In the following conversation, Cohen and I discuss the potentials for feminist theory in racial justice movements, the unique ways in which race and gender intersect in state violence, challenges for feminist academics of color engaged in activism, and the shape of the #BlackLivesMatter movement. You can follow us on Twitter at @cathyjcohen and @sjjphd respectively.

Sarah Jackson (SJ): I’d like to begin by asking what role you see feminism, and feminist scholarship in particular, playing in today’s racial justice movements, as well as what you think scholars can learn from activists and vice versa.

Cathy Cohen (CC): That’s a really big and important question. At its most basic level I think that feminism at the very least—and maybe most importantly—makes us stop and ask about the role that women, and here I mean both cis and trans women, are playing at this particular time in the multiple movements that are emerging, and particularly, at least for the work that I’m doing and thinking about, in what national narratives of equality and citizenship.

In the following conversation, Cohen and I discuss the potentials for feminist theory in racial justice movements, the unique ways in which race and gender intersect in state violence, challenges for feminist academics of color engaged in activism, and the shape of the #BlackLivesMatter movement.
Genvoya™
elvitegravir 150mg/cobicistat 150mg/emtricitabine 200mg/tenofovir alafenamide 10mg tablets

New Genvoya®
is now available
One pill contains elvitegravir, cobicistat, emtricitabine, and tenofovir alafenamide (TAF).

Ask your healthcare provider if GENVOYA is right for you.

To learn more visit GENVOYA.com
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 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:

  - 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 Quicksol®)
- ergot-containing medicines, including: dihydroergotamine mesylate (D.H.E. 45®, Migranal®), ergotamine tartrate (Cafergot®, Migergot®, Ergostat®, Medihaier Ergotamine®, Wigraine®, Wigrettes®), and methylergonovine maleate (Ergonat® , Methergine®)
- lovastatin (Advicor®, Altoprev®, Mevacor®)
- midazolam, when taken by mouth
- phenobarbital (Luminal®)
- phenytoin (Dilantin®, Phenytek®)
- pimozide (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

EMTRIVA, GENVOYA, the GENVOYA Logo, GILEAD, the GILEAD Logo, GSI, TYBOST, and VITEKTA are trademarks of Gilead Sciences, Inc., or its related companies. All other marks referenced herein are the property of their respective owners.

© 2015 Gilead Sciences, Inc. All rights reserved. GENC0003 11/15
Action Leaders.
Change Makers.
Chicago 2016.

Advancing LGBTQ Liberation
Wanna volunteer or host a guest? Find out how at creatingchange.org!

January 20–24, 2016
Hilton Chicago
creatingchange.org

#ActionLeaders #CC16
Kit Duffy dies, Mayor Washington's gay liaison

BY TRACY BAIME AND MATT SIMONEtte

Katherine "Kit" Duffy, 71, Chicago's first liaison to the gay community, under Mayor Harold Washington, died Dec. 22 from complications of heart surgery.

Duffy remained active in Chicago politics until just weeks before her death, staying engaged in progressive Democratic electoral and activist efforts.

Mayor Washington appointed her in 1984 as the first mayoral liaison to Chicago's LGBt communities. As a heterosexual ally, Duffy was a constant force in the 1980s Chicago gay community. As AIDS started to take its toll, and as the community fought for a civil-rights bill, Duffy was a key link for the community to the mayor, and vice versa.

She was inducted into the city's Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2008, in part for her help in securing passage of the 1988 ordinance barring discrimination against gays and lesbians in Chicago.

The Hall of Fame website notes that after being appointed by Washington, one of Duffy's first actions was to start an open-ended meeting between city department heads and a wide-ranging group of lesbian and gay activists and leaders.

"That was very symbolic of what Harold was trying to do for the whole community," Duffy recalled in 2007, emphasizing that Washington was determined to give everyone equal access to city services and programs.

"The one thing that really struck me throughout the time that I served as liaison to the community was the way that process paralleled what Harold thought the city was—a community. It was certainly time for that change," she said. "We were flying blind, but with a complete commitment to fairness."

In 1985, Duffy convened Mayor Washington's Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues. Also in 1985, she became the first executive director of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

After Washington's death, Duffy continued to push for the gay-rights law. In 1991, Duffy was one of the co-founders of the Illinois Federation for Human Rights (forerunner of today's Equality Illinois), along with Jon-Henri Damski, Rick Garcia, Lana Hostetler, and Art Johnston, the Hall of Fame notes.

Duffy was born July 2, 1944 in Funkstown, Maryland, in 1944, and moved to Chicago in 1964. Her friend Janet Rowland said Duffy's family all preceded her in death.

Cook County Commissioner Jesus "Chuy" Garcia recalled that, "Kit Duffy was an angel of justice for people who have suffered through oppression and discrimination. Her life, since she was an adolescent, was about wiping out injustice. She leaves a legacy of fighting discrimination and bigotry in the city of Chicago." Garcia also praised Duffy's political acumen, adding, "When I was running for mayor, and my people were struggling through a speech or needed some background material, we could turn to Kit. She always wanted progressives to be on point. The fact that she was so wonky was such a help—she always had answers for us, and didn't send a bill afterward."

Activist Emmanuel Garcia said, "The first time I met Kit Duffy she handed me the book Every Day Is Election Day by Rebecca Sive. She said, 'I heard about your work and I think you should take some time to read this.' You didn't meet Kit and doubt you played a necessary role in affecting change, it was just up to you to accept her plea to do more."

"Kit always spoke with a sense of urgency—one that inspired me to rethink what it means to lead in these times. In one of our last exchanges she wrote, 'Your generation is in the unhappy position of, as NEVER has been the case before, not having the luxury of time for diversions and in particular those diversions that divide, antagonize, and exclude. To have a chance at all of stopping this rush toward selling this city to tourists and the elite base to have, not shrink into the realm of irrelevant symbolism. Someone has to step up and help people see what paths are productive and which ones aren't. Not everyone will love you for it but that's one of many prices you pay for the joy of knowing you've actually helped move things forward.'"

"After the Chuy for Mayor Run-off Election in April, Kit joined Lisa Marie-Pickens and me on several occasions to talk about the possibility of creating a city-wide coalition to influence electoral politics. She was sharp and committed to the very end. Kit was a fearless trailblazer committed to building future progressive leadership who strategized through intersectionality to bring more people in. There are many lessons I have learned from her life and work, but our communities are better today because of her tireless championing of civil rights."

Irwin Keller, who worked on Chicago's gay rights ordinance and was also a founding member of the Kinsey Sicks singing group, said, "When I was in my early 20s, I thought I was so radical for being gay. And then I met Kit. She brought to our activism a revolutionary edge that made me look like the sheltered suburban boy I actually was. She was already a seasoned organizer who had done support work for the black Panthers. I heard one rumor she'd been a gunnernun for them, which I suspect was meant to discredit her but had the effect of making people sit up and pay attention when this neo-chicagoland Irish woman spoke. Kit brought us a bigger vision. We suddenly saw our work as part of a much larger struggle for justice that included women, people of color, people with disabilities, immigrants, workers. We were at the margins of power, but at the center of a movement."

"I left Chicago in 1988, and only the Internet brought us back together Irish two years ago. I discovered that besides being devoted to the cause, Kit was deeply loyal to all her comrades and had an enduring investment in those relationships. So we ended up keeping track of each other; chatting about religion, politics, the Kinsey Sicks, Harold Washington, life, loss. She was a great comfort when my mother died, and full of good advice and encouraging words when I was trying to dispose of mom's things. Kit was just like that. Radicalism and relationships. My last conversation with Kit was about Fred Hampton and Hurey Newton—and Andrew Patner too. I remain stunned and sad. And Tuesday night I sat down at the dinner table, and began by saying to my children, 'Let me tell you the story of a woman named Kit Duffy'-..."

William Greaves, who was director and community liaison for the Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues a few years after Duffy, said that she "opened the doors of city government to the LGBT community: a community that was fed up with waiting for favors from politicians and well-connected community leaders. She created the liaison position, which I subsequently held, and she inspired the gay community to become such an important and demanding constituency that the city had to respond by establishing the liaison position and the Advisory Council on Gay and Lesbian Issues."

"When [journalist] Paul Varnell introduced us, it was one good Maryland girl meeting another. We instantly became close friends, and Kit became my mentor. I love her deeply and owe her a great debt for what success I had in city government."

"Kit was always a wealth of knowledge on the city, city history, and the Cook County Democratic Party," said Ald. Tom Tunney. "When in doubt, I would ask Kit who invariably knew the answer or connected me with the person who could address the issue. She was extremely pragmatic with a great sense of humor. Kit upheld tremendous passion for the everyday Chicagoan. She is truly an incredible Chicagoan who will be greatly missed."

"We are so sorry to hear about the passing of Kit Duffy. We are grateful for all of Kit's contributions to AFO—and to the advancement of LGBT equality, Kit was a true stalwart and will be missed," said Kathy Goreish, AFO's Chicagoan. "She is truly an incredible Chicagoan who helped to transform how this community worked and how it thought of itself. She was an unrivaled community organizer, tactician, and strategist: brilliant, knowledgeable, and eloquent. She had contacts and friends in every part of the rainbow and was universally loved and respected. She was also fascinating to talk to and a helluva lot of fun. She died peacefully with her friend Bill Greaves at her side. Kit was the first liaison; Bill was the last. The Alpha Project. We are devastated by her loss and extend our sincere condolences to her family, friends, colleagues and many, many fans. R.I.P., Kit … please watch over this community one more time, … you are one of our guardian angels now."

"Kit Duffy's fingerprints are on almost everything we have in the gay community in Illinois today," said activist Rick Garcia. "She was active in a time when there were few straight allies and even fewer openly gay politicians. I really think that she is the midwife of the successes we have in Illinois. She took me around, under her wing, and introduced me to all the right people. … Just a few months ago, she and I met with [activist] Emanuel Garcia to plot strategy. She said to me, 'Rick, this is the future of our movement.'"

"When she was the liaison, she didn't think it was her job to speak for gay people. She thought her job was to teach gay people to speak for themselves. She would tell activists that they needed to speak with city department officials. It was Kit who said [to activists], 'You have to speak to the health department in the early days of the AIDS crisis.' This is a loss for the city, a loss for the progressive-independent movement, and a loss for the gay community."

"When Kit Duffy was appointed to be Mayor Harold Washington's liaison to the LGBT community in 1984, some people were surprised that she, a straight woman, was so dedicated to LGBT issues," said journalist Albert Williams.
“But for her it was all part of a seamless fabric of fairness, justice and equality. She taught the LGBT community that power is never shared willingly; it must be taken. She nurtured the community’s sense of self-empowerment, paving the way for the long-overdue passage of an LGBT-inclusive Chicago Human Rights Ordinance in 1988 as well as subsequent electoral and legislative victories. She was a shrewd strategic thinker (even Machiavellian when necessary) but also a passionate idealist. She cared deeply about the issues, but also revelled in the ‘game’ of politics. She was one of a kind.”

