

WINDY CITY TIMES

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Charlene Carruthers.
Photo from the Black Youth Project 100

KEEPING IT '100'

Charlene Carruthers talks about the Black Youth Project 100

BY ANGELIQUE SMITH

"If those of us who are the most marginalized are safer and more protected, it will improve the lives of everybody."—Charlene Carruthers, national director of Black Youth Project 100

The Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100), a collective of young Black activists that started in 2013 in the wake of the George Zimmerman verdict, has been one of the main organizations leading the recent protests around the 2014 killing of Laquan McDonald by a white police officer. Windy City Times spoke with leader Charlene Carruthers about their mission to create justice where there is none.

Windy City Times: Tell us about BYP100.

Charlene Carruthers: We're a national organization of young Black activists between the ages of 18 and 35 who are committed to getting freedom and justice for all Black people.

We do our work through a Black, queer feminist lens, which means that we work very hard to center the most marginalized of the marginalized in the Black community. We carry out our mission through transformative leadership development, public policy advocacy, direct action organizing and civic engagement.

WCT: What does BYP100 support?

CC: We lead and support a number of campaigns around police accountability, living wages, ending mass criminalization and overall economic justice. We support the things that some people may not want to support; we don't just support the so-called "perfect victim." We believe that all Black folk in this world should be able to live within their full dignity. Unfortunately, that's not the reality for far too many of us.

WCT: Did you accomplish what you'd hoped with the Black Friday protests after the Laquan McDonald video was released?

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Talking with transgender activist Jennifer Boylan.

Photo by James Bowdoin

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BETTY TSAMIS

Attorney seeks to be part of city's election board.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

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WCT analyzes 2015 in areas of movies, dance, TV, books and theater.

Photo of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago in Solo Echo by Todd Rosenberg

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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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SPRINGS TIME
WCT went on an LGBT-themed jaunt to Palm Springs, California (left). Photo by Jerry Nunn

2 JOKE GIRLS



Comedians Cameron Esposito (above) and Rhea Butcher performed in Chicago. Photo by Jerry Nunn

ROCK ON



The Hard Rock Hotel in Chicago offers some innovative delights. Photo by Andrew Davis

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE
New Orleans has a lot more to offer than parties.

EAT AND GREET
This week's dining news covers Mindy Segal's pot-related products, among other things.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ
Find out the latest about Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Queen Latifah and Tennessee Williams.

plus **DAILY BREAKING NEWS**

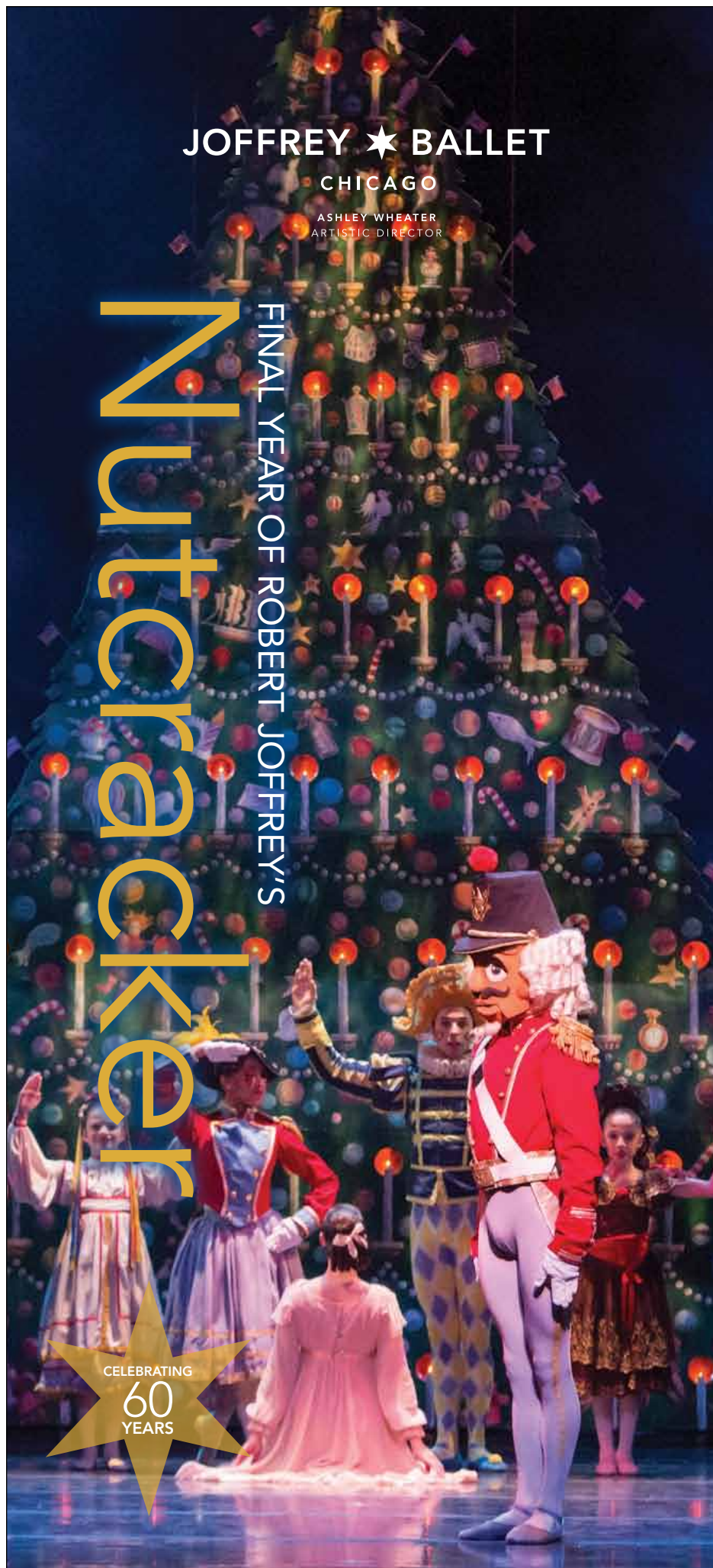
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Lightfoot heads effort to find replacement for McCarthy

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Chicago Police Board President Lori E. Lightfoot announced, on Dec. 10, that the application material for the position of Superintendent of Police is now available, and can be found on the Police Board's website at ChicagoPoliceBoard.org.

"The application is comprehensive in nature. It is designed to require each candidate to not only describe his or her professional and personal qualifications, but to also directly address important challenges facing the Police



Lori Lightfoot.
Photo by Matt Simonette

Department," said Lightfoot in a statement.

As required by city ordinance, when there is a vacancy in the Superintendent's position, the Police Board is responsible for nominating three candidates for consideration by the Mayor. Former Chicago Police Department Superintendent Garry McCarthy was terminated by Mayor Rahm Emanuel Dec. 1.

Lightfoot, who is openly lesbian, has headed the Chicago Police Board since May. A trial lawyer with the firm Mayer Brown, she is also part of the new task force, announced by Emanuel on Dec. 2, charged with repairing relations between the police and the larger community and investigating CPD misconduct.

In 2013, Lightfoot reflected on her career and being out in a Windy City Times interview. "I'm happy that we live in a time where there are so many opportunities opening up for people like me," she said. "We can never forget the struggles, particularly as a woman of color, as a lesbian, I never forget that. I know there are going to be people out there who only see that, and only see it in a negative way. I'm heartened by the fact that we are living in a time in this country where we're seeing that people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, have more of an opportunity to live their lives without restriction, without being judged negatively, and that's inspiring."

The Police Board will host a series of community meetings to solicit public feedback. Those meetings will occur in different locations across the city in the new year. Prospective candidates will have until Friday, Jan. 15, to apply for the position.

"Public Official A" who benefitted from the spending; Howard was the board chairwoman of Kelly's organization, Let's Talk Let's Test. Kelly is still awaiting trial.

Indiana measure called 'bathroom bill'

Opponents of Indiana state Sen. Travis Holdman's measure is calling the item a "bathroom bill," according to NewsAndTribune.com.

Holdman's LGBT-rights proposal covers issues such as hiring and the use of public facilities; in addition, he made exemptions based on religious beliefs.

The Republican senator's effort to broaden the state's civil-rights law to include sexual orientation and gender identity may soon lead to inquiries regarding who should be allowed to use which restroom. He has said that fundamentalist pastors warned him that they would employ the tactics of foes of HERO (the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance); that city's residents resoundingly voted down the measure after conservatives brought up the restroom-related approach.

The original article is at http://newsandtribune.com/news/lgbt-bid-turning-into-a-bathroom-bill/article_dd325ae4-9f98-11e5-ad58-e3cd8fe0c367.html.

Former state politician gets prison term

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Former state Rep. Connie Howard was sentenced Dec. 8 to three months in jail for fraud committed while in office, according to the United States Attorney's Central District of Illinois Office in Springfield.

Howard, who served her South Side district during 1995-2012, will also be confined to her home for three months following her release from jail. She will also have to pay restitution in the amount of \$15,900 to the Chicago Urban League and \$12,450 to the Black United Fund, Chicago.

In July 2013, Howard admitted that, during 2003-2007, she solicited about \$76,700 to go towards scholarships for persons in need who were looking to enter technology fields. But only five such scholarships, totaling about \$12,500, were created, and about \$28,000 went toward Howard's political and personal use.

In 2012, a former aide to Howard, Lloyd Kelly, was indicted under seal for spending \$217,000 of funds intended for HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness for his own personal use. Howard was not named in Kelly's indictment, but it did make reference to a

An Open letter to Mayor Emanuel

BY TRACY BAIM



I love this city.

I grew up first on the Near North Side, and then moved as a teenager to the South Loop. I have worked in media here since 1984, and have covered so many murders, scandals, hate crimes, and so much corruption it would make any sane person want to move somewhere else.

I have seen the racism and classism infect all areas of our city, including the LGBT community. I have wept for the people who have died of HIV because of bias and neglect, and as LGBT people have been harassed by police and murdered for who they are. I have also experienced more than my share of crime, both violent and nonviolent. But I still love this city.

I have also watched with joy as LGBTs became part of this system—as we saw openly gay elected and appointed officials, the first gay police officers rise through the ranks, and as our LGBT community finally started to be treated near to equals in this city.

But it has never been close to enough. I have wondered what it would take to finally crack open this segregated city, this city that works for those who work it, who rob us, who distract us with baubles and center-lane trees, charter schools and desperate grasps for international attention by spending money on stadiums instead of schools, affordable housing, and true neighborhood development.

"What a grand gesture you could make. Many people believe you were only going to run for two terms anyway. You have your eyes on some future prize. Do you really want three more years without it being with a mandate from the voters? This would rip the city apart even more."

My mother wondered some of these same things, and she was my role model growing up. She worked against the horrible racism of red-lining, denying Blacks the ability to get mortgages, causing a multi-generational wealth gap we are seeing the consequences of today. She was editor of the Chicago Defender, worked for the United Mortgage Bankers of America against segregated banking policies, worked for Dempsey Travis on his book An Autobiography of Black Chicago, covered Martin Luther King, Jr. in Birmingham and Chicago, and helped on public housing issues in Chicago and Gary.

She saw some of the worst this city has to offer, yet she also saw its beauty and possibility. She died in 1996, unable to see her dreams, or King's, ever come close to being finished. Yet she never stopped loving this city.

But almost 20 years after her death, what is happening now in Chicago and across this country gives me much hope. These protests are full of passion and pain. They are not monolithic or top-down, they are multi-pronged and sometimes messy. But they are real.

This presents you now several choices, Mr. Mayor. You must dig deep to decide if you truly love this city as you say you do. If you are truly remorseful and awake now.

Because your mistakes are real. Even if most

of the systemic problems are ones you inherited, you asked for this job—twice. Five years in, you are not the new guy with a pass on these matters. Richard J. Daley, Richard M. Daley, and even probably the mayors in between them have huge responsibility here. They are not off the hook, but you are on the throne now.

Whether and when you saw the videos of Laquan McDonald, Ronald Johnson or others killed by police does not matter. What matters is you are the mayor of this city, and you need to take responsibility. For decades, even centuries, the status quo won, the official stories and reports won over the complaints and cries of citizens and their survivors. But we are beyond that now, because unlike the 1970 Gil Scott-Heron poem and song "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," this revolution is very much being televised, and videotaped, and Tweeted, by both citizens and police.

And this is a good thing, Mayor. We (many of us) once were blind, but now we see. This can help us change the systems of racism and classism of this bifurcated city of ours.

So what should you do? Yes, you won the election for a second term. Yes, some people are trying to pressure you to resign, while others are pushing for a recall election, a time-consuming and costly solution. The law does not allow much room here, but you could take

steps to soothe the city and allow for the people to have their voice heard, without costing the city much more pain and money.

We have an election this March for other local and national offices.

You, Mayor, could ask for a new election for mayor of this city. Fair and square, a new election.

It's tricky, yes, in part because of the ridiculous change to our mayoral election to make it a bipartisan

race, with a runoff only if someone doesn't get 50% of the vote. So we'd have to get clever with the partisan primary in March, but we're all smart people, it could happen. And a runoff could be staged in April if no one gets 50% of the vote.

What a grand gesture you could make. Many people believe you were only going to run for two terms anyway. You have your eyes on some future prize. Do you really want three more years without it being with a mandate from the voters? This would rip the city apart even more.

But to you and anyone who wants to run this city—we must change. We must move resources from prisons and jails to schools and job training, create massive affordable housing on the thousands of vacant lots in this city (tiny homes for the homeless), fully develop each of the city's 77 neighborhoods, stop the TIFF nonsense, change the culture of our entire city to be about the citizens, and not the corporations and rich people who get out-size support for their dreams. And, of course, among many other changes, police reform must be a major priority.

We all have dreams, including you. This is a city of dreamers. But it has never been a city of equally funded dreams.

Please, Mayor. Do the right thing—let our people vote.

Tracy Baim is co-founder and publisher of Windy City Times. She is also founder of the new Pride Action Tank.



/windycitymediagroup

Urban Village expands boundaries of what constitutes a church

BY BEN SANDERS

The church and the LGBTQ community have what some might call an uneasy relationship.

The general consensus, which is perpetuated by the media and films such as *For the Bible Tells Me So*, is that the church is unwelcoming toward the LGBTQ community; and that it spews doctrine claiming that being gay is a sin.

Like all generalizations, though, this one has plenty of holes. There are plenty of churches that preach love, rather than hate, and are accepting of all people.

The Urban Village Church, which lead pastors Christian Coon and Trey Hall founded in July 2009, is one of these institutions. With four locations across the Chicagoland area, it does everything it possibly can to spread inclusivity through the words of Jesus.

But unlike some churches that claim that LGBTQ people are “loved by God,” Urban Village takes things its message a step further, according to Coon.

“We do all that we can to let everybody know a) that they’re loved, b) that they’re welcome in our space and c) that once they’re welcome we’re not expecting them change their orientation,” he said.

It’s more than just a bunch of words, though. For example, whenever a new person comes in for services, that individual is immediately invited for coffee with one of the pastors.

During these get-to-know-you meetings, the conversations can get intense pretty quickly.

“We’ve heard so many stories of LGBT people pouring their hearts out and telling us everything,” Coon said. “Sometimes they are horror stories of their church experience in the past, or even if they had a good relationship with the church, they knew they couldn’t fully be who they were.”

Rich Havard—who spent the last year at Urban Village’s Wicker Park site “train[ing], nurtur[ing] and support[ing] leaders who feel called to start new faith communities”—communicated with *Windy City Times* about other visible ways in which the church helps to promote inclusivity.

“We’re a Reconciling Congregation, which means we actively work toward full LGBTQ inclusion in the United Methodist Church,” he emailed. “Before the [U.S. Supreme Court] decision in June [legalizing same-sex marriage nationwide], we hosted a prayer rally for marriage equality. And we celebrated when marriage equality became the law of the land. We also march in Chicago’s Pride Parade every summer; this year, 125-plus folks from our church marched to proclaim God’s love for all people.

Another thing that sets Urban Village apart from other churches is its willingness to perform marriages for same-sex couples. With that has come some pushback, especially from Christians of other denominations.

Coon talked about what it is like having conversations with others who hold different beliefs about the sanctity of these marriages.

Some people, he said, are just impossible to speak with because they simply aren’t going to listen and are intent on saying that he’s wrong. It’s those folks whom he “doesn’t have time” for.

Then there are those who actually want to engage with him. When these instances arise, Coon is able to deliver, what he thinks, is a pretty convincing argument for why marriages for gay couples don’t go against the word of God.

“I will begin to tell them stories of my own experiences of two faithful individuals who found love,” he said, “and I would say that the

love is bounded in a mutual love of God, and it’s grounded in the grace of God, and there is no way that I am going to deny that couple who so clearly are in love with each other and who clearly want that foundation of their marriage to be in their faith [from marrying]. I could not conscientiously say no to that.

“If they disagree with me than they will probably go back to those handful scriptures and we’re back to the Bible again. It comes down to how you interpret scripture and that lens you use, and we just have different lenses, and I’m going to err on the side of grace and love.”

For more information about the Urban Village Church, visit UrbanVillageChurch.org.



Christian Coon of Urban Village Church. Photo from Coon

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Back2School Illinois helps those in need

BY ROSS FORMAN

Back2School Illinois (formerly The Illinois Currency Exchange Charitable Foundation) has multiple programs, yet its 800-pound gorilla, as director and CEO Matthew Kurtzman tagged it, is the B2SI Free School Supplies Program.

There are more than 1 million students in Illinois who come from low-income families, Kurtzman said, a total that increases annually. "Ideally, we'd be able to provide each and every one of them with basic school supplies. That's the long-term goal of the organization."

Slow and steady, B2SI is expanding its reach. "We're just trying to do our part," he said.

School supplies are given out based on the kids' age and grade in school.

B2SI has partnered with numerous community organizations, such as YMCA of Metro Chicago, Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago, Operation Homefront, and others. It also has partnered with the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), which works with area homeless shelters. Those kids get the basic school supplies, along with some hygiene items as well, such as toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, shampoo, etc.

"When we first started, [school supplies] were mostly [distributed] around August and the start of the school year," he said. B2SI has since grown and expanded, thus it is distributing packs at different times of the year as well.

"The need is great," Kurtzman said.

B2SI's school supply distribution program is the largest in the state. In 2014, for instance, the group provided 850,000 school supplies to more than 28,000 underprivileged children.

The B2SI school supply kits contain about



Back2School Illinois CEO Matthew Kurtzman.

Photo from Kurtzman

30 supplies.

"It is a pretty dire situation," Kurtzman said. "On average, school teachers are spending hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars, of their own [personal] money to provide school supplies for kids in their classrooms."



Back2School Illinois' Matthew Kurtzman (back, center) with staff and kids.

Photo from Kurtzman

Kurtzman said students lacking basic school supplies also suffer from low self-esteem.

"At the distribution events, we never really know what to expect," he said, especially since distribution can be in classrooms, in a school assembly, and others too.

Kurtzman told of the time B2SI wanted to give school supplies to a family as part of a promotion with B96 radio station. "The mother of the six children [that were getting the supplies] was pretty sick and, the day before we were supposed to hand out the supplies, she had to go to the hospital."

She eventually was not able to attend the distribution, which was being held at Six Flags Great America in north suburban Gurnee. She

told organizers that, though she wasn't able to attend, the kids really could use the supplies.

Kurtzman said of course they'd still get them, and she broke down crying.

"The impact is far greater than you can imagine," he said.

Kurtzman said B2SI has supported LGBT students, too, many who are homeless. "They have the additional burden of not only being poor, or coming from a poor family, but [they] also have the stigma of being an oppressed minority," said Kurtzman, who is openly gay.

An associate board for B2SI is being launched, with several LGBT involved, he said.

For info: <http://www.b2si.org/>.

Chicagoan develops backpack for those experiencing homelessness

BY ROSS FORMAN

Ron Kaplan wanted to do more than just write checks at the end of the year to charitable causes—that just wasn't enough; it made him feel disconnected from the true process of giving.

"As I found success in my work, and was overseeing a small family foundation, I realized that there was some point in my life that I had to spend a little more time giving [back]," said Kaplan, who grew up in suburban Chicago and now lives in the city. "I really wanted to create something that was personal and branded—and one day I just came up with this idea after seeing people [living] on the streets with inadequate means of carrying their belongings."

Kaplan founded The CITYPAK Project, an initiative of the Selma Breskin Kaplan Foundation. CITYPAK provides a safe, secure, sturdy, convenient and versatile backpack that is uniquely designed to meet the constantly changing needs of individuals experiencing homelessness.

Kaplan has gotten plenty of assistance on his project since he started it back in 2012.

Among those supporting is noted bag-maker High Sierra. Kaplan met with executives at High Sierra, hoping that company would consider partnering to create a custom-made backpack for the homeless.

They agreed—and production was soon starting.

At one point, Kaplan even looked at photos

of World War II soldiers in the rain, with their knapsacks. They tried to create something similar.

And after four months on planning, the prototype was built.

But more fine-tuning was needed.

So Kaplan and others talked to executives at the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless and said that they wanted to host a lunch for 20 homeless people, particularly to show them the backpacks and get their feedback.

That plan worked.

"It was an overwhelmingly positive response to the bag," Kaplan said. "We quickly realized that nothing had ever been made—a bag, that is—for people [living] on the streets who were homeless."

"They gave some feedback [at that lunch] for features [the bag] lacked."

Then when the final project was developed Kaplan was stuck with the dilemma of distribution.

That meant time for another 'work lunch.'

This time Kaplan hosted representatives from various local shelters to discuss distribution.

