



CARYN BERMAN REFLECTS ON HER ACTIVISM

PAGE 8

WINDY CITY TIMES

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ROB SMITHERMAN WEIGHS IN ON THE GAY GAMES 9 PREVIEW
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Supermodel comes out as transgender



Supermodel Andreja Pejic.
Photo by Giampaolo Sgura

BY TERRI-LYNNE WALDRON

Earlier this year, androgynous male model Andrej Pejic underwent gender-reassignment surgery. As part of that transition, Pejic modified her name from Andrej to Andreja.

She has been the toast of the modeling industry for the past four years, gracing the covers of Elle, i-D, Out and New York magazines. Pejic has been on international shows modeling haute couture, and has successfully (cat) walked the line between modeling both men and women's clothing.

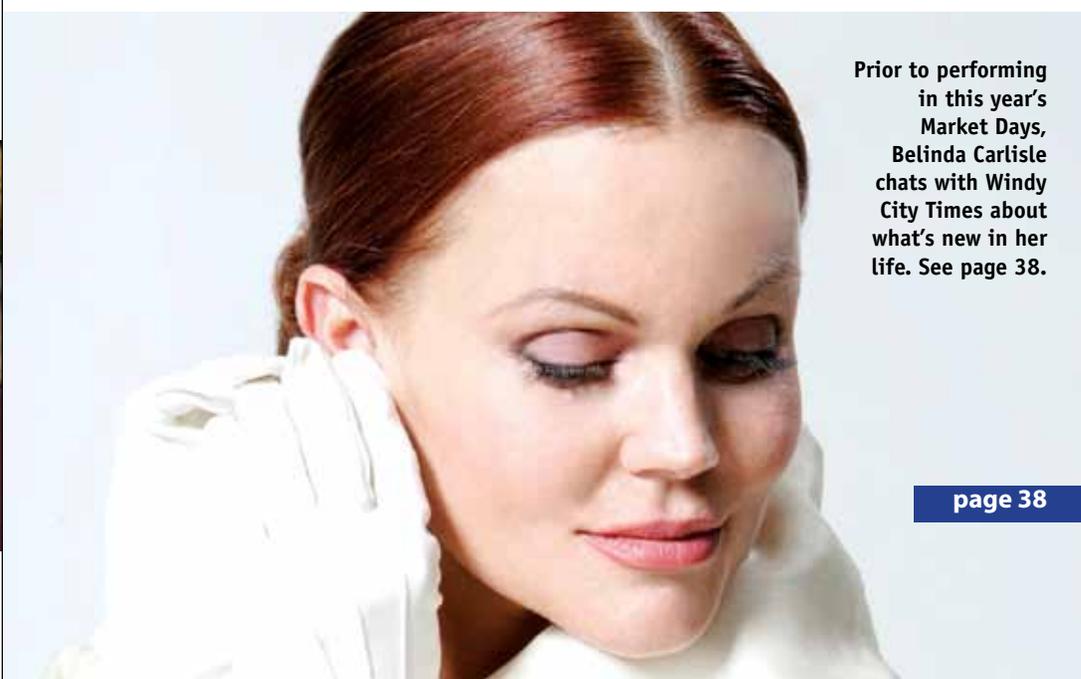
However, she was not comfortable in her own skin and underwent the surgery that she had started researching a decade ago. Pejic will continue to model, but just on a different level. In an email interview with Windy City Times, the Serbian-Bosnian-Croatian model

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WEDDING SPECIAL
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MAD ABOUT YOU



Prior to performing in this year's Market Days, Belinda Carlisle chats with Windy City Times about what's new in her life. See page 38.

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Exposé could lead to protections for LGBT steelworkers

BY DERRICK CLIFTON

For LGBT workers at steel mills, it hasn't gotten better. But there's hope.

Even with the waves of progress in America on issues such as same-sex marriage and employment non-discrimination laws from state-to-state, progress seems to have missed steelworkers at plants across the country, including in Chicago's backyard. They endure on-the-job harassment, sexual assault, physical threats, violent attacks and can be fired at any time just because of who they are—because Indiana doesn't protect LGBT workers.

But at an upcoming international steelworkers' union convention Aug. 11 in Las Vegas, that could all change with an affirmative vote on an LGBT employment protection resolution.

The plight of the steelworkers was brought to light

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CHURCH FIRES GAY MUSIC DIRECTOR
PAGE 6

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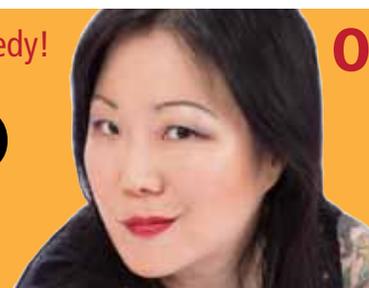
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Images on cover (left, from top): Photo of Caryn Berman by Tracy Baim; photo of Rob Smitherman from Smitherman; photo of Alicia Oeser (left) and Kate Sosin by Felix Risk Photographers; photo of Colin Collette and William Nifong courtesy of Nifong

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OH, LORDE
Lorde and a host of other musical acts entertained thousands at Lollapalooza.
Photo of Lorde by Jerry Nunn



Singer Jackson Harris talks about "Vampires," Disney and Demi Lovato.
Press photo

VOICES CARRY
Jill Sobule, Cathy Richardson and Sami Grisafe put on an entertaining show at City Winery.

WCT reviews the theatrical production **Geezers**.
Photo by Nicole Johnston

PARENTAL GUIDANCE
Dan Barcus reflects on being a single, gay dad who raises special-needs children.



SIMPLY THE FEST
LezFest recently took place at Hamburger Mary's.
Photo by Tracy Baim

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT
Find out the latest about Jennifer Hudson, Morrissey and Jesse Tyler Ferguson.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

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National groups offer support to LGBT cancer survivors

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

Cancer does not discriminate, but the resources, support groups and research available to cancer patients and survivors often have.

As a result, in 1998 Malecare Inc., a nonprofit men's cancer survivor support and advocacy organization, was founded, with The National LGBT Cancer Project-Out With Cancer organization following in 2005.

Out with Cancer focuses on providing cancer survivor support to all members of the LGBT community, while The National LGBT Cancer Project serves as the organization's advocacy arm.

Darryl Mitteldorf, founder of Malecare Inc. and Out with Cancer co-founder, said though Malecare was a successful organization, it became clear that a support group focused on the entire LGBT community could accomplish more, particularly in the area of advocacy, than the many small individual support groups that had sprung up in communities across the country.

"We were concerned that there might be research opportunities that might be missed, particularly with clinical trials and psychological-social support research," Mitteldorf said.

He noted many of the psychological-social support issues cancer survivors experience are not gender or sexual identity specific.

Since their founding, Mitteldorf believes both Malecare and Out with Cancer, which he said was the first organization of its kind, has had an impact on helping the LGBT community gain the recognition of cancer researchers.

"We can identify peer reviewed articles, contemporary research, [including] National Institute of Health research, around gay and bisexual men and trans women cancer survivorship," he said. "LGBT research and LGBT specific research is still becoming prominent now."

He said in 2005 there were no narrative style articles about gay survivorship. He also noted when he first began attending the annual American Society of Clinical Oncology conference, which is held in Chicago each year, he suffered ramifications for displaying a poster focused on gay and bisexual men and prostate cancer research.

"My poster was ripped up and thrown to the ground," he said. "That person was thrown out, but that kind of thing existed."

He said Malecare and Out with Cancer also had a direct impact on the development of an entirely new field of study, gay psychosocial oncology.

Psychosocial oncology is a field of interdisciplinary study that looks at the psychological and social aspects of cancer on an individual. Gay psychosocial oncology focuses on the psychological and social aspects of a cancer diagnoses on LGBT individuals specifically.

"It's a very interesting and important thing that a couple hundred people now research, Mitteldorf said.



Out with Cancer co-founder Darryl Mitteldorf. Photo courtesy of the organization

Cancer research that is inclusive of the LGBT community remains crucial, according to Mitteldorf, which is one of the reasons Malecare has launched StartACure.com, a crowdfunding website specifically focused on funding cancer research projects.

"Over the next year or two, we hope to be presenting with state-of-the-art style research projects from places like Harvard, Columbia, UCLA and others," he said. "We actually funded something recently at Johns Hopkins through that platform."

As far as providing support to LGBT cancer survivors, Out with Cancer has seen more than 153,000 members join since 2005.

The organization provides an online Facebook-style community and members have reached out to one another to form local meet up groups in their communities across the country.

"We also have collaborations with [other cancer-support] organizations," he said.

For example, Out with Cancer is currently partnering with Gilda's Club Chicago to provide training and support for a new facilitator.

Mitteldorf said at its heart the mission of Out with Cancer is to identify the unique issues the LGBT community faces around cancer survivorship, cancer treatment, cancer diagnoses and in relationships between patients and doctors when a patient is a LGBTQ identified person so it can provide much-needed support.

Open To Thinking

BY NICK PATRICCA



Children Crossing Borders

The Beast (La Bestia) is a network of freight trains that connects Mexico's southern border with Guatemala and Belize to its northern border with the USA—about 1,500 miles. These trains move slowly, like fat caterpillars, as they haul the types of cargo you would expect freight trains to carry, except for the cargo of people sitting on the roofs of the cars—thousands of people. In a recent derailment of only one section of one train in Oaxaca, medics treated 1,300 riders of the Beast.

This human cargo, more and more of which are children, travels without any protection: they are exposed to the elements; preyed upon by criminals and corrupt police; have little food, water or clothing; and suffer, not infrequently, from the dangers of the train ride itself—the loss of arms and fingers and legs and, at times, life itself. According to the Catholics and Evangelical Christians who run shelters along the freight rail network, eighty percent of those who travel by the Beast are robbed of their

Invasion Of The Children: The Facts

The surge in the numbers of children crossing our southern borders comes from the rapid increase of children—13 years old and under—fleeing violence caused by gangs fighting over drug profits, turf, and routes in Central American countries, primarily El Salvador and Honduras at this time. Let us consider Honduras: CBP documents 974 unaccompanied minors from Honduras in 2011; 2,997 in 2012; and 6,747 in 2013. Unofficial data for 2014, however, and stronger controls on Mexico's southern borders seem to indicate that the rate of the influx might be slowing down.

These children, some as young as nine years old, are being forced to choose between death and recruitment into a gang, which means death postponed by a few years—at best.

Without excusing the failures of the governments and societies of these nation-states, we must admit our own responsibility for the deplorable situations that force children to flee such

destructive chaos in their native countries. Our government has contributed greatly to this destructive chaos by its repeated interventions into the political and economic life of the nations in Central America. And, of course, our 'war on drugs,' which has failed to control drug use, traffic and violence in our own country, has

"In absolute numbers, overall we have fewer illegal immigrants and fewer illegal child migrants crossing our borders today than we did in 2000. So, why all this political hysteria and media feeding frenzy about the invasion of the U.S. by children?"

possessions; sixty percent of the women, of all ages, are raped. Some of the children are kidnapped and sold into sexual and other forms of slavery.

Yet, most migrants, in the face of such cruel odds, climb back on La Bestia to continue their journey to the USA—to the land of hope for a better life.

According to the statistical tables of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), overall illegal immigration into the U.S. has steadily declined since the year 2000 when it reached a peak of around 1,600,000 persons apprehended by a total work force of 7,500 border agents. In 2013 around 420,000 undocumented immigrants were apprehended by a work force of 18,000 border agents. In 2000, more than 100,000 undocumented, unaccompanied children (ages 0-17) were apprehended. In 2013, the number of 'illegal' children was 38,000. For the fiscal year 2014, the estimates are 46,000 to 80,000, well under the benchmark numbers for the year 2000.

In absolute numbers, overall we have fewer illegal immigrants and fewer illegal child migrants crossing our borders today than we did in 2000. So, why all this political hysteria and media feeding frenzy about the invasion of the U.S. by children? And just who are these children who are invading us?

exported MS 13 and Barrio 18 gangs to El Salvador—gangs formed in Los Angeles drug wars and prisons—and has destabilized one country after another as is now the case in Honduras.

Our Congress—by unanimous acclamation—passed and President Bush signed the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 which requires our border officials to determine whether children from Central American nations are victims of child trafficking or other abuses before they can be deported.

The crisis at our borders is not the lack of border agents but the lack of judges to adjudicate the status of the children processed into our systems.

Between 1960 and 1962, our government gave refugee status to 14,000 Cuban teenagers because of rumors that Castro might force them into military schools.

With one stroke of the pen, President Obama has the power to declare the children crossing our borders to be refugees. In the meantime, these children are entitled by U.S. law to due process. They should be respected as persons in need.

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

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Inverness church fires employee after he announces engagement

BY MATT SIMONETTE

For Colin Collette and William Nifong, the Ponte Sant'Angelo—the Bridge of the Holy Angel—in Rome, seemed to be the perfect place to get engaged.

Collette, at the time, was director of worship at Holy Family Catholic Church in Inverness, where he'd been for 17 years. Nifong is a teacher of classics.

"At one end of the bridge, you've got Hadrian's Tomb, which means so much to Will," said Collette. "At the other end, you've got St. Peter's Basilica, which, as a Catholic, is important to me. It was this perfect intersection of our worlds, at this moment where our lives would be intersecting even more."

But their excitement over the engagement, which they announced on social media, was short-lived. The couple returned to Illinois and on July 27 Collette was asked by Father Terry Keehan for his resignation from Holy Family.

He and Nifong suspect some conservative congregants might have seen the posts and complained: "There were some groups who were more conservative, but nothing was ever said to my face," Collette said, noting that he had no complaints about his job performance and, on July 1, had received a merit-based pay increase.

Collette refused to tender his resignation. The following day, Keehan phoned Collette and asked once more. When Collette refused again, Keehan told him, "I'm relieving you of all your services, effective immediately," according to Collette.

Nifong described Holy Family as an "open

place." He and Collette have been together for five years and he noted that "for at least the last four [years], I have been a completely known entity around the church." He would sing in the choir on Christmas or when members were unavailable, for example, and did readings during services. Each year he did an extensive reading in Latin on Holy Thursday.

Collette added they socialized as a couple with numerous individuals in the congregation, including Keehan. "When members would get married, we would receive invitations addressed to 'Colin Collette and Will Nifong.'"

They only once had concerns about their being out as a couple, Nifong noted. When Collette's mother died a few years ago, he mentioned "his partner, Will," during the memorial mass, and was warned not to do so publicly again.

"As long as you don't make them uncomfortable and fly under their radar, everything's alright," Nifong said.

The Archdiocese of Chicago released a statement that said, "Those that serve as Ministers of the Church, including worship ministers, are expected to conform their lives publicly with the teachings of the Church."

So soon after the firing, Collette and Nifong are not yet sure of Collette's legal standing; Collette said that they'd spoken with a lawyer but he was not confident about having many recourses. Nifong pointed out that the Archdiocese has a notice on its website saying that it is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and noted Collette did not recall ever signing a document that included a morals clause.

"They were trying to set it up so that I did



Colin Collette and William Nifong. Photo courtesy of Nifong

not have a [legal] leg to stand on and so that I can't collect unemployment insurance," Collette said.

But he added that he has been heartened by the tremendous outpouring of support from within the Holy Family community, and not just from the current membership: "I have gotten mail from places like California and Boston, from many former members."

"This is a man who played the organ when his feet could barely touch the pedals," added Nifong. "He is a man of great faith and spirit. I know I'm biased, but he was not only the musical heart of that church but it's energetic heart as well—in another time or place, he would have made a great priest or a spiritual leader."

Collette said he's going to miss his job: "That was my life. Aside from Will, that was the most important part of my life."

Uganda anti-gay law struck down

Gay-rights activists in Uganda and around the world are celebrating a decision by the country's constitutional court to strike down an anti-gay law on a legal technicality.

A five-judge panel ruled Aug. 1 that the speaker of parliament acted illegally when she allowed a vote on the measure despite at least three objections that not enough MPs (members of Parliament) were in attendance.

However, activists warned that homosexuality remains a criminal offense in the African country under colonial-era laws.

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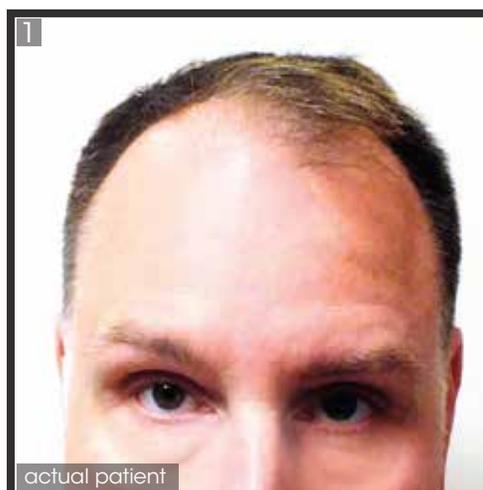


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Caryn Berman reflects on her life of activism

BY TRACY BAIM

Caryn Berman, 62, has always been a fighter. She was among the first people working on the front lines against HIV and AIDS in 1980s Chicago.

Now Berman is in the final battle of her life—the cancer she has lived with off and on for several years has returned, and it is terminal.

Berman is spending her last days with her wife of 36 years, Laura Cuzzillo, surrounded by the memories of the life they shared together in their Lincolnwood home. She is starting to say goodbye to friends and family.

Berman helped organize the AIDS Foundation of Chicago with William Young and Drs. Ron Sable and Renslow Sherer. She also was instrumental in founding the Hispanic AIDS Network, and she was on the city's first Mayor's Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues, under Mayor Harold Washington.

She started the PASSAGES HIV project at Horizons Community Services, where she was also a volunteer therapist, and she was an organizer of the agency's annual Identity conferences. She worked at Travelers and Immigrants Aid, and worked with the Chicago Board of Health to develop protocols and health policies for HIV and AIDS. She also worked for several years with the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Berman, a psychotherapist and social worker, was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 1995. The Hall of Fame website states: "Berman's impact on the mental health of lesbians and gay men goes far beyond her own clinical work. She has taught courses on psychotherapy with gay and lesbian clients to both gay and non-gay students and practitioners in psychology and social work at the Illinois School of Professional Psychology and the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration."

Because she was so engaged in the LGBT and AIDS movements, Berman also wants to say goodbye to the community, so she shared her thoughts about life, and dying, with Windy City Times July 31. These kinds of interviews are never easy, but they are an honor to do. In my 30 years in LGBT media, I have seen so much death, and covered the final moments of so many amazing people. The AIDS crisis has taken thousands of Chicagoans, but we have also lost many to cancer, accidents and tragedies.

And Caryn Berman has been there right in the heart of that loss. Catapulted into AIDS activism by the death of a close friend in 1985, Berman never questioned her involvement in fighting the disease on both the medical and political fronts.

