 9 to 12 pm. Bowling takes place at River-Rand Bowl (on River Road just north of Rand Road). Leagues begin at 9pm and substitute bowlers are welcome and encouraged to come out to the lanes. 9pm, River Rand Bowl, Des Plaines, **http://www.facebook.com/pages/9-to-12-bowling/150981275086?fref=ts**

### Sunday, Jan. 6

**Urban Village Church: Andersonville service** Andersonville is a neighborhood full of passion, art, diversity, and eclectic energy, all which makes Urban Village Church thrilled to be involved in the community! 10:30am-11:45am, Bethany Retirement Center, 1602 W Ainslie St (at Ashland), **www.newchicagochurch.com**

**Family of Women Book Group** Heartburn by Nora Ephron. 2pm, Women & Children First Books, 5233 N. Clark St., **www.womenandchildrenfirst.com**

**Diva: All Drag Revue** Angeliq Munro hosts a salute to song/stage/screen themed shows first and third Sundays. DJ David Byrne. Never a cover. Table reservation suggested at **angeliquemunro@yahoo.com**. Table is reserved only until 7:45pm. Must be at least 2 to a table to reserve. 7:45pm, Atmosphere, 5355 N. Clark St.

### Monday, Jan. 7

**Gay Men's Crystal Meth/Cocaine Group** SMART employs a variety of tools and techniques to help individuals gain independence from addictive behaviors. Email: **smartchicagonorth@gmail.com; 7pm-8:15pm, 773-530-1978, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org**

**i2i new API coming-out group** Open to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and queer APIs. Adoptees, hapas, and multiracial folks welcome too. First Monday of every month. Free. Snacks. More info: **chicagoi2i@yahoo.com; 6pm-7:30pm, Asian Human Services, 7th flr conference room, 4753 N. Broadway**

### Tuesday, Jan. 8

**Adler School of Professional Psychology Open House** Meet with admissions counselors and receive a tour of the downtown campus. RSVP by phone or via email at **admissions@adler.edu. 10:30am-12:30pm, 312-662-4100, 17 N. Dearborn St., www.adler.edu**

**Book Group** Mules and Men by Zora Neale Hurston; 7:15pm, Women & Children First Books, 5233 N. Clark St., **www.womenandchildrenfirst.com**

### Wed., Jan. 9

**Women Wednesday** Second Wednesday of every month, Equality Illinois holds a monthly social gathering for women. 7pm-9pm, 773-477-7173, Mary's Attic, 5400 N Clark St., **www.eqil.org/events.html**

### Monday, Jan. 14

**One-night-only reading of Academy Award winner Dustin Lance Black's 8** Docudrama chronicles the landmark case filed by the American Foundation for Equal Rights to overturn California's Proposition 8—the constitutional amendment adopted to deny gay and lesbian couples the right to marry. Post-performance panel. Free with reservation. 7:30pm, Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St., Tickets: **http://go-pride.com/z7sq**

### Saturday, Jan. 19

**Artemis Singers concert** Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus will perform "On the Street Where You Live," "Testimony" and other favorites. Tickets are a suggested donation of \$10 in advance; \$15 at the door. 7:30pm, Ethical Humanist Society, 7574 N. Lincoln Ave., Skokie, **www.artemissingers.org**

**NUNN ON ONE:  
PERFORMANCE**

# Sandra Bernhard talks audiences, Andy Cohen



BY JERRY NUNN

Comedian and actress Sandra Bernhard is heading to the City Winery for two nights to start off the new year, spotlighting her recent work entitled *I Love Being Me, Don't You?*

Her Oscar-nominated role in Martin Scorsese's *King of Comedy* brought her into the public eye back to 1983. Playing the first openly gay character on the sitcom *Roseanne* led to other shows including *The L Word*, *Hot in Cleveland*, and *Will & Grace*.

Bernhard has written three books and sings live regularly. She has opened for acts such as Cyndi Lauper and the Scissor Sisters. If you haven't heard her rendition of "Midnight Train to Georgia" then you have missed the boat.

Windy City Times caught up with her before an upcoming Joe's Pub gig and trip to Chicago.

**Windy City Times:** Hi, Sandra. It's been years since I've seen you in Chicago.

Sandra Bernhard: Well, it's time to get back there, that's for darn sure. Here I am, ready to roll...

**WCT:** Is it the same show both nights at the City Winery?

SB: The bones will be the same but there will be some changes each night because I tend to get improvisational with topics in the moment. I do have a set show because you want to give people their money's worth, but will be fun and improvisational as well though.

**WCT:** After seeing you perform live a few times, I was wondering if it bothers you when the audience yells things out or is that part of the fun?

SB: It depends—you know what I mean? In small doses it is kind of fun. When people are interactive to a certain degree. It has kind of been less and less over the years since it can be kind of irritating and ruins the flow of the show. It doesn't happen as often as it used to. I try to roll with the punches.

**WCT:** It is usually just fans who want to hear your take on something. It's not like it's a heckler or something.

SB: Totally.

**WCT:** This will be your first show of the brand new year.

SB: You are right. I'm doing my show at Joe's Pub on New Year's Eve, then Chicago will be kicking off a new year. I love Chicago. I have a couple of really good friends there. Partly being from the Midwest (with Michigan), I like the vibe. It is one of my favorite American cities so I am always ready to come back.

**WCT:** Are you bringing the whole band with you?

SB: I'm actually only bringing my guitar player, who has put together two other vocal musicians because these days to travel with a whole band is very costly. It will be very together and cohesive by the time we all get there.

**WCT:** Any cover songs you are planning on singing?

SB: Oh yeah, but I never give that away be-

cause when people come then they want to be surprised. It is part of the fun of what I do. I will be doing some new songs at Joe's Pub so I am not sure if I want to incorporate some of those or not. I don't know definitely what the set list will be but it will be some choice stuff for sure.

**WCT:** There could be a live album out of this one day in the future—who knows?

SB: Right, exactly.

**WCT:** City Winery has really been showing a variety of acts this year.

SB: I know the venue because there is one in New York. I heard the Chicago one is even nicer, so I am all about it.

**WCT:** You have been on Bravo's *Watch What Happens Live* with Andy Cohen there regularly for a while.

SB: I did my little 10-week stint with him. He



Sandra Bernhard.

has things he wants to accomplish on the show and he has a short time to get it all done. It is a special thing every time. I love him. He's been very supportive of me.

**WCT:** Jane Fonda was on there with you recently so that must have been amazing.

SB: It was. We have become friends over the years. She is someone I really admire. She does a lot of great work. She's a good person.

**WCT:** Do you have a favorite Bravo show you watch?

SB: I'm kind of in and out of watching the *Housewives* thing when I have to do it for the show. My TV viewing is on limited time so I pick things that are unique. It serves its purpose and is fun in small doses.

**WCT:** Would you ever do a reality show?

SB: Not like that, no. I might do something that is an unscripted, interesting, smart version but that is almost impossible to do.

**WCT:** Do you think *American Idol* will be crazy this season?

SB: With Nicki Minaj and Mimi [Mariah Carey]?

**WCT:** Yes.

SB: No more than these other shows with the

combinations of people they have. I guess that is the whole point because it is a runaway train. It's a weird new hybrid of entertainment and competition. It doesn't really speak to me so I will watch a little bit, but that's it. It's more about how I grew up and the people I admire. It's a different world.

**WCT:** How was being on TV Land's *Hot in Cleveland*?

SB: It was super-fun! They are all talented and wonderful people. They are all warm and supportive. It's always a joy to be around people on set like that.

**WCT:** Any big plans for 2013?

SB: My goal in the New Year is to end up on television. I'm working on that actively. There are a lot of good things in the works.

**WCT:** People can keep up with that on Twitter. I know you are on there often.

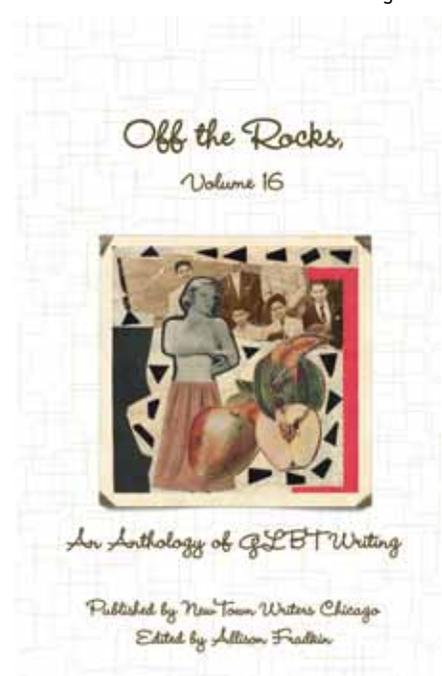
## BOOK REVIEW

### Off the Rocks, Volume 16

edited by Allison Fradkin,  
NewTown Writers  
\$12.50; iUniverse; 167 pages  
BY SALLY PARSONS

A potpourri of poems, prose and essays, *Off the Rocks, Volume 16*, addresses the questions of identity—"How do you identify, do you ident-defy, what are your identities, do you identi-tease?"—as editor Fradkin states on the back cover. NewTown Writers Chicago accepted submissions from 31 LGBT writers and advocates from across the country for this edition. Two of the most endearing are *Forgiveness* by Vince Sgambati and *Ejaculating Beauty* by Aimee Herman.

"Forgiveness" is the heartbreaking account of Charlie and Michael, who tend to Charlie's mom, Lena, in their South Beach, N.Y., home, as Lena settles into a dementia-like fog. The



story begins with Lena peering into a mirror. "And why is the stranger in the mirror wearing the identical nightgown?," Lena asks herself. Charlie lovingly cares for her and for his and Michael's daughter, Rochelle, pushing aside unease that his own union with Michael is falling apart.

In "Ejaculating Beauty," Herman captures, in brutally honest fashion, the pain of a young girl growing up uncomfortable in her own body. At 6 she practices being a girl. She moves on to tomboy and eventually embraces the word "queer." All along, she's battling against stereotypes: "You homos ignored me because I didn't look like you—not gay enough—dyke enough—femme enough—lesbian enough—political enough."

The anthology nicely distributes prose and poems so the reader can variously enjoy it

SB: Yes, all my social media; people can know what I'm thinking. I tend to not go too overboard just because some of the people on there are not as open and intelligent as I would like them to be. They take things a little too literally. It's hard to be ironic on Twitter.

**WCT:** People take sarcasm the wrong way on there.

SB: Sometimes. People don't pick up on the nuances as much as I would like them to.

**WCT:** That is why they need to come see you live.

SB: Thank you. You just hit the nail on the head!

**Bernhard loves being her at the City Winery, 1200 W. Randolph St., on Friday-Saturday, Jan. 4-5, at 8 p.m. Visit [www.citywinery.com](http://www.citywinery.com) or [www.sandrabernhard.com](http://www.sandrabernhard.com) for more information and tickets.**

all. At the back are biographical notes on all the submitters. *Off the Rocks* makes for a thought-provoking as well as a tear- and laugh-inducing read.

With a mission of fostering gay literature, NewTown Writers publishes the literary anthology *Off the Rocks* and the e-zine *Swell*. NewTown Writers also holds frequent public events, including a performance series, dramatist workshops and workshop-style meetings. The organization was founded in 1980.

## Artemis Singers concert Jan. 19 in Skokie

Artemis Singers, Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus, will present "Many Voices Create the Song: Artemis Singers in Concert," at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 19, at the Ethical Humanist Society, 7574 N. Lincoln Ave., Skokie.

In an unusual twist to concert programming, each chorus member selected a song that best represents her. Some songs reflect a milestone in life, such as falling in love, coming out as a lesbian or giving birth. Many individuals proposed songs or written works that speak to their relationships.

Tickets are a suggested donation of \$10 in advance; \$15 at the door. Visit [www.artemissingers.org](http://www.artemissingers.org) for information.

## New web series looks at fictional Kardashian

Chicago-based actor/producer Fawzia Mirza and filmmaker Ryan Logan are presenting *Kam Kardashian*, a web series about the long-lost lesbian sister of the very famous family.

The first season of *Kam Kardashian* consisted of four episodes freely available on YouTube, and the team is currently raising funds on Kickstarter for a second season of eight four-minute episodes. Biweekly mini-episodes will show Kam weekly from Valentine's Day to Cinco De Mayo.

People can donate to the Kickstarter campaign (until Jan. 10) at <http://kck.st/UKo6KH>.



Fawzia Mirza as Kam Kardashian.

# BILLY MASTERS

"I never denied those rumors because I was offended and didn't want to offend my friends who were gay—as if being gay were some kind of fucking disease."—Matt Damon addresses why he never commented on the rumors that he and Ben Affleck were lovers.

As we leave 2012 behind, I'd like to share a bit of knowledge I picked up towards the end of last year. When someone asks you any question that begins with the words, "What do you think about...," they really don't want to know what you think. If they agree with you, they'll go on and on repeating exactly what you've said. And if they disagree, you'll be told you are wrong with hours of reasons why. So take a tip from Billy Masters—when asked "What do you think...," take a beat, look about thoughtfully, and then say, "Well, what do YOU think?" Once they tell you in detail what they think, you can simply say, "I agree." It will save you oodles of time.

Before we jump into the New Year, we should see how some of our favorite celebs spent the holiday season. Neil Patrick Harris and David Burtka stayed up until 2 a.m. on Christmas Eve setting up an elaborate train set for son Gideon, and all he wanted to do on Christmas morning was play with a broom! Dustin Lance Black was invited to one of the many White House Christmas parties—coincidentally (or not), the same one that CNN's Don Lemon was at. (I believe one of them brought model Robby Rasmussen.) A friend sent me a photo of what I thought was Barbara Eden and her grandchildren; it was Kathy Griffin and her nieces and nephew. Oops.

In other cheery news, Glee creator Ryan Murphy and his hubby David Miller welcomed the birth of their son on Christmas Eve. Photos of the newborn Logan Phineas Miller Murphy in a Christmas stocking were sent out to family and friends. Congrats.

Of course, we also lost some noted individuals over the holidays. While the mainstream commemorated the lives of Jack Klugman and Charles Durning, we'd like to remember two others who didn't get quite the same amount of attention. Fontella Bass might be known as a one-hit wonder, but most singers would kill to be known for singing "Rescue Me." Gay-porn actor Josh Weston made a splash as a Falcon star at the turn of the century, but got closer to his real self in more recent videos. He was working on a memoir titled *Sleeping My Way To The Bottom* and was somewhat sanguine about his HIV status. When one interviewer asked where he saw himself in three years, Josh responded, "Good question ... do porn stars go to heaven?" I think they do.

After several delays, the Liberace biopic *Behind the Candelabra* was shot this summer. Directed by Stephen Soderbergh, the flick stars Michael Douglas as the popular pianist and Matt Damon as his secret lover, Scott Thorson. Although the movie doesn't hit HBO until this spring, Damon recently did an interview with *Playboy* discussing it: "Michael was a wonderful kisser. I had to come out of the pool, go over to him, straddle him on a chaise lounge and start kissing him. It's not like I kiss him just once. We drew it up like a football plan." Matt also promises that we'll see quite a bit of skin: "Normally I'd say no to nudity, but I just did a lot of it playing the long-term partner of Liberace. I mean, it's tastefully done. But this movie's not going to be for everyone."

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Frank in New Jersey: "You're Orthodox, right? Did you hear about that calendar of hot nude Orthodox priests? Is it for real? Are they really priests?"

This is how rumors get started. I should know—I've started my fair share. It's not a calendar of hot nude Orthodox priests. Some of them are wearing their collars! That said, the 2013 Orthodox Calendar features what is referred

to as "12 seductive artistic pictures of Orthodox priests and their guests." I'm quite partial to Mr. January—Father Vladimir from the Ukraine, who is photographed with his wife, Yulia, and his three sons who look like they walked out of a Bel Ami video (assuming they could get a work permit to shoot in the Czech Republic). May features brother priests, Jacob and Esua, who "have been together their entire lives and always take care of one another." I bet they do! I must immediately order this calendar from [OrthodoxCalendar.com](http://OrthodoxCalendar.com).

What's a new year without a new celebrity nude? I guess I shouldn't be surprised that it comes from Big Brother alum Will Winkle. It was an inevitability. Even while he was continuing work as an ER nurse, he built up an impressive physique and resume as a much-sought-after NYC go-go boy. In fact, we quoted him in our



**Billy cops to a mistake involving Kathy Griffin.**

wrap up from 2011: "God blessed me with a bountiful butt."

And this year, he popped up in a video walking around Manhattan clad in the smallest pair of pink Timoteo undies I've ever seen to promote Daniel Nardicio's DWorld Underwear Party on Fire Island. A more explicit video was made for the party in Manhattan. Will was cast as a horny and lonely missionary whose neighbors in a sleazy motel include a dozen or so hot underwear models in the midst of a sex party. Of course, Will ends up the centerpiece—much like that old video of Kevin Williams on the *Lazy Susan*! What could he do to top that (so to speak)? Finally show all, which he did in some new nude shots with porn star Benjamin Godfre. Why? Who knows. Allegedly, Will is still in a long-distance relationship with former porn pup Mason Star, but as someone who has been in a few of those, I wouldn't read too much into it. Instead, just check out the pretty pics of his penis on [BillyMasters.com](http://BillyMasters.com).

When I can segue from hot priests to reality stars in the missionary position, it's definitely time to end yet another column. I think this might be the first time nude priests have been featured on [www.BillyMasters.com](http://www.BillyMasters.com)—the site that is always interested in what you think. In fact, if there's something you'd like me to look into, drop a note to [Billy@BillyMasters.com](mailto:Billy@BillyMasters.com) and I promise to get back to you before Kathy Griffin stars in a remake of *I Dream Of Jeannie*! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

# WELCOME 2013

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## Chicago Auto Show marks first for 2013

The public portion of the 2013 Chicago Auto Show will run Saturday, Feb. 9, through Monday, Feb. 18.

This will be the first time since 1998 that the show will open to the public on a Saturday. Show organizers decided to shift the dates for 2013 to take advantage of the Presidents Day holiday.

The Chicago Auto Show's black-tie benevolent event, First Look for Charity, will shift from Thursday to Friday, Feb. 8 (at 7-11 p.m.). "It's a move our charities have asked for and it will, no doubt, increase attendance at one of Chicago's most popular charity events," said 2013 Chicago Auto Show Co-Chairman Kurt Schiele in a statement.

Also, Kurt Schiele of Elmhurst BMW, Jaguar and Toyota-Scion, was recently selected as the 2012-2013 Chicago Automobile Trade Association chairman and the 2013 Chicago Auto Show co-chairman. Schiele will lead a board of 15 dealers and succeeds Michael Ettlerson, who becomes chairman of the 2013 Chicago Auto Show.

In addition, the show has revamped its website ([www.ChicagoAutoShow.com](http://www.ChicagoAutoShow.com)), with new

daily image galleries, a comprehensive listing of vehicles on display and integrated social-media content from the Chicago Auto Show's official blog, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels.

Visit [ChicagoAutoShow.com](http://ChicagoAutoShow.com) or [Facebook.com/ChicagoAutoShow](https://facebook.com/ChicagoAutoShow) for more information.

## Auto news

—**Perfection:** Men's Journal recently listed what the staff says are 65 perfect items, in terms of style and design. Several vehicles made the roundup, including the Acura NSX, which the manufacturer says is three years away. The original went out of production in 2005, but the new version, according to the publication, "aims to upend the supercar world again by offering performance-based hybrid technology at a price that should undercut Porsche's similarly teched-out 918 Spyder."

—**CNET gain:** CNET recently issued its 2012 Car Tech Awards. The 2012 Tesla Model S was named car of the year for showing "superb technology throughout while also challenging our conceptions of how a car should work." Among the other honors were most popular (2012 Chevrolet Volt), most worthy of its hype (2012 Scion FR-S), best concept car (Acura NSX) and most OMG!! car (2012 Bentley Mulsanne).

Acura NSX.



# Memories aplenty from 2012 gay sports scene

BY ROSS FORMAN

Tears flowed in Pittsburgh in early August and more tears flowed in Minneapolis late that month. Both times, the Chicago LGBT community was directly impacted.

History was made Aug. 4, when the first-ever women's football game was played in an NFL stadium as the Chicago Force battled the San Diego Surge in the Women's Football Alliance (WFA) championship, aired live on an ESPN station and held at Heinz Field, home of the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Ultimately, the Surge slipped past the Force, 40-36, scoring the deciding points in the final minutes of the fourth quarter.

"It was a phenomenal season, with everything but the storybook ending," Force owner Linda Bache said in October, still hurt from the heartbreaking defeat. "We were so close [to winning the national championship], so that leaves mixed emotions [about the season]."

The Force features many open lesbians on its roster, not to mention Bache. Quarterback Sami Grisafe was the Force Championship MVP; other open lesbians on the team include Darcy Leslie, Brandi Srdá, Albi Zhubi, Brandy Hatcher, Keesha Brooks, Trish Harper, Kim Marks, Tricia Charbonneau, Amanda Malsch and Tami Engelman, among others.

Three weeks later, on Aug. 25, the Chicago Menace played in the championship round of the top-tiered A-Division at the annual Gay Softball World Series, held in Minneapolis.

The Menace ultimately returned home with the third-place trophy, the best finish ever for a Chicago A-Division team.

"The Menace had an outstanding season in

2012, our third as an A-Division team," said Menace manager Cameron Turner. "The highlight of the World Series that really propelled us into the finals on Saturday was knocking off the [top]-seeded team, the Phoenix Toros. We basically took over the number one after that, and after a couple more wins, we found ourselves among the final four teams left on Saturday.

"Unfortunately, we had to play the Toros again. We always have tough games against them, and this time they beat us and knocked us out of the tournament. We were disappointed, but still very happy to walk away with a third-place trophy."

The Force and the Menace were the co-winners of the top 12 Chicago LGBT sports stories of 2012. Here's a look at the other moments from a truly memorable local gay sports scene:

1. (tie) Chicago Force advance to the WFA National Championship game.

1. (tie) Chicago Menace claim third-place in the top-tiered A-Division at the annual Gay Softball World Series.

3. Brian Kupersmit was named the new president of the predominantly gay Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA), replacing Shawn Albritton. The contentious CMSA elections took place over a record seven rounds, lasting two and a half hours.

4. Two Chicago teams win their division title in the 22nd annual Coady Classic, the largest and longest-running annual gay basketball tournament, held April 21-22 at the University of Illinois—Chicago. The 2012 Coady featured 34 teams, 310 players and 83 games played over two days. The Chicago Has-Bens captured the B-Division title, while Chicago Gotcha Covered won the C-Division title beating Chicago Rec Specs in the finals.



Andrew Burke and BJ Negrete (Negrete is in the right photo, with her partner Leslie Wallin, who is pictured at right) are the local male and female athletes of the year. Photos, respectively, from Burke and Negrete

5. The Chicago BruiseHers Blue Team claims third-place in the inaugural women's division of the Gay Bowl, a prestigious flag-football tournament played in late September in Denver.

6. Jenn Gibbons was attacked and sexually assaulted July 22. She was on a 1,500-mile solo rowing journey around Lake Michigan to raise money for breast-cancer survivors. Gibbons has coached the Chicago Rowing Union (CRU), an LGBT rowing team, for two years.

7. The CMSA Hall of Fame, in May, welcomed inducted its newest class: Shawn Albritton, Sam Hamilton and Jack Nielsen.

8. CMSA women's sports success: The women's flag-football league hits 31 teams, the most since 33 played in 2006. The first-ever 11-on-11 women's outdoor soccer league is launched with six teams playing over the summer and five in the fall. The second annual CMSA Women's Social Party, held in January, attracted about 1,000 attendees, up from 900 in 2011.

9. Ride For AIDS Chicago, the annual 200-mile bicycle ride that benefits the Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN), had a record-setting event in July. The ride raised a record \$751,000, with 316 riders and 102 crew members.

10. All Team To End AIDS (T2) runners finished the Chicago and Honolulu marathons. T2 runners in 2012 included David Munar, the president of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, who is openly gay.

11. Chicago lesbian played on world champion deaf soccer team: Katie Romano, 26, helped the United States win the gold medal at the 2012 World Deaf Football Championships, played in July in Turkey. Romano—who lives in Huntley, Ill., works as a package handler for FedEx Ground and is married to her wife, Casandra Cat-touse—was the lone Chicago-area player on the U.S. team.

12. The Windy City Cycling Club (WCCC) celebrates its 20th anniversary in March, with recreational, road and off-road bike rides for LGBT members. The group also is involved in bicycle advocacy and cycling education events, and has regular social events, too. During the winter, the WCCC organizes outdoor and indoor recreational activities, such as skiing, tobogganing, ice skating, bowling and more.

#### Coming out:

Here's a look at the top five sports personalities who came out in 2012:

1. Orlando Cruz, boxer
2. Megan Rapinoe, soccer player

3. Kevin McClatchy, former owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates

4. Wade Davis, former college and professional football player

5. Shaun T, fitness guru from the popular Insanity workout

#### Chicago stars:

Andrew Burke played three team sports and also completed six endurance-training events 2012. He played CMSA softball, basketball and flag football, and ran the Tough Mudder in Wisconsin with teammates who also call Chicago home.

Burke, 34, was named the 2012 male athlete of the year in voting by a select group of LGBT athletes.

Burke played for the Sidetrack Blues in the annual Gay Softball World Series in Minneapolis, his third time in the Series, and is the commissioner for the CMSA open division basketball league. He also played in the annual Pride Bowl and served on the Board for the flag football tournament, held in June in Chicago.

He is a Chicago White Sox fan who tagged Derrick Rose of the Chicago Bulls as his favorite athlete.

"Over the years I have played several sports with Andrew, including football, dodgeball and volleyball. I also have played against him or watched him play several other [games]," said Cameron Turner. "Not only is he a gifted athlete and a great sport, Andrew also is extremely dedicated to the Chicago gay sports leagues. He is truly deserving of this recognition."

BJ Negrete played four sports in 2012 and has now played more than 20 years of gay sports in Chicago.

Negrete, 47, was named the 2012 female athlete of the year in voting by a select group of LGBT athletes.

The Oak Park resident played volleyball, softball, flag football and dodgeball. Football is her favorite sport, highlighted in 2012 by a double overtime win over Players.

She also played in two out-of-town softball tournaments for Raw Energy.

Negrete dressed as Mrs. Claus to quarterback her football team in a game played days before Halloween.

Negrete and her partner, Leslie Wallin, have been together for 13 years.

"I just love, love, love women's sports," Negrete said.

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#### DIVORCE – LEGAL EQUALITY FOR EVERYONE

When the Civil Union Act was signed into law by Governor Quinn, everyone was rejoicing at the granting of all the legal benefits to same-sex couples. For Beth and her ex-lover Janet, however, the joy of the new civil union law was not that they could enter into a legally binding relationship in Illinois – the joy was that they could finally end the legal relationship they created in Vermont in 2000.

In 2000, LGBT couples from all states could travel to Vermont, apply to Vermont town clerks for a civil union license and then receive a civil union certificate. Vermont intended that the legal status granted to LGBT couples was to be parallel to civil marriage. But it only worked while in Vermont.

Relationships change and it changed for Beth and Janet, who now live apart. In 2006 they split. Now ready to move into new unions and marriages, they discovered they could not terminate their Vermont civil union in Illinois. Illinois did not allow them to "divorce" under Illinois law. The only way for Janet and Beth to terminate their Vermont civil union was for one of them to move to Vermont and meet the residency requirement of living there for one year. They couldn't afford to move back nor did they want to. So they stayed together legally.

People change and grow, people can create ugly disasters and people make mistakes – what seemed like a good idea at one point in someone's life may not be the same great idea years later. The new civil union law in Illinois provides a legal fix for the mistakes. It allows judges to grant legal dissolution of unions and make declarations of invalidity of a civil union, and decree that a marriage between persons of the same sex, a civil union, or a substantially similar relationship (other than a common law marriage), legally entered into in another jurisdiction, can be dissolved here in Illinois.

Now Janet and Beth – as well as all the other LGBT couples who have marriage licenses from other states and countries – can have the benefit of Illinois' law and courts to terminate their legal ties – to unwind the mistakes and fix the bad ideas. This gives a real sense of equality to LGBT couples so they know they won't end up in legal limbo if their relationship changes.

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**CUMMING from page 18**

brought to mind Bette Midler's recording from that period—which gay men everywhere were no doubt singing along with at the time.

AC: That's what they sent me! I didn't know the song so they sent me a YouTube clip of Bette Midler singing at the bathhouse with Barry Manilow playing on piano. I thought, "No pressure." [Laughs]

WCT: Well, you pulled it off beautifully.

AC: Thank you.

WCT: Speaking about your singing for a moment, you bring a lot of character to your songs. Did I read that you recently did something with Liza Minnelli—who also utilizes that approach?

AC: Yes; I've done a few things with Liza over the years. But this summer we did a couple of shows on Fire Island and it was an amazing night—we did two shows at Cherry Grove—and we're going to do it again on March 13 at Town Hall in New York. We had a lovely time together.

WCT: Back to that time period—the late '70s—it was very typical to meet somebody at a club and go home and spend the rest of your life with that person. That "love at first sight" idea was very common in those days. How did you get to that place with Garret? Did you have rehearsals?

AC: No. We met a day or two before we started shooting and we didn't know each other at all. When you do something like this, you just know that you're going to have to dive off the cliff and, luckily, we just got on. He's such a lovely man. It wasn't ideal and I would have liked to have had more time and everything, but I think it worked.

WCT: Is it wonderful as an actor to play those emotionally intense courtroom scenes



Alan Cumming. Photo by Bob Dowey

where you get to really let 'er rip? I love that over the top stuff—it's very Bette Davis. [Laughs]

AC: Yes. It was intense. There was never a day when there wasn't some intense scene to shoot.

WCT: It's easy to look at the movie and

think, "How terrible things were for gay people back then" but this stuff is still going on.

AC: One of things about doing this film is that it's made me feel more, sort of angrier because a lot of the press and reaction to the film has been just that: "Oh look at how bad it was and now gay people can adopt; it's great." That's not true. That family is torn apart basically because of bigotry and prejudice, and that definitely still exists.

We live in a society that condones it and though there are some states that allow you to adopt children, there are not that many. And most gay people either adopt in another country

or do it through an agency or through surrogacy. It's still incredibly difficult to do it through the state system. And in some ways you can't blame people for being prejudice because the government is by its inaction condoning prejudice. So it's been interesting doing this film—I'm all for saying let's be happy for what's happened—but let's not be complacent. Let's not think that everything's all finished now.

WCT: Not at all. Having played a parent, are you and your husband ever...

AC: No, no. We decided against it quite a few years ago. We're content. We did think about it, but it's not for us.

**Preservation Trust seeks volunteers**

Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust is seeking volunteers. Said volunteers would present historic sites and their neighborhoods to an international audience; cultivate long-lasting relationships; and receive ongoing education and training on topics related to history, design and Frank Lloyd Wright.

The Frank Lloyd Preservation Trust will hold training sessions in January for volunteer interpreters to lead tours at the Frederick C. Robie House in Chicago's Hyde Park. Robie House interpreter training will take place Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, Jan. 15 to Jan. 31.

Prospective volunteers are invited to attend a 60-minute orientation session prior to training. An orientation session will take place 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 12, at Robie House, 5757 S. Woodlawn St.

For more information, visit [www.GoWright.org](http://www.GoWright.org)

org and fill out an online form, or call Volunteer Resources Manager Linda Bonifas-Guzman at 312-994-4045.

Look for an upcoming Windy City Times profile of the Robie House.

**'Singin' in the Rain' to end symphony series**

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra has announced the addition of the movie musical Singin' in the Rain Friday, May 17, 2013, at 8 p.m. to complete its 2012/13 Friday Night at the Movies series.

Singin' in the Rain joins the 2012/13 series with Disney Fantasia: Live in Concert (Nov. 23, 2012) and Hitchcock at the Movies: A Symphonic Celebration (March 8, 2013).

Single tickets for all Friday Night at the Movies performances are \$69-\$267, and go on sale to the public Aug. 10. See [www.cso.org](http://www.cso.org) or call 312-294-3000.

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Ray is a legal authority on all of his practice areas, which include probate, trusts, guardianship, estate planning, and elder law, including the litigation of those areas. He is a longtime advocate for and member of the LGBT community, and is involved in several charitable groups, community associations, and professional organizations. Ray is a member of Clark Hill PLC, a full-service law firm consisting of a diverse team of attorneys and professionals committed to our clients and our communities.

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