His first production, in late 2012, was 2,000 bags.

"I never envisioned CITYPAK would grow this big. I [first] thought I would be making 200 of these [backpacks], then walking around the streets of Chicago to hand them out," Kaplan said. "The reason CITYPAK has grown so much is, there's a great need."

As of early December, more than 23,000



CITYPAK recipients.

Photo from CITYPAK

CITYPAK backpacks have been distributed in cities including Toronto, Maui, Detroit, San Francisco, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Austin, Boulder.

"People are constantly saying, 'How do we get them?'" Kaplan said. "I now just want to keep trying to fulfill the need of people who are homeless. The demand is so much greater than the supply."

CITYPAK bags were distributed Nov. 20 at the inaugural Out in the Open Sleep Out, held at Cricket Hill on Chicago's North Side.

"It's been a very fulfilling [project], Kaplan said.

After all, it's been a campaign that has hit

many—and not just those experiencing homelessness.

For instance, a 6-year-old sent Kaplan a letter with a drawing of a homeless person with his CITYPAK. The youngster asked for 12 bags that he wanted to donate, and the kid's mom added that they would pay for them.

"It's touching that people realize that [these bags] make a difference," said Kaplan, who told of a conversation he once had with a homeless Chicagoan who told Kaplan, "This bag is my home; it's everything I have, everything that I own."

See <http://www.citypak.org/>.



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Jennifer Boylan reflects on transgender activism

BY SARAH TOCE

Let's face it: mainstream and LGBT media do not always get it right—especially when referencing transgender lives. Decorated New York Times columnist and best-selling author Jennifer Boylan has made her life an open book, quite literally, in an effort to facilitate positive change from within—and outside of—the community.

"We've seen great progress made," she said. "I'd like to see that progress continue. Stories of trans lives, in all their many different permutations, need to become more commonplace. To some degree, I'd like to see some stories of trans people for whom being trans is not the most important thing in their lives; I'd like to see us defined not by our gender status but by the thoughts in our brains and the love in our hearts—like everybody else."

Trans women of color are being murdered at an alarming rate, but the crimes are not being reported or shared. Boylan wrote an op/ed for the New York Times on this subject as recently as Aug. 22.

"The long and the short of it is that progress is being made for trans people," Boylan explained. "But the progress is not being made for everyone, and if you are a person without privilege in this culture, being trans means you are at [an exceptional] risk for violence and danger."

Boylan hauntingly asked, "Do these women's lives matter any less than mine?"

The Supreme Court's passage of national marriage equality this past June will inevitably leave more space for other pressing issues that affect the transgender community, specifically.

"Transgender issues of every stripe—from education to access to health care to ending the plague of violence in our community," Boylan said. "Reclaiming communities of faith; there's a sense that spiritual people are all anti-LGBT; or, conversely, that LGBT people are not people of faith. Neither of these things is true. And finally, I'd like to see the LGBT movement become less dominated by white people, and to break down the barriers of race and class in the movement."

As far as an urgent call to action, Boylan rendered, "There are a lot of urgent calls, but nothing quite so urgent as ending the violence against our people, and against transgender women of color in particular."

The publicity surrounding Caitlyn Jenner is shining a wide light into the trans community. Even so, misconceptions are commonplace and all over the map.

"I think that there is still confusion among cis people about what it means to be trans," Boylan said. "I think there's still not a general culture-wide understanding of the differences between gender identity and sexual orienta-

tion."

Boylan contributed to *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves*—a book considered to be a modern manual for the trans community because it relays that there isn't just "one way" to be transgender. Deciding to work on *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves* was a no-brainer for the advocating author.

"[Editor] Laura Erickson-Schroth is the guiding light behind that book," Boylan said. "She was the one woman volcano that got so many people in the community involved, and which brought lots of disparate voices together. That's what appealed to me in particular—that this was going to be a compendium not of exactly what to do, but an encyclopedic record of the very many different ways there are of being trans, and to celebrate all of them."

One voice Boylan could easily relate to—her own. In her book *Stuck in the Middle with You*, Boylan chronicled being stuck in the middle of motherhood and fatherhood and the identities that come with both realities.

"I still think that having a father who became a woman helped my sons become better men," she said. "It made them understanding of difference; it made them open their hearts and root for the underdog; it made them prioritize, in their own lives, living their truth, whatever that might demand."

As a transgender mom with two grown sons, Boylan reluctantly agreed to give advice to trans parents, when prompted.

"I am not really in the advice business, since I think everyone had to find their own path, and each path is unique to the lives we are living, and the environment in which we find ourselves," she offered. "My life advice, such as it is, is threefold: 1) Be true to yourself; 2) therapy helps; and 3) read all the time."

One item Boylan's fans are reading now is the updated and expanded *She's Not There*.

"I think the end of *She's Not There* in 2003 showed a couple stepping out onto very thin ice," Boylan said. "It was not clear where Grace [as I call her] and I were going to stay together. Now, 12 years later, the dust has settled, and we are more in love than ever. Our family has thrived."

Also thriving is Boylan's commitment to the media machine GLAAD. The 57-year-old currently sits on the board as co-chair.

"I think we're [GLAAD] the best organization on the country on [transgender] issues, outside of nonprofits like National Center for Transgender Equality, whose work is solely focused on that one issue," she said. "We have been doing this work for years and years now, long before trans advocacy was even on anyone's radar. GLAAD's longest serving employee is trans man Nick Adams, who for well over a dozen years now has been one of our community's guardian angels. He is now director of transgender

Jennifer Boylan.
Photo courtesy of Boylan



media. But there are plenty of trans people at GLAAD, throughout our staff as well as on the board of directors. We have four trans women on the board, including the legendary Marci Bowers. We are the first LGBT nonprofit to have a transgender woman as co-chair of the board of directors. That would be me."

Boylan's come a long way from the haunting feeling of transparency she once disclosed in her early works.

"I think if you reach a certain age, you're always negotiating your way between the person you have been and the person you become," she said. "In my case, that means figuring out what it means to be a woman who had a boyhood. I think the key is seeing your life not as two stories, but one—not as a before and an

after, but as a continuous series of experiences woven together."

As a method of learning more about herself still to this day, Boylan has dedicated herself as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Kinsey Institute for Research on Sex, Gender, and Reproduction.

"It's remarkable how little good scientific research has been done on transgender issues, and on transgender health in particular," she said. "I am hoping that good science will be part of our ongoing understanding of ourselves."

Good science and a good Boylan book (or two), perhaps.

More about Jennifer Boylan and her career are at <http://www.jenniferboylan.net>.

Sylvia Rivera makes history with image

Sylvia Rivera has made history as the first transgender person in the National Portrait Gallery's collection.

Earlier this year, the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery installed the portrait of Sylvia Rivera in the "Struggle for Justice" exhibition.

Seen by many as a forerunner in the fight against gender-identity discrimination, Ray Rivera rechristened himself as Sylvia as a teenager. She was in New York City in 1969 at the turning point of the modern LGBT struggle for equal rights, when patrons of the Stonewall Inn violently rebuffed a police raid. In 1994, she was a keynote speaker at Gay Pride in New York, and in 2000 she was invited to the Millennium March in Italy, where she was acclaimed as the "mother of all gay people." Rivera passed away in 2002.

Regarding the image, photographer and Visual AIDS member Luis Carle took this photograph of Rivera at the Saturday Rally before New York's Gay Pride in 2000.

For more information, visit http://face2face.si.edu/my_weblog/2015/10/welcome-to-the-collection-sylvia-rivera.html.



Sylvia Rivera (middle, with Christina Hayworth and Julia Murray) by Luis Carle, gelatin silver print, 2000. Photo courtesy of National Portrait Gallery

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State approves plan to bring Pride-themed pole to statehouse

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A Florida LGBT-rights activist's request to erect a gay pride-themed Festivus pole in the Illinois statehouse has been approved, according to reports.

The Capitol Fax blog reported Dec. 7 that the secretary of state's office received an email from Boca Raton, Florida-based activist Chaz Stevens, executive director of the Humanity Fund, which addresses issues of separation between church and state, particularly as they relate to the LGBT community, asking about the logistics of installing the pole.

"I am seeking information regarding installation of our 2015 Gay Pride Festivus Pole inside the Illinois State Capitol rotunda," Stevens said. "We'd like the pole's erection to near the Baby Jesus ... as you never know, the little one might want to dance the night away!"

"The 2015 Gay Pride Festivus Pole is approximately 6'6" tall, painted with purple-glitter, covered in the rainbow colors of diversity, and topped with an 8" disco ball.

"There are no moving parts, no power requirements, but plenty of opportunities to air one's grievances."

Festivus, created for the '90s situation comedy *Seinfeld*, was a homemade holiday celebrated by the family of Jason Alexander's character, George Costanza. The Humanity Fund is likewise a play on "the Human Fund," a charity George created in order to fake charitable donations he made in lieu of gifts.

Stevens, who is also a political blogger, first erected a Festivus pole made of 16 Pabst Blue Ribbon beer cans in the Florida Statehouse in 2013. In a promotional video, he said he was looking to expand that effort to other capitals in 2015; he has already attempted to erect a pole in the Arkansas Statehouse. This is the first year the poles would be themed to gay pride. The pole will be installed Dec. 21.

Capitol Fax's article is at <http://bit.ly/1Qmy4Tp>. Stevens' video is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jy-E_uTffmo.

Lesbians challenge birth-certificate rules

Two lesbian couples are challenging Indiana's birth-certificate regulations, saying that the policies are discriminatory and prevent all parents from being listed on their children's birth certificates, according to Courthouse News.

Jackie and Lisa Phillips-Stackman claim that state and county officials have refused to list Jackie on their child's birth certificate. Their child was born via in vitro fertilization, as Jackie's egg was paired with a sperm donor; it was then implanted into Lisa.

The other couple, Noelle and Crystal Allen, were married in New York in 2013, and wanted to add to their family, which already included a 5-year-old daughter, by having another child. Unfortunately, their expected twins were born prematurely, dying that same day. Noelle was allegedly informed that she would not be on the certificate without a court order because she was not the birth mother.

The original article is at <http://www.courthousenews.com/2015/12/08/gay-couples-challenge-birth-certificate-rules.htm>.

Ala. lesbian mother's request granted

On Dec. 14, the U.S. Supreme Court granted a lesbian mother's request to have the adoption of her former partner's children be enforced while the court decides to hear her appeal of an Alabama Supreme Court ruling that nullified the adoption, BuzzFeed noted.

The request, filed on Nov. 16, features a case in which a lesbian couple in Alabama went to Georgia so that one of those women, referred

to as V.L. in court filings, could adopt the children of E.L. Years later, when E.L. and V.L.'s relationship ended, V.L. sued in Alabama to have the adoption request enforced.

Said NCLR Family Law Director Cathy Sakimura in a statement: "I am relieved for V.L. and her children that they can be reunited. For any adoptive parent, it would be unthinkable that their adoption could be invalidated years later and that they could be separated from their children for months while they fought to be recognized. V.L. and her children have already endured what no parent or child should ever have to experience."

The original article is at www.buzzfeed.com/chrisgeidner/supreme-court-grants-relief-to-lesbian-mother-in-alabama-cas#.hn7dK8rJL4.



Creating Change awardees named

The National LGBTQ Task Force has announced the award recipients for the 28th annual Creating Change conference—the nation's largest LGBTQ advocacy conference—set to take place Jan. 20-24, 2016 at the Downtown Chicago Hilton, 720 S. Michigan Ave.

During the conference, Barbara Smith will be presented with the Susan J. Hyde Award for Longevity in the Movement. Smith, a lifelong activist in the LGBTQ-, civil- and women's-rights movements, founded Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press and served two terms as a councilmember of Albany, New York.

Marisa Franco, campaign director of the #Not1More campaign, will receive the Leadership on Immigration Award and Katherine Acey, who served as the executive director of GRIOT Circle as well as the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, will receive the SAGE Advocacy Award for Excellence in Leadership on Aging Issues.

Additional award recipients include Bob Miller, Nick Sakurai, Kasey White (a former Windy City Times 30 Under 30 honoree) and Hilton Worldwide.

To learn more about the awardees and for more information about the conference, visit www.CreatingChange.org.



Kasey White.

Photo by Maria Fernanda Albarracin



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BYP100 from cover

CC: We'd hoped that young Black people would have a space to express their rage—a space that would continue to hold them in support even after that one moment. That was very important to us. And to move forward a narrative that calls for the defunding of the police and the funding of an investment in Black futures. We're not okay with living in a city where 40% of the budget goes towards policing.

WCT: What are your demands of Mayor Rahm Emanuel and of the city?

CC: We believe that Rahm Emanuel needs to resign immediately. He is not fit to be in a position where his decisions impact so many people's lives. We also want [Cook County] State's Attorney Anita Alvarez to resign.

Additionally, we're calling for a participatory city-budgeting process, where people have the power to defund policing in this city and invest those dollars into the things that we need. We're calling for the city council to fully decriminalize marijuana and other petty crimes. We're also continuing our campaign calling for the firing of Officer Dante Servin [who shot unarmed Rekia Boyd] without a pension. Last, we want an independent civilian police-accountability council that has real hiring, firing, subpoena and budgeting power. We don't believe that the Police Accountability Task Force created by the mayor is sufficient by any means.

WCT: You're very vocal about Chicago's failings in terms of law enforcement accountability, calling it "a dysfunctional system where [police] have a kind of de facto impunity."

CC: We know that the Chicago Police Department has acted with impunity for decades ... actually, most police departments, period. What we've seen in the Chicago Police Department specifically are gross instances of misconduct and unchecked complaints.

A very small percentage of the complaints that are submitted are actually dealt with on any level. They're usually just reported and that's it—that's all that happens. There are people who have done some really great research around that, too. We do not have an independent body to monitor, to fire the police. The police department polices itself. It makes no sense that the body that has done so much violence and terrorism in our communities—be it from the Homan Square Black site to our iteration of "stop and frisk" here in Chicago—monitors [itself]. They won't investigate themselves in a way that's actually valid or comprehensive and these issues disproportionately impact young, Black people; and in some parts of the city, young Black, queer and trans people. I think that we have to really broaden how we talk about how the police impact and engage our communities.

WCT: Why did you refuse to meet with Rahm?

CC: BYP100—along with a broad coalition of organizations including We Charge Genocide and Assata's Daughters—decided not to take a meeting with Rahm because we knew that the point of him having it was really about him and City Hall figuring out how to reduce and control anger. He wanted to have it out of fear, not out of a desire for progress. Taking the meeting would not have given us any more power [and] it would not have changed the lives of the people we care about; if anything, it would've helped the mayor. We are in the business of doing work that actually helps our communities, not to help those who actually harm and commit violence against us.

WCT: What are your thoughts on the first-degree murder indictment of Officer Jason Van Dyke [in the death of Laquan McDonald]? Do you think it was a tactic used to appease, as it's been called by some, that will end in an acquittal?

CC: I don't have very much faith in the so-called criminal-justice system. It's not where I see justice for our people. Servin was indicted, charged with manslaughter and all the charges were dismissed. Whether or not Van Dyke is



Black Youth Project 100 national director Charlene Carruthers (above, in orange scarf; below, center), protesting.

Photos from the Black Youth Project 100



charged with first-degree murder, we still have to do this work. Laquan McDonald's life was still taken, he's no longer here [and] his family still has to mourn him. Our work doesn't change regardless of whether one cop is sentenced to prison, because that doesn't change the system on its own.

WCT: Let's talk about hetero-patriarchy and misogyny within the Black liberation movement. I've read that there were issues between youth organizers and certain religious leaders in the spotlight, and that queer activists were disrespected and assaulted at the Black Friday protest.

CC: What happened was really a manifestation of decades-long behavior that de-centers and acts to erase the role of Black women, and Black queer, gender non-conforming and trans folks. It materialized on that day because social-justice movements have consistently erased the roles of Black LGBTQ folks even while we've been at the forefront of the work. We can look at Bayard Rustin, Marsha P. Johnson—these people were pivotal in the overall struggle for human rights and they are just now coming into consciousness for some folks. Johnson helped lead and kick off the American LGBT movement, period. We're in a moment where Black LGBTQ folks are refusing

to remain silent and refusing to not be visible. The more visible you are, the more vulnerable you become.

WCT: Very true. Queer women of color are not only at the forefront of movements such as this one, but also Black Lives Matter, Stonewall ... the list goes on. Why do you think that is and what are your thoughts on the struggle for us to get recognized as leaders for social justice?

CC: Black women, in general, have always been at the forefront of movements: Harriet Tubman, Anna J. Cooper. ... I don't know if any of them were queer, but ... [laughs]. I think it's because we stand in the tradition of Black women and Black queer folk having so much at stake, having to fight for their lives. Folks like Maria Stewart who, during the period of chattel slavery, would talk about what it meant to be enslaved as a Black woman. What we're doing is not new.

WCT: Who inspires you to do what you do?

CC: There are folks living and not living who really inspire me: Harriet Tubman, Audre Lorde, Cathy Cohen. I even look up to some of our young members, because I sit back and I imagine, "Wow, what if I was where they are when I was their age?" I was not as sharp of a thinker or organizer as some of our folks are. They're

extremely inspirational and I learn a lot from them.

WCT: What can people do to be better allies?

CC: One, people—particularly those in the LGBTQ community—need to educate themselves on anti-Blackness and its role in structural oppression; anti-Blackness in patriarchy, homophobia and transphobia. Two, take a serious look at prison abolition as a goal, as a worthwhile strategy. Three, give and share resources to support our work—be it by donating time, money or space. Our strongest resource is the people.

WCT: What's next?

CC: We're going to continue to organize and escalate, particularly around the state's attorney's race, to make sure that young Black people are educated on the issues and come out to vote on March 15. We're running a civic-engagement program all through 2016. We're going to be moving an ordinance around marijuana decriminalization locally. And we'll continue to grow as an organization and build our base, so if you're Black and between the ages of 18 and 35 and you're interested in membership, hit us up.

For more information about BYP100 or to donate to the cause, visit BYP100.org.

CSU becomes first university to host The Legacy Wall

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

According to the Chicago nonprofit The Legacy Project's website, the organization's Legacy Wall is the only installation of its kind. Created in 2013 during the March on Springfield, it is the very first interactive, traveling LGBT history exhibit.

The wall's gracefully curving 40-plus feet is packed with rare photographs, detailed biographies, multimedia and informational graphics charting the growth of the LGBTQ movement, the community's history, culture and some of the individuals who played defining roles within it.

On Dec. 10, The Legacy Wall received a grand opening at Chicago State University (CSU)'s Academic Library. CSU is the first university to host the exhibit—the culmination of months of planning and partnership between Legacy Project creator/Executive Director Victor A. Salvo and CSU's student and faculty.

Salvo—alongside CSU Dean of Library Administration Dr. Richard Darga, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Angela Henderson, College of Education Professor and Legacy Wall collaborator Dr. Gabriel Gomez, Deputy Director of Intergovernmental Affairs for the Illinois Secretary of State Ellen Meyers, and Affinity board member and CSU alumnus Jasmine Thurman—welcomed the wall, which will be available on the campus until mid-January 2016, when it will move on to the Chicago

Hilton and then the Thompson Center as part of a 15-month journey across the state before going on to tour the country.

"The whole purpose of this project is to be a vehicle for discovery," Salvo said. "It is about having your eyes and heart opened to understand that LGBT people have been a part of every field of contribution in every era of history."

"We are spearheading a collaborative effort to make LGBT curriculum that is something that is available to schools across Illinois," Gomez said. "It's not something that's disturbing or unnerving, it's about simply explaining the history of people who have been important to our world, to our culture, to our history."

Meyers recalled The Legacy Wall's world premiere at the state library in Springfield on Oct. 1, 2015, as a "revolution."

"Our library staff was thrilled," she said. "Because they love diversity and [The Legacy Wall] fits everything you could think of. We had wonderful media coverage because something was going on."

In a testament to the transformative power of the wall, Meyers added that the state library in Illinois is the only one the United States that has an LGBT-specific book collection.

Salvo pledged that the wall "will never stop moving and will always be going somewhere."

For more information about The Legacy Wall, visit http://www.legacyprojectchicago.org/The_Legacy_Wall.html.



Above: CSU faculty, staff and students welcome The Legacy Wall. Below: Ellen Meyers. Photos by Gretchen Rachel Hammond



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Civil-rights attorney vies for post on city's board of elections

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

On Dec. 13, 1943, soldiers of the 117th Jager Division of the German army surrounded and then descended upon the town of Kalavryta, which was quietly nestled amidst the mountains of central Greece.

They rang the church bell and pulled people from their homes, dragging them to the local schoolhouse. Men and boys as young as 13 were separated from their families. The Germans marched over 500 husbands, fathers, grandfathers and brothers up a hill called Kappi Ridge. At its summit, the soldiers opened fire. Bodies fell one on top of the other. The Germans then methodically shot anyone who still showed a sign of life. The dozen who survived only did so because they were buried underneath the dead.

It was a brutal reprisal for the actions of rebel guerillas who had been gaining ground against the Nazi occupation of their country.

One of those killed was the grandfather of Chicago civil rights attorney Betty Tsamis. Her grandmother, mother and uncles were in the schoolhouse when the Germans locked the doors and set it ablaze. How they escaped is a matter of contention. There are those who maintain that the terrified people were able to charge down the door. Others say that a sympathetic German soldier freed them.

Tsamis' mother was the last to leave the schoolhouse alive, desperately holding the coat of her murdered father and almost trampled to death as people fled the building.

She helped bury the body of her father using her bare hands.

"They wanted to execute everyone in that town," Tsamis told Windy City Times. "Some of the rebels probably included my relatives who were fighting for their rights."

On Dec. 14—one day after the 72nd anniversary of the Massacre of Kalavryta—Tsamis will go up in front of Chief Judge of the State of Illinois Circuit Court Timothy C. Evans as part of an application process for an open position on the Chicago Board of Elections Commissioners left vacant when Election Board Chairman Langdon D. Neal announced his decision to step down at the end of the month.

According to a press release from the State of Illinois Circuit Court of Cook County, there are seven finalists vying for the role. They include Tsamis (Democrat); Robert W. Bertucci, Cook County Circuit Judge (Democrat); Fred Fortier, attorney at Fortier Law Offices and general manager of Galena Development (Democrat); Dick Simpson, political science professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago (Democrat); Thomas E. Soule, attorney (Democrat); Jonathan T. Swain, chairman of the City of Chicago Zoning Board of Appeals and president of Kimbark Beverage Shoppe (Democrat); and Sean Vinck, director of Enterprise IT Transformation and senior legal adviser for the State of Oregon (Democrat).

According to the Circuit Court, Commissioners serve three-year terms and "manage voter registrations; safeguard the rights of all voters to cast ballots independently in a safe and quiet atmosphere, free of interference or intimidation; and inform voters of all of their balloting options, such as Election Day voting, Early Voting and Vote By Mail."

"In addition, the board serves as the quasi-judicial arm of the courts and issues decisions when a voter objects to the nominating petitions of a candidate who wants to be on the Election Day ballot. Such offices include Chicago Mayor, Chicago Alderman, Ward Committeeman, City Treasurer, City Clerk and certain Congressional, Illinois Senate and Illinois House of Representatives Districts that fall partly or

entirely in the City of Chicago."

Tsamis' candidacy is a moment in her long career that is particularly profound—born from the blood of fighters less than a year after her family emigrated to the United States in 1966 and eventually settled in Alsip, Ill., where, with little education, fewer resources but an understanding of the value of hard work, her father started and built Alexander's Ice Cream Distributors into a giant.

Shaped by the stories told to her by her family and the memory of the grandfather she never met, as early as elementary school Tsamis began what would become a lifelong battle against injustice.

"I wrote about being involved in our society and in government," she recalled. "I loved writing about my family's history and I felt that it was important for people to have a sense of self determination, understand the mechanisms of government and be involved in it."

In the mid-'80s, Tsamis' world opened up even more. "I was in the city and I saw two men holding hands crossing the street," she said. "I couldn't stop looking at them. I'd had feelings towards women for a number of years. It started to come together for me at that moment. I began to read gay publications in the city for the first time, which was very often about what was happening in Chicago in terms of gay rights and I was enthralled."

On Sept. 7, 1986—while Tsamis was in the midst of writing for Windy City Times—the TV show Crime Story was filming at her North Side apartment complex situated above the Medici on Surf Restaurant. The show's producers decided to stage a mock explosion in the building's elevator shaft.

"They blew up our building," Tsamis remembered. "The walls of the restaurant came crashing down on diners."

Five people were injured.

"I was outraged," Tsamis said. "I was contacted two days later by a woman putting together a tenant's organization and they nominated me to be their president. That was the beginning of community activism for me."

After graduating from the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), in the summer of 1990 Tsamis was given a scholarship to the New Pacific Academy (NPA)—a 30-day LGBT activist training program co-founded by HIV and LGBT rights legend Cleve Jones.

"I spent my summer studying and having my eyes opened," Tsamis said. "I came back and did a lot of volunteer work for various gay organizations. That appeals to me to this day I want to give from my heart and share my skills in a way that is meaningful."

In 1995, Tsamis left the family business and moved to Colorado. Three years later, she began law-school at the University of Denver and graduated in the top 10 percent of her class. "I gained an understanding of how positive social change could be accomplished," she said. "I discovered that I needed to have a lot of interaction with people. They fascinate me and I'll never get over that."

But Tsamis' heart was always in Chicago. When her father was diagnosed with terminal Thyroid Cancer, she returned home to take care of her mother and family. "I couldn't leave," she said. "So I started over professionally. It was the right decision."

After passing the Illinois bar exam, Tsamis set out to serve the LGBTQ community with her own law practice. "I thought 'this is my life,'" she remembered. "That I could do a great job representing people who really need help."

Tsamis would eventually go on to take a lead role in some of the community's most defining cases including the 2004 discrimination case



Betty Tsamis.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

filed by a transgender woman against a Denver-based grocery chain and a 2011 suit brought by a same-sex couple against two bed and breakfast businesses who refused to recognize their civil union.

She served as an election judge and worked on various campaigns. A number of Illinois political leaders have written letters of support in her bid for a place on the Board of Elections.

"Elections are very statute-driven," Tsamis said. "There are extremely detailed processes articulated from how someone can get their name on a ballot to how the election is conducted and the results are tallied. Election commissioners have to be engaged in ensuring that the democratic process works. They are at the heart and soul of that process. Vetting is super important because too many people in public office profit personally and I think the public is sick of that."

It is Tsamis' lack of a desire for personal gain that she believes makes her the perfect candidate for the city's board of elections. "It's a culmination of all the things that have been really important to me about civic service," she said. "I really have been wanting to focus and dedicate myself to that role."

Tsamis is throwing her hat into the ring against a backdrop of historic public and political upheaval in the Chicago. "People are engaged," she said. "They are asserting and

empowering themselves in the democratic process. I am a good coalition builder and I have a lot of passion to do this job. It is very exciting to be able to serve the people in this way with a fresh and unique perspective. I want to see transparency in government. I would like to see more outreach to schools to help kids understand the election process and I would like to challenge ourselves to use new technology."

"We have to do better," she added. "Educating ourselves in the systems of electing the individuals that represent us. I want to be part of the process that ensures people the fundamental right to vote, to have their vote counted accurately, meaning their voice is heard accurately."

Where her grandfather fell 72 years ago, there now stands a memorial. When lit at night, it casts a radiant glow over a ridge that once flowed red with the sacrificial blood of those who defied tyranny and fell under the horrific outcome when it goes unchallenged.

Tsamis has dedicated her life to ensuring that it always does.

According to the Cook County Circuit Court, to join the board candidates need the approval of a majority of the circuit judges. Evans will submit one candidate from the interviews to submit to those judges. The decision of the circuit judges is anticipated by the end of December.

Point Foundation seeks applicants

LGBTQ students seeking financial assistance for their undergraduate or graduate school education are encouraged to apply for a Point Foundation Scholarship.

Point Foundation (Point) is the nation's largest scholarship-granting organization for LGBTQ students of merit and currently provides financial assistance and programmatic support to 85 students. Students enrolling in undergraduate or graduate programs for the 2016-2017 academic year are eligible to apply for Point's multiyear scholarship.

Applications are now open online at www.pointfoundation.org/apply.

Students may submit Part I of the application until 11:59 p.m. PST Jan. 19, 2016. Qualified applicants will be invited to submit Part II of the application, which will open from Nov. 2, 2015, until 11:59 p.m. PST Feb. 1, 2016.

HIV-testing van rides through Chicago

On World AIDS Day, Association House of Chicago launched the "Know Your Status Project," an HIV outreach program that includes a mobile HIV-testing van, education materials and prevention strategies that target identified high-risk areas in Chicago.

The mobile testing unit seeks hard-to-reach residents to provide one-minute HIV testing, and immediate linkages to care for those who test positive. The unit is available as late as midnight each day to ensure residents are reached when they are likely to be active.

Visit www.facebook.com/KnowYourStatusAHC/.

Chicago business focuses on socks of all types

BY ROSS FORMAN

A new business opened this summer in the Ravenswood/Lincoln Square neighborhood, centered on the sock craze. Yep, Sockified Inc., carries hundreds of styles inside the 400-square-foot store, including items featuring dogs, cats, beets, carrots, stripes, argyles, Frida Kahlo, sharks, sheep, music, cowboys and, soon, an "adult section," one of the co-owners said.

"I love socks and this space was perfect," said Valerie Booth, one of the co-owners and the store's treasurer. "We were going to do [neighborhood] festivals and street markets, but found this space and decided to go with a brick-and-mortar [store]."

The grand opening attracted about 50 people and there were sock raffles, and visitors were treated to beer and wine.

"The trend in socks is to have fun with them and express yourself," Booth said. "Men are wearing fun socks instead of ties. Sock designers are going all out with great colors, patterns and sayings. It's a fun business to be in and there are people who love socks. When they find us they are so happy, [and] that makes us happy."

The store's window display features a tornado, witch's feet, a yellow brick road and red paper poppies—all in a sock theme.

The most popular part of the store are the Frida Kahlo socks, so far at least.

Sockified offers knee-highs, over the knees,



Display at Sockified. Photo from Sockified

crew, microcrews and more.

The Blue Q socks have funny messages and make great gag gifts, Booth said, adding that the I-Lux socks are gorgeous, soft and expensive.

"Our goal is to be super-stocked for fall and the upcoming holidays," Booth said. "Long-term, [the goal is] to offer socks that are cool and beautiful and made for hiking, walking, running and working on your feet."

Booth was born in Uruguay, grew up in Peru and, as an adult, has lived in London, San Francisco, Miami, Montevideo (Uruguay's capital) and, now, Chicago. A lesbian, Booth is "in a relationship," she said. Booth also works as a caregiver, as the "chief of staff" for an 88-year-old woman who lives at the Admiral at the Lake, said Booth, who also is a photographer.

Eileen Reynolds, who identifies as bisexual

and lives in Rogers Park, is the company president.

"We love socks and there is no other store dedicated exclusively to selling novelty socks in Chicago," Reynolds said. "Socks are a great way to express your style and creativity without breaking the bank. Sock lovers are generally friendly, funny, smart people and we get to work with them all day every day."

Sockified carries 100-percent cotton socks made in the United States, funny socks from Blue Q, beautiful luxury cashmere blends from Bella, and fabulously comfortable stretchy space dyed socks from EG Smith to mention a few, Reynolds said.

Sockified is at 4917 N. Damen Ave. For more information, call 773-275-4780.

Ministries network says 'It's Time'

Reconciling Ministries Network has started the "It's Time" campaign—which involves the United Methodist Church embracing its LGBTQ clergy and members—with a focus on the General Conference in May 2016 in Portland, Oregon.

The campaign is starting with a partnership with the documentary filmmakers behind An Act of Love, which tells the story of Rev. Frank Schaefer, who was defrocked in 2013 for officiating his son's same-sex wedding. The network hopes to get help from donors in order to host more than 50 screenings nationwide leading up to General Conference.

The network has also created a Web page so that people across the country and around the globe can tell delegates directly that "It's Time" for change. See RMNetwork.org.

Ryan White award recipients announced

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) has announced the 30 organizations selected to receive an estimated \$7 million in Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program grants to serve the HIV community throughout the Chicago metropolitan area.

Funding through the federal Ryan White program, which distributes \$2.3 billion nationwide to support people living with HIV, allows AFC to create a system of collaborative partnerships between Chicago-based organizations.

Some of the recipients include Core Center, Erie Family Health Center, Catholic Charities of Chicago, Heartland Health Outreach, Haymarket Center, Test Positive Aware Network, Open Door Clinic, the University of Chicago and Project VIDA.

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views



Just asking the questions...

Why aren't more rainbow-flag carrying, LGBTQ civil-rights leadership and their membership represented in the marches of Chicagoans protesting police misconduct? Equally interesting, where is the organized presence of Black gay men at these marches against Chicago Police Department (CPD) misconduct?

When will LGBTQ-equality organizations actually "continue to educate the public about the need to secure the rights of all Illinois citizens, couples, and families," as one group says on its website? When will they publicly educate and secure the rights of LGBTQ Chicagoans who've been victims of police brutality and misconduct? Will we see LGBTQ organizational leadership at press conferences on television or on social media seeking the resignation of Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez?

Unfortunately, the conspicuous absence of most LGBTQ equal-rights organizations from the march on behalf of Laquan McDonald and other police-abuse victims on "Black Friday" on Michigan Avenue spoke volumes to many LGBTQ people who actually continue to march!

Why hasn't there been at least one LGBTQ organizational town hall in Boystown or Andersonville to meet discuss, strategies or lend support to the various LGBTQ youth groups

that are standing up, creating direct action and being directly involved in protest activities associated with standing up against police misconduct?

Will said LGBTQ-equality organizations continue to enjoy that support if they are viewed by many as indifferent to everything except the issue of marriage equality?

Unfortunately, the Chicago Independent Police Review Authority has found that, since 2007, only a handful of the 400 fatal and non-fatal cop shootings unjustified—resulting in the recently forced resignation of Chicago Police Review Authority Chief Scott Ando!

Now, police misconduct files spanning almost six decades might be destroyed before the public ever sees them, because of a recent decision now being challenged in court by University of Chicago Law School Professor Craig Futterman. That, for me, begs the question: If policeman's records involved in alleged misconduct are destroyed, how will the feds obtain statistical data needed to prove or disprove possible civil-rights violations?

And, adding insult to injury, the feds' investigation will be limited in its legal scope! The effort between the Washington-based Civil Rights Division and the personnel in the U.S. attorney's office in Chicago, headed by Zachary Fardon, is focusing only on the police department's unconstitutional patterns or practices.

Chicago taxpayers regardless of sexual orientation have spent more than \$521,000,000 in CDP-abuse lawsuit settlements in the last five years. I want to remind most, and educate others, as to why this issue is so important in OUR communities.

Many LGBTQ persons in this city, regardless of race or ethnicity, either remember themselves or know of other LGBTQ persons who have been victims of CPD abuse. It wasn't that long ago

that Chicago police routinely abused patrons of our LGBTQ bars. Remember what happened at Carol's Speakeasy? Anybody remember how many times Jim Flint and the Baton cast would be thrown in jail, when the Baton began opening its doors?

Many know this issue isn't new. Decades ago, as a regular "bar fly" of Rialto's, Club la-Ray's, Jeffery Pub, Rail's entertainment and Club Escape, I've witnessed many instances of police abuse—often blatant and with excessive force used!

Oh, and by the way, predominately African-American and Latino LGBT bar patrons experienced bar raids at our watering holes routinely until the late 1990s—long after most predominately white gay bar patrons were subjected to such dehumanizing experiences!

What if progressive African-American and Latino political decision-makers, civil-rights organizations, women's groups, faith-based organizations and the many "progressive" organizations that supported and stood with marriage-equality advocates decided not to be progressive anymore regarding LGBTQ issues?

Unfortunately, I suspect, that if white gay men were still being abused by police at the same rate that Black and Brown LGBTQ people continue to be abused by police actions, there would be rainbow-flag carrying, LGBTQ civil-rights leaders everywhere with their membership coalescing and protesting police misconduct!

Michael O'Connor is a lifelong Chicagoan with more than 30 years of political campaign experience. He was the first openly gay, African-American legislative staffer in the Illinois General Assembly.



CREATING CHANGE CONFERENCE

Volunteers are needed

The nation's largest LGBTQ conference, Creating Change, is coming to Chicago next month—and local organizers are looking to recruit you.

The 2016 Creating Change conference host committee needs 500 volunteers to make sure

we support a successful conference. The conference, which the National LGBTQ Task Force is producing, is set to take place at the Downtown Chicago Hilton on Jan. 20-24, 2016.

"Volunteers are the backbone of Creating Change. The conference is impossible without the help of hundreds of volunteers. I urge everyone who is able to sign on to become a volunteer," said Kenny Martin-Ocasio, 2016 Creating Change conference host committee co-chair.

Conference volunteers perform essential functions to ensure the smooth operation of Creating Change, including serving as room monitors in the workshop sessions and staffing our hospitality suites. It's fun, fierce and fabulous! You'll meet great people from around the movement and have the opportunity to learn new skills offered in our robust conference program. Best of all: You're helping to build the

grassroots power of our LGBTQ movement.

"Volunteering is a great way to meet people and build a resume," said Desmond King, a senior at Northern Illinois University who plans on volunteering at Creating Change. "If it was not for volunteering I would not be able to attend Creating Change. I do not want to miss this life changing conference."

In exchange for a four-hour work shift on any day of the conference, volunteers can attend the rest of that day's sessions free of charge. That's right: volunteer four hours at the Creating Change conference and then attend any other sessions that interest you, absolutely free.

To learn more about the conference and sign up to volunteer, visit www.creatingchange.org/wanna-help/volunteer/.



letters

Stop the sweeps

The following letter was sent to Mayor Rahm Emanuel:

On Nov. 20, more than 400 individuals endured the season's first snow to take part in the Out In The Open Sleep Out to fight youth homelessness.

This inaugural event took place on Cricket Hill Park, steps away from Wilson Avenue, where homeless people have endured routine sweeps from the Chicago Police Department. These sweeps threaten the well-being of some of the city's most vulnerable residents as tents are torn down or ticketed and medications,

identification documents and other precious items are randomly discarded by police officers who inconsistently act on the negotiated list of "approved" items that homeless people can have in their possession.

The individuals who participated in the Sleep Out experienced a tiny sample of what people experiencing homelessness go through every day. There are not nearly enough resources available for the 125,848 Chicagoans estimated to have experienced homelessness by the Chicago Coalition of the Homeless during last school year—nearly 11,500 of whom were unaccompanied youth.

On behalf of the Pride Action Tank, a project of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, the Sleep Out participants and the more than 750 donors

who have contributed over \$43,000 to support 19 Sleep Out beneficiaries that are suffering greatly due to the state budget impasse, I submit the attached petitions.

These petitions, signed on that snowy night in November, call for a stop to police sweeps of homeless people and a real commitment to housing first. Housing saves lives. We call on you, as mayor of this fine city, to instruct the police to stop the criminalization of homeless people and these inhumane sweeps.

Sincerely,
Kim L. Hunt
Executive Director
Pride Action Tank

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Bar Takito.



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MIR Victory Party at Touche.



'Bel' of the ball

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Danielle de Niese stars in *Bel Canto*

Photo by Todd Rosenberg

YEAR IN REVIEW

Theater: News and favorites

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It's nearly impossible to see each and every single live stage show playing in and around the Windy City. So when it comes to year-end lists naming the best of the Chicago-area theater scene, you'll only get highly selective answers based upon what an individual critic was physically capable of catching during the 2015 calendar year.

With that in mind, the three primary Windy City Times theater critics offer up their personal top picks for 2015, while we also look back at some of the year's theater news.

Top 2015 favorites from Mary Shen Barnidge:

The Curious Case of the Watson Intelligence: Theater Wit continued to demonstrate its uncanny talent for play selection with Madeleine George's smart and timely romantic comedy exploring the limits of technology in rendering us happy.

The Hammer Trinity: Most multi-chapter theatrical epics tend to rely on short cuts as they approach their conclusion, but authors Nathan Allen and Chris Mathews kept the intrigue, intelligence and excitement of House Theatre's three-years-in-the-making project all the way home.

Brilliant Adventures and How the World Began. Playwrights Alistair McDowell and Cath-

erine Trieschmann both look to have a long and successful future, but Steep Theatre and Rivendell Ensemble's respective productions were most noteworthy for introducing an impressive young actor named Curtis Edward Jackson.

Top 2015 favorites ranked by Jonathan Abarbanel:

Dramas:

The Apple Family Plays cycle, by TimeLine Theatre

The Project(s), at American Theatre Company (world premiere)

Good for Otto, at Gift Theatre (world premiere)

Musicals:

City of Angels, at the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire

American Idiot, by The Hypocrites

Tie: October Sky and Ride the Cyclone, new musicals respectively at the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire and Chicago Shakespeare Theater.

Top 2015 favorites from Scott C. Morgan:

The Royal Society of Antarctica: Gift Theatre did an amazing job realizing the vast expanse of Antarctica in its tiny storefront theater space for Mat Smart's ambitious Jeff Award-winning world-premiere drama. Although it featured three acts, The Royal Society of Antarctica sped by thanks to Smart's involving

plotting and intriguing characters who all had their own reasons for living and working at the bottom of the earth.

Charm: Skokie's Northlight Theatre showed it was moving with the pulse of transgender culture by commissioning Philip Dawkins to write a play inspired by Miss Gloria Allen and her etiquette classes at the Center on Halsted in Chicago. BJ Jones' moving production at the Steppenwolf Garage felt very relevant, especially since it was staged just down the street from its source of inspiration.

Bad Jews: Theater Wit's Chicago premiere of Joshua Harmon's 2013 off-Broadway comedy proved to be very durable as it saw a series of extensions and venue shifts to run through most of the year. Harmon's scathing comedy brings up plenty of questions on what it means to be Jewish for millennials as three cousins argue over a prized family heirloom.

Honorable 2015 mentions: Wozzeck and The Passenger, at the Lyric Opera of Chicago; City of Angels, at the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire.

And now the news:

Hey New York, we saw it here first

Chicago continued to prove its importance as the incubator of many world premieres—particularly those that landed in, or with aspirations for, New York.

After his Chicago-to-Broadway triumph with *Kinky Boots*, Tony-winning director/choreographer Jerry Mitchell returned to the Windy City in 2015 for the world-premiere musical tryouts of *On Your Feet!* and *Gotta Dance*.

Although no New York productions have been announced, the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire presented the well-received world premiere of the musical *October Sky*, while Drury Lane Theatre in Oakbrook Terrace made its Broadway-aimed intentions known with musi-

cal productions of *Beaches* this year and Hazel planned for the next.

Bruce Norris' *The Qualms* played off-Broadway in 2015 after premiering at Steppenwolf Theatre the previous year, as did Stephen Karam's *The Humans* after it bowed at American Theatre Company in 2014 (*The Humans* in fact is transferring to Broadway in 2016). Ike Holter's acclaimed 2014 drama *Exit Strategy* about a Chicago school closure staged by Jackalope Theatre is also headed off-Broadway next year in a co-production by Primary Stages and the Philadelphia Theatre Company.

Notable Jeff Awards

The Paramount Theatre became eligible for Jeff Awards in 2015, so all the Broadway-caliber work being done in Aurora finally got to be acknowledged. Also, there was a bit of a mix-up when *The Hypocrites'* marathon production of Sean Graney's *All Our Tragic* was switched from the non-Equity categories to the professional ones.

Moving houses?

Northlight Theatre in Skokie and Chicago's TimeLine Theatre raised eyebrows when it was announced that both might be relocated to new spaces. Northlight wants extra fly space in a potential new building development in Evanston, while TimeLine looks likely to be a part of the condo conversion of the shuttered Trumbull Elementary School in Andersonville.

Writers Theatre in Glencoe is saying goodbye to its intimate Books on Vernon space with its current production of *Marjorie Prime* in anticipation of moving into its multi-million dollar new home next year. The Griffin Theatre is also still fundraising to move into its converted police station home on Foster Avenue.

Closing shop

Chicago's longest-running Broadway musical, *Million Dollar Quartet*, announced that it will close in January after a run of more than 3,000 performances. Also giving a closing notice are Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company and Signal Ensemble Theatre—both will cease operations after their current seasons. At least Mary-Arrchie and Signal offered some advance notice, since Fox Valley Repertory in St. Charles abruptly shuttered in the middle of its run of the comedy *Maybe Baby, It's You*.

In passing

The Chicago theater community suffered some painful artistic losses in 2015. Former eta Creative Arts Foundation president Abena Joan Brown passed away in July. American Theatre Company artistic director PJ Paparelli died in May following a car accident while he was on vacation in Scotland. That same month, Chicago Dramatists Emeritus Artistic Director Russ Tutterow died of cancer, as did Chicago actress Erin Myers.



The Apple Family Plays.
Photo by Lara Goetsch

THEATER REVIEW

Bernarda Alba and Her House

Playwright: adapted by Robert Eric Shoemaker from the play by Federico Garcia Lorca
 At: Poetry Is productions at Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.
 Tickets: 270-577-7782;
 www.poetryis.org; \$20
 Runs through: Jan. 3

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

There's this twice-married widow with five daughters, you see. The girls are all of an age to marry—indeed, some well past their prime childbearing years—but their proud mother refuses to consider an alliance with a family of inferior station. Instead, she keeps her offspring under vigilance as strict as that of a convent. All that this accomplishes, though, is to further sensitize the three generations of cloistered women to the mystery aroused by men passing their windows—curiosity transforming the eldest sister's betrothed into a priapal fantasy shared among her cohabitants.

It's easy for cold-blooded English-speaking audiences to dismiss this dysfunctional clan with a scornful, "Well, that's 1930s Spain for you!" After all, haven't the warm countries always been presumed to be writhing in the coils of repressed passions forbidden our phlegmatic peers? Robert Eric Shoemaker's relocation of Federico Garcia-Lorca's drama from rural Andalusia to the bayou regions of Louisiana—while not entirely foiling Yankee prejudices ("Well, that's the Deep South for you!")—reduces the denial reflex significantly.



Bernarda Alba and Her House.
 Photo by Katie O'Shea

Our matriarch is now Mrs. Bernadette Talbot-White, a woman of rigid principles befitting a society where outward appearances define the status of not only individual citizens, but their blood relations as well. The long-deceased Talbot sire left his only child, Augustina, a generous inheritance, enabling her (despite being nearly 40 years old) to be courted by young Beau Frederick III, her junior by over a decade. Rumors circulate, however, of this future husband meeting in secret with youngest sister Adelaide, who would gladly embrace the role of

adulteress and risk the wrath of a disapproving community that does not shrink from violence as a means of correction.

A concept difficult for modern playgoers to grasp is that of the full-out-take-no-prisoners emotion—sometimes called "duende"—mandatory to interpretation of Lorca's aesthetic, without which the characters' extreme actions quickly plummet into camp burlesque. Fortunately, this Poetry Is production (staged in association with the DCASE Lorca In America project) has assembled a company of intuitive

actors capable of infusing the Creole dialects and colloquial vocabulary with the sensual darkness necessary to generate the requisite catharsis.

The results make for a tightly integrated 90-minute spectacle combining instrumental music, body percussion, song, dance, poetry and the spoken word in pursuit of (as Lorca himself once said) "lifting the text off the page and making it human."

THEATER REVIEW

The Heir Apparent

Playwright: adapted by David Ives from the play, *Le Legataire Universel*, by Jean Francois Regnard
 At: Chicago Shakespeare Theatre at Navy Pier, 800 E. Grand Ave.
 Tickets: 312-595-5600;
 www.chicagoshakes.com; \$48-\$88
 Runs through: Jan. 17

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Have you heard the one about the rich old man who wants a young wife to share his bed and nurse his ailments? Sure you have—every culture since antiquity boasts at least one story with this premise. Instead of laying false claim

to its invention, however, playwrights nowadays freely admit to recycling dusty (and safely uncopyrighted) potboilers for their own purposes. Among those seeking to elevate such makeovers from grad-school exercises to big-budget spectacle is David Ives, who looks for his source material to Moliere wannabe Jean Francois Regnard's 1708 romp.

Updating a period play to conform to modern sensibilities is more complicated than imagined, though, and each new experiment reveals new precepts for success—the wisdom of writing your adaptation *before* incorporating original text, or constructing the final scenes first, thus guaranteeing as much punch at the finish as at the start. To this list may be added the necessity of understanding the theatergoing experience of both the way-back-then age and the proposed reboot—a principle that Ives

chooses to ignore.

A night at the theater in the 18th century meant a five-act play whose adherence to neo-classical conventions supported numerous plot complications (even as it encouraged spectator attention to wander). Converting this amount of action to 21st-century running times is not simply a matter of speeding up the delivery, but removing huge portions of decorative, but redundant, wordplay as well. For example, when you open your play with three potty jokes—five, if we include the ottoman that resembles a hemorrhoid cushion and the farting noises that accompany the decrepit clock's chimes—it might be prudent to restrict any additional toilet humor, especially served up in clusters of rhymed couplets, to under a dozen speeches.

Surprisingly, Ives' gobs of gastrointestinal gags in no way obstruct director John Rando's

live-action cartoon stunt show—did I mention the trio of Miss Piggy look-alikes and a character wearing Lord Farquaad dwarf prosthetics? Kevin Depinet's ornate set invites defilement (Freudians, take note). Paxton Whitehead's geriatric lothario is a veritable symphony of rheumy-phlegmy-necrotic-dyspeptic wheezes. Chicago Shakespeare Theatre (CST) subscribers can sway to the iambic pentameter, snicker at the Shakespeare samples and smile like good sports when openly reviled across the fourth wall. Why not? It's not as if they can repeat any of these scatological sallies to their co-workers the next day. CST's holiday treat may appear sumptuous, but will likely leave you only empty and gassy in the morning.

THEATER REVIEW

Bel Canto

Authors: Jimmy Lopez (music), Nilo Cruz (libretto) from Ann Patchett's novel
 At: Lyric Opera of Chicago, 20 N. Wacker Dr.
 Tickets: 1-312-827-5600;
 www.lyricopera.org; \$20-\$299
 Runs through: Jan. 17

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

World premieres at world-class opera houses are costly commitments to the future of the art form rather than the future of individual works, because new operas stand almost no chance of entering the so-called "standard repertory." Explaining why requires a much longer essay. In these few words I must focus on the work itself, perhaps of special interest to WCT readers as the composer and librettist both are out gay artists of global stature.

The thundering, ominous basso brass that opens the work (think Prokofiev's "Battle on the Ice" in Alexander Nevsky) immediately signals a score of symphonic proportions and complexity. It remains a brass player's dream throughout, but takes full advantage of every orchestral section. The music of Jimmy Lopez

is firmly diatonic (familiar "do-re-me" scale) but modern. *Bel Canto* is not a so-called number opera, which will turn off those who think real operas died with Puccini (just one reason it's so difficult for new operas to find productions). If you love opera or contemporary serious music, the very best thing you can do is to see and hear *Bel Canto* for yourself. A note: Although Lopez is Peruvian, there's nothing Latin about the score which, frankly, surprised me.

The libretto also is complex with over a dozen solo roles sung in at least six languages. No one or two roles are musically dominant (although some are larger than others) in a work which finds chorus and soloists onstage together most of the time. The ensemble are leftist terrorists holding diplomatic hostages over the course of more than 100 days, and the hostages never are left unguarded. As in reality, private conversations and moments must be grabbed when they can. This leads to a structure in which there are very few set pieces. Duets, trios, quartets are momentary and fleeting as soloists emerge from the ensemble and melt back into it.

My difficulty with the work is the necessity—built into all operas adapted from literary sources—of reducing story and character de-

velopment to sketchy proportions. *Bel Canto* is no exception, adapted from Ann Patchett's 2001 novel based on real-life events in 1996-1997 in Lima, Peru. The basics of who and what are about all Cruz can achieve, along with much poetical language (which feels Buddhist-inspired to me) and political rant. The emotional center (two hostages fall in love with two terrorists) barely has time to develop and never has time to envelop its audience. The thematic center—in essence, music soothes the savage breast—is forcefully raised in Act I and then allowed to fade considerably in Act II.

Bel Canto features the most multicultural company Lyric Opera ever has assembled—and kudos for that, as well as a rich visual production relying heavily on Greg Emetaz's sumptuous projections. Director Kevin Newbury and conductor Sir Andrew Davis have distinguished themselves, as have the singers from chorus on up. Would there was time and space to discuss *Bel Canto* at greater length. It is beautiful singing, although it isn't traditional singing.

CRITICS' PICKS

Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, Oriental Theatre, through Feb. 21. Take a pleasant walk down memory lane to celebrate the many pop hits of Carole King in this better-than-usual jukebox musical. SCM

Chapter Two, Windy City Playhouse, through Dec. 20. We may be older and wiser now, but the course of true love hasn't gotten any smoother in the nearly 40 years since Neil Simon's been-around-the-block lovers embarked on it. MSB

Good for Otto, Gift Theatre, through Dec. 20 and then extended from Jan. 14 to Feb. 7. 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's more exciting and entertaining than you'd think. JA

No More Sad Things, Sideshow Theatre Company at Victory Gardens Theater, through Dec. 20. It may be the most tourist-y part of Hawaii, but Hansol Jung takes colonialist Freudian fantasy and spins it into romantic magic to dazzle even jaded cynics. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan



Twist Your Dickens.
Photo by Liz Lauren

THEATER REVIEW
Twist Your Dickens
 Playwrights: Peter Gwinn and Bobby Mort
 At: Goodman Theatre Owen Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St.
 Tickets: 312-443-3800 or www.goodmantheatre.org; \$10-\$61
 Runs through Dec. 27

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The Second City sure gets around collaborating with other Chicago arts institutions. Past Second City comedy show creations with the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago were artistic and audience successes, and you can certainly add the current Goodman Theatre collaboration, *Twist Your Dickens*, to the list.

A delicious spoof of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, *Twist Your Dickens* is back for its second year with a shortened title ("Or Scrooge You!" was dropped off). Also returning as the money-grubbing and bad-tempered Ebenezer Scrooge is Steppenwolf Theatre ensemble member Francis Guinan, showing off a wonderful flair for comedy and improvisation.

Twist Your Dickens authors Peter Gwinn and Bobby Mort (formerly of *The Colbert Report*) follow the basic plot structure of *A Christmas Carol*, but they also allow for hilarious tangents from way out of left field. Literary Dickens fans will delight at how his other characters like *Oliver Twist* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* get bizarrely incorporated into the mix.

There's also plenty of fun with pop cultural digressions that mock other holiday favorites. There's a more inclusive reexamination of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and a sarcastic look at saviors for the denizens of the Island of Misfit Toys in the Rankin/Bass TV special *Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer*. Leah Piehl's spot-on costumes for these scenes are amazing additions to the work of credited costume designer Rachel Lambert.

What sticks out like a sore thumb is a sketch involving a Christmas album recording session with a boozy chanteuse. It may allow for an amazing Christmas song cooked up on the spot by comic spitfire Beth Melewski, but the sketch isn't as cleverly integrated into the show as it could be.

Other audience interaction moments allow for great comedy potential. Be sure to write down a personal sin before the show for actor Peter Gwinn to read out, and be ready to shout out ideas for actress Danielle Pinnock at a crucially dramatic point in the show.

More solid comic play come from the likes of Sue Salvi and her slow-moving Tiny Tim, Tim Sniffen as the resentful Bob Cratchit and especially Travis Turner as an energetic 1980s throwback Ghost of Christmas Past. Director Matt Hovde masterfully oversees all the joyous lunacy of *Twist Your Dickens*, while designers like Jesse Klug on lights and Tom Buderwitz on sets both perfectly frame the silly situations.

Whether *Twist Your Dickens* morphs into a

perennial holiday favorite remains to be seen. At least you can confidently go knowing that reinvention has been built into the overall structure of *Twist Your Dickens*, and that every performance has the potential to be funnier than the previous one.

SPOTLIGHT



Relive the success of playwright Philip Dawkins' 2011 hit drama *The Homosexuals* with a special reunion of the original cast overseen by director Bonnie Metzgar for a one-night-only About Face Theatre benefit performance. *The Homosexuals* had its world premiere here in Chicago, and it has subsequently gone on to have numerous productions around the country. *The Homosexuals* plays 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 19, in Rubloff Auditorium of the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St. There is a post-show talkback and reception with the cast, director and playwright. Tickets are \$15; visit www.aboutface theatre.com. Photo by Jonathan L. Green

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GOODMAN THEATRE

YEAR IN REVIEW

An unforgettable year for local dance

Joffrey's April Daly (right) and Fabrice Calmels.
Photo by Cheryl Mann

BY LAUREN WARNECKE

Each year, looking back over the dance calendar in Chicago, I'm reminded of the wealth of wonderful performances; this year was certainly no exception. Many year-in-review columns highlight the big tours that roll through town, and we had amazing appearances by the Royal Ballet, Jessica Lang Dance, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and Steven Petronio Company. What made 2015 really special, however, was the wealth of exceptional dance produced by homegrown companies and choreographers. Here are my top seven Chicago dance events of 2015:

Sarah Gottlieb/Body Compass Dance Project | Yolk

Premiering in February at Links Hall, Sarah Gottlieb's Yolk was inspired by her work as a doula. Although the contemporary dance used overt references to birth, womanhood, menstruation and ovulation, Gottlieb handled the material with a respectful command and no hint of cliché. Three women are each burdened by restless eggs placed in glass fish bowls. The tinny swirlings of the eggs, and the anticipation that at any moment something could go very wrong were part and parcel to some delightfully robust passages of dancing.

Josh Anderson | Fit to be Tied

While Yolk abstracted its topic, dancer/choreographer Josh Anderson created Fit to be Tied by tackling cliché. In a raucous, random and hilarious hour last March at Links Hall, An-

derson would emerge from the slew of young dancers whose coming of age connected with an affiliation with the off-beat performance collective called The Inconvenience. Anderson showed here that he is capable of making serious dances while maintaining his super-cool persona.

The Seldoms | Power Goes

All of the pieces fell into place for the premiere of The Seldoms' Power Goes, an evening-length dance theater piece that premiered in March at The Museum of Contemporary Art. Inspired by the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, artistic director Carrie Hanson took on what could arguably be called the most complex period in U.S. history in her most ambitious work to date. Stunning stage design, text and dramaturgy from an all-star collaborative team complemented Hanson's always brilliant movement vocabulary.

River North Dance Chicago | Fall Engagement

River North's only appearance in the 2015-16 season took place in a one-night-only engagement Oct. 5 at the beautiful Auditorium Theatre. The performance was significant for many reasons, mainly that it would be Frank Chaves' last as artistic director of the company he lead for 23 years. For the past several seasons Chaves has continued to work despite a serious health condition that resulted in his using a wheelchair full-time.

Nevertheless, in 2014 he produced a stunning new work from a seated position, and directed what turned out to be a nearly flawless performance this fall of favorite works from the

company's repertoire. The concert would also feature iconic performances by veteran dancers Jessica Wolfram and Lauren Kias, who would also retire that night.

Khecarí | The Cronus Land

Mastermind Jonathan Meyer, co-artistic director of Khecarí, expanded on 2014's Oubliette for The Cronus Land, an eerie jaunt through the once-glamorous Shoreland Ballroom. The two halves of the evening-length dance bookended a gourmet tasting of small bites in the center of the ballroom.

Guests were escorted along the way by a docent through the nooks and crannies of a decaying, grotesque world. It's a world that is becoming synonymous with Meyer and creative partner Julia Rae Antonick's contempo-

Sketch festival Jan. 7-17

The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival will run Jan. 7-17, 2016.

The event boasts 165 groups performing 186 shows.

Among those taking part are groups who celebrate diverse voices through sketch comedy derived from their cultural or ethnic heritage, sexual orientation or identity, or uniquely abled members. In this line-up are Stir Friday Night, Spic and Tan, GayCo, Your Dark Embrace, Patti Vasquez and Spirit Animal.

The entire schedule for the 15th Annual Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival may be viewed at www.ChicagoSketchfest.com.

All-festival passes, regularly priced at \$165, will be available for \$115 if purchased before Dec. 31. Thursday, Friday and Sunday day passes are available for \$37, \$47 and \$57, respectively. Tickets and information are available online at www.Stage773.com, 773-327-5252 and at the Stage 773 box office, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

'The Homosexuals' reading Dec. 19

About Face Theatre (AFT) will present a one-night-only benefit reading of its 2011 hit The Homosexuals, by AFT Artistic Associate Philip Dawkins, on Saturday, Dec. 19, at 6:30 p.m. at The Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St.

The reading will feature AFT Artistic Associates Patrick Andrews, Scott Bradley, John Francisco, Elizabeth Ledo and Benjamin Sprunger, with Stephen Cone and Eddie Diaz. The play follows Evan, a young gay man

who moves to the Midwest with nothing but the shirt on his back. When a kind man invites him to a party his first night in town—the circle of friends he meets that night have an impact on his life that he could ever imagine.

The Joffrey Ballet | Sylvia

A few short weeks after a stellar program of new works, Joffrey kicked off its 60th season in earnest with Sylvia, a full-length ballet choreographed by John Neumeier, originally for Hamburg Ballet. Admittedly, Neumeier's work can be difficult to grasp, and his interpretation of the original 1876 libretto about a huntress and her nymphs is no exception.

Although Sylvia received little praise when Joffrey premiered it in October, I found it a refreshing departure from the standard story ballet. Each new era in ballet's history has created some level of scandal or provocation, and Sylvia provided a glimpse of what it might have felt like to live in a time when ballet was as challenging to audiences as it was to the dancers.

Pretty much everything Hubbard Street Dance Chicago did

Hubbard Street had a great year, with two programs featuring the work of single choreographers (Alejandro Cerrudo and William Forsythe), and a dynamite Winter Series of all women choreographers. Bar none, the champion of the season was the final piece of the year: the U.S. premiere of Crystal Pite's Solo Echo. As snow gently fell onstage for the duration of the piece, the magnificent journey through a man's life unfolds, masterfully danced just last weekend at the Harris Theater.

Solo Echo has everything you want in a dance: incredible dancing, unparalleled stage designs and an exquisite score (in this case, sections of two Johannes Brahms sonatas). Refusing to rest on its laurels, Hubbard Street continues to push its dancers, crew, staff and audiences to their limits, and while some of the work presented this season were challenging for many dancegoers' palates, it's hard to deny the consistent intellect and innovation behind this company's programming.

who moves to the Midwest with nothing but the shirt on his back. When a kind man invites him to a party his first night in town—the circle of friends he meets that night have an impact on his life that he could ever imagine.

Tickets are \$15 each; visit AboutFaceTheatre.com.

Final Joffrey 'Nutcracker' through Dec. 27

The Joffrey Ballet celebrates the 28th annual, and final, presentation of Robert Joffrey's The Nutcracker in a 24-performance engagement at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy., through Dec. 27.

The Chicago Philharmonic, led by Joffrey Music Director Scott Speck, provides live accompaniment of the classic Tchaikovsky score for every performance. The full Joffrey company is also joined onstage by 118 young dancers from the Chicagoland area and young vocalists from five different local children's choirs.

For its 2016-2017 season, The Joffrey Ballet has commissioned Christopher Wheelton—whose direction for Broadway's An American in Paris earned him the 2015 Tony Award for Best Choreography—to re-envision a new Nutcracker to receive its world premiere in December 2016.

Tickets are \$32-\$136; they are available at The Joffrey Ballet's official box office at Joffrey Tower, 10 E. Randolph St.; the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University box office; all Ticketmaster Ticket Centers; at 800-982-2787; or online at www.ticketmaster.com.

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SAG nominees announced

Nominees for the the 22nd annual Screen Actors Guild Awards were announced Dec. 9.

On the film side, top male actor nominees include Bryan Cranston, Johnny Depp, Leonardo DiCaprio, Michael Fassbender and Eddie Redmayne (the latter for *The Danish Girl*). Female actor nominees are Cate Blanchett (for the lesbian movie *Carol*), Brie Larson, Helen Mirren, Saoirse Ronan and Sarah Silverman.

Rooney Mara (*Carol*) and Alicia Vikander (*The Danish Girl*) are among those vying in the supporting actress category.

On the television side, Queen Latifah (as bisexual singer Bessie Smith in the HBO movie *Bessie*) will vie against four others, including Susan Sarandon and Christina Ricci, in the category of Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries.

Kevin Spacey, as bisexual President Francis Underwood on *House of Cards*, will compete against Peter Dinklage, Jon Hamm, Rami Malek and Bob Odenkirk in the category of Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Drama Series. Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series nods went to Claire Danes, Viola Davis, Julianna Margulies, Maggie Smith and Robin Wright.

Out actor Jim Parsons has again been nominated for Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Comedy Series for his role as Sheldon Cooper on *The Big Bang Theory*. In addition, Jeffrey Tambor was nominated for his role as Maura Pfefferman in the show *Transparent*. Ty Burrell (Phil Dunphy) received the only acting nomination for the show *Modern Family*, which also picked up a nod for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series (with *Orange Is the New Black*, *Transparent* and *The Big Bang Theory* being a few of the other series nominees).

For Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Comedy Series, Uzo Aduba received a nod for her role as Suzanne "Crazy Eyes" Warren on *Orange Is the New Black*.

Also, Carol Burnett will receive the 52nd Annual SAG Life Achievement Award.

The ceremony will take place Jan. 30, 2016, on TNT and TBS.

Golden Globe nods announced as well

The day after the Screen Actors Guild nominees were announced, The Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) unveiled its 2016 Golden Globe Awards nominees from the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills—and many people and productions have received nods for both awards, according to *TheWrap*.

Dennis Quaid, Angela Bassett, America Ferrera and Chloe Grace Moretz announced the nods.

Lesbian-themed movie *Carol* is among the nominees for Best Motion Picture (Drama), along with *Mad Max: Fury Road*, *The Revenant*, *Room* and *Spotlight*. In the musical/comedy sector, the nods went to *The Big Short*, *Joy*, *The Martian*, *Spy* and *Trainwreck*.

Orange Is the New Black and *Transparent* are up in the Best TV Series, Musical or Comedy category, against *Casual*, *Mozart in the Jungle*, *Silicon Valley* and *Veep*. In the dramatic category, nods went to *Empire*, *Game of Thrones*, *Narcos*, *Mr. Robot* and *Outlander*. Ryan Murphy received two nods in the Best TV Movie or Limited Series category, with *American Horror Story: Hotel* and *American Crime*.

Acting nods included several actors, productions and roles that span the LGBT spectrum. Out actress Lily Tomlin is nominated in the Best Actress in a TV Series, Comedy category for the show *Grace and Frankie*, while Alan



Jane Fonda (left) and Lily Tomlin on the Netflix series *Grace and Frankie*. Photo from Melissa Moseley/Netflix

Cumming is in the Best Supporting Actor in a Series, Limited Series or TV Movie area for his turn on *The Good Wife*. Jeffrey Tambor has again been nominated for his lead role in the series *Transparent* (in the category Best Actor in a TV Series, Comedy).

For Best Supporting Actress in a Series, Limited Series, or TV Movie, Uzo Aduba is in for *Orange Is the New Black*, competing against (among others) *Transparent*'s Judith Light. Lady Gaga is in the category Best Actress in a Limited Series or TV Movie for her turn on *American Horror Story: Hotel*—and finds herself against Queen Latifah, honored for her turn in *Bessie*. Also, David Oyelowo received a nod for his role as a gay man who commits a horrible crime in *Nightingale*.

In the cinematic arena, openly gay director Todd Haynes received a nod for *Carol*, which

received a total of five nominations. Lily Tomlin was nominated for Best Actress in a Motion Picture, Musical or Comedy for her role in *Grandma*. *Carol*'s Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara as well as *The Danish Girl*'s Alicia Vikander are all in the Best Actress in a Motion Picture, Drama category. Eddie Redmayne is the Best Actor in a Motion Picture, Drama for his transgender role in *The Danish Girl*.

TheWrap noted that among those snubbed were Michael B. Jordan (for *Creed*, although co-star Sylvester Stallone did get one), the film *Straight Outta Compton*, Johnny Depp (for playing gangster James "Whitey" Bulger in *Black Mass*), *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* and all NBC shows.

The 73rd Annual Golden Globe Awards, which Ricky Gervais will host once again, will air live on Sunday, Jan. 10.

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YEAR IN REVIEW

TV showed diverse formats, faces

BY JERRY NUNN

The world of television continues to evolve outside of the box, as more platforms and ways to watch develop every year.

People currently watch their favorite shows on their phones, tablets and laptops, taking the action out of the living room. Remember when we as viewers were forced to watch commercials? Well, that's no more, as most shows are now DVR'd or streamed. On Demand options have made missed programs a thing of the past. There are so many different kinds of shows to watch it is almost impossible to catch them all, especially during fall season sweeps.

Here are some highlights and lowlights of 2015 on the telly:

Zombies, demons, and white walkers remained supreme with very gory offerings such as AMC's *The Walking Dead*, HBO's *Game of Thrones* and the new surprise camp of *Ash vs. Evil Dead* on Starz.

Some shaky returning shows included Fox's *Empire*—where the numbers were lower and, arguably, the storyline was as well. For *Orange Is the New Black*, the third time was not a charm, and *True Detective* was almost shot down with a stinker of a season. On the upswing, AMC's *Better Call Saul* and Netflix's *Narcos* are set to return after both being highly entertaining.

Superheroes knocked watchers' socks off with *Gotham*, *Arrow*, *The Flash* and *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* *Spunky Supergirl* took off to a good start with big ratings on her first flight and *Agent Carter* on ABC has been renewed for a second season. *Heroes Reborn* lost power with clunky characters; the cheerleader (played by Hayden Panettiere) was too busy in Nashville to bother with this one.

How to Get Away with Murder reigned with the gays while many lesbians thought the new tattooed and naked *Blindspot* girl was simply smoking hot.

Finally, Asian-Americans got some exposure

with the diverse success of *Fresh off the Boat* and newbie *Dr. Ken*.

Chicago got a little love with the new *Med, P.D.* and *Fire* that can now crossover with each other while being filmed in the same windy location.

A new season of *American Horror Story* (subtitled "Hotel") dug up a stone-cold Lady Gaga; then, Ryan Murphy transformed more singers into campy actors with Ariana Grande and Nick Jonas on *Scream Queens*. Why hasn't a brash Jamie Lee Curtis, as Dean Cathy Munsch, been on our boob tubes before now?

Reality shows were rehashed as *Big Brother*, *Survivor* and *Dancing with the Stars* put their best feet forward. *American Idol* will finally sing its last note next year—adios, J.Lo! *I Am Cait* tried to educate while the Kardashian family proved that this brood was no *Brady Bunch*. *The Real Housewives* continued to pump out products in between fights while *The Voice* could be renamed *Scandal*, with two judges who divorced and now date.

What do we have to look forward to in 2016?

A *Full House* spinoff debuts for the New Year but haven't we seen enough of conservative Candace Cameron Bure on *The View*? Cutie-pie John Stamos is doing well on his own on a sitcom, *Grandfathered*, but he, along with many *Full House* alumni, was neglected to be invited to Mary-Kate Olsen's wedding. We know she is busy but Ashley couldn't fit it in her schedule to be on the spinoff?

However, we do have original cast members of science-fiction fan favorite *X-Files* returning in January, thankfully.

Local attention has Illinois gay native Sean Hayes hawking another sitcom called *Crowded*, about two daughters moving back home, and *Steppenwolf's* Joan Allen presenting *The Family*, on ABC.

This may seem a bit bleak for new shows but many return from 2015. So catch up, fellow couch potatoes, and binge-watch some past hits in whatever format you choose.



Daniel Portman and Gwendoline Christie in HBO's *Game of Thrones*.
Photo by Helen Sloan

Willam.
PR photo



'Christmas Queens' Dec. 21 at Park West

Murray & Peter present a holiday spectacular with contestants from RuPaul's Drag Race singing songs from their new CD *Christmas Queens* on Monday, Dec. 21, at 8 p.m. at the Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave.

Willam will host, with performers including Alaska Thunderf***k, Katya Zamolodchikova, Jinx Monsoon, Ginger Minj and Sharon Needles

Tickets are \$35-\$50 (with \$75 VIP passes available, as well); visit eTix.com or the Park West box office, or call 800-514-3849.

Levi Kreis show Dec. 18 at Davenport's

Tony Award- and Outer Critics Circle-winning singer/songwriter Levi Kreis will perform his show, "Home for the Holidays," at Davenport's Piano Bar & Cabaret, 1383 N. Milwaukee Ave., on Friday, Dec. 18, at 8 p.m.

Best known for originating the role of Jerry Lee Lewis in the musical *Million Dollar Quartet*, Kreis has also appeared on such shows as *The Young and the Restless*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *Mob Wives* and *So You Think You Can Dance*. He has released six albums to date.

Admission is \$28—but free for veterans. (Veterans should email Levi4Vets@gmail.com to be put on the guest list.) See DavenportPianoBar.com.

Artemis Singers shows Jan. 23-24

The nonprofit Artemis Singers (www.artemissingers.org) will present "Wildest Dreams," a concert where lesbian feminists musically share their visions, at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 23, 2016, and at 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 24, at the Ethical Humanist Society, 7574 N. Lincoln Ave., Skokie.

Among other things, the group will present the liberty piece, "Universal Dream," by Jenni Brandon with text by Meta Hellman, Artemis Singers president, and Jane Addams.

Tickets for "Wildest Dreams" are a suggested donation of \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door for adults. Admission for seniors

ages 65 and older and for children ages 12 and younger are a suggested donation of \$10; visit <http://artemiswildestdreams.brownpapertickets.com/>.

City Winery to host philharmonic series

City Winery Chicago, 1200 W. Randolph St., is hosting the Chicago Philharmonic Orchestra's fall Sunday brunch series.

The three-part monthly series kicked off Oct. 25 with classical songs of longing, and culminates Dec. 20 with Christmas cuts.

The Dec. 20 shows is "St. Nick in Shades: Fresh Riffs on Holiday Tunes."

See www.CityWinery.com/Chicago.

'Chicago' in the Loop next May

Broadway in Chicago announced that the Tony Award-winning hit *Chicago* will play the Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W. Randolph St. for a limited engagement on May 10-15, 2016.

Chicago is the longest-running U.S. musical in Broadway history.

With a book by Fred Ebb and Bob Fosse, music by John Kander and lyrics by Fred Ebb, *Chicago* is the winner of six 1997 Tony Awards, including Best Musical Revival and the Grammy Award for Best Musical Cast Recording.

Group tickets for 10 or more are now on sale by calling Broadway in Chicago Group Sales at 312-977-1710; individual tickets will go on sale at a later date. For more information, visit www.BroadwayInChicago.com.

'Sing-A-Long' at Music Box in Dec.

The Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave., is presenting its 32nd Annual Music Box Christmas Sing-A-Long as well as a double feature of the classic films *White Christmas* and *It's a Wonderful Life*.

The events will take place through Thursday, Dec. 24.

To view a full schedule of showtimes and to purchase tickets (\$10-\$24), visit <http://www.musicboxtheatre.com/collections/2015-annual-music-box-christmas-show>.

The year in Bent Nights

BY VERN HESTER

After the tidal wave of queer musical closet doors flying open in 2014, this year offered few surprises.

Queer icons Madonna, Ricky Martin, Bette Midler and Janet Jackson toured while Barry Manilow came out. Lady Gaga made a comeback (with the help of Tony Bennett and American Horror Story: Hotel) while Culture Club and Annie Lennox tried to. As expected, Sam Smith swept the Grammys and Adele's 25 (Atlantic Records) broke sales records in one week of release. Original riot grrrls Sleater-Kinney regrouped, recorded and hit the road while Joan Armatrading retired from live performance by taking a yearlong tour of intimate venues.

With the exception of those last two, 2015 was clearly business as usual, with the high-profile tours and releases aimed at making huge piles of cash and little else. There was no "Same Love" moment that opened eyes and no easily embraceable new queer face like Sam Smith's, whose voice dominated the year. In 2015, queerness seemed to be last year's news.

Truth be told, the really juicy queer musical highlights of 2015 were all local. The Christmas collection Homo for the Holidays (Berserk Records) dropped exactly a year ago; since then, we got Glitter Creeps and Resonate, two queer musical showcases with vastly differing flavors. There were yearlong residencies by Mike Maimone and JC Brooks while queer-friendly punkers Meat Wave broke out with Delusion Moon (SideOneDummy Records) and lesbian rock act 8 Inch Betsy released its swan song, The Mean Days (307 Knox Records). Evanston native and loveable oddball Ezra Furman came out as gender-fluid while the city celebrated the centennial of out legendary jazz composer Billy Strayhorn. As if all that weren't enough, Chicago hosted two DIY festivals aimed at diverse communities within the larger LGBTQ community: the second Fed Up Fest and the fourth Black and Brown Festival.

Below are the 'best' from a non-vintage year;

Concerts

1. U2 @ The United Center
2. (a tie) Kaki King @ Lincoln Hall/ Sleater Kinney @ The Riviera
3. The Neighborhood @ The Riviera
4. Cathy Richardson and Katie Todd @ City Winery
5. Young the Giant and Neon Trees @ The Old St. Pat's Block Party
6. Soddy Daisy/Those Manic Seas/The Gold Web @ Emporium Arcade
7. Joe Jackson @ Thalia Hall
8. Walk Off the Earth @ Bottom Lounge
9. Bring Me the Horizon @ Aragon Ballroom
10. Buddy Guy and Shemikia Copeland @ Chicago Blues Festival
11. Ryn Weaver/Coin @ Schuba's
12. Mary Lambert (opening for The Script) @ The Riviera

Books

Best: I Will Never Write My Memoirs, by Grace Jones (Gallery publishing)
Worst: Dancing With Myself, by Billy Idol (Touchstone publishing)

Events of the year

1. Riot Fest @ Douglas Park. St. Anthony's Hospital and 26th Ward Ald. Roberto Maldonado threw a hissy fit over noise and location but with a diverse line-up that embraced reggae (Jimmy Cliff, Ziggy Marley), rap/hip-hop (Ice Cube, Snoop Dogg, Cypress Hill), left-field choices (Bootsy Collins and Merle Haggard),

old-school punk (The Damned, Billy Idol) and queer favorites (Against Me!, No Doubt, Meat Wave), Riot Fest has continued to grow and become more inclusive each year.

2. (Four-way tie) The second edition of Fed Up Fest hit Bridgeport in July and this queer-core gathering continued to offer warmth, discussion and (slam) dancing for a solid three days. The fourth Black and Brown Festival took place in Pilsen and Bridgeport and focused on racism, activism, community and music with performances from Cabrona, Ono, R-Tronika, and Earth Goddess Mother.

Donnie Moore and The Empty Bottle partnered to present Glitter Creeps, a monthly showcase for queer/queer-friendly hard-rock bands and, at the end of the year we got Resonate, a podcast project designed for queer music of a more acoustic nature. The surprise fes-



Travis of ONO.
Photo by Vern Hester

tival of the year was the first-time event Ruido Fest, which took place in Pilsen and stood as the first large-scale Latin rock festival in the United States.

What I listened to:

- "Hello," by Adele
- "Drown," by Bring Me the Horizon
- "Garbage In Garbage Out," by The Bribes
- "Delusion Moon," by Meat Wave

- "No Cities Left to Burn," by Sleater-Kinney
- "Songs of Innocence," by U2
- "Headache/Heartache," by Those Manic Seas
- "Boys Like You," by Who Is Fancy? featuring Ariana Grande and Meghan Trainor
- "Restless Year," by Ezra Furman
- "take," by Richard Album
- "Blame It On Me," by George Ezra
- "Coming Home," by Leon Bridges

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KNIGHT at the movies

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

2015 in movies— including the 10 best LGBT films

Where to begin with the schizophrenic year in movies when it comes to LGBT cinema?

One view—mine—would see 2015 as a triumphant one—from *Tangerine* to *Bessie* to *Grandma* to *Guidance* to *Freeheld* to *The Danish Girl* and finally to the forthcoming *Carol*. The other would tag many of these same films as old-fashioned, out of step, not inclusive enough, politically incorrect. The flashpoint movie clearly was *Stonewall*, which drew nearly universal derision before the film was even released. When the movie briefly opened in late September—attended by scattered protests after all the brouhaha over the trailer died down—it received damning reviews and scant box office. Did it deserve its fate? Read on.

This year's first quarter was mostly filled with movies from the previous year's LGBTQ film festivals finally arriving on VOD, on DVD or, in Chicago's case, in the increasingly rare theatrical run. These included *Boy Meets Girl*, *First Period*, *The Circle* and *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*. Late spring brought *Bessie* on HBO, from out writer-director Dee Rees—a chronicle of bisexual blues legend Bessie Smith's short, tempestuous life. Containing star Queen Latifah's bravest performance, the film didn't stint on her love affairs with women.

Summer brought the bracing *Tangerine*, the story of two trans hookers and best friends bitching each other out as they criss-cross L.A. one memorable Christmas Eve. The lesbian standup comic Tig Notaro brought new depth to her career with the release of *Tig*, which documented her journey back from a cancer diagnosis. David Thorpe's *Do I Sound Gay?* was a sometimes amusing look at the little examined stereotype that has plagued gay men since time immemorial, while *Back on Board: Greg Louganis* elicited the Olympic medalist's story in unvarnished detail that was rather eye-opening. French Canadian queer auteur Xavier Dolan's darkly homoerotic homage to Hitchcock thrillers, *Tom at the Farm*, was gleefully twisted. Lastly, for the first time since making their queer classic *Gods & Monsters*, director Bill

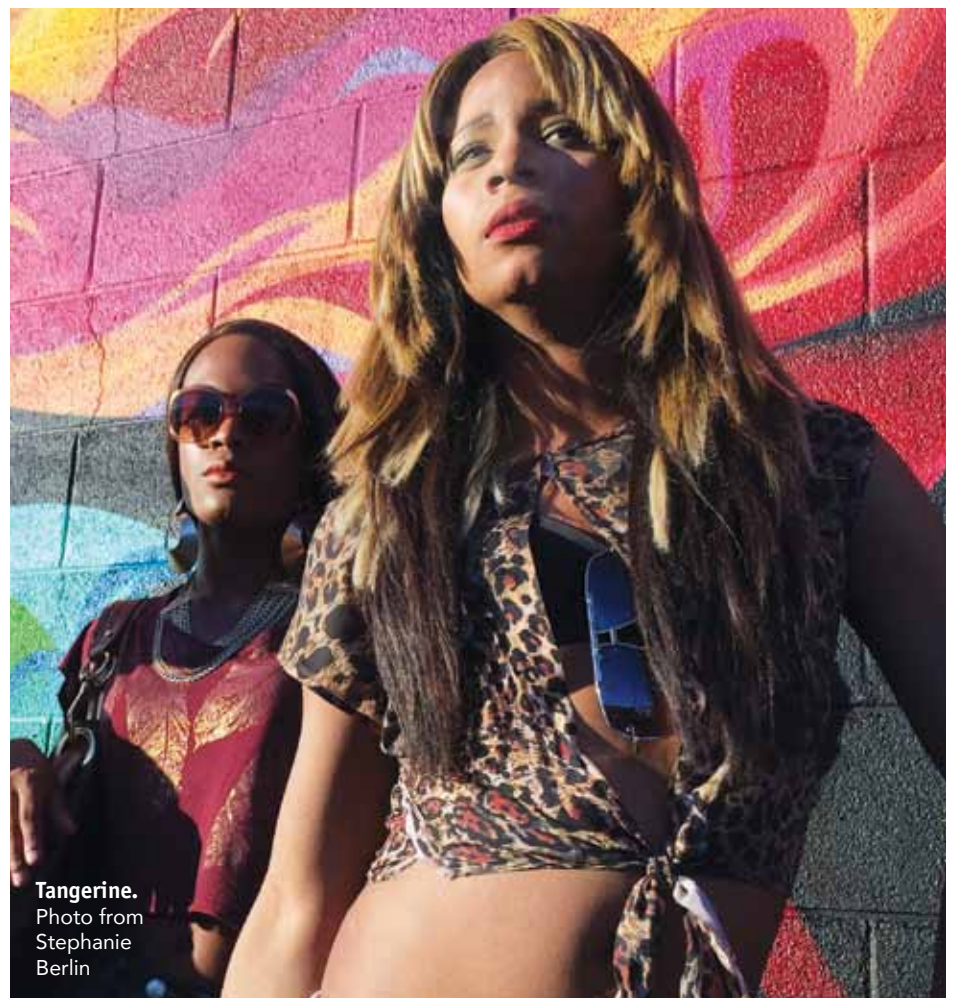
Condon teamed with actor Ian McKellen on *Mr. Holmes*, a reflective look at the last days of the great, fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, who many have long assumed to be gay.

All these offered respite from the usual spate of gut-busting blockbuster action pictures, although one of them—*Mad Max: Fury Road*—has ended up being my favorite “straight” movie of the year. This non-stop pure adrenaline rush also included a not-so-subtle feminist undertone (and, yeah, homoerotic stuff, too) that made it all that much more invigorating. As daring as *Mad Max* seemed to be in the audacity department, it was topped by Paul Weitz's *Grandma*—an unapologetic comedy about abortion, feminism, lesbianism and the joys of strong women kicking ass. Lesbian icon Lily Tomlin gave one of the year's best performances in the title role, continuing a career resurgence that began earlier in the year with her reteaming with her 9 to 5 co-star Jane Fonda in the Netflix sitcom *Grace & Frankie*, which also featured gay themes.

So far so good—with the promise of a great fall and awards season as 2015 came to a close. And then—wham!—the *Stonewall* trailer dropped. The trailer revealed that writer Jon Robin Baitz and disaster-movie specialist Roland Emmerich—both gay—had taken the Stonewall Riots, the seminal moment in LGBT history and placed a fictional character named Danny Winters (a white cisgender one, to boot) at the heart of the story. Although this device of placing a fictional character at the center of historical events has been done to a zillion other movies before and since (*Suffragette* is a recent example), the outcry over this was enormous. Where were the non-white, non-fictional drag queens who many historians claimed (though not all) had ignited the riots in the first place? Both Emmerich and Baitz tried to contain the damage, as did the stars of the film—to no avail. Protests were organized that decry the movie before it screened, but quickly died out upon the film's release to dreadful reviews and box-office receipts.

Stonewall didn't deserve its fate. Although it did trot out a lot of the usual stereotypes, it also got a lot of its history right, started a national conversation about the historic riots and was no better or worse than a lot of other queer-themed movies I could name (including the 1995 version of the same events). But the film was also given a misleading title (a more accurate one might have been “Danny's Story”), its coming-out story felt like it came 20 years too late and filming the movie on what were clearly studio sets had a distancing effect that didn't help. *Stonewall* really does seem like a gay, quasi-Wizard of Oz.

The *Stonewall* fracas (which I think is partially to blame for *About Ray* being pulled from release) now behind us, we have arrived at awards season with terrific contenders. The



Tangerine.
Photo from
Stephanie
Berlin

intelligent and searing *Spotlight*, which about the Boston Globe's reporting of the priest sex-abuse scandal, features several strong gay characters. Tom Hooper's *The Danish Girl*, the biopic about a trans pioneer, is poured through the old-fashioned romantic studio mode and may net star Eddie Redmayne another Oscar. Finally, there's *Carol*, Todd Haynes' long-awaited film adaptation of the Patricia Highsmith's lesbian-themed novel. Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara as the lovers are, well, cinematic perfection. (More on the film will be revealed when it opens here at the end of the month.) When it comes to *Carol*, Chicago is, indeed, getting the best for last.

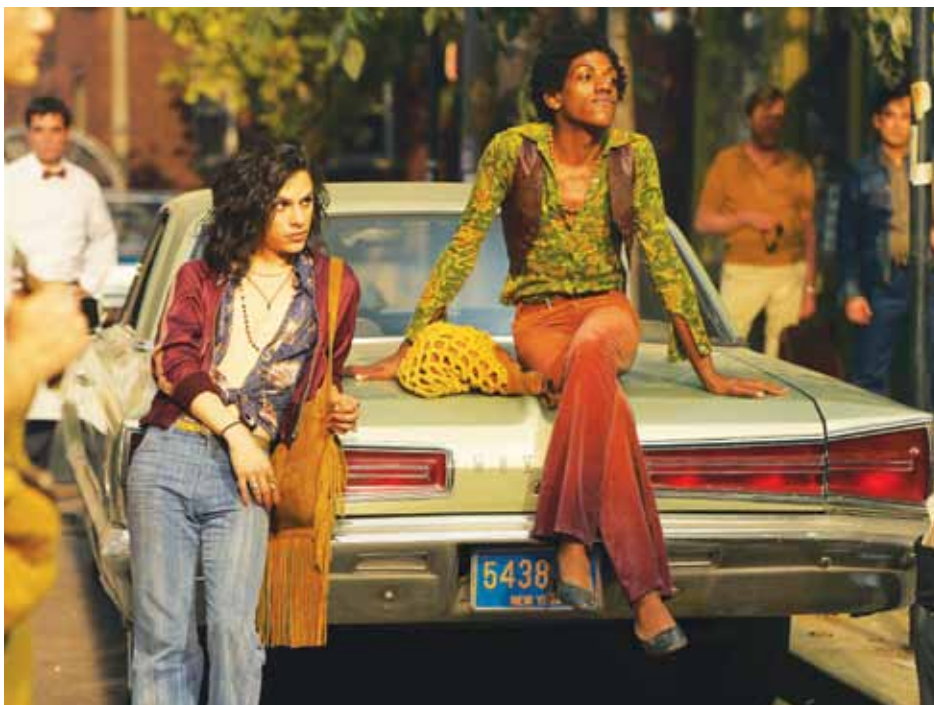
Other noteworthy LGBT films of 2015—*Freeheld*, *Guidance*, *I Am Michael*, *Henry Gamble's Birthday Party*, *The Year We Thought About Love*, *Nasty Baby*, *Tab Hunter Confidential*, *Boulevard* and *Larry Kramer: In Love & Anger*—were seen by Chicago audiences on VOD; at festival screenings such as Reeling (of which, in terms of transparency, I am the co-programmer), the Chicago International Film Festival, Black Alphabet and others; or, as noted, in rare theatrical runs at the Music Box, the Siskel or Facets. They can be expected to

show up again throughout the first quarter of 2016.

I realize that there's a lot of the old “you say tomato, I say toe-mah-toe” cliché inherent in any discussion of queer cinema today—as in just about every aspect of queer culture—but that's also what makes this such an exciting time for the genre. The bottom line is that cinema in 2015 was infused with plenty of high-profile movies showcasing *Our People*—and here's hoping 2016 is filled with many more.

Until then, here's my list of the Top 10 LGBT Movies for 2015 (in preferential order). I'd like to point out—as always—that my “best of” list tends to shift around with repeat viewings and reconsiderations—as I'm sure yours does.

1. *Carol*
2. *Guidance*
3. *The Danish Girl*
4. *Grandma*
5. *Nasty Baby*
6. *Tangerine*
7. *Bessie*
8. *Freeheld*
9. *Henry Gamble's Birthday Party*
10. *Tom at the Farm*



Jonny Beauchamp and Vladimir Alexis in Stonewall.
Photo by Philippe Bossé

Trans exhibit at Columbia thru Feb.

Columbia College Chicago's Glass Curtain Gallery, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., presents “Bring Your Own Body: transgender between archives and aesthetics,” which is open Dec. 10, 2015-Feb. 13, 2016. The reception will be Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015, 5-8 p.m.

Jeanne Vaccaro and Stamatina Gregory are the curators, with Cooper Union organizing.

Taking its title from an unpublished manuscript by intersex pioneer Lynn Harris, the exhibit historicizes the sexological and cultural imaginary of transgender through a curatorial exploration of historical collections, including the Kinsey Archives.

See Colum.edu/deps.

HIV/AIDS exhibit at medical museum

The International Museum of Surgical Science (IMSS), 1524 N. Lake Shore Dr., is assembling “Then and Now: 35 Years of HIV/AIDS,” 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 to the Present Day.

The exhibit runs through Wed., Dec. 30, in observance of AIDS Awareness Month. Museum admission is free on Tuesdays.

See IMSS.org.



HIV/AIDS exhibit at IMSS.
Photo from the museum



Director Todd Haynes and star Cate Blanchett on the set of *Carol*. Photo from Weinstein

Director Todd Haynes on 'Carol'

BY NICK DAVIS

Todd Haynes's *Carol* is more than just a triumph for LGBT cinema. It's at least two triumphs—maybe more.

The predicaments of same-sex desire in an anti-LGBT culture—one that antagonizes lesbians and gay men while also pretending we do not exist—have rarely unfolded on screen with such sensitivity and dramatic layering. The two lovers—an upscale suburban housewife named Carol (Cate Blanchett) and an aspiring photographer named Therese (Rooney Mara)—follow very different paths into their world-shaking encounter with each other, doubling the movie's opportunities for poignant insight.

But *Carol* isn't just a story about concealment or repression. In the women's scenes together, and around other characters "in the life," the film showcases passionate impulse, breathtaking intimacy, even glimmers of sardonic humor that we rarely behold in 50s-set dramas, especially those with gay characters. Awards buzz is already deafening for this otherwise quiet tale.

Director Todd Haynes recently presented *Carol* at the Chicago International Film Festival, where it won the Q Hugo for best LGBT feature.

While in town, he spoke to the *Windy City Times* about how *Carol* recalls but also departs from his earlier work, like his stylized tearjerker *Far from Heaven* (2002) and his gender-bending glam-rock fantasia *Velvet Goldmine* (1998). After sharing fond memories of time he spent in Chicago with the late, beloved Roger Ebert, his conversation shifted to his own memories of first love.

Windy City Times: You have described *Carol*'s biggest goal as capturing a universal experience of falling in love. I so appreciate you approaching lesbian lives not as marginal or "other" but as front-and-center human stories, reflecting aspects of everybody's experience. That said, lesbian relationships, especially in the early 1950s, clearly confront particular social and psychological pressures. So how did you balance the general and specific dimensions of this drama?

Todd Haynes: This story reminded me of my own intensely lovelorn youth, and of being in Therese's position. I remember that kind of painful, pleasurable tunnel you enter around whomever you're completely obsessing over, trying to decode every one of that person's gestures. Later, I'd ask, was that intense, pre-

carious anxiety I felt in those situations because I was gay? Or was it something that everybody feels?

In preparing for *Carol*, I started watching old Hollywood love stories: *Now, Voyager* (1942) with Bette Davis, *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948) and *Brief Encounter* (1946), to name a few. Most of those classics favor the female perspective, and most use voiceover or other cinematic devices to turn these women's subjectivities into absolute echo chambers of the love they're feeling. Something about the women's perspective in these films, which governs the storytelling but stems from their powerlessness in their own lives, makes them slightly less "universal," even if they matched my experience.

I can't speak to how many heterosexual men shared this sense of being pathologized by their own desire, driven to near-madness by not knowing how another person feels in return. The power relations are just so different. But as a gay guy, yes, I can identify with that powerlessness that I think many women feel, which has been so demonstrated in a certain tradition of movies. Maybe I've been overstating the "universality" of an experience like Therese's, because I felt I understood it so well.

WCT: That's fair, though it's worth remembering that in the period you're describing, close to when *Carol* is set, studios did assume everyone could relate to women characters. And they were proven right, all the time! Female-led melodramas were huge hits and major award winners.

TH: Yeah! Lo and behold, a family might go see a movie, and maybe the wife decided what they all would see. Today, it's assumed the teenage boy makes all those decisions, and Hollywood invests exclusively in that consumer. This is just another reminder that we are not always moving in progressive directions, especially when it comes to women and their lives.

WCT: Do you think that's changing? I'm teaching a queer cinema course at Northwestern right now, and the room is full of folks—queer and straight, all over every map—and they're identifying more with a range of sexually diverse images than I saw even five or 10 years ago in the same class.

TH: That's great to hear, and polls always tell us how young people feel sexual identity is fundamentally fluid. Fixed, genetic notions of sexuality always bug me a little. They provide safe, clean categories that you can legislate around, and they're good for stopping Republicans from bringing up the issue of "choice" in our sexual lives. But in important ways, choice is always a factor in our personal and sexual lives.

This is something Therese learns in *Carol*: that saying "no" is also making a choice. She's not making choices in the beginning, which is part of being young and semi-permeable. But

there are reasons why and when that starts to change. Maybe we've been hurt, like Therese is. Maybe we've settled down with somebody or have started a family and are trying not to think about sexual fluidity, to protect what we've built. Often our choices, whatever they are, have to do with self-preservation. We decide what our lives will be, what identities or storylines we will allow ourselves to feel inside of or outside of. That's certainly one thing *Carol* is about.

WCT: *Carol* is rare in your career as an unmistakable story about two gay characters in love. You aren't undermining identities, genders, or story structures as fully as you did with *Safe* (1995) or *Velvet Goldmine* (1998) or *I'm Not There* (2007).

TH: Not as much this time. I wanted to learn how films in that romantic tradition conducted desire, and how they construct barriers—between characters, or with the audience. Desire needs resistance to be felt. That's why *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) was such a revelation, making the love story a viable genre again, because in a world where it's increasingly hard to imagine why two people can't be together, that film presented a reason we hadn't seen. You as the audience are left just yearning for these reasons not to be true, and wishing that society was different. The same holds for *The Price of Salt*, Patricia Highsmith's novel that inspired *Carol*, and is true, I think, for our movie.

WCT: I will admit I stopped reading *The Price of Salt* after 15 pages because I wanted to be surprised by the movie.

TH: Oh, you have to go back!

WCT: I will, I promise. But one particular surprise I savored, having expected a lesbian love story with Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara, is a third character named Abby, played by Sarah Paulson. She is so fascinating, even if I gather her storyline has been somewhat compressed. Plus, an angel gets its wings whenever an out actor plays a gay role in a big movie. How did you and she discuss that part?

TH: Sarah is a fucking brilliant actress. I've seen her do so many different roles now, with different styles and different looks, and sometimes different numbers of heads. I considered several people, but Sarah just felt right in so many ways—and not as some kind of statement of self, as "the lesbian actress." She may have brought that to it, but also her actorly gift of being versatile and mercurial.

WCT: You feel that gift within the movie, even if you had somehow never seen her before. Abby has to make a different impression on us every time she appears, as we learn more of her backstory, and Sarah absolutely does.

TH: Oh, good. And, yes, everything got pared down from the novel, like always, including scenes we shot with Abby that we all still miss. But every amazing actor in the film was able to suggest what we needed, even without those scenes. When I showed the movie to Cate, the one time she cried had nothing to do with her. She was just watching Sarah's face as she drives in one wordless scene, reflecting everything that would have been weighing on that character's mind, at that time and place, in those circumstances.

WCT: I know how endlessly you have been asked about the New Queer Cinema that you and your film *Poison* (1991) helped to launch in the early 1990s. That movement took such risks, bringing more LGBT stories by LGBT artists to the screen than ever before. Is there anything about that movement we tend to misremember or omit today?

TH: Honestly, almost everything about it. But mostly, that radicalized, weaponized sense of standing really, truly outside of dominant norms and mainstream society. That was the message we were endlessly given. Gay lives did not matter. So, our point of view had an inherent mission, and an innate critique to offer. That's a harder thing to locate today, and that's part of what I miss, despite the unquestionable progress that we know in many ways has been the right path.



Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara in *Carol*. Photo from Weinstein

Season's readings: Shopping for books

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Shopping is easy.

You do it at least once a week, just because. It's fun, relaxing, enlightening, and social. You love to shop... except when you have to shop for a gift for someone and you don't know what to buy. Gah.

In that case, how about a book? How about one of these books?

LGBT studies

If there is a young adult on your list who's recently come out—or who knows someone who has—then *This Book is Gay*, by James Dawson, has answers to a lot of questions, including those from people who've come out already and who offer advice. It's a quick-to-read, easily browse-able book that treats all subjects factually. Bonus: you can borrow it back if you have questions of your own...

Here's a different book that your giftee might like: *Not Gay: Sex Between Straight White Men*, by Jane Ward. This book takes a look at what defines gay, for a man. Are "straight" men who flirt with men really straight? Is there a fine line in sexuality, or none at all? This is a thought-provoker, so be prepared to discuss.

Do love and politics make strange bedfellows? Your giftee will know, once you've wrapped up *Don't Tell Me to Wait*, by Kerry Eleveld. This book, written by a former Advocate reporter, takes a hard look at the Obama administration and how the LGBT community helped change policy.



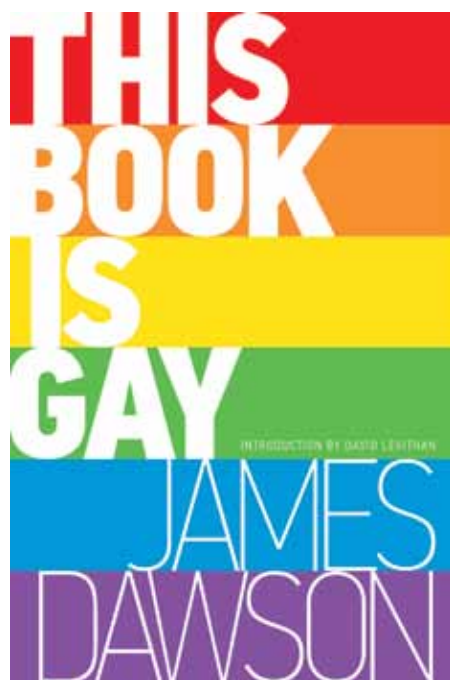
Lillian Faderman.

Photo by Phyllis Irwin

If there's someone on your list who's fascinated by (or uninformed of) LGBTQ history, then *The Gay Revolution*, by Lillian Faderman could be the best gift he (or she!) gets this holiday. This brick of a book is filled with over 700 pages of tales of the fight for basic rights and the triumphs as they happened. Wrap it up with a book that looks at another facet of LGBTQ history: *QDA: A Queer Disability Anthology*, edited by Raymond Luczak. It's a book filled with stories—48 of them—written by authors who explore what it's like to be disabled and gay. See related story at the link: www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Fadernans-The-Gay-Revolution-one-of-New-York-Times-Book-Reviews-top-100/53536.html.

African-American interest

No doubt, there's a historian on your list. That means you'll want to wrap up *Warrior for Justice: The George Eames Story*, by Kathy Andre-Eames, foreword by Dale Brown. It's the story of activist George Eames who, despite being wheelchair-bound, fought for civil rights beginning some fifty years ago. It's also a tale of the author (Eames' wife) and her partnership with him in racial equality and help for those with disabilities. Wrap it up with *Florynce 'Flo' Kennedy: The Life of a Black Feminist Radical*,



by Sherie M. Randolph, which is the story of a world-changing black feminist in a white feminist world.

For the budding entrepreneur who'd love nothing more than a career in music, wrap up *The Book of Luke*, by Luther Campbell. It's the story of hip-hop artist Campbell, the founding of Luke Records, and the fight he took to the Supreme Court to protect the right to free speech.

Biographies and memoirs

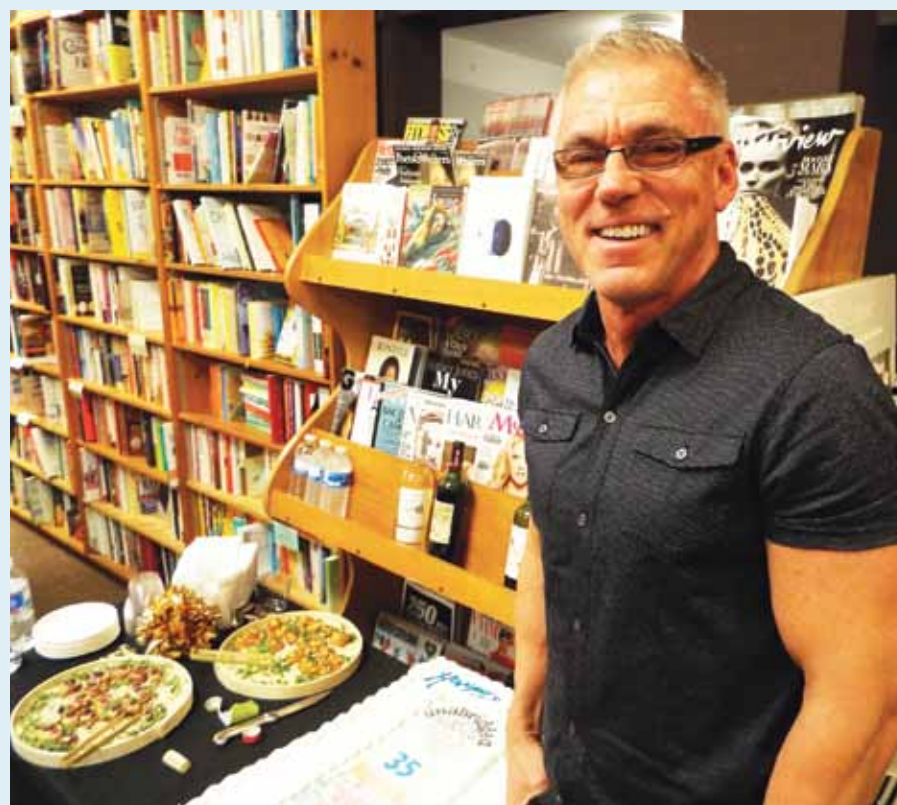
What do you give to your best friend? If that's a question you've been asking, then *Five Years in Heaven*, by John Schlimm is the perfect answer. It's a book about the friendship between a thirtysomething man and an eighty-something nun who teaches him a thing or two—as he's also teaching her. Another great story to give is *White Eskimo*, by Stephen R. Bown. It's the tale of Knud Rasmussen and the exploration of the Arctic.

If your giftee is young enough to know how to get to *Sesame Street*, but old enough to read grown-up books, then *Becoming Maria*, by Sonia Manzano is the gift to give. This memoir is about growing up in New York, dreaming of one thing and getting another, and about big hearts on the small screen. Another book to look for and to give to the person who loves bios about performers: *Becoming Beyoncé: The Untold Story*, by J. Randy Taraborrelli, a book about guess who....

Who hasn't dreamed of running away to join the circus? No doubt, your giftee has and *Love in the Elephant Tent*, by Kathleen Cremonesi, is the right book to wrap. It's the story of an administrative assistant who leaves her life behind to start a new one as a dancer in a circus. But adventure isn't all she finds, and that's a jumbo story. Pair it with *American Ghost*, by Hannah Nordhaus, another unusual story: Nordhaus writes about her family, particularly her great-great-grandmother's ghost.

Is there a reader on your list who can handle a memoir that's not pretty to read? Then *Paid For: My Journey Through Prostitution*, by Rachel Moran is perfect to wrap. It's Moran's story of being a teenage runaway with no other way to stay alive except to sell her body, which she did for several years. This is a brave, powerful memoir, but beware of the subject matter before you put it under the tree.

The person who loves to (or longs to) perform might enjoy reading *Playing Scared*, by Sara Solovitch. It's a personal and historical look at stage fright, panic attacks, and what Solovitch did to overcome them. Wrap it up with *Girl in the Woods*, by Aspen Matis, a memoir by a rape survivor and what she did that



Above: Unabridged owner Ed Devereux.
Photos by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

Unabridged marks 35 years of business

With Nov. 1 marking Unabridged Bookstore's 35th year in Chicago's Lake View neighborhood, owner Ed Devereux and the entire staff at Unabridged invited friends of the store and bibliophiles everywhere to celebrate this occasion at the Unabridged 35th-Anniversary Party on Saturday, Dec. 12, at 3251 N. Broadway.

The literary festivities included themed refreshments, a store-wide 10-percent discount, raffles, and a special look back at 35 years of bookselling, among other things.

Visit www.unabridgedbookstore.com.



helped her heal.

Here's a book for someone's mother: *Expect a Miracle*, by Jenny Long (with Bob Der, forward by LeBron James). You may have heard of Long's boys: her older son, Connor, was the kid who pushed his younger, disabled brother in a kids' triathlon. Pack this book with tissues, for sure, or wrap it up with *Barefoot to Avalon: A Brother's Story*, by David Payne. It's the story of the author, the loss of his brother, the aftermath of devastation and memory, and finding a way back.

For the reader who loves a book with a bit of mystery and a ton of emotion, *Pieces of My Mother*, by Melissa Cistarowill fill that bill. When she was just a child, Cistarowill's mother got into a car and drove away—for good. What made her do that? The answer, which took years to solve, is in this amazing book. And if you're looking for something on the Dad Side, look for *The War Came Home with Him*, by Catherine Madison, a daughter's remembrances of her soldier father.

Is there someone on your list who loves an inspirational biography? Then you'll be the winner of The Best Gift Award when you wrap up *Tough as They Come*, by SSG Travis Mills (with Marcus Brotherton, foreword by Gary Sinise). This book, written by a quadruple amputee, is filled with bravery and plenty of inspiration.

For the person who loves his solitude, wrap up *Navigating Grace*, by Jeff Jay, the story of a man who faced the sea and his own demons on the way to the change his life needed and the God he was missing. Also look for *The Point of Vanishing*, by Howard Axelrod, the story of a man who, having endured too much loss in his life, goes to the Vermont woods for two years of solitude and reflection.

The basketball fan on your list might like un-

wrapping *Elgin Baylor: The Man Who Changed Basketball*, by Bijan C. Bayne (foreword by Bob Ryan). It's a biography about NBA Hall of Famer Baylor, his ball career, and his work on behalf of the civil-rights movement.

It's no surprise that there are skeletons in your closet. It happens, and in *The Beauty of What Remains*, by Susan Johnson Hadler, secrets are revealed and healing commences.

'Transparent' creator comes out as lesbian

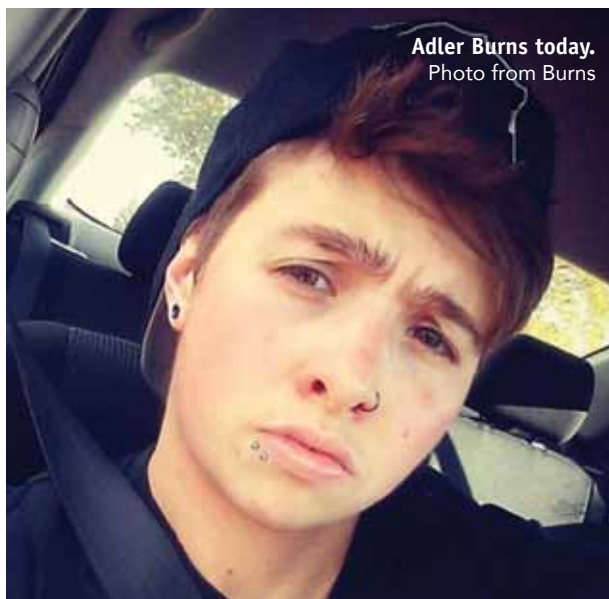
A feature in the *New Yorker* paints *Transparent* creator Jill Soloway's family as very LGBT-inclusive—and details a relationship between Soloway and iconic poet Eileen Myles.

At one point, the article states, "In October, Myles and Soloway sat next to each other at a benefit in New York for the Feminist Press, as the city's first lady, Chirlane McCray, accepted an award onstage. They were tight in the grip of new love; they touched each other's backs and legs ceaselessly through the ceremony.

"Myles was wearing jeans and a button-down shirt, her hair silver and shaggy, her face set in a more lined version of the intense stare that Robert Mapplethorpe captured when he photographed her in 1980."

The family also includes a lesbian sister, Faith, and a transgender mother.

The article is at <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/12/14/dolls-and-feelings>.



Adler Burns today.
Photo from Burns



Adler Burns with the Chicago Force.
Photo courtesy of Burns

Adler Burns: Transitioning to life after the Force

BY ROSS FORMAN

Adler Burns was, by his own admission, an 18-year-old small-town boy who knew very little about the LGBT community when he started playing for the Chicago Force women's tackle football team.

"I knew, [before joining] the Force that I was different than anyone else I knew," he said. "Playing for the Force opened my eyes to the world and that being different was OK."

"I never really fit into the lesbian title, and the Force made me realize that in fact I was not. I knew what transgender was, but it wasn't until my third year with the [team] that I accepted it 100 percent. I think part of that was due to the fact that since the age of 5 [or] 6 I grew up doing male things, and was considered one of the boys."

"The Force allowed me to grow into the man I am today within a safe, judgment-free environment, with [the] caring love from my band of sisters and [the] coaches who were always pushing us to be the best player on the field and teaching us how to be the best us off the field."

The Force molded Burns into the Burns he is today—a straight male, 26, who lives in Marengo, Illinois, which is about 90 minutes from Chicago. He is a fertilizer specialist for Remke Enterprise, a job he has held since 2009. Regarding his relationship status, he said he is "single as a Pringle."

Burns played five seasons for the Force, which he tagged as, "the best experiences of my life [and] the hardest thing to walk away from in order to begin my transition." He played outside linebacker, middle linebacker, fullback and on special teams.

Burns also was a three-sport athlete at Marengo Community High School.

Despite the joy of his Force family, with many wins and countless laughs over the years, there also was sadness, no doubt tears, too.

"There were times that I felt very alone, that I didn't fit in with some of the girls," Burns said. "It was something that I had to adapt to. I went from playing football with other men for nine years to playing football with women. And when you get 30-plus women, let alone [many] women who are gay together, it can be like an episode of *The L Word*."

"However, everyone in the organization is a great support system to me and I am beyond grateful for them all."

Burns officially started hormone-replacement therapy (testosterone) on Dec. 26, 2013.

"I've known that I was in the wrong body since I was about 6 years-old," he said. "I started thinking about hormone replacement therapy when I was a senior in high school,

[back in] 2006-2007.

Burns legally had his name changed Nov. 17, 2013, and had top surgery on May 4, 2015.

"I'm currently on a waiting list to try to get into an iron works apprenticeship in the city. I work full time for my dad's company and workout four or five days a week. So, things are at a great point right now—with both [my] transition and life [in general]," Burns said.

When asked about the transition of Caitlyn Jenner, Burns said the former Olympic gold medalist "was very brave" to take steps she has, especially under the intense media spotlight.

"I'm sure it had to be very hard being on a well-known TV show and trying to be the true her," Burns said of Jenner. "However, I feel like celebrities who do transition end up giving kids of the younger generation false hope. Things with transition do not happen as quickly as their changes occur. There are many kids out there that see how quickly they transform and they expect their transition to go the same way. Transition is not that easy for anyone who isn't wealthy or a celebrity. There are many different things that must take place in order to even begin hormones. Many people don't even realize how costly transition is. Most transgender individuals can't even afford hormones because more often than not insurance doesn't cover anything transgender-related."

"[Transitioning] is a costly thing to do in order to be happy, but to a transgender person it is worth every penny."

Burns has been active on social media, specifically Tumblr and Instagram, where he posts things about his transition, such as videos and more.

"I'm very open to answering [questions] and

helping other transgender individuals," he said. "I have donated old binders to those in need and when I do have the money help others who are saving for top surgery."

"I think the biggest obstacle that I had to overcome was self-acceptance and coming to terms that I was transgender, and also taking the first steps in the process to begin my transition journey. I thought that I would lose a lot of important people in my life, and that scared me. We all deserve to be true to ourselves, and I was at a very low point in my life that I need-

ed to do something for me. Transition saved my life, even if I had to give up things that meant the world to me."

Namely, the Chicago Force.

Now, though, he is a fan in the stands.

"Burns was a talented and tenacious linebacker for the Force for four or five seasons—a good tackler who delivered some of the more memorable hits from those seasons," Force team owner Linda Bache said. "I enjoyed having Burnsy on the team, and now as an active member of the alumni."



Frontrunners/Frontwalkers board members.

Photo from the organization

LGBT group announces new board members

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers Chicago recently held its holiday party at Nookies Edgewater, with more than 50 members and guests in attendance. As part of the program, the results of the elections of the 2016 board were announced. The new board for next year will be:

Front row: David Reithoffer (past president), Dawn Barcus (president), Courtney O'Connell (female vice president), Stan Jenczyk (male vice president)

Second row: Ryan Arnoldy (secretary), David Boese (at-large), Corbin Woodling (treasurer) (Not pictured: John Bowen, at large)

Barcus is the fifth female president in the club's 34-year history.

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers Chicago is a club for LGBTs and friends who are interested in running and walking together along Chicago's great open lakefront. It meets twice weekly, on Saturdays at 9 a.m. and Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m., always starting and finishing at the Totem Pole in Lincoln Park. New members and guests are always welcome to come out for a run or walk.

For more information, go to www.frfwchicago.org.



Burns' tattoo.

Photo from Burns

LETTERS from page 18

PETITION CONTENT FROM SLEEP OUT:

It's cold outside. But not far from where the Out In The Open Sleep Out is taking place, the City of Chicago and the Chicago Police Department, continue to do sweeps under the viaduct on Wilson. These sweeps often result in people experiencing homelessness being ticketed or having their shelter tents torn down and possessions thrown away, if those possessions aren't on an approved list of items. The Pride Action Tank, one of organizers of the Sleep Out, finds these actions deplorable and calls on Mayor Rahm Emanuel to stop the sweeps immediately.

We know that the best way to end homelessness is to make sure everyone has a home and the support services they need. We understand that this is not a task that can be accomplished overnight. In the interim, as a society we must stop criminalizing people who experience homelessness.

Sign this petition to let Mayor Emanuel know that the ticketing and harassment of people experiencing homelessness needs to stop NOW.

Being fair

My letter to Superintendent Cates and the board of District 211

[Editor's note: This letter was written before the Dec. 7 meeting that continued to allow a Palatine trans girl to utilize her school's girls' locker room facilities.]

Like many others, I am asking you to stand up for fairness for all students and to affirm your agreement with the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights in tonight's meeting. I would have wished to attend myself, to ask you to do this myself, but I'll be working at my job at ESPN tonight, covering Major League Baseball's winter meetings.

The acceptance I found inside baseball, and at ESPN, are not a reflection of any strength or courage I have as a trans person. They are instead the product of the merit that the overwhelming majority of people who are not trans have, and that I hope you have as well. They had a readiness to accept someone across our differences, and to accept that trans folks are people of merit, as peers, colleagues, co-workers and friends. It is remarkable only because their brand of everyday courage to look beyond difference is not something our society amplifies and praises every day, but it is that same courage that I would ask for you to find within yourselves tonight.

This avoidable fight should not be the source of ongoing discord. As it already stands, this one kid has had a multi-year dent placed in her childhood, and to what end? It is your sworn responsibility to learn from this experience and anticipate the needs not just of this one student, but to anticipate the needs of every student to come.

There is also wisdom in investing the time to learn from the demonstrated experiences of school districts in Illinois and across the country that have already faced this unanticipated challenge. Perhaps no civic institution was founded anticipating the existence of trans people, but many have already proven that with work up front, you can provide understanding and be a model for other school districts. Don't simply sit there waiting to get yelled out by my fellow activists or by parents motivated by empathy. You have the opportunity to work with the leaders of local districts like Berwyn,

Barrington, Plainfield, Elgin and more, besides. Reflecting examples from across the country, they've had no problems with the trans kids in their care or with their policies, because in the end, they're not people who need special rules and special administrative solutions—they're just kids, asking for the same deal other kids get.

You can embrace this as an opportunity to place your district among the best, instead of one committed to fighting suits you will ultimately lose, at the expense of the families and students you are responsible to. To do that while doubling down on hurting this one student is not just irresponsible, it is unconscionable, because it is avoidable. You are charged with protecting students. You can do this by affirming the agreement with the Office of Civil Rights, and fulfilling your obligation to her and to all of your students.

Finally, I'm not just writing to urge you to do the right thing, but to volunteer to help you if you need it. It's easy to complain about a thing, to suggest how it ought to be without volunteering a readiness to help make it so. But if you want my help, you've got it, on your terms and however much you need. The right choice may not be the easy choice, but you have plenty of people like me willing to help you make it work, long after the cameras and the reporters go away.

I trust that you will honor your agreement with the Office of Civil Rights. But I also expect that District 211 will fulfill its obligation treat all of their students fairly, equally, and without separation and discrimination. Embrace this opportunity as a chance to do right by this student, all of your students, and all of your students to come. The present and the future will thank you for it.

*With hope,
Christina Kahl*

No justice, no peace

To the editor:

Neither Laquan McDonald's death nor the levels of distrust between the Chicago police and the community did not happen in a void.

There is just cause for suspicion, because of the trust lost between activists, politicians, police and religious leaders. It is a very difficult to rebuild, but rebuild it we must.

The LGBT community is not immune to this situation. Have we not for years had our own difficult times with the Chicago Police Department, and listening to the cries of racism within our own community without an adequate response?

We must do something different, new and innovative, said Cook County Circuit Court Judge Colleen Sheehan, who hears juvenile cases. Sheehan and a few other forward-thinking Cook County judges have been turning to alternative methods of conflict resolution in cases that come before them. According to America Magazine and a major online Roman Catholic periodical, one of those methods is the Peace Circle. According to the online publication, the Peace Circle is an idea as old as the Quaker religion and has roots as well in Native American spirituality.

Father David Kelly, a Precious Blood priest from Chicago's Back of the Yards neighborhood, has led Peace Circles for court-ordered defendants. He says they are built on the twin pillars of "hospitality and radical accompaniment." However, the call for a demonstration on Michigan Avenue to highlight the injustice of how politicians and police such as Mayor Emanuel,

Anita Alvarez and Police Commissioner Gerry McCarthy have responded to the situation, set the bar high for continuing dialogue.

The video of the shooting only highlights the injustice of this situation. Any rush to judgment at this point is not helpful for either the community at large or the police. We should not throughout the baby with water in our attempts to seek justice.

However, unlike the reply in, say, Ferguson, Missouri, Chicago had a more peaceful response to the situation, as exemplified by the Michigan Avenue demonstrations. This happened because religious leaders were willing to call for peace in a time of injustice and turmoil, and we had a mayor that initiated this spiritual call for a peaceful demonstration.

In my opinion, no matter how overwhelming and damning the evidence looks, it would be just as irresponsible as the city's efforts to keep this video hidden. Officer Jason Van Dyke (who shot Laquan McDonald) deserves to be tried in a court of law, not on social media.

Now we need to keep our sights on both justice and love. Police, politicians and religious leaders must continue to seek reform of a system that is clearly disordered, and perhaps prayer might help.

*Joe Murray
Chicago*

A matter of trust

There are a lot of challenges in the City of Chicago and nationally that face us as a community—which means there is a lot of work to be done! Through an intersectional lens, civic engagement is the vehicle that drives Affinity's social justice work on behalf of Black LGBTQ communities.

Our work enables us to bridge communities through action for social justice, freedom and human rights. As board president, it is my duty to ensure that Affinity's voice—the voice of her people—is always at the table speaking out against injustices and speaking up for equality. In a special address to Chicago's City Council on Dec. 9, Mayor Rahm Emanuel publicly apologized for the police shooting death of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald and criticized not only what he called decades of city police corruption but also the "shoot first and ask questions later" gun epidemic in the United States. "I am the mayor," Emanuel said. "As I said the other day, I own it. I take responsibility for what happened because it happened on my watch. ... If we are going to fix it I want you to understand it's my responsibility." I agree with Emanuel when he said, "We have a trust problem; it's time to change the narrative."

People, we have the power to change the narrative! Reciprocal relationships between legislators have to be cultivated and sustained to affect change. As state Sen. Jacqueline Collins told me after the mayor's special address, "Your community needs to come together in a unified front to voice all of your concerns, not solely those pertaining to LGBT."

For many LGBTQ people, the win for marriage equality was the end—but for me as a woman of color, that was merely one of many fights that have yet to be won! My color does not supersede my womanhood or my place on the LGBT continuum. All of my identities are equally important and when one is under attack, I must rise up, speak out and take a stand! I again implore you to stand with me and Affinity in solidarity not only for those whose lives were commandeered to gun violence, but for your life and a seat at the table.

"If you're not at the table, you're on the menu!"

They were! You are! I am! We are Affinity!!!!

*In Solidarity,
Ebonie S. Davis
Board President,
Affinity Community Services*

Stand up

An open letter to Equality Illinois and its supporters

This letter is an appeal to the conscience of Equality Illinois and its supporters.

There are times in civil-rights movements when a simple act of courage—a Rosa Parks moment—can propel a movement forward. Right now, prominent Chicago organizations and individuals, through their support or rejection of Mayor Rahm Emanuel, face such a moment.

Emanuel showed contempt for democracy, which was crass even by Chicago's low standards, when he concealed the dashcam video showing the police murder of Laquan McDonald.

It's only thanks to a monthlong court battle that the city released the video and the officer was indicted for murder. Besides potentially being a felony, Emanuel's act of concealment allowed him to steal the close-fought election for mayor.

Most Chicagoans, especially in the Black community, know they've been had. A Dec. 5 poll of "likely voters" showed Chicagoans disapproved of Emanuel's rule over those who approved by a nearly four-to-one margin. Fifty-one percent of likely voters—a serious undercount of minority and working-class residents—said he should resign, versus only 29 percent said he shouldn't. (See <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/12/08/poll-51-chicagoans-say-mayor-rahm-emanuel-should-resign/76977622/>.)

And the city is still fighting to prevent the release of at least two more police-shooting videos of other young Black Chicagoans.

This is a Rosa Parks moment because organizations like Equality Illinois are at a moral crossroads. Those groups that continue to give tacit or explicit support to Emanuel will not only participate in his contempt for democracy. They will also be sharing in his contempt for Chicago's Black community, which disproportionately faces the police violence that Emanuel chose (and continues) to cover.

More specifically, when an organization that is explicitly concerned with LGBTQ civil rights trades respect for the rights of others in Chicago in exchange for political access, it compromises itself. But it also does worse: It sends a message that LGBTQs are ignorant of, or immune to, the sufferings of others, including large numbers of Black LGBTQs in our own community. It undermines or even destroys any future attempts we make to create bonds of mutual support and united struggle to win justice for all.

Equality Illinois, this is your Rosa Parks moment. We implore you not to invite and do not allow Rahm Emanuel to your 25th annual gala on Feb. 6. Do not extend a political lifeline of support to a vicious and manipulative mayor who right now so desperately craves it.

Stand up for all of Chicago.

*Gay Liberation
Network*

**Send columns or letters to Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com.
Letters may be edited for brevity or clarity.**



"Grace does her own shucking."—A line in the rider of things required backstage for **Grace Jones**. You see, Grace asks for an oyster knife along with two dozen unopened oysters on ice. You've gotta love a gal who isn't afraid to shuck in public.

These days, questions about the sex life of a celebrity only makes that person more famous. (Take note, Tom.) Portuguese soccer superstar **Cristiano Ronaldo** is very popular with the gays—a community appreciative of a set of balls, to say nothing of an impressive torso. Ronaldo has been spending lots of time with world champion kickboxer Badr Hari. The duo is regularly captured in provocative photos roughhousing in various forms of undress—which I suppose well-built athletic guys are wont to do. Lots of tongues wagged after the Moroccan kickboxer captioned one photo as "Just married Hahahahaha"—the implied hilarity must have gotten lost in translation.

The situation exploded last week on live TV in France. A guest on the show *Touche Pas à Mon Sport* made a comment that went global in a matter of seconds. However, every single report repeated the original account. Nobody bothered to track down the actual video—until now. TV personality **Daniel Riolo** was making a point that athletes' off-time activities can have ramifications (as it were) on the field.

While my French is limited to getting directions to a bathroom in the Louvre, let me tell you what he said (the original video is on BillyMasters.com): "What interests me is the implication on the field of perks football players have. For example, Cristiano Ronaldo currently uses a private jet three or four times a week to see his friend in Morocco and to cuddle. That will affect his performance." That brought an audible gasp out of several people in the studio—and the French don't shock easily. After all, this is a country where the funeral of a former president was attended by his wife AND his mistress! Since these rumors are nothing new, I'm sure Ronaldo isn't that concerned. He's previously said, "I'm at ease with my sexuality, so it's not a problem for me." God only knows what language he said that in!