After moving to Chicago from her native New York City, Berman received a masters in social service administration from the University of Chicago in 1980. This made her uniquely positioned to take part in the AIDS movement here, from both a lesbian perspective and as a public health advocate.

"Having lived through the AIDS crisis, how it affects us now, as we're aging and we're dying—at least through my filter—I have less fear about dying myself because we've lost friends, in a way we accompanied them, and their buddies, and sat with people who were dying ... looked after them, and it's not so foreign," Berman said. "I think our attitudes toward death ... would be easier for us because we've already ... been forced through the epidemic to come up with some sense of why and where does it all lead to."

"You just have to develop, in the face of the

epidemic, or as an aging adult, you need to have a perspective about death and life ... I feel comfortable with it, that I'm dying. I don't feel afraid of it. ... I will see a lot of people I know, and there will be a collective pooling of our energy and resources, for recycling.

"When I first got diagnosed, it was hard to believe. I had no risk. That was five years ago. It would go away for a couple months ... then it came back. ... all in all, [I had] five different chemo [courses]. It truly gave me a chance to get used to it. This last time came out of nowhere. I had been in remission for 20 months, we'd been having the time of our lives. Laura retired about a year and a half ago, around the time of my remission. We had been traveling and having a lot of fun.

"In June I was diagnosed and started chemo. The chemo didn't work because my liver wasn't working. They found the tumors on my liver were blocking the bile duct, therefore no chemo would be administered because it couldn't be processed by the liver ... so I will basically die of liver disease, liver failure.

"I've always been like fight, fight, fight. ... But it was like hearing there's no fight left—there's nothing to fight. ... That was pretty shocking ... but I knew one day it would happen."

There is so much more acceptance and less fear of LGBTs, and HIV and AIDS, than 30 years ago, the couple agreed. "Even my experience going into the cancer center as a lesbian, I was totally out and never experienced any issues," Berman said. Cuzzillo added she was never questioned as Berman's primary support person.

The couple was married in 2010 in Iowa after that state legalized same-sex marriages. "I never wanted to do a civil union, I thought it was silly," Berman said. "I don't need the government to give me window dressing."

Cuzzillo said they were going to hold out for federal recognition and Illinois marriages, but then Berman was diagnosed with cancer in 2009. "We said, we're not going to wait ... we're going to elope to Iowa."

They had a double ceremony with a gay male couple who they knew in Iowa. The person who performed the ceremony was Polk County District Court Judge Robert Hanson, who wrote the opinion in favor of marriage equality in Iowa. His ruling was stayed pending an appeal to the state Supreme Court, where it was eventually upheld.

When asked about how they maintained a 36-year relationship, Berman sweetly sang a bit of a song and they said that every relationship has its good times and bad, and that they worked hard through any difficulties. "We didn't have many role models," Cuzzillo said. "We just made our own way, and figured out how to love each other, and compromise when we needed to."

"You need some baseline assessment of 'Am I in one that I should stick to?' Once you've answered that, then you stick to it, no matter what. But I wouldn't want people to stick to bad [relationships]," Berman said.

Reflecting back on her activism, Berman said it was "exciting" and "defining" to be on Mayor Washington's gay and lesbian committee, and she met Washington several times. Berman said she saw people as individuals, which is why she was able to work with gay men at a time when there were more gender divisions in the community.

Cuzzillo said she remembers that a lesbian once questioned Berman about working on the "men's issue" of HIV. "That offended me



Laura Cuzzillo (left) and Caryn Berman. Photo by Tracy Baim

to the nth degree," Berman said. "It was just so ignorant of what disease really is and how it works, and what the trajectory was bound to be," Cuzzillo added.

"The hard part was the racial divides," Berman said. "Here we are on the mayor's committee," and then there were still racial divisions in the city.

"I think the future is with young people, because they don't care [about differences]," Cuzzillo said. Berman added: "It's been such a thrill to see the marriage bills pass, or be overturned, it's like no way did we think in our lifetime we would see this ... it never occurred to us [in the 1970s and 1980s]."

"What's sad is the larger truth is lost," Berman said. "At the same time you're seeing gay rights sweeping [the country] and support legislatively, you're also seeing the whole breakdown of a woman's right to choose—more and more restrictions. It feels like these things should be proportional and not inverse. The more people that understand love, and the privacy of love, why don't the same people understand the privacy of decisions over your own body? Especially decisions about life and death. It all to me goes the same. ... I don't see why people don't see this all on a continuum of individuals ... how did things get so backward?"

Being Jewish has been a big part of Berman's life. "I love being Jewish, I very much relate as a culture. ... it's a happenstance at birth, I enjoy it, it's familiar to me. ... I don't think it's any better than any other religion," she said. "I feel very good about God, I don't feel God is in charge of everything. There is no control, folks. The universe has been unleashed. ... I think there's a universal spirit that had something to do with unleashing these forces. I feel comfortable that when I die, I'll join it, this great pool of energy, I'll be recycled. I don't know if I'll retain my own identity, or just be stirred in the soup. I think we're part of something really big, and we're all connected. I like the concept of the collective unconscious, the idea that there's a part of our consciousness that's totally unconscious that's hard-wired and connects us all."

Berman said she "feels good about dying. I'm not afraid. ... I'm worried about pain ... that's why I am in hospice care. It was a very symbolic moment, when I did have pain and I had to ask for the morphine. Knowing it meant things were getting beyond the capability to endure."

Stroking Cuzzillo's arm, Berman added, "The part I don't like talking about is being separated from Laura, that's the real fear, us not being together. That's just terrible. ... Laura is going to suffer for a long time, she's suffering already seeing me in pain. She's suffering because she can't help me, and because she knows she's go-

ing to be alone."

Family and friends are visiting the couple in limited interactions, so she can conserve the energy of her final days. She's asking her closest friends, her "usual suspects," to be there in her final moments, and to be part of the Jewish ritual of purifying the body.

Asked for her final advice for the community, Berman added some wisdom, mixed in with humor: "Have a good time, enjoy your life, don't put it all off for tomorrow. What's the point of all the activism if you're not gonna have fun? Do your business now. Fix your communications now. Be honest now. Be real, be a mensch. Don't forget to be loving. Fighting for the greater cause doesn't give you an excuse to be an asshole."

For the complete video interview, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AANK70sTgV8>.

In 2007, the couple sat down for an interview with the ChicagoGayHistory.org project at <http://chicagogayhistory.org/biography.html?id=798>.

Those who know Berman and want to send a message can do so via email at c.berman@att.net.

State takes step to end trans insurance bias

Several Illinois-based advocacy groups jointly praised the Illinois Department of Insurance July 29 for taking a first step in addressing discrimination against transgender Illinoisans in insurance coverage.

The organizations are the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Lambda Legal and the TransLife Center of Chicago House & Social Service Agency.

The bulletin issued to private insurers in the state notes that many insurance plans sold in Illinois may not discriminate against transgender people and must provide them coverage for the same medical treatment available for non-transgender policy holders. The bulletin cites Illinois law and the federal Affordable Care Act, both of which prohibit discrimination by insurers against trans people because of their gender identity.

"Up until today, insurance plans often denied coverage for services from the routine to the complex simply on the basis of the individual being transgender," according to Christopher Clark, counsel for Lambda Legal. "There is simply no justification for these denials."

PROTECTIONS from cover

in a recent book, *Steel Closets: Voices of Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Steelworkers*, written by scholar and lecturer Anne Balay. The former instructor at Indiana University Northwest told *Windy City Times* that, following the release of her book earlier this spring, many of the workers in Gary, Ind., and elsewhere in that state decided they would approach their local union bosses and take action.

"One of them went to their local [union] steward, and the local president, and then to a civil rights coordinator and a bunch of meetings ... and the language of their contract went through [with protections]," Balay said. "And it got everyone else excited ... there seems to be a positive feeling that once the resolution gets to the convention that it'll get wide support."

Balay opted to be a partner in that very process, even drafting a sample resolution for workers and union figureheads to tweak and formalize into procedural language, given her years and thorough knowledge of the broader issue gained through her original research and countless hours of interviews with individual steelworkers.

Some of those factory employees and leaders, including straight ally Paul Kaczocha of northwest Indiana, are heartened and hopeful with the progress they've already seen. Kaczocha's local, based out of the ArclorMittal plant in Burns Harbor, Indiana, voted almost unanimously in favor of protecting their LGBT steelworkers.

"The thing is that people have so many relatives, children, who have been touched by LGBT discrimination and they're much more open about this than they were 20 years ago, let alone 40 years ago when I was hired into my shop," said Kaczocha, a past president of his local, who says he will retire soon. "Mills can be a brutal place to work. If you show any weaknesses, people exploit them. If someone was openly gay or lesbian, they probably did get harassed by people over the years."

Kaczocha said the broader governing body, United Steelworkers International, would likely not shy away from the issue at the Aug. 11 meeting, where many policies and procedures are revisited during a constitutional convention.

Indeed, the issue isn't confined to northwest Indiana mills and, in fact, extends to unions nationally.

In her recently released book, *Out in the Union: A Labor History of Queer America*, New York University professor Miriam Frank documented various LGBT labor issues that have impacted the community's civil rights and economic empowerment. Frank said that organized labor has had an active role in helping secure the recent wave of wins for equal marriage in America, and that "right away" is barely soon enough for workers to get the protection they truly deserve.

"Roadblocks of prejudice and ignorance will only fall if USW commits to mobilizing all straight allies within the union," Frank said, adding that they must support "Pro-active education about sexual diversity within the workforce" and "immediate responses to complaints of discrimination and harassment."



Anne Balay at a Lavender University lecture in April. Photo by Derrick Clifton

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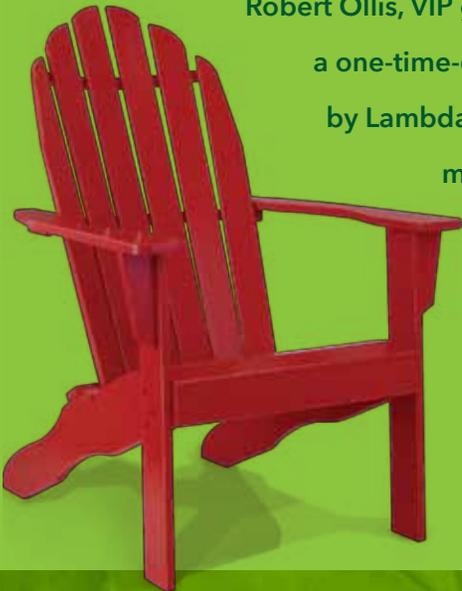
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Eychaner Foundation launches '1,000 Kids for Iowa'

The Eychaner Foundation held a press conference to announce a major new crisis initiative to relocate children incarcerated along the southwestern border of the United States to Iowa.

Gay businessman Rich Eychaner, brother of Chicago gay businessman Fred Eychaner, started the program.

The program, called "1,000 Kids for Iowa," will involve local communities, churches and individuals registering their willingness to house one or more children or donate much needed supplies, services and support to these children when they arrive in Iowa.

The program calls upon the federal government to transfer 1,000 children from incarceration to Iowa to be cared for and supported by Iowa families until such time as the crisis is resolved by political leaders and children can be safely reunited with their families.

The Eychaner Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. The foundation invests in distinguished minority students through Iowa's Matthew Shepard Scholarship Program and the Howard and Mildred Eychaner Minority Scholarship in DeKalb, Illinois.

Forum explores police violence against residents

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Members of the organization We Charge Genocide, as well as other activists and community members, gathered Aug. 2 at Roosevelt University, 430 S. Michigan Ave., to discuss targeting, harassment and violence against Chicago residents by members of the Chicago Police Department (CPD).

We Charge Genocide describes itself as “a grassroots, inter-generational effort to center the voices and experiences of the young people most targeted by police violence in Chicago.”

The afternoon featured spoken-word performances and testimonials about police action in the city’s neighborhoods, as well as individual workshops. Participants described multiple incidents wherein Chicagoans, most of them persons of color, would be randomly stopped by CPD officers, often being detained, then released, for fitting vague descriptions of suspects recently committed crimes or just happening to be nearby when trouble broke out.

“That’s a story that happens too many times...We get stopped and harassed too [often],” said Darius Lightfoot, a youth organizer.

Ethan Viets-VanLear of Circles and Ciphers described harassment that started just as he entered high school. Shortly before the school year began, he and another friend were involved in a bike accident. A few weeks later, he and friends were rounded up by the CPD, he said, and questioned for a crime simply because their information was on file from the time of the accident.

“We were the five brown kids who they knew were around,” Viets-VanLear said, adding that the harassment of his friends “has not really stopped as they’ve gotten older.”

Veronica Morris-Moore, also a youth orga-



Jasmine Davis at the police-violence forum. Photo by Matt Simonette

nizer, spoke of a protest on the University of Chicago (UChicago) campus wherein she was dragged away and detained by UChicago police without being charged or arrested. She said she was taken to the emergency room and isolated, with a UC communications official nearby and campus police in the hallway: “I felt uncomfortable and did not receive treatment for my injury,” she said.

Jasmine Davis talked about a traffic stop that

went awry—she was harassed by a CPD officer when she was riding in the back seat of a car a friend was driving. She also recalled an incident wherein police arrived in her neighborhood and told her friends and her to “get out of our streets.”

Davis noted the irony: “I’m the one who lives there, and they come there for eight hours a day to go to work.”

Christopher Pierce said, “It’s just a normal thing for a Black person, let alone a young Black male.”

Pierce led police on a chase and said he was so brutally beaten by officers afterwards that his tongue was nearly severed. He had some outstanding warrants at the time of the incident and noted that has been difficult to turn his life around from the stigmatization that the incident and a subsequent incarceration brought with them.

“That’s not to say that I was right, but what can I do with these labels?” Pierce asked. “I’m not an animal and I refuse to be beat like one. The police don’t have any right to do what they

are doing.”

“Who the hell is supposed to respect people who do shit like that?” asked co-emcee Malcolm Linden after Pierce told his story. “What kind of city allows them to do that?”

Linden then parsed the term “Chiraq” that has often been bandied about in both mainstream and social media recently, to the consternation of many city residents. But Linden suggested that the term may be apropos not because of the savagery of the citizens, but the city’s escalation of its militaristic response to crime.

“Every year police budgets go up,” he said, allowing the city to purchase weapons and armor that are increasingly sophisticated and deadly. “That’s how they treat the citizens who pay taxes—and their [pay-]checks.”

We Charge Genocide members meet on the third Tuesday of every month at Grace Place, 637 S. Dearborn St., 5:30-8 p.m. Additionally, they will be holding a “Copwatch” training on Aug. 21 at 6-8 p.m. For more information, visit wechargegenocide.org.

Housing activists rally to support SRO resolution

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Shortly before the Chicago City Council on July 30 approved, without discussion, a resolution temporarily banning the conversion and demolition of single-room occupancy (SRO) buildings, activists, housing advocates and city officials gathered outside the Council’s chambers to lend their support to the measure and call attention to the need for more affordable housing in the city.

The resolution, which Mayor Rahm Emanuel backed, puts into place a six-month moratorium on permits that even partially reduce the number of units in an SRO. It was applauded July 30 by members of Chicago for All Coalition, which is headed by the organization ONE Northside.

“The moratorium is just one step along the way to a more long-term solution,” said Norman Kaseberg of ONE Northside, adding that the coalition is aiming for a new, more comprehensive ordinance in September.

“Since 2008, 30 of the city’s licensed SROs closed, and only five to six thousand units of housing remain,” said Department of Buildings Commissioner Felicia Davis. “There are 73 licensed SROs throughout the city. In the past three years, at least four SRO Hotels closed, including the Belair Hotel, Sheffield House, and the Chateau Hotel, leaving close to 600 residents displaced and with very limited other reliable housing options. The moratorium ordinance is valid to stem displacement of Chicago’s most vulnerable residents

while a more permanent and sound solution is worked on and put in place.”

The city will “take stock and try to work with property owners, developers, non-profit organizations and advocates while we evaluate all sides,” she added, noting that her department will continue to issue work permits to maintain and upgrade existing units.

Fred Bartels, who has lived at the Milshire Hotel in Logan Square since 2007, said the hotel gave him an affordable option for living in a safe neighborhood, close to public transportation: “Rents are getting so high in Chicago right now, that, without the Milshire, I would have been out on the street.” The hotel’s residents have been battling eviction notices that were sent out this past spring.

Ald. Walter Burnett, one of the lead sponsors of the resolution, added, “We’re not against development—we’re against displacement. This organization may be called ‘ONE Northside,’ but we’re all about ‘One Chicago.’ We’re here to make sure all Chicago has a decent place to live and a decent place to stay.”

Burnett later told Windy City Times that of paramount importance was ensuring that current residents can stay where they are, and in livable conditions: “The mayor has a lot of people working on this right now. We need to make [the SROs] humane and decent, for people to live in safely.”

Among those also attending the press conference were Ald. Ameya Pawar and Ald. Michele Smith.

The resolution passed the council unanimously. Although Ald. James Cappleman was critical of the resolution at the July 23 meeting of the council’s housing committee, he voted in its favor July 30.

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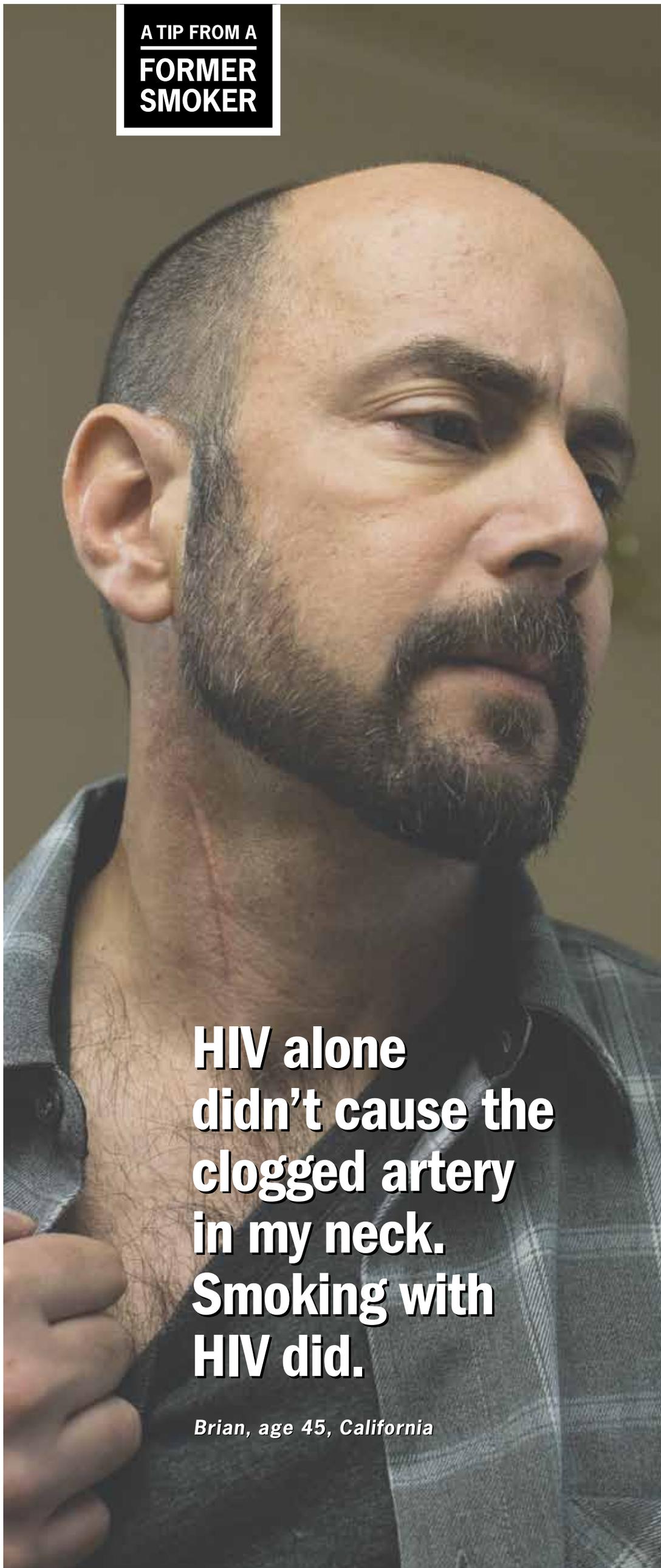
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Trian Alexander aims to promote trans* visibility

BY HAYLEIGH SYENS

Trian Alexander isn't really someone who lives for the now.

"Something that someone told me a while ago is that everything is a moment in time. Like the good and the bad, nothing ever truly stays very long, and I think that's kind of important," said Alexander, a member of the Chicago LGBT community and a recent Windy City Times 30 Under 30 honoree. "If you tend to get caught up in being really cynical about how bad things can be, you should try to move forward. Even if things are going really well, everything changes."

Alexander has constantly used their previous experiences to move forward. While they were raised in Chicago, they attended college on the East coast, where they focused their studies on film and performance art.

"I used that art to make a voice for my issues but also to bring awareness to the issues of trans, like non-binary people," Alexander said.

Alexander took their college experience and used it to help them find a place where they would be supported and accepted: working on the Trans Oral History Project.

"I was really looking for community and other trans groups, but also I wanted to be involved in a social justice type of environment. So I got involved mostly for support and to be able to give to the community," Alexander said.

The Trans Oral History Project is "a community-driven effort to collect and share a diverse range of stories from within the transgender and gender variant communities," according to the project's website.

Alexander was mainly a videographer for the project, but also would interview people and do some of the film editing.

"The Trans Oral History Project gives resources to people in areas where they might not have access, so I think it's important that it fills that role. I went to college in a rural area so there weren't really any other trans people, so I think having the project and the resources available is really useful, both in helping trans people to not feel alone and in educating people who don't know much about trans people, trans people of color, non-binary trans people and what non-binary means, things like that," Alexander said.

"They give a chance for younger trans people to interview older trans people, and so that in-

formation will get put on the website for people in other areas to see and just have a little bit of a sense of being part of the community. It's also to give a chance for people who don't know much about the trans community to see those stories and use it sort of as an education toolkit."

Alexander continues to give to the community by interning for Affinity Community Services, an organization that provides numerous resources and support groups for members of the Black community, the LGBT community and beyond.

"Affinity Community Services is a lot of things. They initially started off as a women's group, then a Black lesbian religious group. Their purpose right now is to work on wellness, issues of public policy, and a couple of other things in the Black community," Alexander said. "While I think the LGBT community is supportive of my trans-ness, seeing as I'm Black, I don't know that the Chicago trans community covers all areas of who I am. I think that speaks for most LGBT communities, they just kind of gloss the surface of a greater part of your identity. It's like finding a needle in a haystack. It's difficult to find someone who identifies the exact same way that you do."

While they are enjoying their time at Affinity, Alexander is always looking to the future, never forgetting that everything is a moment in time.

"I hope that I can be, in the future, an educator of trans issues, and supportive of youth and wellness," Alexander said. "The only thing I'm trying to do right now is survive."

Lesbians Who Tech event Aug. 7 at Brixton

The Lesbians Who Tech Chicago Happy Hour will next take place at The Brixton, 5420 N. Clark St., on Thursday, Aug. 7, at 6:30 p.m.

Lesbians Who Tech is a community of women in the queer community in & around tech (and the people who love them).

Interested persons can RSVP for this free event at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lesbians-who-tech-and-friends-august-chicago-happy-hour-tickets-12360315035>.



Trian Alexander. Photo by Hal Baim

Report has what youth of color think about LGBT agenda

Over the last decade, there has been a dramatic shift in how the public and the courts view same-sex marriage. Much of the reporting on this issue focuses on the overwhelming levels of support for same-sex marriage from the millennial generation.

But as victories pile up for the marriage equality movement, less is known about how young people view the LGBT agenda, and whether young people of color believe the LGBT agenda best serves their communities. These questions are particularly important as LGBT organizations negotiate policies such as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and prepare strategies around other important LGBT issues.

The Black Youth Project's latest report provides answers to these questions using a nationally representative survey of 1,500 young people between the ages of 18 and 30 conducted during June 2014. The main findings are as follows:

—More Black (80.2 percent) and Latino (74.9 percent) youth believe the marriage equality movement has taken too much attention away from other important LGBT issues compared to white youth (64.0 percent).

—More Black youth (58.0 percent) believe that LGBT issues in communities of color are not well-represented by mainstream LGBT organizations than Latino (45.9 percent) and white youth (42.7 percent).

—More than a third (35.0 percent) of Black youth reported that HIV/AIDS is the single most important issue for LGBT organizations to address. Latino youth reported that bullying (20.1 percent) is the most important issue, while white youth (21.3 percent) reported that same-sex marriage is the most important issue.

—Young people of color are more supportive of policies that would provide sensitivity training for police around transgender issues (77.8 percent and 73.2 percent, respectively) and require health insurers to provide coverage for transgender health issues (64.5 percent and 65.8 percent, respectively) than white youth (66.2 percent and 56.3 percent, respectively).

See <http://research.blackyouthproject.com/>.

Illinois Safe Schools Alliance appoints new ED

The board of directors of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance announced the appointment of Anthony Papini as its new executive director.

Papini is currently the founding director for the LGBTQ Resource Center at Northeastern Illinois University.

His start date is Aug. 18, with a welcome reception planned for September.

After Shannon Sullivan's resignation last fall, Loren Linder served as interim executive director.

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Fight against HIV/AIDS and stigma brings lesbian couple together

BY ROSS FORMAN

The first time they met was at the International Conference on AIDS two summers ago in Washington, D.C., and Kathryn Mercado was convinced she would not get along with Kimberly Ramirez, based on what she now admits was “a schoolyard crush in the making.”

They met again last September at the United States Conference on AIDS, held in New Orleans, Louisiana—specifically, the National Latino AIDS Action Network (NLAAN) reception—and Ramirez was a part of the hosting committee for the event.

“I remember spotting her as soon as I walked in,” Mercado said. “I also remembered that I didn’t think we would get along.”

But still, having a conversation with Ramirez was Mercado’s mission for the night.

Time passed and so did opportunities. They even made eye contact, but still nothing.

Finally, near the end of the evening, Mercado approached Ramirez. “All I could think to say was, ‘I think I remember you from last year from D.C.’”

The ice was broken, and when a group from the event ventured out to Bourbon Street for a late-night drink, it was simply another getting-to-know-each-other opportunity for Mercado and Ramirez.

“I was relieved to find out we did get along and how much more time I wanted to spend with her,” Mercado said.

But the next day Mercado was heading home to Chicago, and Ramirez to Los Angeles.

“It was easy to keep in touch every day since we worked in the same field; all of our nonprofit talk helped ignite our sparks [personally],” Mercado said.

Soon, Ramirez was visiting Mercado in the Midwest and, by last Christmas, Mercado went west to see Ramirez.

“It didn’t take very long for me to fall in love with her,” Mercado said. “All of her passion for education, career goals, and pushing herself to her fullest potential made her so unique. The distance allowed us to get to know each other slowly but substantially.”

Ramirez this spring moved to Chicago, to further her career and the budding relationship

with Mercado.

“Our relationship has already become one of my greatest investment of time and love,” Mercado said.

“I was quickly intrigued by her knowledge and passion for HIV/AIDS education and prevention,” Ramirez said. “Little did I know [in New Orleans] how much my life would change.”

Ramirez, 27, is an HIV patient navigator at Mt. Sinai Hospital.

Mercado—nicknamed “Kat,” 26—is the assistant manager of prevention at CALOR, a division of the Anixter Center, where she’s been for three years. Mercado is a Chicago native who graduated from Resurrection High School.

The two are now dating, a mix of Ramirez’ Salvadoran Mexican-American roots with Mercado’s Puerto Rican lineage—brought together through each of their work on behalf of the HIV/AIDS community.

“It’s nice to come home and vent about challenges to someone who can relate and knows how I feel. I think we are interested in advocacy in general, so it’s made it easy to share ideas and beliefs,” Mercado said.

Ramirez added, “I love that we both work in the same field. I get to vent and get advice on programmatic issues. She understands the stress that comes with working in this field and reminds me about self-care.”

And yes, their jobs intertwine. “The HIV/AIDS community is smaller than the LGBT scene, so whether it is through programming, large testing initiatives, trainings, or community meetings, our jobs intertwine all of the time,” Mercado said.

Mercado said Ramirez has helped her “believe that I can achieve life goals, [such as] finishing school, and has been a huge support in getting that plan into action.”

Ramirez added, “Kat has been a huge support with my career. Once I moved to Chicago, she helped connect me with local HIV/AIDS nonprofits and trainings from the Chicago Department of Public Health. Now as I contemplate going back to graduate school, she has pushed me to apply and put myself out there.”

Mercado said she truly enjoys working with youth, certainly a flashback to her childhood, when she didn’t know many gay people. “Being



Kimberly Ramirez (left) and Kathryn Mercado. Photo from Mercado

able to access an environment that promotes a safe space to explore sexual preferences, meet people who share similar experiences and learn about building a community together is something I would have dreamed of [while] growing up,” Mercado said.

“There is a disconnect that the younger LGBT generation has to the epidemic HIV. Since we were not born in a time where we saw so many people die from this disease, it is easy to get lost in the message of HIV prevention. It is important for me to educate this generation about the history of HIV and the risk we might face by forgetting about it. Empowering today’s youth to feel capable and confident to negotiate their sex lives and make decisions that are healthy for them is what I get most from working with youth.”

Mercado also noted that there certainly has been a strong push of late surrounding HIV/AIDS stigma through safer sex campaigns, movies that touch on the subject, and other community organizations offering club-based outreach and testing.

“I would say a negative trend would be new technology like dating apps that have filters for men who are HIV-positive or HIV-negative,” Mercado said. “I think categorizing people based off their status perpetuates the HIV/AIDS stigma. There is an attitude among today’s youth that HIV is not something they need to be worried about anymore, even though we know people are still being infected daily.”

Ramirez added, “A trend I see with youth about HIV/AIDS is that they don’t consider anal and oral sex as ‘sex.’ They think they are not putting themselves at risk, which isn’t true.

There is a lot of misinformation about STD’s and HIV/AIDS with youth. I feel there needs to be better sexual health education in school.”

Ramirez’s job involved identifying patients who test positive within Sinai Health System. She then serves as a counselor and health educator to the patient, engage [patients] into HIV primary medical care, case management, early intervention services, partner services, mental health services, and support groups. She works collaboratively with case managers, early intervention specialists, and infectious diseases physicians to ensure optimal care and facilitate long-term retention in HIV care. “Help people living with HIV/AIDS engage in HIV care and achieve HIV treatment success,” is her job role, she said. “I provide one-on-one risk reduction counseling to high-risk individuals to decrease HIV infection.”

Ramirez said the best part of her job is simply addressing health disparities “that disproportionality affect my community, and improving access to care for communities of color.”

Mercado, meanwhile, coordinates a Centers of Disease Control-funded grant called A.C.E., serving young men of color who have sex with other men in the Chicagoland area. “The goal of the program is to reach young men who are at high risk of HIV infection and empower them through sex-positive education, community building, and routine HIV testing,” she said. “Identifying young men in these communities who are HIV-positive and are unaware of their status, as well as linking them into care is another key component of the program. All of this is accomplished by hosting social events, community testing events, club based outreach, and offering incentive and referral based programming to help address disparities and barriers this population is faced with.”

Mercado said the best part of her job is simply being able to offer free services to a community in need, which makes her job “very satisfying.”

Mercado was chosen to participate in the Public Health Boot Camp: Fostering the Future HIV Leaders, hosted by DePaul University, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, and the Chicago Department of Public Health, held in June.

“Being able to address all the barriers that gay and bi men of color face when accessing education, healthcare, and other free services, [such as] HIV testing,” is a challenge, Mercado said. “HIV in communities of color still face a lot of stigma. Being [gay] in these same communities is also stigmatized. Taking in account all the social determinants preventing this population to access the service we provide has been the most challenging and the most educating.”

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GAY *in the* **LIFE**
George Titterton
 TEXT BY ROSS FORMAN
 PHOTOS FROM TITTERTON

Age
54

Neighborhood
Edgewater

Relationship status
Single

Job title
Senior Sales Representative, Tai Ping Carpets

Hobbies
Scuba diving, growing orchids, bird watching, gardening, art shows, and traveling

Favorite TV shows
Antiques Road Show, NCIS, Elementary

Favorite professional sports team
Chicago Bears

Preferred drink at a bar
Tequila and Ginger ale

Favorite pizza
Nancy's deep dish chicken cacciatore—"hands down, the best."

Little-known fact
"I would love to have been a painter."

George Titterton completed the Ride For AIDS Chicago on July 14, marking the second consecutive year he has participated in the two-day, 200-mile bicycle ride.

This year's event was his best, and he was the third-best fundraiser of 330 riders.

"[It] was such a positive experience for me," he said. "I improved so much because I trained regularly and relaxed. Having done it before I knew what to expect and how to condition myself."

Titterton said he participates to help those in need, particularly the local community as the Ride is produced and supports the Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN).

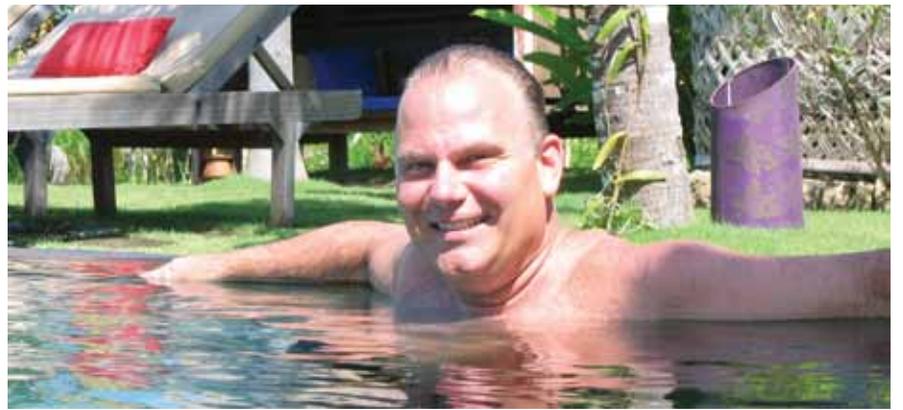
"I often think of all the wonderful people I knew that are no longer [alive], and it makes me so sad," Titterton said. "Gary Peterson died and no one even knew he had AIDS. He was a huge influence and I enjoyed him so very much."

Titterton raised \$11,030 this year.

"It was a total surprise to me that I was able to get this [amount] of money from all sorts of friends and family. It's humbling and so amazing to feel that much love," he said. "The Ride is a very emotional experience. You do your best and hope you have enough. Last year I had people bet against me finishing. I have to admit, [that] really hurt."

"So this year I was so determined to do that much better and not let their negativity take away from my personal accomplishments. I did my best to help those that needed some TLC and support. Everyone struggles [during the Ride], even the best of riders get exhausted and break down."

One of Titterton's fondest memories from the 2014 Ride was simple laughter with fellow rider Todd Johnson. "We were passing a horse event with barrel races. Todd heard a friend's name being called by the announcer. We cycled into the horse ring area and saw his friend just before he had his start. The announcer mentioned that it looked like his fan club just showed up, and off he went," Titterton said. "We met him after his ride and had our pictures taken. All this took less than five minutes and we were back on the road. It was incredible timing."



Titterton said he likely will ride again in 2015. "The Ride is a fantastic experience. Getting to know the other riders is wonderful. It doesn't matter what team they are a part of, as the big picture we are all part of the same team," he said.

Titterton sells custom carpeting, working with talented designers "who create beautiful living conditions and great working environments," he said. "The best part of my job is going to the clients' home and helping with design direction. Sometimes the clients even send me to their second homes. Twice, I have been sent to Maui to assist with a project."



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VIEWPOINTS

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 Community Marketing, Inc.

JEFF
BERRY

Dancing around HIV: When do you know if you've ever done enough?

On July 12-13, I participated in the Ride for AIDS Chicago. It was an amazing and unforgettable experience, with 430 riders and crew trekking 200 miles over two days from Evanston, Illinois, to Elkhorn, Wisconsin, and back. The ride raised over \$840,000 in support of Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) and its community partners, to help fight HIV/AIDS and eliminate stigma.

This was my first AIDS ride ever, and the 11th year of the Ride for AIDS Chicago, and I've worked for TPAN for almost 22 years. So some might ask, "What took you so long?"

I could provide a number of responses, such as, "I could never ride 200 miles," "There were conflicts in my schedule," or, "I've always volunteered in some capacity." But I don't really have a good reason why I've never taken part.

I do know that the last few years, during opening and closing ceremonies, I've witnessed a spirit and camaraderie among riders and crew that made me more than a little envious, and secretly I longed to be part of it. I could see it, but I couldn't touch it, because I had to experience the ride to fully understand what it meant.

For anyone who takes part in a ride like this, it's personal. For me the ride came to be about my friend Eugene, who died of AIDS in 1989, when he was only 30 years old. Eugene and I were good friends when we were both just coming out in the late '70s in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I remember I would pick up Eugene in my old Cutlass, and we'd hang out with friends or go to work together at the Carousel, one of only two local gay bars, where I was a DJ and he was a waiter.

