

# HOLIDAY FILM AND THEATER TREATS



Make way for holiday entertainment! This week, we feature Mitchell Fain (right) and his new production, *This Way Outta Santaland* (and other Xmas miracles), as well as columnist Richard Knight, Jr.'s holiday movie offerings and more.

Right: Mitchell Fain. Photo by Jay Kennedy  
Below: (L-R) Kate McKinnon, Jason Bateman, TJ Miller and Olivia Munn in *Office Christmas Party*.

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## TRANS MISSION

Trans Day of Remembrance observed.  
Photo of ResonaTe member Chiqui by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

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## NATHAN LANE

Out actor part of slate of Broadway shows.  
Photo of John Slattery and Nathan Lane by Julieta Cervantes

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Photo courtesy of Alcaraz

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Company works to create more LGBT-friendly spaces.  
Photo of Bronson Pettitt and Ahmed Avendano courtesy of the couple

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**RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE**  
Bev Rage (left) is among those profiled in the latest Bent Nights music column. Photo by Vern Hester

### ONE ON (SAN) JUAN



WCT took in the sights (smells and tastes) of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Photo by Andrew Davis

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WCT talks with Carlos Thomas, an out member of the percussion group Stomp. PR photo

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Bronson Pettitt and Ahmed Avendano. Photo courtesy of the couple

## Airbnb to provide more LGBT-friendly spaces in Chicago

BY ANGELIQUE SMITH

Airbnb is looking to grow its LGBT host base throughout Chicago amidst an updated anti-discrimination effort.

Windy City Times spoke with two Chicago-based couples—Mat Olson and Randy Heite as well as Bronson Pettitt and Ahmed Avendano—about their experiences as hosts.

Bronson Pettitt: When we lived in Mexico City, we had this family who were from Germany and traveling with a 4-year-old. They were a lot of fun and we just so happened to come across them in Thailand. It was really random and we still kind of keep in touch.

Mat Olson: I think some of our favorite guests—Mike and Kate from Perth, Australia—have stayed with us about four times now and are really drawn to the Midwest. They'll actually stay with us for four nights, then they'll go off to Minnesota, Minneapolis or Madison for a week, then they'll come back to us for another week before heading back to Perth. They feel like family and they're actually already planning their trip for next year.

Randy Heite: Rodney from Brazil, whose company set him up in Chicago to take a course in English. He stayed with us for eight weeks and we really got to know him well. We signed him up with us to serve beer at the City Made Fest here in Andersonville; he really lived like a local. Then there's Joan who stayed with us for several months and she knew she wanted to live in Andersonville, so Mat and I took her shopping for apartments and now Joan is a neighbor.

**Windy City Times: It sounds like you have a lot of long-term stays.**

Heite: We do. It's funny because you really get to know people.

Olson: We also have a lot of repeat guests, I'd say about 30-40 percent of our guests. Another 10-15 percent are long term, two weeks or more.

Heite: About 35-40 percent [are LGBT] and most of those are international guests. I think that international guests are looking for LGBT-friendly areas and it's more comfortable for them.

**WCT: What would you say is something unique to your home that people would enjoy?**

Olson: The most unique thing about our house is our yard. All of our Airbnb guests love to hang out there or go into our garden. It's a huge space that we encourage all of our guests

to use. I would say that from our reviews, that's the most loved part about their experience.

Heite: I also think that since Mat and I are really involved in the block club and we're close to our neighbors, when we have Airbnb guests and neighbors drop by or happen to be walking past in front, they talk to the guests and that gives this very welcoming feeling.

Pettitt: We like to interact with our guests, though we respect their privacy, too. Sometimes we'll have a guest who just wants to go out during the day to do touristy things and just come back to sleep. Sometimes, if they want to be with us, we'll take them out to our parties, take them to Boystown. We stay with other Airbnb hosts, too, and they don't always offer that level of interaction or socialization. We like having that option so, when a guest arrives, we're open to whatever to make their stay a nice experience.

**WCT: You mentioned that you sometimes take people out to Boystown. As members of the LGBT community, have you ever had any kind of issues with guests or hosts?**

Ahmed Avendano: Not really. I mean, in our profile it is very explicit that we are gay just to try not to get in a situation where someone books our place and then realizes that they wouldn't be comfortable. I'm not sure how many times we've been skipped, if we even have, but we've hosted a lot of straight couples, a lot of girls ... mostly girls, because I think maybe girls feel more comfortable. One time we hosted a group of four girls who were backpacking from Eastern Europe.

Pettitt: It was kind of a tight fit for that many people in our apartment.

Avendano: But they were extremely nice! At first, I was a little bit shaky thinking about being in the same place with four girls, like ... oh my God, what's going to happen, especially with the bathroom? But they were very fun and I think we even asked them why they stayed with us and it was because they saw that we've traveled around the world and that would help with the connection.

Heite: For us, it's been an amazing experience across the board. And I think that's because the people who are using Airbnb are very open minded, very friendly, interested in each other, the hosts and the experience. It's really been eye-opening to find what people have in common more than they don't. Gay is one of those things that's just part of who you are.

**Next:** Airbnb will discuss how it plans to tackle racial and anti-LGBT discrimination.

## GUEST COLUMN

BY ROIANN PHILLIPS



### 10 ways to support friends who are parents going through divorce

There are shelves and shelves of books on birth, death, illness, marriage, loss and the stages of grief, describing what you might expect, how to cope, and how to support friends and family. What I have not yet discovered—and mind you, I'm a newly divorced mom, so I haven't been searching long—are guideposts for friends and family members who are close to divorce.

How do you activate your village in the middle of a divorce? I find it's hard to put into words what I need while I'm grieving.

Very recently, I moved out of our family home and into my own place, and I opened a new bank account. Meanwhile, my ex got a new puppy, who is quite

— **Please listen to me without judgment**—even if what I say tomorrow completely contradicts what I said today. Please accept this, and don't worry that I've taken on a permanent character flaw, flip-flopping on my opinions. I haven't. If I was consistent before, I'll be consistent again. Until then, please just listen.

— **If you can't listen, that's okay.** Not everyone can. I still love you.

— **Are you close to my daughter?** Take her to a movie, or to lunch, or to your house. *Understand this is NOT helpful to all divorcing moms; I may be in the minority here.* We have so little time with our kids now, comparatively, and I miss my daughter every single second we're

not under the same roof—even sometimes during the school day, which isn't something I've felt with such force since kindergarten. For me, though, it's still helpful when you take her on a date. I rely on you to be present for my daughter in this time of upheaval. She needs your love, consistency and support. Heck, she needs to be able to talk about me, and her Mama, with someone

“So I thought: If I share some of how my village has shown up for me, and some of what I've asked them to do, will it resonate with someone else who's struggling to activate their village? Maybe.”

likely the new love of our daughter's life.

Thankfully, I have a community of family and friends-who-are-family, who check-in with me regularly and field my crisis calls and S.O.S. texts with love, kindness, strength and clarity. Sometimes they even know what I need before I do.

So I thought: If I share some of how my village has shown up for me, and some of what I've asked them to do, will it resonate with someone else who's struggling to activate their village? Maybe.

Here are a few ideas for supporting friends and family through the grief of divorce, from a newly single mom in the thick of it:

— **Invite me to dinner.** Or coffee. Or lunch. I may turn you down. I may turn you down five times in a row. As much as I need your support, it's exhausting to socialize right now. It's not personal. Please don't stop asking.

— **It's okay to invite me without my kid,** but understand that—at least for awhile—I will turn you down during my parenting time. I only have the kid half-time now, and I hate to separate from her. This is not unhealthy. This is not enmeshed. This is my reaction to the crisis of our upturned life. On the other hand, if she makes plans with her own friends, you can trust me to let her go. I will, in fact, encourage her to go. I'm not a monster. I just miss her when she's not with me.

— **If you stop by for coffee right after I move** and I ask you to bring your own sugar because I don't have any yet, please hand me the sugar with grace and humor. I promise I'll offer it back to you once I've poured your coffee.

who loves her—an adult who isn't me, and isn't Mama. She also needs to just be a kid, and forget her parents are in the midst of a divorce! I can't give her that, but you can.

— **Take the dog for half an hour** because you know she's been neglected in the chaos. Run her. Play with her. Give her your full attention.

— **Send me movie suggestions** for popcorn nights with the kid.

— **Remind me I am good enough**—right now—for my daughter. Promise me I'll make it through.

— **See my grief for what it is:** Grief. Don't expect me to rush through it. I'm already putting that pressure on myself. What I need from you is grace.

It's still hard for me to seek or accept support sometimes, but I can't imagine how I'd make it through alone. Divorce is humbling and my gratitude is vast.

Thank you to my village—this means you, too—thank you for showing up.

Did something here resonate? Is there something you would add? Connect with me on Twitter: @OPgrrl



RoiAnn Phillips and Harley.

RoiAnn Phillips blogs about co-parenting, adoption and other things at *Are You the Babysitter*, <http://areyouthebabysitter.wordpress.com>.



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## POLITICS

# Mike Quigley talks VA, Trump and the 2017 Congress

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-Ill.) has been a fierce champion of LGBTQ rights on Capitol Hill.

Vice-Chair of the Congressional LGBT Caucus and founding member of the Transgender Equality Taskforce created last year, Quigley has led the charge on issues ranging from lifting Food and Drug Administration (FDA) prohibitions on gay and bisexual men donating blood to marriage equality and transgender rights.

However, with Donald Trump's Electoral College win on Nov. 8 alongside a Republican controlled Congress, the always uphill climb for Quigley and his colleagues has become decidedly steeper.

Anti-LGBT signals are already coming from the incoming Trump administration with the appointment of Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) as attorney general along with rabid opponent of LGBT rights Vice President-elect Mike Pence overseeing the transition team.

Meanwhile, the Veterans Administration (VA) announced it would no longer proceed with a plan to cover gender-confirmation surgeries for the nearly 150,000 transgender military veterans who rely upon its services.

In a statement released Nov. 17, Quigley stated, "Our transgender veterans serve our country with the upmost courage and commitment, and they deserve the medical care needed to lead happy, healthy lives."

"I am extremely disappointed by the VA's announcement to withdraw their plan to offer medical procedures to treat gender dysphoria,

a change I was proud to support earlier this year," he added. "Outdated and discriminatory restrictions should not interfere with our service members' receipt of fair treatment and quality care."

Quigley also spoke with Windy City Times on what the 115th Congress, a Trump administration and a possible anti-LGBT Supreme Court nomination will mean for both the work of his caucus and LGBT civil rights in 2017 and beyond.

**Windy City Times: Democrats are clearly reeling from the election results. What are you doing to regroup at this point?**

Mike Quigley: Well, you're right. I've never personally won an election by 40 votes and, at the end of the night, felt like I had lost by 40 votes. We had a meeting with the caucus, [House] leader [Nancy] Pelosi and the rest of the leadership team. It's as simple as getting up every morning, going to work and working on the issues we always have. We have to remember that Mrs. Clinton won the popular vote. Three states that were 1 percent (and Florida was close) determined the electoral process. You combine the fact that perhaps the Clinton campaign team should have focused more on Michigan and Wisconsin, the [FBI Director James] Comey stuff and the issues of healthcare costs, and it was a perfect storm at the end.

How do we regroup? You rebuild, learn from what took place and move forward. You see what common ground, if any, you have with the new administration and then you work together and, where there's differences, you fight



U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (R-ILL.).  
Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

as hard as you possibly can.

**WCT: A lot of people in the community are concerned about these cabinet appointments.**

MQ: The appointment [of Steve Bannon] was as disturbing as any of it. Our next vice president signed a draconian anti-LGBTQ religious-liberty law just last year, he supported conversion therapy as a member of Congress, he said that marriage equality would lead to societal collapse and his words were "homosexuality is a choice." That is scary stuff for a guy who is leading the transition team and who some are calling "the rational voice in the room."

**WCT: Are there enough moderate Republicans in the Senate that extremist appointments could be blocked?**

MQ: I don't know what the Republican strategy is going to be. You've heard of the nuclear option [overruling a 60-vote confirmation by a majority vote]. Do I think there's some rational Republicans over there? Yeah. Do I think they have enough courage to balk the Tea Party and a president popular within his own party? I don't know and that's what concerns me.

While I was somewhat encouraged by the president-elect's comments on marriage equality that it remains the law of the land, when he appoints an arch-conservative [to the Supreme Court], which apparently he is of a mind to do, that man or woman is there for life and they're not going to call President Trump and say "How do you want me to vote on this?" If you're an archconservative on issues, it's unlikely that the one issue you're going to be liberal on is marriage equality, no matter what the president says.

**WCT: What about Trump's threat to strike down executive orders?**

MQ: This has been the worst Congress in the history of the United States on the environment. While it is not an issue specific to the community, it's important to all of us and [Trump] can strike all of those things down. He can walk away from the Paris Treaty. By appropriations internally and appointments, he can do a tremendous amount of damage.

Everything the president has tried to do dealing with immigration and refugee issues, Trump can tell State "we're not bringing anybody over."

I was in the [refugee] camps in Jordan and I saw, first-hand, the problems that exist

there and the kind of country we should be. [Trump] can reject all of that. With an arch-conservative House and Senate, it's going to be very hard for me, as the only appropriator in Illinois, to help us with the things that we care about: HIV funding, research needs, aid to people with HIV; dozens of appropriation matters that are going to make a big difference to us. Three more states won in the Senate would have made a world of difference. It keeps me up at night,

**WCT: Is there any counter-strategy at all being discussed?**

MQ: We don't know just what the new president will do and how far he will go. We don't know how House and Senate Republicans will act as a body, how unified they will be. Our job is to appeal to the American public and those moderate sensibilities to not go back in time and reduce these rights that exist and then focus on the Senate and the House in 2018. Our job is to message, to fight with every vote we have and leverage every vote we have.

It's hard to imagine that the Tea Party people are going to be happy about raising the debt ceiling. My job is to leverage every time the White House needs Democratic support to the maximum extent possible; to protect individual rights, the environment, a woman's right to choose; all the things that are our core principles. Also to drive resources back to Chicago. [Trump] has said there will be no federal aid to sanctuary cities. My answer is "Oh, yeah?" We are going to devise every strategy possible to leverage whatever influence we have to push the new president, House and Senate Republicans to do the right thing. We're working on it. We're doing the best we can. It's a painful lesson that elections matter.

**WCT: A lot of folks want to run in 2018 as outsiders or Democrats to try and turn Trump into a lame duck after two years. Feasible?**

MQ: I would always encourage as many people as possible to get involved, to the greatest extent possible, in politics; voter registration and education programs, recruiting candidates, being a candidate. Being a state rep or senator, alderman or county commissioner, being on your local school council matters. I would strongly encourage everyone to get involved and not to give up. You give up and all hope is lost.

## Center hosts 'A Call to Rise' community meeting

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

In the aftermath of the Nov. 8 election results, Center on Halsted hosted a community meeting—entitled "A Call to Rise"—Nov. 16 for LGBTQ people and their allies to gather together and discuss next steps.

The Center's newly appointed COO, Kim Fountain, told the approximately 100 people in attendance that after the election results were called in favor of Donald Trump, the phone lines at the Center lit up with people calling in a panic about what might happen next regarding LGBTQ equality. Fountain said the same situation happened with other LGBTQ organizations and organizations focused on other minority groups in the city.

"People were reaching out across identities to make connections because what we understand now more than ever is we need each other," said Sheridan.

Sheridan asked that everyone think about their individual talents and what gets them fired up so they can fight back.

Following Fountain's remarks, Vanessa Sheridan—musician and the Center's director of transgender programs and community engagement—quoted the late journalist Gwen Ifill and performed an original song, "Keep on Rising Up."

Fountain called on attendees to suggest ideas for small groups focused on specific issues/actions to continue the conversation during the second half of the event. Some of the suggested groups were direct-action organizing, action through the arts, teach ins, intersectional work across minority groups,



Kim Fountain.  
Photo by Tracy Baim

the role of white allies in helping minority groups, social media campaigns, activism through writing, designing multimedia websites, how to be effective as a public speaker, micro-financing social-justice work, assisting transgender people in getting their documents updated, how to navigate hostile co-workers or the workplace in general and protecting oneself electronically from government surveillance. One woman also offered 'mom hugs' for anyone who needed it.

The Center had behavioral health counselors on hand for those who needed someone to talk to and a white cloth where people could express themselves in written word and/or drawings that will be on display within the building.

A number of individuals announced future events, including a post-election action forum Monday, Nov. 28, at Lakeview Presbyterian Church, 716 W. Addison St., at 6 p.m. The Center said it will create a Facebook page for people to post more upcoming actions and events.

## Leaders ask Trump to condemn hate acts

Labor, civil-rights and faith leaders and others called on President-elect Donald Trump to denounce the hundreds of hate-fueled acts of harassment, vandalism, property destruction and even assault that have happened since his election.

Speaking at a news conference Nov. 18 were American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten; the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II; Maureen Costello, of the Southern Poverty Law Center; Nancy Zirkin, of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; University of Michigan postdoctoral fellow Austin McCoy; and Scott Kasten, a Minneapolis teacher.

More than 100 groups, representing more than 10 million people, have signed on to a letter to the president-elect (and delivered to him Nov. 18) from the AFT's Weingarten and the SPLC's Costello calling on him to denounce the hate acts and the ideology that is driving them.

The letter (at [AFT.org/sites/default/files/ltr\\_aft-splc-trump\\_111816.pdf](http://AFT.org/sites/default/files/ltr_aft-splc-trump_111816.pdf)) includes signatures from organization and people such as the National Center for Transgender Equality, NARAL Pro-Choice America, Rev. Al Sharpton, the Human Rights Campaign, Pride at Work, the Bully Project, Badass Teachers Association and the Tyler Clementi Foundation.

# Gaylon Alcaraz's radical journey

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Gaylon Alcaraz is a self-described radical. An activist in different capacities, she is passionate about certain topics, most of which she has what she has experienced herself. What they all have in common is social justice.

"I'm not the type of person that can sit back and watch stuff happen and not do anything about it," said Alcaraz. "I don't agree with that logic. How can you want some change or you're going to complain, but you're not going to step up and contribute your voice to it. I've always just been very vocal. All human beings have the right to live in a just society."

Alcaraz grew up in different parts of Chicago, having lived on the South and North sides. Part of her radical nature formed when she was a student at Queen of Peace High School in Burbank, Illinois. It was her late father's wishes that she went there and her mother saw it through. She said she was one of about 30 Black girls at the school.

"That contributed to who I am today and in terms of how I view racism and privilege and class and society," said Alcaraz, feeling glad her parents made her go to Queen of Peace.

Alcaraz added that, during the same period of time, seeing her mother having difficulty in finding stable, affordable housing was the other entry point of her activism.

She has taken this passion to her position as a consultant doing non-for-profit management with Project Fierce Chicago. She started as the organization's project administrator in July 2016. Project Fierce Chicago is a grassroots collective of radical social workers, youth advocates and other community members who work to create community-driven and identity-affirming housing in Chicago.

"This is about providing transitional housing for LGBTQ youth," said Alcaraz about Project Fierce Chicago. "I wanted to be a part of that. Housing is a right and everybody deserves housing. Some of the most marginalized and vulnerable people lack safe housing. So, to come to a project where there's all these radicals, these activists, these social workers, these amazing LGBTQ people thinking and envisioning something different like reimagining how housing could look—I wanted to be involved with that."

Alcaraz added she is doing everything in her power to raise money for the organization, which includes writing grants, using her networking and fundraising background.

"I'm a radical," said Alcaraz. "I'm not a traditionalist and a lot of these non-for-profit organizations are very traditional and capitalist; and that's not who I am. One of the main things that Project Fierce does is we do not take any governmental grants because of the capitalism. They brought this building out right from fundraising and I am drawn to that. That is a new way to look at the world around us. We don't need capitalism. It can be another way; we have to reimagine what that looks like. I like the fact that they're radical, they're non-conforming, they're non-traditional, and they're just doing little bit by little bit to make this major change and this shift in how we think."

Alcaraz is a founding board member of Affinity Community Services. She was also executive director of the Chicago Abortion Fund for almost 10 years. There, she worked within the reproductive justice/rights/health movement, advocating for low-income women looking to control their reproductive freedom. Being in that position, she said, was a learning experience and it gave her the opportunity to stand up for women's reproductive rights.

"Anywhere that I see a need, I try to jump into it," said Alcaraz of the work she does with various organizations.

In the last few years, Alcaraz has gotten her

bachelor's and master's degrees. Currently, she is in her second year at National Louis University, earning her doctorate.

Even in the informal sense, Alcaraz explained how she practices her activism, saying, "The personal is political." The mother of two adult children (and grandmother of one) said it happened when her daughter wanted to join the Girl Scouts as a child. Alcaraz remembered every troop being all white, and she wanted her daughter to have positive images of herself. That was when Alcaraz decided to go through the troop leader training, start her own troop and be the positive image for her daughter.

Alcaraz's self-published book *Tales of a Woojehhead* is about her thoughts and experiences. One of the main stories of the book, she pointed out, is her being a survivor of domestic abuse.

Adding to her personal accomplishments, Alcaraz has gone through her own journey. Her weight loss journey began four and a half years ago and she has since lost about 150 pounds.



Gaylon Alcaraz.  
Photo courtesy of Alcaraz

This past October, she completed the Bank of America Chicago Marathon. This was her third marathon, having run two others in 2014. This one, however, was dear to her heart, as she was running in her hometown. She also felt pressed to give it her all.

"I know our time on this Earth is fleeting and so you should be able to live how you want to live, which has played out in my entire life around my activism," said Alcaraz.

Pushing through some health-related obstacles, she finished the race running. During the race, she got a special shout-out, over the speakers, from the announcer. She described when she heard the marathon watchers cheering for her from that announcement, she knew she couldn't stop. Getting emotional, she shared that it was difficult, but she would not allow herself to be photographed crossing the finish line walking.

During her journey, she has joined a few running groups that she calls her running family and she has become a running coach at Fleet Feet.

"I think the most important thing is to be in the moment," said Alcaraz on what advice she would give to others undergoing a journey. "Experience and be in the moment. We don't have to be on anyone's timetable. It's a journey."

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# Trans individuals of color suggest solutions to violence, bias

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

With this year's Transgender Day of Remembrance now honoring the most transgender individuals murdered in the United States in a single year, and with fears of increased transphobia after this year's presidential election, a meeting that Pride Action Tank, Brave Space Alliance and Windy City Times hosted at the downtown offices of the Chicago Community Trust (CCT) Nov. 17 was not simply a matter of good timing but urgent necessity.

Moderated by DAB of Consulting Director Xavier Danae MaatRa, transgender individuals of color and noted community leaders LaSaia Wade, Eisha Love, Emmanuel Garcia, Reyna Ortiz and Beverly Ross presented an open dialogue concerning desperately needed improve-

"Not only are trans women disassociated from the cis hetero community, we also experience a disconnect from the LGBT community as well," Ortiz said. "We need to connect resources to the trans community in general."

Ross discussed the need for a major citywide media campaign to create visibility for transgender people of color internal to the LGBTQ community and external to Chicago and Cook County. The campaign would be targeted toward law enforcement, emergency services, healthcare providers, retail outlets and others and would focus upon the lives of transgender people of color in order to create sensitivity, safety and resources.

Wade verbalized the need for spaces by and for transgender and gender nonconforming people of color particularly on the South and



Attendees at the Nov. 17 roundtable.  
Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

ments in resources for transgender and gender nonconforming people of color to leaders and representatives of advocacy groups across the city including Chicago House, Lambda Legal, the ACLU of Illinois, Howard Brown Health, Affinity, CCT, the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, Association of Latinos/as Motivating Action, Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, Test Positive Aware Network, the Transformative Justice Law Project (TJLP), the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC), the Center on Halsted, Heartland Health Outreach, Project Fierce and Equality Illinois.

According to Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim, the meeting "came out of the murder of [Chicago trans woman of color] T.T. Saffore this summer, a vigil that was subsequently held and meetings with [Chicago House TransLife Care Program Project Manager] Channyn Lynn Parker and LaSaia Wade of Brave Space Alliance about ways we can move the dialogue forward between communities. This is a starting point."

The ideas explored were the result of a Nov. 13 gathering of almost 20 transgender people of color from across Chicago who formulated actionable steps from a statement of demands released during the Oct. 6 vigil for Saffore.

"I am only 29 and I've lost 30 friends. This past week, I've lost three," Wade said. "This is an emergency now more than ever. We've slowly tried to reach the table and we've constantly been denied at it. This past week, we've known 300 reports of hate crimes [against] the LGBT community. A trans woman in the South had her truck was burnt with the word 'Trump.'"

West sides of the city where the dearth of advocacy organizations is as critical as the need.

Wade noted that the 24-hour, free services offered by the proposed spaces should include safety from violence, opportunities for trans elders and youth to talk and learn from one another, peer-to-peer counseling and medical advice, job training and professional development.

Increased geographic diversity was also emphasized by Ortiz, who has been working extensive hours at Taskforce, presently the only trans advocacy organization on the West Side, and they are struggling to survive. Ortiz suggested community liaisons to connect South, Southwest, West and Northwest side transgender individuals to the LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS services offered on the North Side.

Wade also suggested ways in which advocacy groups could be accountable in programming and leadership opportunities for the transgender community of color, whether through board incentives, job fairs, cultural sensitivity training, more comprehensive grant applications, grant writing support, and ensuring that trans applicants are not eliminated from employment if a background check should determine arrest or incarceration for an activity of survival.

Love, who was jailed in a maximum security men's division of the Cook County Jail for nearly four years without a trial, reinforced the need for housing and holistic health as well as the need for more advocates in the Cook County Department of Corrections (CCDOC) who are representative of both trans feminine and



From left: Reyna Ortiz, Emmanuel Garcia, Eisha Love, LaSaia Wade and Xavier Danae MaatRa.  
Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

trans masculine individuals.

"If it hadn't been for Channyn, I don't think I would be here today, free right now to talk with you," Love said. "We need help. People are coming out of jail and have nowhere to go."

Solutions included housing opportunities that would take trans people off the streets and allow them to be self-sustaining, the integration of trans youth and adult issues into general homelessness services, a sustained fight against police brutality toward transgender women of color, and safety training for transgender sex workers.

Finally, both Wade and Baim offered ideas to improve fundraising efforts, including a tithing from community groups of \$25-per-\$100K-budget each month for the next two years,

fiscal sponsorship for transgender and gender nonconforming start-up organizations and enhanced fundraising partnerships with existing nonprofits.

All of the leaders in attendance expressed support of the concept of working better together to create solutions and more resources and inclusion of trans and gender nonconforming people of color.

Organizers hope that a timeline of attainable and measurable goals for inclusion of transgender and gender nonconforming people of color in agency staff and board functions can be created by no later than March 2017. The first step will be creating an asset and deficit map of current resources available to trans and gender nonconforming individuals in Chicago.



Chef Shiame Wilcoxon (center) and volunteers from Omega Pi Psi and Humble Hearts.  
Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

## 5th Friendship Dinner for youth held at Center on Halsted

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

The 38 LGBT youth experiencing homelessness who arrived for the 5th annual Friendsgiving Dinner put together by Team 101 Chicago at the Center on Halsted's Youth Center Nov. 19 was down from the numbers who attended the four previous years. However, for Chef Shiame Wilcoxon and her team of volunteers from Omega Pi Psi and Humble Hearts, that was good news.

"The first year we had about 50, the second about 100," Wilcoxon told Windy City Times. "So it's starting to taper off but that's good because it means that the kids are moving on to better things."

However, for those who were there to enjoy a delicious, full Thanksgiving turkey dinner, there was also a raffle and the opportunity to receive a Youth Excellence Award alongside a scholarship created in the name of dedicated and beloved volunteer Jerri L. Johnson, who passed away in October of this year.

Wilcoxon added that Team 101 Chicago will build the scholarship amount over the next five years.

For more information on Team 101 Chicago, visit: [www.facebook.com/Team101Chicago-127974050637516](http://www.facebook.com/Team101Chicago-127974050637516).

# Same-sex couple become official parents on Adoption Day

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

Everyone was smiling Nov. 18 at Chicago's Daley Center when the Cook County Circuit Court as well as the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) hosted its annual Adoption Day—part of the National Adoption Day festivities designed to heighten awareness of kids in foster care and their dreams of a permanent family and home.

Six new families received the official blessing of the court in front of media cameras. The children were wide-eyed at all the attention as they gave testimony before the judges on what kind of things they liked to study in school,

Legos, what they loved most about their new moms and dads cooking and what could use some improvement.

They were then showered with Beanie Babies, backpacks and lollipops while all the grown-ups got was a piece of paper.

For new dads Joe Grissom and Roger Farquharson from Uptown, it was a piece of paper stamped with a seal of approval that had taken four years to earn but worth every moment.

Grissom and Farquharson met at the Chicago Pride and became foster parents before officially adopting Asia and Keil, who were told by the judge that they “won the lotto” with their fathers.



Roger Farquharson (back) and Joe Grissom (front) with attorneys and children Asia and Keil. Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

## Victory, Center, Art AIDS hosting talk, tour Nov. 30-Dec. 1

Victory Gardens Theater, Art AIDS America Chicago and Center on Halsted have announced the two-day World AIDS Day event. “We’re Still Here: HIV/AIDS Then & Now.”

“We’re Still Here: HIV/AIDS Then & Now”—an HIV/AIDS arts and cultural impact panel and performance—is scheduled to take place on Wed., Nov. 30, at 7:30 p.m. at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St. It is free and open to the public.

The panel will include exhibit co-curator Jonathan Katz, Director of Exhibitions Tony Hirschel, Victory Gardens Theater’s Director of New Play Development Isaac Gomez, with Hutch Pimentel as moderator. The panel will be followed by Queer, Ill + Okay performances by Phillip X Blacknbrilliant and Joan Giroux, as well as a short film by Xena Ellison and Elizabeth Mputu.

On Thursday, Dec. 1, a curated tour of the Art AIDS America Chicago exhibit at the Alphawood Gallery, 2401 N. Halsted St., will start at 6 p.m., followed by a pre-show reception and storytelling performances at 7 p.m. at Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave. The evening will conclude with a performance of Karen Hartman’s *Roz and Ray* at 7:30 p.m. at Victory Gardens Theater.

This temporary space has been created in a former bank by the Chicago-based Alphawood Foundation to bring the exhibition to

its only Midwest venue.

Art AIDS America is the first exhibition to explore how the AIDS crisis forever changed U.S. art. Since the first reports of mysterious illnesses in the early 1980s, HIV and AIDS have touched nearly every resident in some way. While acknowledging and honoring the enormous anger, loss and grief generated by the epidemic, the exhibition refutes the narrative that AIDS is only a tragic tangent in U.S. art. Instead, Art AIDS America offers a story of resilience and beauty revealed through the visual arts, and of the communities that gathered to bring hope and change in the face of a devastating disease.

The Chicago presentation of Art AIDS America will feature more than 100 significant contemporary works in a wide range of media—from oil on canvas and photography to three-dimensional installations and video. The artists represented include Judy Chicago, Chloe Dzubilo, Karen Finley, Robert Gober, Félix Gonzalez-Torres, Keith Haring, Jenny Holzer, Derek Jackson, Kia Labeija, Annie Leibovitz, Robert Mapplethorpe, Kiki Smith, Joey Terrill, David Wojnarowicz and Martin Wong. Added to the traveling exhibition exclusively for its Chicago presentation will be works by a variety of other artists, among them major works by famed Chicago Imagist Roger Brown.

See [ArtAIDSAmericaChicago.org](http://ArtAIDSAmericaChicago.org). Also, see [ArtAIDSAmericaChicago.org/events](http://ArtAIDSAmericaChicago.org/events) for a full slate of events in connection with Art AIDS America.

“It’s so amazing to be parents,” Grissom said. “I know a lot of our friends would love to as well and they should. Go for it!”

They planned on celebrating with a brunch after the holidays.

The latest U.S. Census figures cited by Equality Illinois note that there are more than “34,000 same-sex couples in long-term relationships living across the state, and 21 percent of these couples are raising children.”

For more information on adopting a child through DCFS, visit [Illinois.gov/dcf/loving-homes/adoption/Pages/default.aspx](http://Illinois.gov/dcf/loving-homes/adoption/Pages/default.aspx).

## Emanuel: Chicago to remain sanctuary city

In the wake of Donald Trump being elected as the country’s newest president, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel issued a statement saying that the city will remain a sanctuary for immigrants.

Moreover, the city’s 311 operators have been given special instruction to assist anyone with concerns or questions about their status in Chicago or the United States.

“Since the Presidential Election, there has been a sense of uncertainty among many immigrant communities in Chicago and across the nation. I want to assure all of our families that Chicago is and will remain a Sanctuary City,” said Emanuel. “Chicago has been a city of immigrants since it was founded. We have always welcomed people of all faiths and backgrounds, and while the administration will change, our values and our commitment to inclusion will not.”

## Post-election forum Nov. 28

What is being called a “post-election action forum” will take place Monday, Nov. 28, 6-8 p.m., at Lake View Presbyterian, 716 W. Addison St.

The goal of the community forum is to create

space for LGBTQ communities and intersections to live in an environment of equal treatment where all can thrive.

The objectives of the event are to:

—Discuss the protections that are at risk for LGBTQ individuals;

—Learn how the LGBTQ community & other groups are responding; and

—Find opportunities to take action and volunteer.

Event co-sponsors include Equality Illinois, Howard Brown Health, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Test Positive Aware Network, Chicago Black Gay Men’s Caucus, Chicago House, Black Treatment Advocates Network, Association of Latinos/as Motivating Action, Center on Halsted, Pride Action Tank, Affinity Community Services and the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (Vida Sida).

See <https://act.myngp.com/Forms/-317259444831433984?midqs=4479674254350090240>.

## TPAN part of #GivingTuesday

Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) has joined #GivingTuesday, a global day of giving that harnesses the collective power of individuals, communities, and organizations to encourage philanthropy and celebrate generosity worldwide.

This year, TPAN has partnered with Chicago-based fitness professionals for an inspiring #GivingTuesday campaign: #GetMoving.

On Tuesday, Nov. 29, individuals can join TPAN and our #GivingTuesday fitness partners for a series of movement opportunities. People can post on social media how they #GetMoving, and challenge others to do the same.

Occurring this year on Nov. 29, #GivingTuesday launches the holiday giving season and inspires people to collaborate in improving their local communities and to give back in impactful ways to the charities and causes they support.

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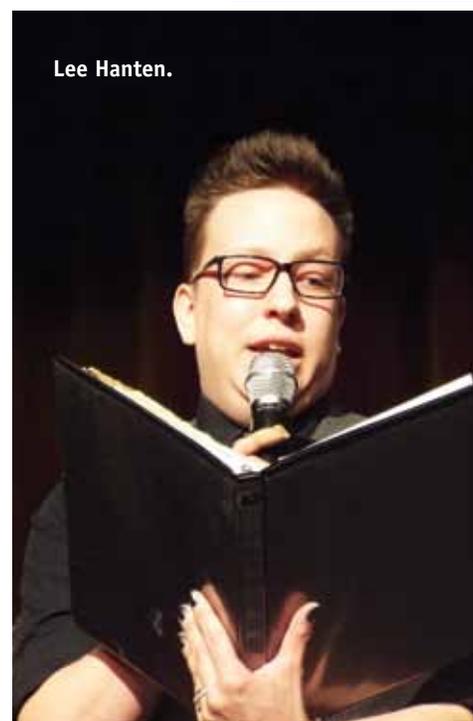
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ResonaTe cofounders Zakary Siler (L) and Liz Jackson Hearn (R) in front of choir members. Photos by Gretchen Rachel Hammond



Lee Hanten.

## Trans Day of Remembrance at Center on Halsted resonates with hope

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

It took the beautifully delivered message of hope provided by Chicago's ResonaTe transgender choir to raise the somber mood of the audience who attended the Transgender Day of Remembrance, Nov. 20 at Lake View's Center on Halsted.

With the number of murders of transgender individuals in the United States at the highest ever recorded and the threat against transgender civil rights presented by the incoming Trump administration, there was reason behind Center Director of Trans Relations and Community Engagement Vanessa Sheridan's welcome.

"We live in times that are perhaps more perilous than ever for trans people," she said before noting the importance of expressing love and respect for the transgender community "in the face of national indifference and hatred" and to "remind cisgender people that we are their daughters, sons, parents, friends, coworkers, neighbors and lovers."

The moment of silence which followed for the transgender fallen seemed as bleak as it was somber.

Then ResonaTe took the stage led by co-founder and executive director Liz Jackson Hearn alongside co-founder and artistic direc-

tor Zakary Siler.

Their program of ethereal ballads mixed with songs of love, loss and hope had the audience on its feet in a jubilant ovation—a testament both to the transformative power of music and the visibly joyous ensemble Hearn and Siler created to flourish it.

"The Trans community does a lot of remembering." ResonaTe member Lee Hanten said in a profound and deeply personal reflection. "We remember childhoods spent answering to the wrong name, we remember the loss of a past self. We remember what life was like before the great gender upheaval and how much better life could be now. We remember the names of strangers who didn't get to see their next birthday. We remember to live our lives loving every moment that we get because too many of them are cut short."

"Today I remember that I am an American," Hanten added. "I remember waiting in line to cast a ballot for the future, the dread watching election results roll in. Mostly, I remember how much our community has already overcome and I refuse to let this sentient glass of Tang pretending to be my president be my undoing. We've done a lot of figuring things out in the past. Let's remember how to do it again."



ResonaTe member Chiqui.



Vanessa Sheridan.

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From left: Billy Stevenson, Jim Huberty, Lori Fox and Gerardo Rodriguez.  
Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

# LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois marks 20 years

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

The LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois took its supporters back in time at Chicago's Ivy Room at Tree Studios Nov. 17. Their anniversary gala celebrated the 1893 Chicago World's Fair for what the organization called "a celebration 20 years in the making."

With an eclectic array of exquisite food provided by restaurants including Lettuce Entertain You, RPM Steak, Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba, II Porcellino, Mon Ami Gabi, Nacional 27, Osteria Stato, Summer House Santa Monica, Shaw's and Beatrix as well as performances from belly dancing to acrobatics on display from the Chicago Cabaret Project, guests reveled in the joy of community while honoring the 20 years since Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim and a group of business owners began what Chamber Board Chair Billy Stevenson called "not just a chamber of commerce, but a movement."

"Starting a chamber of commerce [for] the LGBT community is putting an economic face on a social movement," Stevenson said. "Who doesn't pay attention when money talks?"

"We don't know what Jan. 21 [the day after Donald Trump's inauguration] is going to bring, but our business and our community in general will need to be ever stronger," he noted. "With your help and support, we will continue to be your voice."

To that end, Stevenson announced the formation of the LGBT Business Foundation of Illinois, which is an "official 501(c)(3) organization that will work tirelessly to foster LGBT

diversity and advancement for LGBT business opportunities, LGBT workforce development, LGBT small business training and development and LGBT advocacy."

"Every action we have taken this year was strategic," Chamber Executive Director Gerardo Rodriguez said. "Focusing on how we can bring the best services to our community for the years to come."

The Chamber also took the opportunity to recognize seven community-owned businesses, advocacy organizations, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and individuals "demonstrating excellence, innovation and advancing entrepreneurship."

The Government Partner Award was given to U.S. Small Business Administration, Illinois District Office District Director Robert "Bo" Steiner; BP Pride received the ERG Partner Award; Out & Equal's Jim Huberty and Lori Fox were honored for their work; the supplier diversity advocate award was received by Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) Manager of Supplier Diversity LaTonya Forte'-Lyles; the LGBT Entrepreneur Award was given to Events with a K founder and owner Kristofer Sangari; the Corporate Sponsor Partner Award was received by Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises; and Baim was honored with the Founders Award.

The event's co-sponsors included Lettuce Entertain You, Baker & McKenzie, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Windy City Times, Groupon, Miller Coors, Events with a K, Sidetrack and Elements.

For more information on the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, visit [LGBTCC.com](http://LGBTCC.com).



From left: Billy Stevenson, LaTonya Forte'-Lyles and Gerardo Rodriguez.  
Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

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# viewpoints



**Jano  
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## Remembering Neysa

When Neysa (Neesha) Scott walked into a room she neither sought nor shunned attention, yet it followed her like a shadow.

No one knew if it made her nervous or not, she simply handled it with grace. It was hard to ignore her bald head, coco brown skin, and perfectly made-up face, highlighted by colorful lips. She was often dressed in the clothes she designed; the perfect spokesmodel for her wearable creations. She had come to her bald pate as a result of supporting a friend battling cancer many years before, cutting off the hair that women paid handsomely to have sewn in.

Born to Nelson and Alice Scott of Hyde Park in Chicago, she and her younger brother Kenyatta were raised surrounded by an exposure to opportunity and creativity. A close-knit family, Neysa would share with friends the stories of her father taking them to restaurants all over Chicago and collecting the menus for memorabilia.

Three years ago she posted a video that included her mom and brother. In the video her 40-something-year-old brother threatened to do the acrobatic flips from his youth, honed at the Sammy Dyer Dance Academy that both he and Neysa attended as children. In the video, Neysa and mother Alice can be heard giving him warning (that he might be too old for this), with dare and delight in their voices as he demonstrated the flips.

Her parents were avid patrons of African-American artists such as Frank Frazier and emerging artist Najee Dorsey. They were active members in their collectors group, *Diaspora Rhythms*. Their apartment, which was more like a museum, was also a stop on the local art collector's tours. These 'salons' or gatherings, her parents held supported artists and welcomed others in the spirit of an Ernie Barnes painting;

laughter, performance art, food and drinks were plenty. Perhaps it was here where Neysa fully embraced all aspects of her own creativity that needed no apologies or approval from European aesthetics.

During the year their place was often converted into a welcome home for out-of-town artists showing their wares at the Dixon Elementary School Art Festival in March or the African Festival of the Arts, at the end of summer in Washington Park, on Chicago's South Side. Her father's passion for art was so great, that he would bargain with artists for pieces that he fell in love with, hoping he wasn't mortgaging away his retirement and would have room to hang one more work on his wall.

Neysa designed garments in her head, bought fabric, grabbed a pair of sharp scissors and started to cut and pin. Her business, Neysa's Peaces, created art wear that often included painted hats and scarfs (in a Jackson Pollack



**Neysa Scott.**

Photo by Abena Sharon Dale

style), eye-catching shoulder satchels and women's garments with butterfly wings. Her clients were world-renowned singers, pastor's wives, politicians and women who simply enjoyed dressing with an exclamation point. Eventually, she too became a fixture at the African Festival of the Arts, which often felt to her like a family reunion.

In 2004, Neysa joined the Drum Diva's, a

group founded by a woman who would become one of her best friends, Yaounde Olu. The Drum Diva's was the perfect platform for Neysa. She would dance, sing and flaunt her wearable creations. Her personality often brought levity to the group during their extensive rehearsals. Yaounde and Neysa even partnered on a community radio show out of the University of Chicago, WHPK 88.5 FM every Tuesday where they played music, read poetry, told stories like two old friends and allowed the community to listen.

At least twice a year everyone on Neysa's contact list would receive a text announcing that she was taking a personal, spiritual retreat. She would not be answering the phone or being social, the text would announce. This was her moment of intense, focused prayer, self-reflection and cleansing. Her faith was her backbone.

A few years ago, Neysa was hit with the news that both of her parents were beginning to have major health challenges. While this news would destroy some people, she did not ask for sympathy but dug even deeper into her faith. The dutiful daughter gratefully supported her parents. She had been instrumental in helping to raise her nieces and nephews and now she would have to attend to her parents in the same spirit.

Neysa was on the younger end of a generation of friends who had witnessed so much in each other's lives. She was loyal beyond words. Person after person had stories of how she supported them in their time of need. The world of those she touched was shocked by her quick departure. She died Oct. 16 at age 51 of an aneurysm and a stroke, leaving behind those grappling to understand the mysteries of life and death.

In one of the final tributes to Neysa, DJ Wilma posted on YouTube the audio of Neysa reciting a poem, a prayer. Her words, her emotions and delivery felt like a final reading on a life well lived. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqziC3rJ-Fw>). RIP Ms Neysa Scott).

A designer who did not sew and a woman who shared her story, performed from her heart, determined not to die with her creativity in her. Neysa lived out loud.

Also see <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/PASSAGES-Neysa-Scott/57062.html>.

## letters

### Saving land

*The following press release is from Chicagoans, including LGBTQs, who are raising funds to bring donations of cash and supplies to Native Americans and their allies fighting against the pipeline proposed to run through Native lands in North Dakota.*

Observing Thanksgiving requires that we hold the tension between the beauty of familial convenings and the brutality of erasure. While all over the United States communities and families come together to offer thanks for their beloveds and share sacred space, this time is also a representationally white-washed holiday which commemorates and celebrates the lineage of genocide of the Northern American Indigenous People.

It's in reflecting on these truths that facilitators Teresa Pasquale Mateus, Alicia Crosby and a team of volunteers from Chicago, New York and Minneapolis, in an effort to offer up their bodies, time and sacred space to share in community with the indigenous community and

allies already present in prayerful and ceremonial protection at Standing Rock (Cannonball, North Dakota) this Thanksgiving.

Standing Rock Reservation has become the point of standoff between tribes and tribal leaders gathering to serve as Water Protectors to impede the Dakota Access Pipeline which threatens to desecrate sacred lands, native burial grounds, and potentially contaminate the water supply to the reservation. Thousands of people have come together at Standing Rock calling to the nation and the world the reminder to all of us: Mni Wiconi (Lakota for "water is life").

While there are thousands standing at Standing Rock to protect the water there are a number of camps and camps within camps. One of these is the Two Spirit Nation Camp which is the LGBTQIA representative community. There is a long history within a variety of native traditions which not only discusses the two spirit (non-binary) gender and sexuality nature of humankind, but also offers a spiritual dynamic to this personhood. In many of these lineages it describes a sacredness to "two-spirit" per-

sons—who can hold space between places, between genders and sexualities, and as such are a bridge of sorts. This Two Spirit Nation Camp reclaims this ancient wisdom in contemporary native context and offers an affinity space in this movement for those that identify (native or non-native) within the LGBTQIA frame who come to join the Water Protection at Standing Rock.

If you would like to support these efforts you can donate to the effort of this trip you can go to the following link (see below). If you would like to designate funds to the Two Spirit Nation Camp (winter provisions are needed) if you can note in your donation comments when donating and those funds will be earmarked for that community and go towards gift cards they can use at local stores in Bismark, North Dakota.

This trip will be leaving Chicago early Wed., Nov. 23 and returning back late Sunday, Nov. 27.

The link for donations is <https://www.gofundme.com/decolonizethxgiving>.

Teresa Pasquale Mateus

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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# WINDY CITY TIMES

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WCT reviews *La Gringa*.

Photo by Anthony Aicardi

### SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

## Fain and dandy for the holidays

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

For the past eight years, actor/writer Mitchell Fain has been dressing up to be “Crumpet the Elf” in Theater Wit’s annual production of David Sedaris’ *The Santaland Diaries*. But for some reason the rights to the hit one-man holiday show were restricted for 2016.

“As an actor, it’s great to know that I have a gig at the end of the year,” said Fain about all his previous years as a veteran Crumpet.

So with no *Santaland* slated for this year, Fain got the courage to approach Theater Wit artistic director Jeremy Wechsler with the idea of sharing his own holiday-themed stories on-stage. The result is the world-premiere of Fain’s *This Way Outta Santaland* (and other Xmas miracles).

“I just decided to invite people in, we’re going to have a cozy little time and we’re going to tell some stories,” said Fain, emphasizing how the show also stars his dear friend Meghan Murphy (famed for her cabaret persona as “Big Red”).

“Without bias, or actually, with bias, [Murphy] is the best singer-actress in Chicago,” said Fain, also happy to have Second City stalwart Julie Nichols aboard as the show’s music director.

Several of the show’s stories are written and rehearsed in advance, while others will pull from Fain’s improv training and work at The Second City by drawing out tales from the audience. But don’t worry if you’re averse to audience interaction. Fain says it’s more of a conversation instead of making audiences physically doing silly things.

“One of the challenges of doing a one-person show of someone’s story over and over again is to give the audience the feeling that it’s happening for the first time and that it’s personal,” said Fain about keeping *Santaland Diaries* fresh each night. “This time around, since I had the opportunity to do something new, I’m actually going to create that for real.”

Fain is tackling topics like finding home and how the holidays put a spotlight on how a person can fit in (or doesn’t).

“As a gay, Jewish person, the holidays can sometimes feel like they’re not for me or about me,” Fain said. “Also, I think the show is about how we make our own home—create our own families of choice.”

At the very least with *This Way Outta Santaland*, Fain doesn’t risk having audiences confuse him for author/speaker David Sedaris.

“A lot of people don’t know what he looks like,” Fain said. “I can’t tell you the number of times somebody would come up to me afterward and say, ‘David, we love your books.’”

This *Way Outta Santaland* (and other Xmas miracles) plays from Friday, Nov. 25, through Friday, Dec. 23, at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. Tickets are \$20-\$29. A special Windy City Times Night performance is slated for 8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6. Call 773-975-8150 or visit TheaterWit.org.

*Note:* Mitchell Fain is a former co-host of *The Windy City Queercast*, a podcast once produced by Windy City Media Group, which publishes *Windy City Times*.

### Camp for Christmas

There’s no question that actor/writer/artistic director David Cerda is the driving force behind Chicago’s premier camp theater company Hell in a Handbag Productions. But if you were to nominate Hell in a Handbag’s most valuable supporting player or designated scene stealer, that honor would go to actor Ed Jones.

For more than 15 years, Jones has made audience roar with laughter for outrageous Handbag characters in both female and male drag. Jones gets a chance to shine even more as the title character in Cerda’s world-premiere comedy *The Rip Nelson Holiday Spectacular*, a sequel to 2010’s *The Rip Nelson Halloween Spooktacular*.

The has-been actor Rip Nelson is an amalgam of camp actors like Rip Taylor (*The Gong Show*), Charles Nelson Reilly (*Match Game*) and Paul Lynde (*Bewitched*, *The Hollywood Squares*).

“They were campy and they weren’t initially openly gay, it wasn’t ever overtly stated, but it was like a big wink to the audience... I related to them because they were just being themselves and were very flamboyant,” said Jones about first seeing actors like Lynde and Reilly on TV in the 1970s. “So when I got to do this character, it was actually a homage to them.”

The blended character was actually a necessity because Handbag’s original plans to center their 2010 spoof of variety TV specials around Lynde were challenged by the estate that controls the late star’s likeness. But Jones is ultimately glad that he’s not tied to a single celebrity.

“Actually the character is more like me instead of them,” Jones laughed. “As a kid, I wasn’t open about being gay, but I was campy, sarcastic and flamboyant so there’s a lot of similarities to myself.”



Mitchell Fain.

Photo by Jay Kennedy

For the Nelson’s holiday variety show circa 1982, Cerda has taken delight in bringing together all sorts of odd celebrity pairings. The guests include Dom Deluise (Tommy Bullington), Liza Minnelli (Alexa Castevecchi), magician Doug Henning (David Lipschutz) and even Bruce Jenner (Chazie Bly).

“One of the things about the guests we have is like on those TV variety shows of the 1970s and ‘80s, there’s such a weird hodgepodge of guests,” Jones said. “These people would never be in the same room together under any other circumstances.”

Though Jones has performed with other companies like Factory Theater and the old Bailiwick Repertory, he considers Handbag Productions to be his home.

“I’m just a huge fan of [Cerda’s] writing and his comic sensibilities and I love the fact that I’m able to in his shows,” Jones said. “I’ll be in them as long as he’ll have me.”

Hell in a Handbag Productions’ world premiere of David Cerda’s *The Rip Nelson Holiday Spectacular* continues through Friday, Dec. 30, at Mary’s Attic, 5400 N. Clark St. Preview tickets are \$16 through Friday, Nov. 25. Regular run tickets are \$28-\$30 with VIP tickets packages beginning at \$42. Call 800-838-3006 or visit HandbagProductions.org.

## ‘Queer, Ill + Okay’ Dec. 9-17

Joseph Varisco, in association with Oracle Theater, is presenting the fourth year of *Queer, Ill + Okay*, a multidisciplinary performance series featuring LGBTQ artists living with HIV and other chronic illnesses.

*Queer, Ill + Okay* will be presented Dec. 9-17 at Oracle Theater, 1802 W. Bernice Ave.

The featured performers will be Avery R. Young, Angel Katz, Bea Cordelia, Deven Casey, Dirty Grits and Vasilios Papapitsios, Emma Alamo, JuJu Minxx, Kay Ulanday Barret, Lindsey Lee, Lucas Baisch, Michelle Zacarias, Morgan McNaught, Phillip Lambert and Tim’m West.

*Queer, Ill + Okay* is an annual multidisciplinary performance series exploring, challenging and reinventing narratives about the lives of queer individuals and their relationships to HIV and other forms of mental and chronic illness.

Tickets are on sale now [PublicAccessTheatre.org](http://PublicAccessTheatre.org).

## THEATER REVIEW

**[Trans]formation**

Playwright: Various contributors and five devisers

At: Nothing Without a Company & The Living Canvas, Flat Iron Arts Building, 1579 N. Milwaukee Ave.

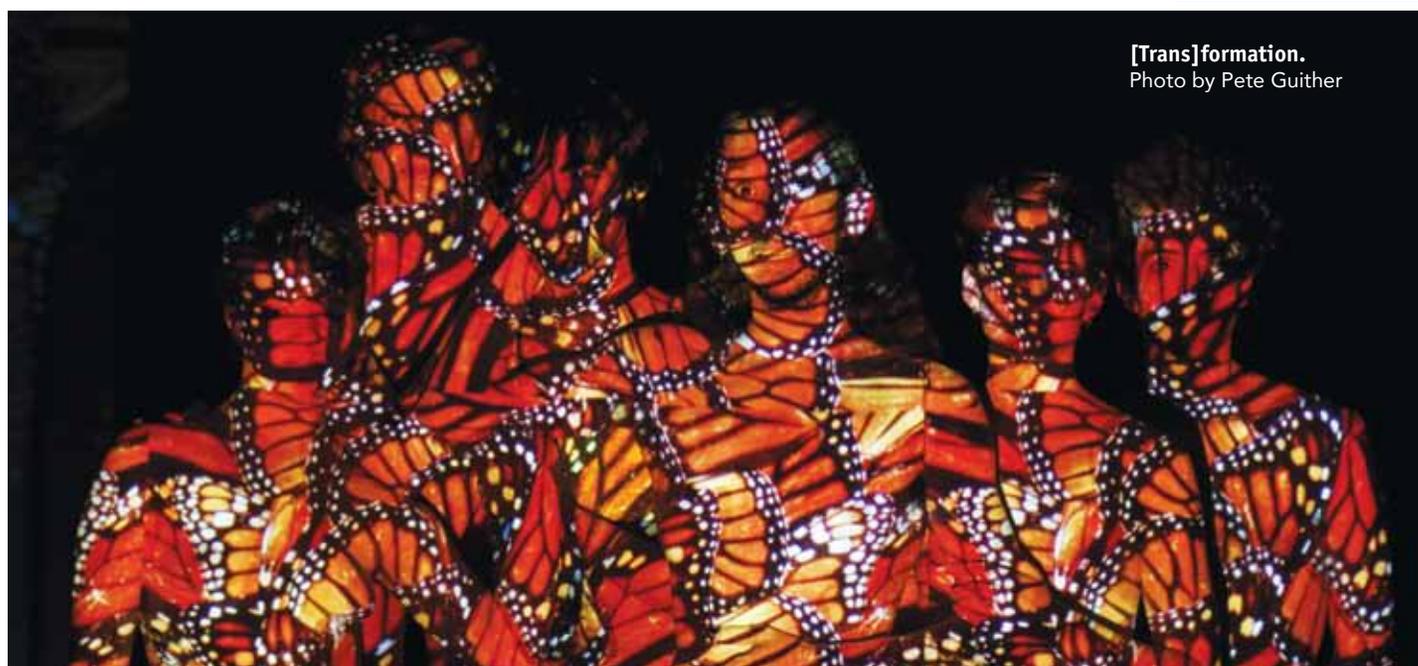
Tickets: NothingWithoutACompany.org; \$30  
Runs through: Dec. 17

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

I had an easy time, compared to many, as a cisgender gay man coming out while also growing secure in my masculinity. I can only imagine the challenges for those who come out as transgender, whether gay/lesbian or not, whether with or without surgical transitioning. [Trans]formation), a new spoken-word and movement work, addresses those issues in a positive, often poetic, and non-confrontational way that stands as a piece of vibrant visual art as much as anything else.

[Trans]formation is performed with a six-person cast who use personal pronouns including he, she, they, "em" and "zhe." All identify as being in some stage of gender transition, some of which is physically apparent as the cast performs the entire piece mostly in the nude. Well, they're perhaps not quite naked, as the company is bathed non-stop in complex projection designs by Chris Owens, making each player part of a living canvas of kinetic art—floral at one moment, aquatic the next and abstract soon after, in a multitude of patterns.

The players tell stories drawn from personal experiences, and they both narrate and in-



[Trans]formation.  
Photo by Pete Guither

terpret as they go. It's no surprise that collectively they have endured bullying, despair, confusion, internal conflict, outsider status, therapy and suicidal thoughts in the process of becoming who they now are, namely trans individuals presenting and expressing themselves with confidence. "We are not computers, we do not need binary," one comments about the traditional male/female divide, while another observes "I've always lived a prisoner to others' perceptions" of how he/she/they should dress, act and identify. Nonetheless, the overall tone avoids angst and is surprisingly playful.

The 90-minute program presents six spoken "chapters" (as the program calls them), divided by dance/movement sequences performed to recorded songs. The choreography by Gaby Labotka (also the director) and Darling Squire is quite athletic and is performed with agility and surprising grace, given that most of the cast are not trained dancers. The songs are not familiar to me, and the lyrics are difficult to understand although the emotional moods of the music seems appropriate. The performers are Gabriel Faith Howard, Ronen Kohn, Lily Jean, Chase Nuerge, Ben Polson and Kevin

Sparrow.

[Trans]formation is quite well done, but will not be to everyone's taste. It qualifies as avant-garde performance work for sure, and yet it has a flower-power vibe as old as my long-past 1970s hippie days. The audience it draws, I suspect, will be folks already converted to the cause of trans progress and rights, and so it will serve much more as a celebratory work than an illustrative one. [Trans]formation holds its head high, although the cause still could use an illustrative or didactic work created for a mainstream audience.

## THEATER REVIEW

**La Gringa**

Playwright: Carmen Rivera

At: Urban Theatre at Batey Urbano, 2620 W. Division St.

Tickets: \$20

Runs through: Dec. 11

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

When your present is boring and/or future uncertain, it's easy to muse upon your past. This search for "roots" may be based in recorded lineage, or may reach back centuries to an age/place/tribe/event rendered all the more mythical by the reluctance of immediate relations to share in your obsession. After all, hasn't the

promise of North America always been that of putting the old behind and making a fresh start in the new?

These factors predispose 22-year-old New York City-raised second-generation Maria Garcia, disgruntled over being perceived as a "token Latina" at her corporate job and jilted by a boyfriend who fears his parents' disapproval, to arrive at her Puerto Rican family's rural home eager to embrace the enchanted island with *brazos abiertos*. What she encounters is cousin Iris unable to find work, neighboring farmer Ramon "Monchi" Reyes reliant on precarious climate conditions and Aunt Norma bitter at having been appointed family caregiver after Maria's mother escaped to an exciting life in foreign lands. Only Uncle Manolo—whose ill health curtailed his career in the theater (but

who mysteriously rallies under Maria's influence)—sympathizes with the young woman's anomie.

Assimilation usually requires at least four generations and concerted effort on the part of those seeking inclusion. Maria is not the first child of immigrant parents to be stricken by ancestor worship, nor the first vacationer to succumb to illusion bred of leisure time, spending money and tourist privilege. The universality of this experience may account for Carmen Rivera's award-winning play now celebrating the 20th anniversary of its off-Broadway run at the Repertorio Español.

Under the direction of Miranda Gonzales, this Urban Theatre Company production (performed in English, with occasional asides in Spanish) remains always faithful to its cultural demo-

graphic, while appealing to audiences of all ethnicities. Sofia Tew makes a charmingly naive Maria and Anthony DeJesus a winsome Monchi, but it is the warmth and vitality conveyed by Frankie Davila's mischievous Manolo, Nydia Castillo's gruff Aunt Norma, Philip Camacho's patient Uncle Victor and NK Gutierrez's restless Iris that ensure our enjoyment right up to the reconciliatory conclusion.

Commendations are also due the technical team—in particular, Caswell James' scenic design and Antonio Bruno's score of ambient *isla bonita* sounds—who conjure pictures of a tropical paradise in the cozy Batey Urbano so inviting that you might leave wanting to book tickets for the Caribbean before winter comes.

## THEATER REVIEW

**King Charles III**

Playwright: Michael Bartlett

At: Chicago Shakespeare Theater at Navy Pier, 800 E. Grand Ave.

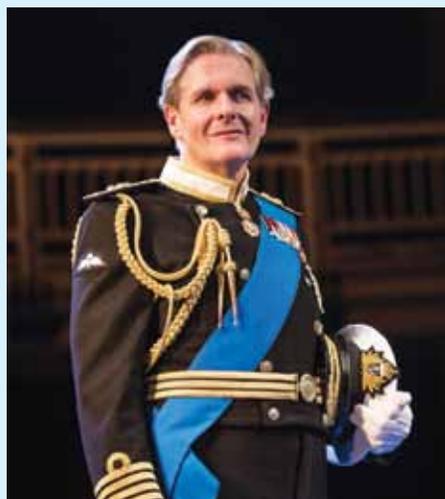
Tickets: \$48-\$88

Runs through: Jan. 15

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Once upon a time, there was a prince who assumed the throne late in life. Vowing to rule wisely, when his advisors proposed a law violating his conscience, he refused to grant his approval, and when his kingdom's voting body objected, he voided their power, throwing his country into turmoil. The ensuing unrest spurred his elder son to depose the royal sire in order to restore peace and unanimity, while his younger son longed only for an "unpredicted life" with his leftist working-class girl friend.

As our own recent election amply demonstrated, governments often surpass sausages and babies as creatures whose manufacture is better left a mystery. Intrigue in high places—especially those recounted in unrhymed iambic pentameter, albeit couched in fluent vernacular—continue to beguile consumers of classic drama and popular television, nevertheless. What distinguishes Michael



Robert Bathurst in *King Charles III*.

Photo by Liz Lauren

Bartlett's speculative play is that the "King Default" is modeled on the person we know in real life as Prince Charles of England. His sons likewise bear a striking resemblance to real-life heirs William and Harry Windsor, as does the former's scheming wife to the Duchess of Cambridge (nee Kate Middleton) and the royal consort to the Duchess of Cornwall (nee Camilla Parker Bowles).

Such a premise might herald a shrill-voiced

Monty Pythonesque farce, or perhaps an academic exercise in counting syllables. Bartlett's industry is not squandered in service of cheap laughs or cheap bathos, however, but instead emerges an astonishingly eloquent and articulate parable of a well-meaning man facing existential crisis when confronted with leadership. By the time Charles reluctantly bows to the will of his subjects and renders his abdication, he is forced to acknowledge his place in the universe as "better the thoughtful prince" than a ruler unable to cope with an inheritance he did not anticipate.

Audiences in the United States have less of a stake in Bartlett's grim prophesy (for the record, Elizabeth II continues healthy and robust at age 90), a factor not lost on savvy director Gary Griffin, whose technical team serves up a sumptuous production, replete with spectacle and soliloquies stitched together by an incidental score ranging from Elger to The Clash. Robert Bathurst leads an ensemble of actors navigating Eva Breneman and Kathryn Walsh's impeccable speeches with a verbal expertise creating characters whose difficult choices arouse our immediate sympathies. In the end, duty triumphs, but romantics can still hope for Alec Manley Wilson's Harry to follow the promptings of his heart, much as his predecessors—his father and Uncle Andrew included—did, not so many years ago.

## CRITICS' PICKS



**Apartment 3A**, Windy City Playhouse, through Dec. 23. Daniel Smith delivers a charismatic portrayal of an aging cupid-ex-machina who rescues lovers from their own foolishness in this deceptively romantic comedy. MSB

**End of the Rainbow**, Porchlight Music Theatre at Stage 773, through Dec. 9. As the entertainer Judy Garland, Angela Ingersoll is heartbreaking and a perfect fit in this strong Chicago premiere of Peter Quilter's drama re-imagining the gay icon's tragic final months. SCM

**The Last Wife**, TimeLine Theatre, through Dec. 18. Big, meaty-but-intelligent performances drive playwright Kate Henning's tale of a woman's survival and power in a man's world, ostensibly about King Henry VIII and Catherine Parr, the only one of Henry's wives to survive him, but very much a modern work. JA

**Rutherford's Travels**, Pegasus Theatre at Chicago Dramatists, through Dec. 4. Charles Johnson's epic yarn of seagoing adventure aboard a slave ship in 1830 draws on classics of the literary genre, making for a likewise thrilling boat-in-a-bottle production. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan



Mary Beth Fisher and James Vincent Meredith in *Roz and Ray*.  
Photo by Liz Lauren

**THEATER REVIEW**

**Roz and Ray**

**Playwright:** Karen Hartman  
**At:** Victory Gardens Theater,  
2433 N. Lincoln Ave.  
**Tickets:** 773-871-3000;  
**VictoryGardens.org;** \$15-\$60  
**Runs through:** Dec. 11

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

There's no denying the heartbreaking and historic resonance of *Roz and Ray*, Karen Hartman's two-actor AIDS drama now making a rolling world premiere at Victory Gardens Theater. Yet it's hard to ignore so many dialogue and characterization pitfalls in *Roz and Ray*, which concludes on a preachy and resigned note that doesn't feel entirely earned.

Hartman wrote *Roz and Ray* to reflect on her late father, who was a pediatric hematologist-oncologist who treated hemophiliac kids from the 1970s through the early 1990s. That's when the HIV virus entered the blood supply with a vengeance. Approximately 90 percent of severe hemophiliacs died from AIDS.

In *Roz and Ray*, Hartman personalizes the crisis down to the 15-year relationship between Dr. "Roz" Kagan (Mary Beth Fisher) and Ray Leon (James Vincent Meredith), a single father of twin hemophiliac boys. The play begins on a playful note in 1976, as Dr. Roz demonstrates to the kids on how to inject the "miraculous" blood clotting medication Factor 8. Then the play abruptly jumps ahead to 1991, with Ray shouting out "Dr. Roz Kagan Killed My Son" in a one-man protest outside a San Diego children's hospital.

Hartman's time-shifting set up unquestionably creates tension and dread as it braces audiences for an upsetting journey. She also does a marvelous job of clearly explaining all the medical jargon in the first few scenes.

Unfortunately, there are several times that Hartman's dialogue doesn't come off as natural. Also, Hartman's decision to make Ray a semi-closeted bisexual feels more like a plot device instead of a believable character. The exchange where Dr. Roz asks pointblank if Ray is gay doesn't dig deep enough to explore Ray's likely self-loathing or denial.

The closing scene of the two making forecasts about the future also suffers from having the playwright's benefit of hindsight coloring the dialogue instead of what the characters might actually know—even if they do make predictions that still have not come true.

If the script for *Roz and Ray* is sometimes disappointing, all the other elements at Victory Gardens are polished and professional—particularly Fisher and Meredith's impassioned performances as they shift from moments of pure elation to angry disgust.

Director Chay Yew keeps things focused atop Tim Mackabee's turntable set that is filled with a jumble of childhood toys and furniture all painted white. Lighting designer Diane D. Fairchild also punctuates the drama to play up particularly ominous moments to eerie effect.

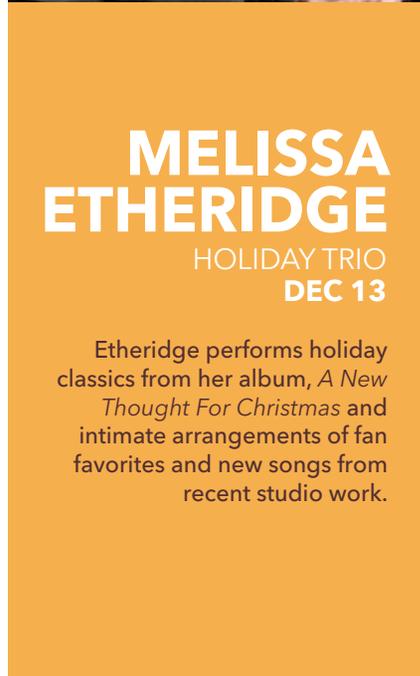
*Roz and Ray* is a bitter pill to swallow as it dramatizes the fear and outrage that came from all directions during the start of the AIDS crisis. Hartman's play is unquestionably a noble and entertaining effort, even if does ultimately fall short.



**KATHLEEN MADIGAN**

THE MERMAID LADY TOUR  
DEC 02

"Along with Lewis Black, Brian Regan and Jim Gaffigan, she's one of the funniest stand-up comedians of her generation."  
-Detroit Free Press



**MELISSA ETHERIDGE**

HOLIDAY TRIO  
DEC 13

Etheridge performs holiday classics from her album, *A New Thought For Christmas* and intimate arrangements of fan favorites and new songs from recent studio work.



**KATHY GRIFFIN**

LIKE A BOSS TOUR  
FEB 18

Two-time Emmy and Grammy award-winning comedian, Kathy Griffin is hitting intimate stages for her latest 80-city *Like A Boss Tour*.



# SPOTLIGHT

Journey back to the 1990s for one of the ice-skating world's most notorious scandals with **Tonya and Nancy: The Rock Opera**. Underscore Theatre Company presents the Chicago debut of composer Michael Teoli and librettist Elizabeth Searle's dark musical take on the infamous rivalry and "knee-whack" incident involving American ice skaters Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding. *Tonya and Nancy: The Rock Opera* plays from Saturday, Nov. 26, through Friday, Dec. 30, at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. Previews through Nov. 27 are \$12, while regular run tickets are \$22-\$30; call 773-975-8150, or visit TheaterWit.org or UnderscoreTheatre.org.

Courtney Mack as Nancy Kerrigan and Amanda Horvath as Tonya Harding in Underscore Theatre Company's Chicago premiere of *Tonya and Nancy: The Rock Opera*. Photo by Joe Mazza/Brave Lux



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2016-17 SEASON SPONSOR




# KNIGHT at the movies

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

## Holiday movie offerings

Like it or not, it's beginning to look like Christmas and if holiday movies are your thing (and longtime readers of this column know that they are mine), there's a nice assortment of holiday-themed movies—new and old on the big and small screen—to crank up your Yuletide spirit.

Highlights of area screenings, some holiday fare on the small screen and a few impending home releases are as follows:

### In theaters

#### New seasonal films:

**Almost Christmas**—A dysfunctional family gathers for its first Thanksgiving since losing the matriarch. Danny Glover is the grieving widower, and Gabrielle Union, Kimberly Elise, Romany Malco and Jessie T. Usher are his bickering adult kids. Think a combination of George Tillman Jr.'s *Soul Food* and Jodie Foster's *Home for the Holidays*. It's currently in theaters.

**Bad Santa 2**—Thirteen years after Billy Bob Thornton became the poster child for every holiday hater as Willie—the profane con man renowned as the nastiest department store Santa ever—he's back to wreak more havoc and spew more venom. His pint-size sidekick, Marcus (Tony Cox), is also back, with the two teaming to rip off a Chicago charity on Christmas Eve. The source of Willie's toxic outlook on life is explained in the personage of Kathy Bates as his horrendously awful mother. Between this and multiple seasons on *American Horror Story*, the Oscar-winning Bates is apparently vying for a new goal to portray more poisonous characters than any other actor in history. Nov. 23

**Office Christmas Party**—Noxious holiday comedies have become the norm rather than the exception (including *Four Christmases*, *Christmas with the Kranks*, *Surviving Christmas*, *Fred Claus*, *Deck the Halls*, *Jack Frost*, etc.) and this promises to be one more. Jennifer Aniston plays a rotten lady Scrooge who wants to close the branch of her hard-partying brother (T.J. Miller); he and his fellow employees scramble to avert the closure by throwing the largest office Christmas party on record. Jason Bateman, Courtney B. Vance, out actor Kate McKinnon and Olivia Munn co-star. Dec. 9

#### Vintage holiday film screenings:

**Home Alone**—This is the 1990 cartoon-like comedy penned by John Hughes and directed by Chris Columbus about 12-year-old Kevin (Macaulay Culkin), who is enjoying Christmas in his family's North Shore mansion after inadvertently being left behind over the holidays—that is, until two inept burglars (Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern) target the home. ArLight, 1500 N. Clybourn Ave., will screen the film Tuesday, Dec. 6; <https://www.arlightcinemas.com/movie/arlight-presentshome-alone?lid=1010>.

**It's a Wonderful Life in concert**—Members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) will play Dimitri Tiomkin's newly restored complete score as the Frank Capra 1946 classic screens in a special event at the Chicago Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave., on Friday, Dec. 9. <http://cso.org/ticketsandevents/production-details-2016-17/cso-specials/its-a-wonderful-life/>

**It's a Wonderful Life/White Christmas**—The Music Box Theatre's 33rd annual holiday extravaganza returns. Pick either the Frank Capra 1946 black-and-white fantasy classic,

the campier Michael Curtiz's 1954 Technicolor musical extravaganza or both. There's a holiday carol sing-a-long with Dennis Scott on the organ before every screening. Dec. 10-Dec. 24 <https://musicboxtheatre.com/events/the-33rd-annual-music-box-christmas-double-feature-sing-a-long>

**Die Hard/Gremlins**—Christmas anarchy thanks to this double batch, again at what is apparently holiday movie central, the Music Box, 3733 N. Southport Ave. In 1988's *Die Hard*, Bruce Willis singlehandedly takes down a group of terrorists (led by the late Alan Rickman in his breakthrough role) during his wife's Christmas Eve office party. A batch of cuddly little fur balls morph into monstrous little poltergeists in smalltown America one memorable Christmas Eve in Joe Dante's 1984 movie *Gremlins*. Both screen Monday, Dec. 12 and 19. <https://musicboxtheatre.com/events/alternative-christmas-double-feature-mistletoe-mayhem>

**Elf/Love Actually**—The Music Box Theatre has even more holiday fare with this delightful double batch consisting of, respectively, Jon Favreau's 2003 charming comedy and Richard Curtis' 2003 British-set heartwarmer. Both screen Tuesday, Dec. 13 and 20. <https://musicboxtheatre.com/events/alternative-christmas-double-feature-jolly-holidays>

**A Christmas Story**—The heartwarming, genuinely funny bonafide 1983 classic from director Bob Clark about little Ralphie and his quest for a Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas. It's adapted from the stories of Jean Shepherd. ArLight is presenting a screening on Wed., Dec. 14. <https://www.arlightcinemas.com/movie/arlight-presents-a-christmas-story?lid=1010>

#### Streaming, DVD/Blu-Ray

**Scrooge & Marley**—Yup, this is how much I love Christmas movies. In 2012, I co-wrote, directed and helped produce this modern-day, gay version of the Dickens' classic. A multitude of gay community favorites—David Pevsner, Bruce Vilanch, Megan Cavanagh, Rusty Schwimmer, David Moretti, Ronnie Kroell, Scott Duff, Amy Matheny, Fawz Mirza and many others—joined together to make this queer take on Christmas.

And it's narrated by Judith Light and has one of the most beautiful, inspiring ballads you've ever hear—sung by none other than Jason Gould. Its executive-produced by Windy City Times publisher Tracy Baim and available to stream, on DVD or Blu-ray. [ScroogeAndMarleyMovie.com](http://ScroogeAndMarleyMovie.com)

**Make the Yuletide Gay**—Writer-director Rob Williams' charming 2009 holiday comedy is about a young gay man coming out to his family over the holidays—after his boyfriend shows up to force the issue. The movie's sweet and daffy. [https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B002XJXDTQ/ref=pd\\_cbs\\_318\\_1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B002XJXDTQ/ref=pd_cbs_318_1)

**Shared Rooms**—Rob Williams returns to a holiday theme with this 2016 festival favorite, the story of three gay couples finding love and lust at the holidays. <https://www.facebook.com/sharedrooms/>

**Christmas with Love from Mrs. Claus**—Is it possible a TV commercial could more beautifully capture the spirit of the holidays in three minutes than many movies can in 90? This exquisitely made mini-epic from England's Marks & Spencer department stores stars acclaimed stage actor Janet McTeer as Santa's power behind the throne, Mrs. Claus, and is directed by Tom Hooper (*Les Misérables*, *The King's Speech*). Don't be surprised if this gets fleshed out into a full-length feature by holiday 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjKS270ha4A>

#### A quartet of queer movies

The Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., is programming a quartet of queer movies throughout December—none of which are holiday-themed—but all of which are worth checking out for LGBT film fans. The films are:

**Being 17**, the latest from French out writer-director Andre Techine, opening Dec. 2 for a week, <http://www.siskelfilmcenter.org/be->



Billy Bob Thornton and Kathy Bates in *Bad Santa 2*.  
Movie still

ing17;

**Spa Night**, the charming, sexy, coming-out story of a young Korean man finding his nightly sexual bliss in the local while dealing with his conservative parents by day, playing Dec. 3 only <http://www.siskelfilmcenter.org/spanight>, a trans drama;

**Don't Call Me Son**, opening Dec. 9 for a week, <http://www.siskelfilmcenter.org/dont-callmeson>; and

**The Handmaiden**, Park Chan-Wook's lesbian-tinted erotic thriller and one of 2016's best films, opening Dec. 16 for a week.



The title subject in Mariela Castro's *March: Castro's LGBT Revolution*.  
Image by Rosalino Ramos/HBO

## LGBT doc on Mariela Castro debuting Nov. 28

A documentary about LGBT-rights activist Mariela Castro—the daughter of President Raul Castro and a member of Cuba's National Assembly—will debut Monday, Nov. 28, at 8 p.m. CT on HBO.

Mariela Castro's *March: Cuba's LGBT Revolution* follows Castro and her LGBT supporters as they spread their universal message of equality across the country.

In addition, Castro serves as the director of CENESEX, the Cuban National Center for Sex Education, is president of the National Commission for Treatment of Disturbances of Gender Identity and is a member of the Direct Action Group for Preventing, Confronting, and Combatting AIDS and an exclusive member of the World Association for Sexual Health (WAS).

Jon Alpert directed *Mariela Castro's March: Cuba's LGBT Revolution*. The documentary will also be available on HBO2, HBO NOW, HBO GO, HBO On Demand and affiliate portals.

Also, the debut will be preceded at 7 p.m. by the debut of *Patria o Muerte: Cuba, Fatherland or Death*, which looks at the state of the country through the eyes of its artists,

activists, bloggers, writers, musicians and everyday people, who live amidst political unrest and economic inequality.

## Report: LGBTQs lacking in Spanish-language scripted TV

GLAAD recently released its first-ever Spanish-Language media report, "Nearly Invisible."

The report offers an analysis of LGBTQ characters in prime-time Spanish-language scripted television airing in the United States July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016.

"Nearly Invisible" found that only 14 of the 516 characters examined were LGBTQ (3 percent)—and only seven of those characters appeared in more than half of episodes aired. Of those, only one character was transgender.

Ten out of the 14 LGBTQ characters were gay men, two were bisexual women, one was a lesbian, one was a straight transgender woman. Additionally, no trans men, bisexual men or LGBTQ persons with disabilities were portrayed.

"Nearly Invisible" (which is in English and Spanish) is at [GLAAD.org/files/SLMR/SPAR-report2016.pdf](http://GLAAD.org/files/SLMR/SPAR-report2016.pdf).

## THEATER

# Tales of the Big Apple

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

On a recent visit to New York I saw two new plays and two old ones, all with significance for Chicago. The new plays are certain to be produced here, possibly within the next 12 months as part of our 2017-2018 theater season.

First, *The Harvest* by Samuel D. Hunter, presented in a six-week run (closes Nov. 20) at Lincoln Center Theater's small LCT3, which presents new works at very modest ticket prices. Hunter's award-winning earlier play, *The Whale*, was seen locally in 2013 at Victory Gardens Theater (VG), where Hunter is part of VG's Playwrights' Ensemble. He's completed seven plays since *The Whale*, and I'll venture that *The Harvest* is the best of them.

Set in semi-rural Idaho (Hunter's usual locale), it concerns young adults within an evangelical church community, among them Josh and Tom who are lifelong best friends now facing permanent separation. Subtly at first, and then more directly, *The Harvest* reveals Tom's longing for Josh goes far beyond church-sanctioned friendship. It's uncertain whether Josh fully perceives Tom's passion, or fully returns it. Complicating things, Tom's father is pastor of the church, which is sponsoring both young men on overseas missions.

*The Harvest* is a lovely ensemble piece, from the opening semi-erotic scene of church youth speaking in tongues to the final lady-or-the-tiger moment when Josh must choose. All the actors perform with nuance and conviction as directed by Davis McCallum. Well-known Chicago veteran Scott Jaeck, now living in NYC, plays the pastor/father. He enters late in this 100-minute work and performs a near-monologue with quiet authority against what the audience anticipates. It's cagey writing which highlights the dilemma of Josh and Tom, caught between what is expected of them and their fundamen-

tal doubts. I suspect Victory Gardens artistic director Chay Yew will have *The Harvest* in the VG schedule ASAP.

The other new work, at the Manhattan Theatre Club (through Nov. 27), is *Vietgone*, by U.S.-born Qui Nguyen. The play won the 2016 Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Association Award of \$25,000. *Vietgone* is a comedy using non-realistic meta-theatrical style to embrace serious issues of understanding—or lack of it—between generations, decisions/actions taken under the duress of war, and the legacy of the Vietnamese War for immigrant South Vietnamese survivors. Mostly set in 1975 (the end jumps to the present), it utilizes hip-hop songs, projections, breaking the Fourth Wall and cartoon-like martial arts battles. They aren't all necessary and they lengthen a work which would be better without an intermission. Still, *Vietgone* is vital, imaginative, funny and eventually unexpectedly powerful. The worthy MTC production MTC was directed by May Adrales. I suspect several Chicago troupes will vie for *Vietgone*—Silk Road Rising, Northlight, Goodman, Writers, Steppenwolf. Perhaps small Silk Road can mount a co-production with one of them.

For something old I saw Christopher Hampton's 1985 play, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and also *The Front Page*, the nearly 90-year-old comedy by one-time Chicago newspapermen Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Both are strictly limited Broadway engagements, with *Liaisons* at the Booth Theatre through Jan. 22 and *The Front Page* at the Broadhurst Theatre through Jan. 29. Both boast major star power and also have Chicago actors in their casts. Both shows are up to the highest Broadway production and acting standards, although posing questions of interpretation which may not please everyone.

*Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, a production that

Janet McTeer and Liev Schreiber in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.  
Photo by Joan Marcus



language is delivered in a conversational way (sometimes hard to hear) avoiding its refinement and, certainly, suppressing its passions. McTeer and Schreiber sprawl on sofas and chairs in a modern way distinctly not of the 18th Century. Finally, Valmont constantly drinks wine, brandy or champagne and is weaving drunk by the play's end. It's a character tick that works: the more he's lost to himself, the more he drinks. One pities Valmont at the final curtain as one should, while Monteuil sheds crocodile tears. Steppenwolf Ensemble member Ora Jones appears in an important supporting role, and former Chicago actor Josh Salt plays Valmont's cheeky serving man.

That leaves *The Front Page*, the famous screwball comedy homage to 1920s Chicago journalism. The large cast sports Tony Award winners or nominees Nathan Lane, Robert Morse, Holland Taylor, Jefferson Mays, Dylan Baker, Sherie Renee Scott and Lewis J. Stadlen, along with John Goodman and John Slattery, under the always-capable direction of Tony winner Jack O'Brien, who knows how to pull off this complicated comedy. Former Chicagoans Joey Slotnick (*Lookingglass*) and Joe Forbrich (*Shattered Globe*) appear in smaller roles.

Slattery is mature for the lead role of reporter Hildy Johnson and Nathan Lane doesn't seem ideal as Hildy's older editor, Walter Burns, but they make it work. Slattery is agile and sincere, a good combination for Hildy, while Lane's blustery, bullying, manipulative Burns is kin to Max Bialystock and perfectly suited for Lane's immense comic abilities. Among the supporting roles, Jefferson Mays steals all his scenes as prissy Tribune reporter Bensinger.

The production features handsome 1920s costumes and a scenic design (Douglas W. Schmidt) that accurately captures Chicago's old Criminal Courts Building, which still stands in River North. Running during the World Series, the clever company added a Cubs pennant to the set. *The Front Page* is a high-energy, audience-pleasing show.

“★★★★★  
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-THE TIMES (UK)

“GALVANIZING  
AND ASTONISHING”  
-TIME OUT NEW YORK

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GMC WINDY CITY TIMES

# Book focuses on gay baby boomers in the present day

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Jesus Ramirez-Valles' book *Queer Aging: The Gayby Boomers and a New Frontier for Gerontology* puts the gay baby boomers' experience into perspective.

Ramirez-Valles is a professor and head of community health sciences at University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC) School of Public Health. He is also a scholar, filmmaker, and an advocate of LGBT and Latino health. Ramirez-Valles grew up in Mexico and was one of six children. He attended college in Mexico and graduated in 1987. He came out after college, during the AIDS epidemic, and right away he began working with gay men and sex workers on HIV/AIDS prevention. At the time, he said, there was not much in the way of prevention. Ramirez-Valles went on to University of Michigan for his masters and doctorate and he has been in Chicago for 19 years working in public health.

He said his first book, *Compañeros: Latino Activists in the Face of AIDS*, is a culmination of that work experience and research. The book shares the stories of GBT Latino activists and volunteers and particularly details how the AIDS epidemic touched or transformed each of their lives.

He remembered when he finished his first book, he was thinking about his next step. Then, he realized what he was seeing at that point was people living and aging with HIV and living longer lives. Examining what was going on with older gay men who were aging with HIV, he said there were barely any articles on the subject and the literature that did exist

was dated and looked at a completely different generation. That, he said, forced him to expand his research and focus on the aging of gay men.

Ramirez-Valles' second book, *Queer Aging: The Gayby Boomers and a New Frontier for Gerontology*, was published in August 2016. It features statistics from other literature and interviews with 11 racially and economically diverse, HIV positive and HIV negative gay baby boomers—people born between 1946 and 1964—from the Chicago metropolitan area.

"What I'm trying to do is interpret the voices or the lives of older gay men to see where they have been, where are they and what's next for them," said Ramirez-Valles, who added he wanted more than just facts and statistics in this book.

The book includes themes of family, sex, stigma, rejection, differences within race and social class and touches on what is going to happen next in this new frontier for the gayby boomers. The candid first-person narratives Ramirez-Valles captured, reflect on their varied experiences. They talk about work, family, the AIDS epidemic, activism, their roles as caregivers and getting older. These stories are framed by a general introduction to queer theory and its history. Ramirez-Valles said this was because he saw urgency and so many details in this topic to cover.

"To mark that generational difference, I focus on what I call the 'gayby boomers' because generations are shaped culturally by their time," said Ramirez-Valles. "Most importantly there are two things that are very differ-



Dr. Jesus Ramirez-Valles.  
PR photo

ent about this generation. [The first is] they came out with the gay liberation movement, so they're the first to call themselves, collectively, LGBTQ. Second, when you look at the history, the epidemiological history of HIV and AIDS, the group hit hardest by the epidemic is the baby boomers in terms of mortality, morbidity."

The author said seeing his teenage son growing up and his own mother continuing to age make him especially realize age and what it means.

"The biggest difference is that most of the gay baby boomers are childless and single and they lived through a very traumatic history of AIDS, which heterosexual people were un-

touched by this," said Ramirez-Valles. "For gay men, when I speak with them and when you read, it's such a defining moment in their lives. It's something that it carries you."

Some points Ramirez-Valles found during his research for this book were that many gay men worried about who will take care of them as they age, since many do not have a spouse or child to take on the caregiver role. For some single, older, gay men, the lack of a spouse is because gay marriage is relatively new and for others, the AIDS epidemic took their partners. Without a legally-identifiable spouse, navigating issues like advance directives, pension benefits, health disclosures, among others, can be a problem and stir up uneasy feelings.

"The biggest difference is that most of the gay baby boomers are childless and single and they lived through a very traumatic history of aids, which heterosexual people were untouched by this," said Ramirez-Valles of aging LGBTQ people and aging heterosexual people. "For gay men, when I speak with them and when you read, it's such a defining moment in their lives. It's something that carries you."

Ramirez-Valles also discovered that another family dynamic impacting gayby boomers involves rejection from their biological families because of their coming out. Ramirez went on to say that it is important that this visibility is created cautiously, so not to create a specific idea of what older gay people should be because each person lives differently from one another and should be seen that way.

Ramirez-Valles added the message he wants readers to get out of this book is to "speak loud and question our cultural norms that become policies about older age, that we make it visible, but at the same time we have to be careful with that visibility that we don't provide this idea of the normal older gay people."

For more information, visit: <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/queer-aging-9780190276348?cc=us&lang=en&> and <https://www.facebook.com/queeraging>.

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Saturday, December 3, 2016, 5:00 PM & 8:00 PM  
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### 'Don We Now' Dec. 3 in Chicago

Windy City Gay Chorus and Windy City Treble Quire will present "Don We Now" Saturday, Dec. 3, 5 and 8 p.m., at First United Methodist Church, 77 W. Washington St.

Spirituals, Carols, Hanukkah, and seasonal songs receive creative treatment in the classical, musical theater and Broadway styles. There will be a sing-along and guest musicians.

Tickets are \$20-\$35; visit [DonWeNow.bpt.me](http://DonWeNow.bpt.me).

### 'Holidivas' Dec. 2, 3, 13

Opera star Cynthia Clarey will perform alongside Chicago Gay Men's Chorus in its holiday production of "Home for the Holidivas," a show featuring holiday music made famous by renowned solo female singers.

The shows will take place:

—Friday, Dec. 2, at Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St., at 8 p.m.;

—Saturday, Dec. 3, at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Boulevard, Skokie, at 8 p.m.; and

—Tuesday, Dec. 13, at the Beverly Arts Center, 2407 W. 111th St., at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$25-\$40 each; visit [CGMC.org](http://CGMC.org) or call 773=296-0541.

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# the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in  
WINDY CITY TIMES

## SAVOR

### Baptiste & Bottle

BY ANDREW DAVIS

There is much to recommend about the bourbon bar Baptiste & Bottle (101 E. Erie St.; <https://www.baptisteandbottle.com/>).

Baptiste & Bottle is one of three dining/drinking spaces slated to be part of the newly opened Conrad Chicago hotel. (The rooftop spot will open next spring.) And Baptiste (a Richard Sandoval project named after Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, the first permanent resident of Chicago) matches the rest of the hotel in terms of contemporary design—coupled with the fact that practically every seat guarantees a spectacular view of the city (and that especially goes for the semi-private area that's cordoned off with a chevron-designed curtain).

Cocktails are seasonal and, indeed, tasty. Items include the Southside Mule (koyal "baptiste series" bourbon, pineapple-rosemary shrub and ginger) served in a nifty copper cup; a Rootbeer Fizz that's a step up from the A&W you enjoyed as a kid; and a \$20 science experiment called a Curtsy & Bow that incorporates bourbon, orgeat, absinthe—and what's called a "Tonka fog."



**Duck (left) and the Southside Mule at Baptiste & Bottle.**

Photos by Andrew Davis

However, this place's love of bourbon extends to its Bourbon Baron Program. Taste 75 whiskeys on the list and become a member of the exclusive Baptiste Reserve club—and Baptiste has enough variety to satisfy the most seasoned lover of bourbon.

However, the cuisine is pretty impressive as well. Chef James Lintelmann offered a nice mix of various items at a recent media event. Red-snapper crudo was complemented by roasted carrot salad that also featured quinoa, macadamia and smoked cream cheese. (How often do you hear about that?)

Other culinary offerings included day boat scallops, a most tender roasted duck (with persimmon, celery root and gooseberry), 48-hour beef shortrib (my favorite, with caramelized cabbage, salisfy and huckleberry) and whole roasted chicken (which might seem like quite the splurge at \$58, even with cornbread, andouille sausage and chan-



terelle mushrooms).

However, even after all that, one would be wise to make room for dessert. I was fortunate enough to try a light but very satisfying pineapple ambrosia—a great ending for a place that aims to turn a standard meal into an experience.



**Chef James Lintelmann (left).**

## nightspots the big TO-DO

OUR WEEKLY PICKS TO PLAN  
YOUR NIGHTLIFE CALENDAR

### Thanksgiving Eve Dance Party



**Wed., Nov. 23**

**Sidetrack,**

**3349 N. Halsted St.**

One of the biggest parties of the year—the night before Thanksgiving at Sidetrack. Bring your friends and dance the night away. Team Sidetrack will donate proceeds from coat check to Heartland Alliance/Vital Bridges Center on Chronic Care.

### Berlin's Anniversary Party: InFocus



**Tue., Nov. 29, 11 pm**

**Berlin,**

**3359 N. Halsted St.**

The party will feature sets by Berlin family DJs and performers until 4 am. Admission is free. You must be 21+ to attend.

This year's theme is Berlin: InFocus.

From the Facebook event page:

"Berlin truly is a family, and we honor the community that makes it such a unique and vibrant part of Chicago nightlife and culture. Our tradition of artistic expression, diversity, and straight-up weirdness lives on in 2016. The collective contributions made by talented artists, DJs, producers, and bar staff all helped us achieve the honor of being voted 'Nightclub Of The Year' for the 3rd Annual Chicago Nightlife Awards.

In the spirit of celebrating everything that makes Berlin special, we will be creating a photo installation featuring images by professional and amateur photographers that capture the wide variety of theme events, shows, and dance parties that have graced the venue. Management will be selecting our favorite photographs for large-format printing, and each photographer will get to keep the prints of their work.

The exhibit will debut on the night of the party, and will be up during the month of December.

Photo originally printed in the April 12, 2006, issue of Nightspots, by Kirk Williamson



## SIDETRACK

Bey watch.

Photos by Jed Dulanias



"The truth is with me and gay is that I can't get round the cock thing. You know I have crushes. Big male crushes. A lot. I crush a lot. But I just can't do the cock. I don't enjoy looking at mine that much."—Singer **Robbie Williams** explains why he can't be gay—much as he'd like to be. Well, I don't really think looking at it is the problem.

A lot of people have been talking about **Mike Pence** seeing Hamilton on Broadway. First things first: How did our next vice president get tickets? And did he pay? 'Cause that's a lot of tickets for Mr. and Mrs. Pence, the Secret Service and the guys who travel with him to electrocute ... err, "convert" any gays they meet. Far more amazing is that anyone took offense to **Brandon Victor Dixon's** speech (which was actually written by composer/lyricist Lin-Manuel Miranda).

Trump tweeted that the cast was "rude" and "harassed" Pence, and he demanded an apology. Did Trump even see the video of the speech? It's readily available online because Dixon told the audience to record it. On Face the Nation on Nov. 20, Pence said that he was not offended, adding "hats off to the cast and the extraordinary team of Hamilton." So, what is this really about? Perhaps former Celebrity Apprentice contestant **George Takei** has stumbled on the truth: "I wonder if Pence went to Hamilton to take our focus off the Trump University fraud settlement." Things that make you go hmmm.

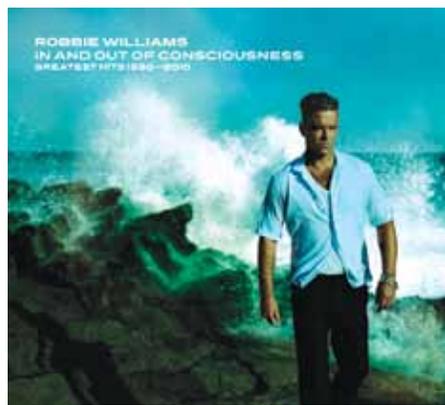
Police were called to the home of a gay couple in Florida to break up a fight that escalated when one man hit his partner in the face with a boiling hot cup of Ramen noodles! I'm just curious—who is eating hot Ramen noodles in balmy Florida? Police arrested the thrower and discovered that he had prior convictions for grand theft, writing bad checks and violating probation. Kinda puts the noodles into perspective.

Last week, **Jack Falahee** from How To Get Away With Murder came out as straight—no surprise to moi, although he does play gay convincingly. He previously didn't want to discuss his sex life, lest it take attention away from the character. Why the change? He said, "Ultimately, I think my stance has been unhelpful in the fight for equality. I feel that I've sacrificed my ability to support the community for a more theoretical discussion about sexuality. Now more than ever, I want to offer my support to the community as an ally."

**Ricky Martin** is once again engaged. This time, his fiance is artist Jwan Yosef. The two have been together for a year, and Ricky told Ellen DeGeneres how they met: "He's a conceptual artist, and I'm a collector. So I started looking for art and I saw his art and I went crazy because I love what he does, really original. And I contacted him, and then I collected him." You can collect some hot nude photos of Yosef on BillyMasters.com.

**Jonathan Knight**, from New Kids on the Block, is also off the market. He proposed to beau Harley Rodriguez while travelling in Africa with their families. The guys have been a couple for the past eight years and, of course, they competed together on The Amazing Race last year.

I know I said I was done talking about the train wreck that is **Finding Prince Charming**, but I can't keep this to myself. After last week's reunion special, Chad (a train wreck himself) posted the most vitriolic Instagram rant—and I



**Robbie Williams explains why he can't be gay—and you know Billy has something to say.**

loved every bit of it! In it, he exposes our prince, Robert Sepulveda, as a lying whore, among other things. He took issue with Robert constantly talking about being authentic. Here are some of the highlights: "How about being authentic that you're still hooking," "How about coming clean that you embezzled over \$40K from the Atlanta rainbow crosswalks project," "How about being authentic about the fact that you actively pursued me, Brandon, Eric and Paul right after the show wrapped," "How about being authentic about seeing your Johns just before and AFTER the show finalized shooting." He ends the diatribe by revealing that Robert tried to sleep with him at Market Days in Chicago. Chad claims he turned Robert down: "But even then, without knowing what I know now, I wouldn't go near that science experiment. And by science experiment I'm talking about his penis."

The best show on TV is The X Factor UK. In the past, I'd been a devoted X Factor UK fan. But once **Sharon Osbourne** left, I slowly lost interest. It was clear that the magic of the show was the chemistry between Sharon, **Simon Cowell** and **Louis Walsh**. Happily, the three are reunited this season (joined by **Nicole Scherzinger**), and I couldn't be happier.

One of the contestants is **Saara Aalto**, from Finland. From the time she was 15, she was dating (and later engaged to) one of Finland's biggest pop stars, **Teemu Roivainen**. That all changed in 2012, when she was on the Finnish version of The Voice. She started getting fan letters from a girl named Meri Sopanen. A year later, they met at a concert. Shortly thereafter, Saara dumped her boyfriend of nine years and started dating Meri! The two are now engaged. On The X Factor UK, the host mentioned the engagement. Saara matter of factly referred to the fiancee as a woman, and nobody blinked an eye. We could learn a lot from the Brits.

After a long story about a British reality show, why not a story about a British reality star with a really long penis? **Brandon Myers** is a very hot 19-year-old who's been featured on MTV-UK's Ex on the Beach. He's also posted photos of his enormous penis. So I wasn't surprised when he posed nude for FitYoungMen.com, saying, "Everyone was talking about it on Ex on the Beach. It's nine and a half inches, and it's a bit like having a tripod, or a third leg." The site charges \$57 to see his "9.5 inches of uncut beauty." It's far less on BillyMasters.com.

When we're delivering one helluva drumstick, it's definitely time to end yet another column. And you'll be mighty thankful when you check out [www.BillyMasters.com](http://www.BillyMasters.com), the site that delivers a horn o' plenty to plenty o' horny fans. If you've got a question, send it along to [Billy@BillyMasters.com](mailto:Billy@BillyMasters.com) and I promise to get back to you before Donald goes to see a Broadway show and is hissed at by Cats! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**Wed., Nov. 23**

**Windy City Gay Chorus and Windy City Treble Quire: A Christmas Carol** Tickets use code WCGC. Dates through Dec. 31 7:30pm Goodman Theatre 170 N Dearborn St Chicago Tickets: <http://GoodmanTheatre.org>

**SpanksGiving: a Spankathon Barlesque Benefit** Come and take a whack for a good cause. Barlesque benefits the Test Positive Aware Network 9:00pm Touche 6412 N Clark St Chicago <http://touchechicago.com>

**Thursday, Nov. 24**

**A Church 4 Me MCC free community Thanksgiving meal** A Church 4 Me MCC, part of the Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC). Doors open 11am. To reserve a place at the meal, please contact Mike Schuppe at 847-529-8440 or [mike123ptr@gmail.com](mailto:mike123ptr@gmail.com) 12:00pm aChurch4Me, 7366 N. Clark St., Chicago <http://www.achurch4me.org>

**Friday, Nov. 25**

**I Am My Own Wife** Based on the true story of Charlotte von Mahlsdorf (born Lother Berfelde) who, against all odds, hid from the Nazi and Communist regimes in East Berlin in plain sight dressed as a woman. Feature transgender actress Delia Kropp and three additional actors. The new production will frame Charlotte's story through a transgender lens. Through Dec. 10. About Face Theater 7:30pm Theater Wit 1229 W Belmont Ave. Chicago Tickets: <https://www.theaterwit.org/tickets/productions/291/performances#top>

**[Trans]formation** Nothing Without a Company and The Living Canvas are

**THAT'S 'WIFE' Through Dec. 10**

About Face Theater's I Am My Own Wife is running at Theater Wit.

Photo of Delia Kropp by Michael Brosilow

proud to present a world premiere entirely from the works of, and performed by, transgender, genderqueer, intersex, and non-binary artists. Through Dec. 17. 8:00pm Vault at Collaboration Studios, Flat Iron Arts Building, 1579 N Milwaukee Ave., Chicago Tickets: <http://bit.ly/2dcUg0J>

**Saturday, Nov. 26**

**Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance (LGBTQ)** Support meeting to talk about illnesses, symptoms, treatment, doctors, and personal issues such as dating, relationships and work. Every Saturday. 11:00am - 12:30am Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com>

**Chick Flick the Musical** Heartfelt female friendship and empowerment wrapped in the iconic conventions of chick flicks. Cast of four, a live band. 90-minute. No-intermission. Open run. 7:30pm Royal George Theatre 1641 N Halsted St Chicago 312-988-9000 [http://www.ticketmaster.com/Chick-Flick-the-Musical-tickets/artist/2284729?tm\\_link=edp\\_Artist\\_Name](http://www.ticketmaster.com/Chick-Flick-the-Musical-tickets/artist/2284729?tm_link=edp_Artist_Name)

**King Charles III** Charles. Camilla. William. Kate. Harry. One family holds the future Of Great Britain in its hands. But what will it be? 2015 Olivier Award: Best New Play. Through Jan 14. 8:00pm Chicago Shakespeare Theatre 800 E Grand Ave Chicago 312-595-5600 <http://chicagoshakes.com>

**Sunday, Nov. 27**

**Monthly gathering of LGBTQ Asian and Pacific Islanders (API)** Christ Church of Chicago (Tri-C) and Invisible to Invincible: Asian Pacific Islander Pride of Chicago (i2i) are sponsoring meetings on the fourth Sunday of each month, a space for stories, information, resources, support. Email [ChicagoI2i@yahoo.com](mailto:ChicagoI2i@yahoo.com) or [pastor@christchurchchicago.net](mailto:pastor@christchurchchicago.net). 3:00pm - 5:00pm Tri-C, 6047 N. Rockwell Ave.

**aChurch4Me Sunday Worship Service** A place to find peace, comfort and prayer 11:00am aChurch4Me, 7366 N. Clark St., Chicago <http://www.achurch4me.org>

**Monday, Nov. 28**

**Post-Election Action Forum** An LGBTQ response to the Trump presidency. Impact and how to protect LGBTQ Americans and other groups. Equality Illinois, Howard Brown Health, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Test Positive Aware Network, Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, Chicago House, Black Treatment Advocates Network, Association of Latinos/as Motivating Action, Center on Halsted, Pride

Action Tank, Affinity, Puerto Rican Cultural Center (Vida Sida) 6:00pm Lake View Presbyterian Church 716 W Addison Chicago <https://act.myngp.com/Forms/-3172559444831433984?midqs=4479674254350090240>

**Thursday, Dec. 1**

**Art AIDS America** Groundbreaking exhibition underscores the deep and unforgettable presence of HIV in American art with more than 100 significant contemporary works in a wide range of media. Brought to Chicago by the Alphawood Foundation, culminating a U.S. tour which included Tacoma Art Museum in Washington State, the Zuckerman Museum in suburban Atlanta, and the Bronx Museum of the Arts in New York City. Free admission with timed tickets. Runs from World AIDS Day through Sunday, April 2, 2017. 11:00am - 8:00pm Alphawood Gallery, 2401 N. Halsted St. <http://ArtAIDSAmericaChicago.org>

**2016 World AIDS Day Celebration and Health Fair** Access Community Health Network (ACCESS) hosting. Affinity among the community vendors. 2:00pm - 5:00pm ACCESS Center for Discovery & Learning: 5139 S. Ashland, Chicago

**Roz & Ray show and Benefit for Affinity** Gripping untold story of one doctor's ethical struggle at the onset of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. \$30 ticket includes viewing of the exhibit of Art Aids America, wine and appetizer reception, admission to the performance. A third of your ticket price goes back to Affinity. 6:00pm Victory Gardens Theater 2433 N Lincoln Ave Chicago <http://www.affinity95.org>

**World of Chocolate** A decadent experience held annually. Dress to impress. All event proceeds benefit the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. 6:12pm - 9:12pm Revel Fulton Market, 1215 W Fulton Market, Chicago <https://www.af-finity95.org>

Tickets: <https://secure2.convio.net/afoc/site/Ticketing?sessionid=89C20FAC819F7ED5EAE8BD1331E88A34.app263a?view=Tickets&id=102361>

**AVER Monthly Meeting** Chicago Chapter of American Veterans for Equal Rights, the national organization of LGBT veterans formerly known as Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA). 7:00pm Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.averchicago.org/>

**New Town Writers' Workshop** Writers are invited to bring printed copies of the work they will be reading so that other participants may follow along. This will be the last meeting in 2016. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago

**Poetry Reading, KOKUMO: Reacquainted with Life** KOKUMO is a musician, performance artist, poet, trans activist, and organizer. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/poetry-reading-reacquainted-life-kokumo>

**Friday, Dec. 2**

**Reading, Q&A and Book Signing, Laura Jane Grace. Tranny: Confessions of Punk Rock's Most Infamous Anarchist Sellout** Ticketed, off-site event, which will be held at Wilson Abbey (935 W. Wilson). Purchase of a ticket to this event includes one copy of Laura Jane Grace's book. Doors open 6:15 pm. 7:00pm Wilson Abbey, 935 W. Wilson, Chicago, IL <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/author-reading-laura-jane-grace-tranny-confessions-punk-rocks-most-infamous-anarchist-sellout> Tickets: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2704760>

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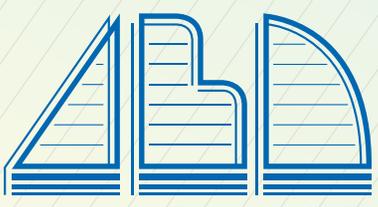
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