

**ROBIN ROBERTS,
SAM CHAMPION
AMONG GAY
BROADCAST
JOURNALISTS**

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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**PFLAG MOM
MARILYN
KELLER DIES**
PAGES 8

In the fight

*Transgender mixed martial-arts fighter
continues to break barriers*

Fallon Fox, the first openly transgender athlete in MMA (mixed martial arts) history, came out publicly March 5, 2013. She has been fighting in and out of the cage, and still continues her battle while also fighting off the grips of Father Time. She is a mother of one teenage daughter and now dating Amy Pierson.

Fox has been living in the Chicago area—now, the northwest suburbs—for eight years, coming to the Windy City to escape gender issues within her family. Fox spoke exclusively with Windy City Times' reporter Ross Forman to discuss her battles in and out of the cage, her long-term goals to aid the LGBT community, and more.

BY ROSS FORMAN

Fallon Fox was at a crowded sports bar in the Chicago area on Dec. 28, 2013, among a throng of vocal, dedicated Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) fans, many anxiously waiting for that Saturday night's women's bantamweight championship bout when Ronda Rousey faced archival Miesha Tate in the co-main event of UFC 168, held at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

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Fallon Fox. Photo courtesy of Fox



**COUPLE RUNS
CAREER BOOT
CAMP**
PAGE 9



**'UNDER A
RAINBOW FLAG'
AMONG THEATER
HIGHLIGHTS OF
2013**
PAGE 15



Bradley Setter. Photo by Patrick McLennand

Former Marine is leading gay college activist

BY ROSS FORMAN

Bradley Setter was at the end of his rope. He had endured all he could while in the U.S. Marine Corps while trying to silence rumors that he was gay in 2010 during the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" era. He even faced death threats.

"I was so depressed that I was tying a noose to no longer feel the pain of my internal battles," Setter admitted. "I remember, I did a Google search to find the correct way to tie that noose."

But as fate had it, while researching a chosen suicide option, Setter spotted an ad that truly changed his life. It said: Never let go of the things you love so much for they will keep you alive.

"My thoughts came to my family and everything they have ever made me to be," Setter said. "One thing they never taught was quitting and letting go. As I laid there, crying, I made a promise to myself to be a positive inspiration for those in need."

A few months later, Setter was honorably discharged—and within a month, he came out to his mom, and then his entire family.

Setter told his mom that he is gay—or more specifically, gender non-conforming/queer, which

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Images on cover (left, from top): Photo of Robin Roberts and Sam Champion by Ida Mae Astute/ABC; photo of Marilyn Keller by Hal Baim; photo of Cathy Cullen and Jody Michael from Jody Michael Associates; photo from Under a Rainbow Flag from David Zak



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CLOWNIN' AROUND

WCT reviews the theatrical production *Clown Car of Desire* (left) and shows pics from Redmoon Theatre's "Revolution" party. Photo from *The Second City* e.t.c.



Activist Marc Loveless has written an op-ed about justice for his late son, Nathan (above). Photo from Marc Loveless



WCT got the 'Truth' from Sean Paul Lockhart (left) and Rob Moretti about their new film. Photo by Jerry Nunn

POP LIFE

Pop Making Sense looks at the highs and lows in music last year.

THE 'CHOZEN' ONE

Executive director Tom Brady provides the 411 on *Chosen*, the FX series about a gay white rapper.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Find out the latest about Ricky Martin, Thomas Roberts and the show *Wicked*.

plus DAILY BREAKING NEWS

'KAM'-DO ATTITUDE



WCT's Q List continues with Ryan Logan, who talks about directing the Web series *Kam Kardashian* (with star Fawzia Mirza, right). Photo by Joe Mazza

Mitchell looks into 2014... and beyond!



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Cultural Q's

BY FRANCESCA ROYSTER



Hearts, Minds, Laws and Art: Mandela's legacy

With Nelson Mandela's death Dec. 5, 2013, we are reminded of the radical vision of his activism, bringing together grassroots protest with international diplomacy; structures for both reconciliation and accountability for the ongoing healing of his nation. His commitment to LGBTQI rights made him a hero to the global LGBTQI rights movement.

At least on paper, South Africa has been the dramatic exception to the rule of government-led intolerance to LGBTQI activism and sexuality elsewhere on the African continent and globally. In contrast, in December of 2013, just weeks after Mandela's death, the Ugandan Parliament

the image of the boy with raised hands in front of a Nazi soldier in a Warsaw ghetto, one of the most famous images from the Holocaust; Jet Magazine's photograph of Emmett Till's destroyed body, taken during his funeral here in Chicago; the photograph of Elizabeth Eckford, one of the Little Rock Nine, walking the gauntlet of jeering white students and adults.

South African photographer, documentary filmmaker and activist Zanele Muholi has used her camera to document the lives of Black lesbians and transgender people living in this state of contradiction between laws and practice in South Africa. She was born in Durban in 1972, just four

years before the Soweto student uprising in 1976. In her book *Faces and Phases*, she uses portraiture to document hate crime's effects on body and spirit, the sustaining power of friendship and family networks, and the funky, resistant aesthetics of South African queer style.

In one portrait, Tumi Mokgosi, from Yeoville, Johannesburg, looks at us with her

"I believe that art has the power to change the quality of everyday life in a way that laws alone can't. It can speak across continents, classes and sexualities."

passed a bill imposing life imprisonment for homosexual acts. This decision echoes recent anti-gay legislative measures in India and Russia, among others.

South Africa's Constitution, in its attention to LGBTQI rights surpasses that of many other nations, including the United States. In 1996, during Mandela's presidency, after the fall of apartheid, South Africa became the first in the world to have an explicit constitutional ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation. In 2006, South Africa became the only country on the African continent and the fifth in the world to legalize same-sex marriage.

Yet the continued violence that haunts the everyday lives of lesbians, gays and transpeople reflects deep contradiction between its progressive laws and deep social change. "As LGBTQ people living in a township we are not really enjoying these rights and privileges in the constitution," said Phindi Malaza, activist from the Forum for the Empowerment of Women, the only all-Black lesbian and transgender community organization on the continent. This violence, including harassment, assault, rape and murder, often targets non-gender conforming women and trans people. In the past year in South Africa, there have been at least seven murders in what appear to be homophobic attacks.

I believe that art has the power to change the quality of everyday life in a way that laws alone can't. It can speak across continents, classes and sexualities. Taking the particular example of photography, we might consider the powerful impact of icons that that have changed the ways that we think of our humanity:

playfully resistant gaze, her half-smile less Mona Lisa than Rihanna. She is wearing a fur stole and her arms are crossed around her, both protective and defiant. The shanties of her township are a blur behind her. In another, Gazi Zuma of Durban, stands in clean white polo shirt against a plain cement wall. The light hits their skin to reveal the strong planes of their face, and the study of light and shadow of closely cropped hair. We might read them as butch, or as transgender. They are wearing a badge whose letters we can't quite read and we are made aware of the multiple selves that might not be revealed by this photo: sister, brother, lover, worker, fighter?

In her book's preface, Muholi challenges the audience: "Is this lesbian more 'authentic' than that lesbian because she wears a tie and the other does not? Is this a man or a woman? Is this a trans man? Can you identify a rape survivor by the clothes she wears?" In the process, she hopes to undo the erasure of Black lesbians and transgender people from South Africa's history of revolutionary movements. (Muholi's documentary *Difficult Love* (2010), a powerful intimate look at the challenges facing South African lesbians, gays, intersex and transgender people, can be viewed for free at <http://www.imdb.com/video/wab/vi3128728089>).

Nelson Mandela famously said, "to deny a people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity." While we might hear this as a call to laws, we might also hear it as a call to art. The power of photographs like Zanele Muholi's is to help us realize that our own humanity is deeply tied to one another.

Francesca Royster is a Professor of English at DePaul University, where she teaches courses on Shakespeare, Popular Culture, gender, race, sexuality and performance. Her books include *Sounding Like a No-No: Queer Sounds and Eccentric Acts in the Post-Soul Era* (University of Michigan Press, 2013) and *Becoming Cleopatra: The Shifting Image of an Icon* (Palgrave, 2003).

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NEXT LECTURE



SAT., FEB. 1, 2014, 11AM-1PM

BETH RICHIE

Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation

Beth E. Richie, PhD is an anti-violence activist and author working in several social justice movements. She is a Professor and Director of the Institute For Research on Race and Public Policy at UIC. This lecture will focus on the

ways that the prison industrial complex has served to exacerbate violence against Black women. The emphasis will be on intimate partner abuse as well as systematic violence and the role that race, class, gender, sexuality and other markers of social disadvantage put people in the path of the punishment industry. It will include the redemptive possibility of prison abolition as philosophical and practical solution.

UPCOMING LECTURES

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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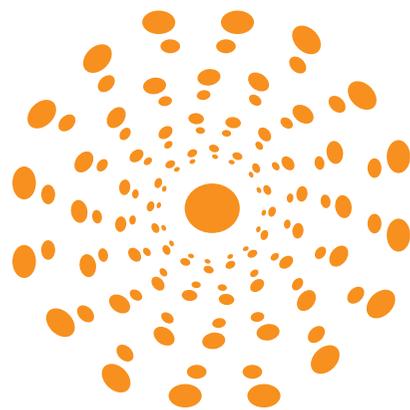
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OUT

on the air



When Robin Roberts came out recently, she joined a small but expanding group of nationally known broadcast journalists who are openly gay or lesbian. Get to know the other members of the club.



Jenna Wolfe

In a special segment for Today that was followed by a blog post on their website, Wolfe revealed last year that she was pregnant and partnered with a longtime girlfriend who is also a journalist with NBC, foreign news correspondent Stephanie Gosk. On Aug. 21, Wolfe gave birth to a baby girl, Harper Estelle Wolfeld Gosk.

Facebook photo



Thomas Roberts

Roberts has been a ubiquitous presence on MSNBC and NBC, and he recently took over the MSNBC show Way Too Early, eight months after the channel named Brian Shactman as the show's anchor. Last year, Roberts co-hosted the Miss Universe pageant in Moscow—and spoke out against Russia's anti-gay propaganda law.

Photo by Kat Fitzgerald
(www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)

Don Lemon

The outspoken CNN anchor officially came out in 2011. In an interview with Windy City Times (www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Don-Lemon-CNN-anchor-on-race-coming-out/34082.html), Lemon talked about everything from the "black box" (how African-Americans are boxed in by stereotypes) to not seeing himself as an activist ("I see myself just as a normal person who is an 'accidental role model.'")

Official headshot



Rachel Maddow

Maddow—who came out in an interview with the campus newspaper as a freshman at Stanford University—is the host of The Rachel Maddow Show, one of MSNBC's highest-rated shows. She is also the author of Drift: The Unmooring of American Military Power, published by Crown in 2012.

Photo by Raymond D. Smith



Sam Champion

The openly gay meteorologist is best known for his stint on Good Morning America, but is now on The Weather Channel. He married Rubem Robierb last year.

Champion (right) weds his partner Rubem Robierb in 2013. Photo by Ida Mae Astute/ABC

LZ Granderson

The ESPN writer has won a GLAAD media award for online journalism, but LZ Granderson is probably best known for his opinions on everything from the Trayvon Martin case to President Obama's re-election as a regular contributor on CNN.

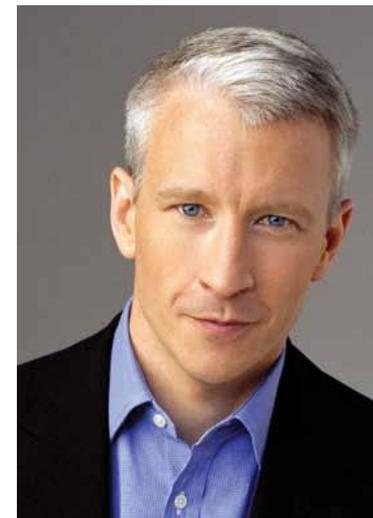
Photo by Hal Baim



Anderson Cooper

Cooper—the son of Gloria Vanderbilt and the host of CNN's Anderson Cooper 360—came out in an email that openly gay journalist Andrew Sullivan unveiled on a July 2 posting of his blog on The Daily Beast.

Official headshot



Stephanie Miller

On her official website, Miller describes herself as "coming to the left, from the right." She's the daughter of William Miller, running mate to 1964 Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. Miller, who came out as lesbian in 2010, hosts the progressive radio program The Stephanie Miller Show.

Photo courtesy of Miller



Jane Velez-Mitchell

The openly lesbian Velez-Mitchell hosts CNN's Issues with Jane Velez-Mitchell, a talk show on CNN sister network HLN. Velez-Mitchell, who has chronicled her battle with alcoholism, has authored several books on her journey to sobriety and happiness, including Addict Nation: An Intervention for America.

Photo by Toky Photography



Read more on Robin Roberts' coming-out story on page 16.

Photo of Robin Roberts (left, with Sam Champion, Ruben Robierb, Lara Spencer and Josh Elliott) by Ida Mae Astute/ABC

U.S. Supreme Court grants Utah's stay

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The full U.S. Supreme Court granted Utah a stay on a district court decision that has allowed same-sex couples to marry there since Dec. 20, 2013.

The court issued its stay Jan. 6, apparently after Justice Sonia Sotomayor referred the matter to the full court. Sotomayor is the justice designated to administer requests for emergency stays for the Tenth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals, but had the option to ask the full court to weigh in on the request.

It takes at least five justices to grant such a stay. The order issued does not indicate that any justice was in dissent. It states simply that the stay is granted and that the Dec. 20 order by U.S. District Court that prohibited Utah from enforcing its ban is "stayed pending final disposition" of the appeal of that decision to the Tenth Circuit. Given the Tenth Circuit's briefing schedule for the appeal, that means the ban will be in force for at least three months and likely longer, given anticipated appeals of whatever the Tenth Circuit decides.

Tomsic and James Magleby—with the private law firm of Magleby & Greenwood, which is representing same-sex couples in the case—issued a statement following the Supreme Court's announcement, noting that it is "not unusual" for the court to stay a decision declaring a state law unconstitutional pending appeal and has "no bearing on who will win on appeal."

LGBT legal activists agreed.

"No one should draw any negative inferences about where the Court is leaning. This is an unprecedented situation," said Shannon Minter, legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights, which has several marriage equality lawsuits pending now, too. "Never before has a federal court struck down a state marriage law and then declined to stay it, and never before has a Court of Appeals also declined to issue a stay. For those reasons, the chances that the Supreme Court would issue a stay until the appeal is re-

solved were always quite high, so the real news here is that so many marriages were able to take place. And it is significant that the Court did not rush to act. There is nothing unusual about the issuance of a stay when a federal court strikes down a state law on federal grounds. "Bottom line," said Minter, "[is] the prospects for this case still look very bright. And there will never be any going back in Utah."

The challenge to Utah's ban (the state constitutional Amendment 3 and related statutes), *Kitchen v. Herbert*, now proceeds as *Herbert v. Kitchen* on an expedited schedule before the Tenth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. The next briefing date—according to attorney Peggy Tomsic, who is part of the team representing same-sex couples—is Jan. 27. The last brief due before oral argument is Feb. 25. The court date has not yet been announced but the next argument session after that deadline is March 17-21.

The Deseret News reports that more than 900 same-sex couples married since Dec. 20, when District Judge Robert Shelby, an Obama appointee, issued a 53-page opinion, striking down Utah's ban violates the U.S. Constitutional guarantees of equal protection and due process. Shelby immediately enjoined the state from enforcing its ban, then denied the state's request for a stay of his decision pending appeal. The state took its request for an emergency stay to the Tenth Circuit, where it also filed an appeal of Shelby's decision. Two judges of the Tenth Circuit—one an appointee of President George W. Bush, the other an appointee of President Obama—denied the request for a stay on Dec. 24 but put the appeal on an expedited schedule.

"This stay is obviously disappointing for the families in Utah who need the protection of marriage and now have to wait to get married until the appeal is over," said Magleby. "Every day that goes by, same-sex couples and their children are being harmed by not being able to marry and be treated equally."

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Charlie Crist delivers apology

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

In an extraordinary interview, former Florida Republican Gov. Charlie Crist apologized last month for having supported efforts to ban same-sex marriage on the ballot in that state in 2008.

"I'm sorry I did that. It was a mistake. I was wrong. Please forgive," said Crist in an interview with Watermark, an LGBT news organization in Florida.

Crist was the Republican governor of Florida from 2007 to 2011. Crist is currently running for the Democratic nomination for governor, saying that his former political party "went nuts."

But Watermark publisher Tom Dyer, who conducted the interview Dec. 17, 2013, didn't let Crist off the hook. He noted Crist also supported limiting marriage to heterosexual couples when Crist ran for senator in 2006 and that he expressed a belief that children who need to be adopted would be best off in "traditional" heterosexual homes.

"When you look back at the circumstances, one could come to the conclusion that your shifts in opinion were either politically expedient..." said Dyer.

"They were. They were. And it was wrong," said Crist, interrupting. "That's what I'm telling you. And I'm sorry."

Nadine Smith, chief executive officer of Equality Florida, said she was "glad to see someone who has done harm publicly pledge to work to repair the damage."

"My activism is based on the premise that people can and do change," said Smith, who

has been an LGBT activist for many years. "I'm particularly proud of Tom Dyer the publisher of Watermark for pulling no punches and really zeroing in on the issues. He asked the questions that needed to be asked and that we deserved to have publicly and thoroughly answered. I can't recall the last time I've heard a politician say 'I was wrong. I am sorry.'"

Crist told Dyer his earlier positions were "examples of me trying to be a good Republican."

"I couldn't do it anymore and I'm sorry I did," said Crist. "I made a mistake. I'm not perfect...please don't hold me to that standard. And I'm sincerely sorry. I understand when it's necessary to say I was wrong."

"Can you convince us that your present views aren't once again driven by political expediency?" asked Dyer. "Can you convince us that the positions you've recently expressed are heartfelt, and something we can count on in the future?"

"I just did," said Crist. "There will be doubters, and they have a right to that. But I ask that they have a little faith." Crist likened his change of position on same-sex marriage to that of President Obama, who famously evolved from supporting only civil unions to supporting marriage for same-sex couples.

Crist said he has urged a state representative who is sponsoring a bill to create a domestic partnership registry in Florida to "go for marriage."

A poll of 1,000 likely voters in late November showed Crist with a slight lead over incumbent Republican Governor Rick Scott, but that lead has diminished over the past from, from a high of 16 points last March, to only four points in November.

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Gay philanthropist Robert Wilson commits suicide

Robert W. Wilson—an openly gay retired hedge-fund founder who became a major philanthropist, donating about \$600 million to causes that included environmental conservation, the American Civil Liberties Union and Roman Catholic education (although he was an atheist)—died Dec. 22, 2013, in Manhattan at age 87, according to The New York Times.

Wilson was found dead in an inner courtyard of the San Remo building on Central Park West. Authorities said he left a note indicating that he had leapt to his death.

Wilson earned a fortune in the stock market as the founding partner of a hedge-fund firm Wilson & Associates.

The Nature Conservancy, the Environmental Defense Fund, the Wildlife Conservation Society and the World Monuments Fund were among the recipients of Wilson's earliest and largest donations. In 2007, Mr. Wilson began giving money to the Catholic school system of the Archdiocese of New York.

Ind. court: Gay-marriage ban cannot void trans marriage

The Indiana Court of Appeals ruled that the state's law banning same-sex marriage cannot be used to invalidate a marriage if one spouse later changes his or her gender identity, according to LGBTQ Nation.

The ruling stems from a divorce case involving David Paul Summers and Angela Summers, who married in Indiana's Brown County on Oct. 30, 1999. David Summers was diagnosed with gender dysphoria, and legally changed his name to Melanie Davis in 2005. Davis and Angela Summers separated in 2008, and Davis filed for divorce in 2012.

However, Monroe Circuit Judge Valeri Haughton rejected the divorce petition, saying the marriage was automatically invalidated when Davis' birth certificate was changed, making it a same-sex marriage—which Indiana does not allow.

But the appeals court's decision makes the marriage valid; the court ruled the marriage must be dissolved through traditional means.

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Lawmakers meet in Lakeview about concealed carry

BY MATT SIMONETTE

State lawmakers held a panel Dec. 30 at 19th district police headquarters, 850 W. Addison, to discuss HB 183, the state's concealed carry law, with business owners and community members.

State Reps. Sara Feigenholtz and Ann Williams took part in the discussion, as did Senate President John Cullerton.

All three representatives acknowledged that the upcoming legislation is cumbersome and unwieldy, especially in terms of delineating where firearms may or may not be taken. But Cullerton explained that the law came about under hurried circumstances.

In Dec. 2012, a federal appeals court struck down the state's ban on carrying concealed weapons. Illinois—the last state without a concealed-carry law—was given 180 days to put a law regulating concealed firearms into place, or risk having the ban end without there being any regulation whatsoever. The bill passed last July.

Without the bill, Cullerton said, "Illinois would be like the Wild West."

He added that the resulting legislation was a compromise involving gun control interest groups as well as the National Rifle Association. "There are parts of it I don't like and that I'm certainly interested in changing," Cullerton said.

Williams reminded the audience that Illinois has not only dense urban areas but numerous rural areas as well, and myriad residents with differing attitudes about firearms.

"It was a real challenge to craft a bill that would take into account public safety and the needs of the very diverse parts of our state," Williams said.

Property owners are responsible for determining whether guns are permitted in a business, not the business owner if they are leasing their space. Glenn Keefer, owner of Keefer's Restaurant, 20 W. Kinzie Ave., and a member of the board of the Illinois Restaurant Association, said that he initially had an addendum attached to his lease to ensure that a "no guns" policy was on the books for his restaurant.

The Chicago City Council voted to ban firearms in restaurants in September, but the new law is complicated for eating establishments in other

parts of the state, Keefer added.

"If your sales of alcohol represent greater than 50 percent of your overall sales, guns are not permitted," Keefer said. "If sales of alcohol are less than 50 percent of your overall sales, guns are permitted, unless the sign is posted."

But revenues are not a proper gauge for measuring overall alcohol consumption in a restaurant, according to Keefer. Fine dining establishments might charge higher prices for menu items, so food might account for a high percentage of total sales no matter how much liquor is consumed there.

Keefer drew both support and ire when he hung the sign at his restaurant, but had no regrets. "I see what happens when people drink. I don't think guns and alcohol go together," he said.

Williams said more common-sense tenets needed to be put in place in the legislation, while Feigenholtz added that the law, as it stands, "is arbitrary for the responsible gun owner" as well.

One audience member asked why a person carrying a concealed weapon, who can pass the required training and background checks, should be subject to the discretion of a business owner. Williams answered that the background checking mechanisms in place in the state are already overtaxed and often unreliable. Keefer added that the owner, by virtue of having invested "thousands, even millions," in their business, should have the final say.

Most of the participants said the upcoming months will see a number of complicated legal scenarios play out as the law takes effect. Colleen Daley, executive director of Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence, said to expect further challenges about the law's validity as well. "Our concern is if the NRA wants to come back year after year after year, and start chipping away at all these places, which is what they've done in every other state in which they've had the law."

Also taking part in the panel was Assistant State's Attorney Brandon Neme. Among those in the audience was Mark Thompson, owner of The Alley, 3228 N. Clark St., as well as Taboo Tabou, 854 W. Belmont Ave. Thompson formally announced in October that he will be running against Tom Tunney to be 44th ward alderman.

HB 183 can be found here: <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocTypeID=HB&DocNum=183&GAID=12&SessionID=85&LegID=69231>

Schock shuts down Instagram account

Illinois Congressman Aaron Schock (R) closed down his Instagram account Jan. 4 after a number of Internet sources fueled more speculation about his sexuality, towleroad.com reported.

Itay Hod, a journalist for CBS Newspath, posted a long entry Jan. 3 on his personal Facebook page that asked, "What if you knew a certain GOP congressman, let's just say from Illinois, is gay...[?]" Hod goes on to imply that anecdotes had confirmed longtime rumors about that congressman's sexuality and laments that the mainstream media cannot report on them because of a taboo against outing.

That same day, Queerty.com said that the subject of the post was Schock. Previously, Americablog.com had posted an entry entitled, "The 7 gayest Aaron Schock Instagram posts of 2013."

Schock, the youngest member of Congress, has long denied rumors about being gay, and has been a vigorous opponent of LGBT rights. Human Rights Campaign gave him a zero-percent rating.



Marilyn Keller (center) with children Irwin and Lynn. Photo from Irwin Keller

PFLAG mother Marilyn Keller dies

PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) matriarch Marilyn Keller died Dec. 30, 2013, several weeks after suffering a stroke while visiting California to celebrate her 85th birthday.

For decades, Keller was among the most consistent and visible PFLAG activists working for LGBT equality in Illinois.

More than 100 people attended a funeral service Jan. 3 at Chicago Jewish Funerals in Skokie.

Marilyn Keller was a lifelong Chicagoan, raised in Logan Square and moving in Niles in the 1950s. But the 10 miles from city to suburb are nothing in comparison to her journey as the mother of two gay children.

In 1976 her daughter, Lynn, called from college to say she was a lesbian. Marilyn and her husband, Jerry, encouraged Lynn to seek psychiatric counseling before it was "too late." Then in the early 1980s their son, Irwin, came out to them. This was a painful period for them. They were now two for two, and they knew that something had to give.

They worked up the nerve to visit Chicago PFLAG and, more remarkable, they went back. Marilyn joined a "Mothers of Gays" subgroup of mostly Jewish women, meeting monthly in Skokie. Things began to change. With these women with whom she shared something unusual and meaningful, she began to put down roots in the LGBT movement and to flourish there.

In 1991, the Kellers' synagogue approached them about starting a PFLAG chapter there. They agreed and Glenview PFLAG was born. More than 20 years later, the chapter (now in Deerfield) continues to thrive, serving a new generation of parents.

"PFLAG Glenview was an instrumental component in the spread of Gay-Straight Alliances throughout the Chicago suburban schools in the 1990s and 2000s," said Toni Armstrong

Jr., former youth leadership development and scholarship coordinator with Chicago's chapter of GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network). "And having the unfailing support of the Kellers was a real driver. Certainly at schools like Maine East—where both of their children went to high school—it helped immensely to have parental support. Marilyn in particular helped secure funding for Maine East to sponsor dances where kids from all Chicagoland GSAs could attend. There's simply no counting how many young people's—and LGBT teachers'—lives she changed for the better."

Marilyn, on her own since Jerry's death in 2000, became equally comfortable presiding over a meeting, assembling a newsletter, collecting donations in gay bars and knocking on legislators' doors in Springfield.

Marilyn grew up in an extended family that organized itself around charitable work—for her, working to improve the world was simply what families did. It was how you cemented your connections and expressed your love. Marilyn grew to realize that her children faced injustice and this became her life mission. Being an activist (and surrogate mom to countless LGBT Chicagoans) is how she expressed her love for her children, and how she created family wherever she goes.

Marilyn was among the mothers featured in the 2012 Windy City Times book MOM: A Tribute to Mothers of LGBTs, pictured with her children, Irwin and Lynn Keller.

In addition to Lynn and Irwin, she was mother-in-law to Oren Slozberg, and "mother-out-law" of Anne and Suegee Tamar-Mattis, and grandmother of Squid and Ari Tamar-Mattis.

Contributions in her memory can be sent to PFLAG-Deerfield, 1201 Lake Cook Rd., Deerfield, Ill., 60015. Mark the check "Marilyn Keller Fund."

Towleroad's article is at: <http://www.towleroad.com/2014/01/gop-congressman-aaron-schock-locks-down-instagram-account-amid-gay-rumors.html>.

Queerty's article is at: <http://www.queerty.com/noted-cbs-journalist-itay-hod-pretty-much-just-outed-homophobic-gop-rep-aaron-schock-20140103>.

Americablog's article is at: <http://americablog.com/2014/01/7-gayest-aaron-schock-instagram-posts-2013.html>.

Hod's Facebook posting is at: <https://m.facebook.com/iamitayhod/posts/10153719602440624>.

Affinity hosting Burning Bowl Jan. 11

The group Affinity is hosting its annual Burning Bowl Saturday, Jan. 11, on the fourth floor of the Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS), 1407 E. 60th St.

The running time for the program and fellowship meal is 1:30-3:30 p.m. Doors open at 1 p.m. Nearly 300 people are expected to attend.

Burning Bowl is a longstanding Affinity tradition that involves, among other things, purging the previous year's challenges and negativity.

See www.affinity95.org.

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Couple starts career boot-camp program

BY KATE SOSIN

A lot has changed about the way people get and keep jobs in the last 20 years. But certain things have remained constant.

Chief among them? People who are happier in their jobs tend to do better in them. And the vast majority of people are not happy in their jobs.

The number is 70 percent, according to Jody Michael.

The licensed life coach and career counselor has been helping people sort through their deep-seated dreams ever since she left her own unhappy career path and started fresh nearly two decades ago.

But new starts can be costly—\$4,000-5,000 if you're working with Michael, and that always bothered her.

"It's get very tiring and painful to turn people away that really need the services all the time," said Michael. "It's very expensive to do this in our firm one-on-one with individuals."

So when Michael stumbled on a way to offer coaching for 20 percent of her price, she and her partner of 18 years, Cathy Cullen, set to work.

The result is Career Cheetah—a computer-based boot camp that aims to put clients on their happiest professional path in three weeks. The program works much like Michael's own coaching practice. The benefit, says Michael, is that it costs a fifth of usual price.

Michael had the unexpected idea for Career Cheetah at a conference in May when she saw a speaker that inspired her, she said.

It was out of character for Michael to participate in a presentation, but when the speaker asked for a volunteer, Michael's hand shot up.

"I had no idea why I was going up on stage," Michael said.

The presenter gave Michael three minutes to pitch the company that she wanted to build. There was no company that Michael had in mind. She already had Jody Michael Associates, her successful career and life coaching practice.

So, without knowing where exactly she was going, Michael started to talk.

"I started to talk to the audience about this idea that I had that I wanted to bring to the masses, that I wanted to become a resource for people in an area that I think brings more pain than just about anything else," Michael said. "Seventy percent of American workers hate their jobs. Let's just start there. The amount of anxiety and suffering and pain that comes from that, I wanted to be a solution to that on a much bigger scale than I ever have been able to do one-on-one, and that's where the idea came from."

Michael pitched what would become the foundation for Career Cheetah, and she brought that idea home to Cullen, a software consultant of 30 years. They decided to give it a try.

The two were in the early stages of building Career Cheetah when they heard about Chicago



Cathy Cullen (left) and Jody Michael. Photo courtesy of Jody Michael Associates

Lean Startup Challenge, an entrepreneurial competition that would leave them with just 10 weeks to build their company. It was the rocket fuel they needed, said Michael. The two worked feverishly over the summer, sacrificing their social lives to make the company happen. The idea is now a finalist in the competition.

Cullen had taken Michael's career coaching process and translated it for the computer.

Cullen, Michael and team designed a workshop-model boot camp that would take place over three weeks, bookended by two in-person sessions. The in-person sessions focus on information entry for the Career Cheetah computer program. The three weeks in-between are devoted to career research. At the end of the course, a client should walk out knowing what their dream job would be. They also have the option of sticking around at Jody Michael Associates to work on making that career happen.

The benefit, said Michael, is that Career Cheetah can take months off the career coaching process and costs thousands of dollars less. The base price for the program is \$995, a fifth of Michael's typical price. And Michael hopes that as the company grows and innovates, she can bring that cost down further. In the meantime, she said, Career Cheetah offers payment plans for potential clients.

However, Michael and Cullen also want to move the new company beyond the traditional

career coaching market. The two want to bring the program to colleges and universities, targeting young people before they declare majors and set out on career paths that might end unhappily.

"We want to get systemically to the problem before it becomes a problem," said Michael.

Young people, said Michael, are often easier to help. They tend to pick careers that will make them happiest early on, free of the anxiety and confusion that adult job seekers carry after college and jobs start to weigh them down.

Cullen and Michael also have plans to expand the company beyond their Chicago base. The two want to put the program online by the end of 2014, allowing clients from all over the country to go through the boot camp. That will likely happen via video workshop, Michael said.

Before starting Career Cheetah, Cullen and Michael researched job seeking trends and found that people used two strategies.

"I think that 99 out of 100 and some people said that they were figuring it out by asking friends and family and looking on job boards," said Michael. Those, she added, are two of the least effective strategies. The answer, she said is internal, not external. That concept has remained true, Michael said, no matter what form her coaching takes.

More information is available at <http://careercheetah.net>.

Hydrate temporarily closed for repairs

Boystown nightclub Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St., closed Jan. 5 for significant remodeling, ChicagoPride.com noted.

"As we continue to bring new entertainment options to North Halsted, it's the perfect time to recreate Hydrate and celebrate the New Year with a fresh destination on the block to serve the gay community in 2014," said club owner Mark Liberson. Liberson also owns adjacent bars Elixir Lounge, Replay Beer & Bourbon, and Halsted's Bar and Grill.

Regarding when the renovation will be completed, Liberson messaged Windy City Times, "In February—we shall see!!"

Hydrate opened over Pride Weekend 2003, replacing Manhole. In 2010, Hydrate held "BACK Into The Manhole: A Manhole RE-UNION," with some former Manhole employees.

—Andrew Davis

Broadway Youth Center to have zoning hearing

Broadway Youth Center is scheduled for a hearing in front of the Zoning Court of Appeals Jan. 17.

The youth facility is appealing a zoning decision that said they have to leave their current location at Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ, 615 W. Wellington Ave, where they moved in 2013. Ald. Tom Tunney is expected to give his recommendation on BYC at that time.

The hearing will be at 9 a.m. at 121 N. LaSalle St., Rm. 200.

Four days prior to the hearing, on Jan. 13, South East Lake View Neighbors will issue a final recommendation to Tunney on the BYC matter. The neighborhood association has been working on a Good Neighbor Agreement with BYC officials and Tunney's office. SELVN will meet Jan. 13 at 7 p.m. at Second Unitarian Church, 656 W. Barry Ave.



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Howard Brown could have new director soon

BY YASMIN NAIR

Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC) is due to make significant changes in the following weeks, including possibly hiring a new leader, according to sources Windy City Times contacted.

Founded in 1974, scandals and significant changes in leadership and key employees have rocked the health center.

Following the departure of its last president and CEO, Jamal Edwards, in August 2012, then-board chair Karma Israelsen took over his post in an interim capacity.

Israelsen's investiture as head of one of the country's few LGBT health centers was severely criticized by many on the grounds of her lack of experience with the healthcare industry. Her appointment came with an annual salary of \$180,000. While not as high as that of Edwards, who was equally inexperienced and yet garnered \$265,000, the figure nevertheless raised concerns.

Since taking over, Israelsen and HBHC have been promising the appointment of a new CEO. At first, this was to happen in the summer-fall of 2012, but the appointment has been repeatedly pushed back. Adding to the complications was the postponement of the new Aris Health Center, scheduled to open in March 2012 (it opened in September), and further changes in the location of the Broadway Youth Center (BYC).

The BYC has faced a rocky relationship with its

surrounding neighborhood in Lakeview. In November, it faced a particularly tumultuous meeting with South East Lake View Neighbors, on the future of its current location at Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ, 615 W. Wellington Ave. Following that, Lara Brooks, executive director of BYC, stepped down from her post in mid-December; her post has been taken over by Imani Rupert.

So far, HBHC's chief leadership has often been picked from within its own ranks, and its last three CEOs have all been people without any experience in healthcare, a fact acknowledged by Duke Alden, current board chair, who insisted that this will change with a new CEO.

When HBHC was founded, it was a unique organization, one of the very few in the country and the world catering exclusively to gay health concerns. It has weathered a number of storms, both in the shape of health crises like AIDS and a revolving door in leadership and financial scandals, all of which has contributed to a worsening of its reputation.

HBHC now faces a vastly different world than that of 40 years ago. The Affordable Care Act will mean significant changes in regulations and coverage, and the idea of LGBTQ-specific healthcare is no longer an exceptional anomaly, although still rare in many parts of the country.

The weeks and months ahead will tell whether HBHC will be able to fit into a different landscape or fall further behind.

MARINE from cover

is his chosen orientation—in an empty apartment in Avondale, Ariz., in 2011.

Within weeks, he came out to the world, and “I might as well went to the [tallest] building in Phoenix and screamed it [from] the roof.”

Setter, 24, who now lives in suburban Westmont, is a strong, outspoken LGBT activist, crossing into many areas and leading many attacks, so to speak. He is the president of external relations for the Pride Alliance at College of DuPage, the school's gay-straight alliance (GSA). And this year alone, Setter and the Pride Alliance have been involved with numerous LGBT agendas, including Illinois Unites for Marriage phone banks; the March on Springfield; and the You've Got a Friend Movement, an anti-bullying panel.

“The Marine Corps was the best and worst of times,” Setter said. “It created the motivation of helping people through love and how violence creates nothing but more violence. During my years of service, I traveled to Guam, Thailand, Africa, Malaysia, and Afghanistan. During my time in service, DADT was in effect so I could not come out and be queer. But [still], I told a person I confided in—and it spread, [thus, I] hid farther in the closet. I had to hide so far because I didn't want to be kicked out for being queer.”

“The last six months were harder than anything I endured in my life.”

After leaving the Corps, he landed in Phoenix, working at a gay bar.

Setter moved to Chicago in 2012 to attend College of DuPage.

“The objective of Pride Alliance is to provide an open and safe atmosphere in which members can discuss issues of sexuality and gender identification/expression in relation to themselves, family, friends, and society. The group places a focus on open discussions, group participation in political discussions, events, and conscientiously working to achieve full equality for individuals regardless of differences,” Setter said.

“Pride Alliance became part of my life from the first time I saw a flyer hanging in the Health Science Building [on campus]. I remember going to the first meeting where I found many like minds, but the best part was the first time I found family in the LGBTQ community outside of the bar. It is when I found that place to be myself and to find myself. It helped, and continues to help me, talking to like-minded people, to find ways to define myself without society's eyes.”

Setter has been dating Patrick McLennand for about a year, “and he really brings out my intellectual side. I have never opened up to anyone as much as I have with him, including my own family.”

Setter is originally from suburban Detroit, where he lived until age 17 when he joined the Marine Corps.

“To me, activism isn't merely just an act. Activism is not just your voice being heard. Activism is not only a fundamental additive to bringing about change. Activism in itself is, change,” Setter said. “To me, activism is

looking for the darkness and bringing it to light; activism is liberation; activism is educating our society. I believe that activism is a human right and duty.

“I don't identify with being proud [of accomplishments] because that means ‘having or showing a high or excessively high opinion of oneself or one's importance.’ I am of no more importance than the person standing to my left or right. Never has anything of great importance been done alone. So, all the events happening around me are of equal importance and no one of these events are more important than the other.”

Still, Setter has been set in many. Just consider:

—HIV prevention through Pride Alliance: “We not only have educated ourselves, but also continue to go to classes to give HIV/AIDS presentations and show movies, such as Positive Youth, on how to survive a plague, supporting people living with HIV and reducing the stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV.”

—TRIBE is a community-based organization dedicated to empowering one's self and one another through educational workshops, volunteering and other community building activities, as well as distribution of safe sex material and free HIV testing. Geared for gay men, age 25 and older, TRIBE is run by Chicago-based Project VIDA, Inc.

“TRIBE is a place where I can talk with gay men about the efforts to bringing equality across the board, and also discuss LGBTQ literature.”

—March on Springfield: “Through Illinois Unites for Marriage I went around DuPage getting postcards signed, phone-banking weekly, and meeting with State Representatives in [the] district and in Springfield. Martin McAlpin, organizer at Illinois Unites for Marriage, brought me to his team [by] reaching out to the College of DuPage and asking for people to help his areas.

“At first, my plate was completely full with working on posting up posters throughout the DuPage area for the March on Springfield, TRIBE, Pride Alliance, and most importantly, school itself. In the end, once I heard his story of being a straight man fighting for his brother's rights, I knew to not make any more excuses and just do it.”

—Gender-neutral bathrooms on campus is a topic that will be discussed in 2014, Setter said. “Now, [the focus] is about creating the context for gender identity/expression to be included in the school's non-discrimination policies, [and] explaining to the Board how important it is to add this community of people. I challenge the college to add these terms to the pre-existing policies and show all community colleges that the biggest community college in the nation is proactive.

“The main focus is showing that gender identity is the process of the mind which the individual person identifies as a man, gender-queer, or woman. Gender expression is how you express yourself as feminine, androgynous, or masculine. The reason these are so important is the fact that sex or sexual orientation simply are not these things.”

Evanston police appoint LGBT liaison

The Evanston Police Department has appointed Sgt. Melissa G. Sacluti as the police liaison for Evanston's LGBT community.

Sacluti will serve as a connection for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community as part of the city's commitment to serve the diverse needs of all residents.

“I am extremely grateful to the Evanston Police Department and Sergeant Sacluti,” said openly gay 6th Ward Ald. Mark Tendam. “With the establishment of a police liaison, the LGBT community now has a dedicated voice serving them.”

In addition to her current duties, Sacluti will be responsible for fostering positive relations between the LGBT community and the Evanston Police Department, and ensuring that police department policies remain sensitive to residents' needs.

“The City of Evanston is committed to serving all members of our community,” said Evanston Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl. “The creation



Sgt. Melissa G. Sacluti.

of an LGBT Police Liaison demonstrates our dedication to service and inclusion. We look forward to continuing a positive relationship with our LGBT neighbors and friends.”

In its continued efforts to implement a new style of policing, the Evanston Police Department seeks to balance traditional and innovative policing methods. The Police Department's programs and services are designed to reach out, connect and work with residents.

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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>.

GAY *in the* **LIFE**
Benjamin Bradshaw Baumker

TEXT BY ROSS FORMAN
 PHOTOS COURTESY OF BRADSHAW BAUMKER

Age
25

Neighborhood
Andersonville

Relationship status
"The most important man in my life is the Sarpino's delivery man."

Job
Show runner/host of Trannika's Most Wanted at Scarlet and Drag Matinee at Berlin

Stage name
Trannika Rex, American Gurl

Orientation
"Gay as a goose."

Hobbies
"Cat-petting and Beyonce-worshipping."

Favorite TV show
Scandal

Best part of your job
"Getting drunk on stage with my best friends."

Worst part of your job
"Having to wake up the next day."

Little-known fact
"I've never smoked a cigarette."

Clueless, the 1995 comedy starring Alicia Silverstone, set the tone for the childhood of Benjamin Bradshaw Baumker. "When I was 8, my dad banned my Cher Horowitz impression at the dinner table," Baumker said of the character played by Silverstone. "She was my original drag inspiration: offensive, self-absorbed, woeful white girl with a heart of gold." Flash-forward to 2010, and Baumker started dressing up for hipster parties on the west side at Pluto, "where I was the only drag queen and I looked pretty rough," he said. A few months later, Baumker was hired at Scarlet as a host on Friday nights, "where I would basically work the room and make sure the vibe was good," he said. Baumker joined the House of Santana drag show at Berlin about eight months in, and it was the first time he worked with others and when, he admitted, he truly started to improve technically and build his drag character. "The more I host, the more offensive I become," he said with a bit of sass. "Trannika's a self-absorbed, alcoholic bigot, but she's full of love. I studied improv at Second City and did theater for 11 years, so a big part of the show is spontaneous audience interaction through games and live tweeting. It's organized chaos. You might gasp first, but you're always going to end up laughing." Baumker's alter ego hosted the 4,000-person dance pavilion at Milwaukee Pride in 2013. "I got to work with some rad DJs, was allowed free reign on the microphone, and the boss made sure I was stocked up on Fireball Whisky backstage. So Milwaukee, if you're reading this, I'm available this year, too."



Baumker said his favorite song to perform is Jennifer Hudson's "Night of Your Life." "When I joined the House of Santana drag show at Berlin, they let me host the show [and] it just clicked," he said. "I started the monthly Trannika's Most Wanted at Scarlet in October 2012, and started running the Berlin show in June 2013. Both bars took big chances on an infant drag queen with a problematic sense of humor, but with their help we've had record turnouts and continue to break sales records." "Trannika's Most Wanted" at Scarlet is the third Monday of every month with cast members Kim Chi, Shea Coulee, and Ivory. "Drag Matinee" is at Berlin the first and third Saturday of every month as well as additional special editions, featuring performers from across the country. "My goal [from a fashion sense] is to look like I'm in the elimination ceremony on Rock of Love: too much hair, too much leg, too many accessories, obvious daddy issues," he said, laughing. So, how different or similar is Benjamin from your drag persona? "My sense of humor is dark and character-based, but there's a big difference between on stage and off stage," he said. "This is business and professionalism is very important to me. Anyone who works my shows knows my rules: timeliness, kindness, and a good sense of humor. On stage we tear each other apart mercilessly and we wouldn't be so successful if that level of respect wasn't there backstage."





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WINDY CITY
TIMES

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TRACY
BAIMThe coming-out
of Robin Roberts:
Why it matters

In this world of violence, lost unemployment benefits and more tragic circumstances, I am often torn whether to post on social media, or at *Windy City Times*, the latest, greatest celebrity coming-out event.

ABC's Robin Roberts, who has struggled so much with her health, has finally stated in public (on Facebook) what many people have known to be true: that she has a longtime girlfriend, Amber Laigh.

It is almost 2014, and yet the coming-out of this 53-year-old woman is still news.

Why should it matter who Robin has loved this past decade of her life? Isn't the goal to make this all not matter any more?

Well, we are decades, if not centuries, from it not mattering. It is a fact that being LGBT is not usually so "obvious" that people just "know" who we are. Most LGBT people easily "pass" and have to come out if they want to be recognized for who they truly are.

Roberts is the perfect example of this. Many of my LGBT and in-the-know straight friends on Facebook acted as if this was no news to them. They always knew Roberts was gay. Some did know this first-hand; others had just heard the rumors. But just as it was a shock to 90 percent of the straight world when Anderson Cooper

came out, this new coming-out story will also be news to most people.

Being able to hide, to compartmentalize our lives, is no favor. It usually causes internalized homophobia, and I believe it is the leading cause of hypocrisy among politicians. It seems so easy to do, just to not talk about what you did last weekend, or to call your partner your roommate, to separately celebrate the holidays, or even live apart. But the price is paid, the damage done.

Each time a celebrity comes out with some aspect of that person's life—whether that is being LGBT or T, or whether that is being adopted, coming from a family of undocumented immigrants, or coping with a health crisis—it shapes our narrative of their lives, and ours. If we are transgender, the story of Laverne Cox or Alexandra Billings is something we glom on to. I am a lesbian, so when I hear of another woman coming out, it tugs a little at my heart and soul.

Yes, even after my own 50 years of life, and having come out at around age 16, I relate to the life of a woman three years older, who took 34 extra years to come out. It was the same when Jodie Foster came out, someone just a few weeks older than me, someone who took decades to muster the same courage I was lucky to have as a teenager in the 1970s.

These "news" stories about LGBTs are news in part because we are never really taught LGBT history in the classroom. LGBTs and our allies are left to mostly fend for ourselves in this self-education about a huge part of history. It is why I created a new game to show just how amazing and diverse our movement has been. That's *So Gay! A Game of LGBTQ Discovery* is meant to be a fun way to learn about the history that has been kept from us, causing us to have low self-esteem and to always feel like the "other."

It doesn't help that we usually seem to move two steps forward and then one step back in

this society. (Utah and New Mexico get marriage equality, meanwhile despite racism and homophobia, *Duck Dynasty* gets to stay on the air because it makes A&E money.)

I don't know why it was so relatively easy for me to come out, and it has been such a struggle for so many of my fiftysomething peers. We each had our own paths to forge. My own family always had LGBT folks around (and I do mean all four of those LGBT letters). We had a commune-like home life of major diversity. My mom covered the 1960s civil-rights movement, and Martin Luther King, Jr. My parents were worried for me, but always supportive. I came out very boldly in college, and never looked back.

I was mainly worried about being openly gay and a journalist, but soon realized I could never compromise my life for my career. Then, I was lucky my mom heard of a job at *GayLife* newspaper when I graduated from Drake University with a journalism degree in 1984. I started down an alternative path, while people including Roberts and Cooper swam in the mainstream.

I could have never survived in that mainstream media world. I am glad I never tried. But I am equally glad that, finally, more mainstream journalists, and broadcast personalities, feel they can be out and proud, and still be respected journalists.

Roberts represents a pivotal coming out for all of our country. It may seem small and petty to even care about this, but I am thinking about those millions who watch her every week, including the parents of LGBT youth—especially the parents of African-American LGBT youth, since Roberts is a role model as an African-American woman. Just as Ellen DeGeneres chips away at homophobia on her talk show, Roberts will join the ranks of everyday heroes of our movement, just succeeding at being their authentic selves.

Thank you, Robin. Thanks for jumping in the public pool. You're already making waves.

LETTERS

Picking the pope

Dear Editor:

I am responding to the Christmas issue of the *Windy City Times* viewpoint by Kim Flowers ("The Pope?").

My take on The Advocate naming its person of the year Pope Francis is that it was done because of prudence. The Advocate, I think, recognizes there is a lot of hope being promoted not only among LGBTs, but also the wider community. I believe that is what motivated The Advocate's intention in this matter.

Like Kim, I recognize that the pope has not changed any anti-gay and -woman dogmas. Will that happen in the future or not, nobody really knows.

Within the worldwide Catholic base this tonal change has given permission for the discussion to begin within the Church, and because of this, yes, I believe dogmatic change is only enhanced by the pope's current position.

I support The Advocate's "Person of the Year" award to the pope because he has changed the tone and dynamic for this discussion to take place within the church. Like a pebble in the pond, you have no idea what the ripple effect will be.

Contrary to Kim's view, I believe this is significant. By the same token I understand how LGBT's of good will can have various opinions and can differ on this topic. Because we are in the holiday season I focus on hope, which, in my opinion, is where The Advocate is coming from. My question to Kim is: Does she recognize the difference between Pope Francis and his two predecessors, Pope Benedict XVI and John Paul II?

Joe Murray
 Executive Director
 Rainbow Sash Movement

Pope and glory

Dear Editor:

The Advocate named Pope Francis (formerly Buenos Aires archbishop Jorge Mario Bergoglio) its "Person of the Year." Maybe the cover was meant for an April Fool's edition, as writer Kim Flowers suggested (WCT 12/25/13).

In his native Argentina, Bergoglio vigorously opposed marriage equality, saying among other things that same-sex marriage was spawned by the "father of lies," a reference to a supposed devil. (The pope lost big time when the parlia-

ment passed legislation, making Argentina another victory for national, not state-by-state, marriage equality.)

The pope was reportedly "shocked" that the government of Malta might approve adoption by same-sex couples, and urged a bishop on the island nation to condemn such adoptions.

In Melbourne, Australia, Catholic priest Greg Reynolds was defrocked and excommunicated by Pope Francis for advocating for the ordination of women and gay marriage.

Indeed, the pope did call for changing the subject away from gays, abortions and women's ordination; but nothing of substance has changed in negative church doctrine for either women or gays. In fact, the pope has ruled women's ordination not a fit subject for discussion.

We should reject the notion that someone who can rescind the church's stance on gay sex and the ordination of women, and chooses not to do so, is a figure worthy of admiration.

Although adulation of religion and its leaders is an American media past time, the fawning over Pope Francis also demonstrates something profoundly disturbing: in the struggle for a better world, women's and LGBT rights are still not taken seriously. The Advocate should not have contributed to Francis-fawning.

Bob Schwartz

Send letters and viewpoints to Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com.
 Items may be edited for length or clarity.

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GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo from David Zak

SMELLS LIKE TEAM SPIRIT

The local women's football team The Chicago Force celebrated its national championship. See page 22.

THEATER

Life's a 'Bitch.'
Page 14

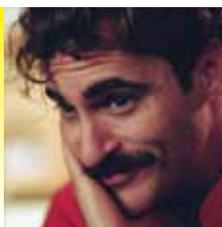
Photo from *Inglourious Bitches* from Bare Knuckle Productions



MOVIES

Phoenix rises.
Page 16

Joaquin Phoenix in *Her* from Warner Bros. Pictures



BOOKS

Rebelle with a cause.
Page 21

Photo of writer Rebelle courtesy of the subject



DANCIN' FEATS

A queer dance romance

BY LAUREN WARNECKE

"It's kind of weird to be in a relationship in this community," said Erica Ricketts, 23, a 2013 grad of the Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago. As she navigates the challenging task of making a career in dance, she has the support of her girlfriend, Greer Dworman, 25.

Dworman graduated a year before Ricketts, and they started dating in March 2011 as classmates at Columbia. The two first met in a contact improvisation class—"I know! It's so gay!" says Dworman. The cat was out of the bag about the on-campus romance when a professor spotted them together at a coffee shop. "They have meetings... we don't know what they talk about ... [but] if we ever broke up, the faculty would be devastated!"

Post-college life for the couple, as for most new dancemakers on the scene, has been an eclectic mix of jobs and activities. Dworman has gravitated toward arts administration. After school, she "was sort of done making work for awhile." A production internship at Links Hall kept her participating in the dance community and led to opportunities with RTG Dance, Sean Dorsey, and supporting production roles with her colleagues as they graduated from Columbia College and entered the professional dance community. She started working as a program manager for The Space/Movement Project, and this spring will make her debut as a dancer in the company.

Ricketts kept her thesis concert alive, showing it at D-49 (a Chicago Moving Company (CMC) contest for emerging artists), and in Detroit. The D-49 project led to an upcoming opportunity to show new work in CMC's annual Dance

Shelter project. She also makes sound scores, and has found a niche with the performance art community stemming from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). Ricketts' androgynous look is not one that many traditional dance companies gravitate toward, regardless of her strong training and facility. Performance artists have expressed a stronger desire to work with queer and androgynous artists, telling Ricketts "[We] want someone who looks like you, meaning, the gay on top of my head."

Dworman and Ricketts both came from very traditional dance backgrounds, which included a lot of ballet. Identifying as a dancer and identifying as queer sometimes clashed; Ricketts felt this conflict acutely when she came out in high school while still enrolled in a traditional ballet school. "I never got good parts in the Nutcracker," she said. "If I had been allowed to do the boy variations, that would have been fun. But that didn't happen. It wasn't so bad, maybe because I had the realization of what I was going to become in college."

She knew that pink tights and a bun were the penultimate place for her in the dance community, and she was able to more carefully craft her identity in college. "I love going to ballet class, I just don't want to wear ballet shoes, and I don't want to get my hair out of my face, and I don't want to wear a leotard, so I avoid those things," Ricketts said. "Just like a lot of young men don't do ballet because everyone's going to think they're gay, a lot of gay women don't do ballet because everyone's going to think they're straight!"

Dworman agrees that it's not the idea of doing ballet, but the heteronormative box that



Greer Dworman (left) and Erica Ricketts. Photo by ChrisGuillen.com

surrounds it that is the problem. "[Erica] is a beautiful ballet dancer...There needs to be space for this type of expression," she said, and while they've found queer ballet popping up on the New York scene, the two have yet to find a more accepting version of ballet in Chicago. She, too, has gravitated toward the performance-art scene, and is considering moving to New York to be among artists who share her values as a dancemaker.

What is involved in those values? "Less dance!" Dworman said. She added she finds it refreshing to participate in a dance-based vocabulary with people who don't have formal training. "I've been dealing with my size, as a performer, and my facility in that capacity," she said. "I don't identify myself as a fat person, but I'm thick, and that's not what people want. It's hard to get

a gig here, and that's what I'm working with." In a way, Dworman identifying herself as queer is as intimately connected to her size as it is to her sexuality. She desires a dance community that is void of connotations tied to a performer's size, gender representation, or sexuality. "I want to feel challenged and completely confused," she said, and isn't currently finding what she wants in Chicago.

For Dworman, making the move may be a "coming-out," more than realizing she was interested in dating women. "I didn't come out. ... I just learned that dating women was another formation of being. I was challenged by my body, my facility—and I still feel that way now. My relationship is ... my relationship, and it's important to me, but my challenge is how my body works ... and that's totally queer!"



From left: Gene Weygandt, Renee Matthews and Tim Kazurinsky in *Old Jews Telling Jokes*. Photo by Dan Rest

THEATER REVIEW

Old Jews Telling Jokes

Playwright: created by Peter Gethers and Dan Okrent

At: Frankel Green Theatrical Management at the Royal George Theatre, 1608 N. Halsted St.

Tickets: 312-988-9000;

www.ticketmaster.com; \$49-\$59

Runs through: March 30

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The title of the show is “Old Jews Telling Jokes,” not “Old Jews Telling JEWISH Jokes,” so audiences shouldn’t be surprised to discover that the laughs in this 80-minute revue are not strictly faith-based. To be sure, it helps to know a little Yiddish, and during a sing-along, the sudden drop in volume on the “gentiles only” verse was not unexpected (though one lone goy struggled valiantly to add his voice to the chorus).

Part of the reason behind this inclusiveness is the proliferation of Jewish talent in the entertainment industry, with artists like Lenny Bruce, Allen Sherman and Mel Brooks making the words “klutz” and “kvetch” as American as apple knish. The more likely explanation, however, lies in the universality of the human condition addressed by its humor: in almost every culture the world over, you can find stories of the old man and his young wife, of the ambitious mother seeking a favorable marriage for her daughter, the churchman who isn’t as holy as he claims, and the disgruntled spouses who can’t die soon enough to satisfy their partners (think *Moms Mabley*).

The program assembled by Peter Gethers and Dan Okrent from field samples collected on their same-titled website includes the joke about the infant and the kreplach, the parrot and the Hassid, and the three bragging Texans. The five raconteurs aren’t afraid to get bawdy, either, gleefully reciting the tale of the deli clerk and the pickle slicer, several yarns involving tropical islands, and even more predicated on doctors’ visits. There are also such daring proposals as the affluent Jew trying to pass for a WASP, a reading of “Old Man River” in a Borscht-Belt accent, and an outrageous advertisement for the nails used at a certain crucifixion. (“This is *not* Fiddler on the Roof,” warns one of the tumblers.)

The show’s extension to March 30 will feature occasional guest appearances by such Chicago celebs as authors Sara Paretsky and Roy Blount, Jr., as well as ABC-Seven’s Janet Davies and radio personality Steve Downes, all telling *their* favorite jokes. On the night that I attended, the spotlight was on columnist Candace Jordan, regaling us with testimonials to her home town that was so small that “driver’s education and sex education were taught in the same car.” During this bleak start to 2014, what could be healthier, for body and for soul, than a hearty guffaw?

CRITICS’ PICKS

The Little Prince, Lookingglass Theatre, through Feb. 23. There are lots of theatrical spectacle to marvel at in Rick Cummings and John Scouliar’s creative adaptation of Antoine de Saint-Exupery’s beloved children’s book about an otherworldly child who meets a stranded aviator. SCM

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

The Seafarer, Seanachai Theatre at the Den, extended through Feb. 1. Know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em—especially when you’re playing poker with the devil and your losses aren’t the kind that can be covered by a stroll to the ATM. MSB

The Shadow over Innsmouth, WildClaw Theatre at the Athenaeum, through Jan. 26. Evolution reverses itself on the bleak Massachusetts coast in Scott Barsotti’s adaptation of this shivery allegory by seminal science-fiction author H.P. Lovecraft. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

SPOTLIGHT



The **13th Annual Chicago Sketch Festival** is playing up its potentially unlucky anniversary in its advertising, although lovers of the art form of sketch comedy are bound to be winners with local, national and international troupes converging all at once upon the Windy City this month. Of LGBT interest is the participation of GayCo and pH Production’s revival of its revue **Same Sex, Different Gays**. Sketch-comedy acts in the festival play at various times between Thursday, Jan. 9, through Sunday, Jan. 19, at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave. Tickets are \$14 for individual shows on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays; and \$15 for individual shows on Saturdays. Call 773-327-5252, or visit www.stage773.com or www.chicagosketchfest.com. Photo courtesy of GayCo



Inglourious Bitches. Photo from Bare Knuckle Productions

THEATER REVIEW

Inglourious Bitches

Playwright: adapted by Glense Hand from the screenplay by Quentin Tarantino

At: Bare Knuckle Productions at the Ravenswood Studios, 4001 N. Ravenswood Ave.

Tickets: 773-998-2671;

www.bareknuckleproductions.org;

\$10-\$20

Runs through: Jan. 25

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The so-called “fair sex” are no less prone to violence than the bold, nor are they incapable of pack-mentality slaughter (consider Greek tragedies like *The Bacchae*), but even today, playwrights stubbornly refuse to write the kind of two-fisted, free-fire, no-prisoners—you know, *fun*—roles for women that they do for men. When your protagonist is a guuurrrl, prevailing wisdom dictates that aggression must invariably be 1) initiated within the domestic sphere, 2) reliant upon sexual manipulation and 3) fueled by an obsession as petty as it is pathological.

So what are the increasing number of theatrical combat-trained young women to do? In the 1990s, the now-disbanded Footsteps Theatre Company, followed by the Babes With Blades, turned to all-female productions of Shakespeare and fan-fiction tales to strut their belle sabreur swagger. The artists of Bare Knuckles Productions carry this solu-

tion a step further, casting across gender and color lines in pursuit of spectacle combining badass broads, blood and bullets.

The 2007 Quentin Tarantino action flick *Inglourious Basterds*—itself a remake of a 1978 Italian potboiler—is the perfect vehicle for the Bare Knuckles aesthetic, as the World War II fantasy scenario revolves around two separate plans to assassinate the indisputably evil leaders of the Third Reich. One stratagem involves the owner of a movie theater hosting a premiere with Nazi VIPs in attendance; the other, a covert mission undertaken by a cheerfully amoral squad of all-American rowdies.

Veteran Chicago trouper Maggie Speer directs an unapologetically diverse ensemble led by Glense Hand as a suave S.S. Commander and Sarah Nutt as his redneck Yankee nemesis, with Melinda Ryba and Lindsay Ashcroft playing femmes fatales (whose wardrobes, replicated by Eli Borrowman, echo those of their cinematic counterparts). There’s no denying the DIY atmosphere invoked by an uncredited set design employing muslin curtains and manual scene-shifts, albeit enhanced by Jeremy Fodor and Keith Hand’s incendiary aural and visual effects—but the low-budget ambience is quickly dispelled by the conviction that the array of Chicago newcomers invest in Tarantino’s comic-book yarn. Whether you’ve never seen the movie (like me) or can sing along with every word, there’s always an added thrill to the good kicking the butts of the bad when it’s right in the room with you.



Kelli Harrington as Maria Callas in *Master Class*. Photo by Adam Veness

You saw it first in 2013: The year in Chicago theater

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

These things tend to come in clusters, but why should theater be different? Acknowledging artistic fashions in no way diminishes their value, since what we call a “classic” is merely a play or practice that transcends its own time and tastes. That said, what contributions did 2013 make to the chronicle of playmaking in Chicago?

Most conspicuous was the focus on disabled characters in significant roles, from Dale Candlara’s virtuoso portrayal of the grossly overweight existential hero in *The Whale* at Victory Gardens, AJ Ware lending icy dignity to the defiantly unfeminine amputee in *The Peacock* at Jackalope (kudos to costumer Samantha Jones) and Reginald Torian strapped to his bed as the paralyzed Curtis Mayfield for Black Ensemble’s *It’s All Right to Have a Good Time*, to Mary Beth Fisher and Annabel Armour navigating wheelchairs in, respectively, About Face’s *The Normal Heart* and Remy Bumpo’s *Northanger Abbey*. These were all able-bodied actors playing disabled, making the cast of Steppenwolf’s *Tribes* the only one boasting both hearing-impaired John McGinty and hearing-unimpaired Alana Arenas as auditory-crossed lovers.

Another demographic receiving increased exposure was the long-unrecognized over-50 set, aka the Baby Boom generation. *Other Desert Cities* at Goodman and *Homecoming 1972* at Chicago Dramatists viewed the events of the 1960s from unexpected vantages, as did *Pride Films and Plays’ Under a Rainbow Flag* and the New Colony’s *Bear Suit of Happiness* the experiences of gay GIs in an earlier era. *Stella and Lou* at Northlight proposed romance for two weary senior citizens (sweetly portrayed by Frances Guinan and Rhea Pearlman) and *Lives of the Pigeons* at the Side Project, teamed Don Bender and Vincent Lonergan for a chilling portrait of old men hiding post-war secrets. Molly Regan stripped down to her undies for *Tribes* and Larry Neumann, Jr., to even less for *In God’s Hat*. Millicent Hurley’s performance anchored *The Trip to Bountiful* at Raven and Paul Dillon reprised his signature role in *Hellcab* at Profiles. The highlight of the season, however, was nonagenarian

Mike Nussbaum’s exemplary impersonations of two geezers, one nearly two decades older than the other, and both younger than the actor portraying them, for *Smokefall* at the Goodman.

It was also the year that some of western literature’s representative masterpieces were re-conceived to emerge as altogether new and unfamiliar works: Mary-Arrchie’s back-alley *Glass Menagerie*, Artistic Home’s resurrective *Night of the Iguana*, Wayward Production’s biker-gang *Richard III*, Timeline’s foresighted *Raisin in the Sun*. It was the year that Victory Gardens moved Jason and Medea to Pilsen for *Mojada*, that Chicago Shakespeare murdered Marc Antony at the end of *Julius Caesar* and Goodman director Robert Falls had Isabella mugged in *Measure for Measure*.

On the technical front, *Smokefall*, *Appropriate* and *The Nutcracker* all featured self-destructing scenic decor, Ruckus Theater’s *Brewed*, Ka-tet’s *Smudge* and Strawdog’s *Improbable Frequency* showcased intricate blinking-lights-and-curly-tubes robot apparatus, and the stage-side bands for American Blues Theater’s *Lost Highway*, Profiles’ *In God’s Hat*, Porchlight’s *Double Trouble*, Haven’s *Wedding Singer* and Theo Ubique’s *Master Class* all enjoyed the spotlight (despite the uncanny shape-shifting transformations of Matt Brumlow’s Hank Williams in the first and Kelly Harrington’s Maria Callas in the last). Oh, and once again, not a week went by when you couldn’t see a Ryan Bourque fight somewhere on a Chicago stage.

What can we hope to see in the coming year? More ensemble acting like we saw in Lifeline’s *Killer Angels* and Steppenwolf’s *Lord of the Flies*. More conceptually integrated productions like the Den’s *City of Dreadful Night*, Factory Theater’s *Incident On Run 1217* and Goodman’s *Meet Vera Stark*. More exposure for returning homeys like Maggie Speer, David Cromer and Michael Shannon (who finally won a Jeff after nearly 20 years), as well as recognition for the inexplicably underrated Mary Williamson for her outstanding work in *A Permanent Image*, *Reverb* and *Kate and Sam Are Not Breaking Up*—maybe in another play whose title makes editors squirm, like *The M**f**ker With The Hat*.

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-JASON HEIDEMANN, *CHICAGO MAGAZINE*



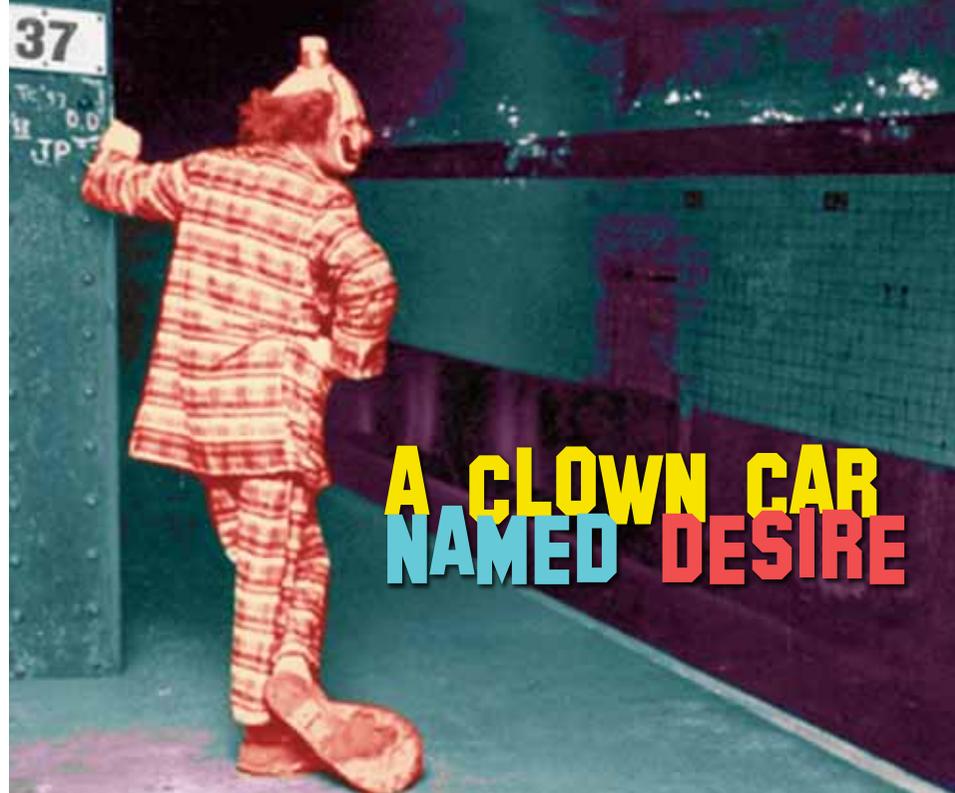
-CHRIS JONES, *CHICAGO TRIBUNE*

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“NON-STOP LAUGHS”

-TOM WILLIAMS, *CHICAGO CRITIC*



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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT JR.

Her; DVD notes

With *Her*, director Spike Jonze—making his solo screenwriting debut after several offbeat collaborations with Charlie Kaufman (*Being John Malkovich*, etc.)—takes the standard movie-romance conventions and adds an intriguing element that tosses them on their heads.

The movie, set in the “slight future”—a place immediately recognizable with its muted colors, glossy surfaces and distracted crowds of people all interacting with their electronic devices instead of each other (kinda like an Apple store)—focuses on the introverted, melancholy Theodore (a note perfect Joaquin Phoenix) who falls hopelessly in love with the enchanting Samantha (an equally impressive Scarlett Johansson). The twist in their romantic story—and it’s a really thought-provoking, uneasy one—is that Samantha is the disembodied voice of a computer program that Theodore has purchased to stave off loneliness in light of an impending divorce.

The mixed emotions and the creep factor are always right there as we watch Theodore dancing down the street to the delight of Samantha, sharing a picnic on a “double date” with one of Theodore’s co-workers, and revealing his innermost feelings with her at night in his darkened high-rise apartment. The main problem, of course, with Samantha—who watches him via the iPhone-like device he clutches in his hand or perches nearby and speaks to him through an ear piece—is that there is no body to go with her scintillating voice.

Samantha—a computer program referred to as an OS (or operating system), and is designed so that her emotions become more complex the more she interacts with Theodore—has an

answer for the couple’s problem: a surrogate who is a young blonde who attempts to seduce him with his awkward consent. But when confronted with the physical reality of this physical stand-in, Theodore hesitates. Confused and upset, Samantha briefly withdraws and, in the ensuing weeks, the duo begins to encounter a series of other roadblocks that are both familiar (jealousy, spite and a reality check provided by Theodore’s soon to be ex-wife, Catherine, who is appalled to discover the relationship) as well as downright confounding (like Samantha’s confession that she’s concurrently having a relationship with 8,316 other people but is only “in love” with 641 of them).

Although the film is hampered by a soft ending that eludes rather than resolves many of the truly thought-provoking questions it raises, *Her* is nonetheless a lyrical, deeply felt movie with a surprisingly gentle spirit. (In that respect, it’s akin to *Lars and the Real Girl*.) As *The New Yorker* film critic Anthony Lane has so aptly pointed out, the thing that makes *Her* so unsettling is that the movie does to us what Samantha does to Theodore.

DVD notes

Here are three recent releases that my fellow show tune queens are going to want to add to their collection:

—I had the pleasure of seeing Barbra Streisand’s concert at the United Center last year as part of her “Back to Brooklyn” tour. Perhaps the greatest surprise of the concert was how artfully the singer utilized the remaining strengths of her 71-year-old voice. She gave new life to several of her familiar chestnuts and to several songs from deep within her catalogue (I was particularly glad to hear her unearth “Didn’t We” and “Lost Inside of You”). And adding guest performers to the mix—jazz trumpeter Chris Botti, the acapella group *Il Volo* and her son, vocalist Jason Gould—livened the night and rounded out the concert. The result is a 24-track CD and DVD titled, naturally enough, **Barbra: Back to Brooklyn**. It is now available and, for Streisand fans young and old, this is a must-have.

—Another lovely aspect of the Streisand concert was her moving musical tribute to her long-time collaborator Marvin Hamlisch, who composed “The Way We Were,” one of her biggest hits. Hamlisch, the wunderkind, multiple award-winning composer of legendary songs (“Through the Eyes of Love,” “Nobody Does It Better”); movie soundtracks (*The Sting*, *The Way We Were*, *The Informant*, *The Swimmer*); and Broadway scores (the Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Chorus Line*, *They’re Playing Our Song*, *Sweet Smell of Suc-*



Joaquin Phoenix in *Her*. Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures

cess), was recently given an additional tribute as part of PBS’s *American Masters* program.

The 90-minute documentary **Marvin Hamlisch: What He Did** will be released Tuesday, Jan. 14, on DVD and provides a warm portrait of this tremendously gifted composer who died too young. Several of Hamlisch’s collaborators (including Streisand as well as lyricists Marilyn and Alan Bergman) and vintage footage help illustrate his fantastic career and the personal consequences that came along with that.

—Finally, Disney—as a nice tie-in with current theatrical release *Saving Mr. Banks*—has,

at long last, released a Blu-ray edition of its 1964 classic about the magical nanny. **Mary Poppins: 50th Anniversary Edition** gives us the Julie Andrews-Dick Van Dyke musical delight on both Blu-ray and DVD, and includes a digital copy. It carries over the majority of the special features from the 45th-anniversary edition and adds a couple of new ones (a karaoke option and a small featurette about *Saving Mr. Banks*). In addition, the film—which has been carefully restored—has never looked this sensational and is truly supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

Robin Roberts thanks girlfriend in message

Longtime broadcast journalist Robin Roberts thanked her girlfriend of 10 years, Amber Laign, in a public Facebook message Dec. 29. The date marked one year since Roberts’ 100 days after surviving a bone marrow transplant.

“I am grateful for my entire family, my long time girlfriend, Amber, and friends as we prepare to celebrate a glorious new year together,” she wrote, also thanking God, her doctors, nurses, and her sister Sally-Ann (who was her donor).

Roberts, 53, has had a lengthy career in broadcast journalism, including as a groundbreaking sportscaster, and most recently at *Good Morning America* on ABC. She was the anchor who sat down with President Obama for his 2012 announcement that he supported marriage equality, the first sitting chief executive to do so.

First Lady Michelle Obama was among those congratulating Roberts for coming out, according to *Out.com*. Obama tweeted, “I’m so happy for you and Amber!” referring to Laign.

See <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=378662368936659&set=a.216479948488236.54140.100003786976400&type=1>.

Yvonne Welbon part of ‘Dyke Delicious’ Jan. 11

Season 11 of *Dyke Delicious* at Chicago Filmmakers will start Saturday, Jan. 11, with an evening featuring Chicago-based award-winning independent filmmaker Yvonne Welbon.

This showcase will incorporate selections from her work, including *Living with Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100* (winner of 10 best documentary awards including the GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Documentary), her ongoing Sundance Documentary Fellow project *Sisters in Cinema*, and her newest film *The New Black*.

The event has a 7 p.m. social hour and an 8 p.m. screening. Admission is \$10; email sharon@blackcatfilm.net for more info.

‘Woman to Woman’ single released in Chicago

Complete Love has released “Woman to Woman”—a song about female love.

The single features Mikhial Douglas and TrueMcG, with Kiki Hurt M.D and GM4L, LLC (Global Music4Life) producing. Hurt, GM4L and Anike Bay produced the accompanying music video.

Complete Love is a group concept whose main member, Mikhial Douglas, collaborates with different featured artists.

See www.CompletelyLove.com.

Cullerton, Feigenholtz in ‘Old Jews’ Jan. 8

Illinois Senate President John Cullerton (6th District) and state Rep. (12th District) Sara Feigenholtz will stage in a special one-night-only appearance in the comedy *Old Jews Telling Jokes* at the Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted St., on Wed., Jan. 8, at 7:30 p.m.

A portion of the proceeds from the evening’s performance will be donated to the Jane Addams Senior Caucus.

See www.TheRoyalGeorgeTheatre.com.

CULTURE CLUB

FIGHT from cover

The bout was a culmination of The Ultimate Fighter (TUF) 18, a show that showcased Rousey's competitive nature—the same Rousey who, in a 2013 interview with the New York Post, stated that Fox has “an advantage” and that she does not “think it's fair” that Fox fights against females.

After Rousey triumphed, a group of 10 or 15 friends debated the women's side of UFC, debating who might knock Rousey off her throne.

Someone said Fox, and she heard it.

So Fox slowly made her way over the group, ultimately surprising all.

“So, do you think I could beat Ronda Rousey?” she asked with a smile on her face.

The group was shocked. They said they saw her that night at the bar, but none were certain it was Fox the fighter.

Cell phones were quickly converted into camera mode.

She stayed with the group for about five minutes.

“Months ago, I probably wouldn't have don't that,” Fox said.

Truly, her life is transitioning.

Fox won her first three MMA fights, but dropped her most recent, on Oct. 12, 2013, to Ashlee Evans-Smith in Coral Gables, Fla.

“I think my record is pretty good, even though I lost my last fight. Hey, every fighter loses at times; it's just something I have to come back from in my next fight,” said Fox, who will fight three or four times annually, and has no next fight scheduled, yet. “I am very hard on myself for things I did wrong [in every fight], even if I win the fight. You can never have a perfect fight. I'm very hard on myself, even for the smallest things. But I always learn from my mistakes.”

Fox said her MMA career should continue for another few years. But five years from now, she added, “I don't know [if I still will be fighting then], maybe not so much.”

She is battling Father Time, not just her in-ring foes and out-of-ring haters—of which there have been plenty. UFC color commentator Joe Rogan, for instance, was strongly opposed to Fox. Also, Matt Mitrione has said Fox was “still a man.” Mitrione also called her an “embarrassment” and stated that Fox is a “lying, sick, sociopathic, disgusting freak.”

“I will never please the haters, and I really don't care about them; I'll never reach them,” Fox said. “The ones who love me, I give them all the love back. I stick to them; they are my support. It's the ones who are in the middle of the road, on the fence, who I am trying to reach. They might understand the reality and truth behind the situation.”

“It's painful when those people who are really, really hateful, but I'm starting to get used to that; I'm starting to get a thicker skin.”

Some haters have been converted, she said, adding that some have even emailed her to admit they have changed.

Not many have changed to now support Fox, probably a dozen, she said.

“I think I am changing minds of people who have never even had to think about the subject. One of the reasons trans people are discriminated against and hated so much, even outside of sports, is because ... we're silenced. A lot of us transition and go on with our lives, and live in silence, and not too many people get to hear our stories. I think it's important that we're able to voice our stories, our experiences. This is a very important time for us to get out there, in every sector—to just be yourself.”

That's why Fox said her post-fighting career will be within the LGBT community—somehow, in some capacity.

“For me, the coming-out of Fallon Fox was the bravest thing anyone in sports did in 2013,” said Cyd Zeigler, co-founder of Outsports.com. “We've made so many great strides for LGBT athletes, but MMA is still deeply transphobic. Fallon came out in a sport that many believe is specially designed to rightfully exclude her and

everyone like her. She has had to bear the brunt of brutal attacks from fans and other fighters. She has had her personal life dissected by state boxing commissions. Through it all, she's been a fighter. Fallon is my hero, and I hope I can meet hatred and ignorance as bravely as she has.”

Fox is, without question, a trailblazer, which she said is “a lot of responsibility.”

“There are a lot of people, especially young people, who say that I am their hero, their role model, so I feel like I have to live up to that expectation. It's been pretty surreal,” Fox said. “I was pretty sure before I came out that something like this likely would happen, but being the first, and so [prominent] in the media, is something that I don't think anyone can prepare themselves for that.”

Fox has been living in the Chicago area for about the past eight years, coming to the Windy City to “escape my situation in Toledo, Ohio.” Fox was born in Toledo, has served in the U.S. military, and has one daughter, 17, who calls Fox “Mom.”

Her family was not accepting of her personal issues, so she left for Chicago—at the urging of a straight male friend she knew from her military stint.

“[It] was a hostile environment as far as family goes, and I just needed to get away and start over, so I came here—and Chicago has been a very nurturing place for me,” Fox said. “I suppose I didn't know what to expect when I came here; I didn't know too much about Chicago. But it's been nice, really good to be here.”

“But I don't like the cold so much. If it could be warm here year-round, I would be in paradise.”

Fox said some family members have “started to come around” over the past couple of years and be more accepting. But still, her closest family member is her younger brother.

“I fill [the void] with other types of family, such as my LGBT family, or friends, or my partner, Amy,” Fox said.

She has been dating Amy Pierson, 28, since last summer, though the two met about five or six years ago through a friend.

“For me, I think it's really important to have someone to come home to, to talk to,” Fox said. “There's a lot I have to deal with, so to just have that emotional support and love from my partner is very important.”

Fox, who was profiled in GQ Magazine in late 2013, said she is “pretty satisfied” on the personal front, “though there is a lot more that I want to do.”

Her daughter, an honors student, is doing “very, very well in school. I have no complaints from her at all,” said the proud Fox.

“I realize the position that I'm in—and I want to capitalize on it. I want to help and do as much as I can to help the LGBT community, especially trans people. The T needs to be brought up; it is behind the LG and B. We're way behind,” Fox said. “It's kind of surreal to see my life story in a big, major magazine or on TV.”

Trans athlete Chris Mosier, a Chicago native who now lives in New York and runs transathlete.com, said Fox is a “role model” for so many under the LGBT rainbow, not just within the T world.

“She's changing athletics and our culture in general by making trans people a part of the conversation in sports,” Mosier said. “As a fighter, she clearly has a tough job, but I think Fallon endures more outside of the ring than she does [while] fighting. The comments she has had to deal with have been atrocious, and have shown us as much about society's ignorance of transgender people as they have about the strength of Fallon's character. Fallon is an absolute warrior.”

“As a trans woman, Fallon faces a lot more discrimination than I do as a trans man. When I came out as a trans male triathlete, people said, ‘Good luck trying to compete against the men,’ and basically ignored me. But Fallon is assumed to have advantages competing as a female, despite her having virtually no male hormones, mostly because people already have their minds



From left: Hudson Taylor, Fallon Fox and Brendon Ayanbadejo at the Hetrick Martin Institute's (HMI) 2013 Emery Awards. Photo from Fox

made up about her competing. The facts are out there—she doesn't have advantages over other female fighters, and she is not unbeatable. If she wins, it's because she trained hard and was the better fighter, not because she's trans.

“Fallon is relentless both inside the ring and in her everyday life. I have been so impressed by her commitment to be her true self in the face of adversity. She truly epitomizes the word ‘fighter.’”

Fox will be spotlighted this summer with the release of a documentary Game Face, an inspiring film by producer/director Michiel Thomas about the coming-out process of professional and college athletes.

“It's going to be an awesome documentary about the challenges that LGBT people face in sports, in coming out,” Fox said. “There are a lot of things in the documentary that people are going to see that they just don't know about yet; I think it's going to blow people's minds.”

Such as?

Fox would not say.

“For me, this [documentary] is very important because I want people to understand what we go through, how hard it is for us LGBT athletes to come out, the reasons we don't come out [immediately], and then what happens when we do come out.”

The film will show Fox as an everyday person, not just a trans fighter.

“This [film] will be eye-opening for a lot of people, [showing me] at training [sessions], be-

hind the scenes at fights, with my daughter, and more,” Fox said.

“I'm stoked for the film. I can't wait until it's done and released.”

More from Fallon Fox:

—On a gay athlete in one of the big four pro male team sports (baseball, basketball, football and hockey): “I'm still waiting for that one [active] LGBT athlete to have the guts to say that he is gay, and come out. I think, when an athlete comes out from one of the top four sports, the public will be very accepting,” she said. “Sure, Jason Collins caught some flack, a little, when he came out, but, for the most part, people were very accepting. There have to be gay athletes in the NFL, the NBA, [as well as the NHL and Major League Baseball]. I think it's going to happen, soon.”

—Fox enjoys going to Andersonville, and spoke favorably about the now-closed bar T's. “I used to hang out at T's Bar a lot before it closed; that was my spot,” she said. “I have to find a new [favorite].”

—She attended the 2013 New York City Pride Parade via GLAAD. She has been to the Chicago Pride Parade “plenty of times,” she said, but never been in it, yet. “I would love to be in the Chicago Pride Parade.”

—More Chicago: “I love Market Days.”

—She is, admittedly, a “horrible cook,” and said she enjoys playing video games, especially the Mass Effect series.

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Chicago LGBT athletes of the year: Colleen Mulhern and Charles A. Richardson

BY ROSS FORMAN

Colleen Mulhern had quite a memorable 2013 sports season—on multiple fields of play.

Her spring flag football team gave up six points all season; her fall flag football team advanced to the championship game; her basketball team held a competitive team to 18 points in a game; and she bowled a 240 game.

“Our playoff run in the winter basketball league was pretty spectacular, but I also won four closest-to-the-pins/longest-drive competitions in our golf league, and I feel like golf is the sport that I experience the least amount of success in. So, it felt really good to win four times throughout the summer.”

In fact, she won the longest drive title (about 230 yards) at the Girls in the Game charity golf tournament June 17 at Chevy Chase Golf Course in Wheeling, earning a free flight on United Airlines. She plans to use it in early 2014, likely to Las Vegas.

“The best thing about participating [for 15] years in sports is the long lasting friendships that I have built,” Mulhern said. “I continue to play multiple sports every season of the year and I still play on teams with some of the same people as I did 15 years ago. It balances out my work life and I look forward to every sport that I play.”

“I always joke that I have about four good years left in me before I have to stop playing competitively and start playing recreationally. I

am just not there yet, but when I finally get there, I will be ready with my cotton shorts, elbow and knee pads to protect my aging bones.”

Mulhern, who lives in Andersonville, and is the vice president of operations at Kemora Landscapes, is “happily dating” Lindsey Trent, whom she calls “a beautiful woman.”

Her 2013 sporting slate also included softball in the competitive division, and she was on championship teams in spring flag football and winter basketball.

Mulhern’s athletic achievements earned her the 2013 Chicago Female LGBT Athlete of the Year, as voted by a poll of fellow gay athletes.

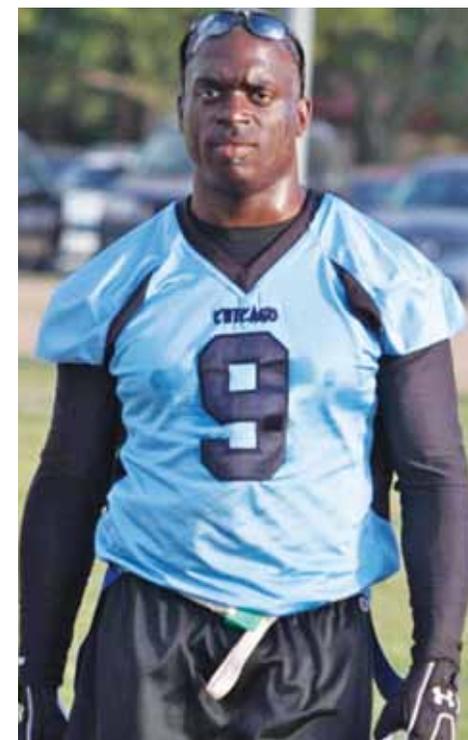
“Participating in sports leagues has been really important to me over the past 15 years,” Mulhern said. “I really do love sports and competition. I have met so many wonderful people through all of the sports leagues that I participate in, [such as] the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) and the Athletic Alliance of Chicago (AAC). I have so much gratitude for the leagues and the organizations because it gives me an avenue to still participate in sports when I am 37 years old. For that, I am eternally grateful.”

Mulhern has also in the past played soccer and volleyball—“neither very well,” she said, laughing. She also has played tennis.

Mulhern said she plans to play multiple sports next August at Gay Games 9 in Cleveland.

—Favorite pro sport: Football

—Favorite pro team: Chicago Bulls



Colleen Mulhern and Charles A. Richardson. Left photo from Mulhern; right photo by John W. Cox III Photography

—Favorite pro athlete: Peyton Manning

Charles A. Richardson was the captain/coach for the Chicago Freeze flag football team that competed in the annual Gay Bowl, held in Phoenix in October. The team finished fifth out of 30.

“The best part was the camaraderie and the positive attitudes towards each other,” Richardson said. “As with many teams, there are divas, queens and princesses along with everyone else, but my role was to turn them into a team of football players who could compete with the best gay flag football teams in the country. I think we accomplished that, particularly since this was a new group of players. I’m proud to

have been able to work with them.”

Richardson’s sporting leadership also was seen in 2013 with his highlight event: winning a national championship with the high school rowing team that he has coached for almost four years.

“In the four spring seasons in my tenure, we went to Nationals three times, placing 3rd twice and finally winning it all this past spring. I was luckily enough to have a group of very talented and highly motivated athletes which made my job easier. I will never forget that experience

Turn to page 20

the DISH WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN WINDY CITY TIMES



Bavette's Bar & Boeuf

BY MEGHAN STREIT

My love affair with Bavette’s Bar & Boeuf began the moment I stepped out of the bone-chilling Chicago cold and into the dark and sexy dining room—before I ever spread a bit of salty butter on a hunk of hot fresh-baked bread, before I washed my first oyster down with a sip of bubbly and before a single ounce of impossibly tender filet mignon ever melted in my mouth. When it comes to classic Chicago steakhouses, this place is the real deal.

With rich and shiny wooden walls, handsome red leather booths, antique mirrors and soothing jazz music, Bavette’s feels like it’s occupied its Kinzie Street space for decades. As I settled into my cozy seat and took it all in, I could picture my late grandmother sitting in that very chair in the 1950s, looking stunning with a cigarette in one hand and a martini in the other. While Bavette’s manages to feel like it’s been around forever, the décor doesn’t feel dated like it can at some steakhouses.

The dining room is the epitome of classic Americana at its finest—as is the food. If you’re looking for culinary sleights of hands and experimental recipes, you won’t find many

at Bavette’s. What you will find is a solid sampling of steakhouse classics: wedge salad with blue cheese, shrimp cocktail, roasted tomatoes, creamed spinach and steaks sized for every appetite. What sets Bavette’s apart is that the dishes, while familiar, are prepared so impeccably that they almost feel new.

The oyster bar, which is actually a vintage sink filled with ice, is an excellent place to start what is bound to be a beautiful meal. This is prime time to check out Bavette’s cocktail menu, a tempting liquid smorgasbord that is heavy on the gin, which plays perfectly into the vibe of the place. The “Lion’s Tail,” a slightly frothy mixture of bourbon, allspice and bitters is a nice way to warm up on a winter night. It tastes the holiday season in liquid form. Or, go the classic route with a French 75. Bavette’s version tastes like a boozy sparkling lemonade and goes down really easy.

The smoked whitefish Caesar is one more unique salad, and it is fantastic. Mild whitefish adds the salty punch that anchovies would provide in a classic Caesar and crispy slices stand in for croutons.

Now, if you’re the kind of person who goes to a restaurant like Bavette’s and orders anything other than a juicy steak and way too many side dishes, I suppose there’s nothing I can do to stop you. And you will be tempted because there are offerings like short rib stroganoff over hand-cut Fettuccine, studded with Cremini mushrooms. Maybe you can veer into entrée territory on a second visit, but I wouldn’t miss out on a steak for your first meal at Bavette’s—and based on current reservation wait lists, it could be spring by the time you can get a table after 5:00 p.m. or before 11 p.m. If you simply can’t wait for your turn in the reservation line, the full menu is served at the bar.



Bavette's Bar & Boeuf. PR photos



Far and away, the filet mignon is my top pick among the many delicious steak options. The 6-ounce petite duchess cut is more than enough meat for most people, and it’s small enough that you can still eat plenty of side dishes. The filet is so thick that it would be difficult to cut through if it weren’t so darned tender. On top of that, it’s simply but expertly seasoned with just enough salt and pepper to draw out the flavors of the beef. This succulent steak barely needs it, but I can’t see any reason to forgo the divine cup of creamy Béarnaise that accompanies it. It has a thick consistency, almost like a decadent pudding, but with a rich and savory flavor. You also can’t go wrong with the Chicago-cut rib eye. Priced at \$38.95 for a plump 22 ounces, you’ll almost feel like it’s a bargain, especially if you sprinkle it with a bit of Bavette’s steak salt, an irresistible blend of salty seasonings that is at once completely unnecessary but totally irresistible—kind of like putting butter on movie theater popcorn.

Of course, any steakhouse is only as good as its side dishes, and Bavette’s certainly rises to the occasion. Expect straightforward classics like broccoli and mashed potatoes, with a few subtle surprises. The creamed spinach, for instance, is made new with blue cheese. Red pepper gives it a bit of unexpected heat, which is interesting, but frankly left me longing for a more classic version. One novel side is the elite style corn, a fun dish that tastes essentially like the spicy, tangy version you can buy from carts on the street during the summer. Good stuff.

Without a doubt, the piece de resistance of Bavette’s side dish menu is the loaded baked potato. It’s a sight to behold. First of all, I don’t know where they even find potatoes this large. It’s piled high with lots of melty cheddar cheese, a generous dollop of thick sour cream and plenty of fresh green chives. Where inferior loaded baked potatoes make do with dried bits of bacon, Bavette’s is upgraded with juicy chunks of pork belly. It is, in a word, heavenly.

A meal as good as the one you will eat at Bavette’s should be honored with a leisurely sweet ending. The chocolate cream pie is a solid choice. Like the steaks before it, this pie is a cut above. The crust is made from Oreo cookies, which feels humble and charming at a place as upscale as Bavette’s. On top of the crust is a rich and decadent dark chocolate ganache. The pie is finished off with a softball-sized scoop of some of the best whipped cream I’ve ever had—super fluffy and just barely sweet.

Bavette’s is located at 218 W. Kinzie St.; call 312-624-8154 or visit www.bavetteschicago.com.

Do you need some more Sugar & Spice in your life? Follow me on Twitter @SugarAndSpiceMS for inside scoop and commentary on Chicago’s dining scene.

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Special content from **nightspots** 'Progress'-ing into '14

Progress Bar, which just opened its doors in 2013, saw its first year out in style, packing both rooms with revellers for their New Year's Eve party. Photos by Jerry Nunn. Look for more Nightspots photos in the next few weeks in this space and in the next issue of Nightspots, on stands Jan. 22, 2014.



CALENDAR

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Wed., Jan. 8

Equality Illinois Marriage Forum Forum aimed at educating the public about SB10, dispelling myths, and empowering same-sex couples and their families to understand and use all their state and federal marriage rights. Registration at the link. 6:00pm Christ Episcopal Church, 410 Grand Ave., Waukegan, Ill., 60085 <http://www.eqil.org> Tickets: <http://tinyurl.com/waukegan-forum>

M. Evelina Galang, author Angel de la Luna and the Fifth Glorious Mystery Women & Children First, co-sponsored by Coffee House Press and Guild Literary Complex. Fifteen-year-old Angel and her family's move from Manila to Chicago after the death of her father. Angel becomes heavily involved in the Philippine People Power Revolution to help the surviving Filipina "Comfort Women" of World War II. Poet Angela Narciso Torres will open with a reading of her work and a wine reception will conclude the evening. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St., www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Cullerton, Feigenholtz appear with Old Jews Telling Jokes Illinois Senate President John Cullerton, Illinois State Representative Sara Feigenholtz in a special one-night-only appearance in the hit comedy. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Jane Addams Senior Caucus. 7:30pm Royal George Theatre 1641 N Halsted St., <http://OldJewsTellingJokes.com>

Static Berlin Every Wednesday Static Join DJ Pete Augustus and special guests for Static. 9:00pm Berlin Nightclub 954 W Belmont Ave.

Thursday, Jan. 9

The Silver Fork Program orientation Nine-week vocational training program for LGBT and allied adults (18+), who are unemployed or underemployed. Participants receive hands-on training in culinary arts and job readiness. Open call sessions for application, math assessment, English assessment and interview. Bring state ID and social security card. Contact silverfork@centeronhalsted.org to learn more about the next orientation. 1:00pm - 4:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

Gay Christian Network conference With speakers to workshops to entertainment, the conference is a friendly, uplifting weekend for Christians of all ages and backgrounds to make new friends, share

their stories, and have their faith re-energized. Through Jan. 12, 2014. \$165. Conference special room rate: \$119 per night 2:00pm Westin Chicago River North 320 N Dearborn St 919-786-0000 Tickets: <https://gcnconf.com/register>

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 Individuals 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@pflagillinois.org 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St., <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., 800-838-3006, <http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com> Tickets: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com>

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

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>

Shower Contest Dance Party Join Spin Nightclub each Friday for their legendary

Shower Contest at Midnight! Get there by 11:30pm to register! First prize is \$100. Second prize is \$50 Bar Tab! 10:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St

Saturday, Jan. 11

Saturday Brunch at Taverna 750 Not everyone can do Sunday-Funday, so by popular demand Taverna 750's Martini Brunch is available on Saturday's too. 11:00am - 2:00pm Taverna 750, 750 West Cornelia Ave <http://www.taverna750.com>

Dance Party Join Spin Nightclub for their weekly Saturday night dance party, featuring resident DJ Riley York, DJ Chester and DJ Dominic. 9:00pm Spin Nightclub 800 W Belmont Ave

Burning Bowl 2014, Exploding Into the New Year With Rejuvenation. Long-standing Affinity tradition involves purging previous year, writing down affirmations and goals for new year, inspiration, performances, fellowship. Keynote speaker Chris Smith, social services expert, organizational development consultant, PhD candidate, and Affinity's founding board president. Emcee Brandee Young of E3 Radio. Performances by Gira Dahnee, Stacy Erenberg, the Drum Divas. DJ during fellowship meal. 1:30pm - 3:30pm Chicago Theological Seminary, 1407 E. 60th St., Chicago <http://affinity95.org/>

Sunday, Jan. 12

Scott Duff hosts LGBT radio talk show LGBT-specific talk show "Out Chicago" on politics, entertainment, celebrity gossip 11:00am - 1:00pm WCPT 820 AM

Screening: Bridegroom The tragic results of homophobia is explored in this award-winning documentary from writer/producer/director Linda Bloodworth Thomason. With special guest Shane Bitney-Crone. Reception, screening, remarks. For more information, contact Dustin Erikstrup, derikstrup@centeronhalsted.org 4:30pm - 7:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted 773-661-0957 <http://www.centeronhalsted.org> Tickets: <https://community.centeronhalsted.org/Bridegroom>

Chicago Prime Timers Second Sunday of each month open social. Prime Timers are older gay or bisexual men (and younger men who admire mature men). Our members are men who choose to have their social lives enriched by the diverse activities in which our members engage. Those wishing to enjoy alcoholic beverages are asked to bring their own bottle. Set-ups are \$1. Social hour is followed by a dinner and a program at 7pm. \$20 for members or non-members. Non-members and guests are always most welcome. E-mail info@chicagoprimetimers.org 6:00pm Ann Sather - Belmont 909 W Belmont Ave 773-844-1005 <http://www.chicagoprime-timers.org>

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. 7:00pm - 8:00pm The Side Project Theatre 1439 W Jarvis Ave <http://www.thisideproject.net> Tickets: <http://www.thisideproject.net>

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

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 Ave., <http://www.TheatrePros.com> Tickets: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/530226>

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

Tuesday, Jan. 14

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>

Equality Illinois Marriage Forum Forum aimed at increasing support for marriage equality, dispelling myths, and empowering same-sex couples and their families to understand and use all their state and federal marriage rights. 5:30pm Embassy Suites Chicago, 511 N. Columbus Dr., Chicago, <http://www.eqil.org> Tickets: <http://tinyurl.com/downtown-forum>

Marriage Forum in Bloomington-Normal Forum aimed at increasing support for marriage equality, dispelling myths, and empowering same-sex couples and their families to understand and use all their state and federal marriage rights. 6:00pm Bloomington Police Department, Osborn Rm 305 S. East St., Bloomington,



'GROOM' SERVICE

Sunday, Jan. 12

The film *Bridegroom* (featuring Tom Bridegroom, above) will screen at Center on Halsted.

Photo from Oprah Winfrey Network

Ill., 61701 <http://www.eqil.org> Tickets: <http://tinyurl.com/bloomington-forum>

Wed., Jan. 15

Marriage forum in Peoria Forum aimed at educating the public about SB10, dispelling myths, and empowering same-sex couples and their families to understand and use all their state and federal marriage rights. 6 p.m., Fondulac Congregational UCC, 100 Illini Drive East Peoria, Ill., <http://www.eqil.org> Tickets: <http://tinyurl.com/peoria-forum>

Open mic and stage Poetry, music, dance and drag... Everyone has five minutes in the spotlight. Sign up begins at 7:30PM and the show starts at 8PM. Get here early, because space is limited. Featuring host Jason Apollo. 7:30pm - 9:30pm Mary's Attic 5400 N Clark <http://http://www.hamburgermarys.com/chicago>

Friday, Jan. 17

GayCo at Chicago Sketchfest 2014! GayCo performs for its 12th time in the nation's largest sketch festival. Featuring highlights 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>

ATHLETES from page 18

with the kids, the parents and my fellow coaches."

Richardson, 39, lives in Andersonville, is "dating someone special," and works as an interoperability product analyst at Optum.

He played fall flag football for the North End Thundercats and also in 2013 competed with the Lincoln Park Boat Club.

Richardson is the 2013 Chicago male LGBT athlete of the year.

"I've played sports all my life, but have focused on football, basketball, and rowing, with rowing giving me the most success competitively," Richardson said. "My rowing story started in high school, but then I left the sport after the fall season my freshman year in college. I returned in 2002 after returning to Boston where my then-partner suggested doing something to get my mind off of a stressful time of my life."

Football and basketball were the first sports he played with gay people, while a student at Northeastern University in Boston, and they "introduced me to a diverse community of athletes

that I did not know existed," he said. "I've met and maintained some of my closest family of friends through gay sports."

Richardson competed with the Lincoln Park Boat Club at the U.S. Rowing Master's Nationals in Sarasota, Fla., and he returned to Chicago with two medals. "After a couple years of very limited rowing and training due to a surgery (hip arthroscopy) and multiple injuries, it was fantastic, re-energizing and reassuring that I could still compete at a high level and be allowed to row with such a great squad," he said.

Richardson said the overall highlight of his gay sporting career was the Chicago Gay Games in 2006, where he played flag football with the Boston Hancock's, as well as winning a couple medals in rowing with Boston BayBlades.

"The [2006] experience of being among so many gay athletes was overwhelming and inspirational. I hope to return to the Gay Games in 2014," he said.

Richardson has played gay sports for about 15 years.

"I use gay sports as an outlet for fun athletic activity away from the corporate game and all my coaching responsibilities, so I tend to stray away from doing anything too serious in my pri-

ivate time," he said. "However, as my body continues to scream at me to 'cut the bullsh*t,' I think stepping in to help some of the leagues would be fun."

Richardson added, "One of the many values of gay sports is its inclusionary nature. Anyone, LG-BTQ or straight, with any level of athletic talent can join a league and share an experience that will remain with them forever. Often enough, many gay athletes either didn't participate in sports or stayed closeted due to their own deep, personal reasons to which I'm also guilty. Gay sports provide an outlet for like-minded athletes to participate in sport without judgment or exclusion."

The Richardson-led Freeze lost their two Gay Bowl games in the top-tiered A-Division by a combined total of four points.

"Tournament teams are never easy to manage. Successful captains have to find a way to convince a disparate group of talented players to sacrifice individual considerations for the common good of the team," said Andrew Burke, of Chicago. "Charles ranks among the very best leaders in this regard. He worked tirelessly to be prepared: from running months of practices, to player management, to in-game decisions. He

has an extraordinary ability to manage strong egos to create a cohesive team environment. People respect Charles for his discipline, work ethic and his willingness to put the success of the team above individual considerations." Richardson also plays competitive CMSA basketball.

—Favorite pro sport: Football

—Favorite pro team: Washington Redskins

—Favorite pro athlete: "I'm not sure I have a favorite as I admire many different athletes from many different sports, but I admit I'm drawn to those with leadership qualities more than pure talent or groundbreakers.

Groundbreakers include Aquil Abdullah, first black Olympic sculler; Shani Davis, [African-American] gold medal-winning speed skater; or Cullen Jones, a Black Olympic swimmer. Leaders include Kevin Durant and Tim Duncan from the NBA, as they tend to put their heads down and simply do the work without a lot of spectacle.

[Also, there are] London Fletcher and Ray Lewis from the NFL, as their passion, excitement and longevity in the game shows their desire to continue their excellence for as long as possible eventually making them strong leaders for their teams."

BILLY MASTERS

"I know the hurt little boy who lives inside the model body. Let me tell you, he is 5 years old. Mommy's missing—she's at Studio 54. His soup is cold, and all he wants is love. ... And that little boy never grew up. He's got short pants, he's got suspenders, he's having high tea. Somebody just love him. Love him for who he is. He's just a model. He's an underwear model who became a newsmen ... by mistake!"—Kathy Griffin reveals the real Anderson Cooper during New Year's Eve coverage on CNN. She also handcuffed herself to the silver fox—not his first time in restraints, I'm sure.

When it comes to ringing in the New Year, I am as traditional as they come. Friends gather to pay homage at the site of Billy Masters' birth (it's been cleaned up since Big Mama's record 28-minute labor) for Chinese food and Lindsay Wagner movies. This year's two flicks showed incredible range—Lindsay fought cancer and wore an almost realistic bald cap while singing "Scarborough Fair" and then, in the second film, saved Thanksgiving virtually single-handedly for the town of Plymouth, Mass. (even though it was clearly shot in Los Angeles). She never disappoints.

The New Year brought news from a few of our favorite fellas. One of the UK newspapers wrote quite a lengthy account of Zachary Quinto's love life. As you may know, he's currently dating artist/model Miles McMillan. (You can check out every inch of Miles—and there's quite a few of 'em—at BillyMasters.com.) Before that, he was linked with Jonathan Groff. But didya know that his other paramours included Jesse Tyler Ferguson and Colton Haynes? That's what the Brits are saying, and who am I to disagree with them?

The Internet is all abuzz about ABC newsmen David Muir and Gio Benitez. You all know who Muir is—formerly a reporter in Syracuse and Boston, who's perhaps been enhanced by some facial reconstructive surgery, and extremely cagey about his personal life (to say nothing of a wide stance that leans to the left). Benitez is from Miami, where he made a name for himself as a reporter. He was also somewhat active in the gay community. Neither of these men are openly gay, but have been linked together after a series of coincidental appearances on ABC World News. Eagle-eyed viewers claim that Gio usually files his reports to Diane Sawyer from the field. But when Muir fills in as anchor, Benitez miraculously appears in the studio. Coincidence? Gio recently said that Muir is one of his top three "Golden Followers" on Twitter. And unlike Muir, Benitez has no problem being seen in gay bars. In fact, a very hot model named Pablo Hernandez posted a photo with Gio at WeHo hot spot Eleven. Photos of the pair to follow on BillyMasters.com.

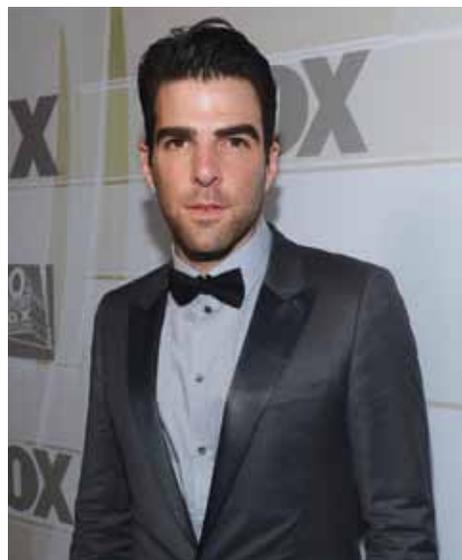
Many celebs dabble in politics. Add Clay Aiken to that list. In a report, someone close to Aiken stated that he has consulted with a political strategist about a possible run for Congress. He's allegedly even made some phone calls to well-placed persons in the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and in Raleigh, NC.

You'd think a U.S. senator could have a hot shaved body, wear a turquoise belt, package-fitting plaid pants and a pink shirt, and not cause a kerfuffle—but, no, apparently not. Despite numerous photo spreads spotlighting his fantastic physique, his penchant for body-conscious fashion and his fascination with footwear, Aaron Schock has gone to great pains to assert his heterosexuality. Alas, he's once again the target of gay scuttlebutt. CBS News' Itay Hod posted quite a diatribe on Facebook: "Here's a hypothetical: what if you know a certain GOP congressman, let's just say from Illinois, is gay ... and you know this because one of your friends, a journalist for a reputable network, told you in no uncertain terms that he caught that GOP congressman and his male roommate in the shower together. Now they could have been good friends just trying to conserve water. But there's more." Since I

want to conserve space, you can read the "more" on BillyMasters.com.

Another Aaron is making some news—Aaron Rodgers. You don't know who he is? Me neither. Apparently, he is a quarterback for the Green Bay Packers. Some people claim that he's been outed by someone being termed as a "scorned boyfriend"—something I know nothing about. (All of my exes are either friends or have had lobotomies.) This story stemmed from a number of tweets from Kevin Lanflisi, who was Rodgers' "roommate" and had been on the payroll as a "personal assistant." The two had been inseparable for quite some time and often turned up at public events "always color coordinated and without any double female dates."

In addition to numerous photos of the pair, there are even pics of Lanflisi wearing Rodgers' Super Bowl MVP ring (which I gather is some sort of big deal). Last week, Aaron moved out, leading Kevin to a number of tweets such as, "All that time spent on 'us' is now spent on 'me.' Which means I have more time to exercise, read, write, dream and save," and "I wish you would



Zachary Quinto has met an actor or two, Billy says. Photo by Frank Ockenfels

learn to love people and use things ... Not the other way around." Adding insult to injury, it's been noted that Rodgers has never once tweeted about any women. He has limited his Twitter topics to the Green Bay Packers, Kevin Lanflisi and sitting in the front row at a Justin Bieber concert. Days later, Rodgers said, "Yeah, I'm just gonna say I'm not gay. I really, really like women." And Justin Bieber, don't forget that.

Could it be that Britney Spears has reunited with a certain member of 'NSync? Yes, but it wasn't Justin Timberlake. It was Lance Bass, who went to catch his old friend's Vegas act days after opening night at Planet Hollywood. But, you didn't think it would be quite as tame as just showing up to say hi. No sirree. Brit brought Bass onstage during "Freakshow," festooned him in a bit of leather regalia, put a leash on him, dropped him to all fours, spanked him with a riding crop and walked him like a dog. In other words, it was a typical Saturday night for Lance. You can get a piece of him (and watch the video) on BillyMasters.com.

When Aaron Rodgers is admitting to loving women and being a Belieber, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Hearing about Britney and Lance brought back some fond memories. Like Spears, I once got porn pup Bobby Clark in a choke collar and walked him like a dog—ah, what happy memories. You can relive all of those on www.BillyMasters.com—the site that never forgets. If you'd like me to investigate anything for you, just drop a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Britney gives Lance the leather ensemble as a wedding gift. Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

DISCO

Sunday, January 19 (the night before MLK Day)

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9pm - 2am · After Sunday Funday Show Tunes

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'BOOKISODE' REVIEW

Back to You

by Rebelle

\$2; Live Justified Books

19 pages (estimated)

BY SALLY PARSONS

From the first sentence of this premiere "bookisode" ("Bullets and blood are the norm here"), the new author Rebelle has our attention. Writing in an easy-flowing style, Rebelle begins us on a journey that neither she nor we know the end of just yet.

At two bucks, we get the initial installment (what she calls a "bookisode") in an evolving series. The author encourages reader feedback and promises to use some of their insights to develop the succeeding installments.

Thus, there is little I can tell you about the arc of the story—the first 19 pages is all one gets for the first investment—so there is a bit of a risk here. How long will the book be, ultimately? The author envisions no more than 200 pages in all.

How much will the reader need to shell out to get the complete story? Rebelle intends to release around 10 bookisodes for Back to You and states the maximum cost to the reader will not exceed \$20. She also states the reader will soon be able to purchase bookisodes directly from her website (www.livejustified-books.com) for \$1, reducing the overall cost to \$10.

I can tell you the premise of the book looks smart, the characters are likeable and, if one cares for this sort of thing, the observations on war and the attempts to avoid it are thoughtful. Given the author's background (she studied peace and post-conflict reconciliation in Uganda and Rwanda, as well as community development and social entrepreneurship in Cape Town, South Africa), she

knows a thing or two about conflict between warring factions.

Back to You begins in the midst of a tense peacekeeping situation. Two female soldiers are on the outlook for sniper bullets. It is unclear where they are. We immediately pick up on the narrator's observations on the futility of war and peace negotiations in a conflict between government forces and rebel factions. "Simply stated, a treaty only works when all actors agree (to some degree) to stop fighting. Unfortunately each time the negotiating table is set, new patrons are presented who demand to be fed their share of social, economic and political freedom."

The tension escalates and Penny, one of the two soldiers and the narrator, is shot. She ends up in the hospital, where she is joined in a cozy reunion with her lover Sophie, also a soldier. Penny and Sophie have served together two years as peacekeepers and are looking forward to just a few more weeks before they can go home and start a new life together.

The bookisode leaves the reader hanging with Penny learning she is being shipped home immediately because of her wound. The author, in proper serial fashion, poses the question: "Can their relationship really endure the escalating conflict?" You have to purchase succeeding bookisodes to find out.

The author offers exclusives and discounts on the next purchase. Check out her website for details.

Rebelle is a devout lover of women. After being closeted much of her life, she recently decided that it was officially time to begin "living in the light." As a result, she founded Live Justified Books in the summer of 2013. She will begin grad school in Washington, D.C., next fall, where she intends to earn an MA in Sustainable Development & International Policy.

Force honored for being national champions

BY ROSS FORMAN

The Chicago Force road to repeating as national champions took a stop Jan. 5 along Bling Boulevard.

The team received its championship rings in a ceremony held at Leona's Restaurant, 1936 W. Augusta Ave., on Chicago Force Women's Tackle Football Team Day in Illinois and also the city of Chicago, as proclaimed by Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn and a separate proclamation presented by 2nd Ward Ald. Robert W. Fioretti, who attended and spoke at the event.

"For me, there were two highlights [Sunday]: the honors we received from Chicago City Council and the state of Illinois, and then the utter joy I felt presenting each Force member with their championship ring," said team owner Linda Bache. "The [state of Illinois] proclamation is signed by Governor Quinn and was presented to us by his chief of staff, Mica Matsoff, who is a huge football fan. My favorite text from the document is, 'The Chicago Force Women's tackle Football players are first-class champions who excel both on and off the field, and provide a shining example to girls and women about what they can achieve in sports and in life.'"

"Ald. Bob Fioretti has been fantastic. He reached out several weeks ago to notify us that he had sponsored our resolution and requested the opportunity to present it at our Ring Ceremony. The resolution states that we 'exemplify the indomitable spirit of the great city of Chicago' and it 'celebrates our pioneering and distinguished example for establishing a sports legacy for women and girls too often unheralded and overlooked in the sports arena.'"

"The text from both documents rings true for

who we are and what we've accomplished. The team was ecstatic to have received these honors from Chicago City Council and the State of Illinois and that representatives from both entities made it a priority to attend our celebration and address the team."

The Force claimed its first-ever national championship, winning the title over Dallas in a game played last August in San Diego. The Force, which is represented in the LGBT community on the field and in its front-office, including Bache and star quarterback Sami Grisafe, among others, landed at No. 1 in the Windy City Times' Top 13 Chicago LGBT Sports Stories from 2013.

"It seemed like the rings took forever to get here [and the] players kept asking when they were arriving," Bache said. "The shipment arrived at my house last week. I didn't take my ring outside of the house, but I wore it constantly while I was at home. It felt like it belonged on my hand and had been looking for me for a really long time."

"The rings are formidable—they scream CHAMPION. They are a tangible symbol of our accomplishment and a reminder of all the effort and sacrifice it took to get to the top."

About 90 percent of the 2013 players and staff attended the ring ceremony, braving the winter blizzard.

"It meant a lot to have everybody together again to honor our accomplishment. It was so nice to have another great memory with this group," Bache said. "Presenting the players, coaches and staff with their rings was very emotional. Most of them are veteran members of the organization and have worked extremely hard for many years to achieve this dream. It was very satisfying to be able to hand them their rings."



Members of the Chicago Force women's football team pose with 2nd Ward Ald. Robert Fioretti. Photo by Ross Forman

The 2014 season begins in April, and the Force will again play its home games at Evanston Township High School.

"I think we're in a good position to repeat in 2014 if we stay healthy and focused," Bache said. "Injuries to key players can derail any team, so that is always a concern. We would love to be the first team in [Women's Football Alliance] WFA history to win back-to-back national championships."

The 2014 Chicago Force calendar is now available (\$10), and will be available at the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) party on Jan. 25 at Joe's on Weed Street. Calendars also can be purchased online at: <http://www.chicagoforcefootball.com/news.asp?ID=193>

Quarterback denies gay rumors

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers, appearing on his weekly radio show ahead of the Jan. 5 playoff rematch with the San Francisco 49ers, disputed recent Internet rumors that he is gay, according to the San Jose Mercury News.

"I'm just going to say I'm not gay," Rodgers said Tuesday on 540 ESPN Milwaukee. "I really, really like women. That's all I can really say about that."

Green Bay lost to San Francisco in Wisconsin 23-20, ending the Packers' season.



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Ray J. Koenig III and Clark Hill PLC



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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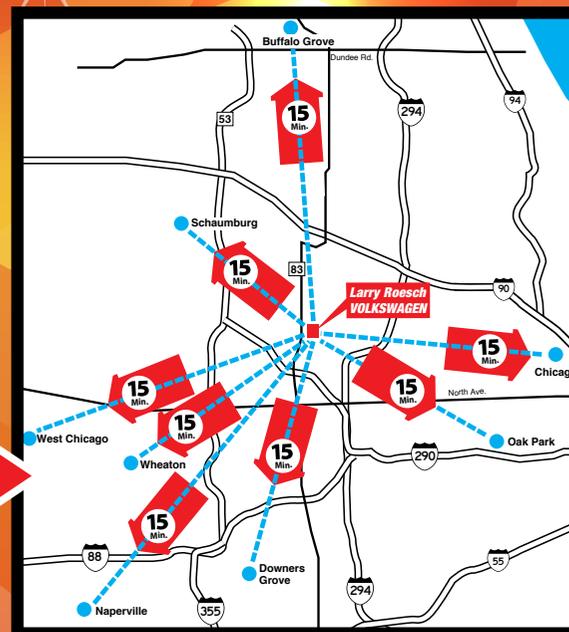
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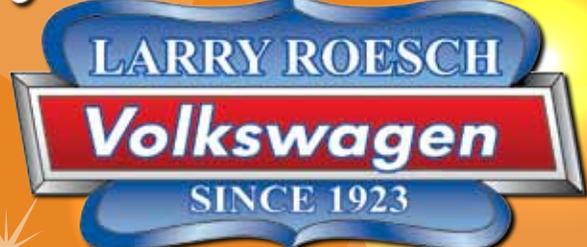


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