

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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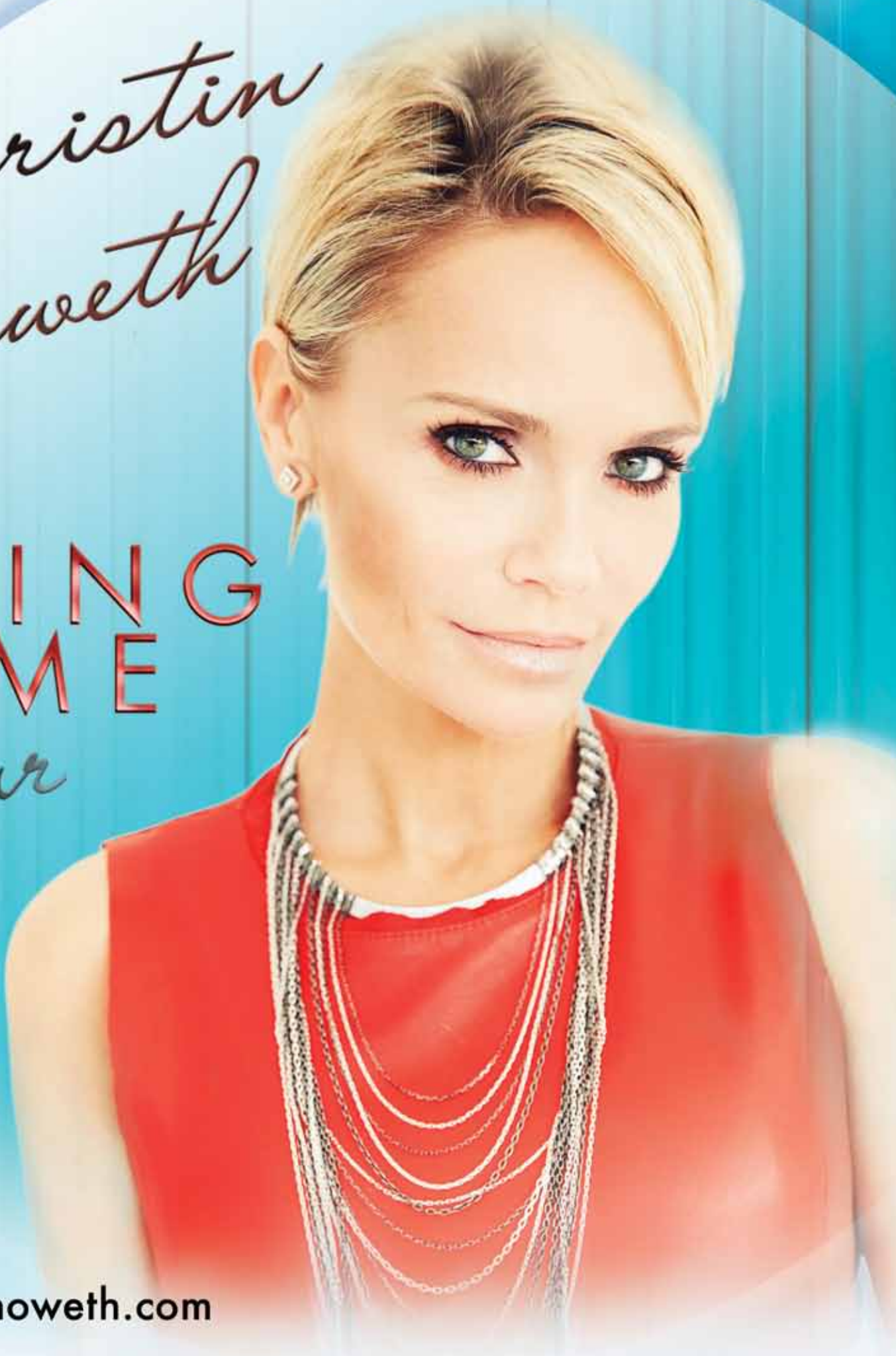
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**MAN OF LETTERS**  
 All types of art (left) entertained and illuminated visitors to EXPO CHICAGO. Photo by Andrew Davis

**REEL GOOD**



The Reeling LGBT film festival opened Sept. 17 (and continues through Sept. 24). Photo of Kate Flannery by Jerry Nunn

**'DANCE' FEVER**  
 The cast of Gotta Dance recently staged a sneak preview.

**I SAW DESIGN**  
 The 2015 Design Excellence Awards were recently handed out at The Ivy Room.

**THAT'S SHOW BIZ**  
 Find out the latest about Bryan Singer, Tyra Banks and rapper Waka Flocka Flame.

**GWEN AND WHY**



No Doubt (with Gwen Stefani, above) was among the acts at this year's Riot Fest. Photo by Vern Hester

plus **DAILY BREAKING NEWS**

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# Fallout from the latest GOP debate

BY LISA KEEN  
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

People posting on the Log Cabin Republicans' Facebook timeline last Wednesday night overwhelmingly agreed that business executive Carly Fiorina was the winner. Of the 117 responses to the open thread question, "Who won the debate?" Sept. 16, 50 said former Hewlett-Packard CEO Fiorina and 27 said U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida. The next closest tally—11—was for pediatric neurosurgeon Ben Carson.

The tally from the national LGBT Republican group mirrored the reactions of most observers. And by Sept. 21, support for Fiorina had catapulted her into second place, behind real estate mogul Donald Trump. A CNN poll of 444 registered voters nationwide in the four days after the debate showed 24 percent support Trump, 15 percent Fiorina, 14 percent Carson and 11 percent Rubio. All the other candidates, including Jeb Bush (9 points), were in the single digits.



Carly Fiorina.

Image from official website

Most observers commended Fiorina for answering often complex foreign policy questions with informed, detailed, and decisive answers. For instance, when asked how they would deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin sending military arms into Syria, Trump said he'd "talk" and "get along" with Putin. Fiorina said she'd rebuild the Sixth Fleet and the missile defense program in Poland, conduct military exercises in the Baltic states, and send a few thousand more troops into Germany.

Many also liked how she handled Trump's remark to Rolling Stone magazine that he couldn't believe anyone would "vote for that"—referring to Fiorina's face. CNN moderator Jake Tapper invited Fiorina to "feel free to respond what you think about his persona." Rather than take the bait to return the insult to Trump, Fiorina said, "I think women all over this country heard very clearly what Mr. Trump said"—a line that drew a boisterous cheer from the debate audience.

Not everyone was praising Fiorina after the debate. Stamp Corbin, publisher of San Diego LGBT Weekly, posted an op-ed in his paper noting the "ridiculous hypocrisy" of Fiorina calling out opponent Donald Trump for making an unkind remark about her face. He was referring, not to her response at the debate but, to a campaign ad, "Look at this Face." The ad shows the faces of many women with Fiorina saying in the background that these are the faces of leadership.

Corbin said he found Fiorina's response hypocritical, given that she "mocked" U.S. Senate opponent Barbara Boxer's hair as "so yesterday" during their race in 2010.

"Such a double standard," wrote Corbin. "Fiorina can say nasty things about Boxer's hair but

her mug is off limits? Ridiculous."

Corbin co-chaired an LGBT arm of the first Obama for President campaign.

## Jeb Bush leans more to the right

While Fiorina's performance and her boost in the polls were the big news out of last Wednesday's debate, there was considerable sparring over at least one LGBT-related issue during the five-hour-long, two-tier event.

The candidates took on the issue of whether Kentucky county clerk Kim Davis should be able to refuse marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The only real news that emerged from that was Jeb Bush's step to the right to agree with Mike Huckabee.

Bush told reporters earlier this month that Davis "is sworn to uphold the law" but that there "ought to be big enough space for her to act on her conscience...." CNN moderator Jake Tapper noted that candidate Mike Huckabee had called the detention of Davis for contempt of court as tantamount to the "criminalization of Christianity." He then noted that Bush had said Davis was "sworn to uphold the law" and asked Huckabee if Bush is "on the wrong side of the criminalization of Christianity?"

Huckabee said, "No," and then launched into a heavily opinionated discourse about the Kentucky controversy. Among other things, he claimed the U.S. Supreme Court "legislated" a new pro-same-sex marriage law "out of thin air." (In fact, the court determined that existing state laws banning same-sex couples from marriage violate the U.S. Constitution.) And he claimed the government "made accommodations" for religious beliefs in the treatment of Muslim male prisoners but not to Davis, who said she was asserting her Christian beliefs in denying marriage licenses to same-sex couples. (In fact, neither Muslim prisoner got religious accommodation. See Slate and Military.)

"What else is it other than the criminalization of her faith and the exaltation of the faith of everyone else who might be a Fort Hood shooter or a detainee at Gitmo?" asked Huckabee.

"I'm not telling you that, governor," said Tapper. "But Governor Bush is, because he disagrees. He thinks Kim Davis swore to uphold the law."

"You're not stating my views right," said Bush. "I think there needs to be accommodation for someone acting on faith. Religious conscience is a first freedom. It's a powerful part of our Bill of Rights. And, in a big, tolerant country, we should respect the rule of law, allow people in this country—I was opposed to the [Supreme Court] decision, but we—you can't just say, 'Well, they—gays can't get married now.' But this woman, there should be some accommodation for her conscience, just as there should be for people that are florists that don't want to participate in weddings, or bakers. A great country like us should find a way to have accommodations for people so that we can solve the problem in the right way. This should be solved at the local level. And so, we do agree, Mike."

Gregory Angelo, president of the national Log Cabin Republicans group, said he found that answer "confusing."

"There are contortions that certain candidates are twisting themselves into unnecessarily with the Kim Davis issue," said Angelo.

But overall, said Angelo, the candidates "merely reinforced statements made in the past."

"I have noticed one thing that differentiates [this debate] from 2012—it's the willingness to talk about LGBT issues and a degree of sympathy and respect that was sorely missing from 2012 cycle."

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Robert Castillo (left), Cathy Plotke, Laura Rissover and John Pennycuff, 1990s

Photo by Tracy Baim

## Ode to My Husband

BY ROBERT CASTILLO

We met at a health club on Chicago's Northwest Side. Nothing in particular stood out about John at the time. But we would become friends. Later he would become my partner and, eventually, my husband.

Milestones exist as a way to mark progress; how far we've come.

John and I shared many milestones in our 20-plus years together: first couple to register for the Cook County Domestic Partnership Registry; plaintiffs in first case to go to trial for discrimination based on sexual orientation under the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance; and being married in San Francisco and having our marriage shown on two Chicago television stations the same day we wed. We made the personal political.

Together we ACTed Up and were part of a Queer Nation. He was not only my husband, he was my fellow activist and we were on our very own yellow brick road with many twists and turns. I always felt stronger with him by my side and thought we made a hell of a team.

But John was pretty special on his own.

He served as office manager for Lambda Publications (when it was Outlines and later Windy City Times), managed the Logan Square Farmers Market, worked for the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, served on the Commission on Human Relations' Advisory on LGBT Issues and, shortly before he passed away, worked for 35th Ward Ald. Rey Colon, a particular highlight for him and an achievement I was quite proud of him for attaining.

He was also one of only a handful of inductees to ever speak at their induction into the Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame, using the occasion to plea for more money for HIV funding in the city and making then-Mayor Daley turn a light shade of crimson. He didn't have to do that but it was important for him to use his voice for what he felt was necessary for our community.

John dared to make a difference but usually was seen as a "gentle giant." He was handsome, talented, good-natured, and one of the most empathetic persons you would ever meet. His ability to put you at ease with his smile or hearty laugh was well-known. John also gave the best hugs of anyone I've ever known. Combine his good looks, those hugs, that smile, that energy and that enthusiasm and you had one hell of a man.

I am lucky to have shared such milestones but I too am sad for the milestones, that we

did not get to share: Gov. Quinn supporting marriage equality; President Obama coming around on marriage; and our home state of Illinois finally allowing same-sex couples to marry, a right we so desperately fought for and never got to savor as a couple. Such milestones serve as a reminder of what I have lost, what we, as a community, have lost.

As I look back at 30 years of WCT, I think of all the progress our community has made. John and I were, at times, in the thick of the fight, whether it was asking for marriage licenses at the Cook County Marriage License Bureau all those years and crying when we were denied, marching against anti-LGBTQ violence, fighting for more money for HIV/AIDS service organizations with The People of Color Coalition, or defending clinics when Operation Rescue would come to town.

John's death sent me reeling and trying to go on without him was, and is, at times, still painful. But I was lucky. Lucky to have shared my life with such a compassionate, caring, generous man. He was amazing and dedicated to working across communities because it was the right thing to do.

He also helped our community of Logan Square through volunteering with Paseo Prairie Garden, Unity Park Advisory Council and countless other causes in Logan Square, earning him the designation of Logan Square Hero from the Logan Square Neighborhood Association.

Most folks know about the bigger things John was involved in, but there were so many little things he did. Like talking to the young teenager who came to our house because he saw our rainbow flag and sought out resources so that he could be himself, despite pressure from his family. John helped him and one day, we found a little rainbow Beanie Babies worm between the doors as a 'thank you'. All the fliers, posters and artwork John helped create for Unity Park events even though we had no children. He understood the importance of Unity Park and knew how vital this park was to the neighborhood. That's the sort of person he was.

John's legacy was a life committed to making the world a better place. And he did. John Pennycuff was the love of my life and I was lucky to share our life together, and I thank God for that blessing.

John Pennycuff, former Windy City Times office manager, died at age 47 on Jan. 29, 2012, after a short illness. See <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Activist-former-WCT-employee-John-Pennycuff-dies/35873.html>.



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# Obama promotes, nominates LGBTs

President Obama made a couple of notable pro-LGBT moves last week.

First, he promoted Amanda Simpson from executive director of the U.S. Army Office of Energy Initiatives to deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Operational Energy, LGBTQ Nation reported.

In 2010, she made history as the first openly trans woman to be appointed by the Obama (or any) administration. She worked for defense contractor Raytheon while transitioning.

In addition, Obama has nominated Eric Fanning for U.S. Army secretary—and he would be the first openly gay person in that position if confirmed.

Fanning is formerly one of Defense Secretary Ash Carter's closest advisers, according to Army Times. Fanning will succeed Army Secretary John McHugh, who has said he will leave the post by Nov. 1 after being there for six years.

"Eric brings many years of proven experience and exceptional leadership to this new role,"

Obama said in a statement. "I am grateful for his commitment to our men and women in uniform, and I am confident he will help lead America's Soldiers with distinction. I look forward to working with Eric to keep our Army the very best in the world."

"We are thrilled to see Eric Fanning nominated to lead the world's greatest Army," said American Military Partner Association President Ashley Broadway-Mack said in a separate release. "History continues to be written and equality marches forward with the nomination of an openly gay man to serve in this significantly important role."

The LGBTQ Nation item is at <http://www.lgbtqnation.com/2015/09/amanda-simpson-advances-as-the-highest-ranking-transgender-official-in-the-u-s/>.

The Army Times piece is at <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/2015/09/18/president-nominates-first-openly-gay-army-secretary/72414970/>.

## Report on bisexual health released

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation has published "Health Disparities Among Bisexual People," a report based on the most recent and reliable data available on bisexual health and released in partnership with the Bisexual Resource Center, BiNet USA and the Bisexual Organizing Project, a press release stated.

Among the results are that:

—Bisexual women have higher rates of cancer than the general population of women, higher rates of heart disease and obesity than heterosexual women, and are more likely than

all other women to suffer from mental and emotional stress;

—Bisexual adults have double the rate of depression than heterosexual adults, higher rates of binge drinking, and are more likely to engage in self-harming behavior, including attempting suicide; and

—Bisexual men are less likely than gay or heterosexual men to get tested for HIV, leading them to be disproportionately affected by the infection; and bisexual people are less likely to be screened for the human papilloma virus, which can increase the risk of cancer in both men and women.

See <http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/health-disparities-among-bisexual-people>.

Bisexual Awareness Week concludes Sept. 26.

## Gov't: Ireland will recognize marriage

Marriage-equality advocates in Ireland are optimistic that the government will recognize same-sex marriages.

Despite delays in publishing the laws following legal challenges, the government said the legislation should be passed in weeks, clearing the way for the first ceremonies, according to The Belfast Telegraph.

Justice Minister Frances Fitzgerald said politicians will begin debating the marriage bill this week. "It will make marriage equality a reality in Ireland," she said.

The only same-sex marriage ceremonies that can take place before the end of this year are those involving couples who have already notified the Civil Registration Office of their intention to enter into a civil partnership.

The article is at <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/gay-marriage-to-be-recognised-in-ireland-before-the-end-of-2015-31532898.html>.

## Obergefell to speak in Chicago Oct. 17

The Human Rights Campaign announced that Jim Obergefell, the named plaintiff of the U.S. Supreme Court case *Obergefell, et al. v. Hodges* that legalized same-sex marriage in the United States, will deliver a speech at the 2015 Chicago Gala Dinner and Silent Auction on Saturday, Oct. 17, according to a press release.

Obergefell will join nearly 700 attendees at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave. The annual HRC Chicago Gala Dinner and Silent Auction is one of the largest LGBT fundraising events in the Midwest.

Obergefell and his late husband, John Arthur, who suffered from a terminal illness, famously had to charter a medical plane to Maryland to marry on the tarmac after being unable to access a marriage license in their home state of

Ohio due to the state's ban on marriage equality. After returning from Maryland, the couple learned that Obergefell would not be listed on Arthur's death certificate because Ohio did not recognize their marriage. Obergefell sought the state's recognition of his marriage to Arthur.

Visit <http://www.hrcchicago.org/>.



Jim Obergefell.  
Photo by Tracy Baim

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# Trans groups, allies protest Stonewall screening

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

More than a dozen transgender and gender-nonconforming people and their allies lined the entrance to the Century Landmark Cinemas, 2828 N. Clark St., on Sept. 20, asking audiences attending the 2015 Reeling LGBTQ+ International Film Festival if they were planning on seeing Stonewall—the festival's centerpiece presentation.

Stonewall director Roland Emmerich's credits include Independence Day, 10,000 BC, Godzilla and Eight Legged Freaks.

Emmerich has come under fire for blanching the historic 1969 uprising, which became the catalyst for a more prolific LGBTQ-rights movement in the United States and worldwide, under a story about Danny—a white gay man who escapes the prejudice of his Indiana home for Greenwich Village, and comes of age through his experiences battling the New York Police Department (NYPD) and through a love affair with another white character named Trevor. [More about this is on page 70-71 of Windy City Times.]

Together they watch with horror as members of the NYPD raid the Stonewall Inn. "This is what we're fighting," Trevor announces defiantly.

Historians and those who actually participated in the riots note that Stonewall was actually precipitated and led by transgender women of color. In an interview earlier this year with Windy City Times, beloved Chicago transgender mentor Gloria Allen recalled Stonewall in 1969; "The violence against transgender women was horrific," she said. "They were being stabbed and found in garbage cans with their bodies chopped up. The police were killing us, too.

They would raid the clubs and drag us out. It was like living in Salem during the witch hunts. If you were Black and transgender, it was bad."

In reporting the raids and ensuing demonstrations, press outlets like the July 6, 1969, edition of the New York Sunday News noted under the headline "Queen Bees Are Stinging Mad" that, "Last weekend, the queens had turned commandos and stood bra strap to bra strap against an invasion of the helmeted Tactical Patrol Force."

In reviewing the 2015 version of events, Little White Lies critic David Jenkins stated, "In Stonewall, Roland Emmerich does to the dignity of New York's burgeoning LGBT community what he did to the White House in Independence Day."

The leaflets handed out by the demonstrators in front of the Century Landmark were just as damning. "The movie Stonewall erases trans people and people of color from LGBTQ history," they said. "It is part of Hollywood's long tradition of focusing on white male protagonists."

The demonstrators were on a mission to educate audiences about who they consider to be some of the real heroes of Stonewall—transgender women of color like Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera and Miss Major Griffen-Gracy.

"We are groups of people who are similarly frustrated with the way Stonewall is being talked about," co-organizer and activist Rebecca Kling told Windy City Times. "We have all collaborated to try and get the message of outreach and education."

Eli was one such member of the group. "I'm a trans person and I don't ever see myself portrayed in media," he said. "These trans and queer women were the source of marriage



Stonewall screening demonstration co-organizer Rebecca Kling talks to a passerby about the history of the riot.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

rights. To see this narrative of the past erased and ciswashed by Hollywood is an oppressive and violent act against me."

Both Kling and Eli believe that it ultimately comes down to the respectability politics that has always played a pervasive role in the fictions presented to the general public. However, when they allow it to plague a central moment in history, much like the NYPD in 1969, Hollywood and the media have crossed a line.

"Part of what's frustrating about the film is that it ignores a number of incredible narratives," Kling said. "You could come at it from the trans women of color who were heavily involved. The implication here is that history isn't interesting enough and these leaders of the community aren't powerful enough or narratively fascinating enough to warrant their own stories."

The leaflets highlighted at least three independent films that believed such narratives are important—Major, Happy Birthday Marsha and Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria.

Kling said that although Reeling organizers had welcomed and even encouraged the demonstration, she was still disappointed that the film served as the festival's centerpiece. "I

don't think they should have pulled the film. I definitely think they should have changed the way they talked about it on their website and in their literature."

In a statement released to Windy City Times, Reeling founder and co-programmer Brenda Webb wrote, "Stonewall is the most high-profile studio picture to date addressing a flashpoint in American LGBTQ civil rights history. It is a fictionalized account of one man's coming of age, set against the backdrop of a watershed historical moment. Reeling would be remiss not to showcase the film's first showing in the United States in front of an LGBTQ audience."

"Stonewall—shepherded by a gay director, written by a gay playwright and featuring diverse gay and trans characters—would be conspicuously absent from one of the world's most prominent LGBTQ film festivals," Webb added. "Based on its success it could well inspire more future movies telling additional stories of the Stonewall riots. We made this our centerpiece because we were very proud to present it."

In a sad irony, another co-organizer of the demonstration, Mike Oboza, announced on the event's Facebook page that he could not attend after being assaulted and robbed of his train and taxi money.



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## PASSAGES

# Retired attorney MaryLu Hahn dies

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

MaryLu Hahn, 66, retired attorney and wife of Berwyn Ald. (3rd Ward) Margaret "Marge" Paul, died Sept. 16 following a four-year battle with breast cancer.

Former Oak Park Village Trustee Ray Johnson relayed Hahn's death to Windy City Times.

She was born Aug. 15, 1949, in Chicago and grew up in Westchester, Illinois. Hahn graduated from Loyola University with a BS in Anthropology/History and received a Juris Doctor from The John Marshall Law School. She attended Marygrove College where she studied Humanities/Philosophy prior to transferring to Loyola University.

Hahn joined the Sister Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Monroe, Michigan, right out of high school and spent ten years there growing in her faith in God.

She is survived by Paul, her mother Lucille Hahn, her siblings (John, Robert, Joanne, Julie, Rita and Janet), Paul's siblings (Rick, Victor and Beth), and 26 nieces and nephews. Hahn was preceded in death by her father John, Paul's parents (Peggy and Ray) and Paul's brother John.

Hahn and Paul were a couple for 34 years before marrying Nov. 16, 2013.

Prior to retiring, Hahn was a partner at Clausen Miller PC and previously worked at Centaur Insurance Company, Millers National Insurance Company and Liberty Mutual.

Hahn and Paul were two of the original members of BUNGALO, Berwyn United Neighborhood

Gay and Lesbian Organization. She was also involved with the Independent Voters of Berwyn for many years.

"I'll miss MaryLu's laughter and love of life," said longtime friend Ted Korbos.

"MaryLu was a remarkable woman who left her imprint on all she met," said longtime friend and urban planner Sandi Radtke. "She would bring clarity to issues whether local or national. MaryLu had boundless energy which she shared unabashedly. She will be dearly missed by those who loved her."

"MaryLu and Marge were a dynamic couple—fully committed to one another, their community and in the cause of equality for LGBT people," said Johnson. "Their partnership provided strength and inspiration to all of us and together, they stood up against those who too often work to divide us. MaryLu's passing is a huge loss for those closest to her, and for those of us who were motivated to do more because of her, I know we will carry on in her name."

"If I had to pick one word to describe MaryLu it would be 'ballsy,'" said longtime friend Jose Ramirez. "She was never shy about giving her opinion, but she did it in a way that never invalidated others' opinions but [instead added] more to the conversation. This is truly heartbreaking. I'm disappointed that she won't be there in November to see me marry my partner of 25 years."

The wake was held Sept. 20, at Hursen Funeral Home in Hillside. A funeral mass took place Sept. 21 at St. Leonard Catholic Church in Berwyn.



MaryLu Hahn.  
Facebook photo

## Stonewall may get new designation

In front of the iconic Stonewall Inn, U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, U.S. Congressman Jerrold Nadler, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), the Human Rights Campaign, state and local elected officials, advocacy groups and community leaders launched a new campaign to designate the nation's first national park site dedicated to LGBT history at Stonewall, a press release stated.

The national campaign launch has been organized outside of the historic Stonewall Inn and Christopher Park, in New York City's Greenwich Village, where the modern LGBT-

rights movement began in the summer of 1969.

Among the supporters are Gillibrand and Schumer, 11 members of Congress, 13 New York state Senators, 37 New York state Assembly Members and five New York City Council Members, as well as the New York City comptroller, public advocate and Manhattan borough president.

## Correction

Last week's story on the Bijou Theater incorrectly stated that the Bijou was previously named the Aardvark Theater, when the Aardvark Theater was, in fact, a different venue.

Windy City Times regrets the error.

FROM DIRECTOR ROLAND EMMERICH AND WRITER JON ROBIN BAITZ

# WHERE PRIDE BEGAN



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# Sloan discusses decision to leave Chicago House

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Longtime Chicago House and Social Service Agency CEO Rev. Stan Sloan announced the week of Sept. 14 that he would be stepping down from his post next summer.

Sloan, who has headed up the organization since 2000, does not yet have any new career plans. He notified the Chicago House Board of Directors Executive Committee of his departure on Sept. 15, and Chicago House employees the following day. The resignation takes effect June 30, 2016, which is the end of the agency's current fiscal year.

He explained to Windy City Times that the main factors in his decision were his parents' health issues—they're still in the same house where he grew up in Amarillo, Texas—and some self-reflection he undertook when he was a candidate for another position in New York City.

"All the things that you think—I can't leave my home, I can't leave all the friends I have here—made me think that, actually, I can do all those things," Sloan noted. "They went with another candidate, but I realized that, if I don't make a move right now, I would likely just keep letting time pass."

He is engaged to a cardiologist who lives in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and the couple has not decided whether Sloan would go to live in South America or if his fiancée would join him in the United States. With his last day not until June, "I have time to see what my options are, play with ideas and plan what's next," he said.

An Episcopal priest, as well as a former Roman Catholic priest, Sloan was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2010. Under his watch, Chicago House's budget, which is about \$6.6 million, and client base have expanded significantly.

"I've worked in homeless services my entire life here in Chicago," he noted. "Chicago House asked me to come here because the programs were largely designed for people who were dying with AIDS. Instead, our houses were filled with classic homeless service clients. We were just on the cusp of protease inhibitors when I got here. People were starting to live instead of die, and we knew we needed to build up our programs to match that."

He added that there's been a 'beautiful evolution' in care for HIV during the time he's been with the agency, noting, "People live, and go back to work. At one time, people didn't really talk about prevention for people who had HIV, but then, by 2001, we realized that people were dying of co-infections with Hep C; keeping people safe [from other infections] was important whether they were positive or negative. By 2004 or 2005, with Senator [Richard] Durbin's help, we really pioneered what is still one of the nation's largest employment programs for people with HIV/AIDS, and helping them move forward."

The agency also opened its TransLife Center in 2013. "Chicago House was founded at a table at the Baton," Sloan said, "We'd always said it was founded to address the crisis of AIDS. We had the opportunity to 'revisit' that table, and realized we had to address the most urgent



Chicago House's the Rev. Stan Sloan.

Photo by Matt Simonette

needs of those who are LGBTQ. At [the time of Chicago House's founding], it was HIV. In 2011 or 2012, when we started raising funds for the TransLife Center, we realized it was the needs of the trans community."

Sloan summed up the years as "growth in mission, physical growth and institutional growth," but also noted that there were some difficult times along the way: "We let our infrastructure lag as we grew so much. We had to work on that with our staff. They were great in calling us out on it this past year. There have been turbulent moments, but it's been a beautiful, grace-filled experience here."

In the months ahead, Sloan and Chicago House will continue working on many projects, including a program that helps transgender women become more aware of and gain access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and an initiative calling attention to and alleviating poverty in the LGBT community. The organization's 2015 Speaker Series luncheon, on Nov. 12, will

feature Caitlyn Jenner; Sloan has been trying to get her to visit the TransLife Center when she comes to Chicago.

"There have been great moments, like when we put up a new families building," Sloan said, reflecting on the proudest times during his tenure. "That's when we doubled our family units. Mayor Daley was there. There's moments like when Congresswoman [Jan] Schakowsky cut the ribbon on the TransLife Center."

He became emotional, however, recalling other, quieter moments that came from working with Chicago House clients.

"I have saved emails, from clients who took the time to write and say, 'Thanks, here's my life now,' Sloan recalled. "There are the big moments, but the actual moments that count most are those that allow you to go to bed thinking about a life that has been changed, because of the incredible work that our staff does. Those are the moments of which I'm most proud."

## Schock turns items over to judge

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Former U.S. Rep. Aaron Schock has turned over 72 documents over to a federal judge, but is claiming they contain privileged information that should be kept from prosecutors, Peoria Journal Star reported Sept. 17.

Schock has been the subject of a grand jury investigation for much of the summer. Formerly the representative for Illinois' 18th Congressional District, he resigned in March after he became the subject of much scrutiny for his lavish lifestyle and alleged financial improprieties, which included filing false mileage reports for his vehicle. Former state Sen. Darin LaHood was sworn in Sept. 17 as Schock's replacement.

Schock's lawyers filed a memo asking that the documents only be seen by the judge in

the case, U.S. District Judge Sue Myerscough, and are expected to submit a longer brief later in September.

Peoria Journal Star's article is at <http://bit.ly/1FTSsSh>.

## WCT's 30th-anniv. party Sept. 27

The Windy City Times 30th anniversary celebration will be Sunday, Sept. 27, at Sidetrack bar, 2-5 p.m. It is open to the public. Suggested donation is \$30 at the door.

There will be "just desserts," from Tri-Star Catering, a performance by singer Sami Grisafe—who was born the year the paper was founded—plus lots of door prizes.

The first edition of Windy City Times was Sept. 26, 1985. More than a dozen original covers of WCT will be displayed at the event, as will hundreds of photos from that era of the Chicago LGBT community.

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# Commission finds in favor of downstate same-sex couple

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The Illinois Human Rights Commission, on Sept. 15, found that a downstate bed-and-breakfast facility discriminated against a gay couple when the owners told them they do not allow same-sex civil union ceremonies.

Todd and Mark Wathen, of Mattoon, Illinois, were told by the owner of the Timber Creek Bed & Breakfast, in Paxton, Illinois, that the inn did not allow such ceremonies when the couple made inquiries in 2011, according to the commission's published decision.

In an email to Todd Wathen, owner James Walder said, "Civil unions and legal marriage are not the same thing, nor do they have the same legal status. ... We will never host same-sex weddings, even if they became legal in Illinois."

After further exchanges, Walder, on Feb. 18, 2011, sent an additional email to Wathen that further laid out his anti-gay viewpoints. "I know you may not want to hear this, but I thought I would send along a couple of verse [sic] in Romans I detailing how the Creator of the Universe looks at gay lifestyle. It's not to[o] late to change your behavior. He is loving and kind and ready to forgive all men their trespasses, including me."

The commission ruled that the Wathens were

unjustly denied services in a place of public accommodation, and had proved that they were discriminated against. While Illinois laws include provisions saying that churches and other religious facilities cannot be compelled to hold same-sex ceremonies, the same does not apply to businesses open to everyone.

"This shows that if you are a business who is open to the public, you can't discriminate on the basis of your religious beliefs," said attorney Betty Tsamis, who represented the Wathens along with Clay A. Tillack and Tai C. Chaiken. "It's a victory that falls in line with some other cases that are going on nationally."

Ed Yonkha, director of Communications and Public Policy for ACLU Illinois, added, "This is the first time that we have an authoritative decision on a case like this in the state. But what doesn't get measured here is how harmful this felt [to the Wathens]. Not only were they denied business, but they were lectured to as well. It is an important victory for them as individuals."

In a Sept. 17 statement, Todd Wathen said, "We are thrilled by this decision ... Our hope is that as a result of this decision no other couple will be discriminated against by a facility, florist, baker or other business just because of who they are."

## WORLD NEWS Argentina lifts gay blood ban

Argentina has lifted a 15-year-old ban that prevents gay and bisexual men from donating blood, Medical Daily reported.

Some have now speculated that this development could impact countries such as the United States, which still restrict donations from men in same-sex relationships from donating. At a signing ceremony, Argentina Health Minister Daniel Gollan said that the change "is scientifically and technically accurate," and is based on a medical approach that overtakes an old concept of "risk groups."

In 1983, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a lifelong ban in the United States on men donating blood and tissue if they had had sex with another man. The ban, motivated by the AIDS epidemic, even applied to HIV-negative individuals.

U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (IL-05), a vice chair of the LGBT Equality Caucus, said in a statement, "I applaud the Argentinian Ministry of Health for ending its ban on blood donations from men who have sex with men (MSM), a decision Health Minister Daniel Gollan said was 'scientifically and technically accurate.' MSM have been prohibited from donating blood in the United States since 1983 as a knee-jerk reaction to the AIDS epidemic. However, this policy is outdated and discriminatory."

The article is at <http://www.medicaldaily.com/blood-donation-argentina-lifts-ban-gay-men-could-impact-other-countries-restrictive-353368>.

## Center makes history in housing Scout troop

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., announced, on Sept. 16, that it is looking for volunteers to serve as Scout leaders and mentors in what is to be the first partnership between an LGBT community center and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA).

"We're embarking on a new groundbreaking endeavor and that's very exciting," said Julie Walther, chief program officer at Center on Halsted, in a statement. "We are entering our third year of Girl Scouts here at Center on Halsted and with this policy change, we're ready to welcome the Boy Scouts, too. It's important for us as an organization to be those agents of change and lead the way in creating inclusive communities."

Prior experience with Boy/Cub Scouts is preferred but not required for those interested in volunteering. A year-long minimum commitment is required and is open to all gender identities and sexual orientations. For more information, contact Grant Ladniak, the Center's special events and volunteer manager, at [gladniak@centeronhalsted.org](mailto:gladniak@centeronhalsted.org).

The initiative comes just a few months after BSA voted to lift its ban on gay troop leaders; the ban on gay scouts was lifted in 2014.

"A Cub Scout pack and a Boy Scout troop chartered by Center on Halsted would send a strong message on how to truly be inclusive," said Mary Anderson of the Oak Park chapter of the national organization Scouts for Equality. "This can be a model for the rest of the country on inclusion and youth leadership."

For 30 years, the *Windy City Times* has been a leader in raising awareness about HIV and AIDS in Chicago's LGBTQ community.

**Thank you for your commitment to the cause.  
We wish you many more years of success!**

AIDS FOUNDATION OF CHICAGO **30** YEARS OF ACTION

# NIU professor to study mental health of bisexual women

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has awarded a \$371,538 grant to Wendy Bostwick, associate professor in the School of Nursing and Health Studies (NUHS), Public Health and Health Education programs at Northern Illinois University (NIU), to study the health effects of microaggressions on bisexual women.

Microaggressions are, according to the press release announcing the study, "brief, commonplace exchanges, often unintentional, that can be demeaning or degrading to someone's identity."

"Bisexual women experience a different kind of discrimination—a more subtle form that accumulates over time," said Bostwick. "It's not one off-handed comment, it's constantly hearing those messages not just from strangers, but from family, friends, partners, the media and society at large. These comments might include remarks that assume a woman is confused about her identity, statements that she should just 'make up her mind' or comments that assume all bisexual women are hypersexual or promiscuous."

The study will take place over 28 days and will include 125 women from the Chicagoland area, with a specific focus on women of color. Participants will fill out a survey each day of the study with questions ranging from the microaggressions they experienced that day to substance use, moods and other queries.

Tonda Hughes—professor and associate dean

for global health at the University of Illinois at Chicago and one of Bostwick's collaborators on the study—said, "This innovative study is well-positioned to help us better understand the unique stressors that contribute to physical and mental health disparities among bisexual women."

Bostwick, who's done LGBT research for 15 years, decided to conduct the current study, in part, following her work with colleagues from the University of Michigan and UIC where they looked at a large national study about health issues faced by the wider world.

The study asked people to identify their sexual orientation, which most national studies don't do, Bostwick explained.

"In looking at the data we were interested in seeing what percentage of LGB people have substance abuse and/or mental health disorders and we found that there was a higher rate of substance abuse and/or mental health problems within that population," said Bostwick. "We also looked at LGB people's experiences of discrimination to see if those experiences of discrimination were associated with mental health or substance abuse disorders."

"As far as discrimination and mental-health issues, we found that the bisexual population are much less likely to report lifetime experiences of discrimination. Yet our research also showed that bisexual women, in particular, have high rates of mental-health problems."

At the conclusion of this study, Bostwick said she hopes that the findings will lead to



Wendy Bostwick.

Photos from Bostwick

a "better understanding of the factors that are contributing to extreme mental health disparities among bisexual women. The idea is to pinpoint the risk factors for depression among a population who has epidemic levels of mental health disorders, so we can prevent them from happening in the future. I don't think you can talk about prevention if you don't understand what's driving the disparities we are seeing. At the end of the study we will, hopefully, be able to provide information to therapists, doctors, social workers and substance-abuse counselors

on how to intervene to correct and prevent health disparities among bisexual women."

"I also hope this work will contribute to a better understanding of the diversity within the bisexual community and a richer understanding of what the bisexual community really looks like. We still don't know nearly enough about bisexual women of color, bisexual women of low socioeconomic status or those who haven't come out as bisexual. I want this study to be the beginning of answering some of those questions."

## IMPACT seeks persons for HIV video

The IMPACT LGBT Health and Development Program—from Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago—is seeking local actors and community members for HIV-awareness videos.

The videos will be aimed at young, LGBT individuals with information about living with HIV. People sought are LGBTQ individuals who are 18-24 (or able to pass for those ages). Diversity is wanted regarding body types, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identities. People living with HIV who are willing to talk about their experiences on film are encouraged to participate.

Filming will occur in early fall in different areas of the city, easily accessible by public transportation. Those selected to participate will receive a stipend of \$100 per video.

Email Julia Dudek at [impact@impact-program.org](mailto:impact@impact-program.org); include a paragraph stating reason for interest, age, links to previous acting work (if applicable) and two photos (one close-up and one full-body).

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# Hazelden Betty Ford focusing on LGBTQ patients

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

What began as a weekly Wednesday staff facilitated peer group meeting at the Betty Ford Center campus for patients who identify as LGBTQ has grown into a program specifically tailored to the needs of LGBTQ people seeking treatment for addiction.

LGBTQ-integrated programming was first fully implemented at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation's Springbrook campus in Newberg, Oregon. Elements of the program are available at other Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation locations—Center City and Plymouth, Minnesota, and the Betty Ford Center in Rancho Mirage, California. In the near future fully implemented LGBTQ-Integrative Programming will be available at all of Hazelden's sites, including Chicago's Gold Coast location.

"Although we don't have any LGBTQ-specific tracks at our Chicago location, our counselors are sensitive to the specific needs of the LGBTQ population and can address their needs on site," said Ramsen Kasha, executive director of Hazelden in Chicago. "If greater assistance is needed, we will work with local private mental health practitioners to help us bolster the support and services we provide."

"Our research published in a 2014 edition of the Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services showed that LGBTQ people had been to nearly twice as many inpatient treatment episodes and three times as many detoxes by the time they arrive to treatment with us," said Buster Ross, Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation's LGBTQ-Integrative Program director based out of Hazelden in Springbrook and adjunct instructor at The Hazelden Betty Ford Graduate School of Addiction Studies. "The research highlighted a lot of other differences, things that traditional treatment has struggled to address including a higher prevalence of reported sexual, physical and emotional abuse histories. We recognized what it would take to better address the wounds LGBTQ people often arrive to treatment with."

"We had to address that needed healing often must take place in relationships between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ people. Further, many professionals 'treated' homosexuality years ago, and our patients are arriving having suffered the effects of that, and its effects on our culture. We had to do something different to make treatment more effective. Our Springbrook campus was a good fit because of our focus on trauma within the program already."

Ross explained that the rates of substance abuse among the LGBTQ population can range from two to four times higher, however, he is confident that this difference will correct over time as society becomes more fair and equal for LGBTQ people.

"The need for LGBTQ-Integrated Programming in addiction treatment was born from a desire to treat an individual with a holistic approach, including sexual orientation/gender identity," said James Barry, Betty Ford Center's LGBTQ specialist/outpatient services counselor. "The externalized and internalized homophobia experienced by LGBTQ persons, coupled with the self-medicating behaviors of addiction is fertile ground for a host of continued problems and undesirable outcomes. By directly addressing these issues the goal is to cast light on potential relapse triggers, and to allow the patient to feel a sense of inclusion and dignity. The patient is able to embark into sobriety with renewed self-esteem, knowing that they are important, and encouraged to see the gift of being who they are."

"Throughout 2014, I was tasked with devel-



**Ramsen Kasha.**

Photos courtesy of Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation

oping LGBTQ-integrated curriculum for the Betty Ford Campus. Portions of the already existing materials from SAMHSA [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration] and the Hazelden Springbrook campus program were adopted along with concepts developed throughout years of working with the LGBTQ peer group, and became our LGBTQ-Integrated Programming."

Tasked with supporting implementation of LGBTQ-Integrative Programming at all of Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation's locations, Ross explained the model emphasizes that all staff receive significant training in LGBTQ issues, including utilizing sexual health education, "something drug and alcohol treatment has struggled to implement historically. Sexual health education makes 'LGBTQ issues' into issues that are actually shared by everyone entering recovery. Trauma, shame, sex/drug links, relational boundaries ... these issues truly affect all of our clients. With the right dialogue, we can make treatment a better environment for both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ people, by having a few key conversations with our entire patient population."

Ross recently trained staff at Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation's new West Los Angeles location, as well as their NYC locations, and has been involved with training at all of the organization's clinical sites. He's started the roll-out of an eight-hour online training that will be utilized by all locations in adapting their programs to meet the basic requirements of LGBTQ-Integrative Programming. The organization will be making this training resource available to counselors across the country in the coming months.

Barry noted that the response among those who have completed Hazelden's LGBTQ-Integrative Programming has been favorable.

"I've witnessed individuals having cathartic experiences with feelings of support and safety," said Barry. "Patients have come out within the structure of the curriculum, addressed compelling issues of trauma related to their sexual orientation and gender identity and found the courage to move with who they are without the need to self-medicate with substances."

See [www.hazeldenbettyford.org/lgbtq](http://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/lgbtq) for more information about the program. To contact the Chicago location, visit [www.hazeldenbettyford.org/treatment/locations/chicago](http://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/treatment/locations/chicago).



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WINDY  
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## 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

## HISTORY



A 1986 Windy City Times staff and freelancer photo on the Belmont el platform. Back row: M.J. Murphy (who shot the photo remotely), Chris Stryker, Hugh Johnson, Steve Alter, Shani, Jorjet Harper (partially hidden), Larry Bommer, Yvonne Zipter, Albert Williams (partially hidden), Chris Cothran, Jill Burgin, Jon-Henri Damski and Mel Wilson. Front: Tracy Baim, the late Jeff McCourt, Larry Shell, Ben Dreyer, Bill Burks,

# Windy City Times at 30

BY TRACY BAIM

The internecine battles of the gay community are legendary. They are not limited to Chicago, or to any one segment of the community. And the gay media have certainly not been immune to these growing pains of the fledgling modern gay-rights movement (more recently called the LGBTQ movement).

Chicago's gay media have strong and deep roots. In Chicago, Henry Gerber started what is believed to be the first U.S. gay publication in the 1920s. Friendship and Freedom lasted just two issues, thanks to harassment by the postal service and police, but Gerber's work did not go unnoticed. And his courage still inspires Chicago journalists.

In the 1950s, Chuck Renslow and Dom Orejudos started the men's physique magazines Triumph, Mars and Rawhide Male. In the 1960s, the Mattachine Midwest Newsletter was a vital source for community news and information, including reports on police harassment, mainstream media bias—and the 1969 Stonewall protests in New York.

Soon more radical gay publications sprang up, including newsletters and tabloid newspapers. Most of the 1970s publications were all-volunteer, but by the end of the decade more business people got involved and tried to professionalize gay media with salaries and pay for freelance stories, photography and delivery drivers. The local newspapers Chicago Gay Crusader and GayLife even added newspaper distribution boxes on the streets in the 1970s.

By 1984, GayLife and Gay Chicago were the two primary gay publications that survived the 1970s publishing startup frenzy. Gay Chicago was a magazine, focused mainly on what was happening in the bar and entertainment world. GayLife was a serious newspaper with coverage of news locally, nationally and internationally, plus entertainment, sports and features.

But by 1985, GayLife was being criticized as

part of the old guard, and its publisher, Chuck Renslow, was especially under fire. Renslow was politically active and an owner of multiple businesses—the newspaper, bars and a bathhouse (at a time when AIDS was just beginning to strike hard in Chicago). He led the local Democratic gay organization and had run to become a convention delegate for U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy's presidential campaign in 1980. People were concerned that he had unfair influence over the community through the newspaper. I started working for Renslow in June 1984 and never saw a misuse of power, but in our community, perception becomes reality.

Sales manager Bob Bearden and his partner, Jeff McCourt, a part-time writer for the paper (under the pseudonym Mimi O'Shea), were making a move to buy GayLife the summer of 1985. But instead they went behind Renslow's back and decided to start their own paper, Windy City Times. Bearden, McCourt and Drew Badanish, from the art department, all lobbied me intensely to come with them. They each put in \$10,000 to start WCT. I had been the managing editor of GayLife and would keep that post at the new paper. But I was just 22 years old. I didn't have the negative experience to lead me to a decision to abandon ship. After some soul-searching, and trusting in Bearden, I made the difficult decision to be part of the new company.

We launched Windy City Times on Sept. 26, 1985. To say we started on a shoestring would be an understatement. While McCourt boasted of making a lot of money as a Chicago Board Options Exchange trader, the truth was that it was just bluster, at least by the time WCT started. And Renslow fought against Windy City Times for several months in the courts. I was forced to do a deposition and left the lawyer's office a wreck. Nothing ever came of the lawsuit, but it was a drain on emotion, time and resources.

We worked out of Jeff and Bob's apartment on Melrose Street just west of Lake Shore Drive, a third-floor walk-up. There were images of naked guys in the bathroom—blatant sexual images I had to get used to at GayLife and at many subsequent gay newspaper offices. We originally did typesetting at a downtown firm,

Tangible Type, owned by Chris Cothran and Sarah Craig. (Craig died in 1994; Cothran, in 1996.)

After McCourt's passing in 2007, Chicago magazine published an article about his death and noted: "Looked at today, the first issue [of Windy City Times] seems inadvertently portentous. The front page has three stories, one on Mayor Harold Washington assembling a 15-person committee on gay and lesbian issues—a first for Chicago—and two on a subject that would dominate gay life and politics for the next decade: the AIDS epidemic."

It was a struggle psychologically and emotionally, not to mention physically and financially. While GayLife staggered and then folded within a few months after our start, leaving us with no direct competition, it was still not easy trying to do a gay newspaper in 1985. Bob got sick within a few weeks, eventually learning it was AIDS. He became a hermit, and my girlfriend at the time, a nurse's assistant, helped him.

Jeff put pressure on Bob because the paper needed his talents to sell ads. Bob just could not. He struggled out that Halloween, just four weeks after the paper launched, to take bar photos and work his accounts. But Bob could not deal with his diagnosis. His friends were dying, his partner was pressuring, and a newspaper was being run out of his home. We would be working late hours and hated to be in the way when Bob would shuffle out of his room to the kitchen—where we were pasting up the art boards.

In the spring of 1986 we moved to a separate office at 3225 N. Sheffield Ave., behind Gay Horizons (which now exists in another location as Center on Halsted), in the Rodde Center, the gay community center of that day. Our offices were next to the el train, so we paced our phone calls between those noisy neighbors. By the time Bob died in January 1987, the office dynamics had deteriorated.

Many people stepped up to help—freezing with the typesetting machines, writing articles and helping our reputation in the community.

A flier for events at Northwestern University in 1985.

**MAY 13-17, 1985**  
Northwestern Gay and Lesbian Alliance presents

**GAY and LESBIAN CONSCIOUSNESS WEEK**

MONDAY COFFEEHOUSE  
at 1418 Greenwood starting 8:30 pm.

TUESDAY COMING OUT TO FAMILY  
with Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays  
at UH 209 starting 8:30 pm.

WEDNESDAY MARIE KUDA to show  
her slideshow on "The Lesbian Image in Art"  
in UH 209. Co-sponsored by Women's Coalition :  
starting 7:30 pm.

THURSDAY GAY RIGHTS Lobbying in  
Illinois. Held with IGLTF and OPEN at UH 209.

FRIDAY TWO FILMS AND COMEDY  
Lesbian filmmaker JAN OXENBERG to show  
"A Comedy in Six Unnatural Acts", "Home Movie",  
then to make us laugh. Harris 107, 8:00 pm. \$2.

LATER FRIDAY NIGHT  
PARTY at Shanley Hall starting 10:30 pm.  
\$2 donation.

**GAY RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS.**

WINDY CITY TIMES

## 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

## HISTORY

But I felt I was letting them down—Jeff and I were having power struggles. Jeff had no journalism background—he had only written gossip and entertainment prior to starting the paper—and I was very young.

Jeff had promised a hands-off approach to the news side, but he soon realized that was where his community power could come. He started writing editorials, including political ones. He and I came to a difficult decision in the 1987 aldermanic campaign when openly gay Dr. Ron Sable first challenged 44th Ward Ald. Bernie Hansen. Jeff wrote an editorial endorsing Hansen, and I did one for Sable. He started fuming about silly things like photo layouts, while people were not getting paid and didn't have insurance. I, for one, went a six-month stretch with no paycheck.

When an attacker came into the office with a bat one day, he asked for and went after Jeff directly, causing injury to one arm. No one else was hurt, but it was played by Jeff as a hate crime. (He testified in Springfield, Illinois, about the attack as part of a push for gay legislation). There were many ugly rumors, including some about drugs. The police calmed our staff down by hinting that it was not a general attack but probably drug-connected. The truth never came out, but it also made it difficult for all of us. When I left a few months later, one of Jeff's loyal allies even spread a rumor that I had hired a hit man to target Jeff!

With Bob gone, and with Drew Badanish bought out by Jeff, I had decided enough was enough. Not only was the office too stressful, but some of us now worried for our lives as well.

I started looking for investors to buy Jeff out. Jeff had indicated he was burned out and depressed, so it seemed like a good idea at the time. We made an offer through an attorney, but when Jeff found out I was behind the deal,



Lobbying in Springfield for the state gay-rights bill, circa 1985.

Photo by Tracy Baim

he was furious. Sales Manager Jill Burgin had to step between us for fear something might happen. I wanted to walk out right then, because I was ready to start a new paper, and most of the dozen or so full-time staff were coming with me. But several of the staffers, including reporter Bill Burks, convinced me the right thing to do was stay and put out two more editions of the weekly Windy City Times. I agreed, as long as Jeff stayed away from me. (We were on separate floors at this point.)

After those two weeks, we moved full force into starting Outlines, in the In These Times office building at 1300 W. Belmont Ave.

As Chicago magazine noted in September



The late Rev. Ninure Saunders, the late Jeff McCourt, Rick Garcia, Tim Drake and the late Dr. Ron Sable at a late-1980s press conference on hate-crimes legislation, in front of the State of Illinois building in Chicago.

Photo from the WCT archives

2007: "Mccourt also enjoyed a good fight. When Tracy Baim left to found her own publication, Outlines, five months after Bob Bearden's death, she touched off what will probably go down in history as Chicago's last great newspaper war."

Even though I was the same gender as before, the fact that I was a woman with her name on "top" of the masthead made it easy for Jeff to really play the gender card. He suc-

February 1988 I knew we could not keep up with the bills or get more investment money, so we went to a monthly newspaper format for the next nine years. The Reader declared Jeff the victor.

Jeff was really motivated. Albert Williams, who had worked at GayLife, was interim editor after I left. The paper was very active in pushing for the city gay-rights bill, taking a strong advocacy approach to the battle.

Jeff soon hired a young gun, Mark Schoofs, as editor, and he took the paper to another level. Mark (who won a Pulitzer Prize for AIDS reporting for The Village Voice after he left WCT) had a great team of both experienced and newer journalists putting out an award-winning weekly newspaper. Subsequent managing editors kept that pace going. Several times, WCT won a Peter Lisagor Award, a prominent Chicago journalism honor. The competition helped both papers, but being a weekly with a stronger economic base had many advantages.

WCT became one of the top gay newspapers in the country. Jeff was especially brilliant at getting mainstream businesses to advertise, which is what helped his paper grow in size. He was very much about size, and proudest of his ever-growing Pride editions of WCT. But Jeff also alienated a lot of people and was just as erratic and drug-influenced as he had been

when I worked for him. Eventually, those internal demons would catch up to him, but for more than a decade he thrived—on the competition, the journalism and the business.

Jeff also got very involved politically, and WCT endorsed candidates at almost every level of office. While I was criticized for working on sports (I was co-vice chair of the Gay Games when they came to Chicago) and business (I founded the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce in 1995), Jeff had his hands in politics and entertainment. He tried to influence elections and lobbying efforts, he produced plays, and he was briefly president of a theater company. Jeff also was part of the National Gay Newspaper Guild to increase the clout of regional gay media. Those moves had their own conflicts of interest, but often publishers (of papers large and small) can't avoid all connections to the community.

Windy City Times also lobbied successfully along with 46th Ward Ald. Helen Shiller for increased AIDS funding under Mayor Richard M. Daley.

Jeff's Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame biography states: "While maintaining Windy City Times as an independent voice, he embraced advocacy journalism and supported

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Marge Summit and Frank Kellas, founders of the Chicago-based Gay Dollar campaign, in the Sept. 10, 1987 Outlines newspaper. The Gay Dollar campaign was focused on people stamping paper currency with a Gay \$ stamp, as a response to AIDS stigma and homophobia. This photo is from a birthday bash for the campaign, held at Summit's His 'n Hers bar, with the Deja Vu Big Band.

Photo by Jill Burgin

cessfully influenced advertisers away from Outlines, saying it was "just" a lesbian paper. He said I hated men, even though most of the people who left his employ to start Outlines were men. But just as with GayLife's demise, perception is reality. Outlines always struggled with the gender issue and advertising. If getting ads in a gay paper was hard in the 1980s and 1990s, getting ads in a paper stereotyped as lesbian was even harder. But our reader statistics always showed a balance of around 60 percent male and 40 percent female. A typical gay newspaper at the time was 90 percent male.

Windy City Times and Outlines went head-to-head as weeklies for a few months, but by



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activism aimed at winning mainstream respect and political victories for Chicago's LGBT communities. During the 1986-88 stages of a long campaign to pass a Chicago human rights ordinance that would prohibit sexual-orientation discrimination, the newspaper's offices were known as 'Ordinance Central' because of McCourt's generosity in allowing activists to use space and equipment. The paper's editorials galvanized community and political support for the ordinance after initial defeats."

Mark Schoofs was quoted in Chicago magazine after Jeff died: "I wonder if Jeff was one of the last of the spectacularly self-destructive gay men. He was definitely a gay publishing visionary. The gay community was coming into its own in those years, and Jeff was one of the people who recognized that gays were part of mainstream America. He understood that gays were like Jews and blacks and Puerto Ricans and Irish people—another tile in the mosaic of America. He was incredibly flawed to the extent that he himself could not be part of that mainstream. But he was one of the people who made it happen."

Chicago also noted that WCT "benefited from the government deregulation of the telecommunications industry in the late 1980s, which, among other inadvertent side effects, spurred the development of the telephone sex industry—the ubiquitous 900 sex numbers of the era. The back pages of many lifestyle publications—including Windy City Times—were flooded with full-page come-hither ads for those services." Former WCT salesman Steve Alter told Chicago: "It was like money that dropped out of the sky. Suddenly what was a \$300,000- or \$400,000-a-year paper became an \$800,000-a-year paper." With the money came a high-flying lifestyle.

Jeff's WCT featured award-winning columnists, including Jon-Henri Damski and Achy Obejas, who provided in-depth analysis of politics and the community. (Obejas shared in a Pulitzer Prize after leaving WCT.) ACT UP's Danny Sotomayor had been fired by Gay Chicago, and soon his controversial editorial cartoons were in WCT. But Jeff fired both Jon-Henri and Danny, and both immediately migrated to Outlines/Nightlines before they passed away (Danny in 1992 and Jon-Henri in 1997). Jeff suffered many similar losses of talented people; he attracted some of the best but, after a few years, most moved on. This was not a problem WCT alone faced; most gay media have a high turnover because journalists are now finally welcomed more into mainstream careers that can offer higher wages and often more respect—thanks in large part to the work of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association.

"If McCourt had no problem attracting top talent, however, retaining it was another story," Chicago magazine's 2007 story noted. "Four years seems to have been the limit for most people. Some left for better jobs, but most simply were burned out from dealing with a person who—for all of his intelligence and drive—seemed at times completely oblivious of the impact of his actions on people." And the abuse of drugs only got worse. Steve Alter related Jeff's arrest for cocaine possession, which included a brief stint in Cook County Jail, in a post on the Reader website after Jeff died.

Louis Weisberg was editor of Windy City Times for five years until he was among those who left to start another competing paper in 1999. He told Chicago magazine: "We'd have editorial meetings where Jeff would be sitting there with white powder around his nose, drink-



The cover of the first edition of Windy City Times, Sept. 26, 1985.

ing booze out of a bottle with Ryan Idol asleep on the couch. At some point we just knew this wasn't going to work—that this was no way to run a business." Jeff had a relationship with the porn star Ryan Idol that was complicated and at times disturbing to Jeff's friends and employees. (Idol's real name was Marc Anthony Donais. In 2012 he was sentenced to 12 years in prison for attempted murder of his ex-girlfriend in 2009.)

Meanwhile, I was always trying something new to keep Outlines alive. I never did drugs or drank alcohol, but I was certainly a workaholic. We had started a weekly bar rag called Nightlines in 1990, which kept us covering news alongside bar photos. (It became Nightspots in the early 2000s, and folded into WCT in 2015). Rex Wockner was our full-time reporter for several years; he helped to keep Outlines and Nightlines on the journalism map—and he eventually became the most widely syndicated gay media reporter in the world. We had an amazing team of dedicated employees and freelancers, and we, too, won awards for our journalism and work in the community.

We also started BLACKlines and En La Vida, monthly newspapers for the African-American and Latino LGBT communities; both began in 1995, and they ran about 10 years each. Our

website for Outlines started in 1996. (Jeff never owned the domain name WindyCityTimes.com, and later we had to fight in an international tribunal to get it back from one of Jeff's former employees.) We were trying to fill different media needs and niches, staying afloat with the generous support of community investors including Nan Schaffer and Scott McCausland. They were our angels in those early years, and Nan and so many others have remained supportive, even as we added Windy City Radio after buying the old LesBiGay Radio.

Windy City Times was a formidable opponent, and the staff kept it going despite both internal and external obstacles. This is why it was a truly unique set of circumstances that led Outlines, the much smaller company, to purchase Windy City Times in 2000—a David-and-Goliath story.

### Newspaper War, Part 2

By 1997, Outlines seemed strong enough to make the change back to a weekly newspaper, so we took the plunge, something which, in retrospect, probably strengthened us for the battles ahead.

In the summer of 1999, Jeff McCourt suffered another walkout, as reported earlier in

this chapter, but this time the way it happened (with no notice) somehow hit him so hard that he rebounded all the way back to me—he called me for the first time in 13 years, and we commiserated about the way they left him. I sympathized with him, but never underestimated the road ahead. Jeff was not giving up yet.

The exodus had been planned for a long time. Before they started their Chicago Free Press, some of the new venture's investors even met with me at Outlines—I, of course, didn't know they were starting a paper, and that they had just been fishing for business information from me, claiming to be interested in buying ads. The WCT staff took their last paychecks and left right before finishing the second-most-important edition of the paper (coinciding with Northalsted Market Days). Some staff remained, but the company was in deep trouble.

Jeff was left far more vulnerable after this staff defection than when I left, for a few reasons. First, when I had started Outlines, I did not have the type of deep pockets supporting us as the new CFP had. I was able to get friends and community members to buy shares in my company, and they trusted me to run it. (Some people believe I am an heiress to a nonexistent Clarence Darrow fortune, which is not true; my mom was a distant relative to Darrow, and my parents were very middle-class. All I received from them in starting Outlines was a \$1,000 check from my stepdad, Steve Pratt, and my mother's help in typing articles—plus their fantastic emotional and moral support, which I believe is priceless and the most valuable thing they could have given me.)

Second, our original goal had been to buy Windy City Times, so starting a new paper was not ideal in 1987. By 1999, when CFP started, the gay market was larger and more appealing to mainstream investors and advertisers, which helped CFP. Third, Jeff himself was not nearly as strong as he had been in 1987, so he had a difficult time battling the new opponent. Fourth, it couldn't have been easy for him to have suffered a second and more debilitating staff walkout.

Fifth, the employees left Jeff right in the middle of a deadline, which meant Jeff could not recover quickly; when we left for Outlines, we gave Jeff two weeks' notice and did put out two more painful issues. Sixth, the top people leaving WCT for CFP were mostly men, and I have to say that this was an advantage in the marketplace. When I left, it was also mostly male staff who came with me (because the staff was mostly male), which meant, of course, that it was mostly men who founded Outlines. But with me "on top" and a few other strong women in positions of authority, we were stereotyped from the start by Jeff. CFP did not have that strike against them. Seventh, I was only 24 when I left to start Outlines and did not have as much experience; most of those who left to start CFP were much older and had been around the business far longer.

And finally, while Jeff did continue to publish for another year, he spent huge financial and emotional capital fighting the former staff that had gone to CFP. Jeff never sued me or Outlines, so his energy and money were not diverted into such a fight earlier.

Dan Page, former production manager and art director of Windy City Times, wrote a scathing rebuke of those who walked out to form CFP, in a posting on the Reader's blog after Jeff died in 2007. Dan had worked during the build-up to the walkout and had been privy to some of the plans, but he was not among the defectors. "The timing of the mutiny was planned to CRIPPLE Jeff (in every sense)," Page wrote. "They had hoped to buy the publication at fire-

### Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues

**Carolyn Bay:** Professional community organizer and ACTION co-chair.  
**Caryn Barman:** Social worker with organizing background.  
**Art Brewer:** Doctor, experienced in health issues, particularly AIDS.  
**Ash Christopherson and Linda Baboon:** Co-founders of Women & Children's First Bookstore.  
**Chris Cathran:** Metropolitan Business Association, National Coalition of Black Gays, Co-owner Triangle Type.  
**Rhonda Craver:** Communications and art background.  
**Tim Hoar:** Small business owner, Far North Side activist.  
**Barrie Kodes:** Longtime active feminist, one of founders of Chicago Mattachinee.

**Achy Obejas:** Latinx community and political organizer, communications.  
**Rich Pflaun:** Community activist, City and Lesbian Film organizer.  
**Linda Rodgers:** Paris Dance Center, community activist.  
**Larry Ratz:** Attorney, active in wide variety of issues, including civil rights.  
**Ron Sabie:** Part of Cook County Hospital Sable/Shere Clinic, community organizer.  
**John Simmons:** Executive director of Joseph P. Kamp Dance Theatre.  
**Bill Young:** Harris Foundation, expertise in private funding.  
**Symbolic position:** To represent the isolated gay and lesbian community.

willings to work and get into books. He also noted that the committee would be responsible for making the public health of the community and the community itself a priority. Originally, the committee was to be

### Colorado HTLV-III AIDS test results kept

By Brian Eric Curdy

The Health Department said it will also reveal the district in how to relate to their public. And if the district cannot be reached, will call the police directly and offer counseling, according to a news service story. Dr. Thomas Vernon, director of the State Health Department, said only three people will have access to the test of persons with AIDS. Also, Lombardi, a department spokeswoman, said more than 1,700 people have been tested for the HTLV-III virus, with half of those returning positive results. When the reporting requirement was first announced in August, many gay and lesbian activists objected on the grounds that the test could lead to discrimination against the community.

### AIDS center proposal

By Paul Cotton

Reports of an experimental AIDS treatment center for Chicago are "preliminary," said Dr. Roscoe Shere of Cook County Hospital's Sable/Shere AIDS Clinic. Reports in Friday's Chicago Tribune and Saturday's Chicago Sun-Times were "misleading," he said. "This is a preliminary proposal," he said. "It's all future tense," countered Northwestern Professor of Medicine Dr. John Phair. "You never know when you quit."

The county hospital has agreed to cooperate with Northwestern University and Cook County's Sable/Shere AIDS Clinic in applying jointly to the National Institutes of Health for permission to open an experimental drug trials in AIDS and pre-AIDS patients. The two hospitals together treat at least 1,000 of all state AIDS patients. Shere said the application would be reviewed at the earliest in November, and trials could begin at the earliest in January. Since the application itself has not yet been written, questions about cost, number of patients to be included, and other major details will be answered, he said. "It's all future tense," countered Northwestern professor of medicine Dr. John Phair. "You never know when you quit."

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 NOW on lesbian rights  
 Lesbian agonics  
 Autumn Dungee  
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# 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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sale prices, and, if not, to destroy it. ... Jeff was out of town the weekend of the mutiny because two staffers, a couple, who were among the Free Press founders, had encouraged him to go to his Michigan summer house. ..."

In fact, Jeff learned about the defection from a journalist: Mike Miner at the Reader called him to ask about the mass resignations. "The reason I found myself breaking the bad news to McCourt is that he wasn't supposed to know it yet," Miner wrote in the Reader of Aug. 5, 1999.

So, departing staff and freelancers started Chicago Free Press and battled McCourt's Windy City Times for a year—both in the courts and for advertisers. Outlines just chugged along for that year, trying to dodge the bullets and stay away from a circulation and advertising-rate war. But because Outlines had gone back to a weekly schedule, it really helped us compete. It also positioned us well for what happened next.

While WCT staffers—including Dan Page, Karen Hawkins, Neda Ulaby, Aaron Anderson, Mark Bazant, Tony Peregrin, Gary Barlow and others—worked hard to keep the paper going, the fight drained Jeff so that even when the court case ended, and even though he reportedly won, he had lost the final battle. He was forced to close the paper in August 2000 (the last issue was in July), and I called him immediately to buy it. He agreed, and after a few weeks of negotiations, Outlines' parent company, Lambda Publications, purchased just the name of the paper and changed the corporation name to Windy City Media Group. There were no other assets, not even any archives, just a lot of bad will among advertisers, some staff and parts of the community.

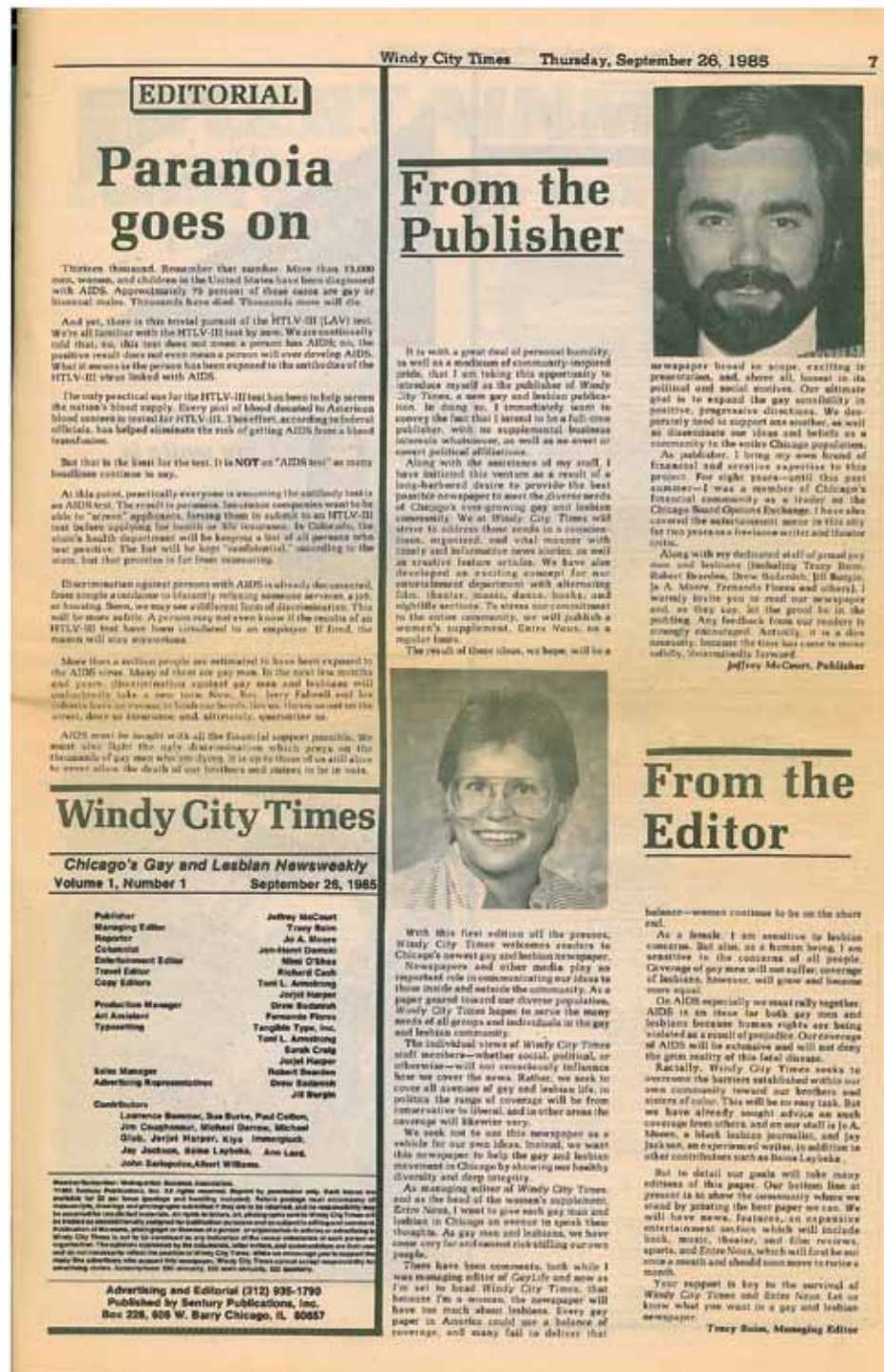
Jeff almost changed his mind about the sale—but his lawyers knew better (no one else expressed serious interest, and certainly not for the price we offered), and they walked him through the sale until the final signature was completed. I was able to get new investors, but the rest of the money came from putting my home on the line for a loan from the bank.

Many people said I was crazy, but I do believe had we not purchased the brand of Windy City Times, Outlines was going to be killed by the competition at Chicago Free Press, which had deep pockets and a laser focus on market dominance. As part of the purchase, we also eventually got WCT's seat on the National Gay Newspaper Guild, something that was highly coveted since only one paper per market was allowed membership.

Jeff and I met at my bank on the sale day in the fall of 2000. He and I sat outside of South Shore Bank, reminiscing about the old days. How hard it was—how it actually never got much easier. About people we had lost, about Bob, about their old three-story walkup apartment on Melrose. It was surreal, acting like old friends, when we had fought tooth-and-nail for 13 years. But sometimes that phrase "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" comes true—Jeff had been so wounded that he actually turned back to me as an ally. Jeff was chain-smoking and looked very frail. He had the shakes and looked far older than he should have. I honestly don't know how he survived another seven years after that day, dying in 2007 at age 51—one year younger than I am today.

The buyout of the Windy City Times name was important for Outlines, because it gave us a mainstream recognition to face the continual media wars in Chicago. Some in the community did not support us, because they viewed it as helping Jeff get out of debt. But I tried to see the value to the community, and to our business, and in the end it was the right decision.

We merged the two weeklies into one Windy City Times in September 2000, and I felt as if



The editorial page of the first issue of Windy City Times, Sept. 26, 1985. The masthead names were: Publisher Jeffrey McCourt; Managing Editor Tracy Baim; Reporter Jo A. Moore; Columnist Jon Henri-Damski; Entertainment Editor Mimi O'Shea (Jeff McCourt); Travel Editor Richard Cash; Copy editors Toni L. Armstrong and Jorjet Harper; Production Manager Drew Badanish; Art Assistant Fernando Flores; Typesetting Tangible Type, Inc.; Toni L. Armstrong, Sarah Craig and Jorjet Harper; Sales Manager Robert Bearden; Advertising Representatives Drew Badanish and Jill Burgin; Contributors Lawrence Bommer, Sue Burke, Paul Cotton, Jim Coughenour, Michael Darrow, Michael Glab, Jorjet Harper, Kiya Immergluck, Jay Jackson, Baina Laybeka, Ann Lord, John Sarlopolos, Albert Williams.

I had got my baby back after it had been in foster care.

As for Jeff, his last years were lonely and painful. Mike Miner, in his Reader obituary May 7, 2007, wrote: "Mccourt had one friend at the end, possibly the only one who knew about his death when it happened. Gregory Munson says he was hired seven years ago by McCourt's sister, Diane, his legal guardian, to be his 'chaperone.' At the time Munson was working for an agency, Always Caring. 'He had gotten mugged when he was staying in the Talbot Hotel,' Munson told me. 'To my understanding, they found him in an alley unconscious and he went into Northwestern Hospital in a coma.' When McCourt was transferred to a nursing home, Munson went to work for him. 'I was originally with him five days a week,' he says. 'As time went by, it dwindled down to two hours once a month. [His sister] said he was broke. He disputed that but he was afraid to go to court to fight. He just hated that he couldn't have more control over his own life.'"

deez as sales representative, and Tony Peregrin, Jonathan Abarbanel, Mary Shen Barnidge and other well-known freelancers.

Politics continued to be a strong coverage area, with so many local, county, state and national elections happening almost every year. Outlines had had a policy of not endorsing candidates, so now the new Windy City Times also stayed away from such endorsements. Instead, the paper gave surveys to candidates in all races and rated them based on their responses. In the 2008 race for president, this proved important, because a 1996 Outlines survey for the state Senate, completed at that time by candidate Barack Obama, had shown he was fully supportive of same-sex marriage well before his later races for federal office.

AIDS also continued to be an important story for WCT and the community. In 2011, which marked the 30th anniversary of the epidemic's first diagnosed cases, WCT started a 13-month series on its impact. The series won a Peter Lisagor Award. It was also a finalist for a national Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation award, losing to The Boston Globe.

Other stories important during that time included the growth in the transgender-rights movement, the alarming increase in reported LGBT youth suicides, the fight to repeal the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" gay ban, and the ongoing battle for the equal right to marriage.

But sometimes even simple business profiles can have a profound impact. A few years ago, when Chicago's Women & Children First bookstore was struggling, its owners allowed Windy City Times to tell their story in a front-page article. The store has been a key player in the Chicago LGBT community since 1979, and we knew our readers would want to know if it was at risk of closing. As soon as the article came out, thousands of dollars in donations poured in, and numerous other media picked up the story. The store is still in business, and was sold to new feminist owners. WCT has also done stories about family members and partners looking for donations to help cover funeral costs for loved ones, and the community steps up each time to help out.

Along with my dedicated staff of general assignment and feature writers (including Tracy Baim, Robert Bearden, Drew Badanish, Jill Burgin, Jo A. Moore, Fernando Flores and others), I warmly invite you to read our newspaper and so they say, let the good be in the telling. Any feedback from our readers is strongly encouraged. Actually, it is also warmly invited that the time has come to move safely. Goodnight, sweet night.

With this first edition of the paper, Windy City Times welcomes readers to Chicago's newest gay and lesbian newspaper. Newspapers and other media play an important role in communicating our ideas to those inside and outside the community. As a paper geared toward our diverse population, Windy City Times hopes to serve the many needs of all groups and individuals in the gay and lesbian community. The individual views of Windy City Times staff members—whether social, political, or otherwise—will not consistently influence how we cover the news. Rather, we seek to cover all aspects of gay and lesbian life, in politics the range of coverage will be from conservative to liberal, and in other areas the coverage will likewise vary.

We seek not to use this newspaper as a vehicle for our own ideas, instead, we want this newspaper to help the gay and lesbian movement in Chicago by showing our healthy diversity and deep integrity. As managing editor of Windy City Times, and as the head of the women's supplement, Extra News, I want to give each gay man and lesbian in Chicago an avenue to speak their thoughts. As gay men and lesbians, we have some very far and varied risk-taking our very people.

There have been comments, both while I was managing editor of CityLife and now as I've set to lead Windy City Times, that because I'm a woman, the newspaper will have too much about lesbians. Every gay paper in America could use a balance of coverage, and many fail to deliver that

balance—women continue to be on the short end. As a result, I am sensitive to lesbian concerns. But also, as a human being, I am sensitive to the concerns of all people. Coverage of gay men will not suffer. Coverage of lesbians, however, will grow and become more equal.

As AIDS especially we must rally together. AIDS is an issue for both gay men and lesbians because human rights are being violated as a result of prejudice. Our coverage of AIDS will be extensive and will not deny the grim reality of this fatal disease. Actually, Windy City Times seeks to overcome the barriers established within our own community toward our brothers and sisters of color. This will be no easy task. But we have already sought advice on such coverage from both our staff (Jo A. Moore, a black lesbian journalist, and Jay Jackson, an experienced writer, in addition to other contributors such as Baina Laybeka).

But to detail our goals will take many editions of this paper. Our bottom line at present is to show the community where we stand by getting the best paper we can. We will have news, features, an interactive entertainment section, which will include book, movie, theater, and film reviews, sports, and Extra News, which will feature a month and should soon move to twice a month.

Your support is key to the survival of Windy City Times and Extra News. Let us know what you want to see in a gay and lesbian newspaper.

### Looking Back, Looking Forward

Jeff McCourt died of AIDS complications at age 51 in 2007. Soon after, I nominated him for the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame—he was inducted later that year. Few people are neutral on Jeff's legacy. Even those who left his employ have mixed feelings, about his mood swings, his drug use, his highs and his lows, his manic behavior and passionate loyalty—and his fierce competitiveness.

The bitterness caused by these wrenching gay newspaper schisms still has fallout today, but most of it is very much insider baseball, only relevant to a few folks who care about the why and how of the gay newspaper world.

Of course, if I were to do it over again, I would change many things. I am glad I helped start Windy City Times, but I would have gotten more of the deal in writing. Mostly, I would have tried to be a better boss. When I would go sometimes three or four days with no sleep, never going home, I had difficulty trying to run a business and be an editor and reporter all at the same time. Taking photos at a sports league in the morning, at a leather bar at midnight, going back to the office to write an editorial, and then trying to balance the books for payroll—that was just plain difficult. But in truth, I had much help in keeping it all afloat.

There have been many key players at Windy City Times and Outlines over the years. I hesitate to even start listing them all. And because

WINDY  
CITY  
TIMES

## 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

HISTORY

## WCT @ 30 from page 17

I separated from WCT for 13 years, I did not work closely with many of the key middle-years employees. There were hundreds of people, including delivery drivers, photographers, salespeople, reporters, business staff, editors, interns, and the supportive investors and advisers.

Some of our longest-term full-time employees still with us today are Assistant Publisher Terri Klinsky, Director of New Media Jean Albright, Art Director Kirk Williamson, Managing Editor Andrew Davis, Senior Sales Rep Amy Matheny, all with us more than 14 years, and our website host Martie Marro of Love Your Website, our web expert for 20 years.

There have also been some important people present from the very first issue of WCT, still helping today in some fashion. They include Toni Armstrong Jr., Jorjet Harper and Yvonne Zipter. Many started in the late 1980s and lasted for years, including Rex Wockner, Jonathan Abarbanel and longtime writer Marie J. Kuda. And there were hundreds more, including those who continue to play important roles as we publish a daily online website and a weekly publication, Windy City Times weekly. Everyone on our masthead plays a key role.

There is one iconic picture from the early Windy City Times era that features some of the first players at WCT, some who soon left to start Outlines, and some who stayed on for many years with Jeff. Pictured in that photo, with Jeff and me, were Larry Shell, Ben Dreyer, Bill Burks, M.J. Murphy, Chris Stryker, Hugh Johnson, Steve Alter, Shani, Jorjet Harper, Larry Bommer, Yvonne Zipter, Albert Williams, Chris Cothran, Jill Burgin, Jon-Henri Damski and Mel Wilson. It captures a brief moment in time, and brings back all the good and bad memories that were the glue holding WCT together in those formative 1980s.

We have also had to say goodbye to far too many young colleagues, most because of AIDS, some because of cancer and other tragedies: Jeff McCourt, Bob Bearden, Richard Cash, Bob Kraus, Mike Simanowicz, John Schmid, Jon-Henri Damski, Danny Sotomayor, Paul Adams, Joseph Beam, Tony Hassan, Marvin Patterson, Alfredo Gonzalez, Fernando Flores, Sarah Craig, GayBoy Ric, Chris Cothran, Kathleen O'Malley, John Pennycuff, William B. Kelley, our attorney Mary York, my mom and stepdad, and unfortunately the list goes on.



A 2007 Windy City Times staff and writers pic. Back row: Amy Wooten, Jerry Nunn, Kirk Williamson, Amy Matheny, Suzanne Kraus, Kathleen Ulm, Terry Wiegel, and Robb Olson. Front: Jean Albright, Tracy Baim, Cynthia Holmes, Andrew Davis and Terri Klinsky.

Photo by Hal Baim

## Next Up

There is a delicate tightrope we continue to walk, as a community-based paper that covers the good, the bad and the mixed of the LGBT movement. That means scandals at health clinics, drug arrests of leaders, domestic violence and financial mismanagement—at the same time promoting benefits and events, activists and organizations.

Windy City Times is also going through transitions similar to those of other gay and mainstream media companies. With more than 30,000 articles and 100,000-plus photos archived online, the website is a key growth area for the company. And, of course, we participate in social media, content sharing and other opportunities to build audience.

We were never intimidated by “giving it away” for free online, since our papers were always free. The dilemma is on the revenue

side—who pays for all that free content. Our solution is not to charge for online content—very few papers will survive on that model. Rather, we have to find other unique revenue streams, and that includes successful community-based events.

While online expansion is important, the primary strength of the company is still in its weekly print edition.

As part of an effort to streamline costs, the company went to a “virtual” office in 2008, just two months before the U.S. economy collapsed. This planned move made sense for a company that has most of its reporters and sales representatives in the field every day. It was an efficiency move that has actually strengthened the company to its best position in many years.

Given the closing of so many gay print publications over the past decade, Windy City Times (one of only 11 weekly LGBT newspapers left, and a member of the new National Gay Media

Association) is fortunate to still be able to serve the Chicago-area LGBT community.

We benefited from an odd mix of luck, good timing, amazing support and wonderful staff. It was a unique blend, but it has worked very well. We thank the community for standing by us these 30 years, and we hope to “deliver” the news for a long time to come.

**The 30th anniversary party for Windy City Times is open to the public. It will be Sunday, Sept. 27, 2-5 p.m. at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, \$30 donation at the door. We will have music, a walk down memory lane, and some fun door prizes.**

This essay was adapted from *Gay Press, Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America*, edited by Tracy Baim, published in 2012 by Prairie Avenue Productions.

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## 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

## PERSPECTIVE



Jorjet Harper in the mid-2000s with a collection of old gay-rights photos and coverage.

## Windy City Times, The Early Years: A personal perspective

BY JORJET HARPER

It's difficult to convey how exciting—sometimes even thrilling—it was to work in gay and lesbian media during the 1980s and early 1990s. All those passionate discussions we had about the burning issues of the day, and marches, and demonstrations, and kiss-ins!

At the same time, the appalling horror of AIDS—the plague that came out of nowhere and snuffed out so many gay lives—cast its shadow over everything and everyone I knew. The highs and lows we experienced were steep, to put it mildly, and sometimes followed so closely on one another that there was hardly room to take a breath in between.

By 1985, I had been writing for Chicago's *GayLife* for several years as a freelancer. Tracy Baim was the paper's managing editor, Jeff McCourt (under the pseudonym Mimi O'Shea) was arts and entertainment editor, and his lover Bob Bearden was sales manager.

Late that summer, Jeff and Bob were in negotiations with owner Chuck Renslow to purchase *GayLife*. Then Jeff told me that after reviewing all the finances, he and Bob were thinking of simply starting an entirely new paper. Tracy trusted and admired Bob, and if he went, so would she, she said. And I trusted and admired Tracy, so if she was going to leave *GayLife* to help start a new paper, I was on-board with that. The art director, Drew Badanish, came in as the third investor (with Bob and Jeff) to start the new paper.

Jeff came up with the new paper's name: *Windy City Times*. He told me he thought it would be best—easier to sell ads to non-gay businesses—if there was nothing "gay" in the title. I didn't like that—to me it sounded closeted. But I was just a freelancer and part-time typesetter, after all—and after a while I warmed to the name.

I no longer have a copy of the first issue of *Windy City Times*, from Sept. 25, 1985, but I recall the herculean efforts, the long hours,

and cycles of excitement and exhaustion during those initial months, as the paper started to get off the ground. I had a lot of new ideas for things to write for *Windy City Times* that had never occurred to me at *GayLife*. Being there at the beginning of the new enterprise, I felt more involved. All sorts of exciting topics in feminist, lesbian and women's writing in general began to emerge for me on this expanded writing horizon, and gay men's literature was, at the time, just at the beginning of an astonishing burst of creativity, one that was fascinating to follow.

At first, the *Windy City Times* office was in Jeff and Bob's big condo apartment on Melrose Street just off Lake Michigan. We had use of typesetting equipment in a Loop office building at Lake and Wabash right next to where the el tracks curved, but we could only use it on nights and weekends. This typesetting machine was quirky; it didn't run properly if the room temperature was higher than 60 degrees. Tracy, Toni Armstrong Jr.—who also typeset—and I spent many an evening in this uncomfortable cold, working from late evening until dawn.

I remember nights when Tracy and I took turns, one typesetting while the other tried to get an hour or two of sleep on the office rug. The huge empty office building was creepy enough, but braving the Loop streets at 4 in the morning meant you had to navigate your way through hookers, pimps, drug addicts, bellicose drunks and gang kids on the prowl, with the frequent loud sounds of smashing glass in the alleyways to keep you frosty. (In the '80s, the Loop had not yet been transformed into the evening entertainment hub it is today, with its many office-to-residential building conversions, late-night dining establishments and high-end hotels.)

By that November, Jeff and Bob somehow managed to install a typesetting machine into the empty basement of their condo building. I don't know how they placated their neighbors, and there was a spot of trouble with a city in-

spector since it was a residential building. I was very glad I didn't have to be in the Loop at midnight anymore, but if anything, it was colder than in the creepy office building, since the basement was unheated and had a broken window. In fact, the door that led to the street was broken off its hinges, and you had to lift the whole door to move it.

Imagine trying to type in an unheated basement when it's eight degrees outside. The bulky typesetting machine surrounded you like the flat faces of giant ice cubes, freezing to the touch, and a penetrating cold kept leaching into the room. Bob reinforced the windows with plastic and tried to arrange plastic draperies around the machine to keep the heat in for us—and not incidentally to keep dirt and debris from the basement ceiling from falling on the typesetting machine. In short, working conditions were less than ideal. But we were activists on a mission, so we pressed on. Everyone worked really hard, determined that the new paper should succeed.

### AIDS Hits Home

By November, just about everybody got sick from spending extended periods of time in that unhealthy basement atmosphere. Bob, however, never got better. He became noticeably thinner and continued to be sick into December. I saw him now and then in his bathrobe upstairs in the office part of the condo, where at least it was warm. By late January, he was hospitalized, near death from AIDS, on a respirator. He got better, and worse, and better again. Bob managed to fight off the pneumocystis but then developed some other immunodeficiency-related problems, including a blood infection.

Understandably, Jeff was a basket case, and Tracy, who was a lot closer to Bob than I was, was devastated. But Jeff had to double up and do Bob's job as well as his own. For a while, Jeff alternated between stoically going out with his attaché case to sell ads, and lying in what appeared to be a semi-catatonic state on the living-room sofa of their condo, staring at the ceiling. We struggled on, very demoralized and sad, but gathering new recruits and supporters and advertisers.

We published issues that I thought were far better, more comprehensive, more wide-ranging and readable, more balanced in reporting, than *GayLife* had been. After a while, Jill Burgin assumed the sales rep responsibilities.

Drew Badanish continued as art director for a few more months. Tracy was running the entertainment section as well as the news. Jon-Henri Damski divided his time between writing his whimsical, philosophical columns and visiting Bob in the hospital.

As it happened, the first actual *Windy City Times* AIDS death was not Bob Bearden's but that of our travel writer, Richard Cash, who was a longtime friend of Bob and Jon-Henri. He went into the hospital to get tests to see if he had AIDS and died there two weeks later. It was another serious shock to the barely 4-month-old newspaper.

That spring (rather miraculously, under the circumstances, and largely because of Tracy's dedication), *Windy City Times* was still going (*GayLife* had by then gone out of business) and the "office" finally moved into an actual office space—in the building behind the Rodde Center on Sheffield just north of Belmont. A new mood, more businesslike, set in. There was far more space, on two floors (having no basement with falling debris or broken windows was also a big plus), and the paper was finally functioning like an actual business, with more freelancers and staff coming on. I kept on writing and typesetting, but also became the books editor.

Every LGBT newspaper back then had to figure out how to balance the tension between business practices and advocacy. *Windy City Times* wasn't "just" another newspaper, but a political voice for gay and lesbian rights and for the community. Different people, both on the staff and in the community, had different ideas about what that political voice meant, and different levels of concern, and different opinions of what should be done, and how. We were all pretty much making it up as we went along.

But Jeff became more and more rigid, possessive and dictatorial, though he often clearly didn't know what he was talking about and had little patience for learning about the dynamics of community organizations. I remember one big staff meeting where we were all sitting with our chairs in a circle. Jeff, in a major freakout over some little photographic arrangement he didn't like, leaped into the middle of the circle, threw down several copies of the paper and vigorously stomped up and down on them, screaming all the while, like a child having a tantrum. Everyone, myself included, froze. But I thought to myself, okay, he's under a lot of pressure, but I can't put up with this abusive crap much longer.

WINDY CITY TIMES

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## PERSPECTIVE

At the time, Bob was still alive, home from the hospital but not capable of returning to work again or of doing much of anything. He mostly stayed in his bedroom at home. After a final, terrible bout of seizures, Bob died in January 1987.

In the year of Windy City Times' founding, 12,000 people in the U.S., mostly gay men, were diagnosed with AIDS—and half of them were already dead. It was a chilling, alarming statistic then—two years before ACT UP was founded, two years before the first AIDS quilt panel was sewn. Today, while it's estimated that 14,000 people become infected every day, it's no longer the science-fiction-like apocalyptic crisis it was within the LGBT community when every week young, otherwise healthy gay men, whom you knew and liked, vanished off the face of the earth. There was plenty of theorizing about the cause of the disease, but no one yet knew what it was.

After Bob's death, Jeff's behavior spun further out of control. He became even more erratic and irrational—insufferable, really. There were murmurs that he had become addicted to cocaine. I don't know if that was true but, judging by the way he was acting, it was certainly plausible.

Tracy initially tried to buy Windy City Times (with investors) through an anonymous offer but, when Jeff found out, he was outraged—even though he had considered selling it after Bob died. By the summer of 1987, many of the staff of Windy City Times, including Tracy, myself, Jill Burgin and others, were poised to start a new paper yet again. There was a certain inevitability to this, since Jeff was no longer someone any of us wanted to work for, but we still wanted to do gay and lesbian journalism—and there was an attitude that, hey, we'd done it once, so we could do it again.

### Outlines

Outlines, the newspaper that was founded by refugees from Jeff McCourt's Windy City Times, began publishing in June 1987. (In 2000, Tracy Baim and her company bought the name Windy City Times from McCourt, and the Outlines name was transformed back into WCT.) After driving his staff away with his crazy behavior, Jeff's animosity toward his new competition was sometimes cloak-and-dagger, sometimes Laurel & Hardy. I recall one organizational meeting of Outlines in which a columnist who had previously written for WCT, sitting on a sofa, bent over and a tiny tape recorder fell out of his pocket and bounced onto the rug—he was recording our meeting to take back to Jeff! I never found out if Jeff had sent him on this burlesque attempt at espionage, or if it was his own idea, but this same fellow was spotted more than once lurking in the street, looking up at the Outlines office windows late at night. Weird stuff like that went on during Outlines' beginning year or two. [When Nightlines was launched a couple years later, as a sister publication to Outlines, all of the computers and disks were stolen from the office.]

The owners who invested in Outlines included Tracy, Nan Schaffer and Scott McCausland. Schaffer and McCausland were, luckily, very hands-off, allowing the paper to grow and giving Tracy the latitude she needed to make well-considered, independent editorial decisions.

I joined Outlines as its arts and entertainment editor. It was my first full-time job on a gay and lesbian paper—full-time meaning hovering around 80 hours a week. Some nights I'd have just enough time to go home and take a shower, nap for two hours with my girlfriend, and go back into the office. I was never so exhausted in my life. Yet I remember those intense years at Outlines now with great

fondness.

Tracy had a vision of a truly balanced gay and lesbian newspaper—in the sense of providing equal coverage of men's and women's news. Previously, gay and lesbian papers were generally aimed at one group or the other: papers run by gay men that were exclusively gay or overwhelmingly gay with a smattering of lesbian news thrown in, like GayLife, and small all-volunteer newspapers like Blazing Star that were strictly for lesbians, or for feminists and produced by lesbians. The fact that our paper consciously strove for parity between men and women was something quite innovative. Outlines also featured stories by and about bisexuals and transgender people—though it would be years before the community "officially" recognized itself as LGBT. I am very glad to have witnessed that evolution.

When I think back to all the LGBT newspaper offices I spent any time in, the first Outlines office is the space I remember best, probably because it was filled with light. It was essentially one large open space, on the third floor of a loft building on Belmont Avenue at Lakewood, about six blocks west of the Belmont el stop and eight blocks west of what was then fast becoming "Boys Town" on North Halsted Street. The building housed a number of little corporations, arts groups and some light manufacturing.

The loft building was run-down but exuded a bohemian charm I found very appealing—real exposed brick walls in places, big, tall windows that let in thick columns of sunlight during the day, and beautiful high ceilings. This charm could fade quickly when the heat didn't work or the bathroom pipes clogged, but it was a great space for a newspaper. Our office furniture was, well, let's say eclectic; each of us had gone to the used furniture warehouse on Western Avenue north of Lawrence and picked out the desk and chair and lamp we preferred, so nothing matched and some pieces were quite scuffed, but we were all comfortable, having chosen to our own liking. The look of the place was unified visually by the original solid wood flooring and the equally old ornate ceiling tiles.

Rather than the standard behemoth typesetting machine, Tracy invested in multiple early Apple computers—which themselves would be considered antiques now, of course—that were a great advancement over laying out typeset pages by hand like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Now writers could "typeset" their words on-screen or, if they had a home computer, bring them in on a floppy disk. Moreover, the art director could flow them right into the layouts without the need to have them retyped. This was a huge time saver. But every story that came into the office on paper from a freelancer still had to be hand-typed into the computer, because there was no such thing as email.

Plus, every phone call still came through a single land line that had an extension at each desk. How was that even possible? How did reporters ever find out about anything in a timely fashion, all of us clicking extension buttons and shuffling through paper Rolodexes to find phone numbers? And anyone who was out of the office and not at home was simply unreachable.

Of course, there were no digital cameras, either. Ages ago, I had taught adult-education courses in film-developing. I took up photography again while at Windy City Times and, by the time Outlines started, I'd built a darkroom in my apartment. I spent a portion of my working time painstakingly (compared to today) developing my film and that of other staff photographers who had no darkroom facilities, then making prints for the paper. (Once made, those prints would still have to be professionally transformed into halftones by an outside



Above: AIDS and serial killers were dominant stories of the 1980s, this cover of WCT is from Nov. 28, 1985.

Below: The Jan. 2, 1986 Windy City Times, with Oprah on the cover.



firm.)

Outlines staff members I recall most clearly, almost 30 years later, are Scott Galiher, Jill Burgin, Stephanie Bacon, Richard Small, Janet Provo, Bill Burks, Rex Wockner, Johanna Stoyva, Pat Bechdolt, Rhonda Craven, MJ Murphy and Rachel Pepper. Tracy Baim, freelancer Michèle Bonnarens and Angie Schmidt are still among my close friends today. There were many others—freelancers, activists from various organizations—who were in and out of the office frequently, and even more writers who sent in stories from California, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere.

You never knew when a well-known gay author or a nationally known activist might stop by, as they often did. It was fantastic to be able to call up Larry Kramer for information and to interview Audre Lorde or Lily Tomlin. It was a time of further discovery for me, too—freelancers would send in eye-opening interviews with Hollywood celebrities, stories on new filmmakers such as Gregg Araki, reviews of a groundbreaking new book by Vito Russo.

And every week, I found out more about authors and artists and historical figures who were gay or lesbian, as new books about them came out, and I'd turn what I'd learned into

an article on Joe Orton, or Constantine Cavafy, or Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap. I did a lengthy series of articles on Sappho—the original Lesbian—and what was known about her, in articles that formed the basis for my later "Tenth Muse" columns in HOT WIRE: The Journal of Women's Music and Culture.

In my capacity as a writer, I continued to concentrate on cultural events but also did some news reporting. For instance, I did Outlines' ongoing updates of Karen Thompson's efforts on behalf of her lover, Sharon Kowalski, who had been severely disabled in a car crash in 1983. The legal battle went on for years, as Kowalski's homophobic father, who was her legal guardian, kept Kowalski isolated from Thompson in a nursing home with no rehabilitation and refused to accept that his daughter was a lesbian. The case inspired books, plays and a documentary film, and it brought attention to the need for durable powers of attorney for gay and lesbian couples. It was finally resolved in Thompson's favor in 1991 and became a landmark in establishing gays and lesbians as legal guardians of their partners.

I did movie reviews, interviews, opinion pieces, puff pieces, pieces about housewares and real estate and jewelry and wines, all sorts of things, basically whatever we needed written that I couldn't or didn't have time to assign to anyone else. To make the paper appear to have more writers than we did (a strategy Jeff McCourt had used at GayLife), I came up with several pseudonyms. I wrote Lyric Opera reviews under the reg name Johanna Buckingham (a composite of my two grandmothers' names); I did theater reviews under another name—Lisa something; and home lifestyle reviews as Randy Levertov.

A lot of us who worked at Outlines lived and breathed community current events, and the sense of community-building was palpable. When we weren't actually working on specific newspaper tasks, we'd sit around the office and discuss the waves and waves of controversies that were always swirling around and, in one way or another, making news. Some of these discussions resulted in opinion pieces.

I recall especially a "debate" in the form of two opinion pieces side by side, that began as an office conversation when Rex Wockner complained that he wasn't being allowed entry to cover a debate about racism in the women's community that was held at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse, a local all-women's venue. Rex argued he should have been admitted; I argued for the coffeehouse's right to keep men, including reporters, out if they wanted to.

I also did a lengthy interview with the newly selected International Ms Leather at the time S&M was just beginning to be discussed widely. I knew little about it, but that turned out to be an advantage since I asked basic questions, and the few leatherdykes I knew (and I didn't even know I knew any till they came out to me after the interview) were quite happy to see the topic featured in the newspaper. I also did long interviews with Mary Daly and Sonia Johnson. I could go on and on. I found almost all of this intellectually engaging, even when I didn't agree with others' opinions about some aspect of culture or politics or sexual psychology.

There was always more to do and a feeling of urgency about the time I had to do it in. On the nights when I wasn't working late at the office, I'd be going to gay and lesbian plays, readings, musical performances, dances—or going to a funeral. The reality of AIDS intensified my commitment to gay and lesbian rights, and I think this may have been the case for many LGBT people at that time.

Turn to page 22

## EARLY YEARS from page 21

## Growing Visibility

The Wikipedia article on LGBT history dismisses the 1980s as “a dismal period for homosexuals.” “Dismal” is not how I’d describe it at all. Frightening, yes, and calamitous, with AIDS hanging over the heads of so many talented, earnest young men I knew, and with the obituary section of the paper ever-growing, week after week. But the ‘80s were also a time of enormous expansion in activism (most prominently, the rise of ACT UP), advances in gay rights, and the birth of cultural institutions.

Not dismal. Energizing. Often even amazing. The gay and lesbian movement was coalescing into some primordial landmass rising from the sea, right in front of my eyes. I had the freedom to let my mind roam wherever my curiosity about new gay and lesbian cultural territory would take me, and to write about it, and enlist other writers who wanted to write about it, too. Though the pay was meager, the hours were endless, and the deadlines were often stressful, I felt that those of us working at Outlines were involved in important, meaningful work that was effecting real social change.

Local gay cultural organizations—choruses, art groups, bands, drama and dance troupes—and professional organizations that had begun in the late ‘70s and early ‘80s had, by the mid-to-late ‘80s, sprung up in so many places that they were starting to have annual regional and national gatherings that we covered. And there were the many annual women’s-music festivals back then. Out gays and lesbians were still nowhere to be seen on television (the first ongoing gay TV character I ever saw was played by Martin Mull on Roseanne, in the early 1990s, though there were apparently a few such roles on earlier shows). But there were enough independent films made about us by then to spark the growing number of gay and lesbian film festivals. As arts and entertainment editor, part of my job was to make sure these events were given ample coverage, and the films, presentations and concerts were reviewed with thoughtfulness and care—especially since we knew that some of these LGBT-themed offerings, no matter how excellent they might be, would not be covered anywhere in the mainstream media.

In the early years of my involvement in gay and lesbian journalism, I had assumed that most mainstream stories simply had no gay or lesbian “angle.” By the late 1980s, as an edi-



The late AIDS activist Danny Sotomayor at an AIDS protest circa 1990.  
Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright

tor at Outlines, I realized that there were very few stories that didn’t have one—though you might have to look a little more closely to find it.

The mainstream press was still loath to report anything at all about gays and lesbians except AIDS-related news. This became glaringly obvious after the “Great March”—the October 11, 1987, National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, in Washington, D.C. Those of us who worked in the gay and lesbian press scurried from event to event there, taking notes for articles, snapping photos, doing interviews and viewing the AIDS Quilt at its unveiling.

Almost everyone from Outlines had made the trip to D.C., and the emotional impact of that trip served to further cement us together as a newspaper team. The number of marchers was estimated by activists during the day as half a million, and by the police at close to that number, but it was reported in The New York Times as 200,000. This blatant minimization of the crowd numbers underscored the ongoing vital need for our own media, since the mainstream was still bent on ignoring our issues and our

impact.

The same muting of our visibility by the mainstream news was apparent at the Olivia Records 15th-anniversary concert at Carnegie Hall in 1988, with a gala reception afterward in the Waldorf-Astoria’s Grand Ballroom. I was part of a large Chicago contingent at the event, and it was quite spectacular, with hordes of dykes in tuxedos strolling up Park Avenue from the concert hall to the Waldorf. Today, mainstream newspapers and magazines would be all over a story like that. But back then, according to Wikipedia, “the two [Olivia] concerts at Carnegie Hall in New York were the largest-grossing concerts at that venue in its history. Yet The New York Times barely mentioned the show.” We did a full-page spread on it, of course, with lots of photos.

I have an especially vivid memory of one night at the office in early December 1987. James Baldwin, the most eminent Black gay author of the 1950s and 1960s, had just died—only three days, in fact, after the sudden death of Chicago Mayor Harold Washington. It was snowing outside, beautiful fluffy flakes, and I was alone in the office all night writing my full-page tribute to Baldwin, which was due the next morning, and would be the opening feature of the arts and entertainment section in the next issue.

It was more than a bit eerie, alone in the cold winter quiet of this big space, with a desk phone ringing once in a while in the empty office. But I remember what a deep sense of satisfaction I had, putting into words what Baldwin had meant to me growing up, and explaining the extent of Baldwin’s importance as an out gay Black intellectual to people who might not know, or be too young to remember, how groundbreaking his books had been during the 1960s.

I started writing a humor column in 1991, called “Lesbomania,” that first appeared in a little weekly offshoot of Outlines called Nightlines, then in Outlines itself and, coming full circle, in Windy City Times. Most of my humor writing was designed to show the irrationality and illogic of homophobia—an easy target, really, but it gave me great satisfaction to ridicule anti-gay bigots and pundits. I did gay spoofs and parodies of television shows and

movies, too, and I also poked fun at some of the crazy things that went on inside the lesbian community. Among my shenanigans, I examined the “scientific evidence” that lesbians from outer space visited the Earth in prehistoric times. I “reported” on the “War Between the Butches and the Femmes.” I revealed the secret lesbian codes embedded in great Renaissance art works. I outed (quite convincingly, I think) Santa Claus, Godzilla, the Abominable Snowman, and the Loch Ness Monster as lesbians, and wrote gay and lesbian versions of The X-Files, West Side Story, Star Trek, Hansel and Gretel, Cinderella and more.

The column was syndicated in a number of LGBT papers around the country, and in 1994 and 1996 many of the pieces were gathered into two book collections, Lesbomania and Tales From the Dyke Side. I did theatrical readings from the columns—with visual enhancement in the form of cartoons—at the Bailiwick theater in Chicago during Pride Week, at the Center in New York, and in a number of bookstores and other venues in the U.S. and Europe. I had a blast—and a good laugh, I hope, was had by all.

Working for Windy City Times/Outlines was a rare opportunity to combine activism and culture, and to feel that I was contributing something tangible to the movement for LGBT rights. And I was constantly learning new things and meeting fantastic, admirable people. I look back almost in awe on the hope and the triumphs of those heady days amid the poignancy of our tragic losses. I saw many instances of bravery and actual heroism in those days, of otherwise ordinary people who realized that coming out, however difficult for them, was an act of dignity, of personal integrity, of openness, of risking personal safety for the sake of honesty.

The LGBT media solidified and amplified our collective courage. I feel privileged to have been among the people who documented those landmark times as they unfolded.

This piece is an excerpt, adapted for WCT from “The Passing Parade: Cultural Reporting in an Age of Heroes,” a chapter in *Gay Press: Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America*, edited by Tracy Baim.



ACT UP members at Chicago’s post-Pride Parade rally in 1990.  
Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright

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AND AFFILIATES

# Surrogacy event held at Center

The Men Having Babies (MHB) Surrogacy Seminar & Gay Parenting Expo took place Sept. 20 at Lake View's Center on Halsted.

Following a collaboration in offering a mini-conference in September 2014, MHB teamed again with the Center on Halsted and Howard Brown Health Center to offer a program dedicated to biological parenting for gay men.

The agenda for the all-day event included an opening session in a standing-room-only Hoover-Leppen Theatre that included everything from coverage of basic terminology to known versus anonymous egg donations.

There were also an expert panel about medical and legal considerations; surrogacy workshops and breakout sessions; a personal stories panel; an expo with surrogacy agencies, attorneys and related businesses; a reception; and even private consultations.

MHB Operations Director A.J. Edge—who has two adopted children (and a godchild) with his husband—told Windy City Times that MHB “is the only nonprofit that we know of that is geared toward helping gay men have babies through surrogacy.”

As for the purpose of the all-day event, Edge said it was “to provide educational resources to gay men who want to go down the path to parenthood and have a biological child. We asked these different providers to sponsor our event, we have experts to speak about the process.

Of course, money is important, Edge stressed. “There’s a big financial aspect to this,” he said. “Our research shows that it is \$110,000-\$120,000, on average, for surrogacy.

“We also have this gay parenting assistance program—GPAP, for short. Gay men and couples are welcome to apply to this and, if they



**A.J. Edge.**  
Photo by Andrew Davis

qualify, they get access to providers who are [offering] discounts for their services. [In addition,] we have cash grants.”

Edge added that he learned about MHB through a gay fathers' Facebook group. He said, “I was really intrigued because I remember what it was like to be on the other side of that. We didn't even know where to start.” Now, he said, there are sites like SurrogacyAdvisor—which is like TripAdvisor, complete with ratings for providers.

—Andrew Davis



**U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky at the Hillary Clinton rally.**  
Photos by Matt Simonette

## Area Democrats rally for Hillary Clinton

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan were among the speakers at a Sept. 20 rally supporting Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

The rally, held at Paris Studio, 59 W. Hubbard St., was aimed mainly at raising support for Clinton among women voters. Among those politicians in attendance were U.S. Rep. Robin Kelly; former state Senator and 48th Ward

Committeewoman Carol Ronen; Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) Commissioner Debra Shore; state Sens. Heather Steans, Jacqueline Collins and Daniel Biss; state Reps. Sara Feigenholtz, Mary Flowers and Lou Lang; Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez; State Treasurer Mike Frerichs; Cook County Recorder of Deeds Karen Yarbrough; and 49th Ward Ald. Joe Moore.

The event was introduced by Josina Morita, who is running for Metropolitan Water Reclamation District.

—Matt Simonette



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# Gay Press: The Long Haul

BY TRACY BAIM

Working in the gay press should probably be measured in dog years. Right-wing threats, death and destruction, physical assaults, robberies, property destruction, and that's not to mention the internal struggles within our great rainbow community—it all makes those years seem so much longer.

But while hundreds of reporters have come and gone through the years of gay media in Chicago, I feel very fortunate to have done this since 1984, one month out of journalism school. I had been doing newspapers since I was 10 years old, shadowing my mother, Joy Darrow, when she was managing editor of the Chicago Defender, creating a family newsletter, and then working on grammar-school, high-school and college newspapers, as well as starting my own feminist newsletter in college.

Still, when I graduated with a journalism degree from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, in May 1984, I assumed I would never have a career in journalism. I didn't think I could be an out lesbian and a reporter, so I readied myself for a typesetting career supplemented by activism and journalism—just as in college. I packed up my 1966 Mustang with all my college memorabilia and headed home to Chicago.

Within a few weeks, my mom heard about a part-time job at GayLife newspaper, owned by Chuck Renslow. I worked doing typesetting and some writing for it, while also freelancing for the Chicago Tribune, where my stepdad Steve Pratt was a reporter and editor of the City Trib section. And to pay the bills, I was typesetting at night for an advertising firm.

Given the low wages and lousy hours, attrition was a fact of life in the gay press. I moved up from editorial assistant to editor of GayLife in 12 months—in time for the June 1985 Pride edition.

I was really lucky to graduate when I did. There were a few dozen Chicagoans who had done the heavy lifting of gay journalism in the 1960s and 1970s, into the early 1980s. They started newspapers, radio shows and newsletters. They fought harassment, struggled to pay the bills and somehow created a thriving media world by the time I started at GayLife. My role models included Marie J. Kuda and William B. Kelley, who had reported in the 1960s for the Mattachine Midwest Newsletter, and Toni Armstrong Jr. and Jorjet Harper, who were lesbian journalism pioneers.

By the summer of 1985, there were stirrings at GayLife. When a group left to start Windy City Times, I joined them as founding managing editor. I left again, 18 months later, to start Outlines newspaper, and then added subsequent sister publications (Nightlines, BLACKlines, En La Vida, Out!, Clout!, Identity, etc.) over the years. More on that elsewhere in this issue.

## Bars, Bombs and Crises

Since there were so few pages in the gay newspapers, and of course no Internet, the power of the press in the 1980s was in choosing just what to cover. It was always a battle for space, and to this day there has never been an edition where we didn't have far too much to print. Making decisions on what to include,

whom to cover and what photos to run was always difficult. A lot of what we were writing about was news briefs, AIDS developments and local organization events.

From the start, I was plunged deep into the gay and feminist communities. I covered Mountain Moving Coffeehouse for Womyn and Children, the Pride Parade, sports leagues, gay and lesbian business owners, gay bars and, most importantly, the growing AIDS crisis.

My first bylined cover story for GayLife was June 14, 1984, about a man arrested for placing 24 bombs in Chicago, claiming to be the "North American Central Gay Strike Force Against Public and Police Oppression." He was a lone wolf, likely not gay. But I have to say that I did not even remember that story until recent years, when I started to work on gay history projects, including co-writing and editing *Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Community* and launching [www.chicagogayhistory.org](http://www.chicagogayhistory.org). Having worked pretty much seven days a week—16-to-18-hour days—on LGBT news and issues for all these years, it's funny how little I remember of some of the actual stories. But the memories come flooding back when I page through those yellowing issues of the papers.

In that same GayLife issue, I also wrote about the closing of the Jane Addams feminist bookstore, after seven years in business. I took photos of the Pride Parade that month and covered the Proud to Run Race.

My first major interview was with ex-Mormon Sonia Johnson, running a third-party race for U.S. president. My interview ran July 12, 1984, and she attacked even Geraldine Ferraro, who was the Democratic vice-presidential pick that year. (Johnson later came out as a lesbian.)

One article I wrote in the June 20, 1985, issue of GayLife led to a series of articles (including some at subsequent papers) on the anti-gay terror striking the University of Chicago and Hyde Park community. A right-wing newspaper, the Chicago Patriot, had been published by students and included offensive remarks about AIDS, gays, investment in South Africa and more. Later, when I worked on related stories about events at the U of C, and actual anti-gay attacks, I received phone calls at home threatening my life if I continued to cover the stories.

Of course, I continued investigating the stories, but I was scared. In later years, we received threats, usually through the mail, including some suspicious powder soon after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorism attacks. We also were robbed of all our computers, suffered additional robberies and even had our windows shot at (when we were not there). Our news boxes were vandalized (dirty diapers being a favorite) and stolen. I was arrested covering an early-1990s Easter Sunday pro-choice demonstration at a right-wing church on the Northwest Side. The arrest and threats were never a deterrent—they usually were a motivator.

I also wrote a lot of editorials for GayLife and subsequent gay papers, but I was always most comfortable doing news articles and interviews. I did some fluff stories, business profiles, and lots of sports news since I played in the lesbian sports leagues, and I took thousands of photos a year. And because I am a pack rat for history, I have saved almost every press release and photo—including those by other photographers.



Above: Tracy Baim getting ready for the Pride Parade in 1987, with bundles of Outlines newspaper.

Below: The 1984 Chicago Pride Parade, as covered for GayLife newspaper.

Photo by Tracy Baim





# 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

# LONGEVITY



Far left: Tracy Baim interviewing Mayor Harold Washington for the Sept. 4, 1986, Windy City Times. Photo by William Burks

Left: Windy City Times, Sept. 4, 1986, issue.

Once I made the move to Windy City Times in September 1985, I felt freer to explore all parts of the LGBT community. I had never felt constrained by GayLife Publisher Chuck Renslow, but Windy City Times soon had a larger advertising base and therefore more space to cover the community. It was all about the space (no overflow of articles to the Internet yet).

Even though I was managing editor, at a small paper that means doing everything, including typesetting and delivery. I found that such chores kept me more interested than just doing writing or editing all day. The cover of our first Windy City Times, on Sept. 26, 1985, was my story about the new Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues appointed by Mayor Harold Washington.

The years 1985-'87 were among the most devastating and exciting in Chicago's gay community. AIDS was tightening its terrifying grip on our city, slightly delayed from the East and West coasts. We lost some of our own staff

(travel writer Richard Cash was among the first to die) and one of our WCT founders, Bob Bearden, to AIDS. There was a large push for the city's gay-rights bill; gays were running for office; more gay businesses were opening; sports and culture groups were thriving; new nonprofits were starting; the 1987 March on Washington sparked a huge growth in local groups back in cities such as Chicago; and ACT UP formed to take a no-prisoners approach to fighting for access to a cure for AIDS.

During the 18 months in my first turn as managing editor of Windy City Times, until May 1987, I was so excited and honored to cover this incredible growth in the community. The highlight was a huge downtown rally in July 1986, when all parts of the community came together to push for a city gay-rights bill vote. There was a buzz unlike any I had witnessed earlier. There were people of all races and genders, thousands strong in Daley Center Plaza. I snapped photos, took notes, and had tears in

my eyes seeing such community unity. We ran the phone numbers of all 50 aldermen and encouraged readers to call their elected officials.

That unity has rarely shown itself, but when it does, I am a sucker for the emotions of the moment. Yet I am also realistic, and for the most part the community's divisions have been the hardest part to cover. The sexism, racism, ageism, classism and geographic divisions make this city a smoldering pot, not a melting pot. I was called a "cunt" and other names by men threatened by a woman publisher.

Of course, there are also the sinister elements, those who are just gays gone bad, who steal from nonprofits, abuse drugs and alcohol, destroy businesses and organizations, or even in some cases murder. I have covered my share of serial and spree killers within the gay community, those so distorted and so ashamed of their own true selves that they have to kill to cope, from John Wayne Gacy (who was arrested long before I started, but who was put to death

in 1994) to Larry Eyler (who was on the scene when I started at GayLife) and later Jeffrey Dahmer and Andrew Cunanan.

The high-profile cases of murders and suicide have been especially traumatic to write about. The 1998 killing of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming, the murders of numerous transgender, lesbian, bisexual and gay Chicagoans, and the spike in reported LGBT youth suicides are very difficult to report. Windy City Times did a series on youth suicide in 2010, and at that time I wrote about my own suicide attempt while in college. I have infrequently used personal difficulties to relate the stories of our movement, but it is not easy getting personal with the political.

So it is not all parades and galas, bartenders and athletes, that keep this LGBT world spinning. As a journalist, you can get pretty disgusted and burned out with the difficult stories.

But then, what always kept me going was the true heroes of our community, those who were martyred for our movement in deaths due to AIDS, cancer, murder, car crashes or other tragedies, or those who have been able to soldier on, keeping committed to their activism for decades, despite the burnout, despite the bitter community infighting.

### Notable Moments

There were many other notable moments over my 31 years:

— Meeting and interviewing Mayor Harold Washington in 1986 was a highlight for me as a 23-year-old journalist. He was a big teddy bear of a man, warm and fierce at the same time. Covering his re-election was exciting and rewarding. And I even had the guts to ask him about the rumors about his sexuality (he denied them).

— The push for the city's human-rights ordinance was at a fever pitch in the mid-1980s. The forced (and failed) vote under Washington led to heightened community activism, and eventual passage under Mayor Eugene Sawyer in 1988. The work of the Gang of Four and hundreds of other activists and politicians was fantastic to watch and cover. Reporting about the City Council for the final winning vote in 1988, under Mayor Sawyer, was phenomenal.

— In 1985, I drove to northern Minnesota to interview Karen Thompson in one of the more tragic stories of the 1980s gay movement. Her partner, Sharon Kowalski, was severely injured in a November 1983 car accident, and Sharon's family won court victories to keep Karen out of her life. This badly affected Sharon's recovery



Left: The first issue of Outlines, June 4, 1987. Above left: The first issue of BLACKlines, February 1996. Cover drawing by Otis Richardson. Above right: En La Vida, founded July 1986. Below: The first issue of Nightlines, March 28, 1990.



## LONG HAUL from page 27

and future health. Interviewing Karen less than two years after the accident, and after Sharon had been moved to a nursing home, was difficult, but her story served as an example to gay couples across the country to get their legal paperwork in order. Sadly, these types of cases still happen.

— Attending and covering the 1987, 1993 and 2000 Marches on Washington were life-changing experiences, as was being at the 1994 Stonewall 25 March combined with the Gay Games in New York. Priceless. The 1987 march and related events were especially pivotal and inspiring, including taking photos of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, and Chicago attorney Renee Hanover and others being arrested at the U.S. Supreme Court protest.

— I witnessed the courage of Black LGBT activists in pushing for inclusion in Chicago's Bud Billiken Parade. Janice Layne recommended applying to be in the parade, and when activists won (with the help of Lambda Legal) and subsequently marched in the event, I was happy to walk the route taking photos. This was a wonderful event to cover, and the acceptance from the onlookers brought tears to my eyes. I had watched the parade as a child, because my mom, Joy Darrow, covered the parade for the Chicago Defender.

— Starting BLACKlines and En La Vida newspapers brought emotional highlights for me, especially the first-anniversary party for BLACKlines at the DuSable Museum, with my mom mixing the punch. This was just shortly before she died, so it is an important memory for me. Since Joy, as a white woman, had been managing editor of the Defender for eight years, she was especially proud of me for launching BLACKlines. The economics couldn't support those papers after 10 years of publishing, but I was very happy to have been publisher of such important monthly media.

— Receiving the 2005 Community Media Workshop's Studs Terkel Award, presented by Terkel himself, was a career highlight. I am also thankful for the other journalism and community awards I have received, including induction into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame at age 31, and induction in 2014 into the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Hall of Fame and the Chicago Society of Professional Journalists Hall of Fame.

— Being co-vice chair of the board of Gay Games VII in 2006 was a once-in-a-lifetime experience as an organizer, showcasing Chicago to the world—and breaking even, financially. I think we did our city proud, despite the odds (and people) against us. Doing outreach for the Games and speaking in more closeted towns, including Crystal Lake (where our rowing events were held), proved educational even to this jaded journalist.

— Founding the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce in 1995 was also an important accomplishment for me. I believe it was the first gay and lesbian business group to use the word "chamber" in its title, and now that has been replicated all over the country—and the world. Around that time I also received the Crain's Chicago Business 40 Under 40 Award, which made me feel accepted beyond the gay community.

— The [chicagogayhistory.org](http://chicagogayhistory.org) website has been a labor of love for me, interviewing hundreds of current and former Chicagoans on gay issues. I launched this in 2007, and want to do many more—only time and funding restrict all it can be. This also got me thinking about writing books on history, and I been lucky to have published my 11th book this year, on Barbara Gittings.

— Producing the films Hannah Free, starring



Nan Schaffer invested in Outlines' founding in 1987. Karen Dixon and Schaffer are pictured here at their 2008 wedding at the Drake Hotel. In 1985, when WCT was founded, marriage was a far-off dream for most in the LGBT community.

Photo by Joel Schachtel

Sharon Gless and terrific Chicago actors, and Scrooge & Marley with a host of actors—well, those are experiences I can't even compare to anything else. And they are simply other ways to tell our community's stories—journalism on the big screen.

— Interviewing Barack Obama in 2004 for his U.S. Senate run, and doing a 2010 in-depth book on him, Obama and the Gays: A Political Marriage, are certainly high points of my journalism career. Going to the White House for his June 2012 Pride Month reception, and getting a hug and kiss from the president, was amazing.

— In recent years, stepping away from journalism to coordinate the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality in 2013, and the LGBTQ Youth Homeless Summit in 2014 have really challenged me. I especially want to focus on community-wide solutions to complex issues that impact not just our community, but beyond. I think we LGBTQs have the talent to lift all boats even more than we already do, so a new group is officially launching next month, Pride Action Tank (as a project of AIDS Foundation of Chicago), to help us work better in coalition with one another, and the mainstream.

## Journalism Juggling 101

The funny thing for me all these years has been the multiple hats I have had to wear, just to keep doing what I love most: reporting. Some people have criticized the conflicts of interest I have to navigate in doing this, but it was the only path I knew to follow in order to keep doing the work. I decided to co-found Windy City Times at age 22, and run my own paper at age 24 so that I could control my own destiny—as a writer. It took me a long time to claim the title of "publisher" at Outlines, even though that was what I was—and nobody else



Photo of Ron Cayot, who was shot in an anti-gay hate crime after leaving a gay bar on Halsted March 31, 1993, and lost his ability to speak normally. He lived on to be an anti-violence advocate, before dying of AIDS complications in 1996 at age 42. He was one among thousands of people lost to AIDS complications in Chicago.

Photo by Tracy Baim

was doing that work. For decades, I have been lucky enough to have shareholders in the paper who have allowed me to make a lot of mistakes as I worked through sleepless nights on a very long learning curve.

So I do sales, writing, editing, photography, delivery, opinion columns, and whatever else it takes to keep Windy City Times visible and thriving.

And I don't take that surviving lightly. Having almost died a few times in my life, I have never taken my days for granted. I also came of age as a gay media reporter when the city had just a few dozen diagnosed cases of AIDS. This was like coming into a war zone, as people on our own staff, and all over the gay community, began to die very quickly, with no end in sight. I was covering the deaths of men (and some women) my age or just slightly older. Many of them never received coverage in the mainstream media, so it fell on the gay press to document their lives. That pattern is repeating with the murders of transgender women of color. The mainstream is barely noticing this plague, and we as a community must pressure to help and change this narrative.

Looking back over thousands of obituaries over the years, and hundreds of funerals I attended, it was the greatest honor to cover the war years, as a young person just getting to understand what her "community" was, making sure our community's heroes are not forgotten.

I remember their faces, their smiles, their anger and their tears. And that is what keeps me motivated.

This essay was adapted from *Gay Press, Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America*, edited by Tracy Baim, published in 2012 by Prairie Avenue Productions.

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# viewpoints



**Tracy  
BAIM**

## The first draft of history

Journalism is said to be the first draft of history. For most of the LGBT movement's history, it has often been the only draft.

While much of the mainstream media now cover LGBT issues a lot better, this has come about at the same time those same media are laying off reporters and covering less and less of niche communities. Even at the pinnacle of coverage of our issues in their pages, the mainstream could only do a surface amount of coverage of any one community.

It is really up to LGBT regional media to make sure all aspects of our community are covered, from specific groups for people of color, to in-depth HIV coverage, transgender features, hate crimes, job discrimination, and profiles of those doing the heavy lifting in the LGBT movement—the volunteers, staff and funders.

But back in September 1985, when Windy City Times was founded, that role was even more critical.

In those days prior to the public Internet, the newspaper was the primary source of information for AIDS updates, protests, gay-rights lobbying news, and much more. There

was always too much news to fit in print, so we had the difficult task of trying to summarize a vast amount of information in a weekly print issue. Thankfully, we now have the ability to post news instantly, so the weekly print newspaper can serve as a more finely curated set of stories.

We at Windy City Times are fortunate to be doing what we love for this community, some 30 years after we launched. With just 11 weekly LGBT newspapers left in the United States, it is not a given that any of us will be here in another 10, 20 or 30 years. We aggressively adapt to new technologies, but even keeping ahead of the game is no guarantee.

Those early pioneers at Windy City Times ranged from our typesetting team to reporters, editors, sales people, photographers and those all-important delivery drivers. Neither snow nor sleet nor blistering heat have kept these drivers from doing their jobs every week these past 30 years.

While I am the only original staffer left from that first WCT, many of those pioneers still lend their skills to our special projects and community events. There are hundreds of people who played critical roles in this paper since 1985, some of them who died within weeks or the early years after we were founded. I am grateful to them all, including those who allowed me to join them in co-founding WCT—Bob Bearden, Jeff McCourt and Drew Badanish. And those who helped me launch Outlines in 1987—especially Nan Schaffer and Scott McCausland.

I was very torn the day Bob, Jeff and Drew asked me to leave my post as managing editor of GayLife newspaper to join them as managing

editor as Windy City Times. Bob and Jeff have both since passed away, and Drew left early on, but all of us were part of a very passionate team of dreamers.

Our current staff include several who have been with us full-time for more than a decade, in some cases two decades: Terri Klinsky, Jean Albright, Amy Matheny, Andrew Davis and Kirk Williamson, plus newer additions you will see listed in this issue. We also have some very longtime vendors who help make us what we are, including Martie Marro of Love Your Website who has been doing our site for 20 years, accountant Deb Murphy, David Schaefer and Steve MacIntosh of Equitek, and the printers Graphic Image and Topweb—which, as Newsweb, printed that very first issue of WCT.

Thank you for allowing me to be a journalist these past 31 years (including that one year at GayLife). I begrudgingly do the “publisher” thing to keep the company chugging along. But in my heart, I am the journalist I wanted to be when I was 10 years old and wrote my first family newsletters—and a kid's consumer column for the Chicago Defender (where my mom was managing editor). Being a journalist is all I ever wanted to be. And this community has allowed me that voice.

Come join us for a walk down memory lane at the Windy City Times 30th anniversary celebration Sunday, Sept. 27, at Sidetrack bar, 2-5 p.m. The suggested donation is \$30 at the door. There will be “just desserts,” from Tri-Star Catering, a performance by Sami Grisafe—who was born the year we were founded—plus lots of door prizes.



**Ella  
VINCENT**

## How the Golden Girls fought for gay rights

A sitcom about four elderly heterosexual women living together is an unlikely vehicle for LGBT rights. However, The Golden Girls became a classic with the gays throughout its seven year run by addressing LGBT issues in a progressive and funny way.

The Golden Girls debuted 30 years ago and detailed the lives and loves of Blanche (Rue McClanahan), Rose (Betty White), Dorothy (Bea Arthur), and Sophia (Estelle Getty). In 1985, when The Golden Girls debuted, there were few representations of LGBT live on TV. Rock Hudson died of AIDS that same year, when the belief was prevalent that being gay was a sin and AIDS was the punishment.

Despite this homophobic background, The Golden Girls, showed the humanity of LGBT people. In the second season of the show, one episode, “Isn't It Romantic,” featured Jean, a lesbian friend of Dorothy's who fell in love with Rose. When Dorothy and Sophia tell Blanche, after initial disbelief, she's not upset that Jean is gay; she's more upset that

Jean doesn't find her attractive. “To think Jean would prefer Rose over me, that's ridiculous!” huffs Blanche. When Jean professes her love, Rose isn't disgusted; she is flattered by Jean's feelings instead.

A special episode in 1990 addressed the AIDS epidemic in a compassionate way. The episode “72 Hours” featured Rose possibly contracting the disease through a blood transfusion. When she asks why she could get the disease when she lived a “clean” life, Blanche snapped, “AIDS is not a bad person's disease, Rose. It is not God punishing people for their sins!” Blanche voiced the frustrations of gay people who were HIV positive in the 1980s and 1990s, but were ignored and denied treatment by because conservative politicians who saw gay people as immoral.

The Golden Girls also addressed overcoming homophobia in a refreshingly honest way. In the “Sister of the Bride” episode, Blanche's brother, Clayton was marrying his partner Doug even though Blanche was in denial about him being gay. “There must be some homosexuals who date women,” said Blanche.

“Yeah—they're called lesbians,” quips Sophia.

The episode aired in 1991 and made the simple argument for marriage equality years before it became a reality in America. When Blanche asked why her brother had to get married, Sophia asked her why she married her husband. When Blanche replied that they wanted the world to know they loved each other, Sophia replied, “That's what Clayton and Doug want. Everyone wants someone to grow old with, and shouldn't everyone have that chance?”

The Golden Girls not only fought for LGBT rights, but addressed the issue of gender non-conformity. When Dorothy's brother Phil died, he was buried in women's lingerie. While Phil wasn't gay, his dressing in women's clothes was a contentious issue for Sophia until Rose helped her see that his cross dressing didn't mean anything was wrong with him—or with her as a mother.

Not only was The Golden Girls a pioneering show for LGBT rights, but in real life, the actresses helped LGBT causes as well. When Bea Arthur passed away, she bequeathed \$300,000 to the Ali Forney Center for LGBT youth in New York. Betty White also advocated for LGBT rights in a live-and let-live way. “I don't care whom you sleep with. It's ‘what kind of a human being are you?’” said White when asked about gay marriage.

When The Golden Girls premiered on Sept. 14, 1985, the love the show received from gay viewers proved that there is a space for people who choose their own family and live life on their own terms. The Golden Girls endures as a gay iconic show today because it fought for gay rights at a time when it wasn't popular. Although the show is 30 years old, the message that people deserve love, respect and laughter is timeless.

**Ella Vincent is a freelance writer who lives in Chicago.**

# WINDY CITY TIMES

**VOL. 30, No. 52, Sept. 23, 2015**

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

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Letters may be edited for brevity or clarity.



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1) The Coalition Against Media/Marketing Prejudice (CAMMP) announced in January 1988 that it was taking on the Stroh Brewery Co. for remarks made in *The Wall Street Journal* by the ad agency handling Stroh beers. Michael Lesser of Lowe Marschalk had said: "I'm surprised beer companies [such as Anheuser-Busch] would think seriously of advertising in gay media. Beer imagery is so delicate that getting associated with homosexuals could be detrimental." CAMMP's Art Johnston, co-owner of Sidetrack bar, wrote a letter to the company in February 1988 asking for an apology and a marketing push to the gay community. As a result, the company took action, and no boycott was necessary. CAMMP's next action soon followed: a protest against the Kellogg Co. in Battle Creek, Michigan, for its TV commercial promoting Nut & Honey cereal, which featured an Old West trail cook threatened with bodily harm when the men for whom he cooks mistakenly believe he has called one of them "honey." Kellogg did not respond as quickly as the Stroh company, and Chicago activists spent over a year calling for action. Kellogg cut off communication with CAMMP after the company asserted that the ad did not promote violence. From the Outlines archives.

2) Women and Children First Bookstore co-founders Linda Bubon and Ann Christophersen at the store in the 1980s. From the WCT archives

3) The 1987 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Among those in the front are Eleanor Smeal, Pat Parker, Karen Thompson, Kate Clinton, Gil Gerald and Whoopi Goldberg pushing a person living with AIDS in a wheelchair. Photo by M.J. Murphy

4) In July 1986, hundreds of community members and allies rallied at Daley Plaza downtown

to pressure for a gay-rights vote in the City Council. From left: Sign language interpreter Diana Thorpe, Jon Simmons, Achy Obejas, Dewey Herrington, Kit Duffy, Chris Cothran, Reverend Ninure Saunders and Jim Flint. Photo by Tracy Baim

5) A reunion of some of Chicago's top lesbian bar owners, circa 1990. Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright

6) Founders of Test Positive Aware Network, circa 1988: Jim Moskel, Hank Jones, Christopher Clason, Greg Stratman and Stephen Dokoupil. Photo from TPA and Outlines archives

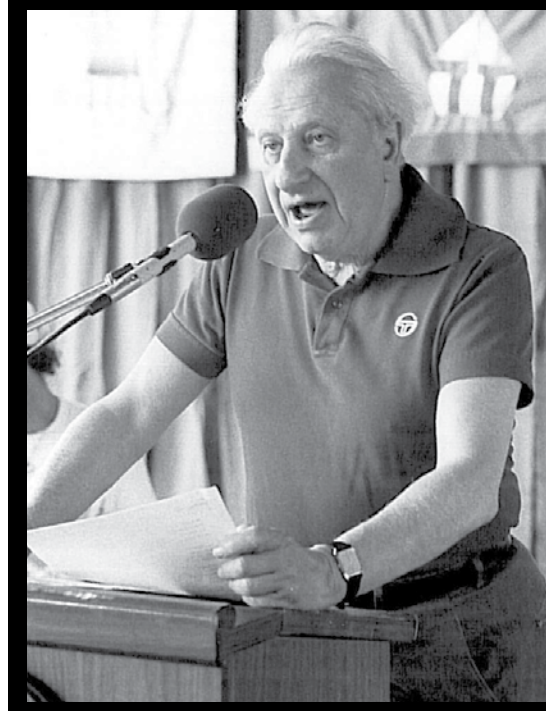
7) At a late 1980s-era AIDS vigil, Bill McMillan (second from left) and Danny Sotomayor (right) are among those pictured. Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright

8) City Council lobbying for gay-rights bill, 1988. Among those in the front row are Al Wardell, Jim Flint and Kit Duffy. Photo by William Burks

9) Mildred and Howard Eychaner, parents of Chicago businessman and philanthropist Fred Eychaner, marching in Chicago's 1989 Pride Parade. Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright

10) Art Johnston, Rick Garcia, Laurie Dittman, Mayor Eugene Sawyer, Jon-Henri Damski and Jon Simmons, Sawyer's liaison to the gay community, after the City Council passed the gay-rights bill in 1988.

11) Members of the Lesbian Community Cancer Project board in the 1990s. Among those pictured are (starting third from left, back row) Suzanne Kraus, Lajaunnesse Jordan, Corinne Kawwcki, Laura Cuzzillo (right), and front row Nancy Lanoue (middle) and Jackie Anderson (right). Outlines archives



1) The three left photos are all from the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt display at Chicago's Navy Pier in 1989. At top is the Reverend Willie Barrow, whose own son Keith had died of AIDS complications in 1983, and below is author Studs Terkel—both were reading the names of people lost to the disease. Photos by Tracy Baim and Lisa Howe-Ebright

2) An ACT UP protest in downtown Chicago, 1990. Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright

3) Lesbian attorney Renee Hanover speaking at the annual benefit for IMPACT, a gay and lesbian political action committee, circa 1990. Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright

4) An ACT UP "die-in" protest circa 1990. Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright

5) An AIDS Foundation of Chicago Not Just Song and Dance gala benefit, circa late 1980s. WCT file photo

6) Sidetrack owners Jose "Pepe" Pena and Art Johnston, Dr. Ron Sable and New York-based national activist and author Vito Russo in Chicago, circa late 1980s. WCT file photo

7) Columnist Jon-Henri Damski and Ald. Kathy Osterman in Chicago's Pride Parade, 1990. Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright

8) Baton Show Lounge owner Jim Flint with Roger Messer, who was Mr. Baton and a longtime Flint bartender, in the late 1970s. Photo by Tom Coughlin from the Gay Chicago archives

9) Longtime lesbian political activist, and one-time Oak Park Village President Joanne Trapani with activist Mike Savage circa early 1990s. Photo by Tracy Baim





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1) Activist Paul Adams (left) wearing a shirt promoting Chicago's contingent in the 1987 March on Washington, in a protest march. Photo from the WCT archives

2) The Amigas Latinas group gathers for a 1990s picnic. From the Outlines archives

3) A Queer Nation anti-violence march Aug. 24, 1991. That's Scout, now a nationally known LGBT health advocate, in the middle with the white helmet. Photo by Genyphyr Novak

4) Queer Nation protests the bigotry of the Cracker Barrel restaurant chain, at its Hobart, Indiana, facility, Dec. 8, 1991. Cracker Barrel had fired gay and lesbian employees, and the community launched a years-long boycott. Among those pictured is the late Chicago gay activist Gerardo Montemayor, second from left. Photo by Genyphyr Novak

5) African American gays and lesbians fought for the right to march openly in Chicago's Bud Billiken Parade. Thanks to activists and Lambda Legal, the Ad Hoc Committee of Proud Black Lesbians and Gays did march in this 1994 parade. Among those pictured are Max Smith (left)

and, next to him, Lisa Marie Pickens. Photo by Tracy Baim

6) Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays preparing to host the national Unity conference in 1994. Among those pictured are Ernest Hite, Michael Harrington and Lora Branch in the back row, and Denise Myles, Steve Wakefield and Renae Ogletree in the front row. Photo by Tracy Baim

7) Asians and Friends Chicago in the 1990s. Photo by Tracy Baim

8) The Lambda Legal float in the Pride Parade, 1995. Included are Mona Noriega (driving), Vernita Gray, Pat Logue and Heather Sawyer. Photo by Tracy Baim

9) The Women of All Colors/Cultures Together group at one of their monthly potlucks, 1995. Photo by Tracy Baim

10) The Men of All Colors Together in 1995. Photo by Tracy Baim

11) The Association of Latin Men for Action group in the July 1996 Puerto Rican Parade in Chicago. From the Outlines archives

Any readers who are confident they can identify other people pictured, please email editor@windycitymediagroup.com with the page number and photo number, and we can add IDs online.



**1)** These three photos are from the start and finish of Chicago's latest community center, Center on Halsted, previously known as Gay Horizons, Horizons and Horizons Community Services. The left photo is from a groundbreaking in the late 1990s, when Mary Morten was Mayor Richard Daley's LGBT liaison. Among those with Morten are Roger Hickey and Art Johnston. Middle is the June 2007 ribbon-cutting for the Center on Halsted, from left: Incoming Board President Robert Kohl, outgoing board President Patrick Sheahan, Executive Director Robbin Burr (who handed over the top spot to Modesto "Tico" Valle the next month), and Mayor Richard M. Daley. On right: Gay philanthropist Michael Leppen with his aunt Miriam Hoover (left), who donated \$1 million to the Center, and his mother, Vi, also a supporter (Vi died at the end of 2007). Photos by Tracy Baim

**2)** One of the North Halsted Street rainbow pylons, soon after they were installed in 1997. Photo by Tracy Baim

**3)** Barack Obama pictured at a Human Rights Campaign gala circa 2004 with presidential candidate Howard Dean (left) and Chicago gay philanthropist Phil Burgess. Photo by Tracy Baim

**4)** Pro-marriage equality marchers in Chicago's Pride Parade, 2004. Photo by Tracy Baim

**5)** Dyke March 2005, from the Bryn Mawr overpass to the Lakefront. Photo by Tracy Baim

**6)** More than 11,000 athletes and cultural participants from more than 70 countries came to Chicago July 15-22, 2006 for Gay Games VII. Left are physique participants. Middle is the Opening Ceremony at Soldier Field. And at right, the South African Chosen Few soccer team at the Closing Ceremony at Wrigley Field. Left and right pics by Steve Becker of Beckermedia. Middle photo by John Faier

# Congratulations Windy City Times on 30 wonderful years!

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# 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

# COVERAGE



## October 10, 1985

The death of actor Rock Hudson Oct. 2, 1985 made front-page headlines around the world, including in the gay media of the day. For the straight community, his was the first high-profile death from AIDS, and something that forced even President Ronald Reagan to acknowledge the disease. Hudson was also outed as a gay man, compelling Hollywood to acknowledge its long-standing forced closeting of leading men and women.



## October 31, 1985

There were constant signs of hope in fighting AIDS, yet almost all of them eventually proved failures, including this French "breakthrough." The Pentagon threatened people testing positive for HTLV-III (later HIV) with ouster from the service. The annual conference hosted by Horizons (now Center on Halsted) was held, and a witness came forward in the infamous raid on Carol's Speakeasy, one of the last big police raids on a gay club in Chicago.



## January 30, 1986

Saying that "irrational commentary" in the Sun-Times reduced the discussion of gay and lesbian civil rights "to the level of mudslinging," the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force called for a meeting with the paper. South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu visited Chicago to discuss the horrors of apartheid in his country. Tutu thanked Chicagoans for helping fight for a new South Africa "where all of us will be free." Tutu also later came out strong for LGBT rights.



## March 6, 1986

Mayor Harold Washington's Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues, COGLI, held a meeting with police and paramedics to make sure there was no mistreatment of gays as a result of AIDSphobia. Linda Rodgers is pictured with Ted Hoerl, and Chris Cothran with Dr. Ron Sable. The paper also covered the first residents moving into a Chicago House facility, a license renewal for Seahorse II bar in Calumet City, and testing rates at a testing site for HTLV-III.



## April 10, 1986

Mayor Harold Washington's liaison to the gay and lesbian community, Kit Duffy, kept that post at the same time she took the reigns of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago in its founding year. Duffy, a straight ally, is still active in progressive politics today. The paper also covered the rejection by the Supreme Court of an appeal in the Karen Thompson-Sharon Kowalski case, where Thompson wanted custody of her injured partner.



## April 17, 1986

Pioneering Chicago dancer and choreographer Joseph Holmes died April 11; his family waited several years before it would confirm that his death was AIDS related. State Sen. William Marovitz introduced a bill that would require mandatory reporting for AIDS/HTLV-III antibody infections. That bill was tabled and replaced by one backed by gay activists. Gov. James Thompson's AIDS Interdisciplinary Advisory Council was poised to make recommendations.

WINDY CITY TIMES

# 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

# COVERAGE



## May 1, 1986

Mattachine Midwest was marking 20 years. The Northwest Gay and Lesbian Association with its leader Ken Jacobson met with aldermanic candidate Manuel Torres, running against Luis Gutierrez in the city's newly drawn 26th Ward; Gutierrez had met with them before the primary. Meanwhile, Baton Show Lounge owner Jim Flint ran for Cook County Commissioner and lost, but garnered votes from all 50 wards (the seats were citywide at the time, not by district).



## May 8, 1986

New York-based Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) met with members of the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force about plans to become a national group. Luis Gutierrez won in the 26th Ward, as did Marlene Carter in the 15th, adding to Mayor Washington's City Council block. Ann Christophersen and Linda Bubon were honored at IVI-IPO's Independent Gay and Lesbian Caucus Glynn Sudbery Awards, as was Rep. Woods Bowman.



## July 3, 1986

More than 140 entries and 60,000 people were estimated at Chicago's 17th Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade in 1986. Mayor Harold Washington spoke at the post-pride rally in Lincoln Park, reaffirming his commitment to gay and lesbian rights. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld Georgia's sodomy law in the Bowers v. Hardwick case. And there were rumors that the City Council would soon vote on the proposed gay and lesbian rights ordinance.



## July 10, 1986

The battle for Chicago's gay and lesbian rights bill dominated the gay press headlines that summer. Here, WCT listed out the possible Yes and No votes, and those who were on the fence. The fallout from the Supreme Court's upholding of the state of Georgia's sodomy law in Bowers v. Hardwick was discussed in this issue. And Harvey Grossman (lower right) joined anti-gay Rep. William Dannemeyer and others on an Oprah show about the sodomy ruling and AIDS legislation.



## July 17, 1986

"If not now, when!" began this cover story in Windy City Times. The City Council once again delayed a vote on a gay-rights bill. The Archdiocese of Chicago issued a statement against the bill at the July 9 Council meeting, causing several Catholic alderman to get cold feet. On the cover of this issue, Windy City Times printed the phone numbers of all 50 Chicago aldermen, urging readers to pressure the elected officials.



## July 24, 1986

Chicago's Catholic leader, Cardinal Bernardin, still withheld his support of the city's gay rights bill, and activists demanded a City Council vote to know who was truly with the community. Activists Marie Kuda and Jim Bussen are pictured speaking at a meeting of 150 gays and lesbians pushing for action. Bussen, a Catholic activist, said he was "embarrassed by my church." Meanwhile, Tom Norton, co-owner of Unabridged Books, died suddenly at age 29.



# 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

# COVERAGE



## July 31, 1986

Writer/activist Achy Obejas, fist raised, symbolized the anger of activists who were pressuring a vote in the City Council later that week. The vote happened, and it was not good: 18 for and 30 against. People sang "We Shall Overcome" as they slowly exited the Council chambers that Tuesday. Mayor Washington died Nov. 25, 1987. On Dec. 23, 1988, the gay-rights bill passed 28-17 and was signed into law by Mayor Eugene Sawyer. It was first introduced in 1973.



## August 7, 1986

More than 300 AIDS educators and service professionals and others attended a national conference in Washington, D.C., which focused on the impact of AIDS on the Black community. National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays Executive Director Gil Gerald said the crisis "is five years old, but in the black community it's an issue we've kept in the closet." Team Chicago athletes readied for the Gay Games II in San Francisco. Businessman Ira Jones died at age 61.



## September 11, 1986

As a followup to the Blacks and AIDS conference, WCT reprinted a Chicago Reporter article looking at local AIDS statistics, which showed 40% of Chicago's diagnosed cases were among Blacks and Latinos. The cover photo is of activists Richard Gray and Tim Offut of the Kupona Network, a group focused on fighting the disease among African Americans. Also featured, Dr. Ron Sable's uphill battle to unseat incumbent 44th Ward Ald. Bernie Hansen.



## October 9, 1986

Hyde Park was experiencing a string of anti-gay bigotry. This cover story was about stickers plastered around the area saying "Clean Up Hyde Park; Stop AIDS; Castrate Gays." The right-wing Midway Review newspaper also published two anti-gay viewpoints. Dr. Ron Sable's campaign office hosted some 300 supporters when it opened. The Gay \$ Campaign launched by Frank Kellas and Marge Summit continued its push to fight bigotry and show the community's clout.



## November 27, 1986

Lane Bank was refusing to take bills marked with the Gay \$ campaign's stamper, so gays were threatening a protest. Mayor Harold Washington attended the Chicago House holiday benefit; he's pictured with CH's Executive Director Thom Dombkowski. Washington gave a \$45,000 check from a city grant for the agency. The Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force hosted a rights confab. Speakers included Dr. James Tinney, Rosemary Kuropat and Darrell Yates Rist.



## December 18, 1986

A lawsuit for \$15.75 million was filed in federal court against officers of the Northwestern Metropolitan Enforcement Group for the drug raid on Carol's Speakeasy Sept. 12, 1985. The suit was filed on behalf of three patrons. Pictured were Richard Bubel along with "John Doe." Protests began against Lane Bank's Diversey branch, the Lakeview Trust and Savings Bank, because they were destroying bills stamped with Gay \$. Pictured: Rick Karlin and artist Jon Reich.



# 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

# COVERAGE



## February 6, 1987

Still furious at aldermen who voted against the gay-rights bill, organizers of the Gay and Lesbian Town Meeting set candidate forums in races for City Council seats in key wards. The photo is from a fundraiser for Ald. Luis Gutierrez, who voted for the bill, with Kit Duffy, Dr. Ron Sable, Gutierrez, Gloria Chevere and Ernest Barefield. Meanwhile, WCT co-founder Bob Bearden, the partner of co-founder Jeff McCourt, died of AIDS complications Jan. 29.



## February 27, 1987

While Washington won his Democratic primary, gay Dr. Ron Sable lost to Ald. Bernie Hansen in the 44th Ward. Hansen had 53.6% to Sable's 46.3%, but Sable's supporters declared victory because it was the most successful campaign of an openly gay candidate in the city's history. Sable ran again, and lost, four years later. He died Dec. 30, 1993 of AIDS complications; that next year Tom Chiola won his race for judge, becoming the city's first openly gay elected official.



## April 23, 1987

An ad hoc committee lobbied for \$1 million in state funding for organizations working on AIDS. The gay Black and White Men Together group visited historic areas of Chicago's South Side in a tour curated by Dr. Margaret Burroughs, president emeritus of DuSable Museum. Ald. Bobby Rush and his wife also participated. The push to get Chicago Dept. of Public Health Commissioner Lonnie Edwards fired continued, with activists saying he badly handled the city's AIDS response.



## May 7, 1987

The anti-gay threats continued in Hyde Park and at the University of Chicago there, but now at least one of the perpetrators had a name—Jeffrey Benner, a staff member of the right-wing student paper Midway Review. Harold Washington was inaugurated for the second time as mayor of Chicago, and he included gays and lesbians in his speech. Former Mayor Jane Byrne was in attendance. The other cover story was on increased anti-gay violence reports.



## June 18, 1987

Rep. Jesse White and Sen. William Marovitz were criticized for trying to exempt insurance companies from confidentiality requirements for those testing positive for the HIV antibody. Also noted: An event planned to honor Bayard Rustin on his 75th birthday at a Chicago event June 29. Rustin died Aug. 24 of that year. A U of C student, Russell Miller, was suspended after being suspected of being part of the anti-gay, racist Great White Brotherhood of the Iron Fist.



## July 2, 1987

70,000 participated in the Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade. Many protested and pushed for Gov. Thompson to "Veto!" AIDS legislation that mandated tracing of sexual contacts of those diagnosed with AIDS and AIDS-Related Complex, and those testing HIV-positive. Mayor Washington, at the post-pride rally, also called for a veto. Gay Olympics organizers lost their appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court to use the word Olympics; they changed the event to the Gay Games.

# Locals talk about the past, present and future of LGBTs

Windy City Times recently asked a variety of people three questions about the LGBT demographic:

1. What do you remember about the LGBT scene in 1985?
2. What's the biggest change you've witnessed regarding LGBTs in 2015?
3. What do you feel the future holds for LGBTs?

Below is what they had to say.

## —Lauren Verdich, entrepreneur:

1) It was the height of the AIDS crisis and, when I came out, it seemed that everything was happening at once. There were a lot of sick people, there was no organized support through the city, state or, certainly, the government with Reagan, thank you very much. And people were trying to figure out a way to help those who had been infected. It seemed to be a time of an incredible amount of activity—people were identifying problems, trying to solve them and moving forward.

And it was the first time—and I didn't come out until '85, so I didn't know what the party was like before—that the women's and men's communities really worked together.

2) That we're all in this together, and you don't marginalize anyone because, then, you marginalize yourself. So I think that a lot of programs that are accessible for trans people are really late to the party—but at least they're here now.

3) I think we need to find a way to help the generations coming up behind us to understand that the fight will never be over. If they just looked to the civil-rights movement, you see that you have to keep fighting for your rights. That's the message that we, as older LGBT people, should make sure the youth hears.

## —John D'Emilio, historian:

1) In 1985, it was almost impossible to be with other gay men and not have the conversation turn to AIDS. AIDS seemed to be everywhere and inescapable, deeply frightening and also enraging. Also in 1985, so, so many gay men were still "in the closet." They were living gay social lives, but not open to family, at their workplace, or to many of their heterosexual friends.

2) There's been an explosion in the most recent period of media and popular culture attention to transgender lives. Some of it is exploitative and voyeuristic, but it also opens up possibilities for activism, organizing, and making change.

3) I'm not sure. My worry is that marriage equality will have the effect of so "normalizing" gay and lesbian lives and loves and integrating them into the mainstream that the community institutions and solidarity that have been built over the last 30+ years will start to fade away. Does that make me sound old-fashioned and not "with it" today?

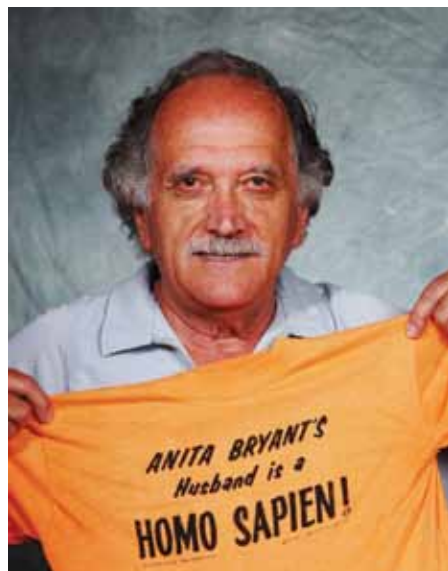


Lauren Verdich, fourth from right, in red, at a late 2003 press conference when Barack Obama was running for U.S. Senate. This was in the Democratic primary when he was seen as having little chance to win. Also pictured on left side are Jim Pickett, Lora Branch and Jackie Kaplan-Perkins. Over Obama's left shoulder is Kevin Thompson.

Photo by Tracy Baim



Above: John D'Emilio. Below: Jerry Pritikin.  
Photos by Hal Baim



## —Jerry Pritikin, activist:

1) It was a time that I decided to move back to live in Chicago after 25 years in San Francisco. I left Chicago in 1960s because it was still taboo to be openly gay in my hometown.

Thankfully, Chicago has become a gay friendly city to live or visit.

2) I have been in the front line of the gay-rights movement for 40+ years, and never in my lifetime have I seen more LGBT people get closer to equal rights than ever before. It's better at home, in the workplace and schools. We are moving forward in big cities, and hopefully soon in rural blue and red states.

3) I am scared that the religious right will bring out the worst in the Republican Party. They seem to be going out of their way to fight each and every gain made in the LGBT communities by using "code word" causes such as

same-sex marriage and religious rights. We will have to work harder to make sure all the gains we made are NEVER taken away from us!

## —Judith Markowitz, consultant:

1) Like today, it was a time filled with legal victories and setbacks in the United States and elsewhere.

The AIDS plague was very much with us. What we have come to call the "religious right" were claiming AIDS was God's punishment for homosexuality ignoring the facts that many heterosexuals had HIV and AIDS and that lesbians tended not to become infected. Related to that, the revelation that Rock Hudson was gay and had died of AIDS, revealing to the straight world that gay and lesbian people were everywhere.

2) The cultural change that has made it possible for the Supreme Court to support gay marriage, adoption and spousal rights.

3) I would like to think that the barriers facing the LGBT communities will continue to fall.

## —Lori Cannon, activist and LGBT ally:

1) Questions one and two almost seem to answer themselves, i.e., the plague called AIDS—how it defined the LGBT community here and across the country.

Nobody went out looking for AIDS—it found us!

The LGBT community responded when no one else would. The decade of the '80s through the mid-'90s was completely defined by the AIDS epidemic. Our friends were dropping like flies.

The local activists and I started Open Hand Chicago, the city's only meals-on wheels program for the AIDS community. We were among the early direct-service programs like Stop AIDS Chicago, Chicago House, Test Positive Aware, Names Project and others who served those who were dying.

We galvanized as a community to offer compassionate services.

2) AIDS CHANGED EVERYTHING! It flung open that closet door, forcing people to have an open and frank conversation re: sexuality, their diagnosis, shame and isolation, as well networking to receive services and rally for support.

Politically, everything is different than back in '85, when very few out and proud candidates were elected. Many had to be dragged out of the closet under the threat of being outed.

The conversation was forced [back then]. Out and proud candidates now campaign to the LGBT community, encouraging others to freely come out and support legislation that supports the community.