This time last year, I was the first to reveal that NBC's next live musical would be *The Wiz*. So let me be the first to tell you what is being planned for next year. Prior to deciding on *The Wiz*, the plan for this year was a live version of *The Music Man*, starring **Neil Patrick Harris**. The powers that be are revisiting that idea and feel that updating the classic show with an ethnically diverse cast could be a winner. But there is another contender in the mix. Since the network also scored huge ratings with its **Dolly Parton** movie *Coat of Many Colors*, why not marry the two formats into one ginormous extravaganza? Is America ready for a live version of *Best Little Whorehouse In Texas*? It's not exactly family fare ... but, ya gotta think outside the box. Another possibility being talked about again is a live version of *Annie Get Your Gun*, starring Parton. Stay tuned...

Meanwhile, ABC is getting into the musicals game—it's announced plans to remake *Dirty Dancing*. How quickly people forget the disastrous *Dirty Dancing* series starring **Patrick Cassidy** and **Melora Hardin**. A remake of the musical was originally announced in 2011. Then it was postponed. Then it was revamped as a TV project. And then it was cancelled. And now it's back as a three-hour extravaganza led by **Abigail Breslin**—'cause we're all clamoring for that! But, here's what you haven't heard. ABC purchased the project as a vehicle for one of its top (and I use that term loosely) talents—**Derek Hough**. 'Cause nobody puts Derek in a corner.



Cristiano Ronaldo's off-field activities have been getting a lot of attention.
Photo by David Ramos/Getty Images

Time for more of "Billy's Holiday Gift Giving Suggestions." For the sensible shopper, I'm suggesting a couple of books that are fun and dishy. The bio that should be at the top of everyone's list is **Becoming Beyoncé**, by the prolific J. Randy Taraborrelli. You know, I run hot and cold on Beyoncé. But occasionally she falls down a flight of stairs or gets her weave caught in an onstage fan. Then I fall in love her all over again. Admittedly, I could have used more anecdotes like that, but I still loved it.

Then there's the autobiography of **Grace Jones**—called *I'll Never Write My Memoirs*. Of course, she didn't write it on her own (or, perhaps, at all). It was "co-written" by Paul Morley. Yes, she's nutty as a fruitcake, but she's also entertaining and has fabulous, dishy stories—some of which are coherent. On the flip side, she writes poignantly about the many friends and colleagues she lost to AIDS, and how this health crisis changed her life.

There's no doubting the audience for Broadway babe **Nick Adams**. He may make the ladies swoon, but we know it's the lads he likes. He makes no secret of that, which only adds to his appeal—as if this perfect specimen of male beauty needed any help in that department. Recently, Nick has had a few hush-hush meetings with the powers-that-be behind the *Magic Mike* musical. So, he's obviously in peak form—both vocally and vascularity. How fortuitous that he got to show off both during *The Skivvies* holiday show at Joe's Pub in NYC. He was wearing a onesie and singing "I'm a Slave 4 Santa" as a naughty elf with an awfully large secret. Oh, yes, the onesie came off and ... well, you can see for yourself at BillyMasters.com. Make sure you're hydrated before watching.

This leads perfectly into our "Ask Billy" question. David in Michigan asks: "Do you happen to have the nude photo of **Phil Sullivan**? I hear there was a full frontal that was removed at the request of his management."

I had no idea who Phil Sullivan was/is. I must admit, I was not a devotee of the late America's Next Top Model—except for that brief weekend with Nigel Barker. While Nyle DiMarco won the crown, many fans were taken with Phil Sullivan. I guess I should have at least heard of him, since he's from the Boston area and, oh yes, has a nude photo floating around out there—and what a photo it is. If you want to see him lying back, fully aroused, looking slightly like Chewbacca and brandishing a sizeable light saber, check out BillyMasters.com.

When even I'm jumping on the Star Wars bandwagon, it's definitely time to end yet another column. This was a long one, so let me quickly remind you to check out www.BillyMasters.com, the site that tracks down top models ... and bottoms, too. Send your questions to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Grace learns what "never" means. So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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V is for "victory" for International Mr. Rubber 19, Chicago's own Gummibärchen.
Photos by Gerald Cernak

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Bar Takito; holiday demo

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Spinoffs are sometimes not as successful. Remember the TV show Joey (which Friends spawned)? Not many people do.

However, **Bar Takito** (201 N. Morgan St.; Bar-Takito.com) is a spinoff worth remembering.

A spinoff of Ukrainian Village eatery Takito (I still remember the chipotle margaritas there), Bar Takito retains many of the aspects of its predecessor, although it also differentiates itself in some ways.

Bar Takito is just as vivid (if not more so), thanks to Nina Palomba's colorful mural and the omnipresence of typewriters (a take on Takito's



Above: Octopus a la plancha and the Pisco Olivo at Bar Takito.

Below: Hotel Intercontinental executive chef Randy Reed.

Photos by Andrew Davis



old-school phonographs).

However, one significant dish is in Bar Takito's dishes themselves—they're shared plates that reflect Latin America in general, as opposed to Takito's take on Mexico.

The shrimp ceviche (served with plantain chips) ranks among the best I've had, while the octopus a la plancha (with extra virgin oil, parsley garlic, Aleppo pepper and lemon potatoes) has again made me a fan of the cephalopod. One of my favorite dishes of the evening was the papas fritas—a line of crispy potatoes served with spicy cheese sauce, pork belly, garlic mojo and parsley. The beer cheese arepa (which can be made with vegetarian, chorizo or chicken options) is a Colombian-style corn cake with mushrooms, aji peanut sauce, cilantro and pickled vegetables—another winning combination. Lastly, the tacos here are second to none, especially the pork-shoulder variety.

The drinks here are amazing as well. My dining partner had a Pisco Olivo while I had an Apple Pie-Pirinha—one of those dangerous items with a sweetness that hides the alcohol. But, my, is it tasty—so tasty that I broke one of my usual rules and had two of them.

If there was one shortcoming, it was the popcorn butterscotch mousse. It certainly wasn't bad; however, I was expecting more of a butterscotch kick, and it was missing.

However, that's just a quibble. Definitely head for Bar Takito—and one can't say it's inconvenient to get there, as it's precisely at the Morgan stop on the Pink and Green Line trains.

Holidays at Hotel Intercontinental

On Dec. 8, there was a media event featuring **Hotel Intercontinental** Executive Chef Randy Reed and Pastry Chef Tom Gorzycha demonstrating how to make items for festive holiday gatherings.

Reed made a few items, including the interestingly named Elf That Fell off the Shelf cocktail (based on the famed "Elf on the Shelf"), a Chateaubriand with Perigourdine sauce, celeriac mouseline and winter vegetable melange. Gorzycha made a peppermint Yule log (or Buche de Noel) covered in a chocolate ganache.

The results of all were very tasty, to say the least. Readers can try their hand at making these dishes; the recipes are online at www.WindyCity-MediaGroup.com.



DANCING ABOUT ARCHITECTURE

BY MARC 'MOOSE' MODER



Best albums of 2015

So far this decade has seen an abundance of stellar album releases, even in a land of singles sales. For 2015, it was hard to pick through to find the gems, but when you did, they shined as bright as anything in the first half of this puzzling decade.

While not quite as accessible as his previous hit CD, **John Grant's** Grey Tickles, Black Pressure was worth the effort it took to wrap your head around its odd sound. Shifting from full strings to a more Talking-Heads-in-1977 sound, this album feels like

a transitional record, but it still fully satisfies. If you ignored this one, give it a few more spins or see him live for the full effect.

If you're a fan of Grant, but had trouble with that shift from guitar/strings to electric, **Father John Misty's** I Love You, Honeybear was more Grant than Grant was. While lacking the gay sensibility of Grant, Father John Misty is just as pointed lyrically, but even more emotionally exposed and with that same deep, growling delivery.

Bitter founding bass player Peter Hook has to be pissed that **New Order** has made their finest album since the '80s with Music Complete. Fans of their electronic dance and fans of their more alt-guitar based songs will finally both be satisfied, plus the bass never sounded so good.

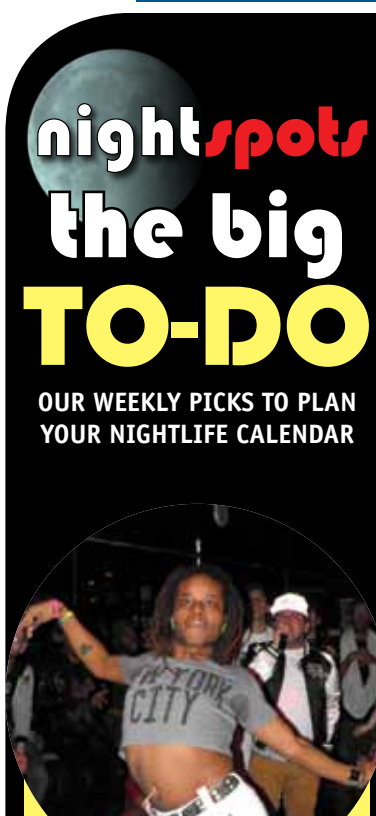
Like New Order, who'd have thought **Janet Jackson** would make her best album since at least 2004's Damita Jo? With Unbreakable, Janet got back with producers Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis to tap into their old chemistry from her first two decades, without replicating or imitating the sound. While I missed the hard-then-fast format of previous albums, I was rewarded with a diverse, creative new Janet sound that also played well live.

Janet aside, lacking a good Kylie, Katy, or Rihanna jam this year, **Jess Glynne** turned out to be the saving dance diva with her debut, I Cry When

I Laugh. Filled with infectious pop gems sang with as much depth and gusto as a Florence track, there's no "growing into" loving this album. It's a love-at-first-sight favorite.

I was hesitant to include either of this year's smash albums (also see **Adele**), but looking deeper, I couldn't help but include **Taylor Swift's** 1989. She's had a long road from tween country favorite to pop goddess, not winning too many new fans along the way. But with 1989, she's made an album so pure and sparkling even the most jaded hipster had to finally give in and admit she has immense talent. Honorable mention to **Ryan Adams'** full album cover of 1989. Great companion piece, but no standalone.

Even outside pop, 2015 was a fantastic year for strong, indie women. **Courtney Barnett**, **Alabama Shakes** and **Bully** all had amazing releases, but my favorite of all was **Torres'** second album, Sprinter. At first an acoustic troubadour, she worked with PJ Harvey's Rob Ellis to turn it up (and out) with shades of PJ, Cocteau Twins, Lush and even Diamanda Galas, but still creating a sound all her own. I've been waiting for a revolution in rock to wash away the bland taste we're currently stuck with, and Torres and the aforementioned ladies listed could and should be it for 2016, if all goes well.



OUR WEEKLY PICKS TO PLAN YOUR NIGHTLIFE CALENDAR

Vogue For Tots 9

Thu., Dec. 17, 10 pm

Berlin, 954 W. Belmont Ave.

The ninth annual vogue-off for Jennifer Hudson's Julian D. King Gift Foundation. Judges include rapper Big Dipper, Miss DiDa Ritz and Chicago Dirty Girl Jenae Williams. Emceed by RoRo and Lucy Stooles. Bring a toy for the legendary children.

Photo of the 2014 event by Kirk Williamson



A Sloppy OTTER X-Mas II w/ Gary and Moose

Sat., Dec. 19, 9 pm

The Sofo Tap, 4923 N. Clark St.

A final night out before delving deep into family time. Come don your ugly sweater, your Christmas tree skirt, your filthy Santa/elf costume or just COME. Host Gary Sullivan will be running around in next to nothing of a costume and being mildly inappropriate, while Moose plays the best Otter Pop of the year while you get sloppier.



Christmas Queens

Mon., Dec. 21, 9 pm

Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave.

RPDR girls Willam, Alaska, Katya, Jinx Monsoon, Ginger Minj and Sharon Needles bring the best of holidays to Chicago for one night only. Tickets on sale at <http://bit.ly/1jEbgzK>.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Dec. 16

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.

Nick Sula and Melissa Young: Holiday Hilarity Benefit for The Night Ministry Wacky holiday hits such as Santa Claus Got Stuck in my Chimney, Hard Rock and CoCo and Joe. \$18. plus two-drink minimum. Reservations recommended. 8 p.m. Davenport's Piano Bar and Cabaret 1383 N Milwaukee Ave Chicago 773-278-1830 <http://davenportspianobar.com>

Creating Change December Host Committee Meeting Learn how to sign up and encourage others to volunteer, sign up to be a community housing host, and how your org can purchase an exhibit space at this year's conference; 6 pm nosh/socializing, 6:15 pm meeting. RSVP to creatingchange@thetaskforce.org 6:00pm - 8:00pm Chicago Area Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, 3179 N Clark St., 2nd Floor, Chicago <http://on.fb.me/1MAcNii>

Women & Children First's Recommended Reading Night Local authors speak for 10 minutes each about their favorite books of the year. Featuring Aleksander Hemon, Nami Mun, Christine Sneed, Gina Frangello, and others. Wine, hot cider, snacks. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago

Thursday, Dec. 17

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



KREIS-MAS CAROLS Friday, Dec. 18

Tony-winning singer Levi Kreis will hold his "Home for the Holidays" show at Davenport's.

PR photo

<http://www.centeronhalsted.org>
Sidetrack's Good Cheer! Annual Customer Appreciation Holiday Party. Food and prizes 6:00pm - 2:00am Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago <http://www.sidetrackchicago.com/>

Queer Tango Paola Borden (Second Place winner at the USA Championships for Argentine Tango in 2015) every Thursday from 7PM-9PM. A beginner and intermediate Argentine Tango class designed specifically for the LGBTQ communities. Partners will rotate each class - individuals and couples are welcome! \$15 per class. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Hal-

sted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=10561>

Friday, Dec. 18

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>

Man Cave Plus On the fourth Friday of each month, ManCave & SOFFA's of ManCave will be hosting a 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=9670>

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Longest-running and highest-rated television special will appear live on stage. \$29.50 - \$75 7:00pm Rosemont Theatre 5400 N River Rd Des Plaines, IL 60018 866-448-7849 Tickets: <http://ticketmaster.com>

Levi Kreis: Home for the Holidays Internationally recognized recording artist, songwriter, stage and film actor. Show free for all veterans. 8:00pm Davenport's Piano Bar and Cabaret 1383 N Milwaukee Ave Chicago Tickets: <http://bit.ly/1NdEADJ>

Boy Toy's Pocket Cabaret Male burlesque and variety show. With a sensual but upbeat theme and performers from all genres of entertainment industry, a cast of circus performers, live singers, boylesque performers, comedians, and more 8:00pm Uptown Underground, 4707 N. Broadway St., Chicago <http://www.UptownUnderground.net>

Saturday, Dec. 19

Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance (LGBTQ) Support meeting to talk about illnesses, symptoms, treatment, doctors, and personal issues such as dating,

relationships and work. Every Saturday. 11:00am - 12:30am Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com>

32nd Annual Music Box Christmas Sing-Along and Double Feature Presentations of White Christmas and It's a Wonderful Life through Thursday, December 24th, 2015 Music Box Theatre 3733 N Southport Chicago Tickets: <http://www.musicboxtheatre.com/collections/2015-annual-music-box-christmas-show>

74th annual Christmas Around the World and Holidays of Light Fifty trees and displays beautifully decorated by volunteers from Chicago's ethnic communities to reflect their diverse culture and holiday customs. Santa Claus on weekends. Through Jan. 3, 2016 10:30pm - 4:30pm Museum of Science and Industry 5700 S Lake Shore Dr. Chicago <http://www.msichicago.org/whats-here/exhibits/christmas-around-the-world/events/december/>

Benefit reading of The Homosexuals Comedic and heartwarming work for anyone who's ever fallen in love with a friend. 6:30pm Chicago History Museum 1601 N Clark St., Chicago Tickets: <http://about-face-theatre.com>.

Handel's Messiah and Mendelssohn's Elijah The Apollo Chorus will include soprano Amanda Majeski. Individual tickets \$30-\$60 7:00pm Harris Theater for Music and Dance 205 E. Randolph St., Chicago 312-427-5620 Tickets: <http://www.apollochorus.org>

Sunday, Dec. 20

QueerReaders Book Group Welcomes folks of all ages, genders, identities and abilities who love to read queer-centric works. Meets every third Sunday of the month. 2:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/queerreaders>

PFLAG: Parents, Families of Lesbians and Gays. For more information, please check out the website. Free. 2:00pm - 4:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chi-

cago <http://community.pflag.org/Page.aspx?pid=194&srcid=-2>.

Scott Duff hosts ChiGayGo The Yuletide gets super gay with super funny people 9:00pm The Laugh Factory Chicago 3175 N Broadway Chicago <http://www.LaughFactory.com>

Monday, Dec. 21

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>

Christmas Queens Singing Live Alaska, Wilam, Katya, Jinx, Sharon, Ginger touring in support of the new CD 8:00pm Park West Chicago 322 W Armitage Ave Chicago Tickets: <http://www.etix.com>

Renee Fleming, Patricia Barber Concert broadcast "Higher" is a musical collaboration between Grammy winning soprano Renee Fleming and Chicago jazz vocalist, pianist, and composer Patricia Barber for a virtuosic, adventurous, and uniquely harmonious evening of music. 8:00pm WFMT <http://www.wfmt.com/main.taf?p=4,5,24>

Ballroom Dance Ballroom, salsa and other energetic dance methods taught by Get on the Floor Dance Company. Drop in or pre-register. \$15/class. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=10420>

Thursday, Dec. 24

2nd Annual Feed The Homeless Event At last year's event, La Ciudad was able to feed over 100 homeless men, women, and children of the Chicagoland area. La Ciudad is accepting sponsors and donors for this annual event. Monetary, goods, and service donations are all welcome and needed. 12:00pm - 3:00pm La Ciudad Mexican Café and Grill, 4515 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago 773-728-2887 <http://www.laciudadgrill.com>



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BOOK REVIEW

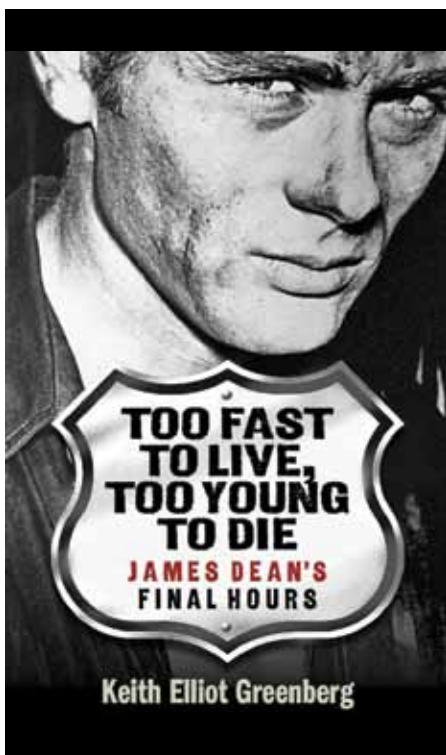
Too Fast to Live...: James Dean's Final Hours

by Keith Elliot Greenberg
\$24.99; Applause Theatre & Cinema Books; 304 pages
BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

The minute you glimpsed the red-and-blues, you knew you were sunk.

Yep, and now you have a traffic citation to pay for stepping on it, having a lead foot, a pedal to the metal. You knew better than to exceed the speed limit, but you couldn't resist and, as you'll see in the new book *Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die*, by Keith Elliot Greenberg, that need for speed may drive you to the grave.

Markie Winslow Jr. adored his cousin, Jimmy. A few years older, Jimmy played with Markie and took him on motorcycle rides, but they never went too fast. With Markie, Jimmy wasn't reckless, though he pushed the limits of it on



his own. People in their hometown of Fairmount, Indiana, didn't care. They loved James Dean because he was a local boy who'd done well.

No one was surprised that Dean ended up in Hollywood or that he became a star: he'd always loved to act. He'd entered and won contests, performed in church plays, and had eschewed prelaw classes in favor of a coveted spot in a UCLA production of *Macbeth*. It was obvious where his career path was taking him.

And it took him there quickly. In just a short time, Dean was a heartthrob movie star, had performed on the new medium of television, and had gained a fiancé and enough money to indulge in the hobby of auto racing. When a guy signed movie deals for six figures, \$7,000 wasn't much for a car and he had his eye on a Porsche 550 Spyder, one of just a few made. He'd almost gotten arrested just looking at the car one night. What else could he do but buy it?

Overjoyed with his prize, he'd started to break the car in but some doubted that it was a good purchase. Others told Dean to be careful in that car, that it was dangerous, that it could kill him, that it would kill him.

And on Sept. 30, 1955, it did....

Although its subtitle indicates a small focus of subject matter, *Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die* is more comprehensive and expansive than merely a few hours. That has its pluses and its minuses.

A little background is always a good thing, especially when you're reading about a star who made only three movies and died six decades ago. Author Greenberg finesses that backstory—including Dean's childhood, his rumored bisexuality, his odd on-set genius, and his rascal attitude—but Greenberg unfortunately combines it with fan-gushing from folks who traveled to Fairmount to partake in a James Dean festival. That's charming at first but it becomes florid, and quite overdone.

Still, if you're a fan and can ignore that, you'll appreciate this book and its marking of a sad anniversary. If you own the iconic poster or t-shirt and want to know more, you'll find that here, too. In either case, "Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die" may be just the ticket.

Want more? Look for *The Death of James Dean*, by Warren N. Beath; or *Dizzy and Jimmy: My Life with James Dean: A Love Story*, by Liz Sheridan.



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