Chicago Sun-Times columnist Laura Washington added, “I have worked with and known Kit Duffy since our days in Harold Washington’s City Hall. Kit was Chicago’s go-to on all things progressive. A fierce strategist and social justice intellectual. She was always pushing and prodding friends, allies and enemies alike to do more, and then more—on a slew of progressive causes, from LGBT rights, to health care inequities, racial profiling, to police brutality. What a loss for Chicago, at a time when we need her political genius now, more than ever.”

“I will miss Kit’s unfailing commitment to fairness for all,” said Equality Illinois co-founder Art Johnston. “Kit’s work organizing in our communities, beginning in the mid-1980s, led not only to the passage of Chicago’s historic 1988 Human Rights Ordinance but became the foundation for a new LGBT movement which led directly to all the political and legislative gains we have made, up to and including full equal marriage. She was, quite simply, the best.”

Activist Lori Cannon said, “Kit Duffy had a lifetime of good ideas and leaves a remarkable legacy of major efforts, mentorship and intelligence when it comes to those less fortunate, her entire life was dedicated to fairness, community, and righting the wrongs amongst those have been denied for so long.”

“I admired her supreme intelligence and fairness. She and I first crossed paths during her legendary tenure as executive director of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. She deeply respected my best friend, the fiery and explosive AIDS activist Danny Sotomayor, and his clever and unique strategies to create AIDS awareness in the most dramatic and successful way.”

“She worked behind the scenes with Danny, consulting and approving his tactics, as bold and shocking as they were. Kit got it. She and her dear friend, the late journalist Jon-Henri Damski, and myself made for a curious and wacky threesome. They were both into everything and coached me in the world of successful and peaceful negotiations, which are not my usual style.”

“As early as 14, the article stated, “Duffy noticed the injustices of segregation while living in her Appalachian Maryland hometown. Eventually Duffy would help form a group that would back the NAACP in the late 1960s. Throughout the 1970s in Chicago, Duffy became involved with several other activist groups including Women Employed, a group that helped pass the first laws in Illinois making sexual harassment illegal.”

“I am not gay, but I have many gay friends and during the late ’70s and ’80s the Chicago gay scene was very racy,” Duffy told Windy City Times. “In a Midwestern-conservative city like Chicago sometimes the anti-gay sentiments were overwhelming.”

“What a pleasure it was to know this magnificent woman. Her heart was as big as all outdoors, her wit was dry and wicked, and if Kit was on your side, you had a friend for life. I did. I had it for her life. How fortunate for me.”

In an Aug., 10, 2011 interview for the Windy City Times AIDS @ 30 series, Duffy spoke about her work during the early years of the AIDS crisis.

“Some men see things as they are and say why, others as they should be and say why not. ‘I dream of things that never were and say why not.’

“The truth is that it was such a very different time back then, open discussion of sexuality and particularly gay sexuality was taboo, and very nearly all politicians were resistant to talking openly about what realistically was needed to combat AIDS, the first and most essential step of course being that very thing, open discussion,” Duffy said. “I had real conflicts with the head of the Health Department at the time over some statements he’d made about AIDS and his handling of the issue in general, which reflected that same reticence in dealing openly with needs such as clean needle programs, condom use, bathhouses, education of sex workers, etc. I felt the same I think as any other GLBT activist, anger that the disease was spreading needlessly because people couldn’t or wouldn’t talk about sex in particular gay sex.”

“AIDS forced a generation to become activists. It required people to get organized and to fight for the resources for prevention and research,” she said. “It brought a community to the political arena to solve a problem. The AIDS crisis showed that the gay community here in Chicago had stunning organization skills.”

Duffy concluded that 2011 interview with this: “If there is hope it’s going to have to come from the young. I see in the GLBT youth a lot of hope. They are unencumbered by the confines of the identity politics older generations found necessary to get power and therefore whole ranges of strategies are available to them, if they learn the system and work at it. They remind me of the Teddy Kennedy quote, ‘Some men see things as they are and say why and I dream of things that never were and say why not.’

“Funds are being raised to cover costs of funeral expenses. See https://www.gofundme.com/k8g4tz3 . A memorial will be held Sunday, Jan. 31, 3-6 p.m. at Sidetrack.


Kit Duffy (second from right) at a 2015 LGBT rally for Chuy Garcia’s mayoral campaign. Photo courtesy of Robert Castillo

With world-class indoor tennis courts, state-of-the-art fitness equipment and a philosophy that nurtures a feeling of community, isn’t it time you upgrade from gym to club? Join Midtown in December and earn back your initiation fee. Learn more at midtown.com/visit.
people are calling the “black lives movement.”

But I think that feminism does a number of different things, in relation to racial justice movements through thinking about the role of black feminism. I’ll give you three things that I think it does: first, it makes us think differently about or, hopefully, expand where we look for forms of activism and resisters to state violence. It says that while there’s a traditional or normative model of who we think about as the victim of state violence, which is often a heterosexual man in a confrontation with police, we know that state oppression manifests not only in that model but in lots of different places. It happens through the denial of state welfare assistance, and it happens in the ways we militarize the public schools that primarily black, Latino, and poor kids attend. These are different forms of state violence. And I think feminism fundamentally makes us ask the question, when we confront the traditional model, what are the other examples of state violence or state oppression that we need to be paying attention to?

Of course, feminism has us intervene in traditional sites of state violence by asking the very basic question about the status of women. So if we’re thinking about how to understand state oppression and more specifically state violence, we have to not only be attentive to what are now recognizable forms of state violence but also move beyond the “traditional” models of state violence to mobilize for justice for broader communities of people.

Second, I think feminism is informing the movement for black lives in terms of how it’s structured and its leadership. There’s some important feminist work that tells us that there are different forms of leadership that we should be paying attention to. Whether it is Belinda Robnett’s work on the civil rights movement and bridge leaders or the exceptional work that Barbara [Ransby] has done thinking about Ella Baker and making democratic models of racial leadership, I think many of the young leaders in the Black Lives Matter movement recognize that the male charismatic leader, or the singular charismatic leader, is not the form of leadership that they adhere to or they going to put forth.

In fact, many of these new organizations are led by young black women who identify as queer and who promote the idea, as Barbara Ransby has noted, that far from this movement being led by a no hands model, it is a leaderful movement with cis and trans women taking positions of power. So the organizations that are part of a network of groups working under the broad framework of the Black Lives Matter movement look different and structure their leadership differently than you would think would be the case. There are organizations that are not focused on police brutality but on the lack of women’s reproductive rights. There are organizations that are focused on the issue of youth violence but also involve the police. But this is different from kind of the traditional sites of state violence by asking the very basic question about the status of women and the existence of prisons and seriously contemplate that many of these young activists have been engaged in the academy. Particularly for women of color and feminists, doing political work in and outside the academy who are both involved in INCITE!, or Kimberlé Crenshaw’s work with the African American Policy Forum and the Say Her Name campaign. We can go down a list of inci-

dent allowing us to be insiders-outsiders. That’s what we’ve seen before. I think that’s another way in which the academy and activism are productively intersecting.

S: That’s so true. Speaking of the leadership, we know that the hashtag #Blacklives-Matter was created by queer black women, which probably can’t be said enough, and in some media outlets there’s been a lot of buzz and there have been several major newspapers or online magazines that have written pieces...
about the new civil rights movement and the new face of racial justice activism. They have suggested that the inclusion of queer folks and women, or queer women, is maybe a new thing. But we know that this is a new face to activist movements all along—we know who threw the first rock at Stonewall—and we know that this is part of the story that has actually been erased. This might be something that we both know the answer to, but do you think that the inclusivity of this moment is new? You have suggested just now that in some ways it is new, but in other ways it isn’t. So I’d like you to talk a little bit about this, and also discuss how intersectional politics in particular might be evidenced in today’s movements and how this is similar to or different from a previous moment.

CC: You’ve got a lot packed into these questions! On the question of whether it’s new; not completely, but there have always been radical black women or radical women engaged in mobilization, organizing, and leadership: we know that is not new. We can read the books on Fannie Lou Hamer; we can read the books on Ella Baker; we can read books by Elaine Brown (although I’m not sure if you can call her a radical, but...); we can read Anna Julia Cooper, even go through this individualized history to say that women have been a part of the leadership: they’ve been a part of the strategy. And I would say that trans women have also had a long history of organizing and resistance that far too often is not held up, ranging from the Compton’s Cafeteria Riot, to Stonewall, to the mobilization around CeCe McDonald and trans folks. I think that we know that the women, color and queer folk have always been central to our struggles. That part is not new. I think we have a lot of information for some people, but if you think about the history and know the history, it’s not new.

I do think what’s new is the ways in which, at this moment in the Black Lives Matter movement, there’s a very young, and there’s a lot of queer women who are not just doing the work but are part of a collective leadership. The fact that they are visible and vocal, not just in one organization but across a number of organizations, shaping the direction of this movement—this is something that’s new. And they are leading not specifically women’s organizations but also what many of us recognize as black liberation organizations. While the inclusion and in some cases leadership of women, queer and LGBT folks in our movements is not something new, the way that these individuals like Bayard Rustin, haven’t always had the opportunity to be visible or foregrounded part of the black struggle, so in that sense I think that it’s new.

Another thing that’s new at this moment is the recognition and articulation of a kind of black queer national politics, that’s informing the politics of many organizations involved in the black lives movement. I should say that when I say “black lives movement,” I’m talking about the multiple organizations that are engaged in the national or international mobilization that is commonly known as Black Lives Matter, not just the organization of the same name. To assert the significance of the multiple black queer organizations, mobilizing and making to be queer in the eyes of the state as well as in their own communities. This idea of queering marginalized bodies, in particular those of color was an argument I tried to articulate in my article “Punks, Bulldogs, and Welfare Queens.” This lens allows for and promotes different types of leadership, both not only rationalized allegiances but also alliances based on the positionality of people relative to the state, which queers all of us, and produces a kind of mobilization that we’re beginning to see. For me, that is what’s new and significant about the forms of leadership and organizational structures that we’re seeing in this moment.

The other new development we could talk about is the constant articulation of the intersectional nature of both the oppression that people feel and the type of resistance that they want to mount; even though the framework for the moment is appropriately focused on police violence, we understand the ways in which race and class and gender intersect. If we look at a campaign like Fight for $15, which is about securing a living wage—often for women of color, who find themselves doing more and more work in the economy and also that’s kind of intersectional approach to understanding the significance and uniqueness of the positionalit y of black women while also saying that their positionality can speak to the condition of black people more generally. I don’t think we have often seen movements say that the common thread of blackness is not just the male body but the female body, but in fact that cis and trans black women can represent the intersectional positionality and oppression that black communities face.

And finally, I think we’re in a technological context that allows people who have traditionally been silenced or made invisible to have a voice or at least to have their voices and issues amplified. When we think about how the Black Lives Matter movement started with a hashtag, I wouldn’t want to discount technology as an important tool for organizing today. I would not say that technology is a driving force, but it has been a critical tool in terms of democratizing the voices which can be a part of this movement.

SJ: That’s actually a really good bridge to my next question. You already mentioned Sandra Bland, and it seems to me that the Bland case was the first time in recent memory that the mainstream media, not just the black media or the alternative media, actually covered an instance of state violence against a black woman as a major news story. It seemed to be a tipping point, in that this case was pushed into visibility by the current moment, and it suddenly became possible to discuss state violence against and Facebook.

Today we have that kind of pushing and the opportunity for digital media to circumvent what might be thought to be the mainstream or dominant press and try to build the story themselves, using platforms such as their organization’s website, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook. I think Bland’s case also resonated nationally because it seemed so extreme. While the country may be prepared to accept the killing of black men, like Trayvon Martin or George Floyd, the hands of the state, the idea that someone like Sandra Bland would end up dead in police custody seemed extreme and unthinkable to many in this country. Bland, while a black woman, was also a middle-class, college-educated, light-skinned black woman who was engaged in an act that was not deemed violent. I think that we know that this story has done, which is changing lanes without signaling. So everybody can say, “Damn, I’ve done this.”

But I’m not sure I’m prepared to say that the Bland case, as important as it was, marks a tipping point. When I see the same type of mobilization nationally around the Rekia Boyd case or the Marlene Pincock case or the Dajerria Becton case, that we have rightfully seen round the cases of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, but that we have not reached a tipping point. I’m not sure if it was a confluence of circumstances that allowed people to pay attention to the Bland case specifically or if it’s a larger trend, but I think the pieces are at least in place to help put forward more and more cases of women, trans and cis, who are the targets of state abuse, often police abuse. I just hope people will pay attention.

Lastly, I also think there has been a form of training that has gone on over the past year. We’ve trained people to pay attention to cases of police abuse, which has helped people’s recognition of the Bland case. Sadly, now that people have seen so many cases of black people being killed by the police, it is a familiar story, and it makes people able to say, “Oh, that happened again, and this time it was to a woman.” They are able to process the Bland case because far too many cases prior to Bland demanded the public’s attention. I don’t know if this training process helps your point about having reached a tipping point, but at least people are more likely to talk about it. So, I turn to you, and pay attention to these types of stories.

SJ: Thank you for that. Were you at the Movement for Black Lives Convening in Cleveland?
CC: I was not, but I heard many reports about it.

SJ: Yes, so did I. At this convening, there was a moment in the middle of the meeting when a deliberate effort was made to reaffirm the value of the inclusion of black trans lives. I wonder if you could speak a bit about the sig-
A radical trans analysis makes clear that our struggle is not so that everyone can find their essentialist selves, but instead this movement is about breaking down systems of oppression based on gender and race, and the resultant ability, that limit the ability of people to have full and happy lives—from having good jobs, to having the kind of intimate partners that they want, to experiencing joy, to having agency, to having control over their bodies and sexuality. Getting us to that point probably means more dialogue, more struggle, as Bennice Johnson Reagan would say, more being uncomfortable around the coalition and intersection of work that we want to do. I sometimes worry that we’ve accepted a dialogue around trans politics that we haven’t struggled with enough. I think there is a way that both in the academy and outside of the academy, we haven’t figured out where the space is to really have this dialogue and come to an understanding around the kind of trans feminist politics that I think is radical and transformative and not primarily essentialist.

SJ: Would you say that’s the case both for feminists working within the academy and for activists outside of it?

CC: That’s a great question. I think there is a way that it has come out of a tradition, an ideological position. To me, that’s what happens when we start to say that this recently because Suzanna Walters’s book basically makes the same argument about the LGB folks who say, “I was born this way; it’s in my genes,” and how this is actually counter to a radical feminist liberatory theory that would say, “actually we shouldn’t justifying treating people like human beings by any sort of genetic or biological criteria.” So I like how you distinguish that narrative that has arisen around trans identity as being an essential thing as opposed to a radical trans identity that is rooted in a more feminist liberatory ideology. It seems like a really good way to think about it.

CC: I’m still struggling to figure it out as well. To me it’s the difference or the tension between a women’s rights politics and a feminist politics, or an LGB politics and a queer politics. What I’m looking for and have found, I hope, is a radical trans feminist politics that is thinking about and rooted in the transformation of institutions that would oppress and limit people’s understanding and performance of gender. I am, thus, interested in a politics that is rooted in and imaginative in coming to binaristic and static categories. That’s the kind of feminist trans politics that I’m committed to, and that’s the inclusion I want in the Black Lives Matter movement. People may not agree with this, but without an intentional politics, I don’t see trans as inherently radical. I think there are many instances where marginal individuals are inserted into traditional institutions or movements and they do something to change the dynamics. They don’t necessarily change these spaces and entities in a radical way that is open and more equitable. I’m interested in trans feminist politics in the same way that I’m committed to a black feminist politics that is tied to a transformative liberatory agenda.

SJ: That makes perfect sense. There also has been a lot of talk about this idea that there’s a generational divide among racial justice activists. The media can’t seem to get enough of comparing contemporary activists to civil rights movement activists, which is problematic in and of itself because the contextual differences are endless, as well as because everyone’s public memory of the civil rights movement has been so sanitized. But there is an ideological tension I see among many of these conceptions and I think we have seen this divide in some spaces. For example, there was that moment in 2014 when Al Sharpton got shouted down. People were saying, “We didn’t ask you to be here to talk about this.” Maybe I’m wrong about this, but I think in some ways these generational differences—I don’t like the word generations—but I think this is the waves model of thought in feminism, and maybe this current moment of activism looks more like the fourth wave of feminist thought. Or maybe it doesn’t? I wonder if you have any thoughts about that.

CC: Here’s the problem for me with the generational framework, and I guess we could say it mirrors my concerns about the wave framework that other people have already articulated: when you start comparing waves or generations, you homogenize those waves and generations. So I shudder when I hear you say Sharpton might speak for my generation. I like, “Oh, my God, no! That’s just scary!” I think that’s what happens when we start to say that there are certain individuals that represent a generation.

One major problem with that approach is that the political/ideological tensions between individuals within the generation are made invisible. As I see it, if there is any divide, it’s more an ideological one: it is the divide between those who understand themselves to be feminist and who insist that cis and trans women are both men versus those that don’t share this understanding. To me, that’s the divide. It’s a divide that’s built around, as we talked earlier, our larger vision of black liberation and who is a central part of black communities; it’s a divide between the structure of more traditional civil rights organizations and the organizations mobilizing today; it’s a divide between those who support new models of collective leadership in our protest organizations versus those who want one charismatic leader to point to. That, I think, is the divide, and this speaks to Sharpton also. He comes out of a tradition, an ideological positioning, that would lead him to support the leadership of the male charismatic leader and believe that there should be one person and one organization leading the way.

I think the thing less about generation, even though I think that’s the easiest place for people to point, but I think if you dig a little deeper, beyond generation, you will see different political and ideological commitments driving the differences in the approach to social movements or in opinions about the Black Lives Matter movement. To me, this divide maps onto the issue of the waves model in feminist studies because, as you know, black feminists have contested the wave theory and questioned when waves start and end and who gets included. In the waves model you see the flattening of differences and division within waves as a way to bring into stark contrast those differences that exist between waves.

SJ: It’s interesting because now that you say that, I think it does map: it seems like the divide within racial justice activism around what leaders look like and whose story should be included maps more onto the conflicts—both inside and outside of academia—between upper-class black feminists and the ranks of working-class feminists, who have always had this ideological head-butting, where feminists of color, for example, have been saying, “Your feminism isn’t necessarily inclusive; you’re helping prop up the carceral state, and so on.” And that’s interesting because it’s less about generations and more about where one’s standpoint is coming from in the first place. That’s a really interesting way to look at it.

CC: But—to go back to the topic of trans inclusivity—I think another interesting aspect is that many of the trans women that we are talking about often come from poor backgrounds rather than middle-class backgrounds. They’ve been in completely vulnerable positions in terms of their lived experience. To me, that’s a different positioning than a middle-class cis black feminist, so I think the question is, are we prepared to look at one of these differences in standpoint, as Patricia Hill Collins might talk about, and say that they are all significant? The divide that we saw, for example, in second-wave feminism, between black feminists or feminists of color, Latina feminists, Native feminists, and white feminists—that’s an important one. But we know that we’ve complicated that account and that many people in the academy are in the academy because they have access to resources and some form of class mobility.

So while folks of color can challenge and open up new possibilities in terms of thinking about feminism, we also want to pay attention to the class positioning of those women of color or who are speaking in the academy, often to the exclusion of poor women or trans women, who often have a very different positionality with regard to both feminism and their lived daily experiences.

Ask a Feminist: A Conversation with Cathy Cohen on Black Lives Matter, Feminism, and Contemporary Activism was originally published on the website of Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society (http://signsjournal.org/ask-a-feminist-cohen-jackson) and is now part of the Feminist Public Intellectuals Project and will appear in the Summer 2016 issue of Signs. © 2015 University of Chicago Press. Reprinted with permission.
Controversy lingers after blood-donation regulations eased

BY MATT SIMONETE

While key limitations still apply, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced Dec. 21 that it was easing some restrictions on blood donations from gay and bisexual men.

Previous restrictions, which had been in place for about 32 years, included a “lifelong deferral” for gay and bisexual men, meaning any men who had ever had sex with men since 1977 were prohibited from making donations. Under new rules, only men who have not had sex with men in the previous 12 months will be prohibited from donating.

“In reviewing our policies to help reduce the risk of HIV transmission through blood products, we rigorously examined several alternative options, including individual risk assessment,” said Peter Marks, M.D., deputy director of the FDA’s Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. “Ultimately, we believe this policy better balances efficacy and patient access and will continue to monitor the situation and further revise our policies as new science emerges.”

Vorderbruggen leaves behind a wife, Heather, and son, Jacob. NBC News reported that she was one of the first U.S. service members to be wed in a same-sex ceremony following the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”

Vorderbruggen, 36, of Plymouth, Minnesota, was assigned to the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI), the main law enforcement branch of the Air Force. She was also the first female OSI agent killed in the line of duty.

Greece allows civil partnerships

Greece enacted a human-rights bill that permits civil partnerships between same-sex couples, according to a Newsweek item that cites Reuters.

The development (which happened when 193 members of the 300-member parliament voted for the bill) occurred despite protests and opposition from political parties and the Orthodox Church.

Creating Change Jan. 20-24

Thousands of LGBTQ individuals are expected at the 2016 Creating Change Conference, slated to take place Jan. 20-24 at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave.

The National LGBTQ Task Force sponsors and organizes the event, promoted on its website as “the pre-eminent political, leadership and skills-building conference for the LGBTQ social justice movement.”

Among the items scheduled are Day Long Institutes, trainings in the Academy for Leadership and Action and a special programming segment called “Practice Spirit, Do Justice” for faith leaders and organizations.

While key limitations still apply, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced Dec. 21 that it was easing some restrictions on blood donations from gay and bisexual men.

Previous restrictions, which had been in place for about 32 years, included a “lifelong deferral” for gay and bisexual men, meaning any men who had ever had sex with men since 1977 were prohibited from making donations. Under new rules, only men who have not had sex with men in the previous 12 months will be prohibited from donating.

“In reviewing our policies to help reduce the risk of HIV transmission through blood products, we rigorously examined several alternative options, including individual risk assessment,” said Peter Marks, M.D., deputy director of the FDA’s Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. “Ultimately, we believe this policy better balances efficacy and patient access and will continue to monitor the situation and further revise our policies as new science emerges.”

Vorderbruggen leaves behind a wife, Heather, and son, Jacob. NBC News reported that she was one of the first U.S. service members to be wed in a same-sex ceremony following the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”

Vorderbruggen, 36, of Plymouth, Minnesota, was assigned to the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI), the main law enforcement branch of the Air Force. She was also the first female OSI agent killed in the line of duty.

Greece enacted a human-rights bill that permits civil partnerships between same-sex couples, according to a Newsweek item that cites Reuters.

The development (which happened when 193 members of the 300-member parliament voted for the bill) occurred despite protests and opposition from political parties and the Orthodox Church.

A growing number of European countries have established legislation allowing registered partnership rights for same-sex couples; however, the issue remains contentious in many of those states, especially in eastern Europe.

One of the themes that looms large for me isSimilarly, when I think of the birth of Jesus, and that struggle was to be fully accepted. I would not have the annual angst of searching non-Christians alike—stayed more focused on and call it a day. While marriage brought up, to put a big bow on what we put a ring on and call it a day. While marriage brought on the recognition, stability, and predictability of raising children of same-sex couples, “The high risk of homelessness among sexual minority youth is disproportionately thrown out of theirs, more often than their heterosexual peers, especially minorities of color like the African-American ones.” Somewhere years ago when I wrote about homelessness of African-American LGBTQ youth, this was a typical type of response I received from an irate blogger who read my piece on “Black youth are not at all psychologically prepared for the liberation struggle, they are expendable. Such as the realities of war. It’s gonna take all of our resources to salvage the heterogeneous youth who will hopefully be more loving, heterosexual relationships & produce healthy children. This is how we will produce a strong [B] lack nation/community. The dysfunctional youth are asking these questions—can we not/will not be able to make the contribution we need, so they are expendable.” The perception that African-American families must sacrifice their children because of the much-touted old African adage that espouses Black unity. “It takes a village to raise a child,” rings false, it seems, when it comes to our LGBTQ youth. The high risk of homelessness among sexual minority teens is a serious problem requiring immediate attention,” said Heather Coitus, MPH, of the Division of Adolescent and

Remember our homeless LGBTQ youth this holiday season

The holiday season is a difficult time of year for many. Too often we see the glitz and glamour that this holiday brings, totally missing its spiritual message. The underlying message in celebrating the season is the full embrace of human difference and diversity. I truly believe that Americans—Christians and non-Christians alike—stay more focused on the message and teachings of this holiday season, many LGBTQ youth and young adults would not have the annual angst of searching for homes for the holidays.

Although Christmas is mostly thought of in terms of feasting and celebrating, Jesus’ birth—like his death—was borne of struggle, and that struggle was to be fully accepted. Similarly, when I think of the birth of Jesus, one of the themes that looms large for me is LGBTQ youths and young adults experiencing homelessness.

Why homelessness? Because many of us do not really have a home to go to where we can sit at the family table and be fully out—or if out, fully accepted. As with Mary and Joseph during the time of Jesus’ birth, many of us travel from inn-to-inn to only find there is no room. “I’m Queer. I’m Homeless. I’m Hungry. I’m Scared. I’m Tired,” was the ad one year by New Alternatives for LGBTQ Homeless Youth asking the public to give the gift of $10 during the holiday season to help their homeless.

“Every night, thousands of lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender youth and young adults are experiencing homelessness in New York City. Whether they have been kicked out by homophobic families, forced to flee conservative towns and/or are forced or come from families torn apart by poverty, AIDS, drug abuse or eviction, these youth sleep in the City’s parks, on the subway, and in public restrooms in places like Confidential Authority in Union Station.” New Alternatives for LGBTQ Homeless Youth website reminded us.

While homelessness of teen and youth populations often involves being kicked out of foster care, or being left to fend for themselves, our LGBTQ teen and youth populations that are homeless are also all youth, first and foremost, if only because of their sexual orientation.

And sadly, it sends a message that these homes would rather have no child than a queer child. According to a 2011 study from Boston’s Children’s Hospital that is published online on the American Journal of Public Health’s website, it was determined that when it came to the private institution of the home, the LGBTQ youth are disproportionately thrown out of theirs, more often than their heterosexual peers, especially minorities of color like the African-American ones. Some years ago when I wrote about homelessness of African-American LGBTQ youth, this was a typical type of response I received from an irate blogger who read my piece on “Black Commentators” website: “Given that our resources are tight & these youth are not at all psychologically prepared for our liberation struggle, they are expendable. Such as the realities of war. It’s gonna take all of our resources to salvage the heterogeneous youth who will hopefully be more loving, heterosexual relationships & produce healthy children. This is how we will produce a strong [B] lack nation/community. The dysfunctional youth are asking these questions—can we not/will not be able to make the contribution we need, so they are expendable.”

The perception that African-American families must sacrifice their children because of the much-touted old African adage that espouses Black unity. “It takes a village to raise a child,” rings false, it seems, when it comes to our LGBTQ youth. “The high risk of homelessness among sexual minority teens is a serious problem requiring immediate attention,” said Heather Coitus, MPH, of the Division of Adolescent and

Turn to page 22
Countertenors are having their voices heard

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Countertenors (male alto) once were something of a rarity in the opera world. But in many ways nowadays, they’re all the rage.

With the ongoing revival of Baroque music, countertenors have increasingly proven that they can take on roles originally written for stage castrati in the 17th and 18th centuries so modern-day opera companies don’t always have to turn to casting mezzo-sopranos in male drag. And there are several new operas debuting that prominently feature roles specifically written for the countertenor voice.

For proof, just look to award-winning singer and actor Anthony Roth Costanzo. The gay countertenor is performing in six world premieres this season.

Two of Costanzo’s most high-profile assignments include the lead role of Cesar in Jake Heggie and librettist Terrence McNally’s opera Great Scott by composer Jimmy López and librettist Nilo Cruz for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the comedy Great Scott by composer Jake Heggie and librettist Terrence McNally that debuted this past October for Dallas Opera. Costanzo will reprise his Great Scott role of stage manager Roane Heckle for San Diego Opera in May.

“I’m working with 13 different composers on different projects for future seasons,” said Costanzo, excited about the vitality of new music. “As countertenors, we’re sort of relegated to before 1750 and after 1950 and we miss the 200 years of the repertoire that most opera companies do. It’s exciting for us to expand that repertoire on this end of that divide and have a new set of things to sink our teeth into.”

In Bel Canto, Costanzo portrays the teenage terrorist Cesar. It’s a character that Costanzo first encountered when he read Ann Patchett’s best-selling 2001 novel Bel Canto that was inspired by the drawn-out hostage crisis of 1996 and ’97 when mostly young members of The MRTA (Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement) took over a Japanese Embassy residence in Lima, Peru. Even on the page, Costanzo thought that Cesar should be a countertenor if the work was ever transformed into an opera.

“It’s a wonderful opportunity for a countertenor because as a teenage boy, it seems to sort of fit in a way that feels uniquely otherworldly, especially the way that Jimmy [Lopez] has written it,” said Costanzo, highlighting his big Act II aria where Cesar reflects on his troubled past and how he found solace in the natural sounds of the jungle.

“Cesar’s character is so timid that he couldn’t assert himself very much at the beginning of this, but he really comes out of his shell by the end,” Costanzo said. “And watching that and knowing that makes his downfall that much more emotional.”

Onstage in Bel Canto, Costanzo is costumed largely in a drab T-shirt and military fatigue. But offstage, Costanzo has built up a reputation for intermingling with stars of the fashion world. Designer Austin Scarlett of Project Runway fame is a friend, and they captured some media buzz when they appeared together at the 2013 opening night of the Metropolitan Opera in matching flowing capes created by Scarlett.

“Growing up mostly in New York and making my prerogative to be culturally diverse and have a whole different set of inspirations, I found my way into the world of fashion and art and film and all different kinds of things,” said Costanzo, who was recently named a curator for the new Brooklyn performance art venue National Sawdust and by Vanity Fair as one of “7 Emerging Artists You Should Know About.”

“I generally think that people in fashion, or art, or in film—even if they know nothing about opera—are primed because of their fixation on the aesthetic to really love it.”

And Costanzo stressed that all of his work in new operatic repertoire has strong roots in the Baroque era.

“Händel and the baroque works are really not only my bread and butter but my home base—both vocally and technically,” Costanzo said. “They really give me grounding and a point of departure and they give me an emotional depth which I use in almost everything I do—even in Bel Canto.”

Costanzo is also very proud to follow in the footsteps of out star David Daniels, whom he credits with helping with the resurgence of baroque opera music and popularizing the countertenor voice part.

 “[David Daniels] defined a new age of countertenors, one in which major opera houses could have them because they were singing with a full-blooded sound,” Costanzo said. “He’s been so kind to me and we’ve become colleagues in multiple productions we’ve done together.”

Although Costanzo emphasized that not all countertenors are gay, he said he realizes there may be a misconception about that among the general public.

“I don’t find singing as a countertenor to be effeminizing, which is really interesting because of course I am singing ‘like a girl,’” Costanzo said. “But it’s a very powerful sound, and in a way it’s louder than what I could do with my chest voice or with my male register.”

Bel Canto continues at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, 20 N. Wacker Dr., through Sunday, Jan. 17. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 15-17, and 2 p.m. Jan. 8 and 17. The performances on Jan. 5 and 8 will be recorded for future broadcast on Great Performances on PBS. Tickets range from $20 to $349. Call 312-827-5600 or visit http://www.lyricopera.org/.

About Face’s ‘Le Switch’ Jan. 15

About Face Theatre (AFT) will open its 20th-anniversary season with the world-premiere romantic comedy Le Switch, by Artistic Associate Philip Dawsink. Le Switch will play Jan. 15-Feb. 21, 2016, at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.

The production—which in a man and his non-traditional family must decide for themselves what it really means to be committed, what it means to be married and what it means to be queer—will feature AFT Artistic Associates Mitchell Fain and Elizabeth Lede, with LaShawn Banks, Stephen Cone and Colleen Quinn Rice.

Tickets are $20-$35 each (preview prices, 5 and 13 with 2 p.m. matinees Jan. 8 and 17. The performances on Jan. 5 and 8 will be recorded for future broadcast on Great Performances on PBS. Tickets range from $20 to $349. Call 312-827-5600 or visit http://www.lyricopera.org/.

‘Menagerie’ at Den Jan. 22-March 6

Hans Fleischmann reimagines his conception of Tennessee Williams’ classic drama in a new The Hypocrites production of The Glass Menagerie Jan 22-March 6 at The Den Theatre, 1329 N. Milwaukee Ave.

The cast will include Fleischmann as Tom, Joanne Dubach as Laura, Donna McGough as Amanda and Zach Wegner as The Gentleman Caller.

Admission is $15 (students)-$36; visit TheHypocrites.com.
THEATER REVIEW
Million Dollar Quartet
Book: Colin Escott and Floyd Mutrux; Score: Various
At: Apollo Theatre, 2540 N. Lincoln Ave.
Tickets: 773-935-6100 or www.milliondollartheatrelive.com; $25-$95
Runs through Jan. 17

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Hey procrastinators! Million Dollar Quartet, officially “Chicago’s longest-running Broadway musical,” is closing up shop in the Windy City after running more than 3,000 performances in seven years.

Yet Million Dollar Quartet didn’t officially become a Broadway musical until 2010. Inspired by the 1956 December night in Memphis, Tennessee, when rock legends Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins came together for a studio jam session at Sun Records, Million Dollar Quartet debuted regionally in 2007 at the Village Theatre in Issaquah, Washington, and also played Florida’s now-defunct Seaside Music Theater.

Yet it was the successful and critically acclaimed Chicago launch of Million Dollar Quartet in 2008 at the Goodman Theatre that truly put the musical on the map. Producers soon transferred the show for an open-ended run at Chicago’s 450-seat Apollo Theatre. A concurrent New York production of Million Dollar Quartet came next in 2010, giving the show an official Broadway label.

Out performer Levi Kreis won a featured actor Tony Award for the musical, with just enough drama involving narrating Sun Records founder Sam Phillips (Andy Ahrens) trying to keep his remaining stars signed to his scrappy and pioneering label. This plot device keeps the show from becoming a celebrity impersonation revue.

Yet what truly impresses about Million Dollar Quartet is how it plays skilled actor/musician to rock out in the starry roles. There were no slouches performance-wise between Brandon Bennett as Elvis Presley, Colte Julian as Jerry Lee Lewis, Adam Lee as Johnny Cash and Shaun Whitley as Carl Perkins. Zach Lentino and Patrick Morton consistently offered great and youthful backing support respectively on bass and drums, while veteran cast member Kelly Lamont returned to offer a smart and salty take on Elvis’ fictionalized romantic love interest, Dyanne.

Now if only Kai Harada’s blaring sound design was toned down. Many of the show’s lyrics are garbled, and there’s awhirl effect from all the volume shifts between the dialogue and over-amplified songs.

Once Million Dollar Quartet closes in Chicago, the show will live on via its Las Vegas engagement and the current non-Equity national tour before regional productions start cropping up. See this long-standing part of Chicago theater history while you can locally, even if earplugs might be advisable. You’ll also get the chance to personally ponder why the Windy City embraced this show for so long.

THEATER REVIEW
Drink! The Sketch Comedy Drinking Game: Wasted Edition
Playwright: the ensemble
At: Corn Productions at the Conservatory, 4210 N. Lincoln Ave.
Tickets: www.conservatory.org: $12
Runs through: Jan. 23

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

In cultures embracing the consumption of intoxicating beverages as a socially beneficial activity, citizens rarely need an authority figure granting them permission to participate. However, when informality or shear numbers preclude individual toasts, drinking games serve to lend structure to an evening of bending elbows.

The concept behind these revels designates certain words, signs and/or occurrences to serve as commands for the assemblage to suck firewater (or, for thirsty teetotalers, a Sharps firewater). While Chicago’s official staged versions of this popular pastime can be traced to Byron Hatfield’s Bye, Bye, Liver (running continuously since 2007), the 25-year-old Corn Productions company joined the goggle-and-gargle-kingages in 2013 with this late-nite nightlife revue.

The agenda in the North Center “Cornserva- tory” is sketch comedy geared to customers bringing their own liquid refreshment (fortu- nately, an Osco with a liquor department is located right next door). At the beginning of each episode, we are apprised of the thir word embedded in the subsequent scene. One of the occupants is a corporate business- man, another an unemployed actor, while a third is an electrician. The others represent a wide-verse social spectrum—a waiter, an artist, an elderly rabbi, a vagabond, a teenage boy, an army psychiatrist in the previous war—even a titled Austrian aristocrat.

What they share at the moment is the discon- certing experience of having been pulled off the street by unidentified agents to await individual interrogation in the adjoining pri- vate office. The artist Lebeau suspects racial discrimination, however, a superlative collection of facial surgery (suggested by a Freddy Krueger mask from the Conservatory’s exten- sive special-effects collection). Lower-brow humor was provided by the elf-on-a-shelf’s imp-on-a-blimp and troll-in-a-bowl, as well as a proposed family gathering divided between Bulls and Packers fans. 

What can you expect, though, when your encore—in this case, director Seth Wanta— proclaims himself to be Tim Burton and pro- ceeds to deliver a survey of some violent yule- tide folk customs to make Krampus look like a wuss.

THEATER REVIEW
Incident at Vichy
Playwright: Arthur Miller
At: Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.
Tickets: 773-728-7529; www.redtwist.org: $30-$35
Runs through: extended to Jan. 10

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Arthur Miller’s play might be set in 1942 France, but with our own would-be leaders in 2015 testing the boundaries of Godwin’s Law, it’s high time we were reminded of the wisdom in setting aside personal prejudices to unite with our fellow citizens—a major lit- erary theme in the years following World War Two, before falling out of fashion in the wake of the 1960’s emphasis on ethnic diversity. As Martin Neimoller once famously warned, if we do not defend one another, who will de- fend us?

Our play opens on a group of men seated in a quasi-industrial room—not a formal police station, but guarded by sentries, nevertheless. One of the occupants is a corporate busi- nesman, another an unemployed actor, while a third is an electrician. The others represent a wide-verse social spectrum—a waiter, an artist, an elderly rabbi, a vagabond, a teenage boy, an army psychiatrist in the previous war—even a titled Austrian aristocrat. What they share at the moment is the disconcerting experience of having been pulled off the street by unidentified agents to await individual interrogation in the adjoining private office. The artist Lebeau suspects racial profiling, but businessman Marchaud shrugs off the inconvenience as a random security check. Significantly, his are the sole identification papers to meet with the approval of their captors.

So when would you begin to get nervous? When Lebeau tells of having had his nose measured? When rumors emerge of prisoners ordered to drop their trousers? When railroad mechanic Bayard reports hearing distressed human freight in the trains bound for “labor camps” in Poland? When the uniformed staff officer expresses unease at his assigned du- ties? As the detainees offer differing opinions on the reason for their—temporary, surely—incarceration and argue among themselves, their numbers lessen. By the time somebody suggests that they could escape by acting to- gether, their depleted strength renders this no longer an option.

Armed with the benefit of hindsight, we may view with incredulity the complacency of a civilian populace assured of their person- al immunity from harm—but did I mention that playgoers in Redtwist’s claustrophobic, windowless auditorium are also seated on bare wooden benches, alley-style, separated from the hap- less victims by mere inches? Under Ian Frank’s tight-as-a-fist direction, however, a superla- tively selected ensemble unperturbed at being viewed within their claustrophobic con- fines from 180 degrees, featuring Tim Parker and Jeremy Trager as the playwright’s chief spokesmen, generates palpable suspense suf- ficient to inspire our collective endorsement at each small heroic act of resistance.

The show’s content changes every three months, with the fall season’s “Wasted Edition” resuming on Jan. 2 and continuing to Jan. 23. You might have lost the opportunity to sing “It’s the Most Wonderful Time for a Beer” until fair-la-la time in 2016, but you still have a few more weeks to sip winter-warm-ups and laugh at a human Roomba, a parody of Grease enti- tled Raised By Motorcycles, and the “Horse and Dad” radio program hosted by—you guessed it—a dad and a horse. Then again, you could wait for Jan. 30, when Drink! The Hollywood Edition makes its debut.

ASSASSINATION, Theatre, Museum of Broad- cast Communication to Jan. 3. After a five- month run, Hillet Levin’s historical docudrama involving the mysterious deaths of presidents might still be short on the “drama” aspect, but makes for fascinating investigative journalism, nevertheless. MSB

ELF, Marriott Theatre, Lincolnshire, through Jan. 3. This 2010 film-to-stage musical adap- tation of the popular 2003 Will Farrell holiday vehicle receives a superlative staging thanks to director/choreographer Marc Robin. SCM

Hellcab, Profiles Theatre, through Jan. 10. Although the words may remain the same, Will Kern’s survey of the urban landscape is reborn every year to showcase anew the diversity of Chicago’s lower depths. MSB

GOOD FOR OTTO, Gift Theatre, returning from Jan. 14 to Feb. 7. Both profoundly and invigorat- ing. David Rabe’s world premiere looks at two community mental health workers and their pa- tients struggling with parental abandonment. Rabe’s skill makes it’s more exciting and enter- taining than you’d think, JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan
MUSICAL REVIEW
Guys and Dolls
Written by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows
Based on story by Damon Runyon
Music and lyrics by Frank Loesser
At: Light Opera Works at Cahn Auditorium, 600 Emerson St., Evanston
Tickets: 847-920-5360
www.LightOperaWorks.com; $34-94
(ages 21 and younger half price)
Runs through: Jan. 3

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN
Guys and Dolls has been a musical-theater mainstay for 65 years, thanks to a simple plot, loveably flawed characters and songs that broke into the mainstream like “Luck Be a Lady” and “Sit Down, You’re Rockin’ the Boat.” Although the show feels a bit dated, specifically in its views on “men and women,” it remains a ter-

ight into the mainstream like “Luck Be a Lady” and

rific introduction to Broadway-caliber musical theatre for children and therefore a great pick for Light Opera Works holiday season produc-

tion. Light Opera Works has mounted finer produc-

ations than Guys and Dolls, and not just in the complexity of its show choices. The company’s production values, namely the set pieces, tend to be higher and the finished products a little more crisp, but Guys and Dolls opts to be sim-

ple and relies on its cast to transport the au-

dience to gangster-era Manhattan—and their effort is superb even they ultimately cannot shoulder that burden.

Light Opera Works’ hallmark of casting strong, classical vocal talent does not wa-

ve, at least with the show’s big four of Sarah Brown (Elizabeth Telford), Sky Masterson (Justin Adair), Nathan Detroit (Steve Silver) and Adelaide (Sarah Larson). Telford and Adair are terrific together and separately as the optim-

istic mission sergeant and the gambler who makes the toughest bet of his life. Their pow-

erful vocals are this production’s highlight and beautifully intertwine in “I’ll Know” and “I’ve Never Been in Love Before.” Given how difficult Sarah Brown is to play as a high soprano asked to perform some jazz/swing numbers and move from morally upright to passionate and free, Telford finds the sweet spot vocally and with the character.

Sarah Larson also gives Adelaide a nicely controlled personality as opposed to overplay-

ing the whiny voice and shtick of the perpetu-
ally ill nightclub singer awaiting marriage to Nathan Detroit, who Steve Silver makes easy to despise and love, as he should be. In general, the acting here is not a far second to the vocal ability, as is sometimes the case in Light Opera Works’ productions. But even with the talent in the right places, the bigger picture of the production isn’t as transporting as perhaps it should be given its reputation as a crowd-pleaser. The painted backdrops and lack of polish in the dancing and even in some cases, the orchestra, keep the charms of this musical from completely wash-

ing over the audience. Many of the jokes don’t land as they should (or once did).

Perhaps Guys and Dolls has become a bit cookie-cutter and dated in 2015, and that pro-

ductions of it these days need to take more risks if they’re going to resonate rather than simply pacify the audience. Light Opera Works gets the core pieces of the show right and taps into the magic of the timeless music, but for audiences beyond families and nostalgia-seek-

ers, there’s no need to roll the dice before this one closes Jan. 3.

‘A Night with Oscar’ Feb. 28 at Center
The Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., will host the Academy Award-related event “A Night with Oscar” on Sunday, Feb. 28. Doors will open for red-carpet arrivals at 6 p.m., and there will be bar service and a buff-

et. The Oscars telecast starts at 7:30 p.m. There will be the Green Room, described as “a sparkling party for radiant red-carpet rev-

elers.” The ceremony will stream live on the big screen in the Screening Room.

Tickets and more information are at Cen-

terOnHalsted.org/ANWO.

Redmoon closing its doors
Redmoon Theater announced on an open letter on its website that it is closing after 25 years of operation.

In part, the letter reads, “It has been an honor to serve the City of Chicago for the past 25 years. We have been blessed to work in and with over 40 of Chicago’s 77 official neighborhoods and to bring our unique brand of spectacle to some of our finest institu-

tions; to many of the city’s most revered pub-

lic sites; and, most importantly, to some of its most overlooked neighborhoods.

... Our core mission was to bring massive, unexpected free art to public spaces—to bring people together across difference in acts of momentary and meaningful celebra-

tion. From the Fringe Festival in recent years to some of our earliest outdoor work, our dream was to create a new kind of urban ritual.”

Regarding why it’s closing, the letter states, “There is no funding model for this civic and social artistic vision. ... [O]urte simply and quite sadly, our innovations haven’t been able to keep up with our civic goals.”
Burning Bowl passes torch to community

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

For over a decade, Chicago social-justice and human-rights nonprofit Affinity's Burning Bowl event has kicked off a new year with attendees bringing past and future together in empowering affirmation on a deeply individual level.

However, Burning Bowl 2016 promises something different both for those who attend and the organization itself.

It is the start of a new era for Affinity. The passing of the torch from former Executive Director Kim Hunt—who will serve as the event's speaker—to a new leader who will be formally announced at the event is not merely this year's theme but an idea of deeper significance. Affinity Board President Ebonie Davis and member Malissa Rainey sat down with Windy City Times to talk about the Jan. 9, 2016, event to be held at Saint Martin's Episcopal Church on the West Side. It is expected to draw more than 300 people from Chicago and beyond.

"It is at St. Martin's for the very first time," Davis stated. "It's a historical moment for us that speaks to the expansion of Affinity's work that we want to do citywide. What you can expect from this Burning Bowl is a change in format in real and ready to do that kind of true social justice work on the street level. We want to talk about that.

"Out with the old and in with the new," Rainey stated. "We want to lift out some things to remove from the community and put them in the fire. We will open it up to those who can to call those things out. Then we will call out the change that we want to create in our community.

"For us to move forward and be intentional about the work we do, we really need the community to come together," Davis added. "What better time to do it than at Burning Bowl?"

Davis described Burning Bowl 2016 as a "call to action."

"We want to allow people space to talk about things that they may have experienced and to share their experiences but also walk away educated about the upcoming issues that Affinity plans on tackling for 2016 so that the community can participate in those events," she said.

One of those goals includes a voter-rights campaign. "A lot of changes come about because of the vote," Davis asserted. "We can't just talk about [Cook County State's Attorney] Anita Alvarez being put of office; we have to vote her out. We have to educate and organize around things like that. When we pass the torch, we will do so invigorated and ready to do that kind of true social justice work on the ground."

Affinity attends to address the continual to the rise in crime and gun violence to the horrific numbers of transgender women of color who lost their lives to societal ignorance and hatred.

According to Davis and Rainey, this is a time for healing.

"So we are being very intentional about the work that we pursue. There isn't an organization like Affinity that provides direct services to women of color. We recognize that the time is now to get that work done."

"We don't want to be isolated anymore," Rainey added. "We want to represent all people in our community as we talk about improvements all the way around."

Interspersed between the old and the new will be performances which have always been one of Burning Bowl's definition of the unique. However, Davis would not betray any early secrets.

"We have some amazing co-hosts this year," she said. "We do have some great performances but also locally and internationally." Rainey said. "We will write things down as a group and we will declare things that we want to work on together as to how we can make things happen for ourselves and for our community."

"My hope is that people walk away with a renewed sense of purpose in the work," Davis added. "After they leave Burning Bowl, they will realize that they are an important part of the community. It is their voice and their seat at the table that is going to stop the onslaught. They are important. They are Affinity."

For more information about Burning Bowl, visit: http://affinity95.org/asccontent.

Sinfonietta MLK Jr. shows Jan. 17-18

The Chicago Sinfonietta, with Music Director Mei-Ann Chen leading, continues its 2015-2016 season with its "Annual Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr."

The shows will take place Sunday, Jan. 17, at 3 p.m. at Wentz Concert Hall of North Central College, 171 E. Chicago Ave., Naperville; and Monday, Jan. 18, at 7:30 p.m. at Chicago's Orchestra Hall of Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave.

Part of this year’s program includes Richard Smallwood’s “Anthem of Praise” followed by Conni Ellisor and five-time Grammy-winning artist Victor Wooten’s “The Bass Whisperer,” featuring Wooten on bass.

Single tickets range from $18-$60 for concerts at Symphony Center and $48-$60 for concerts at Wentz Concert Hall, with special $10 pricing available for students at both concerts. Call 312-284-1554 or visit Chicagosinfonietta.org.

Sinfonietta MLK Jr. shows Jan. 17-18

The Chicago Sinfonietta, with Music Director Mei-Ann Chen leading, continues its 2015-2016 season with its "Annual Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr."

The shows will take place Sunday, Jan. 17, at 3 p.m. at Wentz Concert Hall of North Central College, 171 E. Chicago Ave., Naperville; and Monday, Jan. 18, at 7:30 p.m. at Chicago's Orchestra Hall of Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave.

Part of this year’s program includes Richard Smallwood’s “Anthem of Praise” followed by Conni Ellisor and five-time Grammy-winning artist Victor Wooten’s “The Bass Whisperer,” featuring Wooten on bass.

Single tickets range from $18-$60 for concerts at Symphony Center and $48-$60 for concerts at Wentz Concert Hall, with special $10 pricing available for students at both concerts. Call 312-284-1554 or visit Chicagosinfonietta.org.

Sinfonietta MLK Jr. shows Jan. 17-18

The Chicago Sinfonietta, with Music Director Mei-Ann Chen leading, continues its 2015-2016 season with its "Annual Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr."

The shows will take place Sunday, Jan. 17, at 3 p.m. at Wentz Concert Hall of North Central College, 171 E. Chicago Ave., Naperville; and Monday, Jan. 18, at 7:30 p.m. at Chicago's Orchestra Hall of Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave.

Part of this year’s program includes Richard Smallwood’s “Anthem of Praise” followed by Conni Ellisor and five-time Grammy-winning artist Victor Wooten’s “The Bass Whisperer,” featuring Wooten on bass.

Single tickets range from $18-$60 for concerts at Symphony Center and $48-$60 for concerts at Wentz Concert Hall, with special $10 pricing available for students at both concerts. Call 312-284-1554 or visit Chicagosinfonietta.org.

Sinfonietta MLK Jr. shows Jan. 17-18

The Chicago Sinfonietta, with Music Director Mei-Ann Chen leading, continues its 2015-2016 season with its "Annual Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr."

The shows will take place Sunday, Jan. 17, at 3 p.m. at Wentz Concert Hall of North Central College, 171 E. Chicago Ave., Naperville; and Monday, Jan. 18, at 7:30 p.m. at Chicago's Orchestra Hall of Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave.

Part of this year’s program includes Richard Smallwood’s “Anthem of Praise” followed by Conni Ellisor and five-time Grammy-winning artist Victor Wooten’s “The Bass Whisperer,” featuring Wooten on bass.

Single tickets range from $18-$60 for concerts at Symphony Center and $48-$60 for concerts at Wentz Concert Hall, with special $10 pricing available for students at both concerts. Call 312-284-1554 or visit Chica
“I could listen to you and Don Lemon talk sports all night long.” —Kathy Griffin's quip last New Year's Eve when Anderson Cooper and Lemon discussing football. Well, Don was discussing football. Coop was talking about his favorite halftime shows.

In recapping the top stories of 2015, I'm going to be somewhat selfish and start with me. This year, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of this weekly column—a column that I thought would only last a few months. I fully expected to be the Neil Patrick Harris of print media. That reminds me: Never say this is the "Best Column Ever!"

One of my favorite stories involved pal Leslie Jordan. He was at a Starbucks in the heart of West Hollywood and stood up to three thuggish types who loudly complained about all the "fucking faggots." Jordan yelled, "Shut the fuck up! Not in my house, not in my neighborhood!" The guys left, but Leslie made sure they didn't go far—no until the police arrived to take them in.

The dashing Thomas Roberts hosted NBC's Nightly News, making him the first openly gay person to anchor the evening news on a major network—Mrs. Muir doesn't count, for obvious reasons.

Speaking of hot newsmen, Gio Benitez had been squiring TV model Tommy DiDario for months, and they chronicled their romance online. Still we were all shocked when the ABC reporter got down on his knees in front of Tommy, if the photo was real at the Eiffel Tower. I'd have anticipated something more sexual. But leave it to a gay man to execute a perfectly planned proposal in a romantic setting—and to the other gay guy to get the vapors!

Lea DeLaria proposed to Chelsea Fairless, and they plan to wed later in 2016—with Sandra Bernhard officiating. Gay-porn star Harry Louis got engaged on live television in Spain to Allyson Chinalia, a guy often referred to as his lookalike. And while we don't know exactly who went down on his knees (but one of 'em has coddlies in my experience), Dustin Lance Black and Tom Daley announced their engagement in The Times of London. At the beginning of 2015, The View was hosted by Whoopi, Rosie Perez, Rosie O'Donnell and Nicole Wallace. Now we have Whoopi, Michelle Collins, Raven-Symone, Candace Cameron Bure, Paula Faris and Joy Behar. The only real constant is Mario Cantone. No matter what drama unfolds, we can always count on Mario!

After campaigning to replace Joan Rivers on Fashion Police, Kathy Griffin crashed and burned. It was a bad match from the start and, when the going got tough, Griffin got going. Then Melissa Rivers joined the panel. Now she's bringing in someone Joan would approve of—Margaret Cho. The show returns with a Golden Globes recap.

The show of the year was Empire—a dishy, catty, well-written nighttime soap. Taraji P. Henson is churning up scenery like she hasn't eaten in weeks! Someone who isn't going hungry is Mo'Nique, who claims Lee Daniels offered her the role. The show also brought us an openly gay character played by an openly gay actor. And we have his full-frontal nude photo. Jussie Smollett and his ponderous penis made millions of our readers' dreams come true. Someone who saw the photo confirmed that it is indeed legit, saying cryptically. "I couldn't sit down for a week." If you're wondering what this means, check it out on BillyMasters.com.

HBO cancelled Looking, although it's returning for a wrap-up movie. Suze Orman signed off after 13 years on CNBC. And Chad Allen announced that he's retired from show business. He's getting a doctorate in clinical psychology and planning a private practice. Someday you could say, "My therapist is the kid from Dr. Quinn!"

Say what you will about the Kardashians, but Caitlyn Jenner has brought the transgender issue to the forefront of the American psyche. But she didn't do it alone. Laverne Cox laid most of the groundwork with the success of Orange Is the New Black and an Emmy nod—and she has the good sense to not be a Republican!

We heard memorable coming-out stories from Joel Grey and Holland Taylor. Since their average age is 78, we're glad to have Reid Ewing from Modern Family to bring down the average. And seeing him nude being mounted by a dog was a bonus. (Check out BillyMasters.com.)

That reminds me: Andy Cohen admitted that the most famous person he slept with was Lance Bass! Details may not have been forthcoming, but Lance said, "Sex is a broad term ... like Andy banged Lance—when did he ever say that? This is an old story."

Nick Jonas continued courting the gays with hot-shirtless photos and appearances in gay clubs. But he really showed his stripes when Iggy Azalea had to cancel performing at Pittsburgh Pride. It was Jonas to the rescue. "When I heard about the difficult position Pittsburgh Pride was in just days before their event, I knew I had to find a way to help, I'm excited to do what I can to support the LGBT community in Pittsburgh," he said.

That brings us to celebrity nudes. The most popular one came courtesy of the LA revival of Rent. Yes, the show featured Jake Shears acting and singing in drag, but it was stolen by Tom Berkland's perfect body, gravity-defying ass and enormous (semi-erect) penis. Every bit of Jake and Tom's "work" can be seen on BillyMasters.com.

Lenny Kravitz and his penis burst onto a Stockholm stage. If I didn't see it for myself, I wouldn't have believed it. And what about 20-year-old soccer player Aaron Moody from the UK? He posted photos under the name "bigwhitecock20"—talk about truth in advertising! Besides a big white cock from Britain, we got a kinda average-sized white cock from Canada, courtesy of Justin Bieber. See all of these nudes on BillyMasters.com.

The year's biggest gay-porn scandal was about porn star Brodie Sinclair, aka Leif DeEk Trutt, who was allegedly hired to fly to Chicago and have an overnight "date" with Conde Nast CFO David Geithner, the brother of former Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner. Once Brodie/Leif figured out that Geithner had connections, he asked for help with a legal dispute. Geithner cancelled the date, but paid Brodie/Leif in full. Nonetheless, Brodie/Leif leaked details to the press. Geithner denied it, proof was produced, and lawsuits were filed.

When I'm delivering gossip for a landmark 20 years, it's definitely time to end yet another year of columns. You can find an expanded version of this column (and much more) on www.BillyMasters.com, the site that's always celebrating something. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Ryan Seacrest's balls drop, if they haven't already. So, until next year, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.
Great Expectations

The 2015 Moosey Awards

Lost somewhere in all those pesky Grammy Award press releases was my shortlist for the annual Moosey Awards. I guess I should take John Tesh off my press list. If you’re just tuning in, The Moosey Awards are not quite as prestigious and The Grammys or The Mercury Prize, snarkier than The Village Voice picks, and a bit higher-end and more viewed than the AMAs. If you missed the short list, it’s fine. I was probably drunk when I wrote it … much like the Golden Globes. Without further ado, the Moosey Awards 2015 go to …

The Most Unexpected Hit – “Hotline Bling” by Drake. Released quietly, sans video or accompanying album, “Hotline Bling” hit the web in July and, without any fanfare, earworn its way into our hearts and minds. Followed by an equally infectious video that borrows from Beyoncé’s “Single Ladies” in its simplicity and perfection, “Hotline Bling” even spawned a great response album (Erykah Badu’s “But You Can’t Use My Phone”).

Best Use of Opportunity to Make a Comeback: See Badu above.

Located in the Hard Rock Hotel, this spot features some pretty innovative and delicious items, including the Classic Chicago Hot Dog Flatbread, which tastes exactly like the best hot dog you’ve ever had. The only pill over this is Simon’s unfortunate passing earlier this year.

Firefly Kitchen: Really good restaurants are certainly not confined within city limits. Wilette’s Firefly Kitchen really impressed me, thanks to Chef Dean Salerno’s smoked-pork mac ‘n’ cheese and Maine lobster spring rolls.

Table fifty-two closing

On Thursday, Dec. 31, Table fifty-two will serve its final dinner service at 52 W. Elm St. For nearly a decade, Table fifty-two has served as “modern French with global influences” at the hands of Chef Art Smith, who once cooked for Oprah Winfrey.

“I feel that I’ve reached my peak at Table fifty-two. Everything I set out to accomplish there has been accomplished,” Smith said in a statement. “Moving forward, I’m excited for a new culinary challenge.”

Next year, Smith and Ideology Entertainment plan to reopen the space as Blue Door Kitchen & Garden. Visit www.tablefifty-two.com.

New Year’s Eve

Thu., Dec. 31

The Sofi Top, 4953 N. Clark St.
No overpriced drink packages and never a cover. Just a fun night with party favors and a champagne toast at midnight.

Sidertrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.
Doors open at 7. Champagne toast at midnight with Sidertrack’s New Year’s Babies. Fun surprise throughout the night. $25 advance sale tickets to benefit Equality IL.

Club Krave, 13126 S. Western Ave.
Fireworks, outdoor ball drop, champagne toast at midnight. Win tickets to see Janet Jackson. Tickets are $10 in advance or $15 at the door.

Hamburger Mary’s/ Mary’s Attic, 5400 N. Clark St.
Two floors of fun with midnight toast, balloon drop and a DJ in the Attic. No cover, just come as you are and dance in the new year.

Manhole, 3208 N. Halsted St.
Doors open at 8; no cover until after 10. DJ Neon the Glowgobear. Touche, 6412 N. Clark St.
38th annual Black and Blue Ball. Free buffet at 9. DJ Freddie Bann. Special appearances by adult film stars Alexis Bullock and Lorenzo Fox. Champagne toast at midnight, then begins the blackout. Tickets available at the bar.

Berlin, 954 W. Belmont Ave.
Doors open at 8. DJs Greg Haus and Larissa. Performances by Fox E. Kim, Alexis Bevels and more. $5 cover before 10. Champagne specials at midnight.

Bobby Love’s, 3729 N. Halsted Ave.
It’s a karaoke New Year’s with Creaoke. Every singer/every song gets a shot. Countdown of top 20 songs of 2015. Champagne toast at midnight.

New Year’s Day

Fri., Jan. 1

Sidertrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.
One free drink packages. Doors open at 3. TGIFriday showtunes 5-9 pm. Party goes until 2 am. Wear your onsenie of PJs with Team Sidertrack.

Scot’s, 13126 S. Western Ave.
Let’s see what you wear to bed! Doors open at 11 am. Wear your PJs and have a drink. Onsite bar brunch opens at noon.
Lesley Gore was a pop-music star. Mercury Records was in attendance. In early 1963, to perform at a gig where the president of Mercury was going to sing professionally, she needed a vocal group. Friends. Bands, Lesley Sue Goldstein (later, Gore) was, once. But will those things ever be in style?

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER
$24.99; Backbeat Books; 209 pages
by TREvor TOLLIVER
of Lesley Gore

BOOK REVIEW
You Don’t Own Me: The Life and Times of Lesley Gore by Trevor Tolliver $24.99; Backbeat Books; 209 pages by TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Your closet is packed with mistakes. Odd-colored shirts, patchwork jeans, alligators, Prairie wear, weird ties, you wore it all once. But will those things ever be in style again, even if you wait long enough? No, Nehru jackets, leisure suits, and knitted knickers are best left in the rag bag. As you’ll see in the new book You Don’t Own Me: The Life and Times of Lesley Gore, by Trevor Tolliver, some things may never return.

Born into an era of lush crooners and Big Bands, Lesley Sue Goldstein (later, Gore) was, according to her parents, a musical prodigy almost from birth. At six months, they claimed, she could “duplicate the melody of a song”; as a toddler, she loved to perform for her parents’ friends.

After joining a “girl group” in middle school—one that “tumbled” rather quickly—Gore entered an all-girl school and sang in a chorus. There, she realized that if she was going to sing professionally, she needed a vocal coach.

The one her mother found eventually led Gore to a “tiny recording studio” where she recorded a few discs for the benefit of family. A cousin passed a disc to a band, the United Gore, to perform at a gig where the president of Mercury Records was in attendance. In early 1963, he gave Gore’s demo to music producer Quincy Jones and, some two years later, at age 16, Lesley Gore was a pop-music star.

But as quickly as her star rose, it began to fall, perhaps because of the Beatles and the British Invasion. Gore’s music continued to hit the charts but, in the end, the new sound and the not-so-innocent times wore away at her popularity. By 1969, “Her career, for all outward appearances, was over.”

And yet, says author Tolliver, Gore continued to have some professional success until her death about a year ago, with a few minor hits but mostly as a songwriter and in golden-oldies circles. As for her personal life, she enjoyed a decades-long relationship with another woman, which was something her 16-year-old, 1963-self hadn’t dared to do.

When a book starts out with a foreword entitled “Rustin home OK’d as state landmark” you can be sure that there is an open-mic opportunity where anything is fair game. $10 9:00 pm Underdog

As you would’ve loved reading more about Gore’s personal life—Tolliver hints at some tumult or it consists of reconstructed conversations. “I would’ve loved reading more about Gore’s personal life—Tolliver hints at some tumult with the woman she loved—but, instead, we’re plunged back into more about her flagging career. Even that could have been more interesting, were it given a less-chatty spin.”

Overall, I think there’s an audience for You Don’t Own Me, probably with “audient fans” or music-industry folks only for the rest of us, well, you won’t own this book, either.

Want more? Then look for Quincy Jones: His Life in Music, by Clarence Bernard Henry; or Like Me: Confessions of a Heartland County Singer, by Chely Wright.

New Year’s Day 5K on lakefront
Chicago’s 31st annual New Year’s Day (NYD) 5K Run/Walk will take place Jan. 1, 2016. The NYD 5K’s course is north along the lakefront bike path to Diversey Harbor before returning to North Avenue. A portion of run/walk proceeds will benefit the Chicago’s Windy City Games, a non-profit organization that focuses on health, community building for Black lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and girls. For more information and to register, go to WindyCityGames.com.

The 2016 version of ChicagoAutoShow.com will have, among other things, historical videos and social-media integration that is purportedly smoother than in years past. The website’s “Vehicles on Display” section adds real-time inventory from Chicagoland’s new-car dealers, provided by DriveChicago.com. This allows the visitor to sift through more than 40,000 new cars directly on ChicagoAutoShow.com as they are browsing their favorite vehicles.

Friday, Jan. 22
Are We Still Fabulous? Are LGBTQIs too integrated? A keynote address. Moderated by Brie, director of Gender and Women’s Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Inagurated panel with Richard Gamboa, performance artist and academic; Yainn Nari, PhD, Independent writer and academic; Francesca Ristie, PhD, professor and chair of English at DePaul University and Joseph Varisco, founder and creative director of JRV MAJESTY Productions. $20, $15 members and students. 5:30 pm reception, 6:30 pm program. 10:30pm Chicago History Museum 1601 N Clark Chicago http://chicahistory.org/
MONROE from page 14

Young Adult Medicine at Children’s Hospital. “Teens with a sexual minority orientation are more likely than heterosexual teens to be unaccompanied and homeless rather than part of a homeless family. … These teens face enormous risks and all types of obstacles to succeeding in school and are in need of a great deal of assistance.”

In Luke 2:6-7, it states, “While they were there the time came for [Mary] to have her baby, and she gave birth to a son—her firstborn. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Our birth, as LGBTQ individuals and as a movement, mirrors that of Jesus. It comes at a time where there is still neither room nor tolerance for us—even in 2015, with U.S. Supreme ruling in favor of marriage equality—in some homes and families.

Unfortunately, many of our homeless LGBTQ youth and young adult across this country this holiday season will not have a queer-friendly shelter to go to. And too many will spend the time alone even where homeless LGBTQ shelters across the country will be open because they gravely miss their families and communities.

During this holiday season, let us enjoy the time. Let us make home, if not with biological family, then certainly with beloved friends. But let us also not forget the continued struggle of the LGBTQ homeless youth and young adults searching for home for the holidays.

‘Fabulous’ panel event Jan. 22

As part of its annual “Out at CHM” program, the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St., will host “Are We Still Fabulous?” on Friday, Jan. 22, 2016, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

A reception with refreshments and appetizers will start at 5:30 p.m., with the program commencing at 6:30 p.m.

A panel will weigh, among other things, how LGBTQ individuals identify themselves, now that marriage equality is the law of the land. Jennifer Brier, director of gender and women’s studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, will moderate a panel that will include performance artist/academic/activist Ricardo Gamboa; activist/writer Yasmin Nair, Ph.D.; Francesca Royster, Ph.D., professor and chair of English at DePaul University; and Joseph Varisco, founder and creative director of JRV MAJESTY Productions.

The cost is $15-$20 per person; visit chicagohistory.org.

Davis on ‘Say Yes to the Dress’ Jan. 15

Local transgender figure Precious Davis will appear on the TLC show Say Yes to the Dress on Friday, Jan. 15, according to TransGriot.

The episode (which will air a few days before the Creating Change conference that Davis will help kick off in Chicago on Jan. 29) chronicles her effort to find the perfect wedding dress for her upcoming nuptials with Myles Brady.

ADVERTISE HERE

ADVERTISE HERE: Want to advertise your product, service, etc. to thousands of readers? Place an ad in the Windy City Times! We offer affordable rates, convenient service, and as a bonus, your ad runs in our online section for free. To place an ad, contact Terri at 773-871-7610 ext 101, terri@windycitymediagroup.com, or go to our website http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/placelasclassified.php.

ADULT MALE ENTERTAINMENT

Bored?? WE HAVE THE SOLUTION! Check out: www.gayflix.com. Buy DVDs, Stream Gay Movies, Download them or just Pay Per Minute and watch only the scenes you want to! You will love these xxx gay movies. WWW. GAYFLIX.COM (1/6/16)

BOOKKEEPER AVAILABLE


CLEANING SERVICES

CHESTNUT CLEANING SERVICES: We’re a house cleaning service for homes, small businesses and small buildings. We also have fabulous organizational skills (a separate function at a separate cost that utilizes your assistance) for what hasn’t been cleaned in many months or years due to long-term illnesses, depression, physical/mental challenges, for the elderly, if you have downsized and more. Depressed about going home to chaos? We can organize your chaos, straighten out your chaos, help you make sense of your chaos and finally clean what is no longer chaos. Can we help you? Bonded and insured. Chestnut Cleaning Services: 312-332-6576. www.Chestnut-Cleaning.com (11/23/16-52)

FIREWOOD

GOOD WOOD FIREWOOD

30 Years Experience
PREMIUM SEASONED FIREWOOD
Oak • Apple • Cherry • Birch
No Crisp Cross
No Tree Service Wood
773-975-0251
www.goodwoodfirewood.com

HELP WANTED

ENTREPRENEURAL SPIRITS WANTED. Achieve Personal & Financial FREE-DOM. Help us help you help others. It’s what we do. Earn while you learn to invest VERY PROFITABLY in Real Estate. For a brief online overview, call or text your name to 708-292-8778. (12/28/15-8)

HIRING PATRON SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE. The Leather Archives & Museum is looking for a qualified candidate who will assist museum patrons and operate the museum store as well as perform other administrative tasks at the LASH. Apply ONLINE only at www.leatherarchives.org/nowhiring. html (12/23/15-3)

REAL ESTATE

ONE BEDROOM APTS FOR RENT

EDGEWATER COMMUTER ADVANTAGE. Walk to beach, red line, bus and shops. Large kitchen with pantry and dining room. Big bedroom with unique and large closets. $925 with heat. Plus laundry, video intercom, patio and storage. Call 773-275-3216 (12/30/15-4)

TWO BEDROOM APTS FOR RENT

EDGEWATER COMMUTER ADVANTAGE. Walk to beach, red line, bus and shops. Awesome living room with lots of windows. Big kitchen with pantry. $1150 with heat. Plus laundry, video intercom, patio and storage. Call 773-275-3216 (12/30/15-4)


HOUSE FOR RENT

DEERFIELD SINGLE FAMILY HOME 4 RENT Great little house (900-sqft) available to rent now. WALK to train, grocery, & suburban amenities. Detached garage, HUGES yard, newly refinished wood floors + new floor-ing in kitchen, mudroom, & bath, w/d in unit, newer refrig & stove, central a/c, & in an awesome neighborhood. $2000 / month + utilities. Add $25/month for pet fee. For appt, please call 847-607-9365 (b v msg if no answer) (1/22/15-1)

CLASSIFIEDS

SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

ARE YOU INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED? Are you interested in meeting other LGBTQs like you? Come join the LGBT and Allies Special Interest Group in Chicago Area Mensa. To Inquire, contact-lgbta.us.mensa.org. (4/20/16-22)

WINDOW TREATMENTS

WONDERING WHAT TO DO WITH THOSE WINDOWS? Call me! I take care of it all from design through installation, customizing to your needs. JOSEPH RICE Interiors, Inc. Full Decorating Services with a specialty in window treatments for over 25 years. 773-799-8707. www.JosephRiceInteriors.com (3/9/16-11)

HOME IMPROVEMENT & PAINTING


RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Social Organizations

Are you intellectually gifted? Are you interested in meeting other LGBTQs like you? Come join the LGBT and Allies Special Interest Group in Chicago Area Mensa. To inquire, contact-lgbta.us.mensa.org. (4/20/16-22)

Window Treatments


One Bedroom Apts for Rent

Edgewater Commuter Advantage. Walk to beach, red line, bus and shops. Large kitchen with pantry and dining room. Big bedroom with unique and large closets. $925 with heat. Plus laundry, video intercom, patio and storage. Call 773-275-3216 (12/30/15-4)

Two Bedroom Apts for Rent

Edgewater Commuter Advantage. Walk to beach, red line, bus and shops. Awesome living room with lots of windows. Big kitchen with pantry. $1150 with heat. Plus laundry, video intercom, patio and storage. Call 773-275-3216 (12/30/15-4)


House for Rent

Deerfield Single Family Home 4 Rent Great little house (900-sqft) available to rent now. Walk to train, grocery, & suburban amenities. Detached garage, HUGES yard, newly refinished wood floors + new flooring in kitchen, mudroom, & bath, w/d in unit, newer refrig & stove, central a/c, & in an awesome neighborhood. $2000 / month + utilities. Add $25/month for pet fee. For apt, please call 847-607-9365 (b v msg if no answer) (1/22/15-1)
Want to look FABULOUS for the holidays?

Botox $16 per unit
Dermal Fillers
$750 per syringe
now through January 2016
All injections performed by a board-certified surgeon

Shifrin Plastic Surgery
680 North Lake Shore Drive #1425
312-590-3572 www.davidshifrinmd.com

Mention WINDY CITY TIMES and get $500 off liposuction through January 2016.

Sheila Shifrin DO
Board Certified Oculoplastic Surgeon
Specialist in Eyelid, Midface and Brow Rejuvenation with Surgery, Botox and Fillers

Discover what others know ...

Award-Winning Plastic Surgery
DR. DAVID SHIFRIN
Board-Certified Plastic Surgeon
CHICAGO • 312.590.3572
680 N. Lake Shore Dr.
www.davidshifrinmd.com