Eugene took ballet in his spare time and had aspirations of one day becoming a dancer and escaping the drudgery of life in a conservative, religious town in the Midwest. Known affectionately as Gina when he occasionally did

drag, Eugene was very much in touch with his feminine side, and not afraid to show it. I think that's part of what I loved and admired about him most, as I was often trying to suppress that part of myself and "butch it up," as they say—probably because I was so teased and bullied throughout school. But I'm sure Eugene was teased and bullied too, not only for being gay but because he was also part Native American (Ottawa/Chippawa).

When I moved to Chicago in 1981 to DJ at Dugan's Bistro, I would see Eugene from time to time when I would go back to Grand Rapids to visit family and friends, but eventually we lost touch. Then one day I heard he'd gotten sick and had moved back north to Traverse City to be with his family. Every now and then I would get a call from Eugene, and we would have long talks about what he was doing and everything he was going through. I remember sometimes he would repeat himself; I don't know if AIDS was affecting his brain with dementia or if he was just lonely or bored, or a combination. But the thing that sticks with me the most, and what I've always felt guilty about, was that sometimes I would get a little impatient during those calls. Here my friend was dying, and all I could think about was myself.

Crewing for the ride, I was told beforehand, was actually harder than riding. I don't know if that's true, but I do know that getting up at four a.m., jumping and cheering on riders for hours at a time in the middle of cornfields in the hot sun, wearing a tutu with mosquitos biting at you, is exhausting, both for me and for my partner Stephen, who crewed alongside me. But the reaction from the riders made it all worthwhile: They were so appreciative to have us there that any discomfort or fatigue we felt was immediately erased by their smiles and laughter. They needed us as much as we needed them.

After that first day I was exhausted but exhilarated and couldn't wait until day two. I looked forward to the closing ceremonies and thought about how emotional I would probably get. But as I lay in bed that night, tears started flowing down my cheeks, and at first I didn't quite understand why. It wasn't a sad cry; it was more a joyful one. It was as though life had suddenly come full circle, and I was exactly where I was supposed to be, at the right time. I literally cried myself to sleep.

After the second day, and during the closing ceremonies of the ride, I walked quietly through the crowd, hand-in-hand with the other Positive Pedalers, all of us who had dis-

played orange bandanas and flags during the ride to symbolize being open about our HIV status. As we neared the end of the procession, we hugged each other, but surprisingly no tears came to me then, just a close bond with all my fellow riders and crew. Afterwards my partner and I made our way over to the Quilt display and silently looked at Eugene's panel. (We'd been asked months in advance if we wanted a panel of someone we knew at the ceremony.) "May you always dance in beauty," it read, and there were a pair of ballet shoes, a peace pipe, and gold stars on a black-and-red background. As my eyes fell upon the date of his death, I realized it was just four months later that I would test positive for HIV.

It dawned on me then that during those conversations with Eugene, HIV/AIDS was only peripherally a part of my world. I did not yet know that I was HIV-positive; all I knew was that some of my friends were dying, and I had been one of the lucky ones, at least so far. While others had chosen to become activists, I came late to the game. I had found a way to push HIV and AIDS out of my mind, and out of my life, by working in the clubs (and all that came with it), not realizing that sooner or later I would be forced to take notice when my own diagnosis was staring me in the face.

This has been a hard thing for me to come to terms with over the years, and something I still struggle with from time to time. There are some days when I embrace the work, my activism, and keeping up with the latest about HIV/AIDS. And there are other days when I want to forget about it all and just escape. Because no matter what I do it never seems like it's enough, or that I could somehow be doing it better, or that maybe I waited too long to decide to act.

But the ride taught me an important and valuable lesson: It's never too late to make a difference and have an impact. It's incredibly freeing to be a part of something bigger than yourself, and it gets you out of your head. The support you receive from family and friends is humbling. Most importantly it has helped me to find peace with a part of my past, because even though I don't understand why Eugene had to die and I was allowed to live, I know now that he's looking down and smiling—while doing a fabulous demi-plié.

Jeff Berry is the editor-in-chief of Positively Aware magazine.

This piece was originally published in The Huffington Post; see http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeff-berry/dancing-around-hiv-when-d_b_5588932.html.

make this happen. Cooperation, mutual respect and communication are key; these are what make a neighborhood a real community and a great place to live safely. We would like to thank the following for their contributions to this achievement:

1) The Northalsted Merchants Association paid the cost of enhanced security who work with the police to keep us all safe. We have worked with Sean Kotwa, the vice president of the association, for many years and he has always shown concern for the neighborhood and public safety. We have heard the new president of the association, Ramesh Ariyanayakam, is doing a good job as well. Also, there are the other members of the security committee: David Sikora and Paul Cannella.

2) The Chicago Police Department, under the leadership of Commander Elias Voulgaris, has transformed the police department into a very responsive, "in touch" and efficient organization that works not only harder but smarter. He made decisions that may have been unpopular with some to properly add staff to midnights but his strong leadership has been instrumental in making our streets safe at night. Former Commander Kathleen Boehmer who also did a great job has stayed in touch with some of us

and shown she cares about our district by doing drive throughs in the neighborhood even years after she was promoted out of our area. The results have been truly remarkable.

3) The bar/club owners/managers/staff have played their part by working with the previously mentioned organizations to stop crime by keeping watch and communicating with police/enhanced security when needed.

4) The enhanced security hired by The Northalsted Merchants Association is top-notch and highly professional/highly motivated. We cannot say enough good about them.

5) Ald. Tom Tunney and Ald. James Cappleman are to be thanked for their efforts, especially for the addition of a special entertainment district unit and officers. This team dedicated to Halsted street has greatly increased police visibility.

As citizens/residents, we all have a role to play as well.

Also, when you see security and police, thank them for being here and get to know them.

Sincerely,
 Ron G. Woods and Mark B.
 Neighborhood watch and concerned citizens

Letters

Lake View: A safe space

Dear Editor,

As we approach a significant milestone date here in Boystown/Lake View, we would like to share the following information with the community to recognize and thank all the persons involved in the hope of maintaining the momentum.

At a CAPS meeting on Aug. 7, 2013, after three months of citizens raising valid safety concerns, a dramatic and sustained improvement was implemented by the police department. We are very pleased to announce that after nearly a year the dramatic improvement has not only been sustained, but has also been bolstered and fine tuned like a well-oiled machine.

The safety we enjoy now on Halsted is the best we have seen in nine years, in our opinion. This was not accomplished by only one person or group of people, but by the co-ordination of many groups/persons working together to

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



The Gay Games VII Opening Ceremony at Soldier Field in Chicago, July 15, 2006. Photo by John Faier

LET THE GAMES BEGIN

The Gay Games are set to begin in Akron and Cleveland, Ohio. See page 46.

THEATER

'Intimate' relations.
Page 18

Photo from *Intimate Apparel*
by Tim Knight



DISH

Yum, yum.
Page 40

Press photo of Yum Cha's dishes



COMEDY

Nikki situation.
Page 20

Photo courtesy of NBC



SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

'Some Men': Reflecting upon where we are

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The last time Terrence McNally's 2007 off-Broadway gay history drama *Some Men* played Chicago, it just a one-night-only reading presented in 2010 by Pride Films and Plays as part of a series of other McNally play readings. But now Pride Films and Plays (PFP) is returning to *Some Men* this month with a fully realized Chicago premiere production co-directed by PFP Artistic Director David Zak and Artistic Associate Derek Van Barham.

"When we started looking at this script, one of the things that interested David and us about it was how it jumps back and forth in time," Barham said. "So he really liked the idea of co-directing with someone a bit younger so that we could really try to capture the generational aspect of it."

Barham said *Some Men* is book-ended by scenes looking at people attending a contemporary gay wedding. In-between are scene from different decades of the 20th century, ranging from a secretive hotel rendezvous in the 1920s to New York's St. Vincent's Hospital during the deadly height of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. It's all very much an overview looking at how far the gay community has come and to point out how different generations of gay men had to adapt to with the times they were living in.

"One of the great things about working with David is that we have very different directing approaches and styles, and it has been really nice to try and link those two together for this

particular production," said Barham, adding that the intergenerational approach to the play also applies to the casting for PFP's production.

Trying to bridge the gap between different generations of gay men is a challenge faced within PFP according to Barham, and he's glad that this issue is also brought up in *Some Men* via a humorous scene touching upon too much political correctness.

"Two older gentlemen are approached by two younger gender studies majors for an interview, and it's a very interesting cross-generational conversation where these young people are trying to educate the older people and the older couple gets to bounce it back by saying, 'I'm sorry, we've lived through this,'" Barham said. "Even right now I'm very conscious of trying to use correct terminology so as not to offend any groups and I think that we're at a place where we're almost tongue-tied."

Because *Some Men* touches upon so much gay history, Barham said the play is perfect for PFP.

"This is such a great showcase for our ensemble," Barham said. "What's nice about that is you get to see some of our youngest and oldest PFP ensemble members doing these really beautiful scenes together which is something we haven't been able to find in a lot of scripts."

Pride Films and Plays' Chicago premiere of Terrence McNally's *Some Men* plays from Aug. 14 through Sept. 13 at Rivendell Theatre, 5779 N. Ridge Ave. Preview performances are at 7:30



Mike and Seth playwright Daniel Talbott.
Photo from The Side Project

p.m. Aug. 14 and 15 with an official press opening at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 16. Regular run performances are 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, with 6 p.m. Sunday performances on Aug. 17 and 24. Sunday matinees at 4 p.m. are set for Aug. 21 and Sept. 7. Preview tickets are \$15 and \$25-\$30 during the regular run. There is a \$5 discount for seniors and students to each performance; call 773-250-3112 or visit www.pridefilmsandplays.com.

A gay-straight friendship

Playwright Daniel Talbott isn't gay, but he's had plenty of invitations to write about gay characters. That's because one of Talbott's most-produced success is the troubled gay teen drama *Slipping*, which had its world premiere in 2008 by the intimate company The Side Project in Chicago before being picked at other companies around the country—including a 2009 off-Broadway run by Rattlestick Playwrights Theater.

"I just directed [*Slipping*] in Los Angeles," Talbott said. "It's cool that it's getting done which is really wonderful."

Talbott is really excited to be making a Chicago return to The Side Project with the Midwest premiere of his revised 2012 play, *Mike and Seth*. Originally commissioned by Quince Productions in Philadelphia, *Mike and Seth* focuses on two best friends—one gay and one straight—as they talk about relationships on the eve of one of the two's wedding.

"I wrote based upon a lot of conversations I've had. I feel that of all my best friends, half are straight and half are gay, and so it's a combination of a lot of conversations I've had with a lot of them," Talbott said. "It's also specifically based upon two friends of mine from high school who came from a very affluent background."

Talbott stated upfront that *Mike and Seth* isn't an unrequited love drama, just an intimate examination of the struggles that a lot of people face with emotional vulnerability and just being able to open up to somebody—even in our age of more permissiveness in terms of how people choose to structure their romantic relationships.

"Whether you're gay or you're straight or you're a woman or a man, in the end emotionally you're all searching emotionally for the same thing and struggling with the same thing," Talbott said. "I hope people just see (the characters) as Mike and Seth so then it's not just a gay play or a straight play or a political play. I'm hoping that it's just a play about two guys who are best friends where one happens to be gay and one happens to be straight."

The Side Project's Chicago premiere of Daniel Talbott's *Mike and Seth* continues through Aug. 24 at 1438 W. Jarvis Ave. Performances are 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays with 3 p.m. Sunday matinees. Tickets are \$20 general admission and \$15 for seniors and students. Call 773-340-0140 or visit www.thesideproject.net for more information. See a review of the play in this week's issue.



Intimate Apparel. Photos by Tim Knight

THEATER REVIEW

Intimate Apparel

Playwright: Lynn Nottage

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

Tickets: 773-935-6875;

www.eclipsetheatre.com; \$28

Runs through: Aug. 24

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Lynn Nottage's play has everything historical-romance fans could want: a gilded-age urban setting, ragtime music, long dresses and frilly underwear. Its personnel are women, mostly the poor-but-independent variety (with a lone rebellious socialite, for contrast), accompanied by handsome rakes and shy admirers. This is no frivolous bodice-ripper, however, but docudrama steeped in grim compromise and survival bought at the expense of happiness.

Our locale is New York City in 1905. Our heroine is Esther Mills, a self-employed seamstress who earns her living creating ornate lingerie for piano players in cathouses and matrons in brownstones. Esther lives in a boarding house for colored spinsters, where her wares are in great demand by residents who eventually abandon their single status for marriage. Not that Esther is altogether bereft of male company—her landlady is an eager matchmaker, and her Orthodox Jewish draper would propose without hesitation if not for their religious differences—but as she approaches her mid-thirties, she forsakes her customary caution to enter into an epistolary courtship conducted by a laborer on the Panama Canal who writes suspiciously eloquent letters. Since Esther cannot read or write, her replies to this suitor are composed by a committee of her confidantes.

Sadder-but-wiser lonelyhearts pen pals and Facebook fishers can readily testify to misfortune arising from relationships founded on deception, but by the time Esther's betrothed arrives to find his fantasy-bride and her land-of-opportunity home falling short of his expectations, we are wholly invested in the hopes and dreams of every character in this shabby/cozy homespun universe. When fulfillment is too distant to imagine, the courage and resiliency required to settle for its lesser reward, contentment, is worthy of commendation. As the brothel's resident pianist remarks, she gets to make music every day, whatever she may have to do at night, and when Esther claims to want only to be loved, she doesn't stipu-

late that it must be forever (cf. "better to have loved and lost," etc.)

Eclipse Theatre director Steve Scott has assembled a cast led by storefront-circuit rising star Kelly Owens, each forging wholly-realized personalities from their generic archetypes, with the assistance of a technical team that replicates the period milieu right down the gleaming-like-new treadle sewing machine providing the central image in a production as delicately stitched and skillfully tailored as one of Esther's exquisite chemises. Audiences waiting with bated hankies for this fall's lineup of Victoriana will find plenty to take the edge off their appetite with this wistful tale of corsets and regrets.

CRITICS' PICKS

Brigadoon, Goodman Theatre, through Aug. 17. Love in the Scottish Highlands ... then and now. A luscious staging of a great, romantic show from Broadway's Golden Age. Wonderful voices and orchestra give full value to the rhythmic, lilting and soaring Lerner and Loewe score. JA

Hellish Half-Light, Mary-Archie Theatre at Angel Island, through Aug. 30. The Fabulous Beckett Boys in the 1990s, Signal Ensemble in the 2000s, and Jennifer Markowitz' direction in this decade, prove that the plays of Samuel Beckett don't have to put you to sleep. MSB

My Name is Asher Lev, Timeline Theatre at Stage 773, opens Aug. 28, and Stupid Fucking Bird, Sideshow Theatre at Biograph Theater, opens Aug. 21. Two plays, one solemn and intense, the other snarky and satirical—both written by the same author! Can he pull it off? MSB

Who is Gabi Graysküll?, The Brendas at Public House Theatre, through Aug. 28. Three extremely amusing veterans of GayCo piece together a hilarious sketch comedy show with improvised elements to mock both high and low aspects of the modern art world. SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

THEATER REVIEW

Take the Cake

Playwright: Stacie Barra

At: Factory Theater at Prop Thtr (sic), 3502 N. Elston Ave.

Tickets: 866-811-4111;

www.thefactorytheater.com; \$20

Runs through: Sept. 6

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

This could be "Nancy Drew and the Case of the Curious Cake Balls," except there are three femme detectives, all of them slightly kooky (think Lucy and Ethel) and they are the criminals as well as the detectives, just like Oedipus Rex. But perhaps I say too much.

Take the Cake begins when little old lady Edith (Cheryl Roy) gives younger neighbor Caroline (Laura McKenzie) a can of baking powder to help launch Caroline's cake-ball business. The cake balls are an instant success, so delicious everyone says they are "addictive." When Edith dies suddenly, Caroline and gal pals Holly (playwright Stacie Barra) and Margo (Corbette Pasko) conclude it wasn't baking powder sifted into the recipe but crack cocaine, and that sweet widow Edith was a drug lord who died of an overdose. When police detective Stone (Anthony Tournis) becomes involved, the women try to cover their tracks but only dig the hole deeper, of course.

Despite the contemporary drug twist, Take the Cake is a knowing homage to 1950s sitcoms and never pretends to be either profound or artsy. Frantic and fun at a fast 85 minutes,

it's staged by director Timothy C. Amos without pause or apologies as an unabashed romp. The actors barrel through the script at a furious pace with drop-dead-dry characterizations and considerable charm. Barra's script gives them plenty of ammunition, laced with more double entendres than the cake balls are laced with coke, and with plenty of well-delivered wisecracks. Along the way, Barra manages to insert a pair of dream fantasies one of which is a parody of a Spanish-language TV novella. Naturally, one must not take any of it seriously or stop to analyze the goings-on by rational measures. Still, as in all really good sitcom writing, Barra gives each character a swiftly-drawn but believable basis which draws them together and allows them to act in consistent ways thereafter. It's funny and smart writing, not merely silly.

The production is helped a great deal by Jason Moody's sound design and original music (you'll love the pre-show announcements done as a rap song), and by Gary Nocco's costumes and wigs that range from ordinary to the edge of outrageous without plunging over the precipice of campiness. Scenic and lighting designs (by Zach Pozulp and Paul Foster, respectively) are suitable and solid without being flashy. Aren't most sitcoms set in rather ordinary-looking living rooms?

The ensemble cast works hard and very much works together. Tournis, as the lone male, is particularly versatile but it's the veteran Roy who steals every scene she's in, whether as sweet Edith or a ghost in the novella. Take the Cake is a great show for a summer night!



Mike and Seth.
Photo by Scott Dray

THEATER REVIEW

Mike and Seth

Playwright: Daniel Talbott

At: The Side Project, 1439 W. Jarvis Ave.

Tickets: 773-340-0140 or

www.thesideproject.net; \$15-\$20

Runs through Aug. 24

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The title two characters of Daniel Talbott's Mike and Seth spend most of the play moping and moaning about what's become of their lives. And though they're both very aware of how privileged they are in context to the world's many problems, Mike and Seth persist in bemoaning their fates as friends in their 20s who feel they have been cheated so far out of finding true love and happiness.

That's essentially what you're in store for at The Side Project, which is presenting Mike and Seth in its Midwestern premiere.

Talbott sets the entirety of Mike and Seth in a Ritz-Carlton hotel room during a freak winter snowstorm in Dallas. Mike is set to wed Samantha (Sam) the next day, but he is suffering from a severe case of cold feet and is self-medicating with beer after beer. Mike is sharing the room with his best boyhood friend, Seth, who is already in a foul mood since he's been having issues with his open relationship with his user New York boyfriend, Connor.