This type of openness only came about due to the AIDS epidemic, when more and more LGBT candidates felt it was time to be open and honest—like the Hon. Tom Chiola, who



Judith Markowitz.  
Photos by Hal Baim



Lori Cannon.  
Photos by Rex Wockner





# 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

# MEMORIES

campaigned in '94 as Illinois' first openly gay candidate when he ran for circuit court judge.

The rest, as they say, is history.

3) As the crusty ol' curmudgeon that I am, it's difficult for me to grab hold of what the future will hold after having already seen so much progress so quickly—the type of push and promise I could not have imagined years ago.

Clearly, marriage equality is way up there on my list. We'd have to agree that there'd be no marriage equality without the AIDS epidemic, when the early rumblings of an LGBT political powerhouse was just being thought of—and, all the while, people were fighting for their lives.

I see the trans movement of primary importance going forward. It's just beginning to take hold and organize into a strong and powerful mission. Good people are stepping up to speak of the horrors and nightmares of their struggle—about it being open season on their lives.

Clearly, there's a lot of work ahead of us—locally, nationally and internationally.

I continue to honor, celebrate and salute the early and young AIDS warriors who fought until their dying breaths for the rights and respect of their dying co-conspirators. Could they have ever imagine the LGBT community of today?

I consider these victories to be theirs as well, and I THANK THEM!



Max Smith.

—Max Smith:

1) In 1985, I remember Rev. Hiram Crawford as a spokesperson against LGBT rights. Warner Saunders invited me to debate him on WMAQ-TV 5. I met privately with him after the debate. He was afraid of BDSM, leather, exotic and fetish sex between men, and that motivated his

opposition to gay rights.

2) Over the last 30 years, the size of crowds at the June LGBT Pride Parade has grown tremendously. I never imagined back then how many corporations would be in the parade by now, and how mainstream it would be.

3) It will be revealed in the future that the side effects of PrEP will be very undesirable, such as tremendous loss of bone mass, and resultant bone fractures among people who took Truvada. By then, people will realize it was a bad idea to normalize pill-taking as prevention. People will see it served mainly to make millionaires and billionaires of big pharmaceutical company executives.

—Greg Harris, Illinois state representative:

1) I remember the mid-1980s as the time that the emergence of HIV began to galvanize the LGBT community and our allies as we had never been before. People began to organize to provide services, health care, food, housing

and spiritual support for longtime friends and for strangers across the city. People who had never been active politically were suddenly working to bring change at the local, state and federal levels in ways and numbers that had never happened before for our community.

2) In 2015, we have seen marriage equality sweep the nation, and public opinion shift at a velocity without parallel in our country. I hope we can maintain this level of organization and sense of mission now to lift up every family and every person for whom relationship recognition has been one fight, but who still need affordable healthcare and housing, good jobs, good schools, safe neighborhoods and freedom from intolerance.

3) I hope the future holds LGBT people and families being proud of our cultural heritage, and also seeing commonalities with other communities and supporting their struggles as they supported ours.



Greg Harris.

Turn to page 43



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WINDY CITY TIMES

**30**



# 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

# PHOTOS

## Chicago, 1980s-early 1990s

This page features photos from award-winning author and photographer Andrew J. Epstein, a former Chicagoan now living in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.



# Jan Dee

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WINDY  
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TIMES

## MEMORIES

## LOCALS from page 41

—Victor Salvo, founder and executive director of The Legacy Project:

1) The activist in me had yet to emerge. It was all about getting laid. :-)

Everything was transitioning from a '70s disco vibe into the "modern" '80s. It was the dawn of the Sidetrack era, when video was brand-new. We used to huddle there several nights a week (when it was 1/12th its current size) to watch Dynasty, Golden Girls, Brothers and a host of things that were campy and all the



Victor Salvo.  
Photos by Hal Baim



Israel Wright.  
Photo by Hal Baim



Tom Tunney (left) with Suzanne Kraus.  
Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright

more fun when served up with your community and a cold beer. We talked to each other. We connected. We shared. And we partied—A LOT.

AIDS hadn't begun its full-throttle death march down Halsted just yet. We were poised at the end of the last happy time there would be for decades—only we didn't know it. Everything was about to change.

2) In many ways we are still the same. We are a race of people and we share an indescribable ethos, regardless of the era. But communication is too pre-occupied with technology, too impersonal. Even hooking up is now almost entirely device-dependent. Young people seem less able to interact in a genuine real-time way. The changes that we fought for—which produced the repeal of DADT and the overturning of DOMA—came to pass with a sweeping swiftness that robbed younger people from being able to grasp their own history; it just washed over them with a profound, seeming inevitability. There was no transitional generation to carry the memories and share the lessons. It has altered our understanding of politics and the value of the hard work that real, fundamental change requires.

And, it goes without saying in Windy City Times: AIDS CHANGED EVERYTHING and this paper was at Ground Zero. Yet, our young people barely understand it and are taught nothing about it. That is a travesty.

3) Because all people, all realities, intersect in the LGBTQ communities, I think it is important that we take our successful, fundamental reshaping of society and use that experience to lead an era of reconciliation for everyone else.

Beginning with the vast swaths of this country where, in many ways, the last 50 years seems to have not occurred. The same goes for the rest of the world. Until we can make the lives of LGBT people safer and happier everywhere, our work is not done. Alabama. Uganda. Texasistan. Russia. Our brothers and sisters need help. So many people—gay and straight, Black and white and brown—are being torn apart by seemingly irreconcilable differences. Yet we have shown that there is a way to make change happen. We can reshape our reality, our politics. We can do this. We can help. Think of the forces that were (and still are) arrayed against us! Yet, we prevailed against all odds. We must pay it forward or our success means nothing.

—Israel Wright, activist and photographer:

1) Lots of activists fighting to make a difference in LGBT lives

2) Much assimilated into the normative lifestyles, and less opposition to LGBT issues

3) We are able to live our lives freely without the hatred of our sexual/lifestyle choices.

—Tom Tunney, 44th Ward alderman:

1) Unfortunately, I remember how AIDS really started to hit Chicago hard in 1985. There were many more cases on the coasts, and we were aware of the few cases here, but around 1985 is when we started to see numbers of friends and loved ones getting sick and dying.

2) While we are celebrating great marriage-equality victories and transgender visibility and awareness nationally, I think it's pretty remarkable to have five openly LGBT members of the Chicago City Council. It was groundbreaking 12 years ago when I was elected and I think it shows how far we have come as a city and a society. Our new LGBT Caucus represents diverse populations and neighborhoods across the city and I am proud to serve with them.

3) I am excited for more high-profile contributions from openly LGBT individuals across the board—in business, politics, academics, the arts and cultural institutions.

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# 1985 MUSIC

WRITTEN/COMPILED BY MATT SIMONETTE  
(EXCEPT WHERE OTHERWISE NOTED)

There was some queer energy in the music charts in 1985, which featured, among others, George Michael—then part of Wham!—and the Material Girl herself, who was riding high after the 1984 release of her album *Like a Virgin*. Michael was still a long way from coming out of the closet—at the time he was dating Brooke Shields. This was also the year of “We Are the World” and Live Aid. According to Billboard, the top-10 songs of 1985 were:

1. Wham!: “Careless Whisper”
2. Madonna: “Like a Virgin”
3. Wham!: “Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go”
4. Foreigner: “I Want to Know What Love Is”
5. Chaka Khan: “I Feel For You”
6. Daryl Hall and John Oates: “Out of Touch”
7. Tears for Fears: “Everybody Wants to Rule the World”
8. Dire Straits: “Money for Nothing”
9. Madonna: “Crazy for You”
10. a-ha: “Take on Me”



## Chorus and Band Movement



Windy City Gay Chorus.  
File photo

Chicago's first gay choral group, Windy City Gay Chorus, premiered Dec. 16, 1979, during the first Chicago Gay Pride Band concert, “Don We Now...” at Stages Music Hall.

The chorus was formed by Jerry Carlson, Gordon Chiola, Matt Wycislak and Don Heering, who had all been members of the band. Although WCGC's first director, Richard Garrin, would conduct the group until 1995, that first performance of 37 singers was conducted by Carlson, who later became conductor of the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles.

Three years after its founding, the WCGC had 72 members, and its campy offshoot, the Windy City Slickers, had 17. It was the first gay chorus to enter the Great American Choral Festival, where it won first-place awards. On Feb. 14, 1982, WCGC sang at Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center as part of a memorable joint concert with the New York City Gay Men's Chorus.

Chicago's lesbian chorus, Artemis Singers, is the first lesbian chorus in the nation. The group's initial meeting took place in June 1979. Joel Carothers (who died a few weeks ago) was inspired by her work in the Gay Pride Band—she was among those at that first meeting. By December 1980 Artemis was formally introduced at the “Don We Now ... II” concert, with Susan Schleaf conducting.

In 1986 Artemis hosted the Third National Women's Choral Festival in Chicago, which included women's choruses from Minneapolis, Kansas City, Lansing, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, St. Louis and Madison. Always smaller than the gay men's choirs, Artemis has nevertheless survived and continues to perform at lesbian, LGBT and women's events 28 years after its founding. In early 2008, current and former members joined together to honor longtime Artemis member Michaeline Chvatal, who had died of cancer at age 60.

The first gathering of gay and lesbian choruses was Come Out and Sing Together (COAST) in 1982, out of which grew today's international organization Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA). At the gathering, held in New York City at Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center, Chicago was represented by 15 members of Artemis and a group of about 40 men, mostly members of WCGC. Among all the men's and mixed choruses, Artemis was the only lesbian chorus to perform, and the other groups were so supportive that Artemis received a standing ovation even before they began to sing.

The event also proved important for the Chicago men's group, as this core group of singers—including Kip Snyder, Phil Steward, Danny Kopelson and a number of others—returned to Chicago to found the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus (CGMC) in 1983 with an initial roster of 80 singers. CGMC leaned toward more popular, less classical music than WCGC. Because of its origins at COAST, the CGMC became the opening chorus at all GALA concerts. Kip Snyder directed the group for 15 years, with Patrick Sinozich as accompanist; Sinozich later directed CGMC for more than a decade.

— Jorjet Harper, adapted from the book *Out and Proud in Chicago*.

## Madonna

1985 was a huge year for Madonna. Her second studio album, *Like a Virgin*, was released in late '84, so this was the year hits such as *Like a Virgin* and *Material Girl* were climbing the charts. She promoted the album with her phenomenally successful *Virgin Tour* concerts (which were opened by the Beastie Boys) and married Sean Penn as well.

Madonna also began her rather dodgy relationship with the mainstream movie industry that year, appearing in a brief cameo in *Vision Quest* and in a supporting role in *Desperately Seeking Susan*. *Penthouse* and *Playboy* magazines both published nude photos of her, taken when she was younger and in need of money, but she was unapologetic.

In 1990, Madonna told the BBC that her ballet teacher, a gay man, mentored her in her younger years, by encouraging her to perform and taking her to gay bars and dance clubs.



## Money For Nothing

Money for Nothing, a single from British band Dire Straits' album *Brothers in Arms*, raised some eyebrows with some of its lyrics, especially the line, “that little faggot with the earring and the makeup.”

Lead vocalist Mark Knopfler maintained that the lyrics were from the point of view of a fictional character, an appliance store salesman who is envious of the rock stars performing on the TVs that he sells. He told *Rolling Stone*, “I'm still in two minds as to whether it's a good idea to write songs that aren't in the first person, to take on other characters.”

In 2011, the unedited song was banned on Canadian radio, as regulators said that the slur was unacceptable, even when considered in a different context. But that ban was eventually lifted, and individual stations were allowed to use their own discretion as to whether or not “Money for Nothing” could be played.



## The Band

The gay band movement was born from the desire to have marching bands in the annual Pride parades. Trombone player and music teacher Alfredo Gomez, inspired by word that other bands had formed in San Francisco and Los Angeles, called a meeting at his home in early 1979. The group named itself the Chicago Gay Pride Band and began rehearsing weekly. There were no auditions, but the ability to read music was important. Mary Peck spearheaded the band's debut in the Pride parade that June, where they performed the National Emblem March and March “Grandioso,” with Carl Forsberg as drum major.

The band performed concerts as well. In December 1979, the first “Don We Now ...” concert was presented at Stages Music Hall, 3730 N. Clark St., with Marvin Carlton conducting 28 musicians. They played a mix of classical and popular music and some holiday favorites. Chicago's first gay chorus, the Windy City Gay Chorus, was introduced at that concert.

Many concerts followed. A spring concert in 1980 featured 32 musicians. The WCGC again performed at the band's “Don We Now ... II” concert the following December along with the more pop-oriented Windy City Slickers. The concert introduced the Artemis Singers, conducted by Susan Schleaf. Program notes for that concert commented that the band “has engendered a new sense of respect and pride in ourselves as well as in the gay community.” The band's name was changed after the second concert to the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Community Marching Band (CGLCMB).

In October 1982, Chicago hosted and was the founding organization of the first national conference of GLBT bands from around the country, in what would become the LGBA—Lesbian and Gay Bands of America. Seven bands were represented. Members of other gay bands who were in town made guest appearances at the CGLCMB's fall concert, which coincided with the conference, along with the Orpheus Ensemble and the Windy City Jazz Band. By December 1982 the CGLCMB had also performed at other community events and civic events around Chicago.

Despite its momentum, however, the CGLCMB only lasted three years as an organization. In September 1988, a new group, the Great Lakes Freedom Band (GLFB), formed “for the purpose of providing a creative musical outlet for its members and to serve as a cultural, social, and educational vehicle for the benefit of the gay and lesbian community and the community at large.”

It debuted on Dec. 10, 1988, with Marvin J. Carlton, a veteran of the earlier band, as conductor and artistic director. The GLFB included several chamber music groups made up of band members, and a number of musicians who had been in the CGLCMB.

Chicago's current marching band is the Lakeside Pride Freedom Band (LPFB). Drum major Jon Dallas, who marched in Chicago's Pride parade in 1997, served as catalyst for the LPFB's formation. Initially under the name Chicago Black Lesbian & Gay Marching Band, five people attended the first organizational meeting on July 8, 1997, and by September they were rehearsing at Preston Bradley Center, 941 W. Lawrence Ave. Under the new name Lakeside Pride Freedom Band, the group debuted on Dec. 1, 1997, outside the Ann Sather restaurant on West Belmont Avenue. It successfully expanded to include an associated Color Guard in what is now called the Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles. This umbrella organization includes not only the marching band and color guard but also the Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band, Lakeside Pride Orchestra, the jazz ensemble *Shout!*, and more.

— Jorjet Harper, adapted from the book *Out and Proud in Chicago*.

# Women's Music

Just what is "Women's Music" in the herstorical sense? In the 1970s, a new kind of music launched, and Chicago was on the forefront of music by and for women—with some later artists crossing over into the mainstream (Tracy Chapman and Melissa Etheridge among them). But those early 1970s pioneers, including Linda's Shear's Chicago rock band Family of Women, were breaking much new musical ground.

All of the legends of women's music—Cris Williamson, Holly Near, Meg Christian, Linda Tillery, the Washington Sisters, Ferron, Teresa Trull, Barbara Higbie, Margie Adam, Kay Gardner and dozens more—toured through Chicago, especially stopping at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse for Womyn and Children, which ran from the 1970s to the 2000s. Chicago had its own home-grown contributors to the women's music circuit, including Paula Walowitz, Ginni Clemmons, Jor-jet Harper and Toni Armstrong Jr. and the band Surrender Dorothy.

As Harper wrote in the book *Out and Proud in Chicago*: "Publications on the subject also began to emerge. Musica, a small newsletter from Oregon edited by Indy Allen, appeared in 1974, and the same year, *Paid My Dues*, a more ambitious effort edited by Dorothy Dean, started in Milwaukee. In 1977, six Chicago women, including Toni Armstrong Jr., took over publication of *Paid My Dues* and kept it going until 1980. In November 1984, a new national publication originated in Chicago, called *HOT WIRE: The Journal of Women's Music and Culture*. Started by Armstrong, Michele Gautreaux, Anne Morris and Yvonne Zipter, it quickly became the national voice of the burgeoning women's music movement and a wide-ranging chronicle of lesbian feminist culture. After its first year, Armstrong took the helm as publisher and managing editor, with a large crew of dedicated lesbian volunteers. A total of 30 issues of *HOT WIRE* were published, three times yearly, from 1984 to 1994."

— Tracy Baim



**HOT WIRE, January 1991. This was a national publication launched in Chicago in 1984.**

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# 1985 MOVIES

WRITTEN/COMPILED BY MATT SIMONETTE

Though the biggest movie of 1985 was *Back to the Future*, which cemented Michael J. Fox's movie-star status, it was really the year of Sylvester Stallone, who cracked the top-10 with two films, both of them infused with '80s hyper-patriotism: *Rambo: First Blood Part II* and *Rocky IV*. One film with some lesbian content did become the year's fourth-highest grosser, *The Color Purple*. According to Box Office Mojo, the top 10 highest grossing films of the year were:

1. *Back to the Future*
2. *Rambo: First Blood Part II*
3. *Rocky IV*
4. *The Color Purple*
5. *Out of Africa*
6. *Cocoon*
7. *Jewel of the Nile*
8. *Witness*
9. *The Goonies*
10. *Spies Like Us*



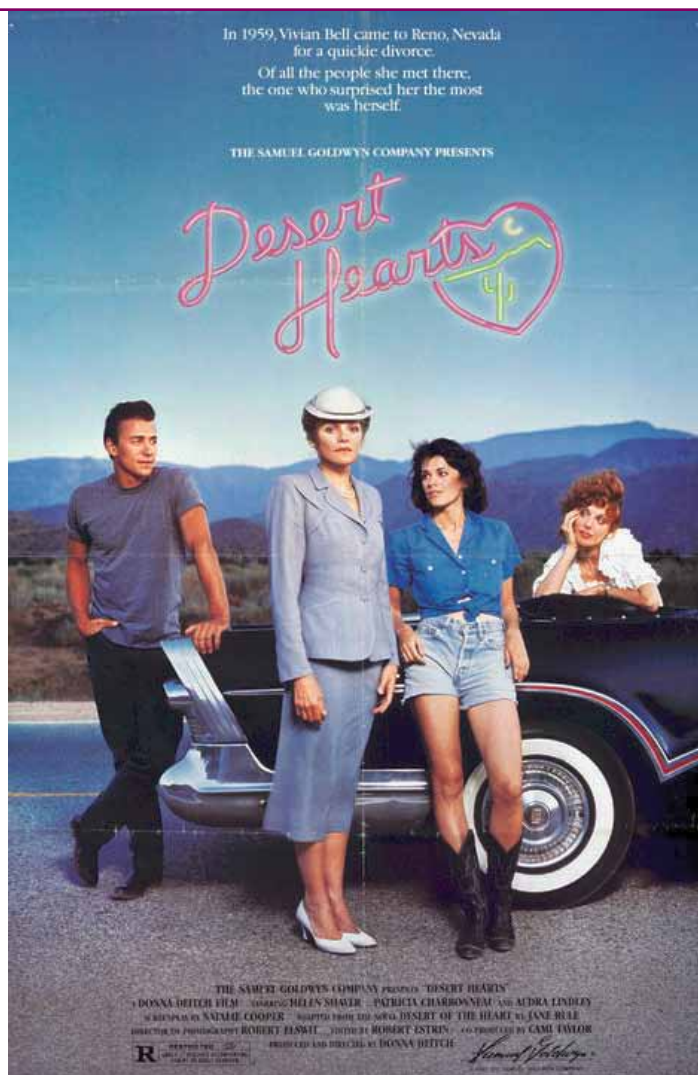
## Desert Hearts

This lesbian classic was released in the U.S. in 1986, but began to show up on the film festival circuit in 1985. Reportedly, when *The L Word* launched production, cast and crew were instructed to watch *Desert Hearts* to show what a lesbian love scene should look like. The film is based on Jane Rule's 1964 novel *Desert of the Heart*.

Donna Deitch directed this account of a 1950s college professor's (Helen Shaver) visit to Reno for a quickie divorce. There, Shaver meets a sculptor (Patricia Charbonneau) with whom she falls in love. Denise Crosby and Audra Lindley also starred.

The film was noteworthy at the time for having its couple end the film together, in a relative state of happiness. In the *Chicago Tribune*, Gene Siskel wrote that *Desert Hearts* "is a gentle story of someone being brought in from the cold. And its final scene, as corny as it may be, will leave you most satisfied in the great tradition of classic Hollywood love stories."

On her website, Deitch said that a sequel to *Desert Hearts*, set in New York City, is in the works.

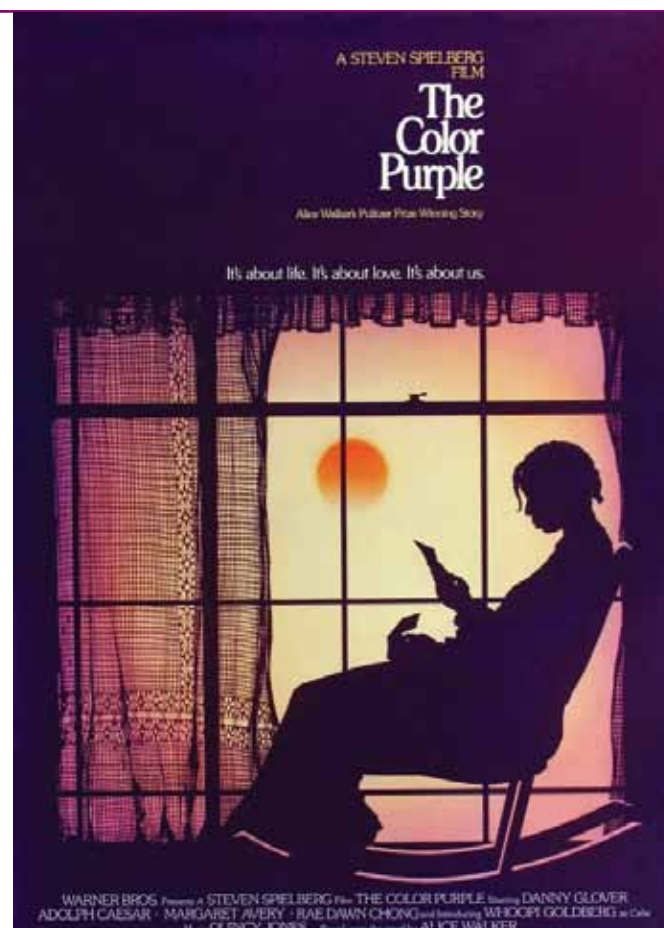


## The Color Purple

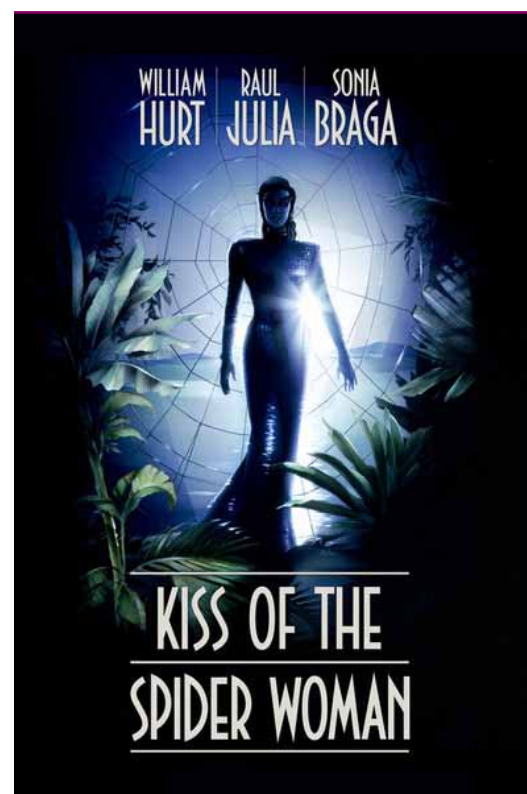
*The Color Purple* was director Steven Spielberg's first foray into straight-forward drama, and was greeted with critical acclaim and large box-office receipts, if not Oscars; the film was nominated for 11 Academy Awards but won none. Among those performers Spielberg engaged just as they were breaking out were Whoopi Goldberg, in the lead role of Celie, and Oprah Winfrey.

But Spielberg faced criticism for tackling Alice Walker's original novel, and glossing over, amongst other issues, Celie's lesbian relationship with her husband's longtime mistress Shug Avery (Margaret Avery). While Walker describes the relationship at length in the novel, the film distills that to a kiss. In 2011, Spielberg admitted to *Entertainment Weekly* that he was fearful he could not get a PG-13 rating had he shown more.

"In that sense, perhaps I was the wrong director to acquit some of the more sexually honest encounters between Shug and Celie, because I did soften those," he said. "I basically took something that was extremely erotic and very intentional, and I reduced it to a simple kiss. I got a lot of criticism for that."



## Kiss of the Spider Woman



William Hurt became the first straight actor to win an Oscar for playing a gay character in this adaptation of Manuel Puig's 1976 novel, which was also the first independent film to be nominated for Best Picture.

Hurt plays Molina, a gay man who is jailed alongside Arregui (Raul Julia), a political prisoner, in a South American country. As Arregui, who has been drugged by their jailers, slips into a haze, Molina entertains him with the story from a Nazi propaganda film. Eventually, however, it is Molina who is transformed and, upon his release, he becomes part of Arregui's cause.



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## 1985 TV

WRITTEN/COMPILED BY MATT SIMONETTE

Bill Cosby was dominating the airwaves in 1985, ushering in a resurgence of the sitcom—as well as the NBC network—that would last for years to come. *Dynasty* was at the peak of its popularity, as was *Miami Vice*. But *Crockett and Tubbs* were not the only fictional residents of Miami to heat up the airwaves; 1985 was the year that *The Golden Girls* were first introduced to television audiences. According to Nielsen Media Research, the most popular programs on network television were:

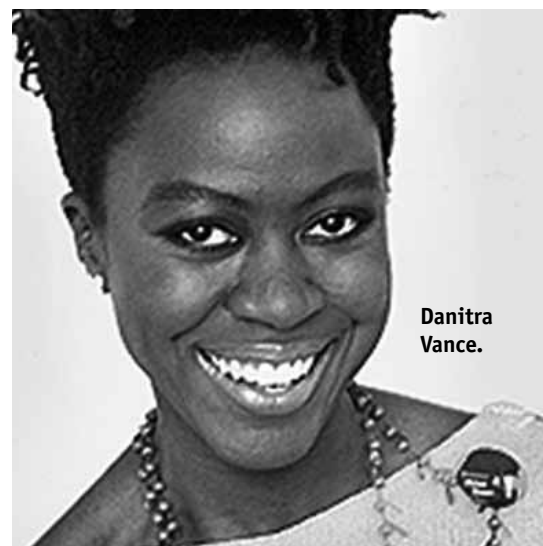
1. *The Cosby Show* (NBC)
2. *Family Ties* (NBC)
3. *Murder, She Wrote* (CBS)
4. *60 Minutes* (CBS)
5. *Cheers* (NBC)
6. *Dallas* (CBS)
7. *Dynasty* (ABC)
8. *The Golden Girls* (NBC)
9. *Miami Vice* (NBC)
10. *Who's the Boss?* (ABC)

Terry Sweeney  
and Danitra Vance

Among the new members added to the cast of *Saturday Night Live* in 1985 was Terry Sweeney, who was the late-night comedy program's first openly-gay performer.

Sweeney specialized in drag spoofs of celebrities, among them Joan Rivers, Joan Collins, Diana Ross, and, most notably, Nancy Reagan. When Ron Reagan Jr. guest-hosted an episode he reportedly told Sweeney that the performer impersonated his mother better than his mother did. The only male impersonation Sweeney ever did during his SNL stint was Ted Kennedy.

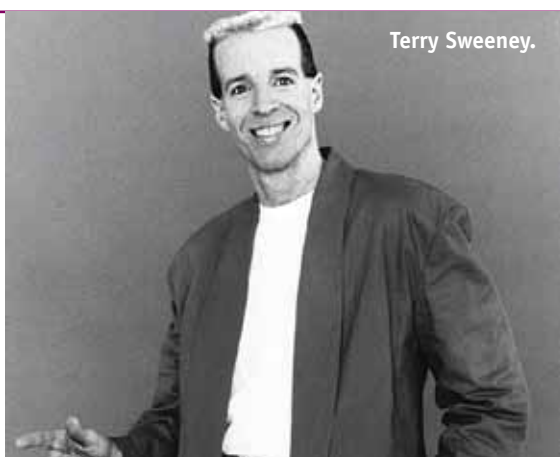
Sweeney only lasted a year on the show; he was part of a large mass-firing by producer Lorne Michaels at the end of the 1985-'86 season. He went on to co-write the 1989 film *Shag* with his partner, Lanier Laney, who also worked for SNL. The couple also wrote for *MADtv*, while Sweeney appeared in small roles on a number of programs, including *Seinfeld*. Sweeney and Laney eventually settled in Beaufort, South Carolina, according to *splitsider.com*.



Danitra Vance.

Meanwhile, that same season featured Chicagoan Danitra Vance, the first African American woman to become an SNL repertory player—and she was also a lesbian, though that fact was not widely known until her early death from breast cancer in 1993; she was survived by longtime companion Jones Miller.

Vance's sketches included "That Black Girl" (a spoof of *That Girl*), and she was also known for her character Cabrini Green Harlem Watts Jackson. She also complained about having to play stereotypical young Black female roles, and left after one season. She won an NAACP Image Award in 1986.



Terry Sweeney.

Rock Hudson and  
*Dynasty's* "AIDS Scare"

1985 saw the prime-time soap *Dynasty* at the height of its popularity. In May, the show broadcast its infamous "Moldavian Massacre" episode that left fans talking all summer long. Among those wiped out by the wedding-day gunfire was Luke Fuller, bisexual Steven Carrington's boyfriend; Fuller was played by Billy Campbell, who years later would play the gay character Jon Fielding in the first two *Tales of the City* miniseries.

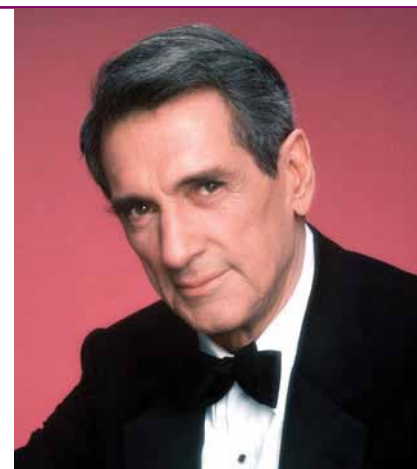
But the program made headlines not just for its over-the-top theatrics in 1985. It also was in the news because of one of its guest-stars that year, Rock Hudson.

Shortly before going public about having AIDS, Hudson, in what would be his final role, portrayed wealthy rancher Daniel Reese, who tried to romance Krystle Carrington, played by Linda Evans. Evans and Hudson shared a kissing scene, leading many in the media to speculate whether the actress had been exposed to infection during her scenes with Hudson.

"... The word around town tonight is that Linda Evans is more than a little concerned," reported KABC-7 in Los Angeles on July 31, 1985. But producer Aaron Spelling denied such a reaction from Evans, as well as rumors that he offered to pay for testing for *Dynasty* cast and crew.

"I swear on my children, that's absolutely not true" Spelling said, according to the Aug. 2, 1985, *Los Angeles Times*. "Not only would we not pay, we haven't even talked to anybody about it. They (Channel 7) never even called me about this. They have no humanity."

Spelling turned down requests from news organizations to use *Dynasty* footage in their reporting of Hudson's illness. "We're just not going to become part of this witch hunt," he said. "It's taken all this time for gays to come out of the closet. And now this is driving them back into the closet."



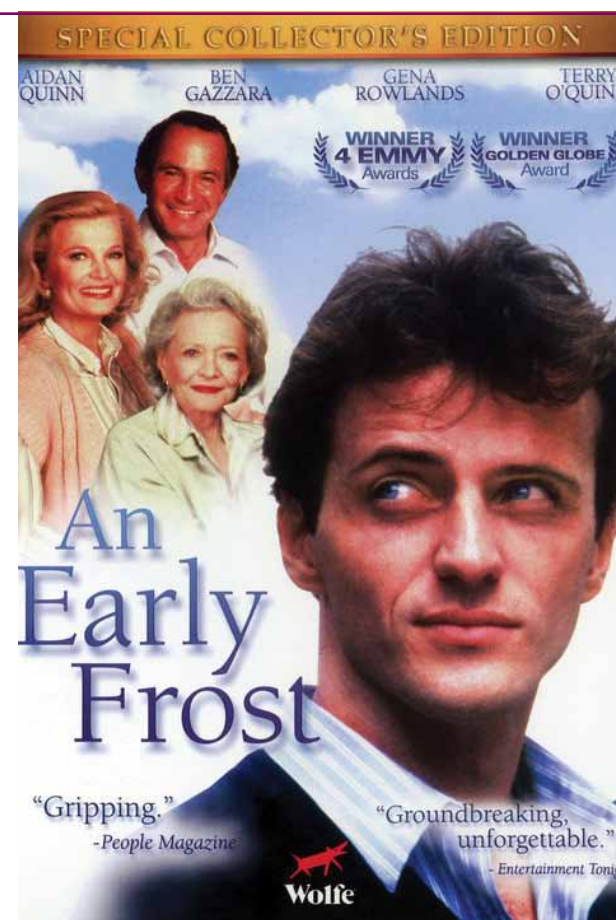
Rock Hudson.

## An Early Frost



Before the Lifetime network, TV movies were the province of the big-three networks. Topicality often brought big ratings, and on Nov. 11, 1985, NBC aired *An Early Frost*, the first television film to address AIDS.

The story centered around Michael Pierson (Aidan Quinn), a young lawyer who is diagnosed with HIV and must disclose to his parents (Gena Rowlands and Ben Gazzara) both his illness and his homosexuality. Sylvia Sidney and openly gay actor John Glover also appeared in the film, which won its timeslot, as well as three Emmys.


Another gay-themed TV movie aired on ABC in February, 1985: *Consenting Adult*, starring Marlo Thomas and Martin Sheen as a suburban couple whose son comes out to them. Sheen, in 1972, played a divorced man who comes out in the 1972 TV-movie *That Certain Summer*, then, in 2015, played a married man who comes out in the comedy series *Grace & Frankie*.



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# 1985 BOOKS

The LGBT writers who at one time called Chicago their home are too numerous to mention. Starting with the pre-Stonewall era, you have Henry Blake Fuller, Nella Larsen, Willard Motley, Jeannette Foster, Valerie Taylor, Sam Steward, Lorraine Hansberry and the women of The Little Review, among many.

Post-Stonewall there are hundreds if not thousands.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Vernita Gray, Jon-Henri Damski, Robert Ford, Scott McPherson, and other authors, journalists and playwrights thrived in the Windy City.

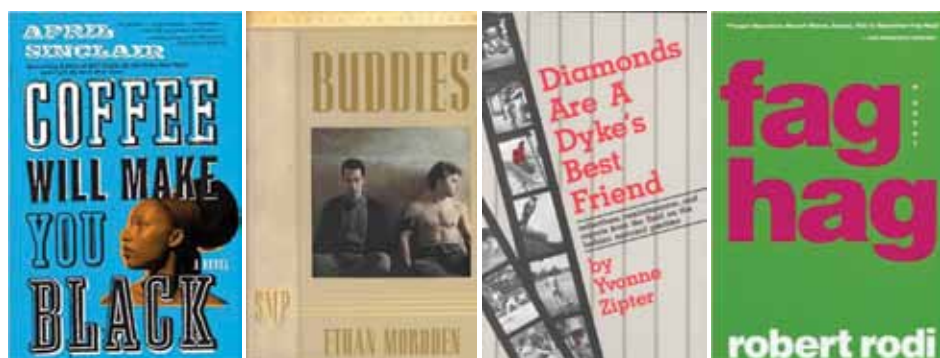
The American Library Association's Task Force on Gay Liberation (later known as the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Task Force) held the first gay book awards ceremony in the United States in 1971, and the event was held in Chicago many times—including 1995 for the 25th anniversary of the awards program, with Quentin Crisp as the keynote speaker.

The Lambda Literary Awards were also presented several times in Chicago, coinciding with American Booksellers Association conventions. Chicagoan Marie J. Kuda was very active in the ALA Task Force, and she did a bibliography of lesbian books that is recognized as a key work in the early documentation of the community.

Barbara Gittings, who dropped out of Northwestern University to find herself as a lesbian, was a frequent return visitor to Chicago because of her involvement in the ALA Task Force awards and other activism.

On the academic side, we have been fortunate to have eminent professors based here working on important projects. Educators including George Chauncey, John D'Emilio, Sarah Hoagland, Cathy Cohen, Beth Ritchie, Dwight McBride, Deirdre McCloskey, and E. Patrick Johnson have contributed key texts.

A brief look at other important writers from Chicago, or with an impact here, must include Langston Hughes, who at one time wrote a column for the Chicago Defender. Studs Terkel, while not gay himself, is among the most important writers of the last century, and his book and radio interviews included stories of gay pioneers, including George Buse, Henry Wiemhoff, Valerie Taylor, and Jim Bradford (pseudonym of James B. Osgood).



Prominent national writers with a Chicago connection include Ann Bannon, born Ann Weldy in Joliet, Illinois, in 1932; Judy Grahn, born in Chicago in 1940; Ned Rorem, born in Richmond, Indiana, in 1923, who attended the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools and Northwestern University; Lanford Wilson, born in Lebanon, Missouri, in 1937, who attended the University of Chicago; and Bonnie Zimmerman, born in Chicago in 1947.

Kathleen Thompson was an important 1970s feminist activist-turned-author. She was a cofounder of Chicago Women Against Rape and coauthor, with Andra Medea, of the book *Against Rape* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974). More recently, she co-wrote *A Shining Thread of Hope* (Broadway Books, 1998), the first narrative history of Black women, with Darlene Clark Hine, and co-edited three visual histories with Hilary Mac Austin.

Jean Hardisty, the founder of Political Research Associates, wrote a critical book published by Beacon Press in 1999, *Mobilizing Resentment: Conservative Resurgence from the John Birch Society to the Promise Keepers*.

Self-published chapbooks in the 1970s and 1980s were the only way for some to be heard. There was a strong women-of-color poetry scene, including Vernita Gray, Lola Lai Jong, Donna Weems, Carmen Abrego and Diane Gomez.

The local and national Women in Print movement and the Lesbian Writers' Conferences both contributed to expanding the availability of publishing to more women.

Chicagoans have been well represented in numerous anthologies, from the academic to the erotic. Third Side Press was an important Chicago press for several years. Among others, they published the plays of Claudia Allen.

Gay author E. Lynn Harris once lived in Chicago, and some of his books are about Chicago characters dealing with being Black and gay. Iftikhar "Ifti" Nasim was probably among Chicago's most distinctive gay writers. Openly gay and Pakistani, he wrote books in his native Urdu language and was widely published on gay and Pakistani issues.

Roger Sutton produced a groundbreaking book for young adults, the nonfiction *Hearing Us Out: Voices from the Gay and Lesbian Community* (Little, Brown & Co., 1994). He profiled prominent gay and lesbian Chicagoans, with photos by Lisa Howe-Ebright.

Former Chicagoan Michal Brody contributed a book about lesbian media in Chicago: *Are We There Yet? A Continuing History of Lavender Woman, a Chicago Lesbian Newspaper, 1971–1976* (Aunt Lute Book Co., 1985).

