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Kerry Eleveld.
Photo by Maria Fernanda Albarracin

AN AMERICAN STORY

Writer/consultant Kerry Eleveld on new book, LGBT issues

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

In Kerry Eleveld's new book, *Don't Tell Me To Wait: How the Fight for Gay Rights Changed America and Transformed Obama's Presidency*, she examines the ways in which grassroots LGBT activists, mainstream LGBT organizations, President Obama and his administration and Capitol Hill lawmakers advanced LGBT equality since Obama took office in 2009.

Eleveld (author, *Daily Kos* columnist and former Washington D.C. correspondent and White House reporter for *The Advocate*) has been covering LGBT issues since 2006, first in New York and then in Washington D.C. for *The Advocate*. She was present at numerous White House press briefings during President Obama's first term and interviewed Obama three times

throughout the course of his campaign and presidency.

She noted that her book is an American story, not just an LGBT story. Eleveld said the book is very important because LGBT people/events have been left out of the history books.

"The book isn't about me," said Eleveld. "It's about the process of getting LGBT stuff done during Obama's presidency."

Eleveld explained that she looks at her book as the first draft of what will become one of Obama's greatest legacies.

"I was convinced after the first handful of years covering the Obama administration that I'd witnessed something extraordinary and in my eyes we'd reached a political tipping point on LGBT issues," said Eleveld. "When Obama came into office, LGBT issues were still considered toxic and while

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REMEMBERING LAQUAN

Protesters shut down Michigan Avenue.
Photo of activist Jedidiah Brown by Tim Carroll

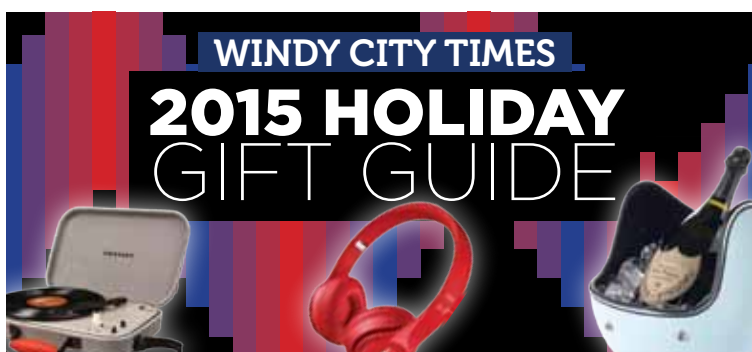
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IMPERIAL COURT

National organization marks 50 years.
Photo courtesy of IIC

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WINDY CITY TIMES 2015 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

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GENDERNAUTS

Youth trans group launches in Chicago.

Photo of Bonn Wade by Pidgeon Pagonis 14

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**Please see Brief Summary of
Patient Information with important
warnings on the following pages.**

Brief Summary of Patient Information about GENVOYA

GENVOYA (jen-VOY-uh) (elvitegravir, cobicistat, emtricitabine, and tenofovir alafenamide) tablets

Important: Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with GENVOYA.

There may be new information about GENVOYA. This information is only a summary and does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about GENVOYA?

GENVOYA can cause serious side effects, including:

- **Build-up of lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).**

Lactic acidosis may happen in some people who take GENVOYA. Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Lactic acidosis can be hard to identify early, because the symptoms could seem like symptoms of other health problems. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms, which could be signs of lactic acidosis:**

- feel very weak or tired
- have unusual (not normal) muscle pain
- have trouble breathing
- have stomach pain with nausea or vomiting
- feel cold, especially in your arms and legs
- feel dizzy or lightheaded
- have a fast or irregular heartbeat

- **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems may happen in people who take GENVOYA. In some cases, these liver problems can lead to death. Your liver may become large and you may develop fat in your liver.

Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms of liver problems:

- your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice)
- dark “tea-colored” urine
- light-colored bowel movements (stools)
- loss of appetite for several days or longer
- nausea
- stomach pain

- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking GENVOYA for a long time.**

- **Worsening of Hepatitis B infection.** GENVOYA is not for use to treat chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV). If you have HBV infection and take GENVOYA, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking GENVOYA. A “flare-up” is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before.

- Do not run out of GENVOYA. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your GENVOYA is all gone.
- Do not stop taking GENVOYA without first talking to your healthcare provider.
- If you stop taking GENVOYA, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly for several months to check your HBV infection. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking GENVOYA.

What is GENVOYA?

GENVOYA is a prescription medicine that is used without other HIV-1 medicines to treat HIV-1 in people 12 years of age and older:

- who have not received HIV-1 medicines in the past **or**
- to replace their current HIV-1 medicines in people who have been on the same HIV-1 medicines for at least 6 months, have an amount of HIV-1 in their blood (“viral load”) that is less than 50 copies/mL, and have never failed past HIV-1 treatment

HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

GENVOYA contains the prescription medicines elvitegravir (VITEKTA®), cobicistat (TYBOST®), emtricitabine (EMTRIVA®) and tenofovir alafenamide. It is not known if GENVOYA is safe and effective in children under 12 years of age.

When used to treat HIV-1 infection, GENVOYA may:

- Reduce the amount of HIV-1 in your blood. This is called “viral load”.
- Increase the number of CD4+ (T) cells in your blood that help fight off other infections.

Reducing the amount of HIV-1 and increasing the CD4+ (T) cells in your blood may help improve your immune system. This may reduce your risk of death or getting infections that can happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

GENVOYA does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.

Avoid doing things that can spread HIV-1 infection to others:

- Do not share or re-use needles or other injection equipment.
- Do not share personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them, like toothbrushes and razor blades.
- Do not have any kind of sex without protection. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about how to prevent passing HIV-1 to other people.

Who should not take GENVOYA?

Do not take GENVOYA if you also take a medicine that contains:

- alfuzosin hydrochloride (Uroxatral®)
- carbamazepine (Carbatrol®, Epitol®, Equetro®, Tegretol®, Tegretol-XR®, Teril®)
- cisapride (Propulsid®, Propulsid Quicksolv®)
- ergot-containing medicines, including: dihydroergotamine mesylate (D.H.E. 45®, Migranal®), ergotamine tartrate (Cafergot®, Migergot®, Ergostat®, Medihaler Ergotamine®, Wigraine®, Wigrettes®), and methylergonovine maleate (Ergotrate®, Methergine®)
- lovastatin (Advicor®, Altoprev®, Mevacor®)
- midazolam, when taken by mouth
- phenobarbital (Luminal®)
- phenytoin (Dilantin®, Phenytek®)
- pimozone (Orap®)
- rifampin (Rifadin®, Rifamate®, Rifater®, Rimactane®)
- sildenafil (Revatio®), when used for treating lung problems
- simvastatin (Simcor®, Vytorin®, Zocor®)
- triazolam (Halcion®)
- the herb St. John’s wort or a product that contains St. John’s wort

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking GENVOYA?

Before taking GENVOYA, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have liver problems including hepatitis B infection
- have kidney or bone problems
- have any other medical conditions
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if GENVOYA can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking GENVOYA.

Pregnancy registry: there is a pregnancy registry for women who take HIV-1 medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of this registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk with your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.

- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take GENVOYA.
 - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
 - At least one of the medicines in GENVOYA can pass to your baby in your breast milk. It is not known if the other medicines in GENVOYA can pass into your breast milk.
 - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Other medicines may affect how GENVOYA works. Some medicines may interact with GENVOYA. **Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.**

- You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that interact with GENVOYA.
- Do not start a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take GENVOYA with other medicines.

How should I take GENVOYA?

- Take GENVOYA exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it. GENVOYA is taken by itself (not with other HIV-1 medicines) to treat HIV-1 infection.
- GENVOYA is usually taken 1 time each day.
- Take GENVOYA with food.
- If you need to take a medicine for indigestion (antacid) that contains aluminum and magnesium hydroxide or calcium carbonate during treatment with GENVOYA, take it at least 2 hours before or after you take GENVOYA.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking GENVOYA without first talking with your healthcare provider. Stay under a healthcare provider's care when taking GENVOYA.
- Do not miss a dose of GENVOYA.
- If you take too much GENVOYA, call your healthcare provider or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.
- When your GENVOYA supply starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to GENVOYA and become harder to treat.

What are the possible side effects of GENVOYA?

GENVOYA may cause serious side effects, including:

- See "What is the most important information I should know about GENVOYA?"
- **Changes in body fat can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicine.** These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the middle of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system** (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome) can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having any new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.
- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before you start and while you are taking GENVOYA. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking GENVOYA if you develop new or worse kidney problems.
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take GENVOYA. Bone problems may include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your bones.

The most common side effect of GENVOYA is nausea.

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

- These are not all the possible side effects of GENVOYA. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

General information about the safe and effective use of GENVOYA.

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information leaflet. Do not use GENVOYA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give GENVOYA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

This Brief Summary summarizes the most important information about GENVOYA. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about GENVOYA that is written for health professionals.

For more information, call **1-800-445-3235** or go to **www.GENVOYA.com**.

Keep GENVOYA and all medicines out of reach of children.

Issued: November 2015

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'STRUT' SERIOUSLY...
Fashion designers and models (left) participated in 'Strut' for World AIDS Day. Photo by Jerry Nunn

CIN CITY



There are lots to do in Cincinnati, Ohio, as well as neighboring northern Kentucky. Photo of dish at Cincinnati restaurant Sotto by Andrew Davis

MAGIC ACT



WCT reviews the magic-filled production Palace of the Occult. Photo by Jonathan Cohon/JHC Production

IN THE THICKE OF IT
Alan Thicke talks about his production Toy Shoppe as well as his connection to a gay vampire.

INN LOVE
The Peninsula Hotel aims to become a haven for same-sex weddings.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ
Find out the latest about Bette Midler, Joe Jonas and the film The Danish Girl.

plus **DAILY BREAKING NEWS**

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BREAKING NEWS

Chicago Police Superintendent fired by Rahm Emanuel

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

During a heated, 30-minute press conference at City Hall on Dec. 1, Mayor Rahm Emanuel said that he had asked for the resignation of Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy.

McCarthy's firing comes in the wake of ongoing protests and allegations of a cover-up by both the Chicago Police Department, Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez and Emanuel concerning the shooting death of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald by police officer Jason Van Dyke in October of last year.

After praising McCarthy's over four-year tenure, Emanuel said "Superintendent McCarthy knows that a police officer is only effective when he has the trust of those he serves."

Emanuel noted that such trust in the CPD's

leadership has been "shaken and eroded."

Deputy Superintendent John Escalante will serve the post during a search for McCarthy's replacement.

Emanuel also announced the appointment of a five-member task force "to do a top to bottom review of the system of oversight and accountability, training and transparency that is currently in place for Chicago police officers."

The multi-racial task force includes City of Chicago Inspector General Joseph M. Ferguson, Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP Partner, Sergio E. Acosta, Mayer Brown partner Lori E. Lightfoot, University of Chicago Criminal and Juvenile Justice Project Director Randolph N. Stone and former Illinois State Police director Hiram Grau.

Former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick will act as senior advisor to the task force.

U.S. Rep. Quigley talks transgender task force

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

The rampant murders, attacks and discrimination against transgender people was finally addressed on Capitol Hill Nov. 17 as U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (IL-05), who serves as vice chair of the Equality Caucus, announced the formation of a Transgender Equality Task Force.

According to a press release from Quigley's office, the task force is designed to "analyze current barriers to full legal and societal equality for transgender people, and will develop legislation and other initiatives to ensure the transgender community has equal access to the American Dream."

"We have a lot of work to do," Quigley told Windy City Times. "We came to the conclusion that transgender Americans face particularly difficult issues involving discrimination and violence. It is particularly acute for the transgender community. It's rampant and I'm hopeful that the taskforce will be a new and unique voice that will help put it under the microscope, and that education and awareness will send a message to policy makers across the country, law enforcement officials and so forth that these issues are real and important."

The announcement coincided with a congressional forum on transgender violence which included testimony from leaders and representatives of the Transgender People of Color Coalition, The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), The National Black Justice Coalition and The Center for American Progress (CAP) among others.

In a statement to the forum, NCTE Policy Director Harper Jean Collins said "Our humanity is being attacked by state legislators, school boards and even Presidential candidates. We are being impugned as deceptive, unstable, or worse, as predators and child molesters, all for political purposes."

"Most emblematic of the trauma of this year, though, has been the horrifying spike in public reports of murder of transgender people, and in particular of trans women of color," Collins added. "This year we have seen more reports of murders than any year since the community started counting and remembering victims almost twenty years ago."

Quigley noted that the Task Force "learned a lot" from the forum.

"There's a myth out there that members of the LGBT community are a wealthy group without economic woes," he said. "We need to focus on the fact that is not the case and recognize that poverty is disproportionately high for members

of the transgender community—living below \$10,000 a year, living in shelters. The numbers of transgender people murdered in 2015 needs to get out to everyone. They are just staggering."

Quigley said the hope is that information discussed during the forum will be passed on to other policy makers.

He faces a difficult battle.

"In February of this year, HUD [Department of Housing and Urban Development] put out guidance ensuring equal access for transgender people in homeless shelters," he said. "We've got to stay on top of this within the agency and at the state and local level. The next step involving Congress is spreading the information out to all members to help them understand why additional resources have to be applied. We must invest in stable, affordable, supportive housing. We have to work with the Department of Justice and the FBI to far more vigorously track hate crimes against transgender women."

However, such crimes can only escalate, particularly after the sort of anti-transgender propaganda that was disseminated before the defeat in Texas of the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO), which painted transgender people as sexual predators stalking children in restrooms.

"Educating the general population about transgender people to help eliminate ignorance, prejudice, stigmatization, discrimination and violence is a long trek that's multi-faceted," Quigley said. "It's going to take leaders, public officials, people in the public eye pushing back on how the community is represented in movies, books and the newspapers. It's a wide swathe and a lot of work and law makers need to take the first step."

Quigley believes that ongoing Task Force meetings will help develop a strategy for that work.

"With the current make-up of the House, I think any measures are going to be very difficult," he said. "You have to understand that I serve with people who seem to enjoy pushing back on these issues. I hear arguments among members of the House that harken back to the '70s and '80s. I can't imagine a social issue right now in the United States that's going to require more education, training and changes of hearts than the discrimination felt by the transgender community and particularly the African-American women who are a part of it. If the task force accomplishes one thing, it will be to dramatically improve education and understanding."

Open To Thinking

BY NICK PATRICCA



Writers at risk: A global pandemic

Writers, throughout the world, are being silenced by legal actions, threats, violence, imprisonment, exile, death. As opportunities for writers rapidly progress because of the explosion of global communication and media technologies, writers find themselves increasingly targets of religious fundamentalists, governments, corporations, militant nationalists, political parties, war lords, drug lords, and other vested powers opposed to freedom of expression and freedom of inquiry.

According to Reporters Without Borders, to date this year, 60 professional journalists have been murdered and 146 journalists imprisoned. These numbers do not include the hundreds of citizen net-journalists and bloggers murdered or imprisoned. Not to mention the people who have been beaten up, fined, imprisoned, or even murdered just for posting a picture on the Internet or for clicking the 'like' button on Facebook.

To add insult to injury, public opinion of journalists continues to decline. According to Pew Research Center statistics (2013), only around 28% of the U.S. public judges that journalists contribute something beneficial to society. Almost the same percentage of people surveyed judge that jour-

nalists contribute nothing to the good of society.

Writers, throughout the world, are being silenced by legal actions, threats, violence, imprisonment, exile, death. As opportunities for writers rapidly progress because of the explosion of global communication and media technologies, writers find themselves increasingly targets of religious fundamentalists, governments, corporations, militant nationalists, political parties, war lords, drug lords, and other vested powers opposed to freedom of expression and freedom of inquiry.

India employs laws against defamation and civil 'disharmony' to silence writers who investigate corruption in governmental, political and corporate agencies. In August 2015: Chayan Sarkar was 'disappeared' for reporting on corruption in West Bengal; Sandeep Kothari was burnt to death for writing about illegal mining in the state of Madhya Pradesh; and Malleshappa Madivalappa Kalburgi was murdered by Hindutva terrorists for being a 'rationalist.'

All of the many cases that PEN International and Reporters Without Borders and Amnesty International take up in defense of basic human rights and freedom of expression have a very human face to them. This fact was brought home to me again by what happened to the Ethiopian delegates to the 81st PEN World Congress in Quebec City, Canada, this past October.

During the scheduled work session of PEN International's Writer in Prison Committee,

four delegates of PEN Ethiopia asked for time to make us aware of what had happened to them as they were departing for Quebec. Ethiopian state forces had closed their PEN Centre and had confiscated all computers and files from their homes. When the Congress concluded, these four Ethiopian delegates were preparing to apply for asylum in Canada. They could not return

to their homes and families in Ethiopia for fear of retaliation against themselves and their loved ones.

Ethiopia, an ally of the U.S. in our war against terror, uses the smoke screen of security laws to silence all opposition to the state. The government of Ethiopia judges the investigation of corruption in the military as a security threat.

Eritrea, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, India—I could easily add Mexico, Honduras, Venezuela—all seem far from the U.S. But, as our war against terrorism heats up because of evil attacks on innocent civilians by groups such as Islamic State, the balance between security and freedom to investigate and publish becomes skewed in favor of the state.

I fear that security laws, procedures and concerns will be used to intimidate writers, all kinds of writers, not just journalists.

It is already difficult enough to discuss Islam, or Israel, or abortion, or birth control, or 'religious liberty,' or gun controls or migrants in our country without becoming the focus for fanatical, sometimes violent, reactions.

As the threats, real and imagined, to our security increase, let us not sacrifice freedom for the illusion of a safe, comfortable, convenient world.

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"For me, this affirmation of the value of journalism was both heartening and disconcerting given the obstacles and dangers journalists face on a daily basis and given the general lack of respect from the publics they serve."

nalists contribute nothing to the good of society.

When we combine the decline of traditional media—such as the daily print newspaper or of mainstream broadcast TV and radio journalism—with the decline of serious investigative journalism by these conventional media, we contemplate a bleak landscape for journalists and serious reporting.

Yet, at a recent symposium I attended on the Child Soldier, U.S. government officials stated that they frequently relied on journalists to do the investigating that they could not do. For me, this affirmation of the value of journalism was both heartening and disconcerting given the obstacles and dangers journalists face on a daily basis and given the general lack of respect from the publics they serve.

All writers are at risk, not just journalists.

Eritrea holds the title of the worst nation in the world on the issue of freedom of expression. Since 2001 all independent media have been suppressed. Amanuel Asrat, award-winning poet and editor, has been in prison since 2001.

Bangladesh authorities seem unwilling or unable to protect writers from religious fundamentalists. On Oct. 31, Faisal Arefin Dipan was murdered by Islamic extremists

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




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Trans man harassed, mistaken for ISIS member

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A trans man who works in Berwyn says that he was harassed and threatened at gunpoint by an area resident who mistook him for an ISIS member.

Benedetto DeFrancisco, who lives on Chicago's North Side and works as a teaching assistant in Berwyn, alleges that, on Nov. 18, William Jackson, of the 1400 block of South Wesley Avenue, began shouting at him and flashed a pistol because his beard made him resemble a terrorist.

DeFrancisco said that most mornings he goes for a walk upon arriving at his workplace, both to unwind after his commute and to check the perimeter of the school grounds. The first time he passed Jackson's house, DeFrancisco had his headphones in, and did not know Jackson was yelling at him.

"I literally just walk around the school, so on my second lap, he was definitely shouting [again], and it felt like it was aimed at me," DeFrancisco said. "It was getting louder and more aggressive. A lot of swearing. I honestly thought he was drunk. I took out my headphones and looked at him, and heard what he was saying: 'I know what you're doing, motherfucker. You're scaring my wife—get out of here.'"

At that point, DeFrancisco saw Jackson's gun, a .45-caliber Ruger semi-automatic pistol. "He was waving it around, waving it at me," he recalled. "I just tried to sit as calm as I could. I pretended to put my earphones back in, but dialed 911 instead, and walked around the corner to hide."

Berwyn police arrived within moments and confronted Jackson. A detective later told De-



Benedetto DeFrancisco.
Photo by Matt Simonette

Francisco that Jackson and his wife were avid viewers of Fox News and other cable news programs that were playing up the threat of foreign terrorism. Jackson's wife was distressed by DeFrancisco's look, so Jackson came out to confront him. DeFrancisco said he identifies with many facets of Middle Eastern culture, since his mother was born in Damascus, Syria, but is of mixed-European descent.

"They were getting scared, because the ISIS attack happened in France, and getting more scared that ISIS was in Chicago," DeFrancisco explained. "It's clear that they had been watching me since the previous Monday—this happened on a Wednesday. I've been taking these walks since I've been working there. On my walk, I notice the same people come around. My thing to do is say hello. Unfortunately, with this man and his wife, their fear got the best of them. They could have just asked, 'Hey, what are you doing here?'"

Jackson was charged with aggravated assault and will appear in court Dec. 9. DeFrancisco asked police to investigate the matter as a hate crime, but was doubtful that would happen.

"[Jackson] is not the only person watching Fox News—it's a toxin and it's spreading fear, and this fear leads to hatred. Instead of wanting to know something about a culture or religion, they just shut it down in the most horrible or scary way," said DeFrancisco, who also noted that his gender identity was not made an issue by Jackson or police.

He said Jackson, from whom he'd most like a letter of apology, became remorseful when talking to police.

"I'm not interested in his serving jail time," DeFrancisco added. "I would like a dialogue with him about what lesson he learned from this, what he's going to do to open his mind a little. I'm not looking for any kind of revenge."

Three killed at Acapulco festival

Gunmen attacked patrons at a gay festival in Acapulco, Mexico—killing three people and wounding another five, News24.com reported.

Attackers stormed the "Reina Gay" festival in Tres Palos on Nov. 29, opening fire on the crowd.

Authorities suspended classes at some rural schools near Acapulco in recent weeks and installed security at others because of an increase in violence near the port, which has the highest homicide rate of any city in Mexico.

The original article is at <http://www.news24.com/World/News/gunmen-kill-three-at-gay-festival-in-acapulco-20151130>.



Howard Brown has new name, logo

Howard Brown Health, 4025 N. Sheridan Rd. unveiled a new look and name for the organization to better communicate its mission.

The digital and visual changes at Howard Brown Health—created *pro bono* by the creative agency Digital Kitchen—includes a logo, revamped website and name change to

"Howard Brown Health," from Howard Brown Health Center.

The overhaul also includes new names for Howard Brown Health's clinics. "Aris" will be known as "Howard Brown Halsted," the Sheridan Road site as "Howard Brown Sheridan" and the forthcoming Rogers Park clinic as "Howard Brown Clark." Howard Brown Health's Broadway Youth Center and Brown Elephant stores will retain their established logos.

See HowardBrown.org.

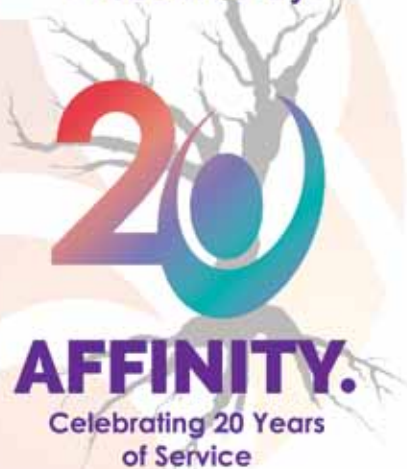
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PASSAGES

Rev. Rodney E. Reinhart

Rev. Rodney E. Reinhart—who ministered to, among others, people with HIV/AIDS—died in early November. He was 66, according to KruegerFuneral.com.

Reinhart held a degree in English and secondary education from Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. He studied theology and church history at Colgate Rochester, Bexley Hall-Crozer, the seminary consortium in Rochester, New York. After graduating with a Master's of Divinity (M. Div.) in 1975, Reinhart did further graduate work at The University of



Rev. Rodney E. Reinhart.
Facebook photo

Michigan in Ann Arbor and at Wayne State University in Detroit. Reinhart was ordained as a priest in the Episcopal Church after a successful career teaching high school in Detroit.

Reinhart was ordained as a deacon at St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church in Detroit, in 1983. A year later, he was ordained as priest at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church on the campus of Detroit's Wayne State University. While at St. Andrew's Fr. Reinhart established programs to care for Vietnam veterans, university students and for people with HIV/AIDS.

Since the Bishop of Chicago invited Reinhart to come to Illinois in 2004, Reinhart served as rector of St. Clement's Church in Harvey and St. Joseph/Aidan's in Blue Island.

Reinhart has always been deeply concerned about the ways that women, gays and racial minorities are abused and mistreated in American society, as the leader of Integrity Chicago, and as the host of Faith on the Front Line on WBGX AM1570. Fr. Reinhart has often taken the message of inclusion and equality out to the world.

Reinhart and his spouse, Alan Engle, resided in Blue Island.

A memorial service will be held in Illinois at a later date.

More information is at http://www.kruegerfuneral.com/tribute/details/630/Rodney_Reinhart/obituary.html.

Schock camp sends many records to feds

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Lawyers for embattled former U.S. Rep. Aaron Schock, on Nov. 25, voluntarily submitted some 3,000 records—most of them emails, text messages and documents—to federal prosecutors, according to Chicago Sun-Times.

Schock had already asked for a judicial determination of whether these 3,000 records were responsive to a previous subpoena, according to a statement from the firm representing Schock, McGuire Woods. But prosecutors issued a new subpoena to see the documents before that review was complete. Schock previously turned over about 10,000 other documents.

"Instead of awaiting the results of that review, the government circumvented this process by issuing a second subpoena to Mr. Schock for the very documents the Court has been reviewing," said the statement.

Schock resigned in March, after questions arose about his expense reports and lavish spending. The matter has been before a grand jury since the spring; that jury's term is set to expire in December.

The Chicago Sun-Times' article is at <http://bit.ly/1XqqELQ>.

LGBTs among Hillary Clinton's Illinois delegates

BY MATT SIMONETTE

At least nine members of the Illinois LGBT community are among those who have been named as delegates for 2016 presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, according to sources.

Among those selected were Ald. Raymond Lopez (4th district); Rocco Claps (5th); John West (7th); Rick Garcia (9th); Alex Arroyo (11th); Gay Bruhn (11th); Jackie Richter (16th); Jessica Flynn (17th); and Charles Good (18th).

Clinton's campaign made a concerted effort to have a diverse representation amongst its delegates of many communities, according to Claps, a Democratic party activist who is also director of the Illinois Department of Human Rights.

"We exceeded the number of LGBT delegates we were aiming for," Claps said. "We were aiming for six, but it came out to be nine. I think it's a well-balanced slate, and represents the diversity of Illinois."

Kevin Conlon, president of Conlon & Dunn Public Strategies, and attorney Kevin O'Keefe oversaw the delegate selection process. Clinton's campaign filled 102 slots allocated to 18 congressional districts.

World AIDS Day in Chicago

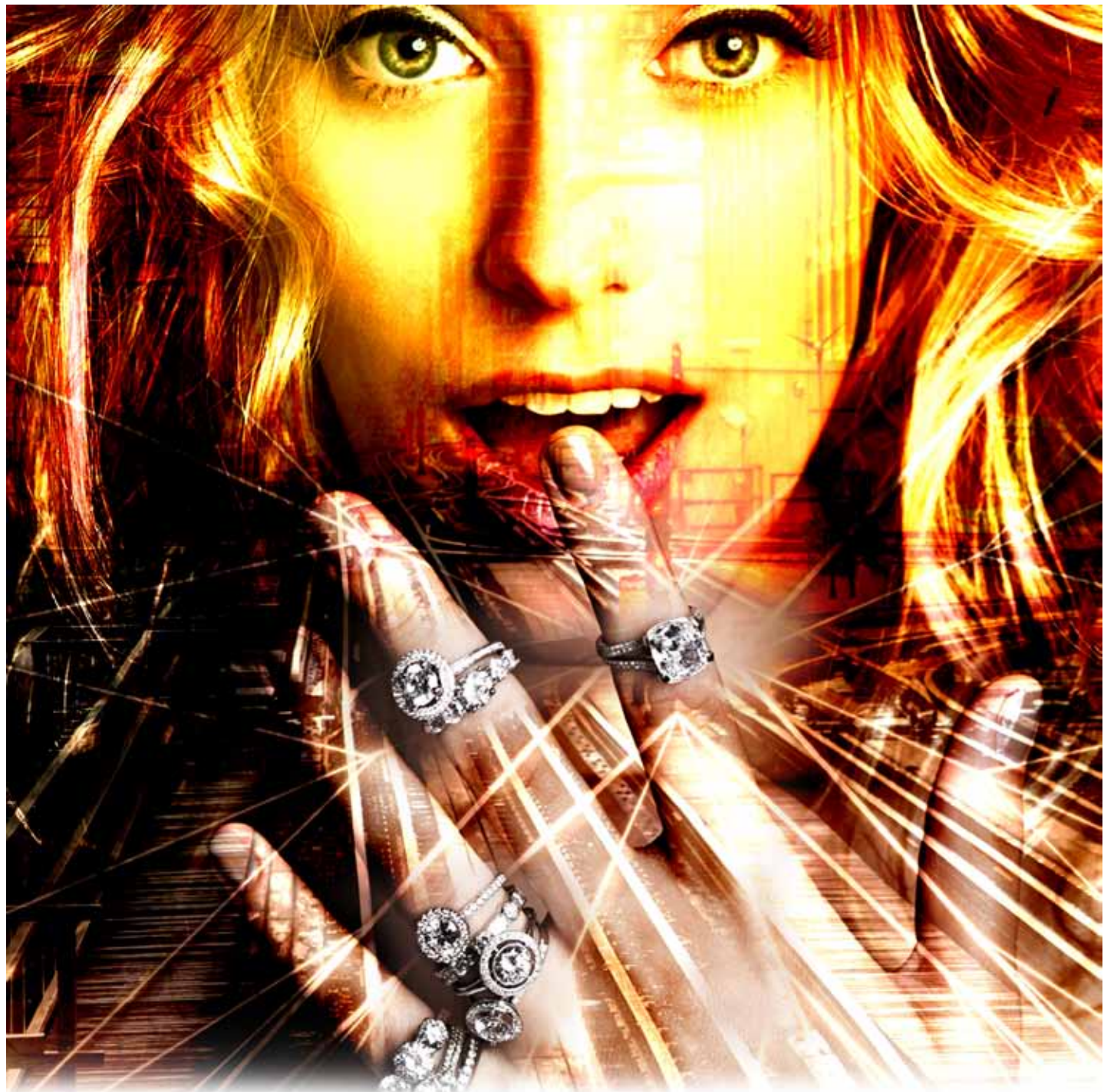
Below are events being held to mark World AIDS Day, which is officially on Dec. 1:

Dec. 3

—AIDS Foundation of Chicago will hold its annual "World of Chocolate" event at the Chicago Union Station's Great Hall at 6-9 p.m. (This year's theme is "Chocolate, Glitz & Glamour.") See <http://www.aidschicago.org/page/events/fundraising-events/world-of-chocolate-2015>.

Dec. 5

—Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., will hold an event at 10 a.m.-2 p.m. that aims to bring together individuals to commemorate strides made in HIV/AIDS research, prevention and outreach work. See CenterOnHalsted.org.



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Imperial Court marks 50 years of outreach, activism

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

With the goal of providing LGBT people with a safe space to meet and raise funds, World War II veteran and gay Latino-American Jose Julio Sarria founded the first chapter of the International Imperial Court in San Francisco, California, in 1965.

Sarria was also the first openly gay candidate to run for public office, as supervisor of the city and county of San Francisco, in 1961—years before Harvey Milk ran and won his seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

When Sarria died in 2013, Nicole Murray Ramirez was named CEO and executive director of International Imperial Court. (Ramirez also holds the title of Queen Mother I of the Americas.) Ramirez called Sarria the Rosa Parks of the LGBT-rights movement when he died.

Since the organization's founding, the International Imperial Court System has added chapters in 67 cities across the United States, Canada and Mexico including Chicago—Imperial Windy City Court of the Prairie State Empire, Inc.—and is one of the few international LGBT organizations in existence.

Emperor 11 Neil Douglas James was recently named the court's board president and also heads the Chicago chapter.

"As incoming board president for the 2016 year, I see my job as keeping the court legal and running the business of the court," said James. "My involvement in the court started 10 years ago and two years ago I stepped up as the fundraising chair for the Chicago Court, first as Imperial crown prince and then as emperor. I selected The Night Ministries and The Leather Archives and Museum as our charities



From left: Jim Obergefell, Rev. Troy Perry, Michael Connolly, Cleve Jones, Nicole Murray Ramirez, Judy Shepard, Toni Atkins, Dennis Shepard, Stuart Milk, Todd Gloria and Dustin Lance Black.

Photo courtesy of the Court

for the year. Supporting homeless youth and the preservation of gay history are very important to me. If we don't take care of our children no one else will. If we don't preserve and tell our stories, no one else will."

Recently, the organization marked its 50th year of existence with a state gala dinner at the Sentinel Hotel in Portland, Oregon, with

special guests Jim Obergefell (lead plaintiff, Supreme Court case Obergefell v Hodges), Rev. Troy Perry (founder, Metropolitan Community Church), Michael Connolly (member of the legislative assembly in Alberta, Canada), Cleve Jones (founder, NAMES Project/AIDS Memorial Quilt), Judy and Dennis Shepard (founders, Matthew Shepard Foundation), Hon. Toni Atkins (California assembly speaker), Stuart Milk (founder, Harvey Milk Foundation), Hon. Todd Gloria (former mayor and current councilman of San Diego) and Dustin Lance Black (Academy Award screenwriter winner for "Milk").

The gala also honored five LGBT couples who've been together for 40 plus years with the designation—Golden Jubilee Royal Couples. Obergefell was given the honor of presenting the couples with their awards.

"One of the first LGBT student scholarships in North America was started by the Imperial Courts in 1979, and since then the over 40 court chapters have raised millions of dollars to help needy students," said Ramirez. "After Jose's death, I established the International Jose Julio Sarria Scholarship Program for LGBT students in the United States, Canada and Mexico. At our 50th anniversary gala celebration, we announced the Court's financial endowment of this scholarship with \$95,000 and will officially begin this educational program in 2016."

The International Imperial Court has been likened to the Shriners or the Elks in that its main focus and goal is charity fundraising. Over the years the Court has supported causes and given financial support in Africa, Israel and Mexico. The Court is also the founding sponsor of Development in Gardening (DIG). DIG is responsible for improving the lives and health of about 23,000 Africans by planting and maintaining 50 large community gardens on the African continent. The Court also gave the Matthew Shepard Foundation over \$125,000 this past year to help "erase hate in schools."

In the 1970s, court members were involved in efforts to defeat Anita Bryant's various anti-LGBT referendums across the United States. The Court was also involved with the National LGBTQ March on Washington, raised funds to fight HIV/AIDS since the 1980s and lead the successful efforts to get the U.S. Postal Service to issue a stamp in honor of Harvey Milk. Now the Court is working to get a stamp issued in honor of Bayard Rustin and a Navy vessel named after Harvey Milk, who was a Navy veteran.

The Court also has partnerships with the Harvey Milk Foundation, the Trevor Project, Egale Canada and the International Gay Rodeo Association.

"It's my hope that our community will learn more about the Imperial Court and our important place as pioneers and trailblazers in the history of our community," said Ramirez. "As I often say, 'A community that does not know where it came from does not know where it's going.'"

See <http://www.impcourt.org/> and <http://www.impcourt.org/the-courts/47-the-courts/court-listings/18-chicago> for more information.



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ELEVELD from cover

Democrats usually said nice things in Washington D.C. there really hadn't been any action on LGBT issues except for negative stuff like 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' [DADT] and the Defense of Marriage Act [DOMA]."

By the time Eleveld left Washington, D.C., in 2013, the climate had changed dramatically with the passage of the Hate Crimes bill, the repeal of DADT and the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that section three of DOMA was unconstitutional.

The demand for LGBT equality reached a tipping point during the Obama administration, Eleveld explained, because grassroots LGBT activists "were fed up and they weren't going to wait any longer, which is why the book is called 'Don't Tell Me to Wait.' It was also something that Obama told me in one of our interviews. He actually used the words don't tell me to wait in an answer to a question I asked him where he referenced Dr. King's Letter from a Birmingham Jail. Dr. King was saying in the letter to white clergy, 'Don't tell me to wait for my freedom and equality,' so the book title is a play on that quote."

"I want readers to walk away with the notion that if they're passionate enough about an issue, they can get involved and make a difference because grassroots activism matters," said Eleveld. "I also wanted mainstream America to get a gripping, digestible and accessible glimpse of some of the history around LGBT issues. This book takes place more or less over a handful of years but it was really important to me wherever possible to go back in time and give people a glimpse of major LGBT heroes like Frank Kameny and Harvey Milk among others."

The book begins on election night in 2008, when Obama was elected while at the same time the Prop 8 ballot measure in California was passed overturning that state's high court marriage equality ruling, and ends with the recent ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court legalizing same-sex marriage across the country.

Eleveld also examines the push back that Obama got from LGBT activists when the campaign invited anti-LGBT minister and singer Donnie McClurkin to perform as a part of their gospel tour in South Carolina as well as the Obama inaugural committee's invitation to anti-LGBT Pastor Rick Warren, a staunch Prop 8 supporter, to do the invocation during the 2009 inauguration.

She also delves into Windy City Times' (when it was known as Outlines) questionnaire to then-Illinois state Senate candidate Obama in 1996, when he stated his support for marriage equality. There's also Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim's interview with Obama in 2004, when he was running for the U.S. Senate; he asked Baim to turn off the recorder so they could speak about the difference between civil unions and marriage equality.

"That [questionnaire] was problematic for him and continues to be problematic for him to this day," said Eleveld. "The questionnaire didn't become public until after the 2008 election, so that wasn't an issue the campaign had to deal with when he was saying during the campaign he was for civil unions. He seemed to be pretty versed on LGBT issues in 1996 due to the way that the statements were written that he signed off on."

Eleveld explained that what's amazing is, unlike Obama's first presidential campaign where he would only state his support for civil unions, it became clear to the administration that it would be beneficial for the president to officially come out in favor of marriage equality ahead of the 2012 election.

What struck Eleveld during her interviews with Obama was how careful and thoughtful he was and also how calculated he is regarding every issue that he has to consider. She said that he always manages to get in the last word during interviews.

"After covering him I came to believe that one of his greatest weaknesses was the ability to accept criticism on things for which he felt like he had moral conviction and authority,"



Kerry Eleveld.

Photo by Maria Fernanda Albarracin

said Eleveld. "Something like the Rick Warren situation where he felt like he was a fierce advocate for LGBT issues."

Eleveld noted that the most surprising thing she found out while writing the book was that average people can make a difference and get the attention of the Executive Branch if they raise their voices and demand that things get done.

As for the future of LGBT activism, Eleveld said the LGBT movement is in trouble compared to what other progressive movements are doing

in pushing their agendas to the various Democratic presidential candidates.

"There's no time for the LGBT community to rest on their laurels," said Eleveld. "They have to move on issues such as the Equality Act or things won't get done"

Don't Tell Me To Wait is available now wherever books are sold. Eleveld can also be found on twitter (www.twitter.com/kerry-eleveld) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/KerryEleveldWriter?fref=ts).

HUD proposes gender-identity rule

The U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced its proposed "Equal Access in Accordance with an Individual's Gender Identity in Community Planning and Development Programs Rule (Gender Identity Rule)." It is a rule requiring shelters to treat transgender people according to their gender identity in emergency shelters.

The proposed rule was created after reviewing and monitoring the implementation of HUD's Equal Access to Housing in HUD Pro-

grams Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity Rule, which was published in 2012. The Equal Access Rule ensures that housing assisted or insured by HUD is open to all eligible individuals and families without regard to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status.

"A person seeking shelter is already in a very vulnerable situation, and they deserve to be treated with dignity when they request our assistance," said HUD Secretary Julian Castro. "This rule takes us one step closer to full acceptance of transgender men and women, and will ensure they receive the proper services that respect their identity."



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Youth trans group announces launch on South Side

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

In order to create a safe space for transgender and gender-expansive youth, clinicians from Chicago Counseling Associates & Beverly Therapists and The Juniper Center formed a support group, Gendernauts, for Chicago area youth ages 14-21. The first group kicked off this past summer at The Juniper Center in Park Ridge, Illinois, and had seven members.

The group has moved to the South Side and will meet Dec. 13 at 5-7 p.m. at Beverly Therapists, 10725 S. Western Ave., on the second floor. Gendernauts will meet the second Sunday of every month and hopes to have about 10 people at its meeting.

Gendernauts will be facilitated by Bonn Wade, who is a licensed clinical social worker, consultant, trainer and psychotherapist with Chicago Counseling Associates & Beverly Therapists, which is based out of the Beverly neighborhood on the far South Side.

To find new members, Wade explained that, to find new members, they've reached out to local high schools, youth groups and churches in the Beverly area and surrounding neighborhoods.

"We also know that once young people start coming and experience the space as affirming and inclusive, they will invite their friends to come," said Wade.

Wade received a master's degree from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration and has worked on the South Side for most of their career in social services.



Bonn Wade.

Photo by Pidgeon Pagonis

"We began dreaming about Gendernauts out of a desire to create a safe and brave space where transgender youth were able to connect to their peers in a supportive and affirming environment," said Wade. "At our core, we believe that growing into our whole-souled selves is contingent upon an intersectional framework of understanding the world. Dreaming and living beyond the gender binary of limited understanding of male and female bodies and



Windy City Times staff posed with Mayor Rahm Emanuel and members of City Council.

Photo by Brooke Collins/City of Chicago

City Council recognizes WCT's 30th anniversary

Ald. Deb Mell recently introduced a resolution in the City Council honoring the 30th anniversary of Windy City Times (WCT). The resolution was read into the record Nov. 18 at the Chicago City Council. Several aldermen spoke in favor of the resolution, including Tom Tunney, James Cappleman, Pat Dowell and Carlos Ramirez-Rosa.

A few members of the WCT staff posted for a photo with mayor Rahm Emanuel before the council meeting. From left: Hal Baim, Jean Albright, Ald. Raymond Lopez, Tracy Baim, Ald. Mell, Mayor Emanuel, Andrew Davis, Gretchen Hammond, Terri Klinsky, Kirk Williamson, Matt Simonette, Ald. Cappleman.

Photo by Brooke Collins, ©2015 City of Chicago

people is a long-term process that can only be achieved through collaborative action, showing up and building ourselves within community.

"Our hope is that, youth find community and a place where they can grow into even more amazing individuals. Transgender and gender expansive youth need space to do just that and that's what we hope to serve up at every group meeting. In addition, a lot of the groups that transgender and gender expansive youth attend are based in not for profits or health centers. We want to take the 'medical' lens off of transgender/gender expansive youth and provide a space where they can be people, not just a 'client.'"

As for how they see the group in the future, Margo Jacquot—founder and director of The Juniper Center, licensed clinical psychologist, certified supervisory addictions counselor and board certified expert in traumatic stress—noted that for right now they are excited to have created this group.

"In the best of all worlds there might be Gendernauts groups in other locations," said Jacquot. "My wish would be that we will be able to help others set up safe, informed spaces in the hinterlands beyond Chicago, where resources are few."

Wade would also like to see the group grow and inspire others to set up similar meeting spaces, so transgender and gender expansive youth outside of Chicago will have a place to explore and grow into young adulthood."

"We're excited for all the possibilities that Gendernauts will bring to Beverly and the surrounding neighborhoods and the youth who participate," said Wade. "Tell your young friends and family members who identify as transgender and/or gender expansive that we're here and ready to build community."

"Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or want to help," said Jacquot.

To RSVP for the free meeting on Dec. 13, contact Wade at 773-330-2544 or wadebonn@gmail.com.

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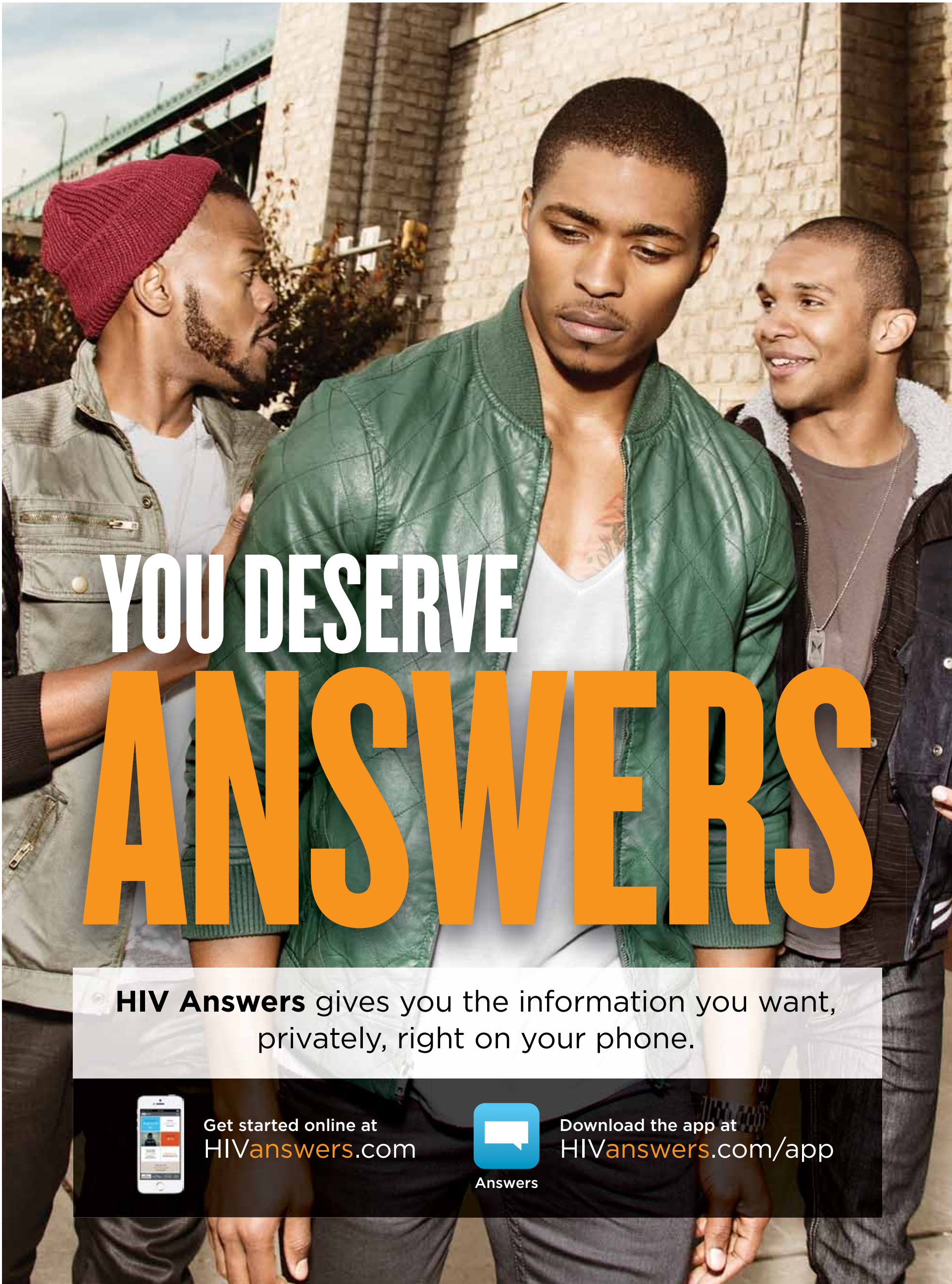
Lori Cannon (second from left) and volunteers. Photo from Cannon

Thanksgiving volunteers mark 28 years

On Thanksgiving, longtime activist Lori Cannon and volunteers marked 28 years of spending the holiday delivering meals to homebound clients who are unable to go to the Vital Bridges pantry Groceryland. Once again, the meals were assembled at Ann Sather, 929 W. Belmont Ave.

In an email, Cannon said, "I salute [Ald.] Tom Tunney and his hard-working Ann Sather staff, who were there since the earliest and darkest days of the AIDS epidemic, preparing delicious meals for homebound AIDS patients."

Photo courtesy of Cannon



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Photo by Tim Carroll

Protesters close down Magnificent Mile

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

Chicago's Magnificent Mile and the Black Friday cash registers of its high-end stores were brought to a standstill Nov. 27 by nearly 2,000 protestors who covered the breadth of Michigan Avenue, pausing at each intersection to give voice to each of the 16 gunshots discharged by Chicago Police Department (CPD) officer Jason Van Dyke into the body of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald more than a year ago.

Released Nov. 24 to coincide with Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez filing murder charges against Van Dyke, the video of the shooting was an eerily silent backdrop to the anguish and rage of the demonstrators whose voices reverberated from the Wrigley Building to Water Tower Place calling for justice and the removal of Alvarez, CPD Superintendent Garry McCarthy and Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

The harsh wind and constant stream of rain did little to deter what was called "an economic blockade" as people of all races and ages gathered to join the Chicago Teachers Union and Rev. Jesse Jackson at The Wrigley Building.

Jackson began by drilling the protestors in each of their demands. "We want a new police chief and infrastructure, a new state's attorney," he said. "We want an independent prosecutor, federal intervention and oversight. End the cover-up. We want transparency. We will march on Michigan Avenue again, again and again until something happens. This year we will not shop until we drop. We will drop before we shop. Let justice be done."

As a line formed and people started walking north on one side of the Magnificent Mile, they were joined by protestors who had already begun from Wacker Drive and Michigan Avenue as well as Trump Tower—until the entire street

was covered by a tide of determined voices sometimes in disparate calls to "stop shooting our future," and for "justice now" but always unified as the marchers paused to count from one to 16.

For the most part, the lines of CPD officers on bikes and on foot had a lower profile than photographers representing media outlets from across the world—some of whom showed more antagonism than the marchers themselves after they were kept from approaching Jackson, who was walking in linked arms with children.

However, by the time Jackson reached the steps of the Water Tower, some division in the aim of the march became apparent. As he took the microphone, he was drowned out by demonstrators on a bullhorn who yelled "indict Rahm"—something for which Jackson seemed reluctant to demand.

As Jackson left, the protestors formed blockades in front of stores including Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Topshop and Apple, stopping Black Friday shoppers from entering or leaving.

"We're going to speak some truth today," protestors cried. "This city's police department has a profound history of corruption. How

many videos is it going to take?"

They pledged to continue economic disruption for the next 30 days.

The Nov. 27 protest was among several protests timed for Thanksgiving weekend. Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100) has called for and been part of several of these protests.

Many more photos available online at www.WindyCityTimes.com.



Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. talks during the Black Friday protest.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

Groups respond to McDonald video

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A number of community organizations and individuals issued responses to the release of video footage that showed the death of Laquan McDonald. Organizations called for a range of actions, from closer investigations of the Chicago Police Department to the resignation of Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy and Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez.

Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100) called for the defunding of the Chicago Police Department and a reinvestment into programs and policies that have a positive impact in Black communities, such as mental health clinics, trauma centers, job creation and quality public education.

"Fearless Leading by the Youth (FLY) organized for over 5 years to have a trauma center on the South Side of Chicago. We need more resources in our communities like quality public schools and jobs so Black people can survive and reach their fullest potential. It is ridiculous that the Mayor of Chicago and Chicago aldermen passed a budget that gives 40% of spending to a police force that is terrorizing our communities," said FLY Organizer

Veronica Moore.

BYP100 also demanded that Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CPD Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy resign from office. "The tape cover-up conspiracy of Laquan's death is proof that Alvarez, Emanuel, and CPD do not stand for justice and are corrupt public servants. Our communities are less safe because of their decisions and they are unqualified to lead and protect our city," said BYP100 Organizer Rachel Williams.

"This has been a remarkable few days in Chicago," said Edwin Yohnka, director of communications and public policy at American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois. "Thousands of residents—young and old, African American, White, Latino and Middle Eastern, from all parts of the City—have come together to express outrage and demand action in the wake of the death of Laquan McDonald, the young man killed by a Chicago police officer. The voices raised in protest this week should be heard and heeded by City and County officials. ... We call on U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch to authorize such an investigation, and urge City and County officials to be cooperative, open and transparent in such a probe."

Lambda Legal Executive Director Kevin Cathcart added, "This story is all too familiar, and, once again, shows unnecessary violence perpetrated against a Black person at the hands of the police—who take oaths to protect and serve all citizens. The subsequent inaction only furthered the pain of a community whose faith in this system is left wanting."

"We at Equality Illinois are outraged and saddened by the killing of Laquan McDonald," said Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov. "We offer our condolences and support to his family and friends. ... We will continue to engage in focused advocacy, dialogue, and education to end violence against marginalized communities and to ensure lived equality for all people."

Officials from AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) and Pride Action Tank noted that those organizations "work with some of the most ignored people in society—people living with and vulnerable to HIV and related chronic diseases and LGBTQ people. Our work requires an intersectional approach that embraces the impact of race, gender identity, economic level, and more. We recognize that real reforms in policing, education, health care access, housing, jobs and so much more are critical to improving health outcomes and creating thriving communities."

"AFC and the Pride Action Tank call on Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago City Council to improve training for police, review all police records for patterns of abuse, and take stronger action against the small number of po-

lice who are accountable for the most alleged abuses. We are committed to transforming systems, policies and resources so that there is no doubt that #BlackLivesMatter."

Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) Executive Director Anthony Papini said the organization "is outraged and saddened by the death of Laquan McDonald. We express our condolences to his family and to all those who have experienced police violence. The Alliance works with young people across intersecting identities who are often the target of violence in their schools and communities. We join the voices speaking out against this senseless violence, the lack of accountability, and the need for systemic reform of these systems that continue to oppress Black youth and other youth of color."

"His name was Laquan McDonald," wrote Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa (35th Ward). "He was 17 years old. Like many of you, it's taken me time to process Laquan's horrific murder and his harrowing final moments. There are no words. I am deeply saddened. I am deeply upset. May the justice that was denied to Laquan now prevail in the courtroom. I am committed to working with restorative justice advocates, civil liberties experts, and Black community leaders to address the institutional ills that denied Laquan McDonald the dignity and justice he deserved."

Affinity Community Services also issued a letter to its members, printed on page 37 of this issue.



in the LIFE
Raul Redaggio

TEXT BY ROSS FORMAN
 PHOTOS FROM REDAGGIO

- **Age**
29
- **Neighborhood**
Albany Park
- **Background**
Originally from Michoacan, Mexico; moved to Chicago 10 years ago.
- **Relationship status**
"Happily single"
- **Hobbies**
Oil painting
- **Job title**
Costume designer at Neverland Productions and owner of Redaggio, "my own eponymous brand."
- **Favorite movie**
A.I.
- **Favorite TV show**
Family Guy
- **Favorite drink**
Lychee martini
- **Fashion sense**
"Theatrical, exuberant, artisanal—meaning, creating couture from trash or found objects"
- **Little-known fact**
"I have a mild case of pteronophilia [arousal to being tickled by feathers]."

His work as a costume designer has roots in Halloween, as Raul Redaggio almost always created his own costumes for the annual October holiday, and they often included wings.

"My best friend and I were always doing photoshoots [in the Halloween outfits]. We would use the narrative from music videos, movies or literature as inspiration for this photography," Redaggio said. "What started out as a self-taught hobby became an obsession. Then Neverland Productions came along, and since I was already friends with the founders, we wanted to collaborate on a project. So I became one of their costume designers."

Redaggio grew up in a family of craftsmen and artisans. His mother—who is the principal and guiding influence in his work, he said—molded decorative pieces and household items from clay. She made intricate and delicate flowers from fabric. She would make elaborate meals that would take hours to prepare.

"From a very young age, I have always had a deep appreciation of things made by hand," he said. "In addition, I have always been fascinated by Catholic iconography, particularly the life-size statues of angels and saints wearing these elaborate and intricate vestments and bejeweled crowns. Before fashion models, it was these saints and angels that got to wear couture first."



Redaggio said his daily work consists primarily of four stages: research, sourcing, execution and photoshoots.

"I do a lot of research on the Internet, which is a vast universe of ideas and images," he said. "I take inspiration from all kinds, [including] movies, paintings, music, major fashion designers, history [and more]. Once I have a design in mind, I source my materials. I spend a lot of time at hardware stores and resale consignment shops, looking for the right kind of materials to use. The execution phase can take anywhere from a couple of hours to several days. One time, I sat for 20 hours straight sewing and gluing feathers. I make everything by hand. And last, once I've created a costume piece, my friends and I do photo shoots to showcase my work."

Redaggio said his career goal is to work for a luxury fashion brand or a major couture house. "To work for Guo Pei or Maison Lemarié, whose sole purpose is to source and create breathtaking works of art from feathers for Chanel Couture, would be a dream come true," he said.

Redaggio said the best part of his job is simple: "Seeing people gasp with delight when they see my work for the first time," he said.

But there is a drawback to his work, too: "There is never enough time to complete a project," he said.



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letters

AN UNCIVIL WAR

OP-ED BY ANDY THAYER

"Do you think police officers who violate the rights of homeless people should be punished, yes or no?"

To this simple question, put to him several times during a Nov. 8 demonstration at his office, 46th Ward Ald. James Cappleman refused to give a direct answer. Instead he kept repeating that the homeless should file complaints with the Independent Police Review Authority, the city's notoriously useless police investigating agency.

For several months, police have led an escalating campaign of harassment against those experiencing homelessness in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood, long a target of gentrifiers. This neighborhood has served as a port of entry for disadvantaged migrants to the city, from Native Americans and poor Appalachians during the 1960s and '70s, to Southeast Asians in the 1990s, to African immigrants today. It has a proud history of social-justice activism.

But Uptown's proud history of racial and economic diversity has long been under siege from Cappleman and the gentrifying real-estate developers who fund his campaigns. One of newly elected Cappleman's first acts in 2011 was to "confront violence" by announcing the removal of basketball hoops from the ward's playlots, including one a half-block from my apartment, which were seen as attracting Black youth.

Outcry over the ugly racial subtext of this move prompted a quick reversal. But a few years later he was back at it again, trying to drive Salvation Army food trucks that give food to the poor out of the ward. Again, outcry over Cappleman's crass attempt to "purify" the ward and lay the groundwork for gentrifiers prompted an outcry, and he was forced to reverse course again.

But these victories have not deterred Capple-

man in his relentless campaign to turn Uptown into Lincoln Park North:

—He has overseen the loss of 1,000 units of low-income housing in the ward during his term—more than the rest of the city combined—and has not replaced one of them;

—He organized demonstrations against a tax-increment financing (TIF) that brought the last chunk of low-income housing to the ward under his predecessor; and

—He steered millions in TIF funds to luxury developments, in the case of the former Maryville Academy site, \$15.8 million;

Not content to attack the homeless in his own ward alone, he has also voted with the mayor to shut half of the city's mental-health clinics and has opposed the mild single-room occupancy (SRO) preservation ordinance that even our infamously pro-1-percent mayor supported.

After taking heat for being seen as a tool of wealthy real-estate interests, arch-hypocrite Cappleman tried to burnish his image by participating in a Nov. 20 charity "sleep out" at Cricket Hill, billed as raising funds for agencies serving homeless LGBT youths. That the event was taking place literally yards away from where Chicago police, apparently at Cappleman's behest, have for months been illegally harassing the homeless, threatening them with false arrest, struck many of us as the worst form of irony.

We have filmed several instances of brazenly illegal, unconstitutional police action against the homeless. But in a city that can't seem to fire its officers when they shoot an unarmed Rekia Boyd in the back of the head, or bring legal action for thirteen months against a cop caught on police dash-cam murdering Laquan McDonald, the notion that Rahm Emanuel or Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy, on their own, will discipline police who merely violate the rights of the homeless is at best hopelessly naïve if not willfully stupid. Only massive public pressure works on those two.

In advance of the Nov. 20 "Sleep Out Chicago," we urged the many social-service agencies benefiting from it publicly to denounce the illegal police sweeps as well as Cappleman, who, from the stage, boasted he signed the permit

for the event and expressed his great concern for homeless youth.

But the agencies' silence was total. Apparently keeping in the mayor's and alderman's good graces, as well as keeping funding for their offices and executive directorships, were more important than truly helping the homeless.

Of course, they will spin it differently. But it shouldn't take a ton of empathy to understand that if homeless people are constantly being forced from location to location and threatened with fines that they cannot pay, it not only causes them undue stress in an already stressful time of their lives, it makes them more difficult to reach with the very services the agencies purport to deliver. Nor does it take a degree in social work to grasp that using City resources for police harassment wastes resources that could instead be spent on lockers for homeless people's possessions and "housing first," programs that the Nov. 20 event was set up to support.

Unfortunately, what often goes unremarked is that Alderman Cappleman's attack on the homeless harms LGBT people as well, and not just because many homeless people are also LGBT. We owe LGBT gains over the past few decades, from forcing rational and compassionate approaches to fighting AIDS to equal marriage rights, not only to our own efforts, but also to the often heroic support non-LGBT people of every racial and cultural background have provided.

When a gay leader like Ald. Cappleman tries to ethnically cleanse a neighborhood and telegraphs that the only interests that count in his ward and the city are those of wealthy people, gay and non-gay—screw everyone else—his actions sabotage efforts to get the support of non-LGBTs for our future struggles. They promote backlash. They foster homophobia.

When a prominent LGBT leader attacks another disadvantaged group—in this case, the homeless, in effect playing the two groups against each other—it becomes particularly incumbent upon other LGBTs to loudly say, "You do NOT represent us!"

Ald. Cappleman responds: I am concerned about the impact of the police sweeps on our homeless neighbors. These sweeps are a short-term tactic that does not address the underlying cause of widespread homelessness—a lack of access to safe, clean, affordable housing in our community and across the city.

The number-one issue that affects people who are homeless or at risk for becoming homeless is the lack of affordable housing. I continue to advocate for keeping and adding more affordable housing in our community and throughout Chicago by my support of changes to the Affordable Requirements Ordinance that will increase the number of affordable units built as well as increase funding for the Low Income Housing Trust Fund. Additionally, to make sure we do not lose our current affordable housing, I have worked with organizations such as One Northside and the Jane Addams Senior Caucus to save more than 100 safe, affordable units owned by Presbyterian Homes. I'm proud to say that since I was elected, we have not lost any government subsidized housing units and, in fact, have added units for those with little to no income.

I have been and continue to be the number-one advocate on City Council to put funding toward the implementation of the City's 2.0 Plan to End Homelessness. More than 25 years ago, I co-founded a homeless shelter for people living with HIV/AIDS because no nursing home would take them in at the time. My experience working with the most vulnerable in our community has taught me that we must remain focused on implementing interventions that get people off the streets and into permanent housing with wrap-around services. This includes making sure the City is equipped to have all social service agencies coordinate their programming so people do not fall through the cracks, something past consumers noted was a big problem for them getting help.

However, this is not enough. As a city, we need to come together to create new, innovative solutions to help our most vulnerable neighbors. We need more affordable housing in every Chicago neighborhood. The current demand is well above our current supply. I will continue to advocate for policies that push our city in the right direction to create more affordable housing.

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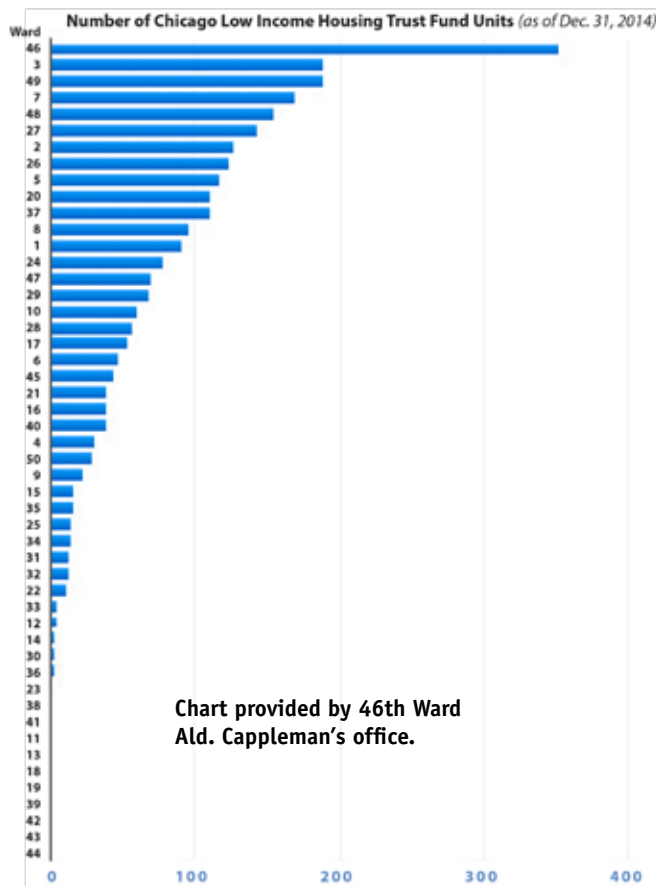


Chart provided by 46th Ward Ald. Cappleman's office.

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Cuddle group launches.



'Daze' of our lives

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Windy City Times reviews the production *Holidaze*.

Photo by Liz Lauren

SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Couple of Cowards

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

English playwright/actor/songwriter Noel Coward (1899-1973) never publicly came out as gay in his lifetime—even when British laws against homosexuality were officially rescinded in 1967. But Coward didn't exactly spend his life covering in the closet, either.

Long before his plays briefly fell out of critical favor in the 1950s and '60s when most of the attention was focused on works by "angry

bare-bones staged reading of Coward's ever-popular 1930 comedy *Private Lives* about two remarried divorcees who run out on their new spouses to take up with each other again. Then for Remy Bumppo Theatre Company's first-ever Coward production, actress/director Shannon Cochran is overseeing his rarely produced 1925 comedy *Fallen Angels*.

"Since it is a woman-centered show, they wanted the sensibilities of a female director," Cochran said. "I jumped at the chance because

rebellion of trying to get out and enjoy some of the same privileges and pleasures that the men had been enjoying all along. Coward seemed to know this and caught the spirit of the times just at the perfect point and he threw this up onstage with women behaving indecently and drinking and talking about pre-marital sex and all these subjects that were strictly taboo."

Cochran said audiences of the time were scandalized by *Fallen Angels* as much as other Coward works, though she's uncertain why it has faded in the limelight and doesn't score as many revivals when compared to his other plays like *Private Lives*, *Hay Fever* or *Blithe Spirit*.

"It's every bit as funny, and the great fun of *Fallen Angels* is this is as probably as close as

in a production of *Fallen Angels*. I think it has a lot more pizzazz that way so it's not a typical drawing room comedy—it has the heightened feel of one of the great musical comedies of that period."

Remy Bumppo Theatre Company's *Fallen Angels* continues through Sunday, Jan. 10, at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays (also Wednesdays on Dec. 16, 23, 30 and Jan. 6), 2:30 p.m. Sundays and Saturdays, Dec. 12 and 26, and Thursdays, Dec. 24 and 31. No show Dec. 25. Tickets are \$42.50-\$52.50. \$15 student tickets available for select performances. Call 773-404-7336 or visit www.remybumpo.org.

ShawChicago's staged reading production of *Private Lives* continues through Monday, Dec. 14, at the Ruth Page Center Theater, 1016 N. Dearborn St. Performances are at 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays and 7 p.m. Mondays. Tickets are \$30; \$25 for seniors; \$15 for students. Call 312-587-7390 or visit www.shawchicago.org.

Bel Canto world premiere

The eyes of the opera world will be on the Windy City this month as the Lyric Opera of Chicago presents the world premiere of *Bel Canto* on Monday, Dec. 7. In advance of that much-anticipated opening night, a free panel discussion will be held at 6 p.m. on Wed., Dec. 2, at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, 20 N. Wacker Dr.

Slated to be on the panel are the opera's composer, Jimmy Lopez, librettist Nilo Cruz, director Kevin Newbury, conductor/Lyric music director Sir Andrew Davis and star soprano Danielle de Niese. Lyric dramaturg Roger Pines moderates the discussion on how Ann Patchett's best-selling novel made its way to the operatic stage. For more information, visit www.lyricopera.org.



Fallen Angels rehearsal.
Photo by Ian Frank

young men," Coward himself was known for stirring up controversy (and dropping coded hints about gay culture) by dealing with risqué topics and featuring effete characters in his works during the 1920s and '30s. For instance, Coward shocked London audiences in 1924 when he starred as the drug-addicted hero Nicky Lancaster in his drama *The Vortex*. Coward also pushed boundaries by depicting a dysfunctional bisexual three-way relationship in his 1933 comic drama *Design for Living* (which was recently revived locally by Pride Films and Plays in an acclaimed production).

Chicago audiences can get even more Coward via two current productions. Actress/director Barbara Zahora is in charge of ShawChicago's

I had never seen a production of *Fallen Angels*. I read it many years ago and I like to come at things completely innocent and not colored by past productions."

Fallen Angels is a drawing-room comedy that explores sexual double standards as two young housewives ponder pursuing a common past lover when both of their husbands are away for a golfing weekend.

"You can get a sense of the stirrings of restlessness—especially among the female population," said Cochran, noting how select British women obtained limited voting rights after World War I while women in general had experienced more personal freedoms while the men were away fighting. "That started their small

Noël Coward ever came to farce," Cochran said. "You know, mistaken identities, chases, slamming doors and big physical pratfalls. It's kind of a mystery to me why it's not more popular."

Since Remy Bumppo hasn't produced Coward before, Cochran wanted her production of *Fallen Angels* to push the company's limits.

"I had some ideas in my mind that a little more fun could be had if we added things that they're not known for. One of the things I brought to the table because of my background was elements of musical theater," said Cochran, revealing that she is soon to star in the national tour of *Cabaret* as Fraulein Schneider. "So there is some movement and songs included in this production that you wouldn't typically see

'Ease on Down' Dec. 6 at Victory

Bailiwick Chicago is presenting "Ease on Down"—a one-night-only concert with favorite tunes from *The Wiz*, *Wicked*, *The Wizard of Oz* and surprises—Sunday, Dec. 6, at 7:30 p.m. at Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.

Some of the performers slated to appear include Jayson Brooks (*Passing Strange*, *Dessa Rose*), Sydney Charles (*Dessa Rose*), TJ Crawford (*Princess Mary Demands Your Attention*), Varris Holmes (*Aida*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*) and Sasha Smith (*Dessa Rose*, *The Wild Party*).

Tickets are \$20 (industry)-\$40; visit BailiwickChicago.com.

THEATER REVIEW

Ibsen's Ghosts

Playwright: adapted by Greg Allen
from the play by Henrik Ibsen
At: Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company
at Angel Island, 735 W. Sheridan Rd.
Tickets: 773-871-0442;
www.maryarchie.com; \$30
Runs through: Dec. 20

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

When executing a makeover on a classic, not only is it a good idea to first write your makeover and then fit the verbatim source material to the space remaining, but to apply your concept to both ends of the narrative throughout the development process. If you're not careful, your analogies stagger under the weight of the text they purport to explicate—in this case, Ibsen's shocking tale of a libertine patriarch whose legacy of corruption and hypocrisy brings misery to his descendants.

Greg Allen's analytical deconstruction for this Mary-Arrchie Theatre production begins promisingly, with a servant's "self-taught" French exhibiting the fluency afforded by the casting of a Montrealer in the part, and a character protesting the preponderance of "cheap theatrics" only to be corrected, "metatheatrics!" The second act attempts to sustain the intellectual level of the self-referential humor with a parlor lamp represented by a fixture known in stage jargon as a "ghost light" and a bottle of cham-



Ibsen's Ghosts.
Photo by Joe
Mazza/Brave Lux

pagne, still bearing its price tag, allegedly purchased at the store downstairs from the Angel Island studio. Too often, however, the irony of personae musing over their "roles" in life gives way to standard-issue comedy shtick before reverting to straightforward tragic delivery for the last 20 minutes.

Allen's Neo-Futurist aesthetic mandates a communal approach possibly contributing to the stylistic dissonance in evidence on opening night. Stephen Walker's sanctimonious Pastor Manders and Catherine Lavoie's ambitious Regina eagerly embrace the anachronisms and

exaggerations—Manders exclaiming "Oy vey!" or Regina shrieking in adolescent outrage—prevalent in improv-based drollery. Carolyn Hoerdemann's Mrs. Alving and Kirk Anderson's Engstrand, by contrast, offer their observations on the action in progress with never a wink or grimace to cue audience laughter. (After describing the late Mr. Alving as "dissolute," Hoerdemann confides to us, "That's the word most translators use," with scholarly aplomb.) Stranded between these warring tonal manifestos, Gage Wallace's Oswald cannot help but come off as unsure of his place in the universe,

dramatic or factual.

What makes this drop-off in creative energy doubly disappointing is that Allen clearly wants to make a cohesive case for our widowed heroine having it within her power to rescue herself and her children from their unhappy fate. We see her reading Ibsen's plays and even stepping out of the stage picture to view her options as spectators do before sorrowfully regretting her inability—now, as in the past—to implement her new discoveries toward alleviating the suffering of innocents.

THEATER REVIEW

A Christmas Carol

Playwright: Mike Ockrent (book),
Lynn Ahrens (lyrics), Alan Menken (music)
At: Quest Ensemble, 1609 W. Gregory Ave.
Tickets: 312-458-0895;
www.questensemble.org;
free (reservations recommended)
Runs through: Dec. 20

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Several dozen kids under 10 years old were well-behaved during a matinee of A Christmas Carol—always a good sign. I learned later that some belonged to a kids' theater program and, so, had built-in showbiz interest. Even so, there's much to recommend in this Quest production, which utilizes effective puppetry and live music as other Quest shows have done. The

songs have pleasant music and intelligent lyrics that work hard at storytelling, as one would expect from the award-winning authors.

Still, I must admit my prejudices. Any 90-minute version of A Christmas Carol with songs and dances necessarily is a significant diminishment of the original, simplified and/or dumbed-down for family audiences. The 1951 British film version, starring Alistair Sim, remains the all-time champ Xmas Carol adaptation because it's told without songs and dances, it's scary and it doesn't forget that Dickens wrote the tale for adults. It, too, is only about 90 minutes, but its depth of character development and story detail is much greater.

That being said, this musical version is reasonably faithful to Dickens, but it rushes through story and character points so quickly that it must bewilder those not yet overly familiar with the tale, or familiar with life in 1840s London. There are numerous small changes (example: there are fewer Cratchit children), some of which add value to the piece and others which do not. I'm pleased that Dickens' reference to ignorance and want (generally represented by an emaciated boy and girl) remains intact because it's the story's most profound caution—one which regrettably remains truer today than it was 170 years ago.

My largest complaint about this adaptation—



A Christmas Carol.
Photo by Braxton Black

and some others I've seen over time—is its religiosity, which definitely is *not* in the Dickens original. The adapters manage to squeeze a priest, monks and angels into the proceedings and actually have Scrooge sing, "To God I pray." No! A Christmas Carol is a Christian tale, but it isn't a religious one. Dickens seldom invokes the Deity and has only one oblique reference to Jesus.

Kent Joseph, with a rich bass voice, makes a towering and effective Scrooge, capably supported by a large cast mostly doubling and tripling in small roles. It's confusing, however,

to have Young Scrooge (Stephen Garrett) reappear in so many other bit parts. The vocal and instrumental musicianship is excellent under Gary Powell's direction. Choreographer Dennis J. Murphy makes non-dancers move in spritely fashion. The miniature Ye Olde London setting (Nick Rupard, also puppet designer) has charm. Director Andrew Park's staging is simple, low-tech and intimate. I suppose this is a fine rendition for younger children, even if it's a speed-dating version of A Christmas Carol. And it's free!

CRITICS' PICKS



Good for Otto, Gift Theatre, through Dec. 20. Both profound and invigorating, David Rabe's world premiere looks at two community mental health workers and their patients struggling with parental abandonment. Rabe's skill makes it more exciting and entertaining than you'd think. JA

The Merry Widow, Lyric Opera of Chicago, through Dec. 13. There's only one more chance to catch Renee Fleming in the title role of Franz Lehár's 1905 comic operetta before Nicole Cabell finishes out the run of this lovely and traditional production. SCM

Pocatello, Griffin Theatre Company at Signal Ensemble, through Dec. 13. A chain restaurant surrounded by big-box stores is sad enough without being in a Samuel Hunter play, but this time the author allows his citizens a means of escape from Big Sky torpor. MSB

The Raid, Jackalope Theatre at the Broadway Armory, through Dec. 12. John Brown's body might lie a-mold'ring in the grave, but Ron Wells delivers an unforgettable portrayal of the fiery abolitionist whose civil disobedience stirs controversy to this day. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge
and Morgan

THEATER REVIEW

Holidaze

Playwright: Mia McCullough, Steven Simonic, Joshua Rollins, Steven Peterson, MT Cozzola and Jake Carr
At: Step Up Productions at the Athenaeum, 2936 N. Southport Ave.
Tickets: 773-935-6875;
www.stepupproductions.org; \$24
Runs through: Dec. 20

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Just as some people compose their holiday gift lists throughout the year (the that's-exactly-what-this-person-would-want-for-Christmas light can go on at any moment), so do some playwrights, faced with the task of writing a short one-act play for a yuletide anthology show, start developing a topic while watching July fireworks, rather than handing out Halloween candy. Step Up Productions is lucky enough to have enlisted some of the first kind for its report on the seasonal spirit

in 2015.

The theme uniting these six plays is the dissipation of sorrow, discord and uncertainty—evils capable of attack at all levels of our society—by a communal effort of will. This principle is illustrated at the very beginning of the evening by Mia McCullough's hard-drinking clan whose festivities consist of its relations disparaging one another's personal lifestyles until the recovering-alcoholic-Buddhist-vegetarian offers to eat turkey on this special day—compromise shaming her kin into declaring a temporary truce. Later, Steven Simonic's bereaved family is comforted by letters and gifts pre-ordered by the now-deceased matriarch for Christmas delivery. These blessings are not just the province of het households, however—Jake Carr's backpacking-in-Europe lesbian couple express misgivings over their plan to adopt a child, but are assured of their parenting skills by a pair of elderly domestic survivors sharing a train to London.

The other three plays, by contrast, suffer from sketch-comedy characters assigned too

much responsibility for plot reversals. Steven Peterson's winter-stressed young couple don't resolve their differences so much as surrender to attrition. Joshua Rollins proposes a matronly woman celebrating Christmas Eve at home with television, popcorn and whiskey, only to be interrupted by a cohabitant cast so close in age and appearance that we are unsure if it is her daughter, her sister, her lover, or a ghost from the future. Most puzzling is the dynamic in MT Cozzola's office party where a mousy clerk lavishes expensive presents on an unwary temp in a display of largesse reaching stalker proportions, whereupon the recipient joins in the charade to a likewise disturbing extreme, at which point co-workers burst in and dance to "Disco Christmas."

Segmented programs like this are often marred by widely varying tonal ranges, but when the outcome in every case is the achievement of, if not precisely happiness, then peace and contentment, at least for the moment, our consolation is that serenity (even in troubled times) lies within our individual powers.

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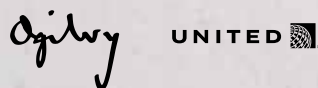
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Joffrey announces competition winners

The Joffrey Academy of Dance, official school of The Joffrey Ballet, announced the recipients of the sixth annual Winning Works Choreographic Competition: Jeffrey Cirio, Christian Denice and Mariana Oliveira.

The choreographers' world-premiere works will be showcased on the international members of the Joffrey Academy Trainee Program and Joffrey Studio Company in "Winning Works 2016" presented in association with the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 220 E. Chicago Ave., in three performances: Saturday, March 5, 2016, at 3 and 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, March 6, at 3 p.m.

Tickets for "Winning Works 2016" at the MCA Stage are \$24; stop by the box office, call 312-397-4010 or visit www.mcachicago.org.

'Dynamic Divas' in Dec., Jan.

Black Ensemble Theater Founder and CEO Jackie Taylor will present Dynamite Divas, A Tribute to Women of Soul at the Black Ensemble Theater Cultural Center, 4450 N. Clark St., on Dec. 12, 2015-Jan. 24, 2016.

The cast includes Shari Addison (Aretha Franklin), Rhonda Preston (Nancy Wilson), and Rashada Dawan (Gladys Knight), among others. Casting for Roberta Flack and Mr. Maurice are TBA.

Tickets are \$55 on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturday matinees; and \$65 on Fridays, Saturday evenings and Sunday matinees. Buy online at www.blackensemble.org or call 773-769-4451.

SPOTLIGHT



Disney's *The Lion King* just celebrated its 18th anniversary and it's now officially the third longest-running show in Broadway history, recently surpassing the run of *Cats*. So if you haven't caught up with director Julie Taymor's theatrical spectacle inspired by the hit 1994 animated film, then catch the return of the musical's touring production to Chicago this holiday season. *The Lion King* continues through Sunday, Jan. 17, at the Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W. Randolph St. (There are no shows Dec. 25 or Jan. 1.) Tickets are \$32-\$177; call 800-775-2000 or visit www.broadwayinchicago.com for more information.

Photo by Joan Marcus/Disney

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'Irving Berlin' through Dec. 6

Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin is running performances through Sunday, Dec. 6, at the Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted St.

Berlin's life covers living in czarist Russia to New York's Lower East Side. He went on

to compose such songs as "God Bless America," "There's No Business Like Show Business," "Blue Skies," "Puttin' on the Ritz" and "White Christmas."

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Nate Burger, photo by Bill Burlingham

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BOOK REVIEW

What Color Is Your Hoodie?: Essays on Black Gay Identity

by Jarrett Neal
\$18; Chelsea Station Editions; 175 pages
BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Some days, it seems as though you have SuperPowers.

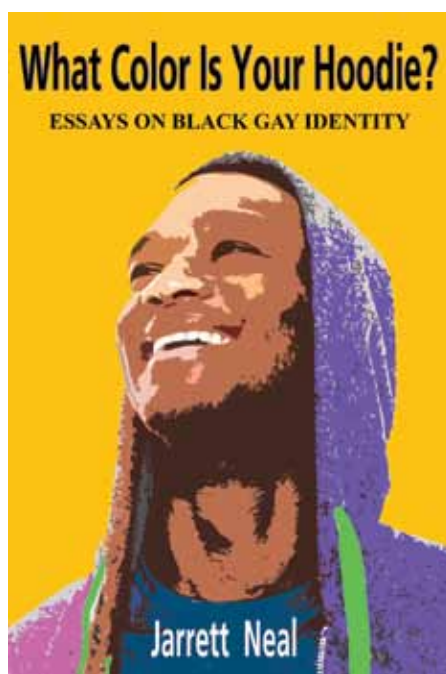
That must be the explanation for being unseen. That's why there are days when nobody looks at you. There's no acknowledgment that you exist. You're suddenly Invisible Man, and in the new book *What Color is Your Hoodie? Essays on Black Gay Identity*, by Jarrett Neal, the reason is not so transparent.

Born to a 14-year-old mother and raised in a household with an alcoholic grandfather, Neal was in eighth grade when his gym class accidentally walked in on their coach showering. It was Neal's first glimpse of a naked man and it "ended my boyhood," he says.

He was well into college when he finally admitted to himself that he was attracted to men; still, the "daily taunts" from his more athletic, more self-confident peers and the absence of a father haunted him for many years. To counteract it, Neal joined a gym and worked out tirelessly, until he realized that he'd never have a body like He-Man. He was never going to make a living with his physique.

Instead, Neal knew that he had to write.

It was "write or die," he says, though he's been told that his style is "either too black or too gay" and he once assumed that "as a boy I wasn't supposed to care about books..." Even so, he devoured the works of gay men—particularly those who were Black. That voracity for books led to a teaching career.



In his essays here, Neal discusses the dearth of gay Black men in films and television, and he decries the lack of interest by white readers in the works of Black authors. He looks at the sexuality of gay Black men who, like most African-American men, live under "sexual stereotypes" that cause "a tremendous onus... to live up to..." And as a Black man married to a white man, he notes that racism within the gay community is as big a problem as it is anywhere else.

Neal is not shy.

There's no waffling inside this book, and nothing held back. Neal discusses gay porn as blithely as he does modern literature; he remembers his childhood with the same passion as he does coming out. Such power and force in writing serves to give readers—straight or gay—a solid understanding of the points he tries to make. We might laugh or raise our eyebrows but we also empathize or, as the case may be, sympathize.

What mars this otherwise well-done collection of essays is its sloppiness. *What Color is*

Your Hoodie? is riddled with misspellings and punctuational mistakes that, because of the frequency, almost made me want to quit this book too many times.

If you can forgive that distraction, then this unusual book is a good read that may actually change minds. Truthful, blunt, and thought-provoking, regretful mistakes aside, *What Color is Your Hoodie?* should be seen.

WCGC, Quire's 'Don We Now' Dec. 5

Windy City Gay Chorus and Windy City Treble Quire will present two performances of their 37th annual "Don We Now" holiday concert on Saturday, Dec. 5, at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. at First United Methodist Church at The Chicago Temple, 77 W. Washington St.

The show will be under the leadership of Artistic Director Paul Caldwell.

Admission is \$18-30 in advance, and \$10-\$20 at the door; visit <http://wcpadonwenow.brownpapertickets.org>.

Jess Godwin show Dec. 4

Entertainer Jess Godwin—recently signed to Razor&Tie as a writer—will perform at the Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport Ave., on Friday, Dec. 4, at 8 p.m.

Each month, Godwin has dedicated a different chapter to a specific individual. This project will culminate in a live performance of every song at the Athenaeum.

Following the performance, there will be a silent art auction of Godwin's pieces, with 50 percent of the proceeds going towards the various Chicago organizations Godwin has worked with over the year: Lurie Children's Hospital, Center on Halsted, Cradle Evanston, Gilda's Corner, Habitat for Humanity, Sunrise Assisted Living, Harvest Vineyard, and the Youth Empowerment Performance Project.

As she approaches the final chapter, Godwin has recruited more than 100 artists from the Chicago theater and music scene and the Youth Empowerment Performance Project to collaborate on the final video in the series, "When the Snow Thaws," which was released Nov. 19. (See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFfyM46AD20>.)

Godwin recently performed at the "Out in the Open Sleepout" benefit for 19 youth homeless projects in Chicago.

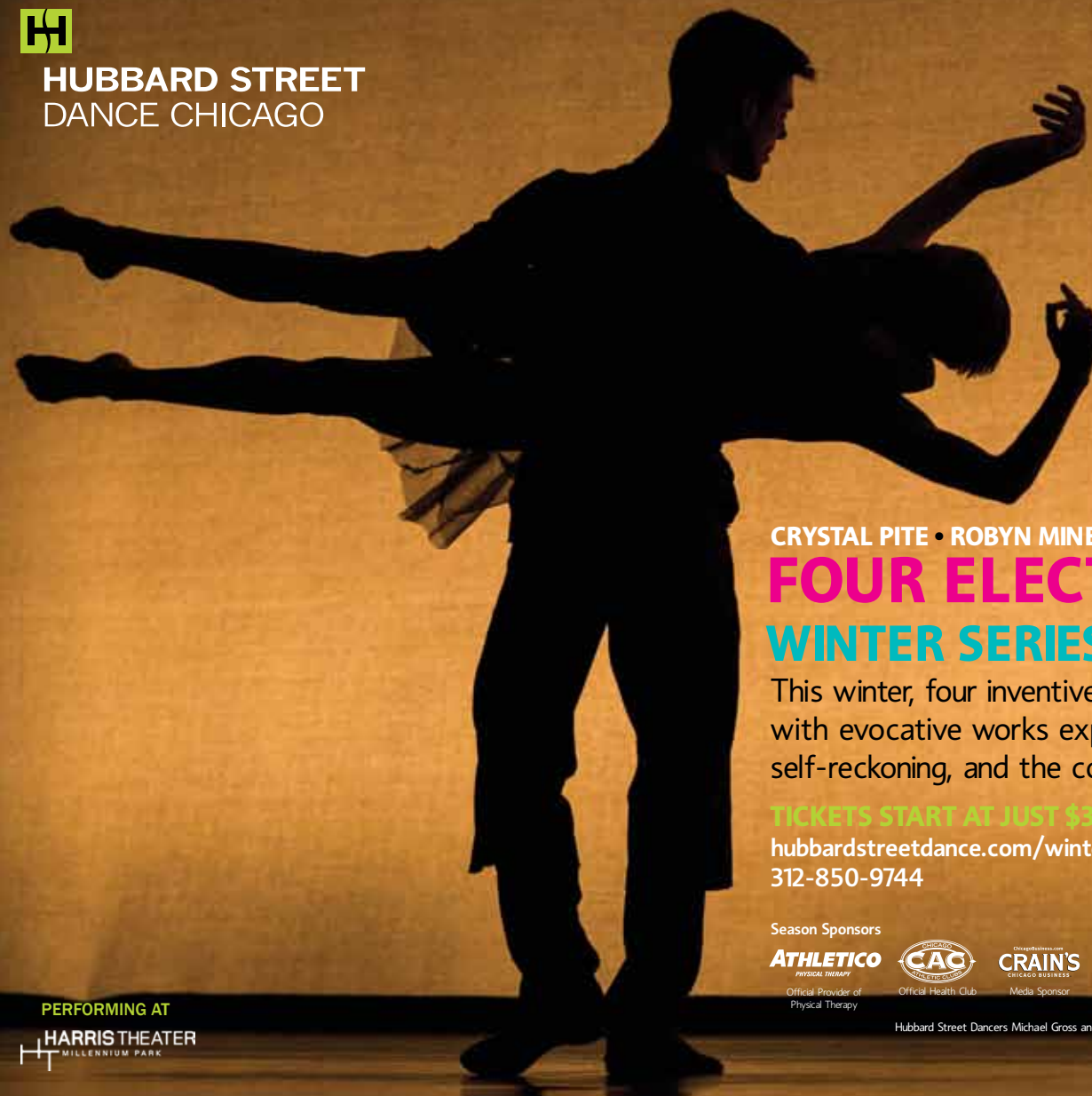
Visit www.athenaeumtheatre.org.



Jess Godwin.
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Hubbard Street Dancers Michael Gross and Emilie Leriche in *Waxing Moon* by Robyn Mineko Williams. Photo by Todd Rosenberg.

Chicago Artists Chorale reveals 'Variations'

BY SKYLAR BAKER-JORDAN

Most people don't immediately associate the poetry of Robert Frost with Christmas. The Chicago Artists Chorale hopes to change that with its upcoming winter concert, "The Frost Variations."

It is the third concert for the chorale, which last year began as a way for local theater artists to come together and celebrate their love of music. Tom Vendafreddo and Devin DeSantis were starring in a production of *Godspell* at the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire when they began to reminisce on their days in high school choirs. Deciding they missed performing in a chorus, they decided to create one of their own.

"We realized the only way to make that happen is to do it ourselves," DeSantis said. Setting out to build a choir of the "incredibly talented people" who work in the Chicago theater community, Vendafreddo and DeSantis got together with Lauren Iezzi and DeSantis' husband, Stephen Schellhardt, to hold the first round of auditions. And while they were surprised by the turnout—the group has held steady at around 60 members since its founding—they understood why people were so eager to join.

"As artists, we're everyday working on such elaborate musical theater productions," Vendafreddo, the chorale's artistic director, said. "So to come to a place once a week where we strip away all of the extra stuff and we just focus on the music, and we focus on the art of singing in an ensemble, I think helps everybody that's involved."

DeSantis, who serves as associate artistic director, agreed. "It's sort of a different outlet than being in theatre. It keeps our craft alive. I found just in the last year that my musical skills have really beefed up because of it." This, and the revolving membership, is hugely beneficial to the actors, directors, designers, and stage managers who make up the chorale, he says, noting that the nature of the business means those available for one concert may not be available for another.

The Chicago Artists Chorale hasn't just been met with a great response from the theater community, though. Audiences have responded positively too, despite not being prepared for what the Chorale had to offer. "It's been a great turnout," DeSantis said. "People came and thought we were a group of theatre kids getting together to sing choir. I think they expected us to sing *The Music Man* or just do some sort of group ensemble. Then they came in and we were singing... just really choral music that they didn't quite expect. And it really surprised people."

Next month, the chorale returns with the music of Randall Thompson, a 20th-century composer who is most famous for his choral works. Frostiana turns seven of Robert Frost's most well-known poems into haunting classical choral art songs.

"It's become really important piece of choral music," Vendafreddo said. "It's a really celebrated set of songs." From "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" to the "Road Not Taken," "it's a really nice, warm and rich choice for the winter season."

The concert will feature both the music of Thompson and more traditional Christmas fare, something Vendafreddo said is a response to audience suggestions. The focus, though, will be firmly on the choral music. "People can come expecting certain things, and then we slap them across the face with Robert Frost po-

etry," DeSantis said, laughing.

Stripping everything back to just a choir is important for their creative vision, Vendafreddo said. "The thing that strikes me the most is that as artists we're everyday working on such elaborate musical theatre productions, and they incorporate music and dance and big scenery and all of this stuff. So to come to a place once a week where we strip away all of the extra stuff and we just focus on the music and we focus on the art of singing in an ensemble, I think helps everybody that's involved."

That includes the audience. "We had a conversation last week, as a chorale, after the attacks in Paris. Chorale music is something I think people need. I think it's a necessity," Vendafreddo added.

"If more people around the world just chose



From left: Chicago Artists Chorale's Lauren Iezzi (company manager), Tom Vendafreddo (artistic director), Devin DeSantis (associate artistic director) and Stephen Schellhardt (manager). Photo by Bari Baskin Photography

to volunteer their time and get together and sing every once in a while, I think we would live on a much happier planet, a much more peaceful planet."

The Chicago Artists Chorale will present its winter concert, "Frost Variations," Tuesday, Dec. 8, at 7:30 p.m. at the Nettelhorst

School, 3252 N. Broadway. Tickets are \$25 for the general public, and \$10 for students, children and those in the theater industry. Tickets may be purchased in advance at chicagoartistschorale1.bpt.me. Prices increase \$5 at the door.

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Hug/cuddle group for gay single men arrives in Chicago

BY DWIGHT OKITA

I have a body pillow that I love to cuddle at night. Its gray fabric is covered with white stars. But there are some nights the body pillow alone just doesn't cut it.

I recently decided to start a Meetup group for single, gay men that focuses on hugging and cuddling. Most of the cuddle groups I'd heard of were for men and women, and I wasn't sure how a gay man might fit into such an equation. Truth is, I've been single longer than I've been plural and missed having someone to snuggle. I was looking for my tribe. One of our group guidelines is: "All humans deserve to be cuddled, whether partnered or not." I also knew that cuddling helps release oxytocin, a powerful hormone that gives a person a sense of connectedness and reduces anxiety. Oxytocin is

released 20 seconds into a hug—but the problem is most hugs only last two to four seconds!

Our first man-hug Meetup took place at Center on Halsted in November, and was a nurturing mix of diverse music, a safe space and 13 men in search of tenderness and intimacy in a platonic setting. I recruited Charles Gamble as my co-organizer to help plan things because I could see he shared a similar passion. His Meetup experience had been with a lucid dreaming group; my Meetup experience had been with an anxiety support group. He's African-American; I'm Asian-American. I liked the diversity of all that.

Said one member, Edward, of our hug-centric November event: "I thought it was a great meetup. It was well organized and the guys were very nice. I thought it was a great way to bond and share energy. I felt happy and re-



From left: Meetup group members Dwight, Charles and Mario hug.
Photo by Matt Koziel

laxed when I left." For the record, cuddle parties seem to have started in New York by two relationship coaches in 2004. And from that

beginning, a kind of cuddle movement has sprung up over the past decade.

Dec. 12 cuddle event

The next event is Saturday, Dec. 12, 2-4 p.m., and will focus on cuddling. Charles and I are diving head-first into planning the event. This time, we will be in the North Center neighborhood at the lovely Rast Dance Studio. Attendees will wear clothes they can cuddle in, a blanket and a pillow, if desired. One must RSVP and pay \$10 online in advance, rather than just show up.

Music will be played from my Bose bluetooth speaker connected to my iPod, which allows me to create unique playlists—from an orchestral piece called "Intro," by Camera Obscura, to Elton John's classic song of inter-galactic yearning, "Rocket Man." With the blankets laid out on the wooden floor and the music playing, it may seem like a kind of slumber party for grown-ups. The \$10 fee helps cover costs of space rental, music downloading, etc. Don't miss out on the Dec. 12 event or you'll have to wait a long winter month for our next gathering. <http://www.meetup.com/Hug-Cuddle-Group-for-Single-Gay-Men-in-Chicago/>

From our first event, we've seen how an hour and a half of human touch can give new meaning to the term "contact high." I tell people to think of this as "communal touch" rather than romantic touch (though they may feel similar at times). But if you're looking for a "happy ending," you will be disappointed.

Some other cuddle activities of interest

On Sunday, Dec. 6, our sister group Truthful Touch Cuddle Party will hold a screening in Rogers Park of a new documentary on the growth of the cuddle movement at 12:30-5 p.m. The event includes both the film and a shortened cuddle party, with men and women of various orientations. The fee to attend the whole event is \$35. <http://www.meetup.com/Truthful-Touch-Cuddle-Party/events/226752853/>

Also there is a new startup website called www.Cuddlist.com. They have certified cuddlers in Chicago and New York. The program is geared for those who seek one-on-one cuddling rather than a group. The cuddlists listed on the website come from various backgrounds and professions, including social workers, artists, yoga teachers and many more.

So, dear readers: We look forward to seeing your shining faces in just more than a week. You must be at least 18 years of age, and a single gay man. No drama or sexual harassment allowed. Big hugs and cuddles to you all.

For more information, visit www.DwightOkita.com. Dwight Okita is the meetup organizer of the Hug & Cuddle Group for Single Gay Men, and is the author of *The Prospect of My Arrival*, as well as *Crossing with the Light*.

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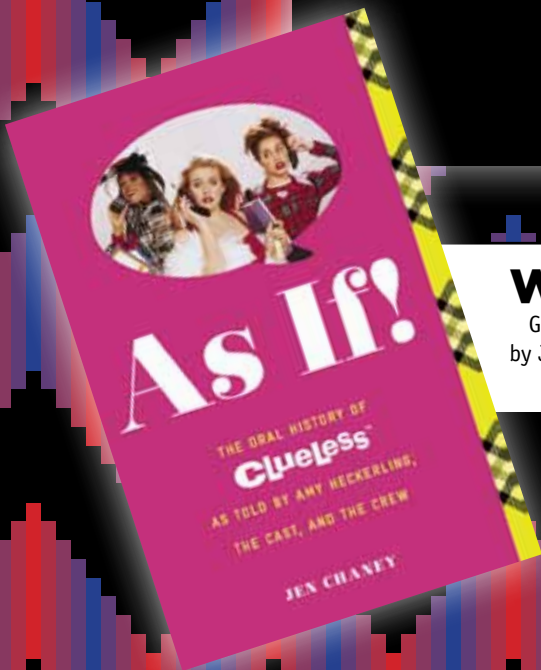
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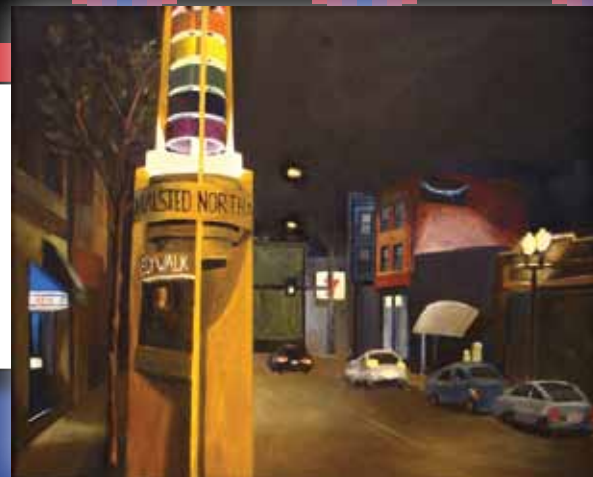


Whatever!

Give your favorite Baldwin the book **AS IF!: The Oral History of Clueless as told by Amy Heckerling and the Cast and Crew**, by Jen Chaney (\$16.99). It's especially special since it's the 20th anniversary of one of the most quotable movies of the '90s.

Leigh whiz

Every time I pass by or enter Lake View's **The Leigh Gallery** (TheLeighGallery.com), I see another item that I wish I owned. Among some of the items currently at the gallery are Amy Hutto's acrylic work "Bighorn Sheep" (\$975), Austyn DeLugo's "North Halsted" (\$700) and Bary Reithmeier's digital work "Seasons" (\$1,400).



The Gold standard

Who doesn't know that **Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams** (MGBWHome.com) is one of the premier home-furnishings companies throughout the country? Cool pillows, bedding and lighting—they're all there. However, did you know that there are limited-run game gift items like a modern ping-pong table and a dartboard?

Express yourself

Don't go for second-best, baby! AlwaysFits.com has a **Madonna makeup bag** (\$29.99) with imagery from the singer's Rebel Heart tour on one side and the Blonde Ambition series on the other, courtesy of artist Kayci Wheatley.



Tuning in

Here are three acts in three different genres with three holiday albums. Tony winner and "Let It Go" singer **Idina Menzel** (aka Adele Dazeem) has *Holiday Wishes*, while seemingly omnipresent group **Train** has its first-ever holiday album, *Christmas in Tahoe*. Lastly, renowned opera star Placido Domingo belts classics like "Silent Night" on the album *My Christmas*, which features guests such as ... Idina Menzel! Life is so circular sometimes.





Skin is in

Black Lace Skin Jewelry (BlackLaceSkinJewelry.com) offers a new way to sparkle. The jewelry is gorgeous and comes in several varieties, including matte and metallic. Also, these tattoo-like applications are temporary (and how many people have gotten tats they later regretted?).

The write stuff

For those who believe communication is more than texting emojis, **Dempsey & Carroll** (DempseyAndCarroll.com) has a variety of intriguing items. Whether it's through wedding invitations, personalized stamps, love notes or even gift tags, this company (which even has items through collaborations with people such as Colin Cowie and Isaac Mizrahi) can add some style to practically any event.



Key best

OrbitKey (OrbitKey.com) presents a stylish way to carry keys—think of it as Keychain 2.0. It looks cool, and even incorporates a locking mechanism to stop keys from becoming undone. There's even an optional USB drive to keep those urgent files near you.



Toast of all

The new **KRUPS Control Line Breakfast Collection** (KrupsUSA.com) helps your morning (as well as that of your spouse, partner or overnight friend) start well, featuring a filter coffee maker, electric kettle and two-slice toaster. The toaster features an extra-high lift and adjustable browning control while the electric kettle boasts a 1.7-liter capacity and button-activated flip-cover opening.

Comic relief

Chicagoland's **Graham Cracker Comics** (GrahamCrackers.com) is one of the area's top stores for novices and for those who know that figures such as Batman, Superman and Wolverine are just the tip of the comic-book iceberg. (Angela, Queen of Hel, anyone?) However, a recent stroll through the Lake View store revealed there are also items related to everything from Jem to Orange Is the New Black. In other words, there's practically something there for everyone.



Bear in mind

Football fans will get a kick out of the the **NFL Home-gating collection** (NFLShop.com/Homegating). Offering readers a variety of high-quality gift options and price points, the collection features all 32 teams—including our Chicago Bears, of course. You'll find everything from tumblers to toasters that imprint the teams' logos on the bread. Punt-pernickel, anyone?

Toffee house

Sometimes food that's sent via delivery service can taste, oh, less than desirable—but I was immediately sold on **Sticky Toffee Pudding Co.** (StickyToffeePuddingCompany.com). Made with all natural ingredients, the varieties include personal-sized versions of the titular dessert, molten chocolate-fudge cake, tart lemon pudding and sticky ginger pudding—or there's the sample box of four flavors (six puddings).



The suite life

Suite NY (SuiteNY.com) is a modern furniture company with some really cool-looking items. Tank Barware (\$65-\$125) incorporates a mix of space-age design and medieval apothecarian shapes, and Tokujin Yoshioka's prism glass armoire (request quote) definitely falls within the realm of functional art.



Buy and Cell

Perfect for the iPhone 6 (and with an upcoming version for Android), the **TurtleCell Case** (\$59.95; TurtleCell.com) comes with integrated retractable headphones and a microphone for safe, hands-free calling. In addition, the built-in headphones makes them less likely to be lost or left behind; they are ideal for students, the gym and anyone who uses a cellphone and has an active lifestyle.



Mat's incredible

Manduka (Manduka.com), an eco-conscious yoga gear company, has all sorts of gear for those who love getting into their adho mukha shvanasana (downward-facing dog pose). The company encourages people to "find their soul mats" (seriously), but there are also towels, bags and props such as body rollers.



Domo arigato, Mr. Roboto

Chicago's **Museum of Science and Industry** (MSI.org) has items that will even entice those who are not into microscopes. In honor of the world-premiere exhibit "Robot Revolution," the museum is offering several related items, including a robot tea infuser, the robotic ball Sphero and Aquabot Robotic Fish (that can swim in multiple directions). However, if those don't get your asteroid moving, there's a range of other items, such as a Star Wars Science Death Star™ Planetarium kit, various T-shirts and the Museum of Science and Industry Timer, which resembles a lava lamp.

Nothing but bubble

Share the gift of Champagne this holiday season. **Moët & Chandon** (ReserveBar.com)—the official Champagne of New Year's Eve in Times Square—has several tasty options. Choices include Festive So Bubbly, Grand Vintage Brut 2006 and Grand Vintage Rose 2006—with the latter two aged for seven years in the cellar.



Tooth or dare

You know it and I know it: Appearance is everything. Make sure your teeth dazzle others with the **Intelliwhite CoolBlue™ Pro Teeth Whitening System** (\$225; ShopIntelliwhite.com). And, to improve efficiency, the award-winning system has been scientifically developed to provide much more rapid whitening results in very short treatment periods—without increased sensitivity or side effects.

Mule love this

The idea behind **Cocktail Courier** (CocktailCourier.com) is pretty ingenious: The company has paired with ShakeStir.com, an online community for professional bartenders, to showcase cocktails. Those cocktails' ingredients are then sent to people who order them—and the customers become bartenders. For instance, the Moscow Mule kit is delivered right to your door and includes one bottle of Stolichnaya Premium Vodka, fresh ginger syrup, Stolichnaya ginger beer, whole limes and a step-by-step recipe.



In therapy

Perfect for anyone who works out or engages in any sort of intense physical activity, **Snapbac** (GetSnapbac.com) is hot/cold therapy that stays put. Among the various items are calf, elbow and knee sleeves as well as shirts, shorts and therapy pods. What's better is that most items won't break the bank; for example, the pods are \$7.95-\$9.95 each.



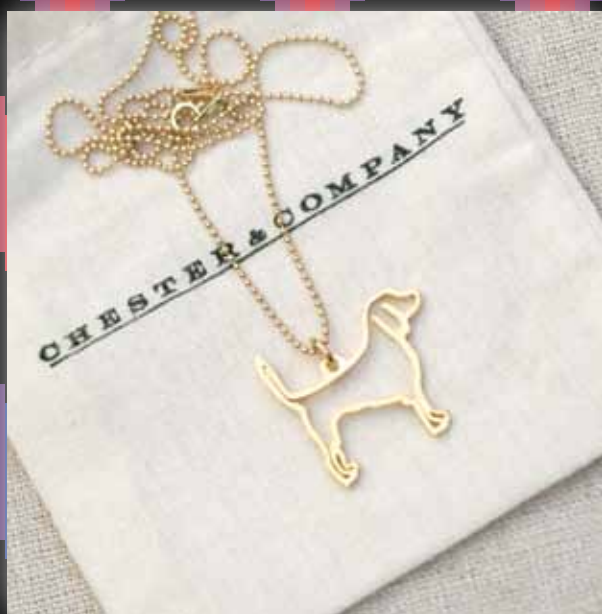


'Star' bright

Star Wars: The Force Awakens is on the cinematic horizon—presumably leaving other filmmakers shaking in their boots at the sci-fi movie's predicted box-office take. **JC Penney** (JCPenney.com) is featuring its own set of Star Wars-related items, including a twin comforter set, glassware and even a rather cool-looking Stormtrooper suitcase.

Watch this

Analog watches (like vinyl records) are coming back in style—and technophiles are likely to appreciate the **Tissot T-Touch Expert Solar Quartz Watch** (\$1,250; TissotShop.com). A perfect traveling companion, this watch (powered by solar energy) has 25 features, including weather forecasting, altimeter, a second time zone, a compass and an azimuth. By the way, if you know what an azimuth is, you definitely should get this watch.



Beagle-eyed

Inspired by a dog named Charmin Charles Buckaroo (I couldn't make that up if I tried), **Chester & Company** (ChesterAndCompany.com) offers pendants, keychains, pillows and even paperweights in the shapes of various dog breeds. Your favorite dog lover will give you a pug—um, hug—for this.



Perfect match

The state-of-the-art **Skin Perfecter** (\$225; SkinPerfecter.com) is an ultrasonic, at-home beauty tool that combines four skin treatments into one tool to deep-cleanse, exfoliate, extract and infuse serums. The system aims to exfoliate cellular debris, extract imperfections, reduce the appearance of enlarged pores, and resurface lines and wrinkles, among other things. If it could work all-over body magic like my masseur, I'd never have to go to the spa again.

Outside the box

For years, **The Container Store** (ContainerStore.com) has featured innovative ways to organize items. For example, check out the origami hanging organizer by Umbra (\$39.99), which has 10 cotton canvas pockets that can hold everything from shoes and handbags to toys. There are also the bamboo magnetic KNIFE-dock (\$29.99) and the crystal clear earring and ring organizer and drawers (\$8.99-\$19.99), which looks as cool as it sounds.



NORTHALSTED
PROUD
PURCHASE
CARD

NORTHALSTED.COM Fees May Apply - See Back

Boystown offering purchase card

Chicago's Boystown neighborhood is now offering a **Proud Purchase Card** that rewards shoppers for buying items in that area, according to a ChicagoPride.com item.

The campaign is an extension of the Northalsted Business Alliance's Holiday Bucks gift card, and the new card can be used at more than 40 businesses, including Whole Foods, Roscoe's Tavern and even Steamworks. However, there is now a charity-related component: The Alliance will donate 5 percent to its charity members, such as AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Lakeview Pantry and Center on Halsted, among others.

Visit <http://www.northalsted.com/visit-boystown/proud-purchase-card/>.

The full article is at http://chicago.gopride.com/news/article.cfm/articleid/72306004#.VLEZ_tuqNyE.mailto.



"My interest is trannies. I love trannies. I'm attracted to trannies. I don't like no muscle like me."—Formerly straight, now gay, boxer and gay porn star **Yusaf Mack** proclaims his personal preference. I smell a sequel...

It's finally here: the time of year I long for and yet dread—stores are once again stocking peppermint bark. I'd like to say I have self-control, but I'd also like to say I can still fit into my size-31 jeans. I gain an inch around the waist each time I walk by a Ghirardelli store (or any place selling Lindt products). By Christmas, I'll only be able to get into the house via the garage door!

Just when you thought you heard it all, the **Charlie Sheen** HIV story takes an unexpected turn. According to RadarOnline, there is what is being touted as a "gay sex video" starring Sheen. A reporter for that media outlet claims to have personally seen three different video clips—totaling roughly 90 seconds long. It supposedly shows Charlie smoking crack in a hotel room, looking right into the camera and then sucking the dick of an unidentified guy. That's an awful lot of action for 90 seconds! We hear that the video was leaked because the guy being serviced

also claimed "enema kits were found throughout the house—on the floors, in the beds, in nightstand drawers and in the trash." How many enemas do three people need? She also states that the hot tub was "brownish in color." Let us take a moment to digest that, shall we?

Lucas responded by saying the lawsuit is without merit and that Knapic is a "professional extortionist." He says that while he was in the mansion, she was in the guest house on the property and could see anything and everything going on. He produced text messages indicating that the owner's representative did a final walk-thru and found the house in good order. Being a smart cookie, Lucas also took photos and videos of the property before and after his stay, which substantiate his claim. He also reveals one little factoid not listed in the lawsuit—the mansion contains a "fairly well-equipped sex dungeon in the basement, complete with a sex swing, whips, chains and miscellaneous bondage paraphernalia." I didn't know **Sondheim** owned a house in Ojai!

It's time for the first of **Billy's Holiday Gift Giving Suggestions**. For the next few weeks, I will be suggesting items which would make great gifts for you and yours. Our first suggestion is something both old and new. When the film *The Wiz* came out at the end of 1979, most critics felt it was lacking—but nobody had any problems with the vocal performance of Miss Ross. The musical generated a two-LP soundtrack, but what many people don't know is that **Diana** also recorded most of the songs from the show for a solo album. When the film tanked, the solo was



A lawsuit, bodily fluids and extortion allegations—it's another week in the life of **Michael Lucas**. Photo by Matt Simonette

says that Sheen gave him herpes. Didn't I make a joke about that last week? My God—I'm not only a gossip columnist, but I'm also psychic!

If this scenario sounds familiar, that's because it was part of an anonymous lawsuit against an A-list celebrity male worth in excess of \$100 million who was spreading herpes. The plaintiff claims that these events took place in Las Vegas in 2011. The suit claims that Sheen "entered into a nefarious plot designed to lure Plaintiff into his luxurious hotel room to serve his prurient desires." Who wrote this lawsuit? Dame Barbara Cartland? Nefarious? Prurient? We are talking about Las Vegas—where you can give a blow job to hotel employees in an elevator! After Charlie assured the guy that he didn't have any diseases, the guy says they partook of the following activities: "mutual oral copulation, mutual self-gratification, rubbing and massaging each other, play-wrestling, licking and (unprotected) intercourse." Where the hell is THAT video????? 'Cause all of that should take more than 90 seconds! To make matters more complicated, other parties claim that the suit was settled out of court (for millions of dollars, allegedly), and the only copy of the video was destroyed. Hmm.

That isn't the only gay porn story of the week. Award-winning director **Michael Lucas** has been slapped with a lawsuit by a woman whose house he rented via Airbnb. According to Kristina Knapic, she rented out her mansion in Ojai (where I believe *The Bionic Woman* lived) to a woman named Anna who said she would be staying there with two friends. Knapic alleges that Lucas showed up claiming to be Anna's brother-in-law. According to the complaint, the house was trashed during their stay, and she found "urine, semen and fecal matter on the linens, carpets, upholstery, walls, ceilings and in the hot tub." It sounds like she went through the place with one of those special blue flashlights! She

scrapped and forgotten. The new television version helped revive interest in Ross' renditions, so you can now buy **Diana Ross Sings Songs from The Wiz**. The bad news is that the recording is only being sold as a digital download—which is ironic, since Miss Ross is still trying to figure out where to insert the crank from her Victrola into an mp3 player.

Every year, **Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS** releases additions to its "Broadway Legends" ornament collection. This year, Barbra Streisand joins the previously released renderings of Liza Minnelli, Julie Andrews and Gwen Verdon. Not only is it a great gift, but it helps a great cause. Check them out at BroadwayCares.org.

We have time for a quick "Ask Billy" question. Charles in London writes, "We just got *Scream Queens*. I didn't know **Lucien Laviscount** was in it. He's a big deal in the UK. I think there are some nude photos of him out there."

Laviscount is best known for roles on the UK shows *Coronation Street*, *Waterloo Road* and *Celebrity Big Brother*. On *Scream Queens*, he plays the ironically named Earl Grey. The very impressive photos allegedly come from a nude Skype call—been there, done that. You can see the pics (of him, not me) on BillyMasters.com.

When a Viscount is being upgraded to Earl, it's definitely time to end yet another column. While I try to avoid eating my weight in peppermint bark, you can check out www.BillyMasters.com, the site that'll never hang you up. If you've got a question for me, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Charlie appears in a gay porn version of "Two and a Half Men" (directed by Michael Lucas, naturally). So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 5




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WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 9

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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Corridor; Home Run Inn

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Dish is going the casual route this week in terms of restaurants—but that doesn't necessarily mean the quality of the fare takes a dip.

Corridor Brewery & Provisions (3446 N. Southport Ave.; CorridorChicago.com)—so-called because it's located in the city's Southport Corridor—is a prime example of this.

Corridor hasn't been on the block for long, having officially opened in October. However, the team behind the site (the same that's behind Dry-Hop Brewers) aims to make quite the impression.

Owner Greg Shuff told Dish that Corridor's



Above two photos: From Corridor Brewery & Provisions.

PR photos

Below two photos: From Home Run Inn Pizza.

Photos by Andrew Davis



growth will be production- and distribution-based, and that the food revolves around the brewing schedule—statements that are not that surprising for a place that spotlights brews.

Speaking of beers, head brewer Brant Dubovick has crafted some interesting brews, including the tasty Nibble, Nibble Little Mouse (6.5 percent alcohol by volume), which has hints of pumpkin and walnut. Cotton Candy Goat is a French table beer with notes of vanilla, pear and citrus.

As for food, Executive Chef Joel Pillar has made some pretty intriguing creations, including a mushroom, leek and goat-cheese pizza that's impossible to resist. Other offerings range from Belgian-style mussels to fried oyster po' boys to grilled asparagus salad.

Hitting a Home Run

Continuing the casual route, a friend and I hit the newest **Home Run Inn Pizza** (3215 N. Sheffield Ave.; HomeRunInnPizza.com).

Although Home Run Inn (HRI) has several restaurants in the Chicagoland area, I'd never entered one. It's a safe bet that I'll return.

The decor isn't necessarily special; there's a bar in the center, and there are a few large TV screens devoted to sports. However, the menu and food surpassed expectations.

First up, though: Don't expect a list of nutritious (albeit delicious) items—after all, this is a pizzeria. That being stated, things started with two pieces of the signature cheesy garlic bread that were the size of whale kidneys. At this point, I knew the visit would be, um, fulfilling.

We did have salad though—the tasty HRI Caesar, which comes with dressing, garbanzo beans, parmesan, bacon and croutons. Then, we had personal eight-inch pizzas, including a lovely grilled artichoke, roasted garlic and spinach combo to which I added turkey sausage. (Not all Home Run Inns serve the same items, so you may not necessarily get something you see online.) Add to that a cupcake, and you have an instant (and well-deserved) food coma.

By the way, there are all sorts of pizzas, pasta dishes, sandwiches and other items there. Try it—you'll like it.

(FYI: This Home Run Inn offers delivery to Lake View, Wrigleyville, Boystown, Park West, West DePaul and parts of Roscoe Village.)



DANCING ABOUT ARCHITECTURE

BY MARC 'MOOSE' MODER



Until Adele's Christmas album comes along...

You know, at some point, you have to put down the Adele 25 and come out from under your covers and realize it's December. And since the aforementioned British songbird has yet to put out a holiday collection, there are a few more worthy divas whose holiday offering you might consider.

Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings (Amy Winehouse's backing band on Back To Black) just never get it wrong. While most holiday joints go for 50/50 sweet and sassy, Sharon and the Kings are 100% spicy on It's a Holiday Soul Party. With her retro mid-'60s-into-early-'70s, big-horns-big-voice Southern groove, even her ballads, like "Please Come Home for Christmas," will have you grinding. Perfect to put on repeat at your next Xmas party.

After a failed reality show and some more pop jaunts didn't exactly make her the thirty-something Taylor Swift, **LeAnn Rimes** sounds like she's getting back to a rootsier sound with Today Is Christ-



mas. Possibly made with encouragement to capitalize on the opening track's assumed success, Today Is Christmas (Holiday Theme for NBC's Today) is a



surprisingly strong collection. Once you get past the obvious commercial tie-in, LeAnn brews up a piping mix of soul (powerful duets with Aloe Blacc and Gavin Degraw), genuine pop and country. If you were a fan of Faith Hill's 2008 Joy to the World, this will be a welcomed addition to your family time.