Although it's admirable for Talbott to depict a best friendship between a straight guy and gay guy in Mike and Seth, he didn't quite

convince me that these buddies could have remained so close into adulthood—especially after Seth moved away to New York. And though Talbott has said in interviews that Mike and Seth isn't a play about unrequited love, his two title characters do alternately pine for each other as friends at certain moments in the play—even though they are both very realistic that it could never be.

Along with the text not always being fully convincing, The Side Project's production also has some issues of authenticity.

Director Adam Webster has cast two very appropriate actors for the production. Derek Garza is convincing as the guy's guy Mike and Michael Manocchio is pensive as the disappointed dreamer Seth. But at the final preview, I didn't quite buy that Garza and Manocchio were speaking Talbott's dialogue as extemporaneously as they could have done (perhaps it will come with more performances under their belts).

Webster also doubles as the show's set designer, providing an aspirational hotel room that is a little too scruffy around the edges to believably be a Ritz-Carlton property. At least the sound design by Stephen Gawrit genuinely makes you feel like there's a blizzard storming outside.

Mike and Seth's feelings and concerns as conflicted twentysomethings are legitimate and are well-articulated, to a point, in Talbott's script. But don't be surprised if you wish for another character with more life experience to come in and slap the two guys around and say, "Oh, just get over it!"

“Mr. Norris’s **knack for writing smart, crisply funny dialogue** has been well established...these debates are **lively, funny and racy**” – *The New York Times*

“**Plenty of amusement ensues from the bawdy dialogue...**

The Qualms really is funny” – *Variety*

“**Every comic beat lands just right**” – *Time Out Chicago*

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SPOTLIGHT



Fringe and underground performance artists from Beauty Bar's weekly Salonathon get a special showcase before performances of the long-running Neo-Futurists hit *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind* as part of the new collaboration called **INFILTRATION**. The series begins Aug. 8 with Filipino performance artist Kiam Marcelo Junio, followed on Aug. 15 with gender-challenging dancer and choreographer Darling Shear. See Salonathon artists perform at 10:30 p.m. Fridays for INFILTRATION now through Sept. 26 at the Neo-Futurarium, 5153 N. Ashland Ave. Tickets are \$9 plus the roll of a die at the door (\$10-\$15), or \$20 in advance plus a roll-back refund if you guarantee seats online (\$14-\$19); call 773-275-5255 or visit www.neofuturists.org. Photo of Shear by Molly FitzMaurice



NUNN ON ONE: COMEDY

Nikki Carr is the last female 'Comic Standing'

BY JERRY NUNN

Nikki Carr is currently knocking them dead with honest jokes and a winning personality.

Starring on NBC's *Last Comic Standing* is a big career boost for Carr, who is a standout being the last female in the four finalists. This is season eight for the show and currently has Roseanne Barr, Keenen Ivory Wayans and Russell Peters as judges, with JB Smoove as the host. The winner receives \$250,000 and a comedy show on NBC.

Windy City Times tracked down Carr as the final episodes are set to air of *Last Comic Standing*.

Windy City Times: Hey, Nikki. So you are originally from the Bronx?

Nikki Carr: Bronx, New York, the boogie-down Bronx, that's right!

WCT: I read you are a mother of four children and have four grandkids.

NC: That's right. Back in the day, old girl was



Nikki Carr. Photo courtesy of NBC

really trying to be straight. I got the kids to prove it!

WCT: Do you have a longtime partner now?

NC: I have a wonderful partner and she's also a comedian. It's beautiful. Her name is big frannie mei.

WCT: Are you always on the road?

NC: I am not as of yet but I have spent a lot of time on the road since I have been with frannie mei. We travel together most of the time. We have some puppies now but they are about to go to their new homes so she has been staying home with all of the puppies. Now that they are going their ways she will be back on the road with me.

WCT: How did you get on *Last Comic Standing*?

NC: Honestly, I wasn't going to submit to *Last Comic Standing* then a friend of mine talked me into it. He said I had been on TV but not something big like NBC, so he talked me into submitting a clip. They saw it, liked it and the rest is history.

WCT: You have done so well and beat the other women on there.

NC: I have done better than I could have even imagined. I hoped what I was doing for the past 17 years would be enough and, surprisingly, it was.

WCT: Your spirit seems so genuine on the show and not like you are trying so hard.

NC: That's sweet. I think that's because I have always been a very silly person, before I even thought about doing comedy. I've been ridiculous forever.

WCT: Were you nervous going on *The Ellen Degeneres Show* during this series?

NC: I was too excited and too amped to be nervous. I was nervous after. How about that? [Laughs] Everything has been a "Wow, I did that" moment. It's not that I have to do it or am doing it, but it was after the fact that I did something.

WCT: You have Jay Leno on this current week. The competition is down to the nitty-gritty now.

NC: It's down to the nitty-gritty. The challenges are over and it is all material now.

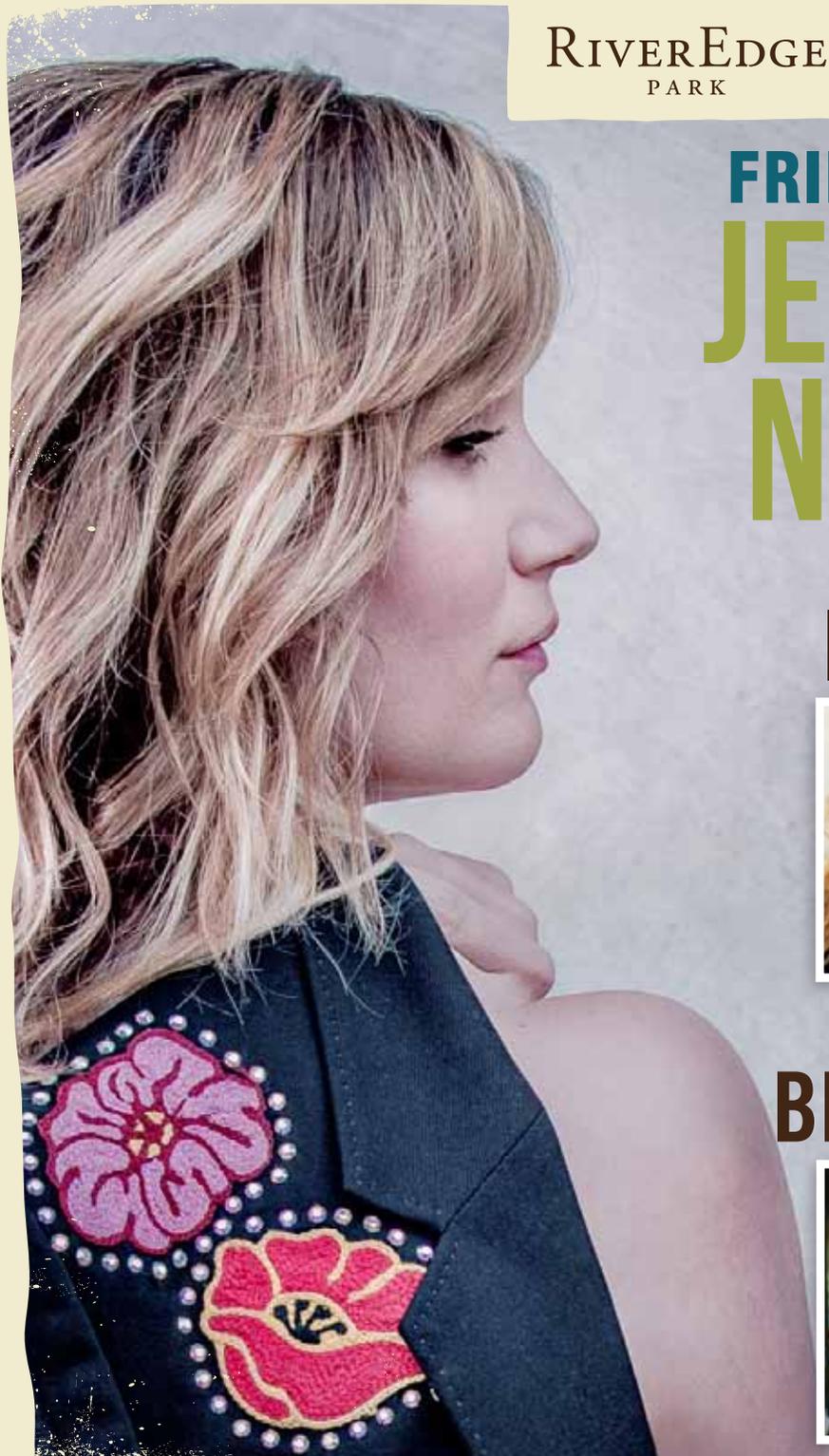
WCT: Do you look up to producer and mentor Wanda Sykes?

NC: She's my shero! I've met my idol and my shero.

WCT: Have you been to Chicago?

NC: I've been trying to get to Chicago my entire career. I love Chicago. I loved it at first because Oprah Winfrey was there. I wanted to do my stand-up there then go to *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, but I never got there. I'm coming though. I feel this in my bones!

Read the entire interview at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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By Anne Washburn

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

THEATER WIT

CHICAGO PREMIERE! A hilarious exploration of how the pop culture of one era, through the resilience of Bart Simpson, might evolve into the mythology of another. "Downright Brilliant." – *New York Times*

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By David Adjmi

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By Christopher Durang

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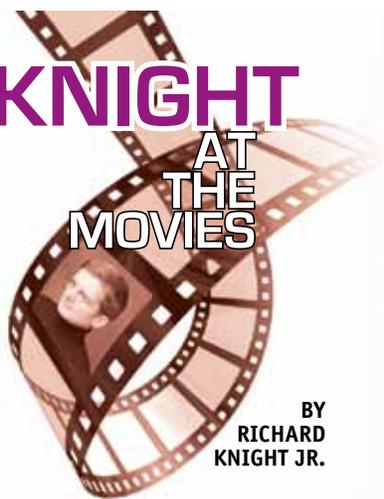
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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES



BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT JR.

Violette; The Hundred-Foot Journey

When Barbra Streisand addressed a Women in Film group in 1992 and said, "If a man wants to get it right, he's looked up to and respected. If a woman wants to get it right, she's difficult and impossible," she could easily have been talking about the three female leading characters in *Lucy*, *Violette* and *The Hundred-Foot Journey*. These complex women—played by Scarlett Johansson, the marvelous French actress Emmanuelle Devos and Helen Mirren—have reminded me (as if I needed reminding) how much I love female-driven movies and how rare pictures like these are, but shouldn't be.

I raved last week about how pixilated the action-driven, thought-provoking *Lucy* made me; now I'm going to do the same for two very different kinds of movies opening this week that have two very uncompromising women at their center. On the surface the films—a biopic of French writer Violette Leduc called *Violette* and an adaptation of a popular novel called



Dame Helen Mirren in *The Hundred-Foot Journey*.
Image courtesy of Walt Disney Pictures

The Hundred-Foot Journey—couldn't be more different, yet it doesn't even matter that one of the women is fictional (Mirren as a French restaurant owner in the latter). These are no-nonsense, take-no-prisoner, exacting-standard ladies and both movies, like *Lucy*, are elevated by focusing on them.

Violette, a critical hit on the festival circuit, examines the life of the feminist writer whose shocking autobiographical novels were taken up by members of the French literary avant-garde—with Simone de Beauvoir, herself a literary provocateur, as *Violette's* first and most

steadfast champion. Filmmaker Martin Provost (who co-scripted with Marc Abdelnour and Rene de Ceccatty) dispenses with the standard biopic tropes, breaking his movie up into portraits of six individuals who had a profound effect on Leduc's development as a writer.

Gay writer Martin Sachs is the first of these. In post-war Paris, nothing in life seems to offer *Violette* an ounce of solace. Emotionally scarred from childhood and profoundly aware of her less-than-gorgeous looks, the ever-volatile *Violette* is making ends meet by selling food on the black market. Adding to her lack of self-esteem, she's also locked into a luckless, lustless marriage with Martin (which Provost vividly portrays when Martin spurns *Violette's* heated sexual advances). Fleeing the marriage, Martin advises *Violette* to put some of her pent-up frustration and anger into writing, which she does.

The frankly bisexual *Violette* is fascinated by Simone after reading a pilfered copy of her novel *She Came to Stay*, which has fueled her own semi-autobiographical book, *In the Prison of Her Skin*. She audaciously follows Simone home from a café and thrusts her handwritten novel into her hands. Simone not only reads the book but gets it published—firmly repelling *Violette's* advances at the same time. (*Violette* is nothing if not persistent.) The book doesn't sell and neither does the next one, although Simone and her other mostly gay colleagues at the forefront of the French progressive writer's movement—Jean Genet, Sarte, Camus and Cocteau, among them—tout *Violette's* brutal honesty. (The books are sexually adventurous, thinly disguising *Violette's* lesbian affairs and a traumatic abortion in detail.)

"I am mutilated!" *Violette* cries out when told that her latest work is even too frank for her liberal publisher and must be edited. At one point Genet calls her a drama queen and, boy, is he right—especially when *Violette* realizes that critical praise isn't going to pay the bills. She never backs down from a confrontation, doesn't know the meaning of propriety and never misses a chance to point out the misery of her existence—which began with her mother (who is very much present in her life) rejecting her emotionally as a child.

And there is that thwarted, never-to-be-consummated love *Violette* has for the icy but supportive Simone, who loves her raw, exciting writing but not the woman who penned it. "One cannot be friends with *Violette*—you know that. One does one's duty," Simone comments at one point to the wealthy gay patron of the arts who sighs in recognition as he, too,

has been subjected to *Violette's* over-the-top mood swings.

"Nobody wants me!" *Violette* sobs after her latest rejection and she's mostly right—at least for a long time. When she, at last, has a popular success with her 1964 book *The Bastard*, the recognition doesn't quell for a second *Violette's* exacting standards or the emotional rollercoaster—which, apparently, continued on until her death in 1972. (The film ends soon after her mainstream breakthrough.)

Emmanuelle Devos is fearless walking the acting tightrope of this very complicated character whose kvetching, in less gifted hands, could certainly have alienated audiences. Instead, we are treated to a rich, fearless performance that is aided by Provost's artful recreation of 1940s and 1950s Paris and its gorgeous countryside. Sandrine Kiberlain is equally compelling as the arch, mostly unflappable Simone, and Catherine Hiegel is fantastic as the domineering mother. And the movie really captures the often lonely, torturous existence of the true artist—a huge feat in itself. The film plays exclusively at the Music Box Theatre beginning this Friday. www.musicboxtheatre.com

Equally diverting is the familiar, welcoming embrace of *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, Lasse Hallstrom's film adaptation of Richard C. Morais' best-selling novel (and Oprah Book Club selection). After losing his mother in a tragic fire at their restaurant in India, the young Hassan (played by the dreamy Manish Dayal) and his family wind up in the French countryside and, at the insistence of their father (wonderfully played by Om Puri), open a new restaurant. Hassan, who has learned the art of cooking from his mother and is truly gifted, only wants to make Papa happy even if it means competing with the exclusive French restaurant—you guessed it—only 100 feet across the street.

French restaurant owner Madame Mallory (Helen Mirren, having a whale of a time) isn't about to allow some little upstart—with its loud music, loud exterior decor and loud, spicy food—to encroach upon her fiefdom and she uses all her powers to thwart these new, unwanted neighbors. A culture clash of major proportions ensues, but once Madame Mallory gets Hassan and his family on the ropes she suddenly sees the light. There in front of her is the answer to her quest for a higher ranking for her restaurant: Hassan. She has an about-face because she sees in Hassan a true culinary artist

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SUPERMODEL from cover

discussed gender dysphoria, support from fans and her love for herself.

Windy City Times: Thank you for sharing your story about having sex-reassignment surgery (SRS). Why was now the right time to share that story?

Andreja Pejic: I wouldn't say that I specifically timed my coming out. I simply went through transition in secret—something I always knew I had to do. Once the most challenging part was over, I decided it was time to share my story. While the physical part of transition was over, I needed the world to know my gender identity so that I could move on with my life. I was a public person so I also felt there was a social responsibility to open up and tell my story in the hope that it would reach a lot of people and shed light on one of the most oppressed social minorities in the world.

WCT: What was the reaction from your modeling agency about the surgery?

AP: Overall, everyone has been positive.

WCT: People have been very supportive of you on social media, but how have you dealt with those who have been unkind?

AP: The response has been tremendous and every day I get more and more positivity. I think every trans person fears rejection, condemnation and ostracization while revealing who they are to the world. I definitely prepared myself for all of that and that's just the risk we all take for the sake of living truthful lives.

WCT: When you decided to have the surgery, did you hesitate at all about doing it?

AP: Never, not for a second. I didn't want to wonder what it would be like to be completely comfortable in my own body for the rest of my life.

WCT: Is it true that, as a young kid, you were not comfortable in your own skin?

AP: No person that wants to transition is ever completely comfortable in their own skin before transition. I struggled a lot with having to live up to the social role of a "normal boy" when I was younger. It didn't feel natural and made me unhappy.

WCT: Talk about gender dysphoria, which is something you overcame.

AP: Gender dysphoria arises when a transgender individual—in order to fit into society—feels anxiety with having to live in a role that does not match their gender identity.

WCT: When did you find out about SRS?

AP: I found out about it online at the age of 13.

WCT: What was it like being discovered at 17?

AP: I didn't think about having a modeling career at all at that point. My dream was to finish high school, transition and go to university. When I was discovered I was told that



Andreja Pejic. Photo by Melodie Jeng

I could be a high-fashion male model. At that time it seemed like a great opportunity to see the world, gain financial stability and earn enough money to pay for my transition.

WCT: Was there jealousy amongst your peers because you were able to model both women and men's clothing, allowing you to dominate in your field from both sides of the table?

AP: I think I always felt a little bit like an outsider. I was living in between genders—which wasn't easy because fashion is very much divided into "male" and "female," like most of society. While sometimes difficult, it was always a very rich experience that I have grown to cherish.

WCT: But now you will only be modeling women's clothing.

AP: I will be modeling as a woman. This means I will be modeling women's clothes as a woman, but I will remain open to the exploration of gender and if someone wants to put me in menswear—and if it's tasteful—I wouldn't say "no." I still have the same skills as a model and I am more confident in my femininity now than ever before.

WCT: Are you ready to be a role model for the trans community?

AP: I hope to share my story and spread awareness about the trans experience.

WCT: What does being a role model mean to you?

AP: For me, a role model is someone whose actions help and improve the lives of others. It's not someone who is completely perfect or someone who should be idolized in every way, but someone who adds something progressive to this world.

For more about Andreja Pejic, visit www.andrejapejic.com.



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WINDY CITY TIMES

Gay and Lesbian Wedding Guide

Together for 34 years, former Chicagoans finally marry

BY ROSS FORMAN

Ken Riley and Harold Ellis have been together for 34 years—and now also months into married life.

Riley and Ellis were married May 10 in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, which has become the “marriage capitol of the South,” Riley said.

“Friends called and said get down here,” to city hall on a Saturday this past May, Riley said. “Harold was still at home; I was in town gardening. There was a lot of back and forth and the city clerk said she was not going to issue licenses, [so] people started leaving. We encouraged people not to leave, and it got to the point we were inside because of how many had just walked away. We went back outside

and started a protest chant.

“There was a little controversy of our way of handling it, but as I explained [at the time], ‘We all have our own way of handling things, and this is my way of handling stuff like this.’”

Within minutes an officer came to the door and said they were going to open up.

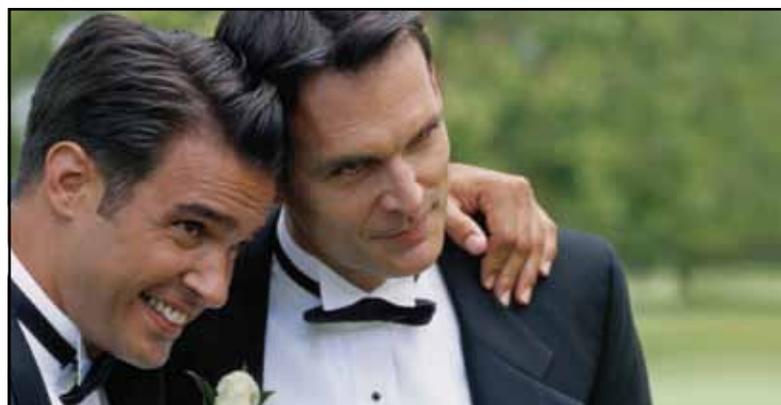
“We let everyone [who] we knew [was initially] ahead of us back in line. We were very lucky that we were the sixth same-sex couple married in the Bible Belt, by coincidence, we also were the sixth couple to be registered domestic partners in the South.”

Riley, 59, was born in Chicago’s Roseland neighborhood and spent his last 17 or 18 years



Ken Riley (left) and Harold Ellis. Photo courtesy of the couple.

Turn to page 33



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Frankly speaking...

Expert tips to plan your wedding expertly

BY FRANK J. ANDONOPLAS

Everything's coming up roses—orchids, calla lilies and hydrangeas, too!

Flowers are a huge part of any wedding. You can spend a little, you can spend a lot. It all depends on how important this is to you, as well as what your budget will allow. This is where your wedding consultant will assist you coming up with a design that works best for you. Here are the key parts of the wedding that need flowers, with some great options I'd like to recommend for any budget.

Personal flowers are the first thing you need to consider. Brides can go with a traditional hand-tied round bouquet of all tight blooms, which has been popular since Martha Stewart made this vogue 20 years ago. It's timeless and simple. Or they can go with an interesting cascading shape of a crescent or oval. I just had a bride recreate her grandmother's bouquet from 1928. They were HUGE back then.

For bridesmaids, I'd recommend something smaller, or, to save money, even one grace single stem. Moms lately seem to not want to wear a corsage so I have been doing small bouquets for them to carry, or even just a small vase of flowers at their place settings. As for men's boutonnières, I suggest keeping it simple so it doesn't look like a corsage or an '80s

prom; they can use spray roses, dendrobium orchids or, as I wore at my wedding (back then it was just a commitment ceremony), a mini calla lily. I suggest having backups for the grooms as after the ceremony, with lots of hugs, they tend to get crushed; this way you have a fresh one for the reception. Also consider non-flower bouts of berries or herbs—or go a completely different route by wearing a brooch.



Photos by Rick Aguilar Studios



The largest expense will be decor flowers. Let's start with reception. Centerpieces are where the costs add up big time. When selecting these, think about the overall feel of the wedding, and where you are having it at. If it's a hotel ballroom, I'd recommend a mix of elevated arrangements and complimenting lower arrangements. By mixing these formats with

the same flowers, it will not only add interest to the room, but save you money as the lower will be less expensive than the elevated, as you need a lot of volume.

If you are in a more casual environment such as a loft or even your home, think about one single vase or even a collection, with each vase having a different type of flower in it. (Having the same color is called monobotanical.) You can tell your florist—if you are not picky—to set a price point, and to just the "the best of market" and have them decide on what type. Also consider a grouping of small vases with a single stem that will double as a favor for guests to take home. You can go entirely with candles, but make sure the flames are in glass to meet fire codes. Also, using non-floral elements such as props or edible centerpieces (such as a small wedding cake) saves money. Again, this must fit your theme and or overall feel of the wedding. I love the words "unexpected" and "out of the box," which are my calling cards.

When selecting flowers and decor for your

using an archway, chuppah or mundap (for a Jewish or Indian ceremony, respectively), ask if these items can be repurposed for you to have a sweetheart table for two to dine at—or would your wedding cake look sweeter under this structure? Pew flowers in church can be repurposed on the backs of chairs at the head table.

Again, try to use whatever you use at the ceremony in the reception. If your ceremony and reception are not at the same venue, there will be an extra delivery/set-up fee, but much less than purchasing separate floral all over again.

If the budget allows, I love to place a bud on each napkin. Small arrangements for the restrooms and bars (as well a bowl of nuts for guests to munch on while waiting for a drink) are nice touches as well.

One more thing to consider is lighting. You have these beautiful flowers, and once the room gets dark you will lose the beauty. I highly recommend pinspotting each table, with a light focused directly on each centerpiece. This

ceremony, I have one word I keep in mind: REPURPOSE. Think "How can I use these at the reception, to save money?" Centerpieces on rented pedestals create an amazing aisle. Large statement pieces flanking your ceremony can be relocated to each side of your orchestra or head table or can be used as centerpieces for your escort card or sweet tables. If you are

makes a huge impact, and I feel is money well-spent. Then, if the budget allows, I love to do a pattern on the dance floor created with light. Also, a lit room perimeter creates a dramatic feel, and can change color during the evening.

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Notes from Diamond Don

BY DON STRZEPEK

First, let me say congratulations on making the decision to get married to that most important person in your life—your wife or your husband. Now for some facts. How to choose the right engagement ring and wedding bands? Do you both get engagement rings? What type of metal should you get? Where should you shop? And how much should you pay?

Let me answer these questions as best as I can. The right engagement and wedding bands should be not only a symbol of your love and commitment, but a very open display of your individuality and personality. You are not going to settle on a cookie-cutter style, therefore, find a jeweler who is willing to listen and know about you and your partner. This will not happen on the Internet. The best thing you can do is shop local and make buying rings part of the overall fun experience.

Should you both get engagement and wedding rings? I think so. Why not? Shout out to

the world that you are going forward with your lives together. I think the embracing of giving rings to each other is more than a display. Ring giving is an emotional statement. Remember, we are creating trends and traditions like never before.

What type of metal should your rings be made of? The answer is simple. Stay with the finer metals that work well with your lifestyle and type of work you do. I am going to say avoid the alternative metals. I know they are trendy but they really are just street-fair type of costume jewelry. You both deserve the best for this lifetime expression. The right type of metal is silver, gold or platinum.

Where should you shop? I strongly recommend that you shop local. Shop with a true professional jeweler. Shop at a place where you can establish a personal relationship. Shop with a jeweler who cares about you and the moments in your life. Shop at the places that have always embraced you and will continue to do so.

Finally, How much should you spend? That answer is simple. If you want quality jewelry, do not just shop price point. Low pricing is often a sign of mass-produced and poor quality product. I would not even call that jewelry. Fine jewelry is quality made at affordable pricing. So the answer is to buy what is comfortable for the both of you. Remember, you are going to be wearing it for a lifetime.

Now get shopping. Diamonds are a woman's best friend and now a man's best friend as well.

Don Strzepek is the owner of Tucker, Inc. Stop by 5 S. Wabash Ave., Suite 507; visit www.tuckercompany.net or call 312-263-3317.



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'First Comes Love' book takes look at LGBTQ love

Available Sept. 26, First Comes Love (So-leil Press) is a new coffee-table photo book that celebrates the lives and enduring relationships of LGBTQ couples from across the United States.

The brainchild of Philadelphia photographer Barbara Proud (aka B. Proud), the book is just one element of the "First Comes Love" Project, a traveling exhibition of photographs, stories and video interviews documenting LGBTQ couples who have been together 10-50 years.

Visit www.firstcomeslove.org.




Photographer Barbara Proud.



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Sosin-Oeser

Former Windy City Times senior news reporter Kate Sosin (in glasses) married Alicia Oeser, surrounded by family and friends July 12, in Rindge, New Hampshire. It was a small, joyous ceremony.

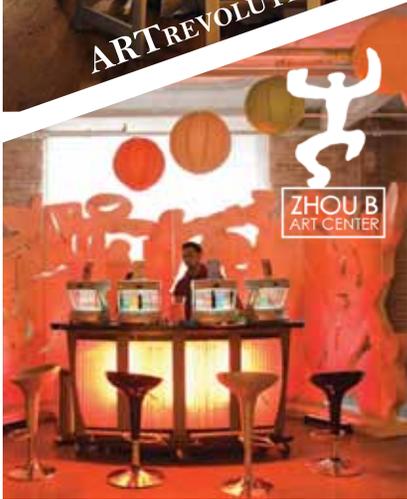
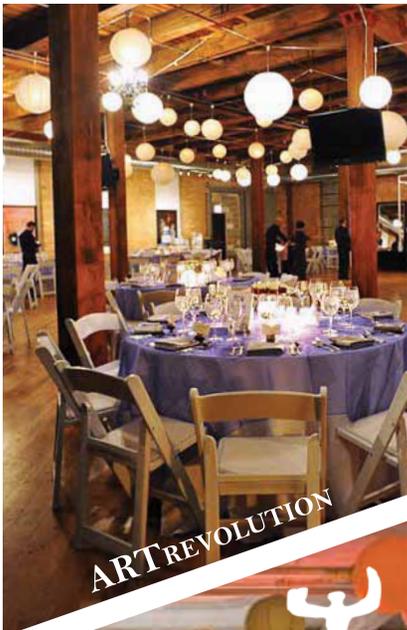
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Photos by Felix Rust Photographers

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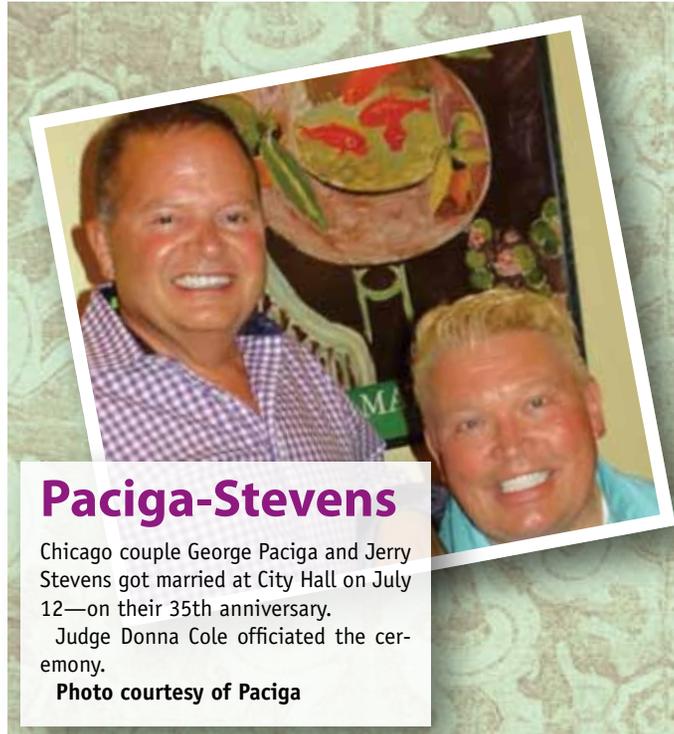
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Paciga-Stevens

Chicago couple George Paciga and Jerry Stevens got married at City Hall on July 12—on their 35th anniversary. Judge Donna Cole officiated the ceremony.
Photo courtesy of Paciga

Bailey-Knight

Jim Bailey (left), event designer at J & L Catering, and Windy City Times film critic and Scrooge & Marley co-writer/director Richard Knight Jr. are pictured with their “son” Barrie on July 16 (Knight’s birthday) just after converting their July 2011 civil union to a marriage.

Together for 17 and a half years, the couple ironically met during an engagement party on which they were both working (Jim as the caterer, Richard as part of the band providing entertainment). The couple celebrated their new status with a fancy dinner—a subsequent summer garden party for friends—and have upcoming formal dinners planned for both sides of their family.

“We have waited a long time to make it legal so we’re taking advantage of every opportunity to celebrate,” Knight commented between sips of champagne.
Photo by Rusty Schwimmer



34 YEARS from page 28

in Chicago living in Andersonville. He was the owner of Chicago Aquarium and Pond Co., from 1980-2005. He is now a realtor with Century 21 Woodland.

Ellis, 68, is now retired. They moved to Arkansas in 2006, as it was “time to slow down,” Riley said. Now married, Riley joked that he now “even walks different.”

“I always said, ‘After all these years [together] what difference is that [marriage certificate on] paper going to make, [but] I cried during that short ceremony and realized I love Harold as much today as I ever did.’”

So how did they meet? It truly is a fish tale.

“I was working at New Town Aquarium [in Uptown],” Riley said. “Harold was the census taker for the blocks around [that area]. We talked for a few minutes, [and then] he mentioned he did stained glass. I said I would like to see it, so he gave me his number—and I started calling as soon as he was out of sight.”

When they later talked, it was the start, officially.

“We spent the first few months reassuring each other that they are not the one, then one day in the garden one of us said, ‘Maybe I wouldn’t mind growing old with you,’” Riley said.

Both have fallen in love with Eureka Springs, too.

“There aren’t any gay bars, per se [in the city], but there are drag shows, and allegedly there are more LGBT per capita here than any place else,” Riley said. “Back in our day, we were very active in Chicago. We were the plaintiffs in the first felony hate crime prosecuted in the state, and the city council passed a resolution honoring the things we did there. We did the Marches on Washington, the March on the United Nations, [and more]. Harold and I have a few buildings in town, but we live on Beaver Lake, about 39 minutes away.”

Riley is on the board of directors for the Eureka Springs Gay Business Guild, “and Harold helps me with my commitments,” Riley said. “Really, these homosexuals’ agenda is to keep moving outward and showing people, sometimes one person at a time, yep, we are all humans

“Eureka Springs is just a great place for people to live; it’s not just that a lot of gays have settled here. We have four diversity weekends a year; we do have a men’s resort, but no gay bars. It’s almost like watching an experiment some times. Look, all I can tell you is, I spent my first 50 [years] in Chicago, and have not been as comfortable as I am here. The natural beauty of this area is outstanding; Beaver Lake is amazing. Being near Bentonville, which is the world headquarters for WalMart, has helped to homogenize the areas outside of Eureka Springs as well.”



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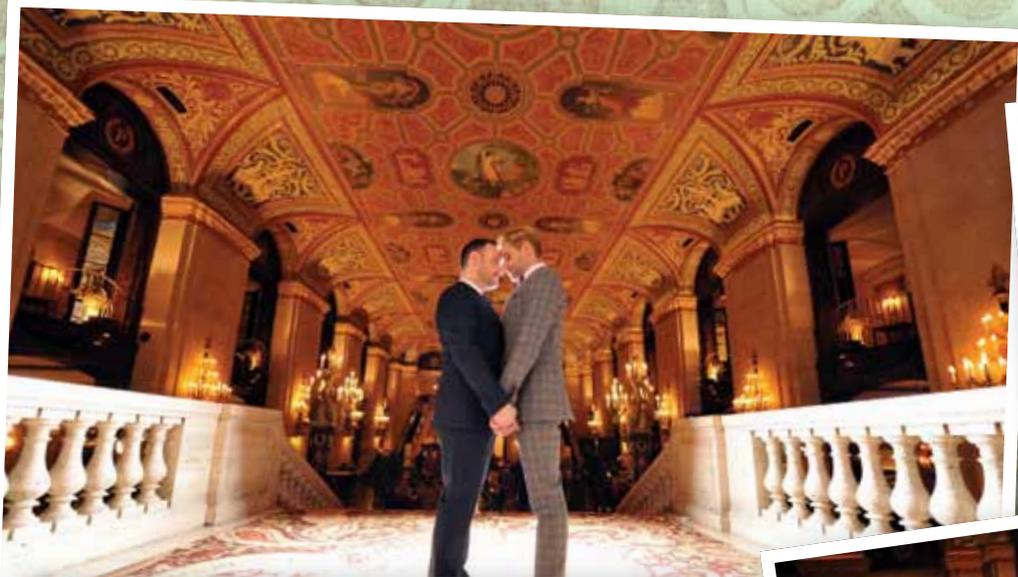
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Hartwig-Chaille

Marek Hartwig (Chicago-based bridal stylist and owner of MAREK Bridal) and Ron Chaille (owner of Chicago-based advertising agency, arch Advertising) celebrated their marriage with a reception March 28 at the Chicago Cultural Center.

The couple, along with their 270 guests, enjoyed scrumptious fare provided by Blue Plate Catering and danced the night away to fabulous music provided by The Larry King Orchestra, celebrating their marriage.

The actual marriage took place Feb. 15 on the rooftop of The Andaz in West Hollywood, California.

Other specifics of the reception included:

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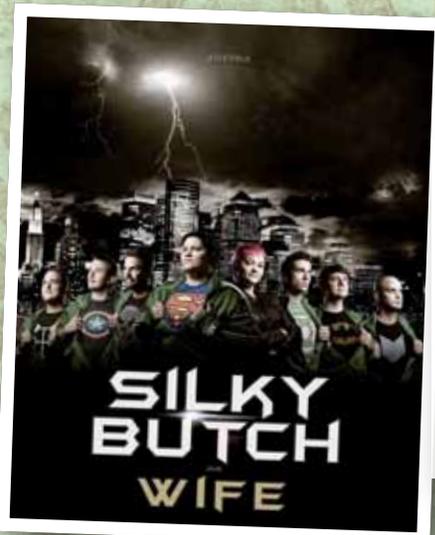
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Forde-Zipter

Kathy Forde (left) and Yvonne Zipter, who have been together for more than 26 years, converted their civil union to a marriage in a ceremony July 5, 2014, at the Logan Center for the Arts at the University of Chicago, where they both work. The ceremony was officiated by author Sara Paretsky in the presence of many family members and friends.

Photos by Eric A. Rogers

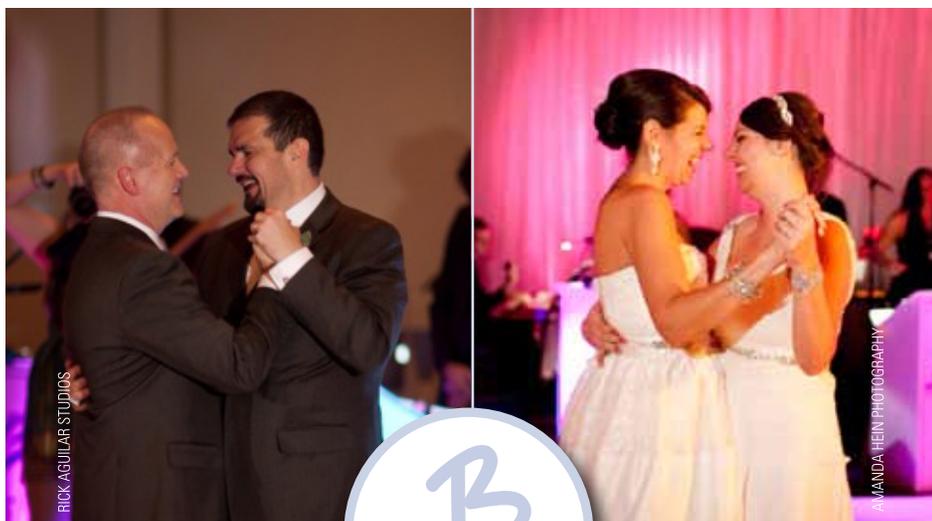


Spaanstra-Barnes

Amanda Spaanstra (brown hair in right photo) and Carmen Barnes are to be married Aug. 16.

They have been engaged for a little more than a year and are looking forward to sharing their lives together. Their wedding website is <http://www.theknot.com/wedding/Carmen-and-Amanda>.

Photos courtesy of Barnes



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MARKET DAYS

Belinda Carlisle: 'Heaven' and 'Earth'



Belinda Carlisle. PR photos

INTERVIEW BY ANTHONY MEADE

Artist Belinda Carlisle first achieved fame in the '80s with the groundbreaking all-female rock band The Go-Go's and then went on to a stellar solo career featuring timeless tracks such as "Circle In the Sand" and "Heaven is a Place On Earth." She finds her heaven this Sat., Aug 9, performing at Northalsted Market Days for the first time.

Contributor Anthony Meade recently got an exclusive opportunity to chat with Belinda about her career, her love of travel, her commitment to "finding the divine," and just how much she loves the Windy City.

Windy City Times: You just got to tour with The Go-Go's, The Motels, Patty Smyth, Cutting Crew and Naked Eyes on the Replay America tour. What was that experience like for you?

Belinda Carlisle: It was fun. Difficult schedule, but fun. We love Martha; we've known her since the late '70s when The Go-Go's shared a rehearsal space with The Motels.

WCT: You are playing the Northalsted Market Days this Saturday night, August 9. Are you excited to play this? You know we have wanted you to perform at this for many years, and the stars finally aligned for you to do so. We are very excited to have you back here in Chicago!

BC: I'm really excited. I've heard it's a great

event and I'm proud to be part of it this year. And it's a great excuse to come back to Chicago, one of my favorite cities in America.

WCT: What are some of your favorite things about Chicago? Do you have places at which you like to shop and eat while you are visiting us?

BC: I love the energy and the architecture. I just love walking and getting lost. I'm a foodie and there are a ton of good restaurants.

WCT: Your music anthology was released this year with remasters of all your albums, added bonuses and videos. It must be "Heaven" to know that your body of work has stood the test of time and the songs are still fresh-sounding and fans of all ages are still enjoying them. What was your favorite part about putting this anthology together?

BC: It was great finally working with a record company that is about the music and that loves music as opposed to working with corporations that don't give a toss about the art and just care about the money. There was a lot of great care put into this by [the record company] Demon and by myself.

WCT: Also on the Anthology there are new songs added, such as "Sun," which your son James brought to you and "Good Bye, Just Go," which Ellen Shipley (co-writer of "Heaven Is A Place On Earth") co-wrote. What was the process in choosing these new songs for this project?

BC: The process was simple. "Sun" did need some lyrical changes. It was originally "Run" and then I asked Jane Wiedlin to be involved in the lyric writing, as she is a genius at that. It's a very Kundalini yoga lyric; it's inspired by my practice. "Goodbye Just Go" didn't take much work; I just sang it. The demo was a lot different than the single. It had an R&B feel, but underneath I heard a song that reminded me of pop in the late '70s. It reminded me of The Three Degrees. In fact, if I had my way I would have had The Three Degrees-style backing vocals that we recorded, but Ralph Schuckett thought that it was corny. Maybe it was, but still I loved it.

WCT: Speaking of new songs, you recently did a cover of country singer Lynn Anderson's "I Never Promised You A Rose Garden" on Jools Holland, which sounded amazing! You really took that song and made it your own. You have also done Pasty Cline. Have you ever thought about doing a cover album of country songs, like you did with your French CD, Voila?

BC: Maybe I will, maybe I won't. I don't know. I have been approached to do a country album before but said no. I will definitely do a Kundalini chant album next year, after I graduate from teacher training. It is not just singing, it's really understanding the mantra. I don't want it to look like a vanity project; I've dedicated my life to this practice and I'm very serious about it.

WCT: You have been practicing yoga for years now. You recently started training to teach it at the Kundalini School of Yoga in Los Angeles. What have you found about yourself in the yoga you practice and decided you wanted to share with others?

BC: This yoga is about finding the divine in yourself and helping others find their own divinity and happiness. It helps you find your connection to something bigger than yourself.

WCT: You live between LA, France and India. You have always seemed to love to travel and visit the "not so common" places. India, in which you started a business, Belinda, has been one of your favorite places in recent years. Any plans to move and explore a new place? You post amazing photos on Twitter of all your finds and treasures when you travel. What are some of your fave things you have found?

BC: I'm off to live in the Far East—Thailand. I found that once the East gets into your psyche, nothing else will do. I have discovered that you really can't go home after living outside of America for over 20 years. And I don't want that kind of life anymore. I want adventure and I want to be of service. I'm working on establishing an animal hospital in Calcutta, India. That will take up most of my time now. And of course, I will always travel to sing.

WCT: Your landmark hit "Heaven Is A Place On Earth" was released over 27 years ago. To this day, it still sounds timeless. What are some of your favorite memories of recording that album and shooting that unforgettable video directed by Diane Keaton?

BC: There was an energy in the studio. We felt we had something special. And Diane was amazing to work with; she had definite vision and I loved her aesthetic. Her humor and point of view were exactly like mine.

WCT: There has been talk that The Go-Go's are working on new material and you are working on new solo material. Please tell us what you can.

BC: We'll see what happens with The Go-Go's. I don't foresee an album really; everyone has their own projects. There are so many different formats for releasing material. We are working with Linda Perry next month.

WCT: Chicago is excited to have you perform at Market Days. What are your fans in store for when they see your performance this Saturday, August 9, at the North Stage? Any surprises?

BC: Well, there will be a mixture of solo and Go-Go's, of course. And some special back up singers!

WCT: Thank You Belinda for your time, and Chicago will see you this weekend!

Belinda Carlisle will take the North Stage at Northalsted Market Days, Sat., Aug. 9, at 8:45 p.m. See page 39 for a full schedule of Market Days entertainment.

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Sat., August 9

North Stage

- 1:15 p.m.—Deborah Cox
- 3:30 p.m.—Blush
- 5:30 p.m.—Steve Grand
- 7:00 p.m.—Whiskey & Cherries
- 7:45 p.m.—Cary NoKey
- 8:45 p.m.—Belinda Carlisle



Steve Grand.



Belinda Carlisle.

Roscoe Stage

- 12:15 p.m.—Crush On Radio
- 1:45 p.m.—Chicago Spirit Brigade
- 2:30 p.m.—Godwin & Branden James
- 4:30 p.m.—Brynn Marie
- 6:30 p.m.—Radical Something
- 8:30 p.m.—Girl Group



Chicago Spirit Brigade. Photo by Kat Fitzgerald

Belmont Stage

- 12:15 p.m.—Hag
- 1:45 p.m.—Skirt Steak
- 3:45 p.m.—Girlband
- 6:00 p.m.—Locals
- 8:15 p.m.—Girl In A Coma



Girlband. Photo by Kirk Williamson

Sun., August 10

North Stage

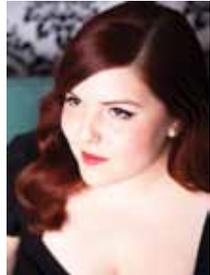
- 1:00 p.m.—Charice
- 2:45 p.m.—Aaron Carter
- 5:00 p.m.—Neon Trees
- 6:45 p.m.—Rockell
- 8:00 p.m.—Karmin



Neon Trees.
Photo by Andrew Zaeh

Roscoe Stage

- 12:15 p.m.—Mary Lambert
- 1:45 p.m.—One Night Band
- 3:15 p.m.—Chicago Spirit Brigade
- 4:00 p.m.—Ariana & The Rose
- 5:30 p.m.—Abba Salute
- 7:00 p.m.—Windy City Cowboys
- 7:45 p.m.—16 Candles



Mary Lambert.



16 Candles. Photo by Kirk Williamson

Belmont Stage

- 12:30 p.m.—The Personnel
- 1:50 p.m.—The Personnel
- 3:30 p.m.—Catfight
- 6:15 p.m.—The Handcuffs
- 8:15 p.m.—Lez Zeppelin



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WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN
WINDY CITY
TIMES

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Yum Cha Dim Sum Parlor

BY MEGHAN STREIT

You no longer have to trek down to Chinatown for dim sum. Earlier this year, **Yum Cha Dim Sum Parlor** opened up right in the heart of downtown.

The serene space is a soothing respite from the hustle bustle of the Loop. The sleek dining room is dressed in grays and neutrals with pops of bright red. Ivory chandeliers that look like oversized chrysanthemums in full bloom provide a playful focal point.

Along with traditional dim sum offerings, wheeled to your table in carts on weekends,



Press images of Yum Cha Dim Sum Parlor



there are other Chinese classics like Peking duck and Mongolian beef. Dim sum purists may find the Chinese appetizers a wee bit less authentic than the stuff you'd get in Chinatown, but for my money, I'm happy to have my "brunch" in an elegant space with an expertly crafted cocktail.

Speaking of which, the specialty cocktails, all clever and boozy riffs on Chinese tea, are not to be missed. My favorite was the "Blossom"—a smooth and flowery concoction of lychee puree, vodka and Mandarin rose tea syrup. It's topped with bubbly and a fresh orchid, making it as beautiful to look at as it is delicious to sip. The "Wild Ginger" is another excellent option. Vanilla tea syrup and ginger liqueur conspire to take the bite out of the whiskey, resulting in a substantial but refreshing brunch cocktail.

Once you have a cocktail in hand (which can take a while, but well worth the wait), get down to the business of devising a dim sum strategy. It shouldn't be too difficult because pretty much everything coming off the carts is delicious. The pork and shrimp dumplings are a familiar dim sum choice, and Yum Cha's version excels. The dumplings are soft and slightly sticky and stuffed plump with tender shrimp and succulent pork. I'd also put the char sui bao on your must-order list. The pillowy steamed buns are filled with a generous scoop of tangy barbeque pork.

The pork soup dumplings are another fun (and very tasty) options. Be sure to slice them open and add a sliver of fresh ginger before you slurp the soup and devour the tender dumpling. The crispy shrimp egg rolls, perfect golden brown on the outside, will please even hesitant dim sum first-timers. The "Buddha" chicken wings are a less traditional offering, and definitely worth a try. The juicy chicken is doused in spicy sesame sauce that adds a nice amount of heat.

If you want to add a main course to your dim sum, there are nicely made versions of all of your Chinese takeout favorites. I really enjoyed the crispy sesame beef. It wasn't super crispy, but the flavors of the rich, savory sauce and tender beef rescued the dish. The Chinese broccoli is fresh and crisp, but the crispy cauliflower (on the dim sum menu) makes a more interesting veggie side dish. The cauliflower is lightly battered and fried with a little bit of chili spice.

Round after round of dim sum may leave you reluctant to order dessert. Ignore your better judgement and try the deep-fried coconut milk. It's not as overly sweet as it sounds. It has the consistency of custard on the inside and a light tempura batter on the outside.

Yum Cha is located at 333 E. Upper Randolph St.; call 312-946-8885 or visit www.yumchachicago.com.

Do you need some more sugar and spice in your life? Follow me on Twitter (@SugarAndSpiceMS) for news and commentary on Chicago's dining scene.

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Chicago, Palmer House Hilton
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The opening day of the
**National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association
Annual Conference**
Aug. 21-24 in Chicago



8:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

**Plenary Session:
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and Transgender Coverage
in LGBT Media**

PANELISTS: Christina Kahrl, Gretchen Rachel Blickensderfer, Jacob Anderson-Minshall, Parker Molloy
MODERATOR: Fiona Dawson

10:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

**Breakout Sessions:
a. Out On the Air:
LGBT Journalists Working in
Every Audio Platform From
Podcasts to Web-Based and
Traditional Radio**

PANELISTS: Fausto Fernos, Scott Duff, Art Sims, Anna DeShawn
MODERATOR: Cathy Renna

**b. The Future of
Lesbian Media**

PANELISTS: Sarah Toce, Trish Bendix, Tracy Baim
MODERATOR: Diane Anderson-Minshall

Noon - 1:30 p.m.

**Lunch Plenary:
The Future of
Journalism Funding:
Foundation Funding with the
Ford Foundation, McCormick
Foundation, Knight Foundation**

PANELISTS: Mark Hallett from McCormick, Barbara Raab from Ford; John Bracken from Knight Foundation
MODERATOR: Cheryl Corley from NPR

1:45 p.m. - 3 p.m.

**Breakout Sessions:
a. Taking Back HIV
Reporting in LGBT Media**

PANELISTS: Todd Heywood, Jeff Berry, Johnathon Briggs
MODERATOR: Diane Anderson-Minshall

**b. LGBT Issues, Athletes
and Journalists in Sports
Reporting**

PANELISTS: Christina Kahrl, Kate Fagan, Michelle Garcia and Ross Forman
MODERATOR: Chuck Colbert

**c. Online and Connected:
Bloggers, Digital Natives, Social
Media, Mobile Reporting and the
Future of Journalism**

PANELISTS: Noah Michelson, Zeke Stokes, Michael Crawford

3:15 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Breakout Sessions
a. Black, LGBT, and
Read All Over:
African-American Journalists
in LGBT Media**

PANELISTS: Alan Bell, Andrew Davis, Lenox Magee
MODERATOR: Kirk Williamson

**b. Young Journalists,
J-School, and the
LGBT Media**

PANELISTS: Camille Beredjick, Derrick Clifton, Kaitlyn Jakola
MODERATOR: Zach Wichter

**c. How We Count:
Data Reporting and LGBT Issues
WORKSHOP LEADER: Howard Goldberg,
Associated Press New York Bureau Chief**

Summit Co-Chairs:

Tracy Baim

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Diane Anderson-Minshall

Editor-at-large of The Advocate,
Editor-in-chief of HIV Plus

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KNIGHT from page 22

and with this turn, the movie heads away from the culture clash into something not quite as compelling.

There is also a pair of budding romances—between Hassan and a pretty, sassy sous chef (played by Charlotte Le Bon, who looks like a young Winona Ryder) and a surprising, rather endearing one between Madame Mallory and Papa—as well as subplots with Hassan's inept brother, a nasty chef working for Madame Mallory, etc. Everything is neatly tied together by Steven Knight's script, gorgeously lensed by Linus Sandgren (talk about food porn!) and elegantly paced by Hallstrom (who is once again in familiar Chocolat territory here). Mirren doesn't get enough screen time and the turn of the material from culture clash to its focus on the rising career of Hassan, with its sidebar to Paris, is a bit too abrupt—but by the fade-out we are back on steady emotional ground, happy to have covered the familiar journey this diverting little movie provides. (It might have been titled The Best Exotic Marigold Restaurant.)

