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TALKING WITH THE CAST OF 'AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY'

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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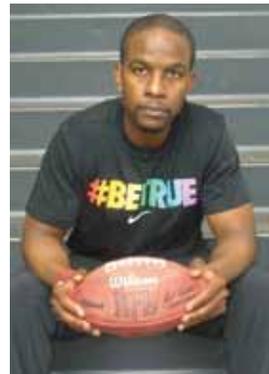
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**WADE DAVIS IS PART OF WCT'S LOOK BACK AT LOCAL LGBT SPORTS IN 2013**  
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# With this ring... The year in local news

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Windy City Times predicted last year that marriage would be the big story for our community in 2013, but we certainly did not foresee the twists and turns that the story would take.

SB10, the legislation that brought marriage equality to Illinois, passed the state Senate on Valentine's Day, then the House Executive Committee 12 days later. Activists and other supporters spent much of the spring wondering when a vote would finally happen. As the legislative session neared its end in May, many advocates for the legislation said that the votes were finally in place for a floor vote.

But then it didn't happen. On May 31, the bill's chief sponsor, state Rep. Greg Harris, addressed the floor and said that his colleagues had asked for more time to sell the idea to their constituents back home. The summer was marked by controversy over Harris' decision, but eventually a campaign staff was put into place to coalesce the various parts of the Illinois Unites to Marry coalition.

Rumors continued to fly, though, with many princi-

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Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn (center) signs the marriage equality bill. Photo by Hal Baim



Rachelle Brown speaks at the Oct. 22 March on Springfield for Marriage Equality. Photo taken from the video of the event.

## MCC's Rachelle Brown works on LGBT religious issues

BY ROSS FORMAN

In high school, Rachelle Brown was, admittedly, "a bit of a religious fanatic." But when she came out as a lesbian, she went away from religion and faith. In fact, her "relationship with religion went farther than south," she said, laughing.

It took her about 12 years to find her way back to religion, and that she did. She is now the provisional pastor of achurch4me, ordained with Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC).

Brown, a Chicago resident, previously was the interim pastor at MCC Illiana in Northwest Indiana during 2008-2011. She has master's degrees in both divinity and communications and is now working toward a Ph.D. in theology, ethics and human sciences at Chicago Theological Seminary.

"I enjoy preaching and enjoy being with people, but I really feel led to teach," she said. "I particularly want to give hope to young people who are trying to live a life of faith."

Brown is a member of American Academy of Religion and a board member for Other Sheep, an organization reaching out to sexual minorities throughout the world.

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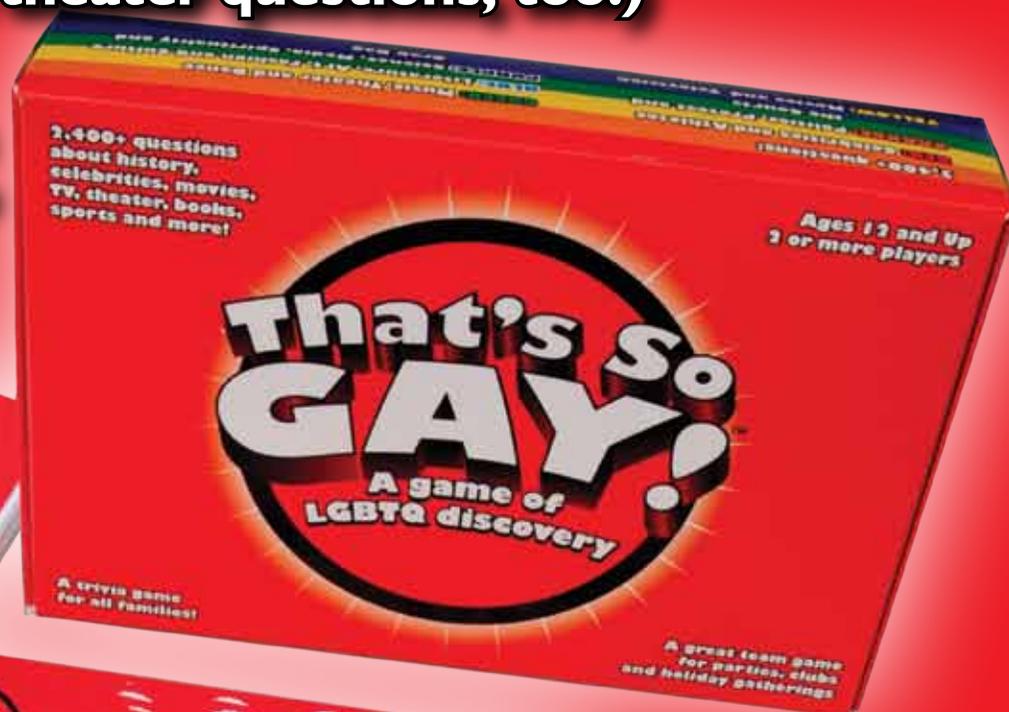
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**WINDY CITY TIMES**

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Photos on cover (left, from top): Photo of August: Osage County cast by Jerry Nunn; photo of Debbie Gibson by Troy Smith; photo of Wade Davis by Ross Forman



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Painting courtesy of Heller



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Bent Nights concludes its look at the year in music.  
Photo of Chaka Khan by Vern Hester

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WCT reports on travels in Switzerland.  
Photo by Jerry Nunn

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# Marriage advances in three states

BY LISA KEEN  
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

Federal judges in three states advanced marriage equality lawsuits Dec. 23.

One of two lawsuits challenging Virginia's ban on recognizing the marriages of same-sex couples advanced Monday after a federal judge denied the state's motion to dismiss the case. Judge Michael Urbanski of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia (Harrisonburg) issued a 17-page memorandum, saying, "It is abundantly clear that plaintiffs' alleged harm is actual, concrete, and particularized."

*Harris v. McDonnell* is a challenge organized by Lambda Legal and the ACLU for two lesbian couples. One couple would like to marry in Virginia; the other has married in the District of Columbia and would like their marriage recognized in Virginia.

Citing sovereign immunity, the judge did dismiss the suit as it was applied to Gov. Robert McDonnell. But the lawsuit will proceed with chief defendant Thomas Roberts, the clerk of the Staunton Circuit Court and Janet Rainey, the state registrar.

In Ohio, U.S. District Court Judge Timothy Black issued a 50-page decision Dec. 23, saying the state constitution's ban on recognizing same-sex married couples violates the U.S. Constitution's guarantees of due process and equal protection.

The lawsuit was *Obergefell v. Wymyslo*, in which two surviving spouses sought the right to be

identified as such on the death certificates of their spouses.

Citing the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in striking down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in *U.S. v. Windsor*, Black said, "It is beyond debate that it is constitutionally prohibited to single out and disadvantage an unpopular group."

Black issued a permanent injunction against the state from refusing to identify a deceased person's same-sex spouse on his death certificate.

"Dying with an incorrect death certificate that prohibits the deceased Plaintiffs from being buried with dignity," wrote Black, "constitutes irreparable harm." Ohio Attorney General Michael DeWine said the state will appeal the decision to the Sixth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals.

And in Utah, U.S. District Court Judge Robert Shelby denied Utah's request to delay the effect of his Dec. 20 order that the state stop enforcing its ban on same-sex couples marrying.

The Salt Lake City Tribune reported that, shortly after Shelby denied the stay, "hundreds" of same-sex couples began applying for marriage licenses around the state.

The administration of Republican Gov. Gary Herbert then asked the Tenth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals to issue a stay of Shelby's order, pending the state's appeal of Shelby's decision that the ban on same-sex marriages is unconstitutional.

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decency" with another man. At age 41, Turing died of cyanide poisoning on June 7, 1954, in what was ruled a suicide.

Victor Salvo—executive director of The Legacy Project, the world's only outdoor museum walk and youth education dedicated to combating anti-gay bullying by celebrating LGBT contributions to history—emailed Windy City Times that "The story of the outrageous injustice done to Alan Turing—one of the most important figures of the 20th century—was the lightning bolt that turned the decades-old Legacy Walk from a pipe dream into an obsession.

"In fact, our plaque on Halsted [Street in Chicago's Boystown] is the only plaque in the world that actually says the man was gay and what happened to him because of it ([http://legacyprojectchicago.org/Alan\\_Turing\\_Plaque\\_Image.html](http://legacyprojectchicago.org/Alan_Turing_Plaque_Image.html)). That he has finally been 'pardoned' by Queen Elizabeth is certainly long overdue.

"Pardoned or not, the conviction and chemical castration that drove Turing to suicide is a scandal which Great Britain and the royals will never erase with the mere stroke of a pen; severing financial ties to Uganda and a British boycott of Sochi in Turing's honor would be a good place to start. Uganda's bullshit law and Russia's anti-LGBT tyranny are just two examples of what we have yet to confront in this world.

"A gesture that comes 60 years too late is meaningless when such horrors are allowed to go unchallenged by those who have real power to change."

—Andrew Davis

## Correction

A story in last week's Windy City Times ("Black LGBT activists discuss steps after marriage") should have stated that 256 complaints were filed with the Chicago Department of Human Relations in 2013.

Windy City Times regrets the error.

## Open To Thinking

BY NICK PATRICCA



## Mandela to Francis: Passing on the Torch

When I came to Chicago in summer of 1966 to enter a PhD program at the University of Chicago in the Divinity School, Chicago embraced me as a long lost son come home at last.

One of my first mentors in this hearty embrace was Eric Kast (died Nov. 24, 1988), medical physician and psychiatrist, who enlisted me in his work providing quality, totally free medical care to the poor on Chicago's South and West Sides. As Eric drove me and my friend and med-student David Moore (who became one of the first medical practitioners to serve people with HIV/AIDS) to the Spurgeon "Jake" Winters Free Peoples Clinic at 16th and Springfield, he would always engage us in philosophical discourse.

**Leadership** was one of Eric's favorite topics of investigation. He strongly believed that we humans need leaders: we need someone who embodies our hopes; we need someone we can trust; we need someone who can show us what actions are necessary to make things better in the communities in which we live and work.

On Dec. 5 2013 when Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela died, the enormous, spontaneous outpouring of love and respect for Madiba (his tribal name) from all parts of the world, from all types of peoples and governments, from all divisions of society

and 3) when to change your mind, even on strongly held, essential policy matters, as Mandela did after he was elected president on the issue of nationalizing the mining industries.

Perhaps the most important leadership quality Mandela learned from his uncle the Thembu king was respect: to respect his own dignity and the dignity of each person he dealt with. Everyone who met Mandela spoke of this bedrock self-respect that rooted him in all circumstances, conditions and situations, no matter how different or difficult.

The leader has only one goal: the welfare of his people. Mandela led his people from bondage to liberty, from liberty to nationhood, from nationhood to statecraft.

### Why Francis?

On March 13, 2013, Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected pope of the Catholic Church and bishop of Rome. He took the name Francis, after Francis of Assisi, the first pope to do so. Francis is the first Jesuit to be elected pope and the first pope from the Americas, the New World. A lot of firsts: To signal New Beginnings.

The Catholic Church had tied itself into a massive, yet intricate, Gordian Knot of doctrinaire opinions, legalistic rigidities, monarchial protocols, bureaucratic insanities, and moral morasses. The morale of the people and of the clergy had reached a nadir.

As Alexander the Great had done by cutting the Gordian Knot asunder with his sword, as Francis of Assisi had done by stripping off all his clothes and standing naked before his father to show his commitment to his 'fair bride lady poverty,' in one

deft move after another pope Francis cut through all the red tape and legalisms and rationalizations of centuries by announcing in word and demonstrating in deed the primacy of the Gospel of Jesus the Christ as the guide for all Catholic thinking and action. Francis the First chose the Gospels over 'laws,' persons over institutions, the future over the past. And, the peoples of the world, whether Catholic or religious or not, took notice: they embraced Francis and found in him hope for their own futures.

I have been asked: Why did you choose an old white man to inherit the torch of liberty and hope from Mandela? My answer is simple: I did not choose Francis. The peoples of the world have chosen him. It is true that Francis is untested. It is also true that there are no other candidates in the running. For better or worse, Francis the First embodies our hopes. May he prove worthy of our trust.

"Francis is the first Jesuit to be elected pope and the first pope from the Americas, the New World. A lot of firsts: To signal New Beginnings."

and nations, gave me pause to consider that Mandela was just the kind of leader Eric Kast had in mind.

### Mandela: Lessons in Leadership

When Mandela was still a young boy (around the age of 10), his father died. His mother moved Mandela into the household of their relative Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo the reigning king of the Thembu peoples. The chief and his wife were Christians who believed strongly in education. They sent Mandela to the Methodist mission school where he learned to read and write, and acquired a life-long passion for historical studies, especially of Africa.

As a 'royal' in the Thembu court, Mandela observed the dynamics of tribal politics. He learned from his 'uncle' the king how to be a leader. He learned: 1) how 'to lead from behind,' a form of Thembu consensus building; 2) when to act independently even against the consensus;

Nick Patricca is professor emeritus at Loyola University Chicago, president of Chicago Network and playwright emeritus at Victory Gardens Theater.



Alan Turing.

## Queen pardons Alan Turing

Under the little-known Royal Prerogative of Mercy, Queen Elizabeth II has formally pardoned famed British mathematician and computer scientist Alan Turing nearly six decades after his death, according to LGBTQ Nation.

Turing—whom many considered to be the father of computer science and artificial intelligence, and who was most famous for his work on breaking the German Enigma codes during World War II—was chemically castrated after being convicted in 1952 of "gross in-

# Looking back: World news

COMPILED BY ANDREW DAVIS

—**Ooo-la-la:** France's first baby of 2013 was born to a lesbian couple. The baby boy, named Sacha, was born on the morning of New Year's Day between midnight and a minute past midnight at the Moulins Hospital Centre. Under current laws the couple was not allowed to get artificial insemination in their own country, so they had to travel to Belgium.

—**Charges dropped:** In Uganda, the courts dropped all charges against David Cecil, the 34-year-old theater producer who had faced prison time for staging the gay play *The River and the Mountain*, according to an Advocate.com item. Little evidence was produced against the defendant, but more than 2,500 people, including celebrities, signed a petition to drop the charges.

—**Wedding day:** Israel celebrated its first public transgender wedding. Celebrities and the couple's friends and family cheered as Chen Arizona married her husband, whose identity was not revealed.

—**Drama in Russia:** Russia passed an anti-gay propaganda law, prompting massive protests around the world. (The law imposes fines or jail time to citizens who disseminate information that may cause a "distorted understanding" that LGBT and heterosexual relationships are "socially equivalent.") The controversy has made its way to the 2014 Winter Olympics that will take place in February in Sochi, Russia.

—**Of note:** Handwritten letters between the late Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi and close friend Hermann Kallenbach, a South African bodybuilder, went on display in India's National Archives. Some people have speculated about the closeness of the twosome, stirring a huge controversy in India, where many people deny the possibility Gandhi could have been gay.

—**Pope and glory:** After Pope Benedict XVI unexpectedly resigned, Pope Francis—the former cardinal archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, Jorge Mario Bergoglio—led the world's Catholics. The new pontiff won some fans in the LGBT community, particularly in July, when he told journalists that gay people should not be marginalized or judged. Both *Time* magazine and the LGBT publication *The Advocate* named him as their person of the year.

—**Wed-letter day:** Uruguay's Senate passed marriage-equality legislation, making the country become the 15th nation in the world—and the fourth in Latin America—where same-sex couples can marry. The law took effect in August.

—**Iron age:** Margaret Thatcher, the first woman to become British prime minister, died at the age of 87. Thatcher served from 1979 to 1990 as leader of the Conservative Party, CNN.com reported. She was called the "Iron Lady" for her personal and political toughness. Regarding gay rights, Thatcher regressed in the eyes of some.

—**French kiss:** French President Francois Hollande made marriage equality an issue on his platform in 2012, and he followed through in 2013. The French Parliament approved same-sex marriage this year by a vote of 321-225 despite public protests, some of them massive.

—**New law:** New Zealand also approved marriage equality, passing the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Bill. The final reading took place April 17, passing 77-44; marriage took effect in August.

—**Hard Knox:** In her autobiography, Amanda Knox says she endured relentless sexual harassment at the hands of senior prison guard Raffaele Argiro and fellow female inmates while in prison in Italy. Knox also says that one female inmate repeatedly offered to start a lesbian affair with the young American, and that officials wrongly told Knox that she was HIV-positive.

—**Castro banned:** Philadelphia LGBT group Equality Forum claimed that the U.S. govern-

ment has refused to allow Mariela Castro, an LGBT activist and daughter of Cuba's president Raul Castro, to enter the United States to participate in its annual event. Eventually, she was allowed to attend.

—**Anti-gay:** Nigeria passed the "Jail All the Gays" law, punishing not only gay sex but gay people as well. It bans same-sex marriage, outlaws anyone from forming organizations supporting gay rights, and sets up prison terms of up to 14 years. The U.S. and the U.K. governments had threatened to cut aid to the African country if it passed the bill.

—**Games on:** Paris, the capital and most populous city of France, was awarded the rights to host Gay Games X in 2018. The announcement was made live by Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson during ceremonies held Oct. 7 at the Renaissance Hotel in Cleveland, host city of Gay Games 9 next August.

—**Ban overboard:** Canada lifted its strict lifetime ban on gay men giving blood, although restrictions will still be in place. While there is no longer be a lifetime ban, men who have not had sex with other men in the last five years will be allowed to donate blood.

—**A prince of a guy:** England's Prince Harry defended one of his soldiers from an anti-gay attack in 2008. Lance Corporal James Wharton reveals in his 2013 memoir, *Out in the Army*, that the young prince was quick to deal with bullies after they reportedly threatened Wharton's life. Wharton—who served under Harry during a four-month training period in Canada—describes how he bragged about how he had "scored the night before" with another officer to several other members of the infantry, leading six soldiers to approach him angrily. After talking with Harry, the prince confronted the group.

—**Flag day:** In what is believed to be a first in Canada, a rainbow pride flag was raised at an Alberta military base during a ceremony attended by senior officers and civilian members of the LGBT community. Master Warrant Officer John McDougall made the request for the flag-raising a few weeks ago through the military chain of command at Canadian Forces Base Edmonton.

—**Ruling:** The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the government cannot force private health organizations to denounce prostitution as a condition to get taxpayer money to fight AIDS around the world. Four organizations working in Africa, Asia and South America challenged the provision in the law, arguing their work has nothing to do with prostitution.

—**App time:** An all-gay team of developers launched China's first gay-targeted "social networking" app. The app, Zank, is the second project on creator Lin Jueding's plate; Jueding previously launched China's first gay social networking site, Feizan.com.

—**Cancer battle:** In Ireland, openly gay one-time presidential hopeful David Norris revealed that he's dealing with cancer. He said the cancer is related to viral hepatitis he contracted from tainted drinking water in Eastern Europe in 1994.

—**Oops:** Costa Rica accidentally approved same-sex unions. Legislators okayed a measure that changed article 22 of the so-called "Law of Young People." Conservative lawmakers are upset over the mistake in the bill, which President Laura Chinchilla signed.

—**Sobering study:** A study shows that an astounding 10 percent of lesbians in South Africa are HIV-positive and the likely cause for the rising number of infections is rape. The study, "Forced Sexual Experiences as Risk Factor for Self-Reported HIV Infection among Southern African Lesbian and Bisexual Women," was conducted in collaboration with community-based organizations in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

—**Pasta time away:** LGBT-rights groups around the world slammed the Barilla Group,



Barilla was at the center of controversy. Photo by Matt Simonette

owners of Barilla Pasta, after Chairman Guido Barilla caused outrage in Italy by saying he would not consider using a gay family to advertise his products. However, Guido later met with Italian LGBT associations, apologizing and proposing pro-gay policies.

—**Reinstated:** India's supreme court upheld a law that criminalizes gay sex in a ruling gay-rights activists criticized. The decision—in which the court said it's up to parliament to legislate on the issue—reverses a landmark 2009 Delhi High Court order that had decriminalized same-sex acts. According to Section 377, a 153-year-old colonial law, a same-sex relationship is an "unnatural offense" that is punishable by a 10-year jail term. Activists around the world responded with a "Global Day of Rage" Dec. 15.

—**Taiwan on:** Three couples married in a Christian chapel on the grounds of Tunghai University in what are believed to be the first Christian same-sex weddings in Taiwan, *Gay Star News* reported. The ceremonies were presided

over by the Rev. Elias Tseng—the first openly gay Christian pastor in Taiwan. The Taiwan GDI Association, the Taiwan LGBT Pride and various student groups organized the event.

—**Bill will:** Ugandan lawmakers passed an anti-gay bill that calls for life imprisonment for "aggravated homosexuality," according to LGBTQ Nation. ("Aggravated homosexuality" is defined as a same-sex act where one of the partners is infected with HIV, is a minor or disabled, as well as repeated sexual offenses among consenting adults.) When the bill was first introduced in 2009, it was widely criticized for including the death penalty, but that was removed from the revised version that parliament passed.

—**Down under:** The Australian Capital Territory parliament passed a marriage-equality law, becoming the first area on the continent to do so. However, a court later negated the measure.

—**Doubting Thomas:** Openly gay MSNBC anchor Thomas Roberts co-hosted the Miss Universe pageant in Moscow after Bravo exec Andy Cohen stepped down—and made his thoughts known on Russia's anti-gay law. On the show's red carpet, Roberts said, "I know the law is very vague and still hard to interpret for many people, but it is discrimination and that's definitive."

—**A legend dies:** Former South African President Nelson Mandela died Dec. 5 at the age of 95. He spent 27 years in prison after the white minority government convicted him of treason, only to forge a peaceful end to white rule by negotiating with his captors after his release in 1990. Mandela, who campaigned for equal rights for all, was laid to rest Dec. 15.

—**Daley double:** Nineteen-year-old British diver Tom Daley, who competed in the 2012 Olympics in London, came out in his own YouTube video as being in a relationship with a man. In the video he says, in part, "Right now, I'm dating a gay, and I couldn't be happier. ... It just really does feel right." It was later revealed that the other man was 39-year-old Oscar-winning screenwriter Dustin Lance Black (*Milk*).

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# History: Covered

In 2013, the state of Illinois embarked on an amazing and, at times, nail-biting journey to the historic vote for marriage equality. Once signed into law, Illinois became the 16th state with marriage equality. Windy City Times exhaustively covered this journey, highlighting the highs and lows of the struggle for the eventual marriage win. The following 2013 covers present a timeline from hope and uncertainty to Illinois' first legally married same-sex couple. Look for details soon about a Windy City Times book project about the march to marriage equality in the Land of Lincoln.

## January 2, 2013



**From the story:** “[Rick] 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.”

## January 9, 2013



**From the story:** “Law-makers will be back in session come February, and LGBT groups report that conversations with incoming lawmakers have been ongoing since before elections. Further, activists say that many who voted against civil unions in 2010, including Republicans, are showing a change of heart.”

## February 6, 2013



**From the story:** “Anthony Martinez, executive director of The Civil Rights Agenda, said the bill could be heard in both houses by month’s end. He said that supporters were confident of the bill’s fate in committee.”  
“We’d like to get it done as soon as possible,” Martinez said.”

## February 20, 2013



**From the story:** “Gov. Pat Quinn praised the Senate’s passage of the bill and called on the House to do the same.”  
“Couples across Illinois have even more reason today to celebrate their love for each other, thanks to the hard work of committed advocates and lawmakers,” Quinn said in a statement.”

## March 20, 2013



**From the story:** “A ‘United for Marriage’ coalition of national and local LGBT groups have planned a number of events and rallies for the steps of the Supreme Court building ... . The rallies are likely to enjoy a great deal of visibility on national television screens that Tuesday and Wednesday, as the high court does not provide for any live camera or web broadcast of the arguments themselves.”

## May 1, 2013



**From the story:** “I feel there’s a very strong majority of people in Illinois in favor of marriage equality, more than ever. We’ve got to convert that majority of the public into majority in the House of Representatives representing the public.” - Gov. Pat Quinn

## May 22, 2013



**From the story:** “If the bill does not pass by month’s end, sponsors will need to wait until at least until fall to push the legislation. That option, however, is not seen favorably. Representatives hold office for just two years, and campaigns are expected to heat up as the year goes on, making controversial legislation like equal marriage harder to pass with time.”

## June 5, 2013



**From the story:** “Hours leading up to the vote had been ripe with uncertainty as the spring legislative session drew towards a close May 31. With the clock ticking on the bill, LGBT organizations and families gathered outside of Madigan’s office May 30, in a hastily organized press conference to urge a vote on the bill.”

## June 12, 2013



**From the story:** “I think I knew that it was an incredibly tough decision to have to make. The way the legislative system is set up, if you choose to be a sponsor of a bill, you are the one who is responsible for making those decisions in the best way you know how.” - State Rep. Greg Harris

## June 19, 2013



**From the story:** “Sponsors of the bill have called for unity in the wake of the non-vote. Cassidy, Steans, Yingling, Feigenholtz and Williams all stated on-record that they felt Harris made the best call.”  
“Still, sources suggest that Harris kept both his colleagues and the coalition at arm’s length.”

## September 11, 2013



**From the story:** “Zero. That is the number of on-record ‘yes’ votes for marriage equality added since May 31.”  
“But LGBT leaders say that support for the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act, SB10, is growing and they intend to see a vote on the bill during this fall’s veto session.”

## October 9, 2013



**From the story:** “I believe the votes are there,” Yingling said. “There will always be excuses as to why the vote should be delayed, but the overwhelming majority of people in Illinois support marriage equality, and we need to vote on it and get it done.”

October 16, 2013



From the story: "While LGBT groups have expressed optimism in recent weeks, that enthusiasm has been met with some skepticism by community members. Forecasts for a win in the spring proved premature, and LGBT groups have been working to rebuild momentum and trust within the community ever since."

October 23, 2013



From the story: "An afternoon-long rally featured several politicians and community leaders, each voicing their support for SB10, the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act, which would bring same-sex marriage equality to the state." "Among those making an appearance were Gov. Pat Quinn and Sen. Richard Durbin, as well as Secretary of State Jesse White, who was unannounced."

October 30, 2013



From the story: "There is no plan B. We're entirely focused on the veto session," Kohlhepp said. "We built this campaign so Greg Harris can keep his promise." "Illinois families cannot wait anymore. The Supreme Court made very clear that it has to be marriage," Kohlhepp stressed."

November 6, 2013



From the story: "Loud cheers erupted through the state capitol Tuesday as the Illinois House voted 61-54 to enact the Religious Freedom and Marriage Equality Act, which could make Illinois the 15th state to get same-sex marriage equality." "Marriages can begin June 1, 2014."

November 13, 2013



From the story: "At the end of the day, we won. There was such a tremendous outpouring. The March on Springfield made a huge difference to my colleagues—wet, cold people coming down to express their love and their faith and their commitment and their dedication to this issue." - State Rep. Greg Harris

December 4, 2013



From the story: "By court order, longtime Chicago lesbian activist Vernita Gray married Pat Ewert, her partner of five years, Nov. 27 on the city's North Side, making them the first same-sex couple to be legally married within Illinois in the state's history." "Judge Patricia Logue, former head of Lambda Legal Midwest and a longtime lesbian activist herself, performed the ceremony in front of several dozen family and friends."

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# The year in local news

COMPILED BY MATT SIMONETTE

Although marriage equality was surely the hottest topic for many in Chicago's LGBT community in 2013, a number of other achievements, tragedies and changes took place this year. Here are some of the top headlines over the past 12 months.

—**Passing the torch:** Former state Rep. Deb Mell, who is a lesbian, was named by a five-person committee to be the replacement for her father, Ald. Richard Mell. Though Mell did not get a chance to vote on SB10, she was pres-

streets, and includes the historic 23rd District Town Hall police station.

—**More bar changes:** T's Restaurant and bar, 5025 N. Clark St., longtime a popular LGBT hangout in Uptown, was shuttered by the Cook County Sheriff's Office in March. Days later, owner Colm Treacy and Renee Labrana, his co-owner of the Glenwood, 6962 N. Glenwood Ave., parted ways, leaving Treacy the sole owner of that popular Rogers Park gay bar.

—**From Bucks to Replay:** Bucks Saloon, 3439 N. Halsted St., a Boystown institution, closed its doors and was taken over by Replay, a retro



The Oct. 22 March on Springfield. Photo by Matt Mills

ent on the House floor during debate before its passage; she was joined there by House Speaker Michael Madigan.

—**What's that in your wallet?:** Cook County Clerk David Orr issued wallet-sized certificates for same-sex couples with a civil union; married couples with two different last names; or any couple who wants to carry proof of their union. The set of two wallet-sized marriage or civil-union certificates included names, license number, the clerk's signature and an embossed Cook County seal.

—**Cocktail closing:** Boystown bar Cocktail was shuttered over alleged rent debts in January. Building owner Robert Brumbaugh confirmed that he had posted the notice and said that he has seized all property inside the bar except for the liquor. Brumbaugh and Cocktail, owned by John "Geno" Zaharakis and Dustin Hoffman, were long ensnared in a court battle.

—**Salvation Army in Uptown:** Openly gay 46th Ward Ald. James Cappleman came under fire following a Chicago Sun-Times report that stated that Cappleman ordered a Salvation Army truck, which typically distributes free meals and other social services, to leave the neighborhood. Both sides have since agreed to keep the truck in the neighborhood and work together.

—**New resources:** Lurie Children's Hospital's Gender, Sexuality and HIV Prevention Center moved to Uptown at 4711 N. Broadway, bringing with it testing services, transgender support and cutting edge LGBT medical research.

—**The axe falls:** For the third year in a row, HIV/AIDS groups were staring down budget cuts to funding in Illinois. Gov. Pat Quinn released his proposed budget in March, slashing HIV/AIDS funding by 16 percent.

—**Affordable housing for seniors:** The Midwest's first LGBT-friendly, affordable senior housing broke ground this year. The 79-unit, affordable housing senior building is being developed on the corner of Halsted and Addison

arcade bar operated by Mark Liberson, owner of Hydrate Nightclub, Halsted's and Elixir.

—**Youth care:** The Same-Gender Loving Clinic at John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County began providing weekly care for uninsured and underinsured LGBT youth. They could drop in for general health services or meet with a physician or psychiatrist to receive counseling on sexuality, gender identity, hormone therapy or safer sex.

—**Not much buy-in for Out Hotel:** Out Chicago, a hotel slated to sit at Halsted and Buckingham, was greeted with neighborhood concerns about noise and the hotel's design. The hotel was modeled after the Out Resort in New York City.

—**Excitement in the air:** An exuberant crowd marched through Chicago's Wrigleyville and Boystown neighborhoods June 26 after favorable decisions on equal marriage came down from the U.S. Supreme Court. Nearly 500 attended the rally and march, which started and ended at Roscoe and Halsted.

—**Uptown spirit:** More than 1,000 people filled the streets of Uptown June 29 for the city's annual Dyke March parade and rally. Attendance and spirits were high despite overcast skies and chilly weather early in the march.

—**Runner record:** The 32nd annual Proud to Run race, which includes both 5K and 10K races, took place June 29 at Montrose Avenue near Lake Shore Drive. About 1,600 participants—an event record—gathered in foggy, windy and chilly weather to participate in the run/walk to benefit the Links Pride Youth Program, The Night Ministries and TPN.

—**Huge Pride turnout:** More than 1 million people attended this year's Pride parade. Mayor Rahm Emanuel led, with Gov. Pat Quinn following later. Spirits were high just days after the U.S. Supreme Court effectively struck down the Defense of Marriage Act and California's ban on same-sex marriage. But many contingents fo-

cused on equal marriage in Illinois, as the Illinois House had failed to vote the issue in May.

—**There will be blood:** The first-ever nationwide gay blood drive demonstration took place July 12 at more than 50 locations across the country, including the Lincoln Park Lifesource branch in Chicago. Ryan James Yezak organized the demonstration to raise awareness about the ban and increase pressure on the Food and Drug Administration to lift the ban.

—**Moving downtown:** Equality Illinois announced it was moving its headquarters to the Stevens Building at 17 N. State St., Chicago.

—**Zimmerman reaction:** More than 300 people turned out for a noon rally at Daley Plaza July 14, the morning after a jury reached a not guilty verdict in the trial of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of African American youth Trayvon Martin.

—**TransLife opens:** After months of anticipation and fundraising, LGBT leaders, elected officials and advocates celebrated the opening of Chicago House's TransLife Center (TLC) July 15. Stormie Williams, the first resident of the house, cut the ribbon the newly renovated house during the morning reception.

—**Crime in Lakeview:** A string of weekend iPhone robberies in Lakeview in July had 44th Ward Ald. Tom Tunney cautioning area residents. Lakeview residents later took police officials to task for what residents say is an ongoing crime problem in the neighborhood, reporting a seeming increase in graffiti and robberies, among other concerns.

—**BYC move:** Broadway Youth Center largely completed the transition from its old location at Broadway and Belmont to its new location at Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ, 615 W. Wellington Ave. The facility's future at that location was soon in question, however, when the City said their location was not zoned for the medical services it provides. BYC's director, Lara Brooks, also left in 2013.

—**No to Stoli:** Many Chicago gay bars—among them Sidetrack, Elixir Lounge, Halsted's Bar and Grill, Hydrate Nightclub and Replay—said they were banning Stolichnaya Vodka and other products of Russian origin following the passage of oppressive anti-gay laws in Russia.

—**Reopening:** Members of the Gerber/Hart Library and Archives board of directors met with the public Dec. 5 to discuss new directions it intends to take as the library recovers from nearly two years of turmoil. The library opened to the public for the first time at its new location, 6500 N. Clark St., in December. Carrie Barnett will be the organization's new Board President.

—**So long, farewell:** About 25 activists, mostly members of the Gay Liberation Network (GLN) and Rainbow Sash Movement, protested a celebration honoring the retirement of Cardinal Francis George held at the Drake Hotel, 140 E. Walton Pl., on Dec. 18.

—**Successor:** Jaime Andrade, a longtime aide to Ald. Richard Mell, succeeded his daughter—out lesbian Deb Mell—as 40th District state rep. Andrade was appointed by vote Aug. 12 and will be up for re-election in 2014. Mel Ferrand, an openly lesbian union activist and Latina, is pursuing the position in the election as well.

—**Sex ed:** Comprehensive sex education became the law of the land in Illinois when Gov. Pat Quinn signed into law a bill requiring that schools offer comprehensive sex education in grades six through 12. HB 2675 requires that schools teach about contraception and preventing sexually transmitted infections, in addition to teaching about abstinence.

—**Pritzker announcement:** Col. J.N. Pritzker publicly indicated that she identifies as a woman. Pritzker, the founder of the Pritzker Military Library in Chicago and a member of one of the nation's most wealthy families, legally changed her name to Jennifer Natalya Pritzker, and her foundation has supported major transgender causes in recent years. Equality Illinois later named Pritzker as Chair of their February gala.

—**Mary Richards, maid of honor:** Minneapolis, Minn., officials visited Chicago to encourage local residents to consider their city when they wanted to get married. "Chicago is my kind of

## RING from cover

pal players fearing that a vote, promised by Harris for the fall veto session, might be put off until after filing deadlines for the 2014 elections had passed. The March on Springfield for Marriage Equality rally on Oct. 22 brought momentum however, when thousands of supporters showed up to Springfield, lending their support even in the rain and cold weather.

Finally, on Nov. 5, the vote came. After about two-and-a-half hours of debate, a vote did come and SB10 passed 61-54. Among those voting yes were state Rep. Naomi Jakobsson, who came from the bedside of her ill son to cast her vote; her son died before she could return home. On Nov. 20, in front of hundreds of the bills' supporters, Gov. Pat Quinn signed SB10 into law using one of Abraham Lincoln's desks.

The veto-session vote, however, was problematic in one respect. Thanks to some tenets of the Illinois Constitution, legislation signed during a veto session cannot take effect until the following June 1—meaning Illinoisans could not actually get married for several months. For many couples—particularly ones in whom a partner had a life-threatening illness—that was too long to wait. A judge ordered that one such couple, activist Vernita Gray and Pat Ewert, could marry early, and they became the first partners of the same-sex to legally marry in the state Nov. 27. A few weeks later, a federal judge allowed two more couples to marry under similar circumstances, and introduced a streamlined process for any couple dealing with time-sensitive illnesses.

town, but right now, it's a second city in human rights," Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak said. Exactly two months later, however, marriage equality legislation passed the Illinois House.

—**Hunters closing:** Hunters Chicago, a gay bar in northwest suburban Elk Grove Village, announced its closing in September. Robert Brumbaugh, who also owns Progress Bar on Halsted Street in Lakeview, purchased Hunters and reopened it the following month as The Phoenix-Bar.

—**March on Springfield:** Several thousand gathered under rainy skies at the State Capitol in Springfield Oct. 22 to demand the Illinois House vote on gay marriage in the fall veto session, which kicked off the same day. An afternoon-long rally featured several politicians and community leaders, each voicing their support for SB10.

—**Cab lawsuit:** Lambda Legal filed suit against a Chicago-based cab company after one of its drivers allegedly ejected a gay couple for kissing in May. Steven White and Matt McCrea made headlines in June when they alleged that driver Jama Anshur ejected them from his cab late at night on a trip back from O'Hare Airport.

—**Velvet Rope arrest:** Frank Elliot, 26, was arrested by Oak Park police Nov. 1 in connection with a fire that destroyed his gay bar Velvet Rope Ultra Lounge, 728 Lake St., on June 2, 2012. The fire was suspicious from the start, with Elliott alleging he was targeted in a hate crime, but others concerned it may have been motivated by an insurance claim.

—**Excellent day for an exorcism:** Bishop Thomas Paprocki announced Nov. 14 that he would offer "prayers of supplication and exorcism" in Springfield at approximately the same time Gov. Pat Quinn will sign marriage equality into law Nov. 20.

—**Cappleman weds:** Ald. James Cappleman wed longtime partner Richard Thale in Washington state. Cappleman announced that the marriage had taken place on his Facebook page Nov. 17. "Can't wait to celebrate the day that's coming soon when other same-sex couples can get married in Illinois," Cappleman said.

See the entire list of events online at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

# Looking back: Local passages

COMPILED BY MATT SIMONETTE

—**Prince Edwards**, a popular young gay dancer who was active in National Youth Pride Services (NYPS), died Jan. 16 after an illness. He was 25. The Chicago native was well known for his dance talents, performing at more than 100 events throughout the city.

—**Bobby Glaze** passed away suddenly on Jan. 8. He was 58. He was a bartender in Atlanta and for many years at Chicago's Baton Lounge, followed by a hospitality career with a major catering company. More recently, Glaze gave back to the community through volunteering with various organizations, including SAGE at the Center on Halsted and his church, aChurch4Me MCC.

—**Frederick MacDonald** died peacefully in Northwestern Hospital on Jan. 4, after a brief illness. He was 86. MacDonald was retired from Illinois Masonic Hospital where he had worked in the development office as well as medical records. He had worked at Theater in the Round in Washington, D.C., and lived in Texas before coming to Chicago.

—**Charles "Chuck" Lee Windemuth**, a fixture in Chicago's leather community since the late 1980s, died Feb. 7 at the home of his parents in Cumberland, Md., after a battle with liver cancer, with his family by his side. He was 54 and lived in Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood.

—**Makayla/Michael Gwinn**—a young transgender person whose life work was in mentoring fellow LGBTQ youth, among other things—died Feb. 16 at age 23. An active performer, makeup artist and LGBTQ youth advocate, Gwinn loved life and worked to give back to Chicago's LGBTQ community. Gwinn, who identified as transgender, used the names Michael, Mikayla and Jaiden.

—**Jackie Lane Smitherman** passed away in February at age 40 due to liver and kidney failure. Many knew lane at Ragin' Rajejan's video store, which he managed for several years. He also worked at He Who Eats Mud and Windy City Sweets.

—**Dawn Clark Netsch**—a former Illinois comptroller and state senator, the first woman to win the Democratic nomination for governor and a longtime LGBT ally—died March 5 at 86, the Chicago Tribune reported. Netsch had disclosed in January that she had been diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease.

—**Rudy de la Mor**, a cabaret entertainer who performed in Chicago for decades before working on boat cruises and in venues in California, died in March in Irvine, Calif., of complications from surgery. He was 73.

—**Rex N. Olsen** passed away March 5 at St. Joseph Hospital. After earning degrees in journalism and history from the University of Missouri, Olsen went on to enjoy a long career as managing editor of Hospitals, the magazine of

the American Hospital Association. Olsen was the beloved partner of 57 years of Donald E. Seibert.

—**Harley McMillen**, 70, former executive director of Chicago's Howard Brown Health Center, died March 23 in Viroqua, Wis. McMillen was an important pioneer in the early gay men's health movement, on issues of sexual health, hepatitis and AIDS. He was also very involved in the leather community, and bartended for gay bars. He was also part of the Pride Chicago Motorcycle Club, and bartended at clubs owned by Jim Flint and Chuck Renslow. McMillen also worked for Renslow at Gay-Life newspaper in the early 1980s.

—**Rodney Russell Prunckle** died March 14 at the age of 65. A graduate of DePaul University, Prunckle taught music before working at Marshall Field's in sales, management and human resources from 1975 until his retirement in 2003. He studied flute with Don Peck (who was first-chair flautist for the Chicago Symphony) and played with the Civic Orchestra, the Lake Shore Orchestra and many smaller ensembles.

—**Brian Coats**, of Chicago, died March 19 at his home. Coats was in hotel management with Starwood Hotels at Westin in Lombard. He also had been an emcee at Maneuvers Club in Joliet, where he was known as "good times" emcee. He was also known as the mouth of the Maneuvers float, which he rode in the Chicago Gay Pride Parade for more than a decade. He brought excitement and fun to every event.

—**Timothy Callaway** passed away March 31 from complications of pneumonia. He was 47. As Blondina Del Rey, Timothy amazed audiences at 3160 with his searing rendition of "Why'd Ya Do It" and was a member of the club's dart league for a number of years.

—**Brant Gniewek**, who this year was scheduled to run 52 races of varying distances, including marathons, to help others in the fight against cancer, died unexpectedly May 28. Gniewek was 30.

—**Vinnie Arroyo**, a longtime, multisport participant and former board member of the predominantly gay Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association died after a lengthy illness. He was 41.

—**Donna Pomerance**, 73, passed away at her home in Lakeside, Mich., June 16. She was a co-owner of Augies bar, and a strong supporter and contributor of the LGBT community.

—**Maria Jacinto**, well known in the Chicago lesbian bar community, died at age 54. She started bar-backing at Augie & C.K.'s, then went on to Paris after Augie's, then Star Gaze after Paris.

—**Erland M. Parnell**, 73, passed away June 15. Besides a fruitful career training and managing at various Baker's Square restaurants, Parnell was very social and active at St. Peter's Episco-



Charles "Chuck" Lee Windemuth. Photo by Todd Davidson

pal Church in Lakeview, where he served altar for many years.

—**James "Jim" Bussen**, 63, died July 6 in Glen Carbon, Ill., after a long battle with cancer. Bussen was engaged in gay and religious activism starting in 1973. Bussen was inducted into Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 1994, in part for his longtime leadership of Dignity Chicago, and for his work as president of DignityUSA from 1985–1989.

—**Michael "Mikey" Morehead**, who had a passion for musical theater and worked as a VJ at Sidetrack for about six years, died the night of July 23 at a hospice care facility in Glenview. He was 43.

—**Michael William Lancaster**, a Rogers Park resident, passed away peacefully after a long illness. He was 48. He was the beloved partner of 17 years to Charles Raymond Hemphill.

—**Josephine D'Angelo**—one of the 60 original players in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League—died Aug. 18 at Resurrection Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Park Ridge, according to the Park Ridge Sun-Times. She was 88.

—**Robert L. Cecil, Jr.**, 52, of Chicago, passed away July 25. His committed service to the LGBTQ community in Chicago with such organizations as The Newtown Alano Club and The Rec (recovery) Room, helped a great many affected by HIV and addiction find recovery.

—**Jeff Netz**, of Naperville, passed away Sept. 25. He was an assistant manager/chef at Cater-

ing by Knight in Oak Brook.

—**Bruce Howard Catt**, 48, passed away Oct. 9. Besides a long career as a client representative for Owens and Minor Medical Supply, he was a dedicated NOH8 campaign activist and longtime member of Lincoln Park Lagooners. Catt was the beloved husband of 23 years to John Alexander Pucker; loving father of Rick Laughery; and honorary father figure of many.

—**Paul Joseph Wickliff** died Oct. 23 at the age of 51. Wickliff was a CPA who owned Wickliff & Associates in Chicago, and was involved in the Chicago Pit Bull Rescue Organization.

—**Cathie Ellen Kopecky**—a prominent figure in the 1980s LGBT scene in Chicago—died Oct. 12. She was 56.

She was a founding board member of Horizons, which later became the Center on Halsted. Kopecky also frequently taught business classes at the Women's Business Development Center.

—**Brenda Ellen Marie Williams**, one of the founding members of Artemis Singers and early supporter of Mountain Moving Coffeehouse, died at home Oct. 11. She was 72.

—**William Gary**, known to friends and patrons as "Feathers," passed away at age 74. Gary tended bar for many years, notably at Bulldog Road, The Granville Anvil, and Buddies Restaurant and Bar, which was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2003.

—**Terry L. Baker**—a resident of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., who once lived in Chicago—passed away Nov. 11. He was 69.

—**Wally Dwyer** passed away Nov. 19 at the age of 49. He worked with many theaters over the years, most notably The Ivanhoe, Bailiwick and Lionheart theater companies. Wally also worked for several businesses in the community.

—**Nathan Alexander Thaddeus Loveless**—the son of local LGBT-rights activist Marc Loveless—died at age 23.

—**Ann Muller**—a resident of Chagrin Falls, Ohio, who once lived in Chicago—died Dec. 4. She was 78. Her book, Parents Matter, Parents' Relationships with Lesbian Daughters and Gay Sons, was published in 1987, and she wrote a syndicated column about her family for gay newspapers from 1986 to 1989. In 1981 she was one of the first three parents ever to march in Chicago's gay pride parade.

—**Robert A. Vade Bon Coeur** passed away Dec. 6, at his residence in Crete, Ill. He was 77. A Catholic priest who was ordained in 1963, he was survived by his partner, Roy Olson.

—**Hal Brun**, 66, was the lifetime partner for 30 years of Jeff Ginsberg. He was the director of special education at New Trier High School; director of special services Evanston/Skokie District; and executive director of the East DuPage Special Education District in Villa Park.



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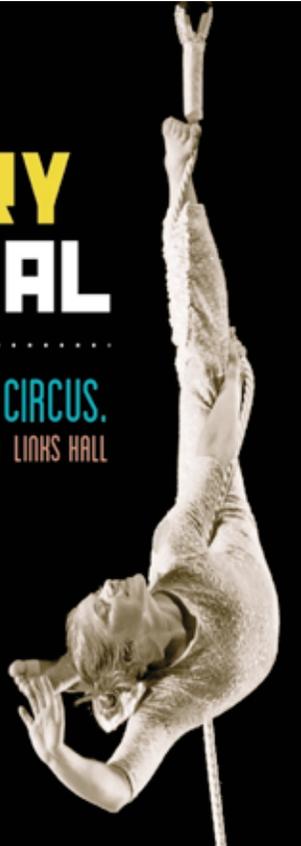
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# Award-winning social worker retiring after 35 years

BY ROSS FORMAN

It's a bittersweet time for social worker Davida Williams, who is ending her 30-plus year career at Hephzibah Home in Oak Park.

She's retiring as the facility's foster care and adoption specialist, ending a near-35-year career in the industry, then moving to Fennville/Saugatuck/Douglas, Mich., to start a new chapter: writing a book about her experiences—"about our brilliant children and how they are our future leaders," she said.

Williams certainly will have the photos for a future publication, as her office showcases—in pictures—her long run, her loving friends, her "wild ride," she said. Her photos tell the time and tales of the countless children and youth she has impacted.

Williams, 58, a single lesbian who has always lived and worked in Oak Park, has touched the lives of literally hundreds, if not thousands, of children over the decades. She's watched and helped many of those youngsters grow up and start their own families. Some have even returned to Hephzibah to work as staff members and/or social workers.

Their successes is "what I take away; it's a gift," Williams said.

Williams is among 10 Hephzibah employees who are proud members of the 25-year club, which honors their tenure at Hephzibah. During her run, Williams has worked to create groundbreaking training, targeting LGBT parents as foster parents and created a model to be inclusive of LGBT parents for foster care and adoption.

"It's been such a positive, collaborative effort with our Hephzibah executive director, Mary Anne Brown, as we worked together to create our community-based foster care program in 1982," Williams said. "Mary Anne and I think a lot alike and always reach for the stars. Our Hephzibah children have been our mission and an enormous part of our lives."

Williams was board member of the Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association for six years. In early November, Williams was honored with the OPAL—Oak Park Area Leadership Award, at the annual Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association's gala.

Hephzibah is Oak Park's oldest charity—founded in 1897, when Mary Wessels (whose mother's name is Hephzibah), opened her home to children from a nearby orphanage that had been destroyed by fire. Hephzibah became known to care for society's most vulnerable children, according to its website.

Hephzibah now works to help children thrive, and families flourish, through innovative, community-based programs.



Davida Williams. Photo from Williams

Christmas Day is one of the most memorable days of the year at Hephzibah—and the day Williams personally chose to end her run.

"It's a wonderland here on Christmas," she said.

When Williams started at Hephzibah in 1979, there were 25 employees. It now has a staff of about 160.

Hephzibah is the home for 26 youngsters ranging in age from 3 to 12.

"Working at Hephzibah has been a gift, of giving and receiving, because what goes around comes around," Williams said. "Picking one moment from 30-plus years that stands out the most ... wow, that's tough. I just look at the faces of the children we've helped, who we've impacted, and to see their happiness, their contentment, their safety, their love ... that's what makes it for me."

Tears of joy have been plentiful over the years, especially in recent weeks as the number of days Williams remains at Hephzibah equals the number of years she's been there.

"Watching these children become happy, healthy, competent adults, and breaking that

## BROWN from cover

"Like many who are LGBTQ and just walk away from the church, that's what I did in my late 20s," she said.

But in August 2001, she walked into an MCC church in St. Louis, attending admittedly, "as a scoffer."

She was immediately hooked. "When I walked in, I thought, this is amazing," she said.

Two years later, she was in seminary, doing volunteer ministry.

In 2003, Brown started doing chaplaincy work with perpetrators of domestic violence.

She served in a United Church of Christ (UCC) church for a year, and then switched to MCC.

"I kept thinking, 'This is crazy, being an out lesbian, trying to navigate the world of religion and faith.' That was because, I felt, in so many places that I turned, especially in chaplaincy, it was like I had to keep coming out of the closet over and over again.

"But with MCC, it has allowed me to just be myself, not have to name which team I am on at any given time. I could just live a life of spirituality, a life of faith, and not feel like I had to apologize to one group or the other in order to be a person of faith and also be an open lesbian.

"That has fueled me in so many ways."

Truly, Brown has walked an interesting past decade—and she agrees.

"It has been a non-traditional path," she said.

Brown was working at a marketing agency years ago and then one day told her boss that she was going into the seminary, into ministry—and gave her resignation.

His reply, with a smile: "Is it so bad that you have to go work for God?"

Brown laughed, too, and told him, "I'm going to take my chances. It's not for the paycheck, but [rather], for the peace of mind at the end of the day.

"That still fuels me today."

Brown's church4me is located in Rogers Park, its home since 2012, after a previous location in Boystown.

About 95 percent of its 50 members are LGBTQ, Brown said.

"When I talk to open and affirming churches, they say that they welcome gay people. I say that's fabulous—and we're gay and we welcome straight people. That's the big difference," she said, laughing.

About 75 percent of its members are male, with a mix of white (about 60 percent), African-American and Hispanic. The female members are predominantly African-American and Latina. Members come from Hyde Park on the South Side to the northern suburb of Skokie.

"It's a real interesting mix of people who are involved [with the church, driven by] their passion for this real openness and this real spiritual path mission," she said. "What we're asking people to believe is faith and spirituality. They're doing it and we're doing things in a radical way."

Her church supports World AIDS Day and Transgender Day of Remembrance, among other LGBT-driven events. "There is the queer holy day calendar," she said. "It's just who we are, what we're about."

Brown spoke at the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality in October.

"That was such an incredible moment," she said, "and marriage equality is huge.

"What marriage equality does is, it begins to level the field socially."

Brown said that she will take a portion of the fees for weddings at her church, starting in June, and put it into marriage equality support for other states—"because we fought long and hard, and know what it's like, and want to help the next state," she said.

Michael McBride, who has participated in Windy City Gay Idol, is the church's music minister.

cycle of abuse and neglect, that's what means so much to me," Williams said.

After earning her bachelor's degree in psychology from Benedictine University in Lisle, Williams was back at home in Oak Park when her mom (Rose) suggested she go seek employment opportunities at Hephzibah. Two days after she first walked into the facility, Williams was hired.

"If I had gotten a law degree, which I had thought about, or a Master's in business from the University of Chicago, I would be rolling in [money]. I'm not, but I'm doing OK [financially]. But the real gift to me is, these children," Williams said. "There is such pride, such emotion thinking and talking about these children. My, it's so, so emotional for me—in a positive way.

"Instead of this ongoing generational pattern of abuse and neglect that I've been helping to deal with for 34 ½ years, there has now become this whole new culture of generational patterns of healthy families, fostering to adopt. It's the reverse [of what it once was]. Don't think of these kids and be sad, depressed or overwhelmed. Now that they're here at Hephzibah, we are going to help them become amazing adults."

For the last 27 years, she also has provided foster parent training for all child welfare agencies at Hephzibah, for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). During her career:

—One couple told her that they moved to Illinois from Wisconsin because they had heard of her work and knew they could form a family with her support.

—An Oak Park lesbian couple that wanted to adopt their son through Hephzibah came to Williams for help in "challenging the state system," she said. They initiated the legal aid of the ACLU and were able to become openly licensed as DCFS foster/adoptive parents for their new son.

—As part of a two-day workshop called Contemplating Parenthood that Williams developed

while serving on the OPALGA board of directors, she organized and hosted events where gay and lesbian parents could meet the necessary professional agency representatives and share their experiences with other prospective parents and established gay & lesbian families. Many of those families are current members of OPALGA who have realized their dreams of parenting.

"Davida has seen many changes in the foster care system over the years and is responsible for many of the positive changes enjoyed by gay and lesbian families," said David Neubecker, a foster adoptive parent who is openly gay. "Largely through Davida's efforts and over decades of time, dozens of Hephzibah's families have been headed by gay and lesbian couples. For many of them, it was Davida's efforts that demystified the process and assured them that they had every right to pursue their dreams of forming forever families for these amazing children."

## Gay Christian confab Jan. 9-12

The Gay Christian Network will host a conference Jan. 9-12 in Chicago.

According to a media release, "This year's theme, Live It Out, is inspired by the Bible's reminder that living out our faith means living out God's love in all that we do—loving our neighbors, praying for our enemies, and following the example of Christ."

The conference will take place at the Westin Chicago River North, 320 N. Dearborn St. There will be breakout and general sessions; a first timers' meeting; the weconnect women's retreat; a group sharing time; and other events.

For more information, visit <https://gcnconf.com>.

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PASSAGES

**Chester Holowicki**

Chester Holowicki, a beloved part of Chicago's LGBT nightlife community, DJ, and artist, passed away on Dec. 11 following a prolonged battle with ocular melanoma. He was 39.

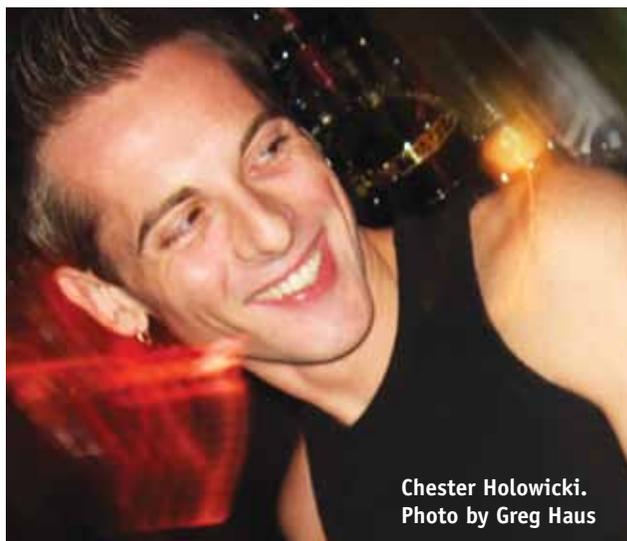
Known to many as "DJ Chester," Holowicki was a resident DJ at Berlin Nightclub since 2000, and was a popular fixture at many other venues, including Spin Nightclub and Cocktail, during his 13-year DJ career.

Born June 24, 1974, in Dearborn, Mich., Chester studied acting at Wayne State University in Detroit before moving to Chicago in the late 1990s. His artistic endeavors included pop-art inspired illustrations, including a provocative drawing series he called "Spaghetti Man."

Holowicki's humor, creativity and musical selections brought joy to many. After losing an eye to cancer in February 2011, his bravery and strength during his very public struggle proved inspirational. He continued to work, entertaining friends and fans until was no longer physically able.

He is survived by his parents Lisa and Chet Holowicki, his brother Drew Holowicki, and partner Joey Hinger.

Friends and family hosted a special memorial gathering at Berlin Dec. 18. Another memorial will be held in the Detroit area on Saturday, Jan. 11. Details will be posted at <http://www.berlinchicago.com/chester>.



Chester Holowicki.  
Photo by Greg Haus

PASSAGES

**Jim J. Gray**

Jim J. Gray—born in Fairbanks but raised in Wasilla, Alaska—passed away suddenly at his home in Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood Dec. 15, 2013. He was 43.

Gray leaves behind his beloved partner of 16 years, William Liberty; his mother, Cleo Gray; sisters De Cyril, Carolyn Carlson and Lenny Gray; brothers Joe (Shari), Don (Teresa) and Steven Gray; many nieces and nephews as well as great-nieces and -nephews, most living in Alaska; and aunt Lorraine and uncle Jim and their family of Rohnert Park, Calif.

Gray was the faithful companion of Bella the Chihuahua; and Shiloh and Clifford, the beagles.

He was preceded in death by his father, David Gray; brother Richard; nephews Justin Sieler and Ethan Bowman, all of Alaska; and both sets of grandparents.

He will be remembered for his uncanny humor and for his smile, which easily melted the hearts of many.

Services are private.

Donations may be made in his name to National Alliance on Mental Illness [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).

Arrangements by Cremation Society of Illinois (773-281-5058; [www.cremation-society.com](http://www.cremation-society.com))



Jim J. Gray.

**Vital Bridges deliver Christmas Day meals**

On the 25th anniversary of HIV/AIDS agency Vital Bridges (formerly Open Hand Chicago), Lori Cannon and her volunteers delivered Christmas Day meals from the Ann Sather restaurant on West Belmont Avenue to their homebound clients living with AIDS.

In an email, Cannon and the Vital Bridges family stated, "[Ann Sather owner] Tom Tunney and his wonderful staff have been preparing delicious meals since 1988.

"Thank you, Tom, for your generosity and kindness."



Photo of Philip A. Englert (left), Cannon (second from right) and Ann Sather staffers courtesy of Cannon

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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**NEXT LECTURE**



**SAT., JAN. 4, 2014, 11AM-1PM**  
**HYACINTH PIEL**

**Ethical Problems in Gender Identity Construction**

Hyacinth Piel is a graduate student in philosophy at UIC. Ze lives in Edgewater with hir corgi, Poggibonsi. This lecture begins with the idea that as people who seek to lead good and authentic lives, we are repeatedly confronted with profound and difficult questions about how best to develop, identify, and express our genders. Although our genders are uniquely our own existential projects, they are never only that: the way we live our genders is bound to affect others too, and since our existing gender templates are deeply influenced by the oppressive gender hierarchy from which they are drawn, it looks like the building blocks we must use to develop genders in which we can be free may also tend to threaten the freedom and well-being of those around us.

**UPCOMING LECTURES**

**SAT., 2/1/14**  
**Beth Richie**  
**Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence and America's Prison Nation**

**SAT., 3/1/14**  
**Lourdes Torres**  
**Making Familia from Scratch: Towards a History of Latina Lesbian Organizing in Chicago**

**SAT., 4/5/14**  
**Anne Balay**  
**Steel Closets: Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Steelworkers**

**SAT., 5/3/14**  
**Timothy Stewart-Winter**  
**From Civil Rights to Gay Rights in Chicago**

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## VIEWPOINT

WINDY CITY  
TIMESSEAN  
STRUBKenneth Cole  
needs a  
history lesson

As the early days of the HIV/AIDS epidemic are finally being documented in various films, books and exhibits, we must be vigilant to the consequences of historical revisionism. Recently, longtime amfAR board chair Kenneth Cole was on Chelsea Handler's TV talk show *Chelsea Lately* and rewrote history by erasing the role of the LGBT community in the early days of the epidemic—and insulting us to boot:

Handler: "How did you get involved with AIDS research?"

Cole: "This is was, like, 25 years ago and people weren't talking about AIDS then because stigma was so devastating (and arguably stigma has killed more people than the virus itself has), and the gay community wasn't speaking up, they were afraid to."

I could not let this comment go unaddressed, particularly since a similar mistruth has been perpetrated in the promotion of a new film, the *Battle of Amfar*, that Cole produced. I wrote a blog post and a tweet this past weekend about Cole's comment and how he is promoting his film:

Sean's tweet:

@BodyCountsBook: Historical revisionism about #HIV / #AIDS must stop! @SeanStrub's reaction to @KennethCole on @chelseahandler <http://t.co/ew2Z6CEiLF> #HIV

In response, Kenneth Cole tweeted:

@KennethCole: @BodyCountsBook we agree, our film confirms your point. I was saying that because of stigma, many others were reluctant to speak out

His response is doublespeak—a deflection that adds no clarity and offers no apology. While his film references gay community activism, that isn't what he said on national television. Nor has he addressed the mistruth in the film's promotional material that reads: "In the darkest days of the epidemic, two very different women—Hollywood superstar Elizabeth Taylor and research scientist Mathilde Krim—joined forces to create amfAR (the American Foundation for AIDS Research), America's first AIDS research organization."

The "first AIDS research organization" was actually the AIDS Medical Foundation (AMF), which preceded amfAR by two-and-a-half years and was founded by people with AIDS, including Michael Callen, Dr. Joseph Sonnabend, a pioneering researcher and community physician and Dr. Krim. Sonnabend knew Krim from interferon research and had asked for her help in raising money to study his sick patients. The partner of one of Sonnabend's patients—an African-American, I might add, whose role has also been largely lost to history—suggested formation of a foundation to pursue research drawing on Sonnabend's pool of patients.

Krim was AMF's first board chair and quickly became its most generous donor. Two-and-a-half years later, in September of 1985, two community clinicians based in Los Angeles, doctors Michael Gottlieb and Arnold Klein, formed the National AIDS Research Foundation with Elizabeth Taylor as a high-profile co-founder.

When Krim heard of Taylor's involvement, she smartly used her Hollywood connections (her husband was head of a movie studio) to contact Taylor and propose the organizations join forces, creating amfAR. Hollywood producer Howard Rosenman tells me it was David Geffen who got the key parties in the same room and midwived the merger.

The important efforts of prominent people like Elizabeth Taylor and Mathilde Krim in combating the epidemic are only diminished by lies that render the LGBT community and people with AIDS invisible in those early efforts. It might be effective marketing to write the LGBT community out of this history, or to ignore how people with AIDS were fighting back from the begin-

ning, but it isn't true.

Twenty-five years ago, in 1988, it was almost solely members of the LGBT community who were speaking up about AIDS. The year before, the executive directors of almost all the national lesbian and gay organizations protested government inaction in an act of civil disobedience and got arrested in front of the White House. At this time, the LGBT community had launched hundreds of organizations, was lobbying Congress, legislature and city councils, organizing demonstrations and protests and, quite frankly, could hardly have spoken up any louder. The problem was that too few others were listening—not that we weren't speaking up.

Ken Cole needs to understand epidemic history better before cavalierly making such statements on national television or promoting mistruths about the origin of the organization he heads. The truth is an interesting and important history unto itself, but Cole seems to either not know it, not care about it, or is willfully manipulating history for some other agenda.

It is also worth noting that under Cole's watch as amfAR's Board Chair, the visibility of people openly living with HIV on their board has dropped to an all-time low. There may be others I don't know about, but of the 26 philanthropists, corporate executives, socialites and others listed today as members of amfAR's board of trustees, I recognize only one, former *POZ* editor Regan Hofmann, as openly HIV-positive. Fewer than a third of the trustees are women. Only one, Harry Belafonte, is African-American.

For him to suggest that either the gay community "wasn't speaking up" or to imply that there wasn't adequate attention to the disease until he got involved is wrong on so many levels. Kenneth Cole owes the gay community—and all those who were "speaking up" during those early years—an apology. He also might reflect on what amfAR's board composition says about the organization.

**This essay originally appeared on the Huffington Post Gay Voices blog: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sean-strub/kenneth-cole-needs-a-hist\\_b\\_4454558.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sean-strub/kenneth-cole-needs-a-hist_b_4454558.html).**

**Visit [www.SeanStrub.com](http://www.SeanStrub.com) and join Sean Strub on [Facebook.com/BodyCounts](https://www.facebook.com/BodyCounts).**

## LETTERS

## The 'Duck' stops here

An open letter to Phil Robertson of 'Duck Dynasty':

Dear Mr. Robertson:

Thank you for your remarks as printed in *Gentleman's Quarterly* magazine presenting your views of homosexuality, bestiality, race and religion. I am grateful to learn that you are not, as I had once hoped and trusted, above the fray.

Thank you for demonstrating, beyond any reasonable doubt, that bigotry and prejudice, wrapped in a flaky, Christian crust, can dispel any misunderstandings or misconceptions about the values you and your family so carefully display to the world every Wednesday on A&E.

Thank you for descending, so vividly and so completely, into that maelstrom of celebrity that seeks only to offend and to distress, but not to edify or to uplift.

Thank you for destroying the camouflaged pedestal upon which I placed you, for it was done by my own folly; my eyes have now been opened, and now, I see the Light.

And because of this, I now thank you for correcting, and clarifying, my beliefs, my faith and

my trust in God. Not in you, Mr. Robertson. In GOD.

Mr. Robertson, you are as entitled to your personal opinion and your personal statement of faith as any other American; it is our right, as written in our Constitution. Nor are you disqualified from practicing your faith as you see fit; your religious freedoms are guaranteed by that same document.

Mr. Robertson, you may be interested to know that I enjoyed your program, very much, to the continued astonishment and derision of my friends, colleagues and family.

"How can you watch that show; it's about a bunch of rednecks...!"

"I can't believe you watch something that trashy."

And so on, and so forth.

Yes, I once watched your program. And, I once enjoyed it, immensely.

Do you know why, Mr. Robertson?

It was not because of the hunting, or the duck calls, or anything else, although I remain enamored of the outdoors, and spending as much time in the woods as I possibly can.

I enjoyed your program because you and your family presented good, solid Christian values, and practised them; you focused on your family, and you supported each other. You thanked the

Lord for His blessings at every meal, and you preached the Word of God.

Yes, Mr. Robertson, I enjoyed your program, for precisely those reasons.

And now, this.

Thank you, Mr. Robertson, for reminding me that it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man (The Book of Psalms, 118:8; KJV; Cambridge Edition).

Thank you, Mr. Robertson, for reminding me to trust not in a friend, nor to put my confidence in a guide, and to keep the doors of my mouth from her who lieth in my bosom (The Book of Micah, 7:5; KJV; Cambridge Edition).

Mr. Robertson, thank you for presenting your Christian bigotry, your Christian prejudice, your Christian homophobia and your Christian racism. Thank you for presenting yourself as you truly are. A hypocrite. A bigot. A homophobe, and a racist.

Mr. Robertson, do not label yourself a Christian; you are not in least bit like Christ. Not one camouflaged, red-neck, white-trash bit.

Would Jesus do what you have done, or say what you have said?

I don't think so.

Good day to you, sir.

Sanjay R Singhal, RA

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Community Marketing, Inc.

## GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

Photo by  
Claire  
Folger

## WE ARE FAMILY

An all-star cast, including Meryl Streep (not pictured here), headlines the movie *August: Osage County*. Read pages 16-17.

## THEATER

'Ship' check.  
Page 14Photo from *Shipwrecked!*  
by Jan Ellen Graves

## DISH

Cake expectations.  
Page 18Photo of Dinkel's logo  
by Andrew Davis

## INTERNET

'Nikki' situation.  
Page 19Photo from *Nikki & Nora*  
from tello film and  
MyHardt Productions

## SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Lesbian opera singer  
Patricia Racette returns

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

You can typically count on an opera singer like out soprano Patricia Racette for providing heightened drama onstage.

Racette is due to star in a revival of *Madama Butterfly* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago this month, and she's had plenty of experience on how to wring out as much emotion and drama from Puccini's classic tragedy of a Japanese geisha who is abandoned by her American naval husband. Racette has performed this signature role more than 100 times, including a run in the Lyric's final staging of its 1980s Harold Prince production in 2008 before they replaced it with one by British director Michael Grandage last year.

But how does Racette react offstage when something major happens that affects her own life? Racette and her fellow opera singer wife, mezzo-soprano Beth Clayton, have made a home together in Santa Fe, so they were bound to have a joyous response when the New Mexico Supreme Court ruled in favor of legalized gay marriage on Dec. 19, 2013.

"My wife and I were running errands and I was in the car as she was out picking something up, and I got a news bulletin on my phone that said 'Gay marriage approved in New Mexico,'" Racette said during a recent telephone interview. "I just immediately ran out of the car, left the keys in there, and shouted to her, 'We got it! It's approved!'"

Racette and Clayton have been together as a couple for more than 16 years, first meeting in a Santa Fe Opera production of Verdi's *La Traviata* in 1997 when Racette starred as Violetta and

Clayton was cast as her friend, Flora. Though the couple had already had a 2008 commitment ceremony and reception with friends and family in New Mexico, they plan on getting a state marriage license soon just to make it legally binding. It will add to their New York marriage license they recently obtained following Racette's appearance in the Metropolitan Opera revival of Puccini's *Tosca* that was simulcast around the world to movie theaters as part of the Live in HD series this past November.

"It's going to be an interesting tax year as well. Because of DOMA, we'll be filing as a married couple for the first time," said Racette about the U.S. Supreme Court striking down key parts of the Defense of Marriage Act last year. "But as opera singers, because we work in many different states, I have to file as a single person where it's not recognized in those states and as a married person where it is. Talk about a recipe for confusion."

Last year was also something of a career high for Racette, too.

She showed off her vocal versatility early on with the January 2013 release of her CD *"Diva on Detour,"* which featured her singing jazz and Broadway showtune standards. Racette also got to perform a series of intimate shows tied to the album at 54 Below, the basement cabaret space at Studio 54 in New York.

"It really is one of the best performing experiences I've had," Racette said. "I'm not a boastful person, but I say with full confidence that I don't sound like an opera singer when I'm singing [showtunes]. I sing like a cabaret singer. And the reason is because that's where I started."

Racette also made plenty of headlines in Sep-

Patricia Racette in *Madama Butterfly*. Photo by Dan Rest

tember when she was asked, on short notice, to step into the title role of Tobias Picker's world-premiere opera adaptation of the Stephen King novel *Dolores Claiborne* at San Francisco Opera. Originally cast opera star Dolora Zajick pulled out of the production late in the game, giving Racette less than three weeks to learn and memorize the role and the staging.

Racette did this on top of simultaneously rehearsing and starring as Margherita in a repertory staging of Biotto's opera *Mephistopheles* with the same company.

"It was a harrowing experience, and I'm not sure I would do that to myself again," said Racette about her experience starring in her third world premiere Picker opera following Emmeline in 1996 and *An American Tragedy* in 2005. "I mean I love a challenge like that, but I was literally working from the moment my eyes opened to when I had to close them—so about 13 hours a day."

But Racette said she has always been great at multitasking. When asked about the "It Gets Better" anti-suicide video for LGBTQ youth that she and Clayton filmed in 2010 at the Metropoli-

tan Opera, Racette said it happened between intermissions when she was hosting the worldwide Live in HD simulcast of *Boris Godunov*.

"It was really their idea," Racette said of the Metropolitan Opera, noting that it made sense to film the video at that time since she and Clayton were already "tszujed up" for her international live hosting duties.

Racette and Clayton were pleased with the overwhelmingly positive response they received after their video was posted to YouTube. For many months afterwards, Racette and Clayton would receive physical thank you notes in the many opera houses they performed at.

"We were honored to have been given the opportunity to be activists for a cause," Racette said. "We are out, we are proud and we do take the many opportunities to assert that."

**Patricia Racette stars in the remaining six performances of *Madama Butterfly* in January at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, 20 N. Wacker Dr. Performance times are at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 11, 14, 17 and 20 with 2 p.m. matinees Jan. 23 and 26. Tickets are \$64-\$299; call 312-332-2244 or visit [www.lyricopera.org](http://www.lyricopera.org).**



The Shadow over Innsmouth. Photo by Kyle Hamman

## THEATER REVIEW

### The Shadow over Innsmouth

Playwright: adapted by Scott T. Barsotti from the story by H.P. Lovecraft

At: WildClaw Theatre at the Athenaeum, 2936 N. Southport Ave.

Tickets: 773-935-6860;

www.athenaeumtheatre.org; \$25

Runs through: Jan. 26

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

As a literary genre, the horror story is fundamentally incompatible with the theater experience: If we accept the premise that what we imagine is invariably scarier than anything we can actually see or hear, the written word has the advantage of being consumed in solitude, its fancies restricted solely by our own unreliable perceptions.

The elaborate spectacles associated with 19th-century melodrama and 20th-century cinema could overwhelm audiences on sheer sensory overload, but always risked being diminished by the communal nature of their presentation. All it takes is one vocal skeptic to reduce a fortune in special-effect wizardry to backyard make-believe.

WildClaw Theatre's mission of recreating such adventures on restrictive budgets in small rooms requires them to address that challenge with every production. This time, the creepy crawlies are supplied by that master of shivery science fiction, H.P. Lovecraft, recounting the tale of a traveler who discovers evolution reversing itself upon the bleak Massachusetts coast, where the natives of a remote settlement have not only reverted to pagan worship of pastoral gods, but adopted the practice of theogenesis, resulting in a population combining characteristics of both sea and land creatures—and we're not just talking mermaids.

So how do you suggest human beings gradually changing into frogs and fish? If you're Scott T. Barsotti, you find the social message in your source material—Lovecraft's seat of eroding civilization is an economically-depressed fishing village in 1931—and allow director Shade Murray to forge his central visual metaphor therefrom. The citizens of Innsmouth thus appear afflicted by a degenerative respiratory illness—coughing and vomiting, their eyes fixed in an unblinking stare and throats displaying skin lesions resembling prototypal gills. Oh, and did I

mention that our narrator breathes with the aid of an inhaler?

Containing this much metaphor within the abbreviated performance time of modern dramatic presentation is a difficult task. Manual scene-shifts, however skillfully executed, when coupled with the dialogue necessary to re-establish locale, consume precious minutes, rendering the narrative set-up more coherent at initial viewings than its swift and abstract resolution. You won't find a more closely integrated ensemble currently appearing on a Chicago stage than the acting and technical team assembled for this ambitious undertaking, however, their sheer conviction redeeming the ambiguities inherent in projects of this kind.

## CRITICS' PICKS

**An Inspector Calls**, Remy Bumppo Theatre Company, through Jan. 12. A wealthy family gets a lesson in communal responsibility from a mysterious visitor—played with unflinching candor by Nick Sandys—in J.B. Priestley's social-protest play from 1945. MSB

**The Merry Wives of Windsor**, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, through Jan. 19. Smart women, clueless men, 1940s fashions, swing dancing, Looney-Tunes foreign accents, full-stage laundry-fights, chases down the aisles, an adorable boy singing to his adorable dog—and it's Shakespeare! MSB

**Port Authority**, Writers Theatre, through Feb. 16. Exquisite acting, and commonplace speech elevated to poetry, infuse this tender and introspective piece about three Irishmen of different generations who bare their rueful souls about the women who got away. JA

**We Three Lizas**, About Face Theatre at Stage 773, through Jan. 5. Though the setting isn't as nearly as cozy (or audible) as last year, this queer revisionist take on A Christmas Carol with various guises of Liza Minnelli serving as a supernatural inspiration is even better in its new, thoroughly revamped version. SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

## SPOTLIGHT



Lifeline Theatre continues with a tradition originally cooked up by Live Bait Theater: **The 17th Annual Fillet of Solo Festival**. The event is spread out over three weeks, and features 10 solo performers and 13 storytelling collectives performing 50-minute pieces in repertory. The featured artists include out writer Liz Baudler (performing *Virgo: The Screenplay*), Nick Ward (performing *The Backyard*), Jamie Black (performing *It's My Penis and I'll Cry If I Want To*) and many more.

The 17th Annual Fillet of Solo Festival takes place at two Rogers Park venues along the Glenwood Avenue Arts District Jan. 3-19: Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave., and at the Heartland Studio Theatre, 7016 N. Glenwood Ave. Most performances run approximately 50 minutes. Tickets are \$10 for each performance with festival passes available for \$30; call 773-761-4477 or visit [www.lifelinetheatre.com](http://www.lifelinetheatre.com) for tickets and a full performance schedule. Photo courtesy of Liz Baudler



Shipwrecked! Photo by Jan Ellen Graves

## THEATER REVIEW

### Shipwrecked!

Playwright: Donald Margulies

At: Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W.

Bryn Mawr Ave.

Tickets: 773-728-7529;

www.redtwist.org; \$20

Runs through: Jan. 13

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The full title of Donald Margulies' play is "Shipwrecked! An Entertainment The Amazing Adventures of Louis de Rougement (as told by himself)." This Victorian-sounding broadside leads us to expect a picaresque yarn in imitation of *Candide* or *Tom Jones*, and on the surface, that's precisely what we get.

Our raconteur is the aforementioned Louis, a sickly boy whose childhood is steeped in fanciful stories—the *Arabian Nights*, etc.—spurring him to stray from his London home in 1860 to seek his fortune. He hires aboard a ship bound for the pearl-fisheries off the coast of Australia, little realizing that the next 30 years will immerse him in thrilling events like the typhoon that maroons him—along with the captain's dog—on a desert island, face-to-face encounters with exotic flora and fauna, assimilation into Aboriginal tribes and many more curious experiences before he returns to England, where the popular press first lauds, then questions, his account. Luckily, the skills acquired in his exile enable him to end his memoirs in triumph.

Playgoers may detect in our hero's progress a certain similarity to, say, *Robinson Crusoe* (or *Pirates of the Caribbean*, for that matter), but the actual tale that he relates is merely a pretext to Margulies' real purpose, which is to showcase the creativity of the four actors whose task is to depict, with the assistance of commonplace objects, their narrative's dizzying array of personalities and locales. The production currently playing at Redtwist Theatre, in repertory with *Elemeno Pea* (whose suburban living room is divested of its portable components at the start of our show), features Matt Browning, Michael C. Countryman, Daniela Colucci and director Ian Frank, who also provides incidental music and twice has his piano bench stolen out from under him to be pressed into service as a giant equestrian sea-turtle.

A canine companion equipped with a pair of tube-sock floppy ears, a menacing octopus fashioned from an armload of pool-noodles and a nautical atmosphere suggested by chanteys gleaned from traditional and modern sources are not without a certain school-room charm, particularly since the precocity usually afflicting this genre is largely absent (playgoers looking for broad-guffaw spoofery will not find it here). The intimacy of Redtwist's tiny storefront space—audience members seated in one corner of the room may find themselves armed with foam-rubber spears for one scene—likewise prevents the 90-intermissionless-minute running time pushing the cutesiness factor to extremes.



Silk Road Rising (which ran Paulus, above, this year) generated controversy in 2013. Photo from Silk Road Rising

# Notable theater news for 2013

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The New Year is here for the Chicago theater scene and there are lots of things to look forward to in 2014, ranging from the pre-Broadway world-premiere musical *The Last Ship* by British rock star Sting to the world premiere play *The Qualms* at Steppenwolf Theatre by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Bruce Norris.

But now is also a good time to reflect on the past year. Since there were a lot of productions I couldn't catch before they closed, I'm offering up a 2013 theater news highlights column rather than a "Best-of" list—it's only fair. Several news items are already firmly in the rear-view mirror, while others are still developing as you read this.

## Changes in comedy

The Second City gave a major show of confidence in GayCo by offering up Chicago's oldest LGBT sketch comedy troupe the chance to officially open its newly renovated Donny's Skybox Theater with a brand-new revue called #God-

HatesHashtags. So what if the show wasn't up to GayCo's past glories, it was certainly a fine occasion to show off the space which is largely used by students in The Second City's classes and training programs. Now that Donny's Skybox has been reconfigured and elongated to resemble The Second City's classic Mainstage, perhaps it will help The Second City's students work their way up the company ladder.

Another major change was the Annoyance Theatre exiting from Uptown with plans on re-opening sometime this year in Boystown at 851 W. Belmont Ave. The move will allow the Annoyance to house its classes and theater in the same building for the first time. The Annoyance will also help make Boystown a true center for Chicago comedy since it will be just down the street from ComedySportz and a couple of blocks away from the Playground Theater.

## Worrying trends

Our country may officially be out of the recession, but that doesn't mean that arts organizations are free of struggles. For instance, Chicago Dramatists this season isn't producing its own shows, rather just using its venue near the intersection of Chicago and Milwaukee avenues as a rental house.

Buffalo Theatre Ensemble in Glen Ellyn has also cancelled the rest of its season. Apparently, the Equity theater ensemble will need to renegotiate its connection and mission with the College of DuPage and its McAninch Arts Center (which has been closed this year for major renovations).

## Rising controversy

Silk Road Rising, a company dedicated to producing works focusing on Asian and Middle Eastern culture, generated a lot of controversy in 2013 as its artistic founders called out a couple of influential Chicago theatrical heavyweights.

Silk Road Rising artistic director Jamil Khoury posted a blistering blog post about Tony Award-winning director Mary Zimmerman due to some dismissive comments she made regarding Rudyard Kipling's colonial views in a Chicago Magazine article (which appeared as an advance piece to her highly anticipated Goodman Theatre stage adaptation of Disney's *The Jungle Book*). Khoury accused Zimmerman of building her career on cultural appropriation and "Orientalism," which in turn prompted Zimmerman to have a face-to-face meeting to iron out their differing opinions of her work. (Either way, the dustup seemed to generate lots of extra interest for both Silk Road

Rising and *The Jungle Book*.)

Silk Road Rising also took on Chicago Sun-Time theater critic Hedy Weiss in another blog post. Weiss' review of Silk Road Rising's production of *Invasion!* could have been interpreted as an endorsement of racial profiling in the fight against global terrorism.

## Addressing Chicago violence

Steppenwolf Theatre and Collaboraction both produced works as a way to address and comment on a growing tide of violence in Chicago neighborhoods. Collaboraction produced a very interactive production of *Crime Scene: A Chicago Anthology* conceived by Anthony Moseley that seems to beg for expansion, while one wishes that Steppenwolf Theatre's production of Miles Harvey's *How Long Will I Cry?* Voices of Youth Violence will have a future life in high schools beyond its original production and subsequent tour of Chicago Public Library branches.

## On the LGBT theater front

Bonnie Metzgar said goodbye as About Face Theatre's artistic director with a marvelous Chicago premiere production of Alexi Kaye Campbell's *The Pride*, which showed how far gay men have come in British society in just 50 years time. The esteemed Chicago company dedicated to LGBT theater also welcomed Andrew Volkoff to lead About Face Theatre as its new artistic director. One of Volkoff's first decisions was to bring back *We Three Lizas* in a heavily revamped version for 2013 (it continues through Jan. 5).

Pride Films and Plays is also going from

strength to strength with its program of developing new works through playwriting contests and then subsequently producing many of the winners. The original musical *Under a Rainbow Flag* proved to be a big winner at the non-Equity Jeff Awards, while *Pride Films and Plays* continued to show its dedication to new works by producing the world premiere of Martin Casella's *Directions for Restoring the Apparently Dead*.

Pride Films and Plays is also producing significant revivals, like Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* in 2013 and its upcoming production of Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*. But also very encouraging was the fact that Batavia-based Albright Theatre in Kane County also staged *Beautiful Thing* in 2013, while Glen Ellyn-based Village Theatre Guild in DuPage County produced Geoffrey Naufft's *Next Fall* (following AstonRep's Chicago premiere) this past year as well. Seeing LGBT theater in Chicago is old hat, but in the conservative suburbs it can still generate a certain amount of controversy and hopefully change a few minds.

Another major item of LGBT theater news in 2013 was out playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney being awarded a MacArthur Fellowship "Genius Grant." The jet-setting McCraney is a member of the Steppenwolf Theatre Ensemble, which presented the world premiere of his play *Head of Passes* in 2013. But I hope that two other works by McCraney will also have Chicago premieres soon. The Windy City still has yet to see his drag drama *Wig Out!*, while his 2013 work *Choir Boy* deserves to be seen in Chicago following its acclaimed runs in New York and Atlanta.

## PPF to present 'The Children's Hour'

Pride Films and Plays (PPF) continues its 2013-14 season with Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*, which will run Jan. 9-Feb. 9, 2014, at Collaboraction's Pentagon Theater, 1579 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Written in 1934, *The Children's Hour* is based on a true story, and was originally banned in Chicago and not seen here until the 1950s.

Tickets are \$15-\$30; call 800-838-3006 or visit [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com).

For more about PPF, visit [www.pridefilm-sandplays.com](http://www.pridefilm-sandplays.com).

## 'Bible Bingo' back in Royal George Jan. 10

Vicki Quade and Nuns4Fun Entertainment have announced the return of the comedy *Bible Bingo: An Act of Charity in Two Acts* to

the Royal George Theatre starting Jan. 10.

It will run Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. Late Nite Catechism stays on the schedule, at 5 p.m. Saturdays and 2 p.m. on Sundays.

*Bible Bingo* is a comedy about the Catholic culture of fundraising and bingo that features the character Mrs. Mary Margaret O'Brien, a former nun who now heads a fictitious archdiocese fundraising department.

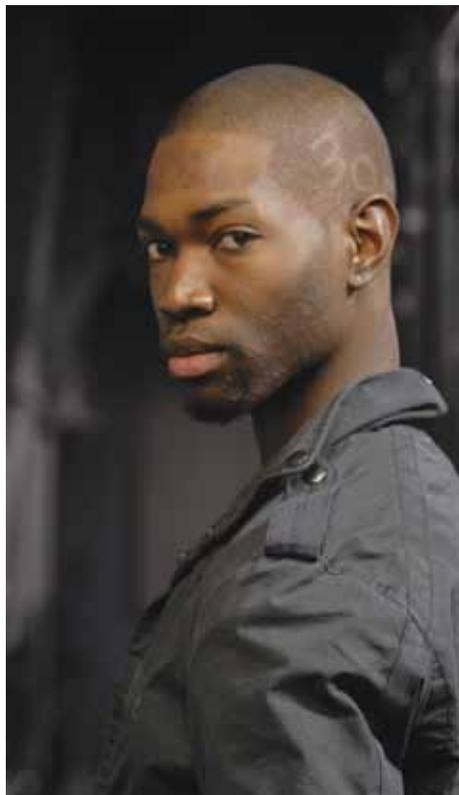
Tickets are \$30, and group discounts are available. For ticket info, call the box office at 312-988-9000.

## Marketing event Jan. 13 at Lifeline

TheatrePros.com is holding a marketing event for theater professionals Monday, Jan. 13, at Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave., 7-11 p.m.

Among those slated to appear are Simplify Your Marketing owner Amanda Young and Chicago Style SEO founder Rod Holmes.

Tickets are \$10-\$15; see [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/530226](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/530226).



Tarell Alvin McCraney. Photo by Deana Lawson

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STEPPENWOLF LUNCHEON

# 'Osage County' cast on the movie, fish and Meryl Streep

BY JERRY NUNN

Family drama hits new heights with August: Osage County, and it's already predicted for big awards this season.

Playwright Tracy Letts won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, along with a Tony Award and Drama Desk Award, for penning this piece. After it premiered at the Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago in 2007 then hit Broadway at the Imperial Theater for two years. The story didn't end there with a UK debut in London and a U.S. national tour.

Letts then wrote the screenplay for the big-screen version starring such heavy-hitters as Meryl Streep and Julia Roberts. The story centers around a three-story home outside of Pawhuska, Okla. Violet Weston, played by Streep, deals with mouth cancer, a husband who committed suicide and the family arriving to help out.

The family consists of Roberts as Violet's daughter Barbara; Ewan McGregor as her husband Bill; and Abigail Breslin as her daughter Jean. Julianne Nicholson and Juliette Lewis play Violet's other daughters, with Margo Martindale as Violet's sister, Mattie Fae, who is married to Chris Cooper's Charlie Aiken.

Lewis was nominated for an Oscar in Cape Fear and has continued in the biz with unforgettable roles like What's Eating Gilbert Grape and Natural Born Killers. Martindale can currently be seen on CBS with The Millers, and created the role of Truvy in Steel Magnolias. Nicholson currently is in production of The Red Road for the Sundance Channel along with reprising her part on Boardwalk Empire.

Letts, Lewis, Nicholson and Martindale all arrived in Chicago for an appearance at Steppenwolf's Women in the Arts annual luncheon. Windy City Times spoke with them afterwards.

**Windy City Times: How was the Steppenwolf's luncheon?**

Tracy Letts: It was great.

**WCT: In Osage County there's an intense scene with the family about eating fish. Did they serve fish at lunch?**

Juliette Lewis: They did have fish!

Margo Martindale: "Eat the fish, bitch!"

JL: Cold salmon. Is that the thing?

Julianne Nicholson: I don't normally think of salmon as fish, but it was protein.

MM: Let me just say I didn't touch it. I ate the lettuce.

JN: I ate the whole thing.

JL: I ate half of it.

TL: As soon as I saw the cranberry I thought, "Salmon, really?"

**WCT: Tracy, can you talk about making the play into a movie?**

TL: It was real hard. It took a long time and was a process in patience. We tried to find a way to tell our story with pictures instead of with words. We didn't want to change things that we knew already worked about the piece. It was a balancing act.

Ultimately, we wound up losing stuff that I didn't want to lose. I will admit that but you are making something different. When you are the person that wrote the play you have to let go of the stuff that preserves it as a play. You are making something entirely different.

That is what we did. We made a movie. It looks, walks, and talks like a movie not like a play.

**WCT: You are originally from Tulsa, Okla., Tracy, and insisted on filming in Oklahoma. How was it?**

MM: Fabulous!

JL: A revelation.

JN: It was beautiful.

MM: I loved it.

**WCT: Where is everyone from?**

MM: I am from East Texas.

JL: I was born and raised in Los Angeles, but a couple of different parts of LA. I feel defensive already because it is not just the TV and Hollywood world. I lived on a ranch as opposed to lower income apartment living.

JN: I'm from Massachusetts.

**WCT: All over the place. Tracy, did you think about putting more humor in the beginning because the drama is very intense?**

TL: The truth is the play begins with a 15-minute scene with characters that are not the central characters. The scene in the movie is three minutes so maybe we get to the funnier stuff sooner.

JN: I think you shave off 12 minutes from the play version and Beverly not being funny. When the people start arriving, then the humor is there.

TL: I think that happened with the play too that you would listen and lean in to hear what is going on with that scene. There is a real darkness to that scene.

MM: I loved the play and listening to all of those literary references and poetry. I liked the history of Oklahoma at the time and the Native Americans. I loved that but you couldn't do that in a movie.

**WCT: Were there any divas on the set with this extraordinary cast?**

JL: No; that was the remarkable thing—the actors were not like that in this piece. We shared stuff about our families and things in rehearsal that surprised me. I thought, "Oh, wow. Julia Roberts was so open and so was Meryl about marriages, children and siblings"—stuff that colors your relationships in the movie.

Everyone was there to do the best they could and it required being pretty open and down for the cause. I think it was the casting too. I don't think they cast anyone who suffered from what I call "Hollywooditis."

**WCT: You worked with director John Wells before, Julianne?**

JN: I worked for him on a show called Presidio Med years ago. It was a lady doctor show. It starred Blythe Danner, Anna Deavere Smith, Dana Delany and Sasha Alexander in all 13 episodes. John was my boss.

TL: It's a terrible title.

JN: It is. I agree.

JL: I can't understand it when she says it.

JN: Presidio Med. I actually met John once or twice when we were doing it so it was a pleasure getting to work with him on this. I adore him.

**WCT: Juliette, like your character in this film you have a knack for tapping into the innocence in these various women in parts you have played. Is it a part of you?**

JL: It is. [Laughs]

**WCT: You have done it in a few films, going back to California.**

JL: In California she truly has the mentality of a 9-year-old. I guess a lot of my characters have suffered trauma. In my heart of hearts I fancy myself as a healer so I try to give a voice to people's pain I guess. I don't know why that is.

With Karen, I can't take too much credit because of the way she was written. She really cares about appearances and that was different for me. I don't usually play females that are looks based. It is really important to her that her hair is done and to show her mom and sisters what has become of her, that are her troubles are behind her. I loved her, that opening and entrance to her. Her guts and insides get divulged



From left: Julianne Nicholson, Tracy Letts, Margo Martindale and Juliette Lewis. Photo by Jerry Nunn

but she is still trying to keep it together.

There is a dignity there even though it's horrifying. She is trying to maintain her dignity but is going with a predator to Belize! Clearly, this is insane but she is going to do it in a very dignified way. That juxtaposition contradicts because I feel I am as strong as I am vulnerable and weak, so that drives me a bit crazy.

**WCT: How was working with Meryl, Margo?**

MM: I knew her before this film, and she was thrilled to see me. We had done other movies like The Hours together—one I played best friends with her and the other as her therapist. I had a history with her but being with her again it was as if we had been around each other for the last 10 years. We spent an enormous amount of time together.

JN: You both snort when you laugh!

MM: We do and have a lot of little tricks that make us similar to playing sisters.

JN: Did the actors walk on set in character?

TL: People don't come on set in character but if there is a prevailing mood then yes.

MM: Yes, if the mood is there right but none of us were people that can't break character.

JL: None of us were called only by our character names. People could call me by my real name or character name, either/or.

**WCT: Did the cast have fun?**

JN: We enjoyed each other's company so much! That is what made the job so much fun was actually being together. I care about these people every time I am with them. The first time I watched the movie I felt like I was in their company again. They felt like my family and I really fell in love with them.

MM: I felt that way too. It felt like family. Looking at pictures of the set and cars I kept thinking that this was part of my Texas family. The landscape was similar. We sort of lived and breathed as characters. We were all together all of the time. We didn't have anybody else.

JL: There was no Four Seasons Hotel. We stayed in a complex of townhouses with a horseshoe driveway. They wanted us all to live in a house together but they couldn't find one so they found these odd townhouses behind a Toyota dealership. We would go to Meryl's to have a pot luck and rehearse. Meryl would yell at the TV...

MM: She would cook and we would eat. You see that really helps the movie. We didn't even know that at the time.

JL: I would run away to Tulsa to see rock shows because that was what Karen probably did when she was 18. That is also what I do.

**WCT: I noticed you tweet a lot about music.**

JL: It fuels my day. If I don't listen to music then something is off. It could be anything

whether is Jamaican soul music or Beastie Boys.

TL: Where did you go? Cain's Ballroom over there?

JL: Yeah. I saw Smashing Pumpkins; only Billy Corgan, though—not the original band.

TL: He lives here in Chicago.

JL: I also saw Jack White's band. I know from touring in a small town that it is harder to get VIP tickets in LA because of the celebrities but in Oklahoma you get the royal treatment. "You want ten people on the guest list? Sure you got it!"

**WCT: Margo, you did theater in Kentucky?**

MM: Yes, the Actors Theater of Louisville when in its heyday from 1979 through 1984. I met Chris Cooper from Osage there 33 years ago.

JL: I bet he was cute back then, too!

MM: He's cute now...

JL: I mean now, that is what I am saying... [everyone laughs] some people are cuter as they get older.

MM: He was definitely cute back then.

JN: I wonder if he likes being called "cute."

JL: He's handsome then.

**WCT: What is everyone doing for awards season?**

JL: This is it, doing interviews.

MM: We will see where we get to go. We hope to go everywhere but we will see.

**WCT: Let's go around the room on future projects.**

MM: I am on TV with The Americans and The Millers on CBS.

JN: I am on Masters of Sex right now and just did a show on the Sundance Channel called The Red Road. It comes out in February.

JL: I was just at Sundance with Aaron Paul of Breaking Bad in a film called Hellion. I just did an indie called Kelly and Cal and a TV show I did with Matt Dillon called Wayward Pines coming out in March that M. Night Shyamalan created.

**WCT: Are you still singing, Juliette?**

JL: Oh, yeah. I am making a record with the band Cage the Elephant. They are like my rock 'n' roll brothers. We are recording in Nashville and I basically hijacked their band with Brad, their guitarist, doing my EP. I miss being on the road like crazy!

**WCT: And your plans, Tracy?**

TL: I am doing a play on Broadway as an actor called The Realistic Joneses by Will Eno with Marisa Tomei and Toni Collette.

JL: What a great cast—wowsers!

**WCT: Speaking of a great cast, August has a stellar one and I wish you all the best success with the film.**

**Take an unforgettable trip to Oklahoma by way of cinema as August: Osage County opens in Chicago Jan. 3.**

# KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

BY  
RICHARD  
KNIGHT JR.

## August: Osage County; Wolf of Wall Street; The Great Beauty

As longtime readers of this column know, there are few movie genres that I revel in more than “the woman’s picture” (or “chick flick” in modern-day terminology). Even better is that beloved subset of this genre: the mother-daughter movie. Before we get to **August: Osage County**—John Wells’ all-star screen adaptation of the Tracy Letts Steppenwolf-Broadway sensation that is essentially another addition to the M-D canon (and a great one)—a quick question: How many mother-daughter pictures has Meryl Streep, who stars, appeared in before taking on this latest Grand Dame?

The answer doesn’t really matter because when Streep starts chewing the scenery, the dining room table, chairs, the place mats, the service for 10, the place cards, and everything else in the room as she does here portraying Violet Weston, the drug addled Gorgon at the center of **August: Osage County** fans of this singular actresses’ ability to command the screen are in for another galvanizing, memorable performance. What Streep does with Letts’ monologues for this monstrous, complicated woman is akin to the arias that Callas must have thrilled audiences with at the height of her career. It’s the primary reason to see this dysfunctional family drama, a modern-day *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* (with plenty of Terms of Endearment, Home for the Holidays and Used People thrown in for good measure).

After the suicide of Violet’s husband (a typically stoic Sam Shepard), the gathering of the clan for the funeral is, naturally enough, the perfect time for deep seated wounds to resurface and be picked over. “Thank God we can’t tell the future, we’d never get out of bed,” Julia Robert as Streep’s most messed up daughter Barbara

comments enroute to the gathering (stating the theme of the picture as well). Boy, is she on the money about what’s in store for this train wreck of a family. Letts (who adapted his play for the screen) stuffs this tale—a Soap Opera Grand Guignol—with enough deep seated enmity to fuel a dozen *Real Housewives* reunion shows. And portraying this Addams Family are some major acting heavyweights: Ewan McGregor, Benedict Cumberpatch, Chris Cooper, Juliette Lewis, the amazing Margo Martindale, Abigail Breslin, Dermot Mulroney, and Julianne Nicholson.

Everyone gets behind Streep, of course, who takes no prisoners as she handily takes apart all the other characters and relishes doing so. The other characters, one by one, fall by the wayside as the mother-daughter boxing match between Violet and Barbara winds up for its final round. Roberts does her best with the role, frowning and grimacing (her high-wattage smile nowhere in sight) and giving herself to the complicated role as much as she can. But, ultimately, she lacks the finesse to bring out the shading to make you really care if Barbara breaks free of Violet the witch. And, really, who would expect otherwise? What actor in Hollywood would expect to leave much of an impression when paired with Streep, done up in a teased brunette wig, swilling booze and pills, and chain-smoking in between all those acid-soaked soliloquies?

New Hollywood motto: Never act with kids, dogs or Streep—when she’s in *Mommie Dearest* mode, that is.

At one point amidst the insane excesses displayed in **The Wolf of Wall Street**, Martin Scorsese’s darkly comedic tale of ‘90s Wall Street high flyer Jordan Belfort, Rob Reiner (as Belfort’s father, Max) surveys the financially perverse goings on and exclaims, “This is obscene!” This perfectly sums up both the subject of the movie and it’s bloated, three-hour running time.

Based on a true story tale of a white collar criminal, this isn’t the cautionary tale that Oliver Stone’s 1987 *Wall Street* with its ironic slogan, “Greed is good” was. No, this is yet another Scorsese gangster picture in which the irony of those words are handily stomped on. In this sordid tale of a poor Brooklyn kid who makes a killing as a penny stockbroker before moving on to greater “glory” as a megawindler, greed really IS good and any poor sucker who hasn’t figured that out is a shmuck who plays by the rules. “I want you to deal with your problems by getting rich” DiCaprio is exhorted at one point and he takes that advice to heart.

This latter-day *Gatsby*—with a taste for cocaine, hookers and all manner of material goods—becomes more confident the higher he climbs (natch) and ignores the warnings of his lawyers that the feds aren’t sniffing around because they envy him or his sleazy associates. And those associates are just as arrogant and are portrayed as buffoons. (Jonah Hill, whose character is strongly hinted at to be closeted, is not surprisingly, the most buffoonish.)



Toni Servillo in *The Great Beauty (La Grande Belleza)*.



From left: Julia Roberts, Ewan McGregor and Meryl Streep in **August: Osage County**. Photo by Claire Folger

The jaw-dropping indifference to anything outside of the narcissistic pursuits of DiCaprio and company as the noose tightens is illustrated by Scorsese in his usual flashy, theatrical style (working for the zillionth time with his brilliant editor Thelma Schoonmaker) but the picture, which is mostly entertaining, never quite resonates like, say, *Good Fellas*. Some of that has to do with the subject matter which has been covered so extensively in documentaries in the last few years. But I think the larger problem here is DiCaprio whose performance, odd as this may seem given the overindulgences displayed on screen, seems rather remote. There’s not much zest in his portrayal and though the character repeatedly gets up to address his troops—before, during and after his downfall—none of it ever connects with the audience.

It’s just one of the many incongruities in this ultimately hollow exercise in movie excess.

**Briefly noted:** Fellini lives! At least, that’s what you’ll think after seeing **The Great Beauty (La Grande Belleza)**, director Paolo Sorrentino’s fantastic visual feast that truly is a modern-day *La Dolce Vita*.

Set in Rome, the movie focuses on Jep Gambardella (played by Toni Servillo, familiar to audiences from *Gomorra* and *Il Divo*), a long time chronicler of Rome’s party scene and member of same who is thrown a lavish party for his 65th birthday. Jep, who wrote a critically acclaimed novel in his 20s, reflects on his life and loves in the ensuing days as he visits many of Rome’s familiar highlights.

Sorrentino’s camera loves Servillo’s enigmatic but expressive face and the accompanying visuals are something to luxuriate in. This is the best Italian film I’ve seen since 2009’s *I Am Love* and needs to be experienced on the big screen. The film opens Friday, Jan. 3, at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave. [www.musicboxtheatre.com](http://www.musicboxtheatre.com)

### ‘RuPaul’s Drag Race’ season six cast named

Fourteen contestants have been announced for the upcoming sixth season of the Logo TV show *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, which will start in February.

Gia Gunn is the only contestant from Chicago. Some of the other entrants include April Carrion (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico), Vivacious (New York City), Laganja Estranja (Los Angeles), Milk (New York City) and Adore Delano (Azusa, Calif.).

The prizes will be \$100,000 and the title of “America’s Next Drag Superstar.”

### A&E reverses stance about ‘Duck Dynasty’

The network A&E has reversed its suspension of show star Phil Robertson for making anti-gay comments, and he will not miss a single episode of the upcoming season, according to a *Chicago Tribune* item.

Shooting will resume in the spring, and will be accompanied by a series of public service announcements “promoting unity, tolerance and acceptance among all people, a message that supports our core values as a company, and the values found in *Duck Dynasty*,” the network said.

The network suspended Robertson after he compared gays to “drunks” and “terrorists” in

a *GQ* interview in which he also said African-Americans were perfectly happy before civil rights.

The pro-LGBT group Truth Wins Out (TWO) condemned A&E’s turnaround. In a statement, TWO Executive Director Wayne Besen said, “This is a disgraceful decision that gives a pass to prejudice and puts money before morality. ... A&E took the low road, and its failed attempts to justify its inexcusable actions have reflected poorly on the cable network and deeply tarnished its brand.”

### Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival announces line-up

The 13th Annual Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival—the nation’s largest event of its kind—has announced its official line-up for 2014.

Festival organizers chose 150 troupes that involve 1,000 artists performing over 170 shows in eight days (the two weekends around Jan. 9-19, 2014).

Highlights include Johnny Knoxville (of *Jackass* and *Bad Grandpa*); Siblings of Doctors (Los Angeles), featuring Danny Pudi from the TV show *Community*; Same Sex Different Gays (Chicago); Kerpatty (Chicago); and Virgin Daquiri (Chicago), as well as two local groups who have been a part of the festival for all 13 years: The Cupid Players (Chicago) and Stir Friday Night (Chicago).

Visit [www.chicagosketchfest.com](http://www.chicagosketchfest.com).

# Dinkel's: Nine decades and counting for sweet institution

BY ANDREW DAVIS

**Dinkel's Bakery & Cafe** (3329 N. Lincoln Ave.; www.dinkels.com) opened in 1922 (at 3327 N. Lincoln Ave.).

To put that in perspective, at that point:  
—Only one world war had taken place;  
—Prohibition was ongoing;  
—Warren G. Harding was president of the United States and Calvin Coolidge was vice pres-



ident; and

—The Chicago Cubs had only gone 14 years without winning a World Series. (Now, it's 105—and counting.)

Walking into Dinkel's recently, it was apparent that not much has changed; indeed, it felt like I had gone back in time. Dessert flavors, for example, are old-school, to say the least—and that's a good thing.

Luke Karl, the bakery's general manager and the husband of third-generation owner Sandy Dinkel, told Windy City Times that, indeed, few things have changed. "Every once in a while we'll do something like a pina coloda cupcake and we have our maple bacon donut, which [is only available] on Saturdays," he said. "But we usually don't try to get too exotic. This isn't really the place for that."

However, there have been a few alterations. Starting August 2012, Dinkel's reincorporated a sandwich section. "My father-in-law, Mr. Dinkel, actually did the sandwich thing in the '90s and early 2000s," Karl said. "We were doing a ton of movies in Chicago at that point, so he catered movie sets. But then that dried up and moved on, and he had some staff changes so he closed that down."

"My wife and I are in the business now, and we were looking for ways to make ourselves more relevant. So we thought about bringing in the lunch crowd. We're still focusing on the bakery, but this is, like, a sideline."

By the way, regarding the sandwiches, they're named after neighborhood fixtures, such as The Woolworth (turkey breast, bacon, red onions, Granny Smith apples, cheddar and tomato



Dinkel's GM Luke Karl. Photo by Andrew Davis



mayo)—and that one was divine. Others include the Dinkel's BLT (which the sandwich chef insisted is one of the best in the city), Ziggy's Ham Sandwich, Kotz's Caprese and many more selections.

Dinkel's also conducts tours. "We get a lot of groups that come through, such as elderly retirees, and I'll chat with them and give them free samples" Karl said. "But I always do four or five kids' tours a year. We have St. Andrew's right here, and the YMCA had a kids' class here. Kids love seeing people make roses and buttercream." I suspect many adults feel the same way.

As for those famed desserts, is there one that's the most popular? Karl said that it changes but right now it's the "vanilla cake donut with chocolate icing, which is sometimes called the chocolate cake donut." In fact, The Daily Meal ranked Dinkel's donuts among the top 25 in the country. (Chicago's Dat Donut, Do-Rite Donuts &

Coffee, and The Doughnut Vault were also on the list.)

Another popular item is the stollen, which I thought would be the dreaded fruitcake, considering it contains roasted cashews and almonds along with golden raisins and diced pineapple. However, this item—traditional to the southern Bavarian region, Karl said—isn't nearly as dense, and is quite flavorful.

As for the Dinkel's experience, Karl said he wants the place to "be part of people's lives. I want people to have smiles on their faces when they walk in here. I don't want us to be dated, but I want us to be part of families' histories."

Basically, with Dinkel's you can't go wrong. Come for the cupcakes, and stay for the donuts, stollen, cakes, tarts, sandwiches—you get the picture.

I'm counting on all of this goodness to be the same when Dinkel's reaches 100. Maybe the Cubs will have won it all again by then.

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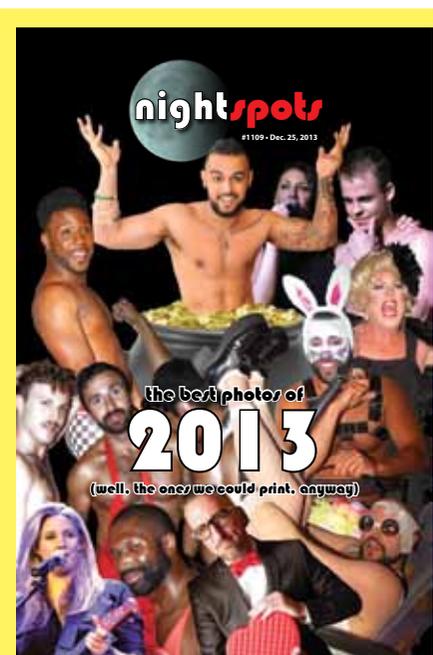
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## NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

## Debbie Gibson talks gay fans, 'Electric Youth'



BY JERRY NUNN

In 1988, Debbie Gibson became the youngest artist to produce, write and perform a number-one single on the Billboard Hot 100 with "Foolish Beat"—and holds that crown to this day. Songs like "Only in My Dreams" and "Shake Your Love" kept her in the spotlight and became staples in her live shows.

Her Broadway debut in *Les Miserables* led to more musicals such as *Grease*, *Gypsy*, *Cabaret* and *Company*. She made a cameo in the musical film *Rock of Ages* and will reprise her role in 2014 for Syfy's *Mega Shark vs. Mecha Shark*.

Gibson competed on the fifth season of *The Celebrity Apprentice* for her charity Children International.

Windy City Times caught up to her after she performed at the Festival of Lights on Michigan Avenue.

**Windy City Times: Last time we talked face to face was during Pridefest in your trailer.**

Debbie Gibson: Yes. Oh, my gosh!

**WCT: Someone was just mentioning to me what a great job you did there performing.**

DG: You know, I thought about that the other day, wishing I had said more to that audience. It was a long street and packed. The audience was, pardon the pun, electric!

**WCT: You have always been great with your gay fans.**

DG: Thank you. Well, they have always been great to me. I probably have said this to you before but so many people may not realize that I started in gay clubs. "Only In My Dreams" was a gay club hit. Little did I know when I wrote that song at 13, I wasn't targeting anyone in particular but now I have a kinship with the gay audience and I love it!

One of the last events I did in Chicago was at Pride and I was in the tiniest miniskirt and top.

**WCT: And some feathers...**

DG: Right. It was completely sweltering and it is cold now. I only come here when it's extreme weather! I was here recently for the Hollywood Show, which is an autograph show. I was just thinking about all the times I have been here. I sang the anthem, I did Cubby Bear, I performed in *Cinderella*, *Joseph* and *Grease*. This is probably one of my most frequented cities and I am glad about it.

**WCT: You looked cold out there opening the holiday shopping season on Michigan Avenue.**

DG: When I watched it back I could hardly move my mouth! I had done that half-hour show during the day and by nighttime it was so taxing on my voice to sing in that cold, but it was fun.

**WCT: How has your trip to Chicago been?**

DG: Well, I broke my phone and went to the Mac store so I was kind of a local. I went to the movies.

**WCT: What did you see?**

DG: About Time. I would have made it a little more dramatic but they wanted it to be nice. Rachel McAdams is amazing and the lead guy is adorable.

This trip has been very relaxing. We went to Lawry's and sat in the bar. Chicago, to me, is about food and walking around.

**WCT: Your phone is fixed?**

DG: It is all fixed and was just a SIM-card issue.

**WCT: Talk a bit about *Celebrity Apprentice*. I am talking with Lisa Lampanelli next week.**

DG: Tell her hello! She and I got along so well. I think people on the show expected me to be more precious but on the show they edited me without showing all my manual labor so they could later [say I was] "not a team player." I was running down the street with bags and picture frames, but that was not shown. Ninety percent of it was what you see is what you get. We were stressed a lot of the time.

I won \$50,000 for Children International. They transferred a family that I sponsor that was living in the Philippines from living in a cemetery to living in an apartment with a storefront. They even taught the woman to sell her own groceries. They are now a self sustaining family.

After being a people pleaser my whole life I learned to carry through a vision you are not going to be liked. I had to drop the desire to be liked when I did that show. That saved me a lot of money in therapy!

**WCT: There is all this talk about your past dancer recently.**

DG: There was just an article about Buddy Casimano in *Newsday* that I provided some quotes for. He teaches, choreographs and trains people.

**WCT: What are you planning for the 25th anniversary of *Electric Youth*?**

DG: I will be celebrating and embracing my past while giving a new perspective to my past from where I stand now. This will be in a recording sense and possibly a TV special. I will always own it and not think of it as an image that was put on me. That was me then and this is me now.

I am working on a book. It will not be a tell all but instead about lessons I have learned to navigate life. I live in the real world. I will relate back to anecdotes that I think people will be interested in. Sometimes when you are on top of the world you may not have the best perspective.

**WCT: What advice do you give young artists just starting out?**

DG: One thing to remember is not to become a slave to the record company's itinerary. Some things might look [good] on paper but it might not be something you can actually handle. There should not be a need to be super boy or super girl.

I went through a period of anxiety attacks and a year of fatigue. It was just moving too fast. I think kids now can move a little slower because everything is Internet and gets projected. For me, I had to play clubs four nights a week to get momentum for the song to jump on the charts. Pressures are higher now though with awards shows every two weeks. When I started there were three award shows in a whole year.

I think kids should stay true to themselves. It is not a race. If you miss one opportunity the world doesn't end. If you have the goods that window will be there again.

**WCT: You are very active on social media, I noticed.**

DG: I love interacting. I find that I have generally very respectful fans. I think back to when I was on a tour bus and there was no texting. All I had was me, my sister, some backup dancers and Scattergories! That was my social life there. There was no outward reach and I was living in a bubble. It is amazing that the whole world is the bubble now.

**WCT: How do you maintain looking great?**

DG: There are like two to three years of trying to figure out on how to lose weight. My boyfriend, who goes by Dr. Rutledge, is an anti-aging doctor who has a program called *Better Than Lipo*. We actually had one of my fans do it recently. I cleaned up my diet. When I am on a performance day, I know I will be going all day



Debbie Gibson. Photo by Troy Smith

with a singular food and protein.

It is a myth to eat five times a day, and I think people overeat. You need to digest and get a little hungry again. That is what the program is all about. People need to realize they are not going to die if they get a little hungry. I am not saying to starve to lose weight, but just not to [overdo it] with food. I have become a scientist with my body and the food.

When you eat a pizza and wake up feeling bad, you don't know if it's the olives, pepperoni or the carbs! Before how I felt [involved] emotional ties to the eating and now I have a clarity.

**WCT: Have you seen any good musicals re-**

**cently?**

DG: The last thing I saw—you are going to laugh—was *Newsies* because my nephew was in it. He finished his run so I think it was in the spring. I thought it was great and heartfelt, not just because I am a proud aunt!

My nephew is like a film actor so he is so still and boys are doing backflips all around him. He was just reacting and you couldn't take your eyes off of him. I think that is fascinating because I was an overacting kid. I joke that in these Syfy movies I am projecting to the hundredth row!

**For more on Gibson, visit [debbiegibsonofficial.com](http://debbiegibsonofficial.com).**

## Lesbian series 'Nikki &amp; Nora' makes Internet debut

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

Actresses Liz Vassey and Christina Cox are stepping back into their roles as lesbian private investigators Nikki Beaumont and Nora Delaney with a seven-episode web series that recently premiered at [www.OneMoreLesbian.com/tello/](http://www.OneMoreLesbian.com/tello/).

The pair first took on the characters of Nikki and Nora in 2004 with a pilot that made the network television rounds, but was ultimately passed over. Then, in 2008, the pilot episode re-emerged on YouTube thanks to a leak, and it quickly gained a fan base that begged for more.

Fans were so eager to see more of Nikki & Nora that they shelled out \$65,000 on Indiegogo for the web series, making it the largest funded campaign with lesbian lead characters and surpassing the original funding goal by 30 percent.

"I think it's a good example of how media can be crowd sourced for niche markets," said Christin Mell, whose Chicago-based production company tello Films joined with MyHardt Productions to release the series. "You saw the fans rally around 'Veronica Mars' and Zach Braff and this is sort of our version of fans letting us know this is what we want to see and we will put money behind it."

For anyone who has seen the pilot episode, not to worry, season one of the Web series is a complete reimagining of the original pilot episode.

"We kept it in New Orleans and kept the



Nikki & Nora. Image by tello films and MyHardt Productions

names of the leads," Mell said. "We had to reimagining everything else."

In season one, titled "Music, Mayhem and Mothers," Nikki and Nora enter into the underbelly of the New Orleans music scene when they're hired to work on a case that puts them in the spotlight and the headlights: the possible murder of an up-and-coming musician. Meanwhile at home, Nikki and Nora tackle the rising tide of core family issues while their new home is in the throes of renovation.

In addition to Vassey and Cox, Jim Beaver, Tess Harper, Janina Gravankar, Armin Shimerman, Kitty Swink, Aasha Davis and Larry Poindexter also appear in the series.

Nikki & Nora is currently available at [www.OneMoreLesbian.com/tello/](http://www.OneMoreLesbian.com/tello/) via a subscription that costs \$3.99 and gives viewers access to all of the website's content.

# CALENDAR

Brought to you by the  
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WINDY CITY  
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nightspots

## Wed., Jan. 1

**Red Cup Party** Every Wednesday. Featuring DJ Cooper Thomas and tasty drink specials. 9:00pm Scarlet Bar 3320 N Halsted <http://www.scarletbarchicago.com>

**You're The Star Karaoke with Honey West** Join hostess with the mostess, Honey West for You're The Star Karaoke, 10pm in Roscoe's front bar. Take your place in the spotlight! There's not a bad seat in the house. 10:00pm Roscoe's Tavern 3356 N Halsted St <http://www.roscoes.com>

## Thursday, Jan. 2

**White Party** Minibar's weekly exclusive underground. Reserve your table with a staff member for VIP service and priority seating while the DJ provides the hottest music on Halsted all night. 9:00pm Minibar 3341 N Halsted <http://www.minibarchicago.com/#!white-party/c1zff>

**Frat Night Thursday at Scarlet** Scarlet's popular night of frat guys and their fans, with a night of 40-dawg specials, HOT bartenders, cranked-up music and hottie high jinks! 10:00pm Scarlet Bar, 3320 N Halsted St.

**We Three Lizas** Fresh from a concert at Joe's Pub in New York City with a revamped book and expanded score, last year's sparkly, queer holiday hit is back... and better than ever! Box maker Conrad Ticklebottom's life has hit a block. Once, Conrad and his purple box ignited an entire movement in art and design, but now he finds himself alone, forgotten and teetering on ruin. The holidays bring three magical figures to his door - a trio of Liza Minnelli to escort him on a fabulous journey through what-was, what-could-be and what-the-f\*?! , redeeming his lost promise and re-inventing a brand-new Conrad Ticklebottom. A quirky holiday musical tale of hope, transformation... and the power of Liza! Through Jan. 5. 7:30pm Stage 773 1225 W Belmont (773) 327-5252; <http://www.aboutface theatre.com>

**Weekend Pre-Party** Join Spin every Thursday for \$1 cocktails, wine, and beer. Featuring DJ Chester spinning the hottest music videos and dance hits! 9:00pm Spin Nightclub 800 W Belmont Ave

## Friday, Jan. 3

**Through the Leaves** Through the Leaves, written by German playwright Franz Xaver (F.X.) Kroetz, tells of the relationship between a rough, emotionally abusive laborer and a lonely middle-aged woman. 7:30pm - 8:30pm The Side Project

Theatre 1439 W Jarvis Ave <http://www.thisideproject.net> Tickets: <http://www.thisideproject.net>

**Christmas Dearest: A Joan Crawford Christmas Carol.** Hell in a Handbag is proud to introduce Chicago to a new holiday show that is sure to be a camp holiday, classic tells the tale of Hollywood superstar, Joan Crawford and the important lessons she learns one Christmas Eve. 7:30pm Mary's Attic 5400 N Clark <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/455598>

**Home Again - The Songs of Carole King** Chris Logan performs the Carole King songbook. 8:00pm - 9:30pm No Exit Cafe 6970 N Glenwood Ave <http://www.theo-u.org> Tickets: <http://www.theo-u.org>

## Saturday, Jan. 4

**Ethical Problems in Gender Identity Construction** Hyacinth Piel. Part of Lavender University LGBTQ programs, a nine-month series of LGBTQ educational programs featuring prominent scholars known nationally for their innovative research and work. Reservations online or tickets at door. Questions to publisher@windycitymediagroup.com or lkarlic@centeronhalsted.org 11:00am - 1:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Tickets: <https://community.centeronhalsted.org/lavenderuniversity>

**Welcoming the New Year with SoulCollage** The beginning of a new year brings hope for a fresh start and the energy for manifesting goals and intentions. This workshop will provide you with an opportunity to take a look at what's stirring within and a chance to give voice to those desires. Take a few hours of dedicated time to activate your inner guidance and let your creative juices flow. Contact Shari to reserve your spot today! 12:00pm - 4:00pm 4400 W. Lawrence Ave., www.soulcollage.com/finder/wc/Chicago

**CAKE Chicago - Queer Arts Showcase** Voted: Best Queer Variety Show - Chicago Reader 9:00pm - 12:00am The Red Line Tap 7006 N Glenwood Ave., <http://www.facebook.com/cakechicago>

## Sunday, Jan. 5

**Beers, Boys and Beats** Who Needs A's When You Can Get B's! Beers, Boys and Beats at Roscoe's. Beers! \$1 Miller Lite Drafts. Beers! Male Call at 5pm. Beats! Via VJ Bobby Marley 2:00pm Roscoe's Tavern 3356 N Halsted St <http://www.roscoes.com>

## Monday, Jan. 6

**HamBINGO** Join Mary's for "HamBINGO Mary's" every Monday night at 8pm downstairs in the dining room, with your host, Velocity Metropolis calling the balls. You know this ain't your church bingo! 8:00pm Hamburger Mary's 5400 N Clark <http://www.hamburgermaryschicago.com>

**State Rep. Feigenholtz to Host Roundtable for Condominium Owners** Sima Kirsch, a condo expert who draws on years of legal experience to guide owners looking for advice on settling conflicts with their associations. RSVP to sara@staterepsara.com or by phone. 6:00pm - 8:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted 773-296-4141 <http://www.staterepsara.com>

## Tuesday, Jan. 7

**Bi discussion group** Every other Tuesday we get together to chat about upcoming bisexual events, concerns, and answer each other's questions about the community. Soft drinks & water are provided by the Center, but feel free to bring anything else you'd like to share, whether it's snacks or a good book! 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

**Intersex Chicago** Intersex people physically differ from the "standard" male and female. Intersex Chicago is a safe, confidential meetup for all intersex people and their allies in the Chicago area. Meet other intersex people. Make new friends. Find out more about intersex. Explore and celebrate your difference. [intersexchicago@gmail.com](mailto:intersexchicago@gmail.com) 6:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

## Wed., Jan. 8

**Red Cup Party** Every Wednesday. Featuring DJ Cooper Thomas and tasty drink specials. 9:00pm Scarlet Bar 3320 N Halsted <http://www.scarletbarchicago.com>

**Pumped** Each Wednesday Minibar lets you spoil your self with hot entertainment and surprises around every corner. 9:00pm Minibar 3341 N Halsted St., <http://www.minibarchicago.com/#!events/c9qb>

## Thursday, Jan. 9

**Frank Lloyd Wright Trust 2014 lectures** Focus on Walter Burley Griffin, an architect and landscape designer who worked in Frank Lloyd Wright's Oak Park studio from 1901 to 1906. Christopher Vernon will present an illustrated lecture, Walter Burley Griffin, the Oak Park Studio's Landscape Architect. \$10. Register online. 6:30pm Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple 875 Lake St Oak Park, IL 60301 Tickets: <http://flwright.org/programs/vernonlecture>

**Parents of Transgender People** For decades, PFLAG has been proud to be a resource for transgender and gender non-conforming people, their families, and friends. For More Info: [parentsoftransgender@pflag.org](mailto:parentsoftransgender@pflag.org)

[gillinois.org](http://gillinois.org) 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted <http://community.pflag.org/transgender>

**Pride Films and Plays presents The Children's Hour** A revival Of Lillian Hellman's classic play of loves and lies. 8:00pm Collaboraction's Pentagon Theater, 1579 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago 800-838-3006 <http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com> Tickets: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com>

## Friday, Jan. 10

**Bible Bingo** Vicki Quade and Nuns4Fun Entertainment present a comedy about the Catholic culture of fundraising and bingo, featuring the character, Mrs. Mary Margaret O'Brien, a former nun who now heads a fictitious archdiocese fundraising department. 8:00pm Royal George Theatre 1641 N Halsted St <http://www.biblebingo.info>

**Life is a Cabaret - The Songs of Kander and Ebb** Scott Gryder performs the songs of John Kander and Fred Ebb, songwriters of such popular musicals as Cabaret, Chicago and Kiss of the Spider Woman. 8:00pm - 9:30pm No Exit Cafe 6970 N Glenwood Ave., <http://www.theo-u.org> Tickets: <http://www.theo-u.org>

## Monday, Jan. 13

**On Grace & Politics: Conversation with Anna Deavere Smith, Toni Preckwinkle** Part of Anna Deavere Smith and cellist Joshua Roman's work-in-progress play On Grace. Smith is known for her one-woman performances that meld theater, journalism and social commentary. Toni Preckwinkle is Cook County Board President. Free and open to the public. Walk-ups welcome; reservations recommended. 7:00pm Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts 915 E. 60th St Tickets: [http://www.eventbrite.com/e/on-grace-politics-a-conversation-with-anna-deavere-smith-and-toni-preckwinkle-registration-9621521229?utm\\_campaign=Anna+Deavere+Smith+PR1&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=RSVP](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/on-grace-politics-a-conversation-with-anna-deavere-smith-and-toni-preckwinkle-registration-9621521229?utm_campaign=Anna+Deavere+Smith+PR1&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=RSVP)

**Theatres: Market like a Pro** Two speakers will address both theatres and theatre professionals about marketing and website techniques for success in the theatre field. \$10. 7:00pm - 11:00pm Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood, Chicago <http://www.TheatrePros.com> Tickets: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/530226>

## Friday, Jan. 17

**DJ Rocky Horror Picture Show Film with Live Cast** WOWMUS presents THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW at 27 Live in Chicago! - Movie with Live Cast! 8:00pm - 11:45pm 27 Live 1012 Church St Evanston, IL 60201 (855) 927-5483 <http://www.27live.com>

**GayCo at Chicago Sketchfest 2014!** GayCo performs for its 12th time in the nations largest sketch festival. Featuring high-



## HOUSE CALL

### Monday, Jan. 6

**State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (above) will host a forum for condo owners at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.**

Photo by Michael Brosilow

lights from GayCo's #GodHatesHashtags, find out what will happen to the gay community after #GayMarriage and #Equality are no longer trending topics. Tickets online or by phone. 8:00pm Stage 773 1225 W Belmont 773-327-5252 Tickets: <http://www.chicagosketchfest.com>

**Finding Beauty** A one-hour solo cabaret show by Amanda Batcher, who says "this show explores the path through that darkness. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll hear songs that are old favorites and songs that may become new loves. It expresses my journey of seeing and feeling beauty in myself, other people and the world." 8:00pm No Exit Cafe 6970 N Glenwood Ave <http://www.theo-u.org> Tickets: <http://www.theo-u.org>

## Thursday, Jan. 23

**PPIA Roe v. Wade Anniversary Celebration** Planned Parenthood will be honoring Sen. Dick Durbin with the Dr. Marvin Rosner Lifetime Achievement Award and State Representative Camille Lilly with the Richard J. Phelan Profile in Courage Award. Special guests include SNL alum Jane Curtin and radio personality Loni Swain. VIP reception will be held from 5:30PM - 6:30PM with the main event beginning at 6:30PM. Tickets can be purchased at [www.ppiaction.org](http://www.ppiaction.org). 5:30pm - 9:00pm The Bottom Lounge, 1375 W. Lake St., [www.plannedparenthoodactionillinois.org/action/attendevent\\_action.php](http://www.plannedparenthoodactionillinois.org/action/attendevent_action.php); Tickets: [www.ppiaction.org/site/Calendar?id=108545&view=Detail](http://www.ppiaction.org/site/Calendar?id=108545&view=Detail)

## BOOK REVIEW

### My Brother

### My Sister

by Molly Haskell

\$26.95; Viking; 213 pages

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Mom always said you were two of a kind.

You and your favorite sibling: yin and yang, two halves of a whole. A lot of film was spent documenting your lives. A lot of memories are shared when you get together.

Once upon a time, you knew exactly what your sib was thinking—or did you? Read the new book *My Brother My Sister*, by Molly Haskell, and you might wonder.

Growing up in Richmond, Va., in the post-WWII years, Molly Haskell, her brother Chevey, and their friends enjoyed the same clubs, schools, cotillions and churches. She remembers a childhood of "privilege" and happiness.

Her brother remembers sneaking up to Haskell's closet to try on her clothes.

Of course, that was unknown to Haskell until years later, when Chevey came to her in New

York and told her that he'd decided to act on something that had vexed him for decades. Nervously, he explained that he had gender dysphoria. He'd been on hormones for months. Years ago, he'd thought of himself as "Ellen," the woman he knew he was inside.

It was something that Haskell never saw coming.

Chevey had been married twice. His first wife knew of his feelings, as did his second wife, but the latter was struggling with acceptance. So, in fact, was Haskell, though she was also curious to know the particulars.

When did Chevey know? (At age seven). How did he decide to do this? (The urge was so strong that he could do nothing else). Why did he wait 50-some years to transition? (Many reasons, including family). He likened his gender to a "birth defect." It was time to make things right.

As Chevey became Ellen, Haskell mourned the loss of her brother. When Ellen informed the rest of the family of her news, Haskell kept "waiting for the sky to fall" but nothing happened. Yes, there were slips, gaffes, hurts, and a few surprising revelations, but the world didn't end.

"Lucky for me," says Haskell, "my newly minted sister is still the magnificent human being my

brother was."

There's an awful lot of "poor me"-ing in the beginning of *My Brother My Sister*; a lot of hand-wringing from author Molly Haskell; and too much fretting about how her brother's transformation would affect her. While some readers might imagine how they'd feel in the same situation, it's pretty tedious reading here. And angsty, almost.

Thankfully, the book gets better.

Once Haskell's story gets around to acceptance, readers are treated to a more relaxing read, one of discovery (both on Haskell's part, and that of her sister), devotion, and of delight. That's the *raison d'être* of this book. What you'll find from there to the end is why you'd want to read this book in the first place.

Aside from a bumpy beginning and some surgery descriptions that are TMI overload, I thought this was a good enough book. If you, too, are curious, or if your family is dealing with these same issues, *My Brother My Sister* may be one of a kind.

Do you want more? Look for *Just Add Hormones*, by Matt Kailey; or *She's Not the Man I Married: My Life with a Transgender Husband*, by Helen Boyd.

## MY BROTHER MY SISTER

Story of a  
Transformation



MOLLY HASKELL

# Chicago Force has top local LGBT sports moment

BY ROSS FORMAN

The Chicago Force won its first-ever national championship in 2013 and truly established itself as the most dominant women's tackle football team.

"It's one thing to know that you are the best team in the country; it's another to see it all the way through," said Linda Bache, team owner. "We systematically defeated every team in our path, usually by an enormous margin. We earned this [championship]."

"I'm incredibly proud of our organization and what we've accomplished."

Bache is one of many LGBT associated with the Force—from players to front-office officials.

In fact, the 2013 Force Team MVP was Sami Grisafe and the Defensive MVP was linebacker

tion. His involvement has been critical to our success."

When asked what she and the team is planning for an encore in 2014, Bache didn't hesitate: Repeat, sweet repeat, she said.

"We have most of our roster returning, including all of our All-Americans. It took a long time to get to the mountaintop. ... We're going to try to stay here for a while," Bache said. "It felt amazing to be presented with the championship trophy and then hoist it over my head while seeing the joy on the faces of our players and coaches. The players were given the trophy for some celebratory photos and then it was put into the hands of head coach John Konecki. We're fortunate to have John; he's the best coach in the league. As much or more than the players, he earned that trophy."



The Chicago Force celebrates another win. Photo courtesy of the Force

Darcy Leslie—both out lesbians. And when the team's post-season awards were announced in the fall, the lesbian community was well represented. (See below for all of the Force post-season awards.)

The Force's national championship also carried the team to the number-one spot on the list of top 13 Chicago LGBT sports moments.

"This championship is for all the women who have ever worn a Force jersey, for all the coaches who have moved this program forward, and for every fan and sponsor that has supported us over the past 12 years. They all contributed to this," Bache said in December. "The moment that stands out most to me [from the 2013 season] is the actual post-game celebration in San Diego [after winning the national championship]. It was a long time coming and it felt cathartic and surreal. I kept thinking, 'So this is what it feels like.' There was a lot of screaming and jumping. And champagne."

The Force destroyed the Dallas Diamonds 81-34 on Aug. 3 to win the title.

"The 2013 season ranks as the high point of my football career," said Bache, a former Force defensive star, now retired. "It is the culmination of 12 years of complete and total dedication to winning a championship. I've been so focused on achieving this goal that it never occurred to me what it might feel like to actually attain it."

Bache said the Force has had "tremendous support" from the LGBT community since the team was founded in 2002. "We are so fortunate and grateful for that support," she said. "Without it, the Force would not still be in existence. Dave Gassman, the owner of SPIN Nightclub, has been a champion for the LGBT community for many years and a sponsor of the Force since its incep-

The Force capped the championship run with an on-field honor from the Chicago Cubs and co-owner Laura Ricketts, an out lesbian. Bache said the honor from the Cubs was the "icing on our championship cake and an experience that we'll never forget."

Bache said the 2014 season features the team's "most competitive regular-season schedule ever," including road games against the perennial powers Boston Militia and D.C. Divas.

"In my opinion, those are the second and third best teams in women's football, so we will have a very challenging road back to the championship," she said.

The Force is holding its 2013 championship ring party Jan. 5, 2014, at Leon's Restaurant, 1936 W. Augusta Blvd., 1-4 p.m. The public is invited (\$20 for adults, \$10 for children), and the event will feature pizza, salad, cupcakes, drinks and more.

## Honoring the Force:

Here's a look at the 2013 Chicago Force team awards, presented at the team banquet in October:

- Team MVP: Sami Grisafe, quarterback
- Offensive MVP: Jeanette Gray, wide receiver
- Defensive MVP: Darcy Leslie, linebacker
- Offensive Linemen of the Year: Jamie Menzyk and Dawn Pederson
- Defensive Linemen of the Year: Kim Marks and Angel Smith
- Special Teams Players of the Year: Taylor Malloy and Candace Griffin
- Offensive Rookie of the Year: Karlee Quaritsch, wide receiver
- Defensive Rookie of the Year: Melissa Nelson, linebacker

—Most Improved Offense: Mary Choules, running back

—Most Improved Defense: Martha Dantuma, defensive back

## Top 13 Chicago LGBT sports moments from 2013:

1. Chicago Force won the national championship.

2. Ride For AIDS Chicago surpassed \$769,000 funds raised, setting event record. Goal for 2014 Ride is set at \$1 million.

3. Former professional football player Wade Davis hosted the inaugural LGBT Youth Sports Camp at the Center on Halsted in late July. The event featured appearances by out athletes Jason Collins, Fallon Fox, Kye Allums and others.

4. Chicago Gay Hockey Association video to the popular song "All I Want For Christmas Is You" went viral, drawing more than 143,000 views on YouTube in a matter of weeks after its Thanksgiving launch.

5. The predominantly gay Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) celebrated its 35th anniversary.

6. Chicago native Chris Mosier, a trans triathlete, was named the 2013 Athlete of the Year for Compete Magazine, it was announced in mid-November.

7. Christina Kahrl, a trans sportswriter, covered her first World Series.

8. The Chicago Sky made the WNBA playoffs for the first time in team history; the Sky roster featured out player Sharnae Zoll-Norman, who attended the Chicago Pride Parade.

9. The Chicago Express captures fifth place at the annual Gay Softball World Series (C Division), held in Washington D.C.

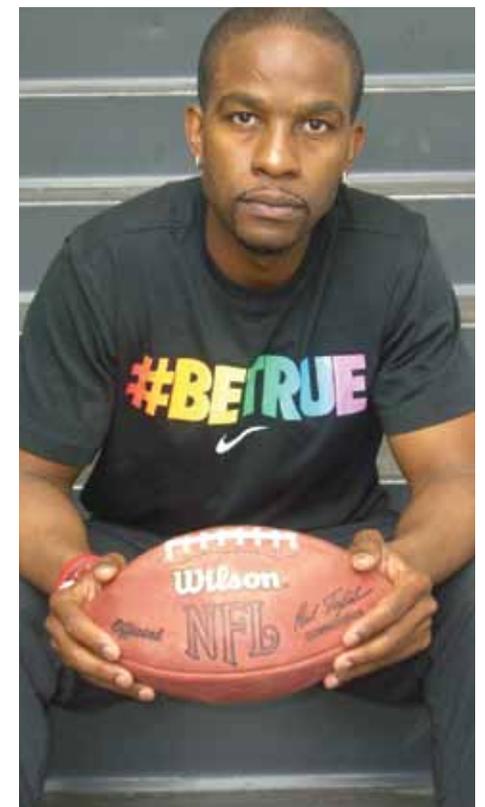
10. The first-ever all-women's team competed in a flag football tournament against men. The Chicago Diesel Daisies competed in Pride Bowl VI and were the only all-women team in this or any national gay flag football tournament. The 2013 Pride Bowl, held in Chicago in June, was the largest Pride Bowl ever with 28

teams from across North America.

11. The Chicago Replay and Chicago/San Diego Seals (comprised of half Chicago players) won their respective divisions at Pride Bowl VI. Tyler Foerster of Chicago, playing for the Seals, was named A-Division Defensive MVP.

12. The CMSA Hall of Fame inducted four newcomers: Gary Vien, Rob Burton, Maureen Sullivan/Spyners, and John Lyrla.

13. CMSA launched two new sports: Ultimate, led by Felipe Rojas; and golf, led by Mark Sakalares and Steven Solari. "The new sports were overwhelming hits, more than doubling participant projections," said CMSA President Brian Kuipersmit.



Wade Davis. Photo by Ross Forman

# Gay comedian Sampson McCormick talks new DVD and family

BY TERRI-LYNNE WALDRON

Openly gay comic Sampson McCormick will tickle funny bones on his upcoming DVD *That Bitch Better Be Funny*. This year will mark his 10th anniversary doing stand-up across the country, as well as working as a writer and activist. The award-winning comic opened up about working at Starbucks, making history and being a funny bitch.

**Windy City Times: What types of jobs did you have before doing stand-up?**

Sampson McCormick: The last job that I had was working at Starbucks and that was the absolute worst! [Laughs] It was almost like being in boot-camp because I had to get up really early in the morning to be there for 4 a.m. As soon as you get to work there is a line at the door waiting for you and you have to run in and start making coffee.

**WCT: You have a stand-up DVD entitled *That Bitch Better Be Funny* coming out in January?**

SM: The DVD will be out Jan. 29 and the show happened at the historic Howard Theater in Washington, DC. That theater has a very significant history in the Black community. There's the Apollo, there's the Howard and there's the Regal and those were the three legendary theaters in the Black community. I became the first Black, gay, male stand-up comedian to ever play a live show there.

We plan on getting *That Bitch Better Be Funny* in some film festivals—gay film festivals and regular film festivals. It's going to be on a few Internet networks—we're working to get it on Netflix—and of course people will be able to buy it.

**WCT: What was it like playing at the Howard Theater?**

SM: It was amazing! We just about sold out the place, and the Howard Theater is a concert venue.

**WCT: Tell me about your stand-up show.**

SM: My comedy is very reflective and I do poke fun at the different ironies in life and that type of thing. But it definitely deals with the lighter side of life that we deal with every day as people. Comedy has always been like a spiritual journey for me and it's definitely helped me to grow up in a lot of ways.

**WCT: Where did the title *That Bitch Better Be Funny* come from?**

SM: We put a lot of thought into the name and we wanted it to be something kind of edgy. This show was at the Howard Theater and it required a different marketing strategy and energy. Money is a little tighter for people these days and the value of money is what kind of drove us to name this show and also the quality of work that I present to the public. People work 40, 50 and 60 hours a week and they really value their time and their money. People were at the box office saying, "And the tickets cost how much? Ok, this bitch better be funny."

**WCT: Did you know as a young boy that you were funny?**

SM: Not really. When I first started I was about 16 and I was a senior in high school and I had always been a smart aleck and I never got in trouble in school for fighting, but I got in trouble for making the class laugh. My 12th grade English teacher told me that if I didn't get on-stage that he would fail me.

**WCT: What was your mother's reaction to**



Sampson McCormick. Photo from McCormick's website.

**you doing stand-up?**

SM: She found out that I was going to perform at a nightclub and she didn't want me going out because I was 16 or 17 at that time. This was back in DC when there was a lot of crime so of course she was worried as a mother. She would tell me that I couldn't go and I would have to be in the house by a certain time and I would sneak out of the house. So she started putting the chain lock on the door.

**WCT: What about negative reaction from people?**

SM: As I am an openly gay stand-up comic I get hate mail from people—like crazy Chris-

tians—and there are people who tweet me crazy things.

**WCT: You are also an activist crusading against homophobia, poverty and youth homelessness.**

SM: Humor has been such a healing thing for me and a lot of people always say that laughter is the best medicine for a lot of things. I really believe that it is and I also believe that because of the things that I've experienced—that being in places where you can use humor to disarm people—it opens up the ability to reason about things without acting crazy.

**That Bitch Better Be Funny will be released on DVD on Jan. 29. To find out more about Sampson, visit [www.sampsoncomedy.com](http://www.sampsoncomedy.com).**

## Bull riders stop in Chicago Jan. 11-12

For the second year in a row, the Professional Bull Riders tour will stop in the Windy City, with its elite Built Ford Tough Series slated for Jan. 11-12 at the Allstate Arena.

The event will take place Saturday, Jan. 11, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 12, at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$20-\$125; they're on sale at the Allstate Arena box office, [www.Ticketmaster.com](http://www.Ticketmaster.com) and 800-745-3000. For more information, visit [www.pbr.com](http://www.pbr.com).

## Emanuel asks for more Divvy sites

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Divvy, Chicago's bike-share system, launched a new website to solicit suggestions and feedback from Chicagoans on the locations for the 175 new Divvy stations scheduled to be added to the system in 2014.

On the website [suggest.divvybikes.com](http://suggest.divvybikes.com), Chicagoans can make suggestions.



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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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STEVEN SANCHEZ MAKES HISTORY AS TRANS HOMECOMING QUEEN  
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# CAPITOL GAINS Thousands estimated at march

Windy City Times' special coverage of The March On Springfield For Marriage Equality

page 15-22

Photo by Tim Carroll Photography



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