Speaking of TV tie-ins, I was hoping the first full **Braxton Family** album in twenty five years with Toni and her four sisters would be a proper pop release, not an 8-song EP, and not one this weak. This is definitely one to cherry pick off iTunes or stream if just for Toni going full gospel on "Blessed New Year." Skip them butchering the soul standard "This Christmas" ... twice! Once where they insert their own names into the chorus, and the second, sans Braxtonism, but remixed poorly.

Cleanse yourself of reality stars and receive a true star (of Christmas too), **Kylie Minogue**. Like Madonna, you wonder how she's not done a holiday-themed album after 30 years in the industry. Well, it was worth the wait. With Kylie Christmas, she's taking you on a pop sleigh (or SLLLLAAAYYYY) ride through 60 years of contemporary tunes with her duet with Frank Sinatra and seven other fully orchestrated classics; into a few Phil Spector Wall of Sound moments; and even three tips to the '80s, duetting with Iggy Pop on "The Waitresses' Christmas Wrapping," covering The Pretenders' "2000 Miles" and the amazingly lovely Yaz cover, "Only You," with late night host James Corden. But of course, it's not Kylie without some electro-pop. She touches on it wonderfully twice, with the Coldplay-written "Every Day's Like Christmas" and the bouncy "100 Degrees," a rare duet with sister Dannii.

So until you hear Adele debut a track mourning the inevitable break of Mary and Joseph, have yourself a very diva Christmas.

nightspots the big TO-DO

OUR WEEKLY PICKS TO PLAN
YOUR NIGHTLIFE CALENDAR



LQOKS: Bowery Ball Two-Year Anniversary

Thu., Dec. 3, 10 pm

Berlin, 954 W. Belmont Ave.
Two years of LQOKS are feted with performances from Nico, Shea Coulee, NOT TWINS, Curlene Ribbon and Mistress of Ceremonies Lucy Stoolie. Paying homage to visually stunning and groundbreaking artist Leigh Bowery.



Santa Speedo Run

Sat., Dec. 5, noon
Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

Run one mile through the heart of Boystown to raise money for the Center On Halsted and Chicago House. Register to run as an individual or as a team or make a donation at noon. Running of the Santas at 2, followed by awards, entertainment and door prizes with Debbie Fox. Photos of the 2014 event by Anthony Meade



Tat Tuesday Sound Sessions: Milty Evans

Tue., Dec. 8, 7 pm

Replay, 3439 N. Halsted St.
The second Tuesday of the month is Sound Sessions. This month, Replay welcomes Whitebeard Records-Chicago owner, Black and Blue Ball resident, and Chicago House legend Milty Evans.

Wed., Dec. 2

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.

Tiny Homes Competition: Interested Parties Meeting The Tiny Homes Competition is an opportunity for architects, students, artists and members of the public to propose new solutions to Chicago's affordable housing shortage. 5:30pm - 6:30pm AIA Chicago, 35 East Wacker Drive, Suite 250, Chicago <http://www.tinyhomeschicago.org>

Stripper BINGO! Ten games, the very first number the night is called the hot number and every time that number is called the dancer comes up 8:00pm Atmosphere Bar 5355 N. Clark St.

Thursday, Dec. 3

Open Gym Volleyball Every Monday and Thursday for 18 and over. All gender and experience levels welcome. Daily passes: \$7; Monthly passes: \$30 6:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

Job Club Help drafting a resume or doing online job searching. Fine-tuning interview skills one-on-one. Team hosts the Cyber Center several times each week. Free. 10:00am - 1:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=11010>

Trans Rights Panel Discussion with ACLU Project Director John Knight Knight directs litigation in states in the Midwest designed to confront bias and discrimination 12:00pm David Weinberg Photography, 300 W. Superior St., Suite 203; <http://www.aclu-il.org/>

**HAVING A BALL Thursday, Dec. 3**

AIDS Foundation of Chicago's World of Chocolate will take place at Chicago Union Station.

Photo from 2014 by Anthony Meade

World of Chocolate Party like Gatsby at this commemorative World AIDS Day event. \$135 or ticket packages. 6:00pm - 9:00pm Union Station 210 S Canal Chicago Tickets: <http://www.aidschicago.org/page/events/fundraising-events/world-of-chocolate-2015>

Girl Scouts Girl Scouts serve all girls regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, economic status, or disability. Meetings are free to attend, but fees may be required for supplies and uniforms. No one will be turned away if fees are not possible or reasonable for

your family and interested scout. For more information, please contact Ashley Pelz, Membership Specialist, Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana at 224-207-9227. 6:15pm - 8:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=9930>

American Veterans for Equal Rights (gay veterans) monthly meeting AVER is a non-profit, chapter-based association of active, reserve and veteran servicemembers dedicated to full and equal rights and equitable treatment for all present and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces. 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted

The Plural, The Blurring by H. Melt Book launch party for a collection of poems and essays that critically celebrate Chicago's queer and trans communities. A READ LOCAL event. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St.; <http://womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Friday, Dec. 4

Man Cave Plus On the fourth Friday of each month, ManCave & SOFFA's of ManCave will be hosting an extra special open meeting! Bring family, chosen or given, friends, lovers, coworkers, or whosoever you may choose! Free. 6:30pm - 8:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=9668>

Late Night Andersonville & Late-er Night Andersonville Andersonville makes it easy to save money and support local businesses while shopping for friends and family 6:00pm - 10:00pm Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood, centered at Berwyn and Clark, Chicago 773-728-2995 <http://www.andersonville.org>

Jess Godwin: 12 Honoring the people who have made a difference in her life through stories, service, and song. 8:00pm The Athenaeum Theatre 2936 N Southport Ave Chicago Tickets: https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pr/951711?_ga=1.227495709.10

4440992.1445875119

Miracle on Thirty Funk Street Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, holiday favorites with a funky twist, including Pearl Bailey, James Brown and Donny Hathaway. 150 singers, dancers, and a six-piece band. 8:00pm Harris Theater for Music and Dance 205 E Randolph St. Continues Dec. 5 at Skokie Theatre. <http://www.cgmc.org/2015-events/miracle-on-thirty-funk-street/>

Black Ensemble: Dynamite Divas, A Tribute to Women of Soul Put Aretha Franklin, Nancy Wilson and Gladys Knight together in the same room for a day and get some great nostalgic music. Thursdays through Sundays through Jan. 24, 2016. \$55/\$65 8:00pm Black Ensemble Theater Cultural Center 4450 N. Clark St. Chicago 773-769-4451 Tickets: <http://www.blackensemble.org>

Saturday, Dec. 5

World AIDS Day Center on Halsted will acknowledge World AIDS Day from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. by bringing together individuals to commemorate strides made in HIV/AIDS research, prevention, and outreach work while inspiring a generation to live in supportive communities and advocate for their own health and well being. For more information contact Jill Dispenza at jdispenza@centeronhalsted.org. Free 10:00am - 2:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=10952>

Sound of Music Sing-along Pre-show costume contest for kids and adults accompanied by the Music Box Theatre Organ. Show times and tickets online. 11:30am Music Box Theatre 3733 N Southport Ave.; <http://www.musicboxtheatre.com/collections/sound-of-music-sing-a-long-2015>

Santa Speedo Run Raises money for non-profits serving Chicago's LGBTQ community. 12:00pm Sign-in and Registration @ Sidetrack, 1:50pm We sing our very own Christmas Carol, "Jingle Balls!", 2:00pm

1-mile run through Boystown, 2:30pm Awards, Entertainment and Door Prizes 12:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago Tickets: <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=10951>

Sunday, Dec. 6

Heartland Health Outreach's Annual Holiday Brunch HHO's biggest annual fundraiser in support of its life-sustaining HIV/AIDS services for low-income and homeless Chicagoans. ssimmons@heartlandalliance.org. 11:30pm Four Seasons Hotel N Michigan Ave at Delaware Pl., Chicago 773-271-5140 Tickets: <http://www.heartlandhealthoutreach.org/calendar/events/2015-holiday-brunch>

Monday, Dec. 7

Transworks Peer leaders run a job program for gender non-conforming community members in the John Baran Cyber Center. Walk-ins welcome. Free. 12:00pm - 2:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=10386>

Tuesday, Dec. 8

Then and Now: 35 Years of HIV/AIDS The International Museum of Surgical Science has assembled a large-scale timeline of HIV/AIDS that charts the intersections of medicine and the social from the first appearance of the disease in 1981. Exhibit. 6:30 p.m. International Museum of Surgical Science, 1524 N Lake Shore Dr.

Thursday, Dec. 10

Holidays on Ice Winter cocktail party to celebrate and support the work of Lambda Legal. Sponsored bar, wonderful tastes for the winter palate, and an inside update on how Lambda Legal's work is advancing the civil rights of our LGBT community and people with HIV. Advance \$25. Door \$35 6:30pm - 9:30pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago Tickets: <http://www.lambdalegal.org>

LETTERS from page 18**'Sleep' and sweeps**

To the Editor:

Now that Windy City Times (WCT) editor Tracy Baim's one-night, feel-good extravaganza called "Sleep Out Chicago" is over, it is time to evaluate its impact. The positive developments were that reportedly 200 people rallied to sleep out in the park for a night in an effort to highlight LGBT youth homelessness, and \$40,000 were raised for 19 Chicago-area charities badly in need of funds due to the ongoing state budget crisis.

But a price was paid. The event was held yards away from where several illegal police sweeps have harassed the homeless in past weeks, rousted them out in the early morning hours, and forced them to move. In addition, the cops have ticketed these destitute individuals under bogus ordinances knowing full well they cannot pay and will have extreme difficulty showing up miles away in court.

Angry homeless advocates on the Internet in the preceding weeks had called for Baim and the other organizers to use the event to forcefully condemn the illegal cop coercion. In an apparent attempt to placate the advocates, the organizers allowed a "petition ... addressed to Mayor Rahm Emanuel, calling for an end to the sweeps" (WCT) to quietly circulate among the throng of guests that night. In addition, several speakers reportedly denounced the police sweeps from the stage.

Unfortunately, however, in the article that appeared immediately following the "sleep-out," WCT did not feel it necessary to mention these passionate speeches. Why not? Given Baim and her newspaper's close ties with Chicago's Democratic Party, could it be that she wished to mute criticism of the police department, spare further embarrassment to the city's mayor, and not put public funding for the charities involved at that night's event at any risk?

Furthermore, our suspicions are only compounded when Baim and the others provided a platform for Democratic Ald. James Cappleman, in whose ward the sweeps are taking place. This is the same guy whose office had been targeted by the homeless and their advocates demanding he take immediate action and go on record condemning the sweeps, which he refused to do. Indeed, this is the same guy who is pals with well-heeled real estate developers and is responsible during his tenure for eliminating more low-income housing from his ward than the rest of the city of Chicago combined.

When called out about these matters, Baim responded that she only wanted to "bring everybody to the table" to address the homeless issue. This is disingenuous. As she well knows, not everybody at the table, or on her stage—certainly not Cappleman or the cops who protected her event—is of equal good will toward the homeless. It is necessary to take sides and call out those who are not and expose them for what they are. "Sleep-Out Chicago" could have been billed as an event that would do this in a loud and principled way so the mayor's office might have listened, but that was not its goal. Instead, it was billed strictly as a fundraiser and promoted as such.

Challenging powerful interests in Chicago responsible for creating and sustaining homelessness was treated as an incidental side issue and barely mentioned in WCT.

We feel a real opportunity was lost.

Roger Fraser
Bob Schwartz

Giving thanks

A Letter from Affinity Community Services As We Give Thanks...

Thanksgiving, currently celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November, has been an annual tradition in the United States since a

presidential proclamation in 1863.

Traditionally, Thanksgiving has been a day to acknowledge and celebrate the blessings of the year—a joyous occasion when families and friends come together [sometimes in prayer], partake in an elaborate meal, and give thanks. In more recent times, Thanksgiving has also become a time when many people vigorously rush to their favorite retailer(s) in hopes of securing Black Friday deals. Even some of the most refined people lose their decorum in the name of "getting a deal."

It is on Thanksgiving Day that many families sit back and watch two people snap the wishbone of the turkey with hopes of receiving the larger piece. Families frequently gather around their televisions on Thanksgiving Day to watch the Macy's Parade and stare in awe of the various floats. Others use the holiday to gather with their family and friends, wear their favorite football jersey, and enjoy the action of professional football games on television. For many Americans, these things are the source of their thankfulness, as well as their entrance to the holiday season.

Well, the reality is as much as the founders, board Members, staff and constituency of Affinity Community Services share many of these traditions with other Americans, we must acknowledge a very lonely road we take that rarely intersects with others. As women of color, primarily Black women, on the LGBT continuum, many of us are thankful for being simply alive. Unfortunately, we do not have the privilege of reflecting over the past year and feeling blessed without our thoughts being embedded in the reality of a systematic genocide of our people. Our blessings come from the fact that it wasn't our son THIS TIME or our daughter THIS TIME. We give thanks that it wasn't our partner THIS TIME or it wasn't us THIS TIME—and for that we are grateful.

The onslaught of Black lives is no longer imminent; it is contemporaneous. How do we give thanks when, as Black women, we fear driving alone because of the uncertainty of being ar-

rested one day and dead the next? How do we give thanks when our sons and daughter cannot receive a college education without having to protest the institutional racism on their campus? How do we give thanks not knowing if we, too, will be victims of inner-city gun violence? How do we give thanks knowing that our babies are being laid to rest from violence at the hands of those who have sworn to serve and protect EVERYONE? How do we give thanks when the phrase "Don't shoot—I want to grow up" is now directed toward street gangs and so many of the boys in blue? How do we give thanks knowing that we live in a society where payoffs are the modern-day reparations for murder at the hands of law enforcement?

Our thankfulness this holiday season is neither for the food we will eat nor the deals of today. It is not from watching football or a parade or television. Our thankfulness derives from knowing that the lives of Kaylyn Pryor, Tyshawn Lee, Hadiya Pendleton, Ashton O'Hara, Michael Brown, Tamara Dominguez, Tanisha Anderson, Blair Holt, Keyshia Blige, Rekia Boyd, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Amadou Diallo, Ron Lane, Sakia, Gunn, Freddie Gray, Walter Scott, Eric Harris, Sandra Bland, Eric Gardner, Jamar Clark, and Laquan McDonald and so many others were not in vain. We are their mothers, sisters, aunts, grandmothers and cousins—therefore, they are us!

As you congregate with family, friends and co-workers this holiday season, before you sit down to break bread, we implore you to stand with us in solidarity and give thanks for those whose lives were commandeered. We ask you to take a moment of silence in their honor. They were! You are! I am!

We are Affinity.

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Trans Lifeline marks one-year anniversary

Photos by Vern Hester

BY VERN HESTER

On Nov. 24, The Trans Lifeline held its one-year anniversary celebration at The Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western Ave., commemorating a watershed period of rapid growth and outreach.

Co-titled "Message In A Bottle," the benefit event featured an informal award ceremony, a dance party, spoken word and musical performances, a full-course dinner, two DJs and a host of personal experiences. The attendance may have been small, but this did not limit the passion and joy of those present.

Co-founded by trans women Greta Gustava Martela and partner Nina Chaubal in San Francisco, Trans Lifeline was created specifically to support trans individuals in crisis.

Over this one year, Martela and Chaubal have seen their grassroots start-up expand, with more than 300 telephone operators in the United States and Canada.

At the start of the performance portion of the event, Martela and Chaubal spoke about their personal experiences but also emphasized the urgent need for Trans Lifeline to continue to grow. Although those 300+ operators responded to more than 8,000 phone calls in the last 12 months, they were unable to answer a like number of calls due to limited resources and staff. The suicide rate for trans individuals is 22 percent higher than any other demographic, with Latina and African-American trans women hit hardest.

One of the factors that made this benefit so dynamic was that this was the first time that many of the operators had met each other in person. With Tony "La Tony" Alvarado-Rivera serving as emcee, the night got started with an awards ceremony that was full of surprises. Jessica Jacqueline and Dr. Rylan Testa received awards in absentia, but Chaubal was overwhelmed when she found herself awarded for her unwavering support of the project. (Chaubal not only provided seed money but also gave up a lucrative career to serve as operations manager for Trans Lifeline.)

Rebecca Kling then performed an improvisational spoken-word piece (that featured Donald



Emcee Tony Alvarado-Rivera.



Nina Chaubal and Greta Gustava Martela.

Trump and the app Scruff) that included audience participation. Martela then strapped on a guitar and was joined by Sergio Munoz on bass for a short set. DJs Ariel Zetina and Jesus [XP] closed out the night with a dance party that had the guests on their feet for the remainder of the evening.

For those interested in supporting Trans Lifeline, staff member Andre Perez encouraged the crowd to volunteer, donate or to organize a fundraiser. The hotline's numbers is 877-565-8860 (United States) and 877-330-6366 (Canada); for more information, call 415-483-5361.

Windy City Times profiled Trans Lifeline in its Nov. 18 issue; see <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Organization-provides-lifelines-for-trans-individuals/53462.html>.

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