Camarin Grae is a pseudonym for a former Chicagoan who produced several well-received lesbian fiction books, including *The Winged Dancer* (Blazon Books, 1983, and later Naiad Press, 1991). Chicagoan Nikki Baker's mystery fiction for Naiad Press includes *In the Game*, *The Lavender House*

The bestselling authors of 1985 produced works that were almost like comfort food for their readers. Among the bestselling novels were *The Mammoth Hunters*, a second-sequel to *Clan of the Cave Bear*, and *Lucky*, Jackie Collins' follow-up to *Chances*.

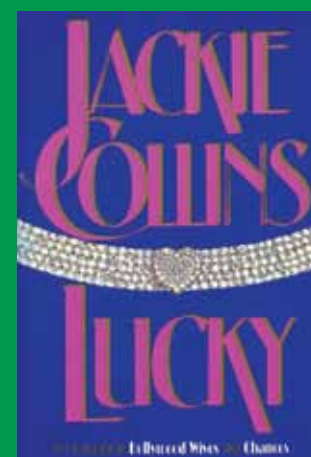
*Lake Wobegon Days* made use of material from Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion*. In Texas, James Michener gave his usual treatment—sprawling histories, told through numerous generations of families—to his adopted home state.

LGBT authors who were published that year included Jeanette Winterson, who debuted with *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, her account of a young lesbian growing up in an English Pentecostal community. Ethan Mordden launched his *Buddies* series of books, story collections about a close-knit group of gay friends, with *I've a Feeling We're Not in Kansas Anymore*. Bret Easton Ellis, then age 21, also debuted with *Less Than Zero*, his tale of debauchery over the course of one student's holiday break (Ellis, who would not publicly identify with any one sexuality or another for several years, said he was gay in 2012).

One of the hottest books of the year, and one that stirred mainstream and lesbian community controversy, was *Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence*, by Nancy Manahan and Rosemary Curb, published by Naiad Press.

The 10 best-selling novels of 1985, according to *Publisher's Weekly*, were:

1. *The Mammoth Hunters* by Jean M. Auel
2. *Texas* by James A. Michener
3. *Lake Wobegon Days* by Garrison Keillor
4. *If Tomorrow Comes* by Sidney Sheldon
5. *Skeleton Crew* by Stephen King
6. *Secrets* by Danielle Steel
7. *Contact* by Carl Sagan
8. *Lucky* by Jackie Collins
9. *Family Album* by Danielle Steel
10. *The Class* by Erich Segal



*Murder and Long Goodbyes*.

Robert Rodi is among the better-known writers of gay fiction in Chicago. His witty books, including *Fag Hag* (Dutton Books, 1992), have been successful across the United States. David Trinidad's work includes *Answer Song* (Serpent's Tail/High Risk Books, 1994), a poetry and prose book about life and love as a gay man.

Achy Obejas has been a critical figure in Chicago's activist and literary scenes for three decades, in part because of her political columns for *Windy City Times*. Her writing is passionate, very openly lesbian, and frequently about her dual identities—Cuban and lesbian. Her books include *Days of Awe* (Ballantine Books, 2002) and *We Came All the Way from Cuba So You Could Dress Like This?* (Cleis Press, 1994).

Chicago native April Sinclair, raised on the South Side, has used the city for several of her novels to date. *Coffee Will Make You Black* (Hyperion, 1994) is set in the turbulent 1960s, beginning at a time "before black was beautiful." *Coffee* is a coming-of-age novel in which a teenage woman's sexuality is awakened more by a white nurse than by her Black boyfriend. Despite its many awards, some schools tried to ban the book.

Carol Anshaw came out as a lesbian in her early 30s, and it had a tremendous impact on her writing. She is the author of the much-honored novels *Aquamarine* (1992), *Seven Moves* (1996), and *Lucky in the Corner* (2002), all published by Houghton Mifflin Co. Among Chicago critic Andrew Patner's works is *I.F. Stone: A Portrait* (Pantheon Books, 1988).

Yvonne Zipter is a poet, columnist and humorist who wrote columns for Chicago's LGBT newspapers (*GayLife*, *Outlines*, and *Windy City Times*) for more than 20 years. Zipter's passion is poetry: *The Patience of Metal* (Hutchinson House, 1990) was a Chicago Book Clinic Honor Book and a finalist for Lambda and Melville Cane (Poetry Society of America) awards. She has written two nonfiction books. *Diamonds Are a Dyke's Best Friend* (Firebrand Books, 1988), which is still in print, examines the love that lesbians have for softball, and *Ransacking the Closet* (Spinsters Ink, 1995) is a collection of Zipter's newspaper columns.

R.D. Zimmerman is best-known in the Chicago gay community for his award-winning mystery series about Todd Mills, a gay TV journalist.

Mark Richard Zubro is another of Chicago's prolific gay activists and writers. Zubro's legacy is in both quality and quantity: "In Chicago, I am ... the most published openly gay author, using openly gay characters, being published by a mainstream house in New York." His books include *Why Isn't Becky Twitchell Dead?* (1990) and *Everyone's Dead But Us* (2006), both from St. Martin's Press.

There have been important organizations promoting gay, lesbian and feminist work, including the long-running New Town Writers Guild, the Feminist Writers Guild, Tall Grass Writers Guild, and Literary Exchange, an African-American organization that, along with Affinity Community Services, has hosted literary events and conferences.

—Partially excerpted from *Out and Proud in Chicago*, with contributions by Judith Markowitz.

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Started: 2013. Sales Rep.



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**Thank you** to the amazing Chicago-area LGBTQI & allied community for your readership, advertising & support for 30 years. We could not have done it without you.



# in the LIFE

**Avi Bowie**

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ROSS FORMAN

Avi Bowie celebrated their one-year anniversary at the Center on Halsted this summer, serving as the director of youth programs—but Bowie admits that they struggle to answer how they got to that field, short of, “my life and my experiences led me to this field.”

“As a multiracial, multicultural, genderqueer, female bodied human, my childhood was a rich example of intersectionality and also really different from that of many of my peers,” Bowie said. “As a child and adolescent I felt both special and lonely, isolated and connected, accepted and rejected. Growing up I was exposed to and embodied so much difference. I simultaneously held and hold privilege and oppression. My privilege gave me the resources, both intrinsic and extrinsic, to hold and honor the pain, fear, and confusion of those around me, while my oppression allowed me to intimately relate to and understand suffering and injustice and to recognize that my and my communities’ liberation is tied together.

“I’ve worked really hard to figure out how to communicate and celebrate seemingly competing experiences, [and] I’m still figuring it out, and how to joyfully exist in my body, and assert my right to do so in a world that constantly tells people like me that we cannot truly be free. I know, beyond a doubt, that my identity and experiences have brought me and kept me here.”

Bowie manages a youth program for LGBTQ and allied youth between the ages of 13 to 25. With a staff, Bowie and Co., “work to create brave space with and for our youth,” they said. “We do this through making an effort to meet our youth where they are at, engage in sometimes difficult conversations about the reality of their lives, celebrate their beauty and brilliance, and provide a number of supports and services.”

Bowie also supervises staff and interns.

“Getting to be around and learn from and love brilliant, powerful youth who know so much more about themselves and the world

than I did when I was their age and are who fighting hard to thrive, and find joy, and to be seen and to take up space,” is the best part of Bowie’s job, they said.

The worst part is: “Bearing witness to the unnecessary suffering my youth and my community are subject to and, at times, feeling helpless to end it,” they said.

Bowie’s career goal is to “constantly be growing, learning, and giving, and to make a living doing as much good and as little harm as possible while working to insure that social justice, and rights and benefits are extended to those who are on the margins and who are impacted by structural oppression while also taking care of my heart, soul, and body.”

Bowie added, “I’ve always loved working and growing with people—humans are messy and magic and so beautifully unpredictable. Overcoming struggle is a big part of my personal narrative and this has guided most of my work.”



- **Age**  
35
- **Neighborhood**  
Uptown
- **Orientation**  
“Proudly and solidly queer and genderqueer.”
- **Job title**  
Director of Youth Programs, Center on Halsted
- **Hobbies**  
Painting and drawing, cooking, spending time with my family, playing the ukulele.
- **Favorite drink**  
Old Fashioned,
- **Favorite TV show**  
Bob’s Burgers
- **Favorite movie**  
“I’m a huge fan of Pixar movies (Up, Finding Nemo, Inside Out) and film noir (Night of the Hunter, Sunset Boulevard, the Big Sleep).”
- **Favorite pizza**  
“Father and Son’s extra crispy, thin crust with cheese, onions, olives and peppers.”
- **Little-known fact**  
“I’m obsessed with outer space.”
- **Favorite drink**  
Kentucky Mule or beer.

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# WINDY CITY TIMES

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Laganja Estranja for Reeling.



## By the Brooks

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WCT reviews the Mel Brooks comedy *The Producers*.

Photo by DCP Photography

### SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

# Silk Road's many strands

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

There's a powerful bit of advice for theater actors or artists who complain about inherent biases or the lack of roles available to them in the industry. It's basically to stop complaining and go create or produce your own material.

One Chicago theatrical institution that has more than lived up to that advice is Silk Road Rising (formerly Silk Road Theatre Project). Co-founded in 2002 by life partners Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury as an artistic response to the 2001 terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, Silk

Road Rising became a way to respond to the country's growing tide of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment. Silk Road Rising's focus was soon expanded to shine a light on the peoples, history and civilizations found along the historic Silk Road stretching from Japan to Italy with the idea that many cultures share customs and are inherently linked.

But for its 2015-16 season, Silk Road Rising is in a sense going back to its roots by producing many personal and solo artist-generated projects. Already come and gone was a one-weekend August run of Puja Mohindra's A

Great Dive which explored notions of Eastern and Western love with a nod to classical Indian dance.

Next on the roster is Marissa Lichwick's *Yellow Dress* running from Thursday, Oct. 1, to Sunday, Oct. 4. *Yellow Dress* explores Lichwick's own experiences as a Korean American adoptee who tries to discover her cultural and ancestral roots back in Asia.

"In the calendar year of 2015, we had made a decision to commit to the development of solo pieces. For years, artists have been asking us to look more seriously at solo work," said Silk Road Rising artistic director Jamil Khoury. "It's not that we didn't like solo work or take solo work seriously, we were so focused on 'traditional' plays."

So this explains why some theater traditionalists might have glanced at Silk Road Rising's seasonal roster and wondered why the largely short-run scheduling deviated so far from what the company had previously done with longer theatrical runs.

"We finally came to the point where we decided to make a big, bold artistic commitment to working with solo artists—particularly female artists—who are in various stages of their work either developing it or revisiting pieces," Khoury said. "We were interested in introducing to audiences a genre that I think draws from several traditions including the oral narratives and epic poetry that we associate from the Silk Road itself."

Yet there is also room for other traditions in the mix, like sketch comedy in Jameelah Sheelo's *My American Cousin* (Nov. 19-22) that archly explores life aspects of an Arab-American Muslim woman. And music is bound to play a major part in Ronnie Maley's historically influenced piece called *Ziryab, The Songbird of Andalusia* (Feb. 18-22).

But to close out Silk Road Rising's season is a full-length play by Jamil Khoury that has been the company's long-aborning signature project known as *Mosque Alert*. Its creation was inspired by the furor over the so-called "Ground Zero" mosque in New York, though Khoury instead switched the setting to be more local by following three fictional families' in Naperville, Illinois, and their responses to a proposed Islamic Center on the site of a beloved landmark.

Since 2011, *Mosque Alert* has been developed in workshops and online video snippets to generate debate. In many ways, *Mosque Alert* was a catalyst for Silk Road Rising to create work online like documentaries and video plays so the company could reach people globally beyond the live audiences watching the plays they produced.

"We really need to use all of this technology that's now available to us. On some level it's unprecedented in terms of human history that we can communicate the way we can," said Khoury, who noted that people in countries as

far away as Iran and Pakistan have reached out to Silk Road Rising wanting to see the company's material but were unable to travel to Chicago. "And how do we create artistic content that is also very true to our mission and poses questions and provokes in a way that becomes a little difficult with the live theater and terms of its reach. We're able to have conversations that are prohibitively dangerous or censored in any number of countries."

For example, Khoury and Gillani haven't shied away from feminist or LGBTQ issues or characters in some Silk Road Rising productions, and they have had to respond to comments or criticisms from members of different ethnic and religious minorities. In fact, *Mosque Alert* prominently features a scene where a gay advocate on the side of the Islamic Center gets pushback from an Imam who would prefer that he stay closeted.

"I wanted to explore those sort of gray areas of coalition work when people aren't always comfortable or excited about who their allies may be," Khoury said. "We personally and organizationally have dealt with a great deal of homophobia from segments of the Silk Road community. That's not a broad generalization because we have lots of Muslim supporters on any number of levels, but this has been a very difficult 'wedge' issue."

**Silk Road Rising presents *Yellow Dress* by Marissa Lichwick at the Chicago Temple, 77 W. Washington St. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 1, 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 2 and 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 3 and 4. Tickets are \$15 and \$12 for students. Call 312-857-1234 ext. 201, or visit [www.silk-roadrising.org](http://www.silk-roadrising.org) for more information on the rest of the season.**

## Victory starts diversity initiative

Victory Gardens Theater announced the launch of The Directors Inclusion Initiative to encourage and develop talented and emerging Chicago stage directors identifying as people of color, disabled, women, transgender and gender non-conforming.

The aim of the initiative is to cultivate a new generation of diverse stage directors who create dynamic theatre work for their unique points of view.

The assistant directors for this season include Toma Tavares Langston (*Sucker Punch*), Lavina Jadhvani (*Never The Sinner*), Lexi Saunders (*Cocked*), Kevin Matthew Reyes (*Hillary & Clinton*) and Chika Ike (*The House That Will Not Stand*).

For more information about Victory Gardens, visit [www.victorygardens.org](http://www.victorygardens.org).



Silk Road Rising co-founders and life partners Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury.

Photo from Silk Road Rising

## THEATER REVIEW

**The Producers**

Playwright: Mel Brooks (book, music, lyrics) and Thomas Meehan (book)

At: NightBlue Performing Arts at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: [www.nightbluetheater.com](http://www.nightbluetheater.com); \$32-\$35

Runs through: Oct. 11

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Mel Brooks fans will have a fine old time at *The Producers*, staged by NightBlue (sic) Performing Arts “mit a bing, mit a bang, mit a boom,” to quote from the show.

Most readers probably know *The Producers* from Brooks’ 1968 non-musical film or his 2001 Broadway musical version which won 12 Tony Awards, and probably deserved half of them. It certainly was not the Best Score of the year, but Broadway rewarded Brooks for providing a big, laugh-a-minute, old-fashioned musical comedy that was box office magic. The songs work in the context of the show, but the music is neither innovative nor particularly memorable.

Quibble aside, *The Producers* is a valentine to Broadway, a backstage musical that bears little reality to the way shows actually are produced nowadays. It concerns Max Bialystock, a legendary Broadway showman (now down on his luck) who schemes with Leo Bloom, a schlemiel of an accountant, to make a ton of money by producing the world’s worst and most tasteless musical, a paean to Nazism called *Springtime for Hitler*. Along the way, Bialy helps Leo grow a pair, get the girl and find happiness.



**The Producers.**

Photo by DCP Photography

NightBlue is performing *The Producers* in rotating repertory with *Victor/Victoria*, another lavish musical, and there simply is no way to create two lavish scenic designs within the physical limits of the 3/4 round Stage 773 space, so the scenic design is pretty basic and colorless. It’s likely that NightBlue didn’t have the budget for two massive design concepts, either. Where NightBlue has put its cash is into costumes, designed by David E. Walters who also directed the show. The 19 company members change costumes several times, with men sometimes cross-dressing to enlarge the wom-

en’s ensemble (a clever idea of Walters’ that works). From little old ladies to Nazis to other assorted types, the costumes provide the color and pizzazz missing from the scenic elements.

Costumes, scenery and songs aside, *The Producers* rises or falls on the lead performances. This production is fortunate to have two strong, appealing players, Tommy Novak and Casey Hayes. Novak eerily channels the film Bialy, *Zero Mostel*, rather than Nathan Lane’s stage Bialy, while Hayes brings great charm to the role of the cute nerd who blossoms. Both have fine, strong voices. Their able third is

Cara Chumbley as Ulla, the sexy love interest. They’re backed by a strong band under Charlotte Rivard-Hoster.

Several characters in *The Producers* are blatant gay caricatures, and I’ve always felt Brooks is laughing *at* gays and not *with* gays in creating Roger DeBris (Billy Dawson) and Carmen Ghia (Dominic Rescigno). Most, however, do not seem to have this problem and accept these parody characters as part of the show’s total buoyant comedic package.

## THEATER REVIEW

**Side Show**

Playwright: Bill Russell (book, lyrics) and Henry Krieger (music)

At: Porchlight Music Theatre at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: 1-773-327-5252;

[www.porchlightmusictheatre.org](http://www.porchlightmusictheatre.org)

Runs through: Oct. 15

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

It’s always easier to write about a good production. This one is easy, with a top-notch cast, a vigorous and colorful physical production and a sizzling six-piece band (Aaron Benham, music direction) playing the beautifully-colored jazz-influenced score.

*Side Show* is challenging, however, due to its off-beat subject matter, conjoined twins and the freak-like atmosphere that clings to them even under the best of circumstances. It’s a musical biography of conjoined twins Daisy and Violet Hilton (1908-1969), who did live for a time under the best of circumstances, earning good money as vaudeville stars, taking lovers and husbands and making a few movies. Each

was a nearly-fully-formed individual—they didn’t look freakish—and they were vivacious and musically talented. Still, their fame passed and they died poor and obscure.

Porchlight offers the revised 2014 version of this 1997 Broadway show, which many critics and audiences found off-putting although it was a *succes d’estime*. Warming to the material remains difficult despite the fine score and the more clear delineation of characters in the revised version. The authors do not want Daisy and Violet to appear freakish or pitiable (as many horribly mal-formed conjoined twins are), and yet there is nothing particularly wonderful about them beyond their pluck and endurance. At their sides are two men—one hinted at as being gay—who leave them professionally strong but emotionally drained. The tension comes in the contrasting personalities of the sisters: Daisy wants fame, celebrity and success while Violet wants normalcy, as they state in their first song, “Like Everyone Else.” Early in the show, they are exploited by others, but soon they are full participants in their exploitation, and that’s hardly fuzzy and warm.

No matter, this is a full-throttled and full-throated cast: Colleen Fee (Daisy) and Britt-Marie Sivertsen (Violet) brightly and quickly



**Side Show.**

Photo by Brandon Dahlquist

differentiate the sisters’ different personalities. The attractive but deceitful (in different ways) men in their lives are Matthew Keefer (as Terry Conner) and Devin DeSantis (as Buddy Foster). In the pivotal supporting role of Jake, who loves Violet with a quiet, unrequited passion, Evan Tyrone Martin knocks it out of the park with his big baritone. The entire company of 18 brings energy and focus to the show.

*Side Show* is a designer’s dream, with a backdrop of a carnival tent and vaudeville theaters,

and with the sisters rising from poverty to glamor and wealth. The production team has a field day and brings the intimate Stage 773 theater alive with color and movement: Megan Truscott (scenic), Bill Morey (costumes), Greg Freeman (lighting), Robert Hornbostel (sound), Ross Hoppe (projections) and Andrew Waters (choreographer). Porchlight artistic director Michael Weber—who’s really hit his stride in the last two years—staged the show.

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**The Tempest.**  
 Photo by Liz Lauren

## THEATER REVIEW The Tempest

Playwright: William Shakespeare  
 At: Chicago Shakespeare Theater  
 at Navy Pier, 800 E. Grand Ave.  
 Tickets: 312-595-5600;  
 www.chicagoshakes.com; \$48-\$88  
 Runs through: Nov. 8

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Picture playwright-adaptor Aaron Posner sitting around a table over beers with the magician known today as Teller, beat-blues songwriters Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan and Pilobolus dance choreographer Matt Kent, all planning to put on a show together. When somebody suggests that a framing story might be useful, Posner remembers one by William Shakespeare that might serve.

Whatever you want to call this production, what it certainly is NOT is your classroom classic tarted up with cute decorative shtick, but instead a whole freshly imagined project employing its venerable 17th-century source as one—but only one—of its components.

The predominating ingredient is the “conjuring” hinted at in the original script, in this case replicated by familiar stage illusions—teleportation, levitation, body-part displacement, a snippet of Houdini’s underwater-breathing stunt and manipulation of cards, spring and wires—courtesy of co-director Teller, “magic designer” Johnny Thompson and Chicago newcomer Nate Dendy as a whiteface Ariel. Another exercise in body-part displacement is Kent’s depiction of the misshapen monster Caliban as a creature composed of two humans cojoined in permanent grapple-stance, a feat of physical coordination accomplished with agility and a lurching grace by Zach Eisenstat and Manelich Minniefee. Let’s not forget, too, Shaina Taub’s arrangements of Waits and Brennan’s gritty melodies for the onstage spooky-tunes orchestra (also mentioned in the Elizabethan play-book) dubbed—what else?—the Rough Magic band.

So many different attractions could easily dissolve into an entertaining, but ultimately chaotic, circus—which is where Posner comes in, him of the daring Chekhov and Potok make-overs. Recognizing that increased time in the spotlight for non-verbal elements reduces that allotted for spoken dialogue, he pares down

Shakespeare’s text—already a fusion of such period literary fashions as vengeance dramas, fairy-tale fantasies and lost-voyage travelogues—into a streamlined narrative retaining all of the major themes while dispensing with verbiage rendered unnecessary by the aforementioned sensory diversions. On board to ensure that every word uttered by a cast ranging in expertise from iamb-crunchers like Larry Yando and Barbara Robertson to the anonymous crow-masked ringers falls trippingly from the tongue is verse coach Kevin Gudahl, while Daniel Conway’s quasi-Victorian scenic design connects land and sea in visual harmony.

Oh, and did I mention that it requires a mere two hours for everything to be resolved to everyone’s satisfaction? If you see just a single play this autumn, you won’t find a more conceptually integrated or seamlessly realized production than this.

## CRITICS' PICKS

**The Jacksonian**, Profiles Theatre, through Oct. 11. Audiences who chuckled at Beth Henley’s early depictions of the American Deep South during the 1960s are in for a surprise with this peek into its darker corners. MSB

**Jamaica, Farewell**, Royal George Theatre, through Oct. 8. Debra Ehrhardt may smile as she recounts her own coming-to-America story, but hidden between the laughter lie dangerous risks embraced as adventure by the young and daring. MSB

**Katrina: The Mother-in-Law of 'em All**, Interrobang Theatre Project at Den Theatre, through Oct. 4. A great way to reflect on the horrors and human spirit in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina is to catch playwright Rob Florence’s engrossing drama inspired by six true tales of New Orleans residents who survived the disastrous 2005 storm. SCM

**October Sky**, Marriott Theatre through Oct. 11. Teenage nerds want to build rockets in 1957 West Virginia, and must triumph over small-minded adults to succeed. The story is predictable although based on fact, but it’s so well-rendered in this world-premiere musical from the 1999 film. JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

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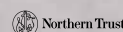
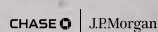
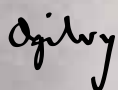
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## SPOTLIGHT



Two aspiring Chicago punk musicians try to impress a Riot Fest scout, only to have their plans thwarted by an eccentric landlady in **Punk Punk**, a world-premiere dark comedy by lesbian playwright Hannah Il-Epstein for Nothing Without a Company. Punk Punk plays through Saturday, Oct. 10, starting at Fat Cat Bar, 4840 N. Broadway St. A preview performance is at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 23, with an 8 p.m. opening on Thursday, Sept. 24. The regular run is then 8 p.m. Thursdays and 8 and 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. The preview performance is \$5-\$10 while regular-run tickets are \$15-\$30; visit [www.nothing-withoutacompany.org](http://www.nothing-withoutacompany.org).

Photo of Punk Punk playwright Hannah Il-Epstein courtesy of Nothing Without a Company

### THEATER REVIEW

#### Dogfight

Playwright: Music and lyrics by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, book by Peter Duchan  
At: BoHo Theatre at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.  
Tickets: 773-975-8150;  
[www.bohotheatre.com](http://www.bohotheatre.com); \$27-\$30  
Runs through: Oct. 18

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Soldiers preparing to ship out overseas from San Francisco typically spend their last 24 hours drinking and whoring, not wasting time on a Frat-house stalk-and-snare mission—especially when it's 1963 and the fresh-out-of-boot-camp corpsmen are bound for a tiny Southeast Asian patch called Viet Nam. Credibility, however, wasn't the goal of the 1991 film, nor of the 2012 musical adaptation, so much as the attempt to replicate the tone of a mid-1940s song-and-dance G.I. comedy within the hindsight context of a war not yet begun.

Such cognitive dissonance requires a thick layer of wistful nostalgia, provided by a retrospective ballad serving as a prologue to our first glimpse of former Marine corporal Edward Birdlace, whose flashback introduces us to his buddies, Boland and Bernstein, and the plan proposed by their fellow jarheads on the eve of their departure to hold a "dogfight" competition, its object being to rendezvous at a predetermined destination, accompanied by the most unattractive women they can muster up. Birdlace's search leads him to a shy, guitar-

strumming, peacenik waitress named Rose, whom he decides will do. Upon discovering the reason behind his invitation, Rose upbraids the cruel pranksters, declaring that she hopes they all die in combat.

As military atrocities go, injury to feminine self-esteem is relatively mild, and a later incident involving a gang-assault on an uncooperative prostitute, while repugnant by enlightened 2015 standards, can be dismissed as a by-product of the perpetrators' recent immersion in a testosterone-fueled subculture. Even so, Birdlace's conscience spurs him to vow remorse to the wronged damsel, who accepts his apology, whereupon the two embark on a montage of young-lovers-in-the-big-city checkpoints. Come morning, Birdlace resigns himself to a future where his comrades will, indeed, die, and he, himself, will be wounded and return in 1967 to seek comfort in the arms of the patiently waiting Rose.

It might be inevitable that Boho Theatre's production should suffer ambivalence toward its material. Despite locating details like the vintage trapeze dress worn by Boland's escort, a 90-second jungle firefight and a score of period incidental music *not* including "For What It's Worth" (kudos to Theresa Ham, Tony Churchill and Amanda Hosking, respectively), the actors still appear reluctant to embrace the uglier aspects of their milieu—actual USMC haircuts, say, or fluency in gruntspeak. For any but the fuzziest memories of the era under scrutiny, the resulting Hollywood romance-in-uniform propaganda emerges as too nebulous to convey the emotions its authors strive to evoke.



**Dogfight.**  
Photo from BoHo Theatre

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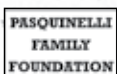
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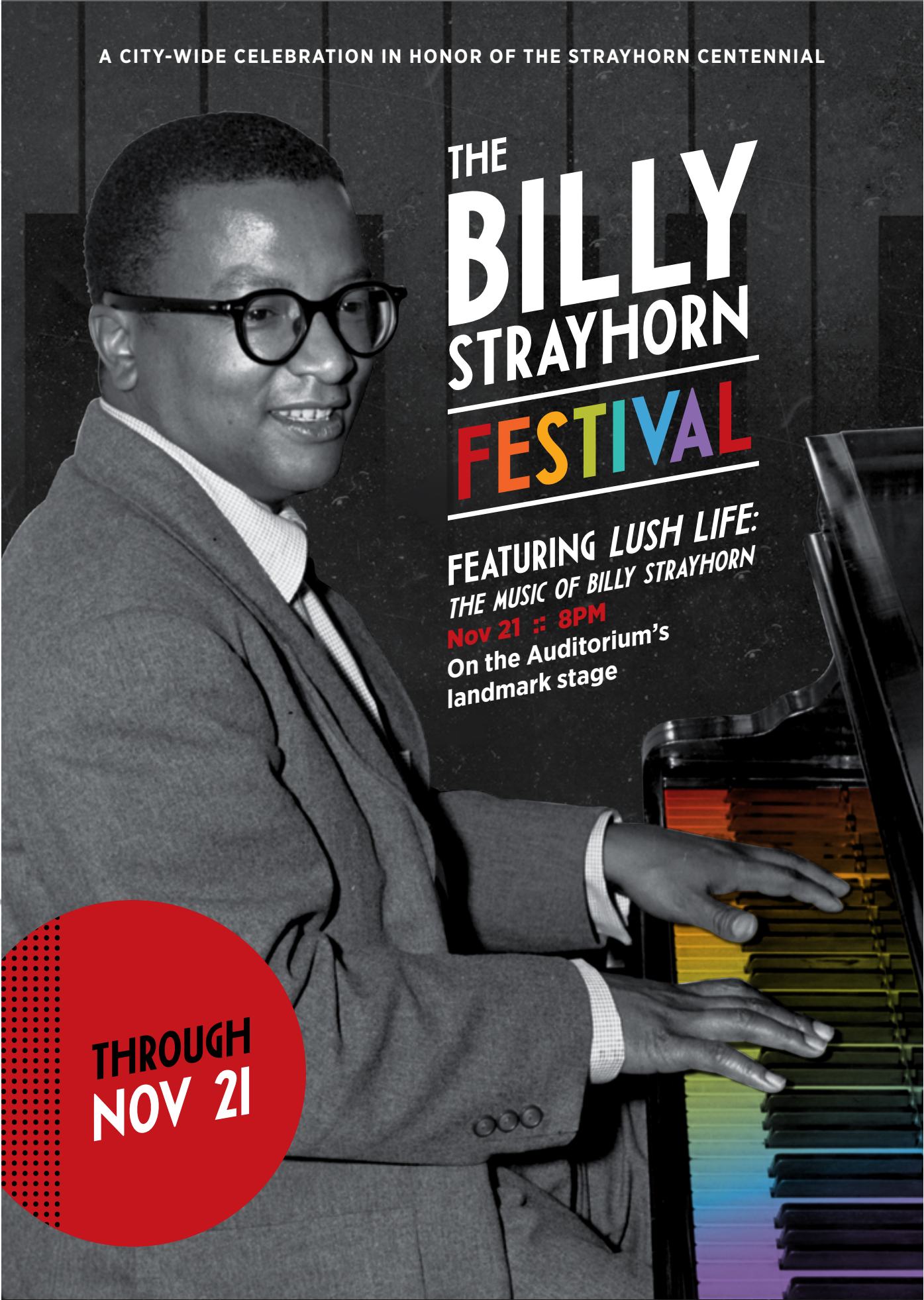


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# Chicago Theater still thrives, still evergreen

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Perhaps the major difference between Chicago theater today and 30 years ago is that back then you had to pick up the telephone and call, or visit the theater box office in-person, if you wanted to purchase a ticket.

Advertising and marketing, too, relied on old technology—print, radio, TV, mailings—rather than Twitter, Facebook or Instagram. Word-of-mouth was the best form of advertising (as it still is), but it was a lot slower going around.

By the early 1970s, Chicago could claim several pioneering “gay” theaters, among them the Godzilla Rainbow Troupe (1971-’74) of Garry Tucker (aka Eleven), who introduced Theatre of the Ridiculous, genderfuck and the midnight curtain to Chicago; the Artemis Play-

annual productions. The theater troupes sold some 2.65 million tickets. Today, the League has more than 200 members throughout Chicago and the six collar counties, with dance troupes and opera companies among them, selling more than 5 million tickets a year.

In 1985, Chicago’s theater industry was only a few years into an innovative contract developed by Actors Equity Association and an association of Chicago theater producers. Called the CAT Contract (for “Chicago Area Theatre”), it offered a flexible sliding scale of minimum salaries for actors and stage managers, based on the seating capacity of the playhouse. Sounds like a no-brainer, but it was a new idea at the time, an experiment which worked brilliantly. The CAT Contract, which remains in use here, practically jump-started the growth and devel-



A scene from the play *Johns*, which opened June 24, 1982, by Party Productions Company.

ers (mid-1970s), a lesbian oriented women’s theater company; and the Drama Shelter (circa 1972-’80), the storefront theater of lovers Daryl Hale and Ron Hitchcock.

The Drama Shelter did some straight plays but made its fame on gay fare, notably the plays of Robert Patrick. By decade’s end Rick Paul’s Lionheart gay theater (1979-’94) assumed primacy, eventually producing more than 100 plays by writers such as Jeff Hagedorn, Lawrence Bommer and Nicholas Patricca. Hagedorn earned a footnote in drama history by writing the first play produced on the subject of AIDS, *One*, which premiered in Chicago in 1982.

Chicago’s world-famous off-Loop Theater industry was roughly in its third wave, or very close to it, by 1985 with a reliable level of acting and production, a growing number of theater companies and—fortunately—a growing theater audience, too, many of whom had reached adulthood during the 18-or-so-years since off-Loop Theater was born in the late 1960s, much of it out of the political turmoil of the times. In 1985, Steppenwolf Theatre Company—the very icon of cutting-edge energy with its so-called “scratch and sniff” style of theater—won the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, thereby setting the troupe on a short path to Establishment status.

Steppenwolf was the first local company to win the Regional Theatre Tony Award, but four more would follow: Goodman Theatre 1992, Victory Gardens Theater 2001, Chicago Shakespeare Theater 2008, Lookingglass Theatre 2011, thereby cementing Chicago’s status as the finest theater city in America. In 1985, the League of Chicago Theatres could boast of having 116 members presenting some 1,000

opment of Chicago’s Off-Loop Theater movement into an industry. CAT became the model used over and over by Actors Equity for smaller theaters across the country.

In 1985, Chicago’s theater community—and it was at that time a smaller and tight-knit community—began to suffer the first loss of artists to AIDS. Highly visible among those who died were playwright Jeff Hagedorn, and popular actor J. Pat Miller and stage manager Tom Biscotto. In memory of Miller and Biscotto, about 200 friends gathered one afternoon at Victory Gardens Theater and created a humanitarian fund for those in the theater community suffering from AIDS-related illnesses and personal hardships. The fund couldn’t pay the high costs of medical care, but it could and did pay rent and utility bills, buy groceries and clothing, and fly in a loved one. The Biscotto-Miller Fund flourishes today as the chief giving program of Season of Concern, the theater industry charity created several years later. The Fund will be honored Oct. 26 at a 30th-anniversary gala at the Steppenwolf Theatre.

As Chicago’s off-Loop theater industry grew, the pioneer troupes were succeeded by a number of LGBT companies, among them Theatre Q, Zebra Crossing, A Real Read (an African-American group including Byron Stewart, Sanford Gaylord and C.C. Carter) and the Pansy Kings, a mid-1990s vaudeville-style showcase for gay male performers that nurtured a number of important artists such as solo performers David Kodeski and Edward Thomas-Herrera, video artist and poet Kurt Heintz, novelist Robert Rodi, writer Dave Awl and songwriter Eric Lane Barnes. Alexandra Billings of *Transparent* fame has her roots in the 1980s Chicago theater community as well.

The progress of the last 30 years has been so significant that Chicago LGBT artists and troupes scarcely need special theatrical identities today. Out theater artists and managers are integrated in every possible facet of Chicago’s booming theater industry from producers to ushers, playwrights to prop masters, and academics to theater critics.

Among Chicago theaters today that self-identify as LGBT-specific are About Face, Pride Films & Plays, GayCo and Hell in a Handbag. An additional number of troupes boast female-centered identities without being specifically lesbian.

Chicago has been the birthplace of a number of nationally prominent works that reflect LGBT history or issues, such as David Dillon’s much-produced *Party*; Doug Wright’s *I Am My Own Wife*; Patricia Kane’s *Pulp*; the Alfred Kinsey musical comedy *Dr. Sex*; Claudia Allen’s *Hannah Free* (also adapted into a feature film starring Sharon Gless); and *Loving Repeating*, the Gertrude Stein musical fashioned by Frank Galati and Stephen Flaherty.

The late Scott McPherson’s *Marvin’s Room*—first produced at the Goodman Theatre in 1990—may be the single most important LGBT work to emerge from Chicago. Although not gay in its story, the play was McPherson’s passionate and profound response to the AIDS crisis that took his life too soon. It was made into a movie in 1996 and starred Meryl Streep and Diane Keaton.

Long-time partners Steve Scott and Ted Hoerl are integral longtime contributors to the theater scene, Scott as an associate producer at Goodman Theatre, along with teaching positions, and Hoerl as an actor and director.

Of special note are Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury, co-founders of the Silk Road Theatre Project, who are respectively of South Asian and Middle Eastern ethnicity. Openly a couple, they rapidly are becoming nationally known for the diverse range of sexual and nonsexual issues raised by their productions, and for fostering growing recognition of diverse Asian theater artists and audiences.

Perhaps the most important thing to recognize is that most of those who were young, eager and making theater in Chicago in 1985 still are here today making theater in all capacities. Some have moved up the ranks to become artistic directors or managing directors of our important theater companies, others have continue acting or writing careers, perhaps adding some teaching along the way. Their legacy of commitment, creativity and just-plain-endurance continues to energize and inform those who have followed ... and it’s every bit as true for dedicated audiences as it is for the theater-makers. We remain blessed in Chicago with the best on both sides of the footlights.

**Jonathan Abarbanel not only is a long-serving Windy City Times theater critic, but also reviews for WDCB Public Radio every Sunday morning and teaches theater at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Part of this story is adapted from an essay in the book *Out and Proud in Chicago*.**



A Lionheart flier.



## Dancing for Life

BY TRACY BAIM

All of the creative arts were devastated by AIDS, with a generation of stars struck down in their prime—never to write another opera or play, sing on another stage, play another piano or organ or paint another masterpiece. The dance world was particularly hard-hit, with many gay male choreographers and dancers lost to the disease.

In Chicago, one of the earliest losses was of Joseph Holmes, the head of Joseph Holmes Chicago Dance Theatre. Holmes left his mark on many who followed, including Randy Duncan, who took over the company after Holmes died, and dancer Keith Elliott.

Elliott nurtured the idea of an annual Dance for Life benefit, bringing together Chicago’s top dance companies in a fundraiser for AIDS organizations and individual dancers. Like Season of Concern, which helps those in theater affected by AIDS, the Dance for Life Fund helps people meet their basic living requirements. The first Dance for Life was in June 1992 at the Organic Theatre.

Todd Kiech, Danny Kopelson, Harriet G. Ross, Gail Kalver and Duncan have all played critical roles in the Dance for Life annual gala, which is still operating. Duncan has been honored widely for his choreography, and Elliott has expanded his work to producing many benefits for gay and AIDS groups.

Joel Hall is another important part of Chicago’s dance scene. A native Chicagoan, Hall co-founded Chicago City Theater Company in 1972 and, as part of that effort, created the Joel Hall Dancers and Joel Hall Dance Studios. Hall has an international reputation as a choreographer, and his company has toured the United States and other countries.

Above and below: Past Dance For Life posters







# 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

# HISTORY

## Season of Concern celebrates Biscotto-Miller Fund's 30th

BY SCOTT DUFF

In 1985, people were dying, and seemingly, no one was doing anything about it. The AIDS plague was ravaging the world, and arts organizations nationwide were experiencing tremendous loss as actors, writers, directors, designers, stage managers, choreographers, and musicians were taken far too soon. An entire generation of talent was lost.

In the spring of that year, a group of Chicago theater artists banded together to create "Arts Against AIDS," a benefit performance by and for the theater community to raise money for the newly created Biscotto-Miller Fund, which provides direct relief for those living with HIV/AIDS. It was named after two beloved theater artists, stage manager Tommy Biscotto and actor J. Pat Miller. The evening was meant to be inclusive and representative of as many artistic disciplines as possible.

On an off night at The Second City, the Chicago theater community produced what Chicago Tribune reporter Sid Smith described as "the biggest effort so far by Chicago's entertainment community to raise funds for victims of the deadly ailment, and one of the biggest to date by performers anywhere in the country."

The lineup was an impressive array of Chicago actors, singers, musicians, and comedians.



Photo from the 2014 Larry Sloan Awards (with board members). Season of Concern archive

Aaron Freeman, Frank Galati, Ross Lehman, members of The Second City ensemble, Carolyn Ford, and Scott McPherson were featured. The cornerstone of the evening was a performance from Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart* with Gary Cole and D.W. Moffett, a member of the historic Remains Theatre, who flew in from New York City where he was starring in the play at the Public Theatre.

"All of us had experienced the loss of friends and acquaintances," said Tom Guerra, one of the organizers of the event. "We all felt the need to do something, something which would make a mark and create a movement which could grow bigger. Not for our personal gain or recognition, but to let our emotions and our feelings of loss to be channeled into a productive effort, to be of assistance to those ... who

were in need of help."

Arts Against AIDS was a huge success, raising more than \$10,000 that night for the Biscotto-Miller Fund, which, in 1988, led to the creation of Season of Concern, the Chicago-based theater community's fundraising effort for those living with debilitating illness or injury. Since then, Season of Concern has distributed more than \$2.5 million to 35 different Chicago-based AIDS services and has provided care for hundreds of artists in the entertainment industry who are experiencing health-related emergencies and medical issues.

On Monday, Oct. 26, 2015, 7 p.m., at Steppenwolf Theatre, Season of Concern will commemorate that auspicious event with "Season of Celebration: An Evening of Song," honoring the generous spirits of the organizers of Arts

Against AIDS. The festivities will also include the Larry Sloan Awards, named after former executive director of Season of Concern and director of Remains Theatre. Board Member Emeritus Alexandra Billings (Transparent) will receive the Larry Sloan Heritage Award for her outstanding contributions to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Other honorees include Chicago actor Mitchell Fain and the companies of Goodman Theatre's *A Christmas Carol* for their tireless fundraising efforts. The evening features performances by host (and Chicago legend) E. Faye Butler, Bethany Thomas, Christine Mild, Erik Hellman, Matt Deitchman, and a host of Chicago theatre favorites. As Ms. Billings eloquently wrote, Season of Concern is "artists helping artists, family helping family."

For more information and to purchase tickets to "Season of Celebration: An Evening of Song," visit [www.steppenwolf.org](http://www.steppenwolf.org) or call (312) 335-1650.

Scott Duff is Season of Concern's manager of communications and fundraising events.



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# Bully Project uses film, education, litigation to assist schools

BY SARAH TOCE

The Bully Project is an advocacy and educational organization inspired by the award-winning film, *Bully*. Since 2011, Bully has been seen by more than 3.8 million children through nearly 12,000 school and community screenings. Working with more than 100 partners globally, The Bully Project motivates and builds capacity for educators to create safer schools, reduce bullying, and improve educational outcomes for all.

Adele P. Kimmel is a senior attorney at the D.C. headquarters of Public Justice. In 2013, Kimmel spearheaded Public Justice's Anti-Bullying Campaign, which seeks to hold school districts and officials accountable for failing to protect students from bullying, make systemic changes in the ways that schools respond to bullying incidents, and educate attorneys about best practices for handling bullying cases.

"Public Justice launched its Anti-Bullying Campaign to ensure that our nation's schools do a better job of preventing and responding to bullying, and to hold schools accountable when they fail to protect our children from bullying," Kimmel said. "Despite anti-bullying laws and policies across the country, many school administrators, teachers, and other staff turn a blind eye to bullying. They simply are not doing enough to make schools safe for our children. Our project is designed to change this. Through litigation, we effect systemic changes in the ways that schools respond to bullying incidents and obtain justice for bully-

ing victims and their families."

The need for such advocacy is widespread.

"Students who identify or are perceived as LGBT are targeted for bullying at particularly high rates," Kimmel said. "The abuse faced by many LGBT kids was part of what inspired Public Justice to launch its Anti-Bullying Campaign, and we are committed to making schools safer for LGBT kids."

The media often focuses on the victims of bullying when the bullies themselves are most likely also victims.

"Schools should be helping both the target and the perpetrator of bullying," Kimmel cautioned. "The key to ending bullying and harassment is training and education. Not only should all students should receive appropriate anti-bullying training and education, but all school administrators, educators, and other employees should be trained and educated on how to recognize and report bullying and harassment. In addition, counseling should be available for both the victim and perpetrator."

Kimmel added, "Schools sometimes punish the perpetrators of bullying when counseling, training, and education would be better options. For example 'zero tolerance' policies against bullying often lead to automatic suspensions or expulsions, which take kids out of school and increase the likelihood that they will end up in jail later on. This is not a good solution to bullying. Though there are certainly times when a suspension or expulsion are warranted, if we really want to stop bullying, schools need to do a better job of helping both



Adele P. Kimmel.

Image from Public Justice

victims and perpetrators."

All 50 states currently have anti-bullying statutes. "Montana was the last hold-out, but finally passed an anti-bullying law this year," Kimmel said.

"Bullying and the Law: A Guide for Parents" is a new resource guide available to teachers, students and parents.

"As a parent who happens to be a lawyer with expertise on school bullying issues, I wanted to 'pay it forward' to other parents," Kimmel explained. "So I put together a free online resource for parents to help them address school bullying. The guide is being launched in partnership with The Bully Project from award-winning filmmaker Lee Hirsch."

The guide is intended to help parents understand what the law requires schools to do to address bullying, what they can reasonably expect from school officials when their child is a target of bullying, and what options are available when schools fail to take appropriate action.

For example, Kimmel said that if people be-

lieve their children are being bullied by school peers, here are three important things to know:

—Report the bullying to a school employee with authority to take corrective action. Telling a teacher may not be enough.

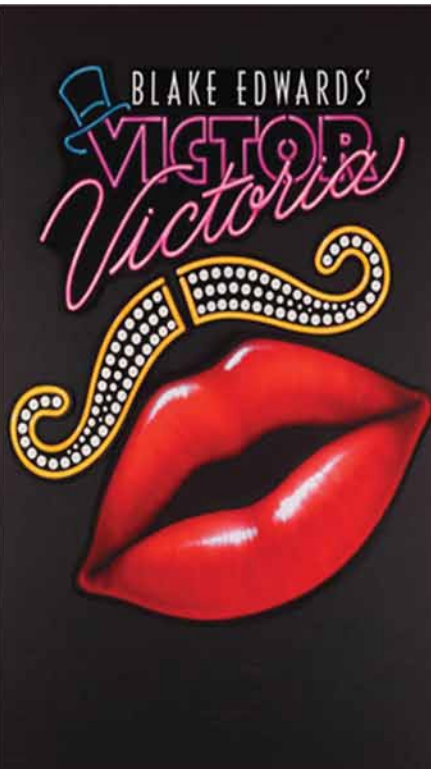
—If a school attempts to remedy the bullying by having a child change his or her class schedule, say "no." The burden of changing schedules should fall on the aggressor, not the victim.

—Make sure the school informs parents of the process to follow, in case there are subsequent bullying incidents.

"Just as I have seen school officials turn a blind eye to bullying, I have seen parents make unreasonable demands on schools about the action they should take to stop bullying," Kimmel said. "My hope is that 'Bullying and the Law' will arm parents with the information they need to advocate effectively for their children and work cooperatively with their schools to address bullying."

The free guide is available at [http://www.thebullyproject.com/bullying\\_the\\_la](http://www.thebullyproject.com/bullying_the_la).

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# KNIGHT at the movies

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

## Fall LGBT movie preview

The end of September means that fall movies and award season is just about here.

This year, the studios have a healthy crop of LGBT-themed movies in contention—from the polarizing Stonewall to the heartbreaking true story of a lesbian couples struggle for financial parity in *Freeheld* to the trans-themed *The Danish Girl* to Todd Haynes' lesbian romance *Carol*. That, and more, are headed to Chicago area movie theaters. Unless otherwise noted, these are the opening dates for runs of at least one week. Highlights:

### Late September

**The Year We Thought About Love**—The members of a Boston-based teen LGBTQ theater troupe (*True Colors: OUT Youth*) are profiled as they bring their coming out stories, their yearnings and their desires to sometimes receptive audiences—and sometimes not. This lively, instructive documentary from producer-director Ellen Brodsky crackles with youthful vitality and energy. The one night only, Thursday, Sept. 24, screening at AMC River East 21, 322 E. Illinois St., at 6:30 p.m. will be a benefit for About Face Theatre, Chicago's highly respected queer-themed theatrical company. <https://www.tugg.com/events/37792>; Sept. 24

**The New Girlfriend**—French queer auteur Francois Ozon (*Swimming Pool*, *8 Women*, *Under the Sand*, *Time to Leave*) returns with this wry black comedy that, in typical Ozon fashion, plays with gender boundaries—this time making it the theme of the film. One day, the female friend of a young widower is surprised to find that the widower likes dressing in drag and, with her help, hopes to delve deeper into this unexplored area of his life. It's a gender dramedy that defies expectations. <http://www.landmarktheatres.com/chicago/century-centre-cinema/film-info/the-new-girlfriend>; Sept. 25

**Stonewall**—Disaster-picture specialist Roland Emmerich (who is openly gay) gets personal with this look at the burgeoning gay-rights movement that was sparked by the riots that ensued in June 1969, when a group of LGBTQ patrons in a New York bar fought back against police harassment. Jeremy Irvine, Jonny Beauchamp, Ron Perlman and Jonathan Rhys Meyers co-star in the fall's most buzzed-



**The New Girlfriend.**

Image from Cohen Media Group

about movie. Sept. 25

**The Intern**—Anne Hathaway is a fashion editor and Robert DeNiro is a retired widower who goes to work for her in this latest relationship dramedy with a twist from *Something's Gotta Give*/*The Holiday*/*It's Complicated* writer-director Nancy Meyers. Sept. 25

**Goodnight Mommy**—It's an Austrian horror film about 10-year-old twin boys whose mother returns home after an operation with her face swathed in bandages. Soon mommy begins to exhibit some very odd behavior—and the twins react in kind. Although it sounds like typical horror fare, the movie has wowed critics and is Austria's entry for this year's foreign Academy Award. Sept. 25

### October

**The Martian**—Ridley Scott goes back into space for this suspenseful story of an astronaut who is inadvertently left behind on the planet Mars by his crew and who now have a limited time to try and rescue him. Jessica Chastain, Kristen Wiig, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Jeff Daniels co-star. Oct. 2

**Freeheld**—Ellen Page and Julianne Moore (following up her Oscar-winning turn in last year's *Still Alice*) star as a lesbian couple fighting for survivor benefits when one of them is diagnosed with late-stage cancer. It's based on the 2007 Oscar-winning short film. The film, which had its Chicago premiere at the Reeling Film Festival, was scripted by Philadelphia scribe Ron Nyswaner and also stars Michael Shannon and Steve Carell. Oct. 9

**Steve Jobs**—Danny Boyle (*Slumdog Millionaire*, *127 Hours*) directs Michael Fassbender in a biopic of the legendary co-founder of Apple. Oct. 9

**He Named Me Malala**—It's a documentary film about the young Pakistani feminist activist Malala Yousafzai, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Oct. 9

**Pan**—It's a lavish, big-budget retelling of the Peter Pan story starring Hugh Jackman, Garrett Hedlund, Rooney Mara and Amanda Seyfried. Oct. 9

**Crimson Peak**—This is a gothic romantic supernatural film from horror master Guillermo del Toro. Mia Wasikowska, Tom Hiddleston, Jessica Chastain and Charlie Hunnam co-star. Oct. 16

**Bridge of Spies**—Gentle funny man Paul Rudd steps into comic-book hero territory in this big-budget action flick that focuses on a

heist that will save the world. Evangeline Lilly, Hayley Atwell and Michael Pena co-star. Oct. 16

**Suffragette**—It's a drama based on the early days of the British feminist movement with Carey Mulligan, Helena Bonham Carter, Brendan Gleeson, out actor Ben Whishaw and Meryl Streep in a small but pivotal part. Oct. 23

**The Amazing Nina Simone**—The genius of the bisexual jazz songstress and civil-rights activist is explored—along with her troublesome personal life—in this documentary portrait. Oct. 23

**The Music Box of Horrors**—Twenty-four hours of creepy classics, from the rancid to the unsung to the audience favorites, are being shown. The Music Box Theatre's marathon has become a much-loved annual Chicago tradition. Oct. 24-25

**Truth**—It's a re-enactment of the fallout

that resulted after the broadcast of the controversial 60 Minutes story reported by Dan Rather about George Bush's questionable military service. Robert Redford plays Rather, and Cate Blanchett her producer. Oct. 30

### November

**Spectre**—Daniel Craig is back in the saddle as 007 in this latest entry in the James Bond franchise. Christoph Waltz plays the super criminal, Ralph Fiennes, out actor Ben Whishaw and Lea Seydoux co-star. Nov. 6

**Trumbo**—Bryan Cranston plays the blacklisted writer Dalton Trumbo, who continued to work under an assumed name during the infamous Hollywood blacklist, in this dramatic reenactment. Helen Mirren plays gossip columnist Hedda Hopper, while Elle Fanning, Diane Lane and John Goodman co-star. Nov. 6

**Miss You Already**—This movie's a tearjerker, with Drew Barrymore as a young woman trying to get pregnant while her best friend, Toni Collette, is battling cancer. Nov. 6

**The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2**—The saga of this post-apocalyptic YA franchise concludes with a battle to free the citizens of Panem from its tyrannical rule. Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson, Elizabeth Banks, Woody Harrelson and Liam Hemsworth star. Nov. 20

**Carol**—Patricia Highsmith's classic 1950s novel of a tragic lesbian romance finally comes to the screen with out director Todd Haynes at the helm and Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara as the star-crossed lovers. Nov. 20

**Legend**—Tom Hardy plays the dual roles of the Kray twins (one of whom was gay), the infamous British crime lords whose violent career is chronicled in this biopic. Nov. 20

**Victor Frankenstein**—The story of the legendary mad scientist and his infamous creation are seen through the eyes of his assistant Igor in this lavish attempt to once again reenergize the Frankenstein franchise. James McAvoy plays the title role and Daniel Radcliffe his troubled young assistant. Nov. 25

**The Danish Girl**—Eddie Redmayne follows up his Best Actor Oscar turn in *The Theory of Everything* with this eagerly anticipated adaptation of David Ebershoff's best-selling fictional dramatization of the life of Lile Elbe, one of the first people to have sex reassignment surgery. Alicia Vikander plays Gerda Wegener, Elbe's understanding wife. Directed by Tom Hooper (*Les Miz*, *The King's Speech*). Nov. 27

The Indiegogo campaign—<http://igg.me/at/easyabby-season2/x>—hopes to make its goal by Oct. 5. Perks for contributors include marital aids, gear from TomboyX clothing and the chance for a walk-on role.

Season one is available for streaming in 12 languages worldwide on [Youtube.com/juicyplanet](http://Youtube.com/juicyplanet) and [EasyAbby.com](http://EasyAbby.com).

## Jane Lynch dates rescheduled

Lyric Opera will present actress, comedian and singer Jane Lynch (*Glee*) in her cabaret show *See Jane Sing* during the 2015-16 season.

Due to a scheduling conflict resulting from the production schedule of her new CBS series *Angel from Hell*, the dates for Lynch's Lyric performances are moving from the previously announced Dec. 17-18, 2015, to newly confirmed dates on June 17-18, 2016, with performances at 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. each evening.

Ticket holders need do nothing to keep their tickets for the new dates, or may choose to call Lyric Opera at 312-827-5600 to exchange into one of the other three *See Jane Sing* performances. Tickets (\$50-\$150) for the four June performances of *See Jane Sing* are on sale now at [LyricOpera.org](http://LyricOpera.org) or 312-827-5600.

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**Fawzia Mirza in Easy Abby.**

Image from Wendy Jo Carlton

## 'Easy Abby' Web series raising funds for second season

Lesbian Web series *Easy Abby*, which had 30 million views for season one, is coming back for season two.

The series, which Wendy Jo Carlton wrote and directed, has announced a crowdfunding campaign for a show that has been called "a gay girl's Nurse Jackie." Shooting in Chicago and Los Angeles, *Easy Abby*'s cast includes Guinevere Turner (*The L Word*, *Chasing Amy*), Billy Aaron Brown (*Chicago PD*, *8 Simple Rules*), Dalila Ali Rajah (*New Girl*; *The Young and the Restless*), and Lia D. Mortenson (*Nightmare on Elm Street*).

# Reeling Film Festival: Into the homostretch

BY STEVE WARREN

(Kinsey) Six down and two to go. Having already delighted thousands with films, filmmakers and celebrity guests, the 33rd Reeling Film Festival gets ready to wind up without winding down.

The opening night screening of *Fourth Man Out* was a huge success. "The audience loved the movie," said Brenda Webb, the festival's features co-programmer who also serves as executive director of Chicago Filmmakers. "The producers commented onstage that the Reeling audience gave the film the most laughs they've heard to date. We were delighted with the reception. It set a great tone for a week of fantastic LGBTQ movies to come."

Here are my thoughts on the final eight films. You can still read expanded versions of these and 15 other festival reviews at <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com>.

Visit the festival's online headquarters at <http://reelingfilmfestival.org>.

Wed., Sept. 23

**In the Turn** (\*\* 1/2), 6:45 p.m.

Erica Tremblay's documentary about a ten-year-old transgender girl being empowered by a queer roller derby collective, the Vagine Regime, is so inspiring I wanted to love it; but its episodic structure is off-putting and despite being about roller derby, it shows very little of the sport.

**Beautiful Something** (\*\* 1/2), 7 p.m.

A throwback to gay ghettoization, *Beautiful Something* is set in a nighttime world of men looking for love and finding sex. After two hot sex scenes to get your attention, it's mostly talk, with everyone overacting (mostly well) except Zack Ryan, who stands out for his natural performance.

**Two 4 One** (\*\*\*), 9:15 p.m.

The old "pregnant man" premise is no longer a fantasy. Canadian filmmaker Maureen Bradley blends seriousness and humor in the right amounts as Adam, who used to be Melanie, gets pregnant while helping Miriam, his former lesbian lover, artificially inseminate herself. Bradley makes you laugh, cry and believe it.

**Like You Mean It** (\*\* 1/2), 9:30 p.m.

It could have been an excellent study of a gay relationship in crisis, but writer-director-actor Philipp Karner made it a vanity project, all about his character while short-changing his more sympathetic partner, played by Denver Milord. Their scenes together—the film's best—suggest what it might have been.

Thursday, Sept. 24

**Stuff** (\*\*\*), 7 p.m.

I'm not a big soap-opera fan but *Stuff* happens to be a good one. After 14 years together, Deb (Yvonne Jung) and her wife Trish (Karen Sillas) are drifting apart. Deb drifts toward Jamie (Traci Dinwiddie), a hot tattoo artist. Solid acting overcomes minor weaknesses in the screenplay.

**That's Not Us** (\*\*), 7:15 p.m.

A lesbian couple, a gay couple and a straight couple share a beach cottage near Manhattan, each with a problem to work out during the weekend, in a largely improvised, largely dull drama. The title is misleading. The aim is to attract multiple demographics and make them say, "That's us!"

**Hush Up Sweet Charlotte** (\* 1/2), 9:15 p.m.

Billy Cliff's follow-up to "Baby Jane?" is a far less successful drag spoof, again featuring Matthew Martin in the Bette Davis part. This one's less spoof than remake—with men in the lead-



**Beautiful Something.**  
Image from  
AltarBoy  
Productions

ing female roles; a bad melodrama that's rarely even amusing, once you get over the initial giggles.

**Death in Buenos Aires** (\*\*\*), 9:30 p.m.

You're never sure what to believe, including your own eyes, in this intriguing police procedural. Inspector Demian Bichir heads the investigation of the murder of a gay man from a wealthy family. Rookie Chino Darin gets himself assigned to the case. The twists are both intelligent and hot.

## Emmy wins exhibit diversity

If the 67th Annual Primetime Emmy Awards, held Sept. 20 in Los Angeles, aren't known for anything else, it may be recognized for its diversity—especially regarding African-American women.

In a historic win, Viola Davis became the first African-American to win the Emmy for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama for portraying a law-school professor/defense attorney in ABC's *How to Get Away with Murder*. Her speech became one of the most buzzed-about moments of the award ceremony, as Davis said, "The only thing that separates women of color from anyone is opportunity. You cannot win an Emmy for roles that are simply not there." She also quoted Harriet Tubman and thanked African-American actresses such as fellow nominee Taraji P. Henson (*Empire*), Kerry Washington, Halle Berry and Gabrielle Union for helping to push boundaries.

However, Davis wasn't the only African-American woman to win, as *Orange Is the New Black*'s Uzo Aduba prevailed in the Sup-

porting Actress Drama category and *American Crime*'s Regina King won for Supporting Actress in a Limited Series Or Movie. Aduba become the second in history to win a Best Actor or Actress Emmy in both the drama and comedy categories because of the Netflix series' switch to dramatic competition for 2015 (following, as host Andy Samberg pointed out, in the footsteps of Ed Asner).

Allison Janney also pulled off an "Ed Asner" of her own later in the evening, tying the legendary TV actor with her seventh win (out of 10 nominations). Her Sept. 20 victory was for her role in the comedy *Mom*.

LGBT individuals and LGBT-themed projects were also victorious. HBO's *Olive Kitteridge* won six awards. Lesbian director Lisa Cholodenko (who helmed the big-screen film *The Kids Are All Right*) was one of the winners.

Jill Soloway won for outstanding comedy director for the "Best New Girl" episode of *Transparent*. Also, Jeffrey Tambor won for Best Actor in a Comedy for his role on the transgender-themed show, while Bradley Whitford prevailed in the Outstanding Guest Actor in a Comedy Series category.

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Jonny Beauchamp (leaning against the car) and Vladimir Alexis (sitting on car) in Stonewall. Image from AltarBoy Productions

MOVIES

## Stonewall: Brick layers

BY LAWRENCE FERBER

The issue of who threw the first brick at 1969's Stonewall Riots, which launched the modern LGBT-rights movement and annual pride parades, has been a point of controversy and disagreement long before director Roland Emmerich's new film of the same name. Yet Emmerich, best known for bombastic, special effects-laden Hollywood disaster blockbusters like Independence Day and The Day After Tomorrow, is the first to warn that audiences shouldn't regard this key moment in his film as a representation of historical fact.

"We said, let's make a movie about Stonewall and try to be as entertaining and accurate about it as possible, but it's a [narrative] mov-

ie, not a documentary," he explained. "When you look at a movie like Titanic, at the end the Titanic goes down, but the rest is a love story between a rich girl and poor artist. Those characters were probably never on the Titanic, but that's where it happened. Our story takes place [partly] in this club Stonewall and our main character, Danny, learns about what's going on, to be gay in NYC, from these homeless kids, falls in love, and learns to survive."

Written by out screenwriter Jon Robin Baitz, Stonewall follows the journey of Danny (Jeremy Irvine), a teen from the small town Midwest who hightails it to Manhattan after his father gives him the boot for being gay. Once arrived at the city's gay mecca, Christopher Street, Danny falls in with a clique of rowdy home-

less LGBTQ sex workers including Puerto Rican "scare queen," Ray/Ramona (Jonny Beauchamp), sassy African-American Cong (Vlad Alexis) and gender-bending hippie Orphan Annie (Caleb Landry Jones). Stonewall Inn is their hub, and where Danny meets and falls for older Mattachine Society activist, Trevor (Jonathan Rhys Meyers), who despises Danny's friends and their flamboyance. Add corrupt cops, homophobia and a mafia-run prostitution ring, and it all combusts on a balmy June night during a police raid on the Stonewall...

Spoiler alert: Danny does, in fact, throw the first brick in the movie—he's motivated to do so when a lesbian is carried away by police and urges the angry gay crowd to do something, which did actually happen in real life—but

those who suspect the film is a "whitewashing" based upon the trailer (see sidebar) will find that not to be the case at all.

Stonewall's cast is diverse regarding ethnicity and sexual/gender identities (including "scare queens," feminine males who couldn't afford proper drag get-ups yet wore eyeliner and whatever else they could cobble together) and Emmerich and team decided to include quite a few characters drawn directly from history, including Black drag queen/activist Martha P. Johnson, played by Nigerian-American actor Otojo Abit; Ray/Ramona—a composite of Puerto Ricans Silvia Rivera, a drag queen and transgender activist, and Ray Castro; and Cong, portrayed by Alexis, a African-Canadian newcomer.

Despite the fact Danny throws the brick, a turning point in his character's arc and an embracing of his sexuality and friendships, "It's Cong's brick," noted Alexis. Openly gay, Alexis is a native of Montreal, where the film was shot. (A detailed replica of 1960s-era Christopher Street and Stonewall Inn was constructed within a giant building.)

Cong, who always carries a brick in a handbag for larcenous activities, is based on real-life Stonewall participant Congo Woman, chronicled in David Carter's excellent non-fiction Stonewall tome. Alexis describes Congo Woman as "a nasty Black drag queen that steals things, throws bricks and breaks windows just to survive."

"I also took inspiration from so many other trans and queer kids out there," he said. "The documentary Paris Is Burning, and Jason Holiday, who was a Black artist back in the '60s [and subject of the 1967 documentary Portrait of Jason]. For me, it's not important who threw the first brick, because the fight was already happening [by the time it was thrown]. We don't have to praise a specific person."

The UK-born Irvine, who previously starred in Steven Spielberg's War Horse, admits that he was only peripherally aware of the Stone-

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wall rebellion when he took on the role. Once cast, he immersed himself in research and drew personal inspiration and details from someone involved with the production. He won't name the person, but says they shared their coming out letter with him. While Irvine also declines to divulge whether he ever questioned his own sexuality, he freely admits that his mother is pleased that Jonathan Rhys Meyers plays his onscreen love interest. "My mom says you couldn't choose someone better to have your first gay sex scene with."

Unlike his film's hayseed protagonist, Emmerich was born into a relatively wealthy German family, and his own coming out took place comparatively late. "I didn't want to become a 'gay director' because, in Germany when you were a gay director, I couldn't have done the movies I wanted to do," he recalls. He arrived in the USA at age 33, fell in love with another man, and, later feeling much freer in his personal and professional life, considered making a gay-themed film.

It was during a tour of Los Angeles' Gay & Lesbian Center that Emmerich learned that 40 percent of today's homeless youth are LGBTQ. Upon digging into Stonewall's history, and the critical role homeless youth played in the riot, he whipped up the film's story outline.

Hollywood didn't exactly embrace the idea of backing such a film, so Emmerich financed Stonewall independently with friends, and brought on Baitz as screenwriter. He also enlisted surviving Stonewall witnesses to speak with the film's actors, and insisted that all extras taking part in the riot scene be LGBT-identified (when Emmerich learned that some straight extras were unhappy having to dance with other men during Stonewall Inn scenes, they were fired, Alexis shares). "Montreal has a big gay population, and I insisted that everyone who is part of this riot has to be gay, and there was some real anger there," Emmerich says. "For two or three days they were pumped. A couple of times we said 'stop' with a megaphone and it took a while to stop them."

Apparently, some of the stars, including Irvine, Jones and Alexis, retained their characters' more rowdy, sassy traits off-screen, especially while enjoying downtime in Montreal's famed gay village.

"I told my friends before I started doing the project, I might not see you much this summer because I will be unbearable," Alexis recalled, laughing. "Cong is such a strong character who has no fucks to give. Without naming names, we went to a gay strip joint and someone [from our group] threw a glass of water at the stripper dancing. It was sort of a Flashdance tribute. He didn't receive it that well, and I needed to go speak to him in French and explain we are doing a movie and in our own heads! He understood and we shook hands after."

Despite whatever controversies may transpire (or not) once audiences have actually seen Emmerich's film in its entirety, Stonewall's memory and legacy has already imprinted itself on the filmmakers. The day after wrapping, Irvine visited New York's actual Stonewall Inn—"It was like I was back on the film set but for real, we got horribly drunk and danced the night away!," he said—and an empowered Emmerich added LGBT characters to his upcoming Independence Day sequel. (He declined to share details beyond "I have a couple of them.") Meanwhile, Alexis, who recently shot a cameo in Bryan Singer's next X-Men film, admitted he would have liked a physical takeaway—specifically, Cong's brick.

"I wish I could have!" he laments. "But this was my first movie and you never know what you can take or not and I don't want to be someone who steals from the set. That would be like taking Cong to another level. Some crazy method acting to steal from the set."

SIDEBAR

### Two Stonewalls, two controversies

The Stonewall trailer received a standing ovation at the GLAAD Media Awards in March—where director Roland Emmerich received the Stephen F. Kolzak Award for his work in promoting equality—so when it debuted to the public in early August, resulting in calls for a boycott of the film, Emmerich was completely surprised by this completely different, outraged reception.

"I was upset, I have to admit," he said, "but one of our investors, who is very involved in marriage equality, he's already happy because we said, you have to bring attention to Stonewall because kids these days don't know nothing. Already we made our goal—people are talking about who threw bricks, who was there and not."

A 1995 film of the same name—directed by the late Nigel Finch and written by Black gay British multi-hyphenate Rikki Beadle-Blair (who also co-wrote Patrik-Ian Polk's recent Blackbird) and based on Martin Duberman's book—also stirred up some controversy in its day, although mostly concerning its historical accuracy and emphasis on drag queens. (Guill-

ermo Diaz, who has since come out publicly, co-starred as a headstrong Latino drag queen La Miranda.)

Beadle-Blair politely declined to be interviewed for Stonewall-related articles, while Emmerich said of Finch's 1995 film, "His was

more like a musical. We have a totally different take and it was entertaining, but I wanted to tell another story."

—Lawrence Ferber

### Jackie Collins dies at 77

Writer Jackie Collins—the sister of actress Joan Collins who was known for dishy novels such as Hollywood Wives—died Sept. 19 at age 77 after battle with breast cancer that she kept largely secret, according to The L.A. Times.

Collins revealed the illness only to her family and closest friends until she spoke about it in a recent interview with People magazine.

Her website stated that she wrote more than 30 best-selling novels, including Hollywood Wives and Hollywood Husbands, selling more than 500 million copies of her works globally.

She spoke with Windy City Times in 2014 about Confessions of a Wild Child, a novel she was promoting that focused on the teen

years of famed protagonist Lucky Santangelo. The book contains several gay characters, including Lucky's brother, Dario.

In honor of Collins, her family asks fans to consider donating to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Organization, Advocate.com noted.

The L.A. Times article is at <http://www.latimes.com/local/obituaries/la-me-0920-jackie-collins-20150920-story.html>.



Jackie Collins. Photo by Greg Gorman

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## VIEWPOINTS

# Dis-membering Stonewall

BY REV. IRENE MONROE

[Note: The names in the story have been changed to protect identities.]

*"By institutionalizing memory, resisting the onset of oblivion, recalling the memory of tragedy that for long years remained hidden or unrecognized and by assigning its proper place in the human conscience, we respond to our duty to remember."*

—UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura

I am disturbed by Roland Emmerich's historical drama Stonewall, because of its whitewashing of a historic moment-turned-movement. When I look back at the first night of the Stonewall Inn riots, I could have never imagined its future importance. The first night played out no differently from previous riots with Black Americans and white policemen. And so it too has been underreported. But I was there.

FRIDAY, JUNE 27TH, WAS THE last day of school that year. And with school out, my middle-school cronies and I looked forward to a summer reprieve from rioting against Italian, Irish and Jewish public school kids for being bussed into their neighborhoods. However, the summer months in Brooklyn's African-American enclaves only escalated rioting between New York's finest—the New York Police Department—and us. During this tumultuous decade of Black rage and white police raids, knee-jerk responses to each other's slights easily set the stage for a conflagration, creating both instantaneous and momentary fighting alliances in

these Black communities across gangs, class, age, ethnicity and sexual orientations—against police brutality.

That night of June 27 started out no differently than any hot and humid summer Friday night in my neighborhood. Past midnight, folks with no AC or working fans in their homes were just hanging out. Some lounged on the fire escapes while others were on the stoops of their brownstones laughing and shooting the breeze. Some were in heated discussion of Black revolutionary politics, while the Holy Rollers were competing with each other over Scripture. The Jenkins boys were drumming softly on their congas to the hot breezy mood of the night air. And directly under the street lamp was an old beat-up folding card table where the Fletchers and the Andersons, lifelong friends and neighbors, were shouting over a game of bid whist.

The sight of Dupree galloping up the block toward us abruptly interrupted the calm of the first hour of Saturday, June 28. Dupree stopped in front of the gaming table and yelled out, "The pigs across the bridge are beating up on Black faggots—right now!" Cissy Anderson, who was just moments from throwing in her hand to go to bed, let out a bloodcurdling scream that shook us and brought a momentary halt to everything. Nate Anderson grabbed his wife to comfort her and said, "Cissy, calm down."

Greenwich Village in the 1800s had housed the largest population for former slaves in the country. But gentrification forced racial relocation and led to Harlem becoming the Mecca of



Rev. Irene Monroe.

Photo from Monroe

Black America.

When Dupree stopped in front of Mr. Fletcher's game table, he was signaling to his aunt and uncle that their son Birdie, who sang like a beautiful songbird, was more than likely in the melee across the bridge. Everyone knew Birdie was gay, and we wondered where he and his "brother-girls," as he dubbed them, had gone on the weekends when they laughed and spoke in code on Sundays about their exploits while robing-up for choir.

Cissy detested that her eldest, Nate Turner "Birdie" Anderson Jr., went outside the community to a white neighborhood to be himself. Nate Sr., too, worried about his eldest son. When Birdie told his dad he was gay, his father asked him if he understood that he didn't know how to keep him safe, especially if his son wandered out of his purview. When his voice rose above Dupree's and the crowd, we were as shocked to silence as we were by Cissy's blood-

curdling scream. "My son is somewhere there and I need you all to help me find him and bring him home safely to his mother and me."

Coming out of the subway station at Christopher Street we could hear the commotion. The shoving and pushing by both protestors and police yanked three of us away from the core group; we were left to fend for ourselves.

As the momentum of the crowd pushed my small group to Waverly Place, a block away from the Stonewall, we witnessed two white cops pummeling a Black drag queen. "I should shove this stick up your ass," said one of the cops as he pulled up her dress with a nightstick in his hand. The taller of the two cops yanked off her wig and laughingly tossed it to the other cop. In spotting us, the cop who caught the wig threw it at us yelling, "You nigger fags get away!" The wig missed and landed about a foot away from us, but the cop's words hit, striking fear.

On the first night of the Stonewall Inn riots, African-Americans and Latinos were the largest percentage of the protestors because we heavily frequented the bar. For Black and Latino homeless youth and young adults, who slept in nearby Christopher Park, the Stonewall Inn was their stable domicile. The Stonewall Inn being raided was nothing new. In the 1960s, gay bars in the Village were routinely raided, but some have attributed race as another reason the establishments were targeted.

The Stonewall Riot of June 27-29, 1969, in Greenwich Village started on the backs of working-class African-American and Latino queers who patronized that bar. Those brown and Black LGBTQ people are not only absent from the photos of that night, but have been bleached from its written history. Many LGBTQ Blacks and Latinos argue that one of the reasons for the gulf between whites and themselves is about how the dominant queer community rewrote and continues to control the narrative of Stonewall.

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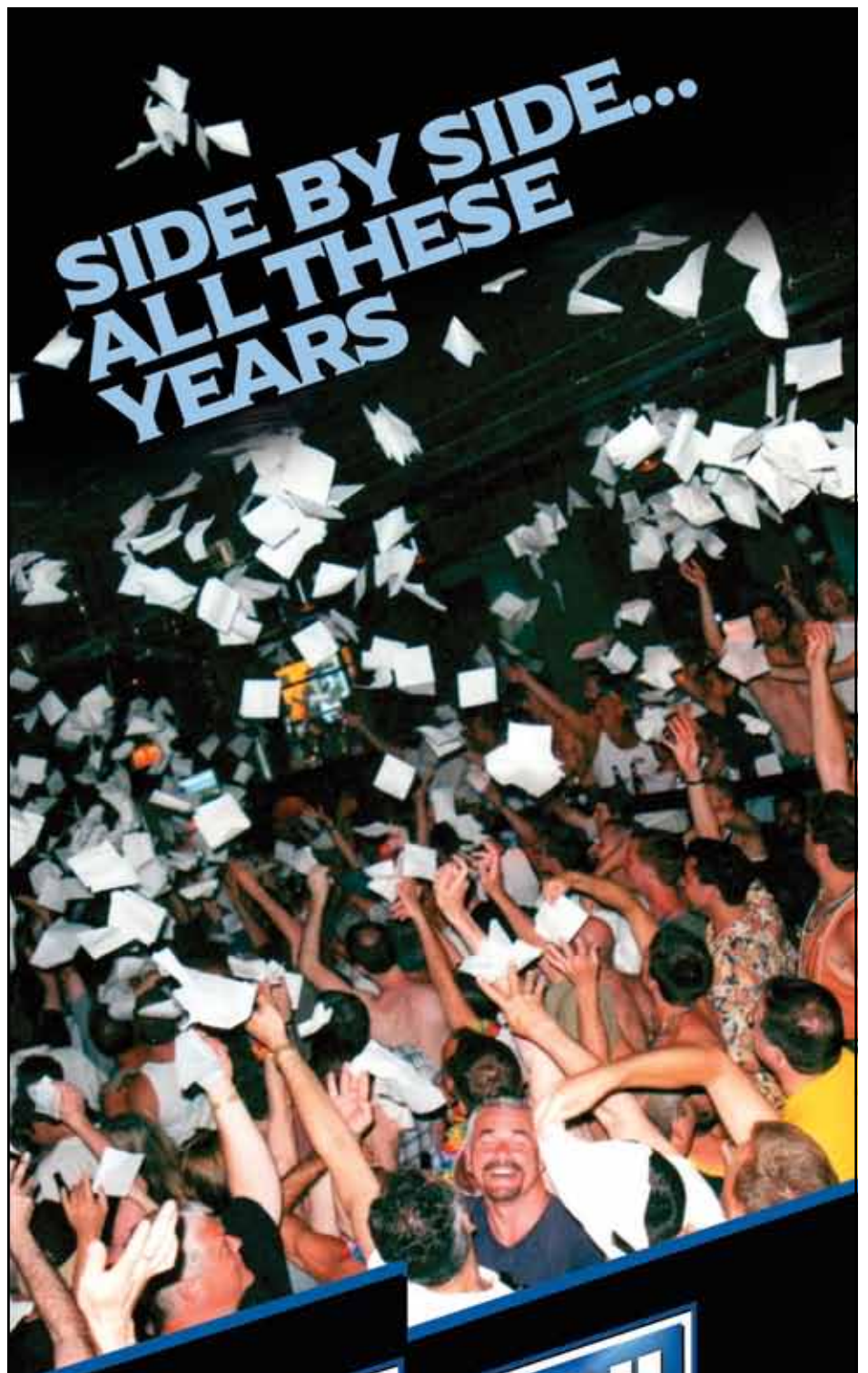
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## BOOKS

# Douglas O'Keeffe on surviving India's 9/11

BY BEN SANDERS

Douglas O'Keeffe, a gay leatherman in Chicago, has been working as a flight attendant for the past 20 years. On Nov. 26, 2008, he and his crew were on a layover at the Trident-Oberoi Hotel in Mumbai, India, when a terrorist attack by Pakistani extremists threatened to take their lives.

His book—*Gunfire and Silence, Surviving India's 9/11*, on sale since early August—tells the true story of how he and his crew managed to survive.

Windy City Times spoke with O'Keeffe over the phone about the book, as well as his experience both during and after the attack.

**Windy City Times: While you state that the book is based on actual events, you also chose to create certain characters for dramatic purposes. What was your reasoning behind that?**

DO: Douglas O'Keeffe: A number of my crew members were very traumatized by the events and didn't want to be identified in any book format. They wanted their privacy respected and I chose to do that.

I used fictionalized names, but the events depicted and the things that the characters did were real.

**WCT: Many people, including yourself, call the November 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai "India's 9/11." What makes this comparison appropriate?**

DO: I would say the press very quickly latched on to that because it was a terrorist attack upon a major metropolitan city, involving the attacks upon large, iconic locations similar to the World Trade Center in New York City. The extent of the attack was also profound and affected thousands of people. The city of Mumbai was completely taken by surprise and was actually shut down, largely, for parts of Thursday and Friday following the attack because they were simply overwhelmed by what had happened.

**WCT: You wrote how you "projected a calm sense of normalcy" in the moments following the first explosion in the [Trident-Oberoi Hotel]. How were you able to do that, considering the circumstances?**

DO: I simply made a choice somewhere in my brain to be calm and not to become excited and/or rattled by what was happening around me, because I could see so many of the other people were morbidly afraid, and I felt that the character Nina [Hoffman] needed someone that was calm enough around her that would



The photo is of Douglas O'Keeffe next to the Trident-Oberoi's memorial to the attack. Photo courtesy of O'Keeffe

show her that we were OK.

**WCT: How long do you think that you were in the conference room hiding from the terrorists?**

DO: About two hours. I believe we would have been in there indefinitely had we not been found by the hotel employee and the fact that [German International Airlines purser] Regina [Schumann] was able to get word out [to her husband, Lutz, who alerted the GIA operations center about their situation]. But other than that, I really believe we would have been in there for a great deal of time.

**WCT: When you heard footsteps outside of the conference room, not knowing that soldiers had come to your rescue, what thoughts were running through your mind?**

DO: My thought was, "Well I'm glad Colleen [Ballard] is behind me because when they shoot, my body might save her. But I'm dead. This is it." I simply accepted the fact that I was dead and I wasn't going to go out of there. The time had come and it was over, and I simply accepted that. I wasn't afraid.

I also kept thinking in my head again and again, "This is an airline layover, how can this be happening! This simply can't be going on!" But at the very last moment it was, "Well, this is it. I'm dead."

**WCT: Everyone in your crew somehow managed to survive the attack. What do you**

make of that?

DO: I think it was astronomical, given the severity of the attack and the circumstances that surrounded each person. As I said in [the book], I didn't even know that anyone else had survived except us six who were together [in the conference room]. Not until we were outside did we know that others had survived.

**WCT: Once you were safe and sound, what was it like to speak to your family and friends over the phone and in person for the first time?**

DO: Initially, I was in shock, and the first couple of days the people with whom I was sharing the information were a small group. Over time it became exhausting, quite frankly, because everyone wanted to hear what happened, everyone wanted to contribute something, even people that you only know a little bit. Everyone was phoning, everyone was contacting, everyone wanted to air the story, and it just became exhausting after a while.

**WCT: You took a month off after returning from the attack. What did you do during that time?**

DO: The first week to 10 days or so were all logistics: the debriefings with the airlines, the debriefings with the FBI, replacing some of the items that I needed to replace, and also just getting your wits back and sleeping as much as you want. If you were exhausted, [they'd say], "Just go to sleep."

I channeled all the energy I had into surviving, so I had nothing in reserve.

**WCT: In 2012, you returned back to the conference room at the Trident-Oberoi Hotel. Why did you go back, especially considering that many of the crew members who survived the attack have never returned?**

DO: [Laughs] It wasn't actually my choice. When we bid [for flights], we use a computer program, and of all things the computer assigned me the Mumbai sequence, and I have to admit that I was a little unhappy about it, and a little unsure.

I discussed it with the counselor with whom I spoke to after the attack, and the woman I know who runs the Facebook page for us survivors, and they both encouraged me to go back. I intentionally chose to go back to the Trident [Oberoi] Hotel ... and I'm glad I did. Being able to go back to see the [conference] room in a non-threatening situation, and to actually thank it for saving our lives because that room enabled us time [was therapeutic].

**WCT: How often do you think about what happened to you?**

DO: Recently, of course, it's been a lot more with the release of the book and people's reactions to it, but outside of that I really only think about it around the anniversary time.

**WCT: Do you have plans to write another book in the future?**

DO: I hope so, yes.

**WCT: Any specific ideas in mind?**

DO: I have a lot of ideas, and we'll see what terminates when I finally sit down and do it. [Laughs]

## 'Avondale' Sept. 26 on Milwaukee Ave.

The arts and culture festival "A Day in Avondale" returns Saturday, Sept. 26, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., on an extended stretch of Milwaukee Avenue between Kimball and Belmont avenues.

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## David Bowie box set out Sept. 25

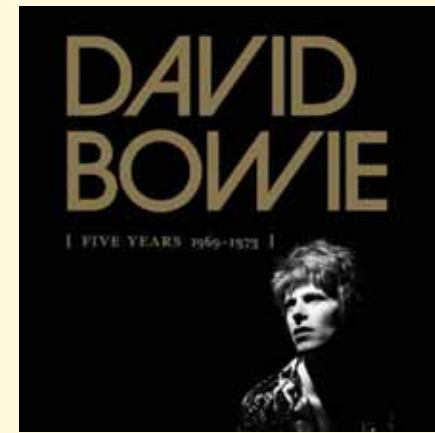
Parlophone Records has announced that David Bowie Five Years 1969-1973—the first in a series of boxed sets spanning Bowie's career—will be released Sept. 25.

The 10-album/12-CD box (\$149.98), 10-album/13-LP vinyl set (\$249.98), and

digital download each feature all of the material officially released by Bowie during the those years in his career. All of the formats include tracks that have never before appeared on CD/digitally as well as new remasters.

Exclusive to the boxed sets will be Re:Call 1, a new two-disc compilation of non-album singles, single versions and b-sides.

Some of the songs that will be featured include "Changes," "The Jean Genie," "Space Oddity," "Hang on to Yourself" and "Velvet Goldmine."



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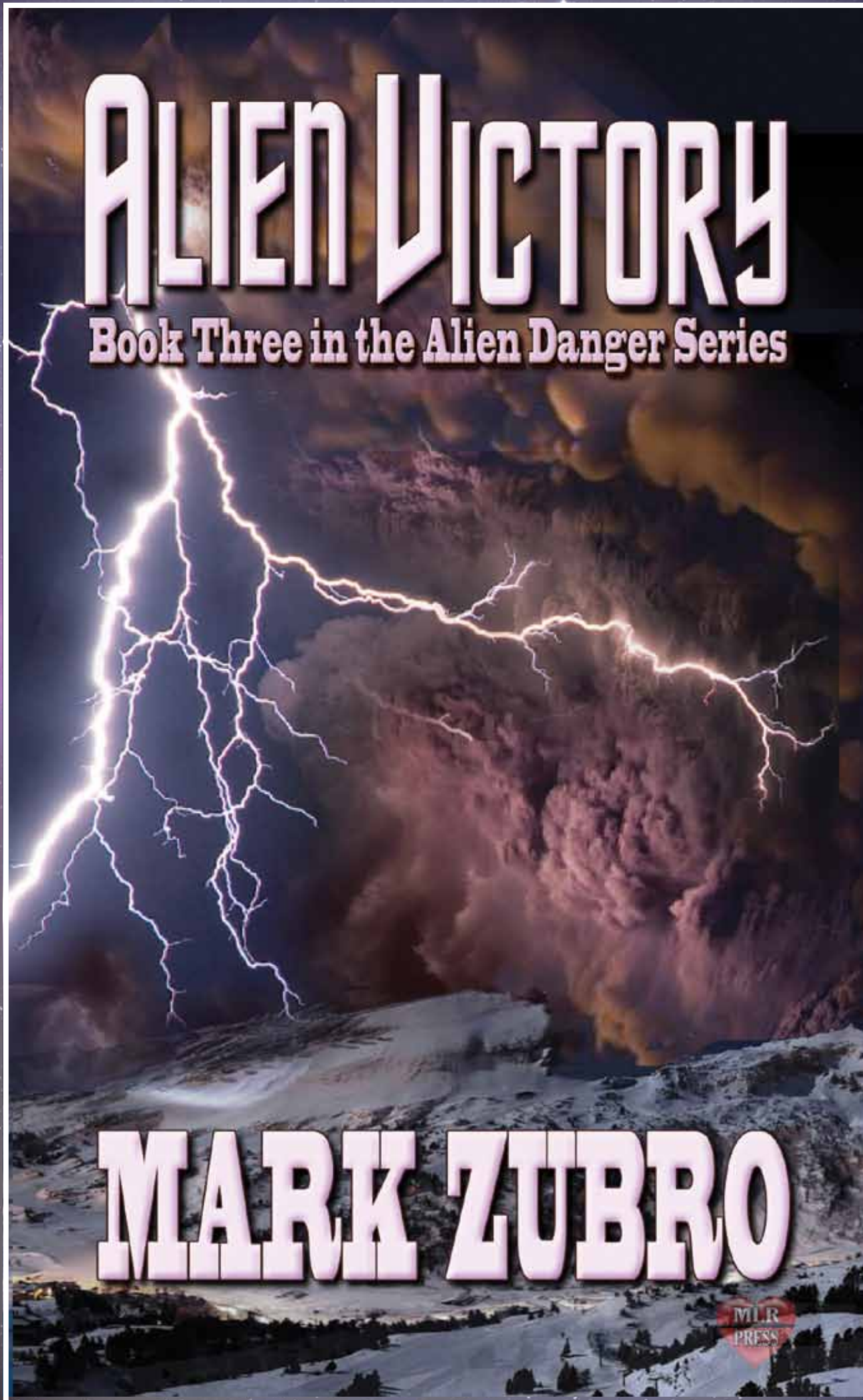
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**WINDY CITY TIMES**

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## the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in  
WINDY CITY TIMES

### SAVOR

## Autre Monde; Cantina 1910

BY ANDREW DAVIS

I had never been to Berwyn. Not that there haven't been good reasons to go there, but I've definitely found one: **Autre Monde Cafe & Spirits** (6727 Roosevelt Rd.; AutreMondeCafe.net).

Autre Monde, which launched in 2011, is a celebration of Mediterranean food, with ingredients on the seasonal menus ranging from almonds to olive oil—giving one the feeling that s/he is in another world. (“Autre Monde,” in fact, is French for “another world.”)

Chefs Dan Pancake and Beth Partridge (with Andrew Kerns as the chef de cuisine) have brought their incredible experience—which includes helming the kitchens at Café Spiaggia and Spiaggia, respectively—to Autre Monde.

Going to Autre Monde was an incredible expe-

rience, as my dining companion and I skipped the chilly inside to sit on the colorful patio on a day that had perfect weather. (I don't usually enjoy dining outdoors—heat and bugs being my mortal enemies—but this day, as I stated, was exceptional.)

Something else Autre Monde has going for it is the food (and, by the way, I highly recommend trying the chef's special—\$55 for what seems like a boatload of items). The meze platter had a slew of items on it, ranging from Marcona almonds to meats to (my fave) pepper jam. The soft polenta with mushroom ragout and poached egg was one of my favorite dishes of the evening, with the flavors complementing each other beautifully.

What was amazing (honestly) was that each dish seemed to be even better as the night progressed. The wood-grilled octopus was another winner, along with the lamb pintxos (with olive and harissa). The sweet corn risotto also hit a high note, as did the ribeye (served with salad).

The desserts made for a fitting ending. The olive-oil cakes, with berry jam and vanilla whipped cream, were incredibly tasty—but, somehow, the chocolate hazelnut pot de creme topped them, going into the realm of being dangerous. A smaller version of the latter dessert would be preferable—if for no other reason than to lessen the amount of guilt I felt.

Autre Monde is certainly worth the trip to Berwyn.



Goat chorizo (left) and modern lighting at Cantina 1910.  
Photos by Andrew Davis

Chicago's Andersonville has another restaurant in the neighborhood—and it's a doozy.

Situated at the former site of T's Restaurant and Bar, **Cantina 1910** (5025 N. Clark St.; Cantina-1910.com)—so named after the decade-long Mexican Revolution that began in 1910—opened Sept. 16.

According to a press release, “Cantina 1910's menu takes an updated approach to traditional and regional dishes, offering guests authentic Mexican flavors presented in unique, unexpected ways. Committed to sourcing 70 percent of its food and beverage from within a 200-mile radius of Chicago, the menu showcases a variety of Mexican dishes, including tacos, ceviches, small plates and larger entrees.” There will also be a rooftop garden on the third floor.

Executive Chef Diana Dávila certainly impressed during her opening (which, before dish-

es were served, featured a media-related mixer, DJ and the band You Are Here). The nachos were beyond delicious, with a slight kick, while carne asado tacos were similarly tasty. Executive Pastry Chef Andrew Pingul also impressed, with a tres leches cake that reminded my guest of the dishes he had in Mexico. (At the time I checked on Sept. 17, the menu hadn't been posted online. However, I expect that to change soon.)

As for drinks, try the Jacko's Ponche—a heady mix of mezcal, ancho, absinthe and cranberry that comes with a bubbling side (thanks to dry ice) that will have your neighbors ooh-ing and aah-ing.

Cantina 1910 is open for dinner seven days a week at 5-10 p.m. Additionally, the Cantina 1910 café is open 7 a.m.-3 p.m. daily and the cantina is open 10 p.m.-2 a.m. daily (3 a.m. on Saturdays).

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"Honestly, I'll make out with anyone who's willing. I brought my own lube. I don't know if that's something that interests anyone but, yeah, I'll do it with literally anyone."—Amy Schumer backstage quip at the Emmys. Sounds like the press room was funnier than the actual show!

How many times have you read something on Facebook and wished there were a "dislike" button? Well, Facebook has read our minds. Last week, Mark Zuckerberg said, "People have asked about the 'dislike' button for many years ... and today is a special day. Because today is the day that I actually get to say we are working on it and are very close to shipping a test of it." What are they shipping? Do I have to buy it or install something on my computer? Where do I get to press "dislike" for this idea?

I surely would have hit "dislike" from the Red Carpet, since Hollywood was rocked by a triple-digit heat wave on Emmy night. The funereal mood continued inside for the most unbearably painful awards show I've ever attended—and I was at the Oscars when Rob Lowe sang with Snow White! And poor **Andy Samberg**. He used to be so funny, but there was nary a laugh to be found in his monologue. I really shouldn't single him out—almost every scripted bit fell flat. Here's a fun fact—this year's Emmy show actually ran under schedule because the time allotted for laughs was unnecessary. At a certain point, they stopped asking winners to wrap it up. During one commercial break, they asked if anyone of us in the audience had anyone we'd like to thank.

I hate to toot my own horn, but since someone isn't here to do it for me (and since I'm limber), I'll do it myself. Days after last week's column, I awoke to the following headline online: "ABC News' **Gio Benitez** Gets Down On His Knees." No surprise there. But this was a report that Gio had proposed to beau **Tommy DiDario**—days after I told you about their romantic relationship. And if I'm not mistaken, I am the only national columnist to report about this with the same candor (and ebb) I would report a heterosexual relationship. Benitez did it right. He brought Tommy to Paris and, with the Eiffel Tower in the background, got down on one knee. We know the details because Gio hired a photographer to capture the special moment. After all, he is a newsman. Without the photographer, he wouldn't be able to post it online with the caption, "Time is what's left behind in the wake of love." And, you know what they say—a photo is worth a thousand words. In the photo, we get to see Tommy with his hand up to his mouth, as if he's got the vapors.

They say life imitates art. Sometimes art imitates life. Sometimes art imitates art. And sometimes I imitate Mae West, but that's a different story. The point is, in these days where we see the news reflecting stories which have long been important to our community (gay rights, same-sex marriage, transgenderism), sometimes its even more powerful to see those stories reflected in art. Well, OK, on television. That's an awfully highfalutin way to announce that NBC is developing a reboot of the 1980s series *Hart to Hart* with a twist—the two Harts will be gay men. The new series will be about a gay couple—conventional attorney Jonathan Hart and his rule-breaking investigator spouse, Dan Hartman. While we hear that the show will have no direct connection to the original series, I'm told



**Graeme Coleman (above) was the reporter who confronted actor Tom Hardy about sexuality.**

Photo by Andrew Davis

that **Stefanie Powers** is open to making an appearance.

Actor **Tom Hardy** ran into a potentially sticky situation when he was answering questions at the Toronto International Film Festival. The discussion centered on his upcoming film *Legend*, in which he plays twin gangsters—one of whom is gay. When it came time for a question from a reporter with the Toronto gay magazine *Daily Xtra*, it was gay-related. "In the film, your character is very open about his sexuality. But, given interviews you've done in the past, your own sexuality seems a bit more ambiguous. Do you find it hard for celebrities to talk to media about their sexuality?" Hardy was incensed. "What on Earth are you talking about?"

The reporter then referenced a 2010 interview Hardy did with the UK gay mag *Attitude*, where he mentioned having had sexual relations with men. "As a boy? Of course I have. I'm an actor for fuck's sake. I'm an artist. I've played with everything and everyone. But I'm not into men sexually. I love the form and the physicality but the gay sex bit does nothing for me. In the same way as a wet vagina would turn someone else into a lemon-sucking freak. To me it just doesn't compute now I'm into my 30s and it doesn't do it for me and I'm done experimenting."

Back to the present day. Hardy pressed the point, "But what is your question?" "I was wondering if you find it difficult for celebrities to talk about their sexuality," Hardy responded, "I don't find it difficult for celebrities to talk about their sexuality. Are you asking me about my sexuality?" The reporter said, "Sure." "Why?" asked Hardy. And that's where the interview ended. In defending the line of questioning, *Xtra* said, "As Canada's gay and lesbian news source, we feel it's our responsibility to examine sexuality and the ways in which it's portrayed on screen, especially once it's in the public eye." You can watch the tense exchange on *BillyMasters.com*.

When I want to thank **Tracy Morgan** for saving the Emmys (and stealing our hearts), it's definitely time to end yet another column. While I'm getting personal, I must take a moment to acknowledge the death of my pal Jackie Collins. Before my very first trip to Hollywood, Jackie gave me a list of places to go, people to meet, and things to do. She was an amazing lady with a wicked sense of humor and a heart of gold. She will be greatly missed. You shouldn't miss a thing on [www.BillyMasters.com](http://www.BillyMasters.com), the site that will never steer you wrong. If you have a question for me, send it along to [Billy@BillyMasters.com](mailto:Billy@BillyMasters.com), and I promise to get back to you before Gio and Tommy get cast in that remake of *Hart to Hart*! So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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8 Windy City Times Thursday, September 26, 1985

M = predominantly men W = predominantly women MW = mixed (women and men) D = dance/floor L = live/leisure P = private club/night S = female impersonator show	E = live entertainment F = food served V = video N = non-alcoholic 2 = open till 2 am (3 am Sat.) 4 = open till 4 am (5 am Sat.) T = Windy City Times carried here
<b>BARS</b>	
311 CLUB ..... 368-9272	13128 S. Western Ave. - Blue Island - M,D,S
AMEN CORNER ..... 651-4115	8105 S. Cottage Grove - MW,D
ARTFUL DODGER ..... 252-9025	1234 W. Hubbard - MW,D,L
AUGIE & CRY ..... 878-3440	3726 N. Broadway - W,D,A
BATCH SHOW LOUNGE ..... 614-5280	436 N. Clark - MW,S,4
BFB ..... 348-8876	554 W. Belmont - MW,V,D,4
BIG RED'S ..... 525-1200	3729 N. Halsted - M,2
BJS ..... 417-3434	3031 N. Clark - MW,D,2
BLUE PUB ..... 568-3158	3059 W. Irving Park - M,2
BLUE PARROT ..... 465-5432	1128 W. Granville - MW,2
BUBBLES BISTRO ..... 824-8773	1048 W. Scott Rd. - Hill - MW,D,4
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NORMANDY ..... 348-8806	805 W. Belmont - MW,2
NORTH END ..... 477-7989	3450 N. Clark - MW,D,2
NUTBUSH CITY LIMITS ..... 321-0778	3733 N. Halsted - M,2
OASIS ..... 781-6885	501 N. Halsted - Forest Park - M,D,2
OPAL STATION ..... 835-7792	111 W. Hubbard - M,2
OTHER BROTHERS ..... 943-5581	8655 N. Clark - MW,E,F,2
OUR WAY ON WELLS ..... 891-8078	148 W. Cornelia - MW,F,2
OUR WAY II ..... 935-1210	1437 N. Wells - MW,F,2
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OUR WEEKLY PICKS TO PLAN YOUR NIGHTLIFE CALENDAR



The Bijou Theater's closing weekend

Fri., Sept. 25-Mon., Sept. 28  
1349 N. Wells St.  
Final weekend events include Friday's warehouse clearance video sale, Saturday's final nude revue, Sunday's 4 pm Touche leathersmen and bear invasion and Monday's big Last Night for S.I.N. party, with dancing to '70s and '80s classics 'til dawn.



Team CÜR AIDS/LifeCycle 2016 Fundraiser

Thu., Sept. 24, 9-11 pm  
Big Chicks,  
5024 N. Sheridan Rd.  
Team CÜR (Chicago Urban Riders) is having their first team fundraiser at Bear Den at Big Chicks. Raffle prizes and plenty of sexy fun to be had. Come meet the guys and find out why they are riding.



16th Annual Jack Daniel's Chili Cookoff

Sat., Sept. 26, 1-4 pm  
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Enjoy chili from Jack Daniel's, Amazing Edibles Catering, Bountiful Eatery, Dive Bar, Revival Social Club and many more locations. Your \$10 donation benefits the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.

Bar list page from the September 26, 1985, issue of Windy City Times. In the past 30 years, many things about the gay scene have changed, while some have not. The top right ad is for the former Christopher Street, which is now the location of Hydrate and was also Manhole in the interim. Both Little Jim's and The Closet are still open and in the same locations. The listing also includes The Bijou Theatre, which is slated to close after this coming weekend after 45 years. Also in the listing is Sidetrack, still on Halsted, same location, but expanded north and south.



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Wed., Sept. 23

**Genderqueer Chicago** A grassroots group that works to create safe spaces for everyone to talk about, think about, explore and express gender. 7:00pm - 8:15pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St.

**Action Against State Budget Impasse** On behalf of youth experiencing homelessness. More info from BETH@CHICAGO-HOMELESS.ORG 10:00am Thompson Center Plaza 100 W. Randolph St. Chicago <http://CHICAGOHOMELESS.ORG>

**Wednesday Night Out With Victory Gardens - Sucker Punch** A social event in conjunction with a performance of Sucker Punch. Cocktail hour followed by performance. After the performance, a panel discussion on the experience of "out" LGBTQ athletes. Tickets \$10 with code WNO. 6:30pm - 9:30pm Victory Gardens Theater 2433 N Lincoln Ave Chicago <http://victorygardens.org/our-season/sucker-punch/> Tickets: <http://victorygardens.org/our-season/sucker-punch/>

**Celebrate Bisexuality Day Panel Discussion** Celebrate Bisexuality Day with Bisexual & Queer Alliance of Chicago. Speaker: Wendy Curry; Q&A. Contact Andrew Fortman [afortman@centeronhalsted.org](mailto:afortman@centeronhalsted.org). Suggested donation \$5 at the door, cash only. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://centeronhalsted.org> Tickets: <https://community.centeronhalsted.org/CelebrateBisexuality>

**Shop in Lakeview to Fight Hunger** Lakeview Pantry has launched "Shop to Fight Hunger." For the month of September, a number of local businesses will offer special promotions that will benefit the Pantry. More info at the link. 9:00pm Various locations <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Shop-to-Fight-Hunger-in-Lakeview-for-Lakeview-Pantry-during-Hunger-Action-Month-/52774.html>



## THE CAINE EVENT Sept. 25

Ripley Caine (above) will perform in Evanston with Homer Marrs and Mister E. Machine.

Photo courtesy of Caine

Argentine Tango class designed specifically for the LGBTQ communities led by Paola Borden (Second Place winner at the USA Championships for Argentine Tango in 2015). Free. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St.

## Friday, Sept. 25

**Alliance Homecoming honors heroes in the safe schools environment** Tastings, awards, dancing and drinks. Regular tickets \$100, \$175 VIP. Time:TBA Museum of Broadcast Communications 360 N. State St Chicago Tickets: <https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/ILSafeSchoolsAlliance/Homecoming.html>

**Celebrate Bisexuality Party** Cyra K. Polizzi 6 pm. Naughty Little Cabaret on at 7pm. Steve Douthat with Luxe productions will provide music all night. Tables for Creating Change, IMPACT, Howard Brown. Catered by Hamburger Mary's. \$10 benefits both BQAC and COH. Third floor. 5:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago [http://www.meetup.com/chicago-bisexual-queer-meetup/events/225208977/?a=ea1\\_grp&rv=ea1](http://www.meetup.com/chicago-bisexual-queer-meetup/events/225208977/?a=ea1_grp&rv=ea1)

**World premiere of Funnyman** George Wendt, Tim Kazurinsky, Amanda Drinkall, Steve Haggard and Rob Lindley. Through Oct. 18, 2015. 8:00pm Northlight Theatre 9501 Skokie Blvd Skokie, IL 60077 Tickets: <http://northlight.org>

**Red Bull Flying Bach Mashup** of Bach and breakdancing pairs four time World Breakdance Champion Flying Steps and renowned opera director Christoph Hagel. Through Sept 27. 8:00pm The Chicago Theatre (Chicago) 175 N State St Chicago <http://thechicagotheatre.com> Tickets: <http://ticketmaster.com>

**Ripley Caine, the only show of the year** With Homer Marrs and Mister E. Machine 8:30pm 27 Live 1012 Church St Evanston, IL 60201 Tickets: <http://www.ticketfly.com/event/948899-homer-marrs-excellent-evanston>

## Thursday, Sept. 24

**Open Gym Volleyball** Every Monday and Thursday for 18 and over. All gender and experience levels welcome. Cost \$7/night or \$30/month. 6:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago

**The Year We Thought About Love screening to benefit About Face Youth Theatre.** Documentary about True Colors, an award-winning LGBTQ youth theater group billed as the oldest and largest queer theatre troupe in America. RSVP by Sept. 17. 6:30pm AMC River East 21 Theater 322 E Illinois Ave Chicago Tickets: <https://www.tugg.com/events/37792>

**Queer Tango** A beginner and intermediate

## Saturday, Sept. 26

**Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance (LGBTQ)** Support meeting to talk about illnesses, symptoms, treatment, doctors, and personal issues such as dating, relationships and work. Every Saturday. 11:00am - 12:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St., <http://dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com>

**2015 AIDS Run & Walk Chicago** Walk and Run courses are each 5 kilometers (3.1 miles). The 10K runner course is 10 kilometers (6.2 miles). \$40. Info from [runwalk@aidschicago.org](mailto:runwalk@aidschicago.org) 8:00am - 11:00am Soldier Field 1410 Museum Campus Dr Chicago <http://events.aidschicago.org/site/PageNavigator/RunWalk/FAQ.html> Tickets: [http://events.aidschicago.org/site/PageNavigator/rw15\\_splash.html](http://events.aidschicago.org/site/PageNavigator/rw15_splash.html)

**Taking a Closer Look: How To Read The Bible Spiritual Retreat** Retreat participants will get a hearty lunch, workbook, uplifting music, engaging teaching, rich discussions, and will walk away from the retreat with a clear ability to explain why: 1) homosexuality is not sinful but rather celebrated by God, 2) gender equality is important, and 3) slavery/racism is wrong. 11:00am Uptown Underground, 4707 N Broadway Ave., Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/events/391221897744105/Old-Lesbian-Oral-Herstory-Project-Out-Stories-Our-Words> With Arden Eversmeyer, a mix of dramatic readings taken directly from transcripts of interviews with older lesbians interlaced with bits and pieces about the history and inner workings of the Oral Herstory Project itself. \$5 suggested donation. 12:00pm - 2:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.oloc.org/projects/herstory.php>

**Chicago Queer Contra Dance** Rachel Shapiro Wallace will be calling and the Cat Wranglers will be providing the music. Lesson 6:30 - 7 pm. Dance 7 - 9:30 pm. \$10. No advance planning or experience is needed. Noone turned away for lack of funds. Potluck snack, beverages encouraged. 6:30pm - 9:30pm Second Unitarian Church 656 W. Barry Chicago <http://queercontrachicago.com>

## Sunday, Sept. 27

**The Lighthouse Church of Chicago** Multi-ethnic and LGBT-inclusive with Pastor Jamie Frazier, 10:00am Uptown Underground, 4707 N. Broadway St., Chicago <http://www.lighthousechicago.org>

**Windy City Times celebrates its 30th anniversary** There will be "just desserts," from Tri-Star Catering, a performance by singer Sami Grisafe-who was born the year the paper was founded-plus lots of door prizes, original covers of WCT on display and hundreds of photos of the Chicago LGBT community from the 1985 era. Open to the public. \$30 donation at the door, with rifles and walks down memory lane. Tickets at the door. 2:00pm - 5:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com>

## Monday, Sept. 28

**Madonna Rebel Heart Tour** 8:00pm United Center 1901 W Madison Ave.; Tickets: <http://ticketmaster.com>

## Tuesday, Sept. 29

**Chicago Foundation for Women 30th Anniversary Symposium** Laura S. Washington, Chicago Sun-Times columnist and political analyst for ABC 7 will make an introductory address. Ashley Judd, activist and champion for the equal rights of women and girls, will be the keynote speaker. 8:30 am - 9 am breakfast. 9 am - 10:30am symposium. Free. 8:30am - 10:30am Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers 301 East North Water St Chicago Tickets: <http://www.cfw.org/?event=30th-anniversary-symposium>

## Wed., Sept. 30

**L Lounge** A safe place where Lesbians can connect to each other as a community in a friendly, helpful environment. Free. 6:30pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted

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**CONGRATULATIONS TRACY AND THE STAFF OF THE WINDY CITY TIMES FOR KEEPING US INFORMED FOR 30 YEARS!**



Longtime CMSA leader Marcia Hill (front row, third from left) on the Sidetrack softball team, 1985, with Sidetrack co-owner Art Johnston in front.  
Courtesy of Marcia Hill



Dick Uyvari at Strike Against AIDS, 1980s.  
Outlines photo archives



Sam Coady (left) getting ready to play some gay softball, 1980s.  
Outlines photo archives



Jack Sitar (left) and Spike (second from right) with their 1980s-era bowling team.  
Photo by Janice Polito



Far left: Vanessa Davis was a player in the softball leagues, and also is a well-known singer in Chicago.  
Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright

Left: Peg Grey, a founder of Proud to Run in the 1980s, here running the race. She was part of dozens of sports teams and leagues.  
Photo by Tracy Baim

# Bases loaded with 1985 sports memories—locally and nationally

BY ROSS FORMAN

Bob Knight whipped a chair across the basketball court at Indiana University, where he was the beloved, longtime men's basketball coach.

Larry Bird and Magic Johnson battled for supremacy in the NBA, and it was the Johnson-led Los Angeles Lakers who claimed the championship in six games.

The upstart USFL ended its run, while the San Francisco 49ers defeated the Miami Dolphins in January after the 1984 season. And by September, the 1985 NFL season was all Chicago, as the city's beloved Bears shuffled to a Super Bowl title, won in January, 1986.

The baseball world met a Doc, aka, Dwight Gooden, the power pitcher for the New York Mets—and it was the Kansas City Royals who toppled their intra-state rival, the St. Louis Cardinals, in seven games to claim the World Series championship.

Hulkamania was running wild, as Hulk Hogan was the WWF World Heavyweight Champion—and a Sports Illustrated cover boy in July.

Olympic sensations Michael Phelps and Sarah Hughes ... well, they were born in 1985.

Welcome back in time, 30 years. For the record, Sept. 23, 1985 was 10,957 days ago from when this issue was printed—that's 1,565 weeks and two days. During that stretch, it's spanned 262,968 hours—and countless sporting memories. Some good, some really good. Some bad, some really bad. And everything in between.

As far as out LGBT professional athletes nationally, there were very few. That list included football's Dave Kopay; tennis stars Martina Navratilova, Billie Jean King and Renee Richards; and baseball's Glenn Burke. Former Olympic athlete Dr. Tom Waddell also was out, and founded the Gay Games in San Francisco in 1982.

What was happening with other noteworthy LGBT athletes and officials? Let's see:

—Billy Bean didn't make his Major League Baseball debut until April 25, 1987.

—Brittney Griner and Michael Sam were both born in 1990.

—Rosie Jones finished second in the 1984 U.S. Women's Open.

—Greg Louganis captured gold medals at both the 1984 and 1988 Summer Olympics, but came out in 1996.

—Baseball umpire Dave Pallone was the home plate umpire in 1985 when Pete Rose tied Ty Cobb for the most hits (4192).

—Baseball umpire Dale Scott made his Major League Baseball debut on Aug. 19, 1985—and is still calling balls and strikes this season.

—Olympian Blake Skjellerup was born in 1985—and he's now happily married.

Chicago's LGBT sports scene, meanwhile, was so much different 30 years ago from what it is today. The most organized sports were softball, volleyball and bowling. Softball then was the 16-inch, no-glove, Chicago-tradition style, though the women also had 12-inch leagues. Bowling was a five night-a-week event, including a mid-week afternoon league for local bartenders.

"It's hard to believe it was 30 years ago," Marcia Hill said, reflecting on the local sporting scene of 1985. "Heck, I founded the women's football league in 1988—before many of today's players were even born."

Men's flag football didn't arrive here for another 10 years or so.

Hill, now 57, is one of the strongest links to history, particularly Chicago's LGBT sporting scene, then dominated by the Gay Athletic Association (GAA). It wasn't until 1986 that the Metropolitan Sports Association (MSA) was founded—and it is now a wildly successful, popular, ever-expanding organization of multiple sports, leagues, legends and more, known as the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA).

Hill is now just a referee in flag football and a softball umpire.

Bobby Nicholson also is a softball umpire now—and he too is a tie to gay softball games of the mid-1980s. He is even one of 14 members of the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance (NAGAAA) Hall of Fame with ties to Chicago softball of the 1980s.

NAGAAA runs the annual Gay Softball World Series, which dates back to 1977.

Others from that illustrious list of 14 who had ties to the Chicago softball scene of the 1980s include Jack McGowan, elected in 1997; Jim Flint (class of 2000), Frank Bostic (2001), John Cieplak (2001) and Don Welsh (2002). Art Johnston of Sidetrack fame was elected to the NAGAAA Hall of Fame in 2003, while Buck Bachman entered in 2005 and Will Hartman in 2007.

Nicholson was elected in 2009, alongside fellow Chicagoans Sam Coady and Phil Runions. Runions, who is straight, is still a CMSA softball umpire and others from his family play in the predominantly gay league, including his daughter, who also is straight.

Peter Meyer was honored by NAGAAA in 2010; Mike Travers was elected in 2011; John Skoubis went in in 2012.

Gay softball nowadays is played with gloves and 12-inch balls.

"A lot of guys were afraid of breaking their fingers [in 1985], and a lot of guys did break their fingers," Hill said with a laugh. "There were some really good players [back then] and there were some really bad players."

In 1985, there were eight women's softball teams and about 10 men's softball teams. There were about 20 volleyball teams—eight women and 12 men.

Bowling was king then, anchored by the late Dick Uyvari.

"The big thing in bowling at the time was, making sure you had a good scorekeeper," Hill said, reflecting on the technology changes that

have spanned 30 years.

At the time, for instance, players and potential players had to go to the gay bars to see flyers, to learn what was going on. The gay weekly newspapers were vital at the time, Hill said. League commissioners would call in their sports scores and standings every Monday morning to Windy City Times.

Today, in comparison, athletes can—and do—update the world seconds after a softball at-bat whether they smacked a home run or struck out. Welcome to Twitter, Facebook and the rest of the social media scene.

The competition level then was high, for all sports, Hill said. "There were some good athletes then," Hill said. "We really cared if we won a game."

Hill, Uyvari, Flint and Johnston were local sporting legends from that era, and certainly Sam Molinaro, too. In 1979, Molinaro was named the first president when the Gay Athletic Association (GAA) was incorporated. The rich history in gay Chicago sports, circa 1985, also includes the late Peg Grey, Rich Essig, Jackie Fabbri and others.

MSA back in the day produced a quarterly newsletter, which Molinaro would print. He'd then fold the newsletter, stuff into envelopes, and he and his mom would address envelopes, add stamps and then mail.

Notes at GAA/MSA meetings were done by hand at the time. The association's secretary then would go home and make copies of those notes. They'd mail out the minutes from meetings for approval before the next meeting.

The Windy City Athletic Association (now the Athletic Alliance of Chicago), founded in 1979, also was a prominent player on the gay sports scene in 1985. Flint, best known as the owner of the Baton Show Lounge, was one of the founding members of the WCAA and was its commissioner on multiple occasions. Flint was involved in softball, basketball, volleyball, darts, bowling, and hockey over the years.

WCAA and GAA/MSA feuded off and on, each wanting to reign supreme on the scene.

Pre-dating those leagues, and still on the scene today, are the Lincoln Park Lagoons, which offered both sports as well as recreational efforts. They launched in the 1970s.

Turn to page 85

## SPORTS from page 84

In 1982, after the success of an event called the Gay and Lesbian Pride Run, a local chapter of the international Frontrunners group was launched by Peg Grey, Rob Williams and Jim White. The Frontrunners/Frontwalkers group is still going strong today; since the 1990s they have operated the Proud to Run race that Grey founded.

There have been other leagues that have come and gone, such as the Women's Sports Association, and many organizations formed to focus on a specific sport, such as rowing or rugby. And certainly some of the women's sports teams that played in mainstream leagues, including rugby, have always had a strong participation from lesbians.

"It was a time of great growth and excitement [in 1985] as more and more people became involved [in gay sports], particularly

softball," Johnston said.

Also in 1985, Chicagoans were planning for Gay Games II, which was to be held in August 1996 in San Francisco. The week-long event was twice as large as the inaugural Games in 1982, attracting about 3,500 athletes from 17 countries for 18 sports.

Chicagoans went to the 1986 Games for softball, volleyball and bowlers mostly.

"That was the first Gay Games that a lot of [Chicagoans] participated in," Hill said.

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clare that as occupant of this office, I will neither be responsible nor will I pay for any debts or obligations of the United States. And neither will I pay for any debts or obligations of any United States Person/citizen. Should anyone like to rebut this matter, please email the Instituted Executrix office at [sharajones@hushmail.com](mailto:sharajones@hushmail.com) within 21 days of this Notice. Notice From the Office of the Instituted Executrix aka Protectorate. (9/30/15-3)

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