Now available: The Best of Knight at the Movies: 2004-2014—a compilation book of more than 150 of my film reviews from a queer perspective for Windy City Times—is now available. www.knightatthemovies.com

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MAGAZINE

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CALENDAR

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WINDY CITY
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Wed., Aug. 6

Trans Youth Resources and Advocacy

Youth Drop-In Center Every Wednesday, safe, confidential place for transgender people between the ages of 14 to 24. Meet other youth who also identify as transgender, or are questioning their gender identity. Free food, snacks and refreshments, music, peer support, adult supervision, referrals and education. 5:00pm - 7:00pm Broadway Youth Center, 615 W Wellington Ave., <http://www.genderadvocates.org/Tyra/TYRADropIn.html>

Shaker's on Clark Grand Opening Help welcome the new kid on the block (in the former 3160 space) with \$11 mix-n-match buckets, and \$4 Jager shots. 6:00pm - 2:00am Shaker's On Clark, 3160 N. Clark St. <http://www.shakersonclark.com>

An Evening about Lesbian Pregnancy The American Fertility Association hosts a free event about pregnancy and family-building options for lesbians in Chicago. Refreshments, gift bags. RSVP to corey@theafa.org or by phone. 6:30pm - 8:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St 718-853-1411 Tickets: <http://www.theafa.org>

Thursday, Aug. 7

At the Intersections: Gender, Sexual Orientation and Race in Public Policy Presented by Affinity and National Conference of Men Against Sexism. Through Aug. 9. Open to the general public, unless noted. Registration required. \$30. 8:45am - 5:30am University of Chicago, 5733 S. University Ave., Chicago <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/740948>

Men & Masculinity Pre-Conference Institute Topics: History of the Pro-Feminist Men's Movement, Screening of "Gen Silent", Social Science Findings and Public Policy: Why the Dis-Connect?, Ending Men's Violence: The New York Anti-Batterer Model 8:45am - 5:45am Conference Hotel Hyatt Regency McCormick Place, 2233 S. King Drive, Chicago

Something Something New Vagina Rebecca Kling, transgender artist and educator, solo performance about loving one's self and one's body. It's also about a vagina:

Kling's fancy new vagina. Part of the Chicago Fringe Festival. 4:00pm Jefferson Park Tickets: <http://www.chicagofringe.org/>

American Veterans for Equal Rights monthly meeting All veterans and those interested in veteran issues and activities are welcome. 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted 773-472-6469 <http://www.averchicago.com>

Bowie Ball Celebrate the legend, the chameleon, and the man: David Bowie. Featuring live performances by Chris Connelly and Robert Byrne as they play David Bowie. 10:00pm - 4:00am Berlin Nightclub 954 W Belmont Ave <http://www.berlinchicago.com>

Friday, Aug. 8

Eshel in Eden: Retreat for Orthodox LGBT Jews Set in the beautiful Wisconsin Dells at the height of summer, Eshel in Eden offers several unique features: the intimate setting of the retreat provides a place where we can get to know each other more deeply. 8:00am - 10:00am Contact an organizer for location. <http://www.eshelonline.org/eshels-midwest-summer-retreat/#sthash.U2nqf460.dpuf>

Art exhibit The works of Gene Skala in the 2nd floor gallery and Roman Liufa in the 3rd floor gallery through Aug 19. 12:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

Jinks Jervey-Page "Take a Swing at Breast Cancer" golf tournament Get your four-some registered now! Raising money for breast cancer research aimed at saving lives. Tourney held only for that purpose. 2:00pm Highland Park Country Club, Highland Park <https://www.facebook.com/events/1438949446369116/>

Queen of the Night II: Whitney's Birthday Celebration Celebrate the life and birthday of the angel that was Whitney Houston. DJ Moose will be spinning all of Whitney's biggest hits, remixes and rarities plus the best of all her friends and family. 2:00pm Mary's Attic, 5400 N Clark St., <http://www.hamburgermarys.com/chicago>

Patrick Dati, author I Am Me: Survivor of

Child Abuse and Bullying Speaks Out Chicago author, speaker, and survivors' advocate will do a reading from his memoir which recounts his assault by John Wayne Gacy, followed by a reception during which audience members will have an opportunity to purchase Dati's book and interact with him one-on-one. 6:30pm Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

Katy Perry Katy Perry has added a show to her sold out show Aug. 7, part of the Prismatic world tour. Lesbian musical duo Tegan and Sara will join her for part of the tour although the Chicago shows will feature Capital Cities instead. 7:30pm United Center 1901 W Madison Ave <http://www.KatyPerry.com> Tickets: <http://www.Ticketmaster.com>

Bible Bingo & Late Nite Catechism Bible Bingo is 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. Now in its 21st year in Chicago. 8:00pm Royal George Theatre 1641 N Halsted St 312-988-9000 <http://www.latenitecatechism.info>. Tickets: <http://www.latenitecatechism.info>

Justin Utley LIVE Kick off Market Days Weekend with singer/songwriter Justin Utley, coming back to perform at The Glenwood. Meet and greet after the show. \$5 Milagor Margaritas, \$6 double drafts of Miller Lite and Leine's Hoppin' Helles, \$4 shots of Fireball. 9:00pm - 11:00pm The Glenwood Bar 6962 N Glenwood Ave <http://www.theglenwoodbar.com>

Saturday, Aug. 9

Gay Games Through Aug. 16. Since the first Gay Games in 1982, the Federation of Gay Games has promoted equality in and by sport and culture and ensured that the Gay Games, the world's largest sports and culture festival open to all, take place every four years under the founding principles of Participation, Inclusion, and Personal Best™ 7:00am - 9:00pm Various locations, Cleveland and Akron, Ohio; <http://www.gaygames.org/>

NorthHalsted Market Days 2014 More than 100,000 from across the country will converge on Halsted Street for the annual two-day event. It's the largest two-day street fair in the Midwest. Suggested donation \$8. The event spans six city blocks, has 17 entrance gates and features three music stages with more than 40 musical acts. Thru Aug. 10. 10:00am, 773-584-6631 <http://www.northalsted.com>

Memorial for Joanne Marie Bristol Bristol passed away on July 19, 2014 at her home



REMEMBERING JOANNE

Saturday, Aug. 9

A memorial for Joanne Marie Bristol will be held at Oak Park's Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church, 405 S. Euclid Ave.

Photo by Hal Baim

in Logan Square. 3:00pm Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church 405 S Euclid Oak Park, IL 60309 <http://www.windy-citymediagroup.com/lgbt/How-a-loving-lesbian-couple-made-Logan-Square-Honey/47411.html>

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, Chicago-area GLBT Chapter Specifically founded to meet the needs of the Chicago-area GLBT community with mood disorders or other significant psychological conditions, as well as their friends, partners, and family members. Free. No RSVP needed. 11:00am - 12:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted <http://www.dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com/>

Sunday, Aug. 10

Tom Goss Midwest Love Tour With Homer Marrs. \$12 8:00pm <http://www.uncommonground.com>

The Goo Goo Dolls Multi-platinum, Grammy-nominated bands Goo Goo Dolls and Daughtry tour with Plain White T's. 6:45pm FirstMerit Bank Pavilion at Northerly Island 1300 S Linn; visit www.ticketmaster.com

Tuesday, Aug. 12

DACA Renewal Informational Session The Association of Latino/as Motivating Action (ALMA), in collaboration with the Chicago LGBTQ Immigrant Rights Coal-

ition, is hosting a "DACA Renewal." Safe space, LGBTQ undocumented youth are highly encouraged to attend. Informational Session. Questions to info@almachicago.org. 4:00pm - 6:00pm Chicago Commons Paulo Freire Family Center, Large Motor Room, 1653 W 43rd St., Chicago <http://almachicago.org>

Chicago Writers Conference Party with a Purpose CWC's annual benefit to support its scholarship offerings. Readings, a performance, a drink & appetizers included, along with a silent auction and raffle. 6:30pm - 8:30pm Mary's Attic 5400 N Clark <http://www.chicagowritersconference.org/party-purpose/> Tickets: <https://pwp2014.eventbrite.com>

Bi Discussion group Every other Tuesday, chat about upcoming bisexual events, concerns, and answer each other's questions about the community. Soft drinks, water are provided by the Center, or bring anything else you'd like to share, whether it's snacks or a good book! 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

Voice Box with Cathy Richardson Spoken word hosted by Maureen Muldoon with storytellers, open stage and musical improvisation by Cathy Richardson, out Grammy nominated singer/songwriter from Chicago known for her portrayal of Janis Joplin in the original cast of the hit Off-Broadway musical "Love, Janis." \$8. SideBar Music Room 7:30pm Fitzgerald's 6615 Roosevelt Rd. Berwyn, IL 60402 <http://www.fitzgeraldsnightclub.com>

Wed., Aug. 13

Taste of Andersonville Dinner Crawl 2014 selections from 20 restaurants in Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood. Choose between the SALT Route and the PEPPER Route. Or do both with THE WHOLE ENCHILADA! \$25 for each route in advance, \$30 at the door (if available). THE WHOLE ENCHILADA is \$45 in advance, \$55 at the door (if available). 6:00pm - 9:00pm Headquarters location, Swedish American Museum, 5211 N. Clark St., Chicago 773-728-2995 Tickets: <http://www.andersonville.org>

Speakeasy: Crew's 10th Anniversary Party Celebrate a decade of Chicago's very own gay sports bar with this Roaring '20s-inspired party. \$20 suggested donation gets you complimentary eats and drinks, plus raffle prizes. '20s attire encouraged. A benefit for TPAN and The People's Music School. 7:00pm - 10:00pm Crew Bar & Grill, 4804 N Broadway, <http://www.worldsgreatestbar.com>

Wachowskis host TransLife Center benefit at film studio

BY TRACY BAIM

The award-winning sibling filmmakers Lana and Andy Wachowski held a very unique benefit, "TransReelization," for Chicago House's TransLife Center Aug. 2. The event took place in their North Side film studio, Kinowerks.

On display were props and representations from their many films, including the Matrix series (guests could sit in a Matrix chair from the famous scene with Laurence Fishburne), Cloud Atlas, Speed Racer and the much-anticipated Jupiter Ascending, out in 2015. The Wachowskis gave a private tour and discussed how they move a project from concept to a finished film—and they even showed several exciting minutes from Jupiter Ascending, with the film's stars racing through the skies of Chicago.

The evening also featured a short film series in the studio's screening room, with a diversity of trans-related movies shown, as curated by Mickey R. Mahoney and Karin Winslow, a Chicago House board member and wife of Lana Wachowski.

Stan Sloan, CEO of Chicago House, also gave a parting award to TransLife founding Director Bonn Wade, who stepped down from the post July 31. Sloan also introduced the new director, Josie Paul, to the crowd. Paul told Windy City Times she is excited to continue the work that Wade started, and looks forward to serving the Chicago transgender community.



Back row (from left): Karen Winslow, Josie Paul and Andy Wachowski. Front row (from left): Stan Sloan, Lana Wachowski and Bonn Wade. Photo by Tracy Baim

BILLY MASTERS

"Jesse [Tyler Ferguson] and I call Cam a 'bossy, fussy bottom.'"—Eric Stonestreet gives the Huffington Post a bit of insight into his Modern Family character. Frankly, I think a better name for the sitcom might be Who's the Top.

Why on Earth should I care who Andi chose on The Bachelorette? Ostensibly, it's part of my job to watch it. To be sure, many of you have asked me about the rather nebulous sexuality of various Bachelorette contestants. But that doesn't explain why I felt such unmitigated joy when Nick, the runner-up, asked Andi on live TV, "If you weren't in love with me, I'm just not sure why you made love with me?" I don't know about the rest of you, but I was virtually orgasmic. It was like the heavens opened up and the angels were singing. Now, certainly we have all suspected that the various contestants are having sex in the Fantasy Suites, or the hot tubs, or any number of darkened doorways in eastern European cities. But to have someone bring it up on live TV? Bliss. But please understand, I have no love for Nick. Really, I don't. Still, knowing that he tried on two separate occasions to speak with Andi in private and she declined made me feel less than sad at her having to hear about this on live TV. On the other hand, her decision may speak volumes (or, at the very least, pages) about the quality of this lovemaking.

Jason Biggs (the boy who came into our collective consciousness fucking fruit pies) feels that at least half of the contestants on The Bachelorette are gay. When asked how many of her suitors were perhaps in the closet, Andi answered with an emphatic "zero." (Sigh—they're always the last to know.) There's usually at least one cast member from the potential suits who receive the bulk of gay rumors. I believed this season's sure thing was JJ O'Brien, a self-proclaimed "pantsapreneur"—he designs eye-catching pants. He's also movie-star handsome, with a strong, chiseled face and fitness-model body. But inside, he's still a nerd. So he gets my vote (and the pink pants didn't hurt).

The cast member the rest of the world was focused on was Tasos Hernandez. He's 30, lives in Denver, is a Spanish teacher, a DJ and a wedding coordinator. He's also in a band where he often plays the guitar in his undies. And, oh yes, In Touch magazine found some photos of Hernandez licking some guy's nipples. In their blurb, they quote a close, unidentified friend, saying, "I've only known Tasos to date guys." The boys didn't take this lying down. JJ tweeted, "I can't believe you cheated on me like this." Tasos wrote, "Sorry, Didn't mean to offend. Really love In Touch's accurate & verifiable information. Quality magazine I tell ya. #sarcasm"

Of course, Big Brother has its share of same-sex romances. Or do they? Many people are cavalierly branding Zach and Frankie's liaison as a "showmance"—just something to keep the viewers talking. I mean, how seriously am I supposed to take professions of love from a bleached blond member of the Grande family? Then there's Cody Calafiore, who looks so familiar to so many people.

Uh, that's because the 23-year-old former soccer player has shown off virtually every inch of his body in various C-IN2 underwear ads. The campaign was called "Get a Firm Grip." Ringing any bells? If I recall correctly, he's sporting one of those briefs that lifts and separates the penile area. In another shot, he's wearing a contraption which emphasizes his other assets. Is it coming back to you now? Well, check out Cody at BillyMasters.com.

You know that lawsuit against Bryan Singer and others about sexually abusing male youths in the '90s? Well, it looks like that entire situation might be going away—or at least it's going on a bit of a hiatus, as we say in the biz. In the weeks since Michael Egan brought

his allegations against the director and several other Hollywood hotshots, his recollections have proven to be far less reliable than initially thought. In the midst of his mounting credibility issue, Singer's lawyers swooped in and made an offer to settle the matter out of court without the admission of any guilt in exchange for \$100,000. It would appear that Egan's lawyers favored such an arrangement, and Singer's people drew up the agreement. Singer even signed it. But when push came to shove, Egan nixed it, saying, "This exact kind of take-it-and-shut-up deal is why I decided to stand up in the first place. Being silenced goes completely against what I believe in and offers no protection for other vulnerable children." Ah, there it is—he's not holding out for more money—he's doing this for the children! While these platitudes might sound convincing, apparently his lawyers feel differently, saying, "We are in the process of withdrawing from representing Mr. Egan in all his cases and have no further comment concerning his matters at this time." And that, dear readers, says it all.



Modern Family's Eric Stonestreet has provided some insight about co-star Jesse Tyler Ferguson (above). Photo by Robert Mannis

Lots of news has been wafting out of Comic-Con this year. Most of it has been focused on Arrow and The Flash. The upcoming Flash reboot pilot was screened for the sold-out audience. Because I'm in the know, I already had my copy, and I particularly liked the sensitive and yet powerful scenes between the new Flash, Grant Gustin, and classic Flash, John Wesley Shipp. I'll post this clip on BillyMasters.com for your perusal.

It's been announced that the lovely Robbie Amell will be recurring on The Flash as Firestorm (first appearing in the third episode). Meanwhile, over on Arrow, Brandon Routh has joined the cast as The Atom. It's perhaps a comedown from playing Superman, but at least he's got a job.

Our brief "Ask Billy" question is about the more famous Amell—the one who plays the eponymous Arrow. Keith in Seattle writes: "I heard Stephen Amell stripped at Comic-Con. Is that true?"

I think "strip" is overstating the situation. I mean, there wasn't music, dollar bills, or bumping and/or grinding. There was, however, encouragement from the audience (and from his co-stars) for Amell to show off his abs. And, he was happy to oblige. And, yes, you can also see that footage on BillyMasters.com.

When we're flashing the abs of two Amells, we've definitely come to the end of yet another column. That's just the tip of the iceberg of what you'll find at www.BillyMasters.com, the site that keeps it all in the family. If you've got an itch I can scratch, feel free to contact me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Tasos and JJ beat Andi and Josh to the altar. So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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Gay Games 9: Fewer registrants, but excitement aplenty

BY ROSS FORMAN

When basketball superstar LeBron James announced in mid-July that he was "coming home" to play this upcoming season for the Cleveland Cavaliers, organizers for Gay Games 9—which runs from Aug. 9-16 in Cleveland—sent a formal invitation to James to attend the Games' opening ceremony. The event, after all, is being held at Quicken Loans Arena, the same venue that, come NBA season in the fall, will be James' home court.

Gay Games organizers have not received a formal reply from James or his representatives.

"God knows it would be unbelievably incredible if we could have gotten LeBron to come to the opening ceremony, but that's just not going to happen. It was a pipe dream," said Rob Smitherman, the former Chicago resident who now serves as the events director for Gay Games 9, being held in Cleveland and Akron.

James' official welcome-home party is Friday, Aug. 8, in Cleveland.

Still, James' return and the arrival of polarizing rookie football quarterback Johnny Manziel have certainly skyrocketed Cleveland in the national and international spotlights.

And at what a perfect time: When Gay Games 9 kicks off, despite fewer participants than almost all past Games, but just as much energy and excitement. Smitherman said there are more than 7,000 registered participants for Gay Games 9, and he debunked reports that the registration was only about 5,000. "That's not true," he said.

"This will be a smaller Games than Chicago or Cologne, Germany [in 2006 and 2010, respec-

tively], but [with] as much excitement," said Smitherman, who noted that the population of Cleveland-Akron is the smallest of all past Games' host cities. "I can tell you, the opening ceremony is going to have more energy [than Chicago or Cologne] because we're not [holding the event] in arenas that seat about 60,000," as was the case in Chicago and Cologne. The Chicago opening ceremony was held at Soldier Field.

About 12,000 are expected at the opening ceremony in Cleveland.

"I think it's going to be an incredible event overall," said Smitherman, who also worked on the local organizing committee in Chicago and Cologne, and is a longtime player in gay basketball tournaments. "The professionalism and the welcoming nature of Cleveland and Akron are amazing. People are just so excited that the Gay Games is coming.

"I think people are going to be overwhelmed by the welcoming nature of everyone here."

Smitherman said the Games are "more of a big deal for these two cities, Cleveland and Akron," than it was for Chicago or Cologne. "This is the premier event for Cleveland-Akron this summer," he said.

Smitherman said no sport was cancelled due to limited registration, or because of another reason. However, "we've had to consolidate some divisions [in some sports], but we do that every time," he said.

Smitherman noted strong registration for basketball, volleyball, swimming, water polo, plus dancesport, which has about 180 registered, "which is more than Chicago had in that event," he said.



Rob Smitherman. Photo from Smitherman

The rowing event is being managed and produced by the Cleveland Rowing Foundation, and about 140 are expected to participate. "It's going to be a great event," he said.

All of the running events—from the 5K through the 26.2-mile marathon—have solid registration, Smitherman said. The running events, plus golf, are the only events that are still accepting registrants until Wed., Aug. 6.

Swimming also has a lot of participation, along with the triathlon and track & field events.

"The team sports that have other avenues [for major tournaments], such as softball with the annual Gay Softball World Series [which will be held in Dallas in September], or flag football with the [annual] Gay Bowl, those sports ... people seemingly have to make a decision

as to what [event] to go to," Smitherman said.

Gay Games 9 will be represented by 52 countries, including Sri Lanka, which recently joined the list of attendees. And there will be participants from 48 of the 50 states. Smitherman joked that he'd personally register anyone from Mississippi or North Dakota for a perfect 50 of 50.

"We have a really good, diverse participant base," he said. "Most are from the United States, with more men than women."

Dancesport has more women than men registered.

Smitherman did not know exactly how many Chicagoans are registered, "but [it's] certainly hundreds."

"If you don't come, I think you are going to be really disappointed because you're going to hear really good things about these Games," he said.

Related notes:

—Former Olympic diver Greg Louganis will headline "The Power of Embracing Difference," a Cleveland Foundation/City Club kickoff event on Aug. 9.

Louganis was the first man to win two gold medals in diving in two consecutive Olympic Games. Twenty years ago, the gold medalist came out publicly as an HIV-positive gay man at Gay Games IV in New York. He will be joined by the Cleveland Foundation President/CEO Ronn Richard in a conversation about embracing difference and diversity.

The one-hour event starts at 12:30 p.m.

—The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is holding the official brunch of the Gay Games, a benefit for HRC, on Aug. 10 at Red Space, featuring Latin American fare and cocktails courtesy of Paladar Latin Kitchen & Rum Bar.

—Team Chicago will host a Gay Games 9 send-off party Thursday, Aug. 7, 6-9 p.m., at The North End, 3733 N. Halsted St. There will be Team Chicago shirts and other items, plus the latest news from Cleveland for those heading to the Gay Games. Call 773-477-7999.



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