Thank You Windy City Times!

The course of the Windy City Times print edition over the last 35 years has mirrored our own involvement with the community, both as political activists and as real estate advisors.

Without fail, the Windy City Times has captured and memorialized the joys, the struggles, the pains, and the triumphs of our community - on both local and national levels. From parades and carefree happenings around town to events for LGBTQ-friendly politicians, the AIDS crisis and momentous Supreme Court decisions, WCT has always been a reliable and trusted source for information that matters to all of us.

And as the Windy City Times has grown, so have we and our family. On a personal level, our accomplishments, events, and business developments have always been covered thoughtfully and heartfully by the newspaper. And the Brad Lippitz Group is so proud to have been one of its strongest and most prominent advertisers for so many years.

As sad as we are to see the last of the print edition, we will always admire the drive, dedication, and respect for all members of the community afforded by the paper’s publisher, Tracy Baim and all the editors, writers, photographers and staff. This is the essence of pride.

With so much love and gratitude,
Brad Lippitz and Jonathan “Yoni” Pizer

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Meticulously maintained historic estate with lush grounds and 4-car attached garage.
Offered at $2,890,000

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Serene oasis on a 57’-wide lot: stunning historic all brick home overlooking 37’ yard.
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Indoor/outdoor architectural masterpiece.
Offered at $1,395,000

1240 N Lake Shore Dr #32A, Gold Coast
Modern 2200 square foot architectural transformation.
Offered at $1,050,000

1320 N State Pkwy #6A, Gold Coast
Exquisite co-op in elegant pre-War building.
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1560 N Sandburg Terr #4115, Near North
Rarely available corner unit with amazing views.
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And everything in between.

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AIDS Foundation Chicago celebrates our partnerships with Windy City Times to create equity and justice for LGBTQ+ Chicagoans. Thank you for your deep and long-standing commitment to our community.
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Thank you, Windy City Times, for 35 years of coverage, collaboration, and care!
INDEX

NEWS

ESSAY: TRACY BAIM
LGBTQI MEDIA: THE LONG HAUL
National LGBT Media Assn. pushes for Biden 8
PASSAGES: Yeaworth/Rogers/Sangster 10-11
LGBTQs react to Ginsburg replacement pick 14
Gay History Podcast’s new host: Studs Terkel 15

16
17
LGBT HALL OF FAME
LENDALE JOHNSON

18
Artemis Singers marks 40 years 19
2020 General Election charts 20-24
WCT’s Guide to the LGBTQ candidates 26

ESSAYS:
TERRI KLINSKY/ANDREW DAVIS/ MATT SIMONETTE
28
VIEWPOINTS: Monroe on Justice Ginsburg
30
ENTERTAINMENT
THE MOST IMPORTANT LGBTQ+ PLAYS
31
Reeling reviews
Theater reviews
36
38
MISS TOTO
40
BECKY RAISMAN
42
MUSICIAN
DAVIS
MALLORY

19
20
31
44
Wind City Times

ESSAY:
JEAN ALBRIGHT
58

WCT 30 UNDER 30 RETROSPECTIVE
68

COVERS: Outlines
70
ESSAYS: Rex Wockner/Kate Sosin
72

WINDY CITY TIMES: MAKING 35
74
ESSAYS: Trudy Ring
81

COVERS: BLACKlines/En La Vida/Identity
82
ESSAY:
KIRK WILLIAMSON
86

COVERS: Nightlines/Nightspots
88

Dish dining reviews
Billy Masters
92
92

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

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

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

Within a few weeks, my mom heard about a part-time job at GayLife newspaper. I worked doing typesetting and some writing for it while also freelancing for the Chicago Tribune, where my stepdad Steve Pratt was a reporter and editor of the City Trib section. And to pay the bills, I was typesetting at night for an advertising firm. Given the low wages and lousy hours, attrition was a fact of life in the gay press. I moved up from editorial assistant to managing editor of GayLife in 12 months—for the June 1985 Pride edition.

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

By the summer of 1985, there were stirrings at GayLife. When a group left to start Windy City Times, I joined them as founding managing editor. I left again, 18 months later, to start Outlines newspaper, and then added subsequent sister publications over the years. I explain more about this history in the article on Windy City Times; what follows is a set of more-personal observations about my more than 36 years covering the LGBTQI community. It’s a story of journalism and other near-death experiences. And all without even one cup of coffee.

Bars, Bombs and Crises

Since there were so few pages in the gay newspapers, and of course no Internet, the power of the press in the 1980s was in choosing just what to cover. It was always a battle for space, and to this day there has never been an edition where we didn’t have far too much to print. Making decisions on what to include, whom to cover and what photos to run was always difficult. A lot of what we were writing about was news briefs, AIDS developments and local organization events.

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

My first bylined cover story for GayLife was June 14, 1984, about a man arrested for placing 24 bombs in Chicago, claiming to be the “North American Central Gay Strike Force Against Public and Police Oppression.” He was a lone wolf, likely not gay. But I have to say that I did not even remember that story until recent years when I started to work on gay history projects, including co-writing and editing Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City’s Gay Community and launching www.chicagogayhistory.org. Having worked pretty much seven days a week—16-to-18-hour days—on LGBTQI news and issues for all these years, it’s funny how little I remember of some of the actual stories. But the memories come flooding back when I page through those yellowing issues of the papers.
In that same GayLife issue, I also wrote about the closing of the Jane Addams Feminist bookstore, after seven years in business. I took photos of the Pride Parade that month and covered the Proud to Run race.

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

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

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

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

Once I made the move to Windy City Times, I felt freer to explore all parts of the LGBTQI community. I had never felt constrained by GayLife Publisher Chuck Renslow, but Windy City Times soon had a larger advertising base and therefore more space to cover the community. It was all about the space.

Even though I was managing editor, at a small paper that means doing everything, including typesetting and delivery. I found that such chores kept me more interested than just doing writing or editing all day. The cover story of our first Windy City Times, on September 26, 1985, was

**Turn to page 48**

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*Add tax, title & license. 3.9% financing. 63 months. 0% financing. 7-year/100,000 mile powertrain warranty w/ $0 deductible. 152-point inspection. 24/7 roadside assistance. All-wheel-drive. SiriusXM. Starlink. Giant Selection. Low rate financing. All-wheel-drive.
For Joe Biden, push relentlessly until Nov. 3

STATEMENT FROM THE NATIONAL LGBT MEDIA ASSOCIATION

Among the many compelling reasons to make sure that Donald Trump and Mike Pence are not re-elected Nov. 3, perhaps the 27 most compelling are the transgender Americans—most of them trans women of color—known to have been murdered this year.

We needn’t be simple-minded in making this argument. Trump and Pence did not pull the trigger, and those who did must, of course, bear the consequences for their horrific acts.

But the all-too-toxic environment which too many of our transgender siblings have endured in their lives has gotten immeasurably worse over the past four years.

For this reason and many more, in an historic move, the 12 newspapers of the National LGBT Media Association (NLGMA), which represents the nation’s oldest and most established LGBTQ publications with a combined circulation of more than one million readers, are issuing this joint endorsement of the Joe Biden/ Kamala Harris ticket this week.

From the start, Donald Trump has used the trans community as a punching bag to prove his toughness to his socially conservative base hungry for a strongman willing to turn back the clock. He has denied trans folks the ability to serve openly in the military, sought to strip them of nondiscrimination protections in healthcare, worked to rob trans youth of dignity in their schools, and battled to take away the right of student athletes to compete in sports.

And against the trans community as well as lesbian, gay, and bisexual Americans, Trump’s administration fought tooth and nail to prevent the pivotal advance we won at the Supreme Court in June—the recognition that we enjoy employment nondiscrimination protections thanks to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Still, Trump and his see-no-evil GOP Senate allies refuse to move the Equality Act, which would extend those nondiscrimination protections across the board in areas like housing and public accommodations. For them, the nation’s most embattled minority are bigots who want to enshrine their right to discriminate under the cloak of “religious liberty.”

As in every other aspect of this endorsement, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris offer a stark and redemptive alternative.

After Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell denied President Barack Obama federal judicial appointments in his last year in office, he and his colleagues have rubber-stamped an unprecedented number of judges—many of them viciously right-wing, others lacking in even the most elementary judicial qualifications—whose influence will last for decades to come. The cornerstone decision in protecting reproductive freedom—Roe v. Wade—may already be doomed by the Trump court’s configuration. Give him another chance or two to name a member to the high court and the ball game will definitely be over.

Trump’s governing has been much like his court appointments—where he is not cruel, he is merely incompetent. Mexican and other Latin American immigrants have been slurred in overtly racist terms, and their children have been caged. Muslim newcomers to America have also been stigmatized where they have not been blocked outright. The damage is not limited to the newcomers. Latinx and Muslim-American citizens have faced increasing levels of hostility and hate crimes.

Trump saw “very fine people, on both sides” during the 2017 neo-Nazi invasion of Charlottesville, but he’s been snide in reacting to the Black Lives Matter movement, telling Bob Woodward, in response to a question about why he can’t bring himself to empathize with African-American citizens, “You, you really drank the Kool-Aid, didn’t you?”

The coronavirus’ most recent surge—in the Midwest—and the wild fires raging through wide swaths of the West are only the most calamitous indicators of Trump’s refusal to accept the basic facts of science, a posture at one with his hostility to fact-based discourse on almost any public policy issue. It’s no surprise that the nation’s free press and the unfettered right of Americans to vote—the twin jewels of American democracy—are in his mind, enemies of the people.

Meanwhile, Trump is most at ease with fellow authoritarian figures around the globe, whether Putin’s Russia, North Korea’s Kim, Turkey’s Erdogan, or Brazil’s Bolsonaro.

Since Hillary Clinton lost the presidency in 2016 even while winning almost three million more votes than Trump, the Democratic Party has undergone an internal battle of sorts for its soul, pitting insurgent, left-leaning candidates, many of them young newcomers, against more moderate establishment figures—on issues from racial justice to healthcare policy, economic inequality, and climate change action. Those are all areas on which debate is legitimate, indeed needed.

But here’s the thing: With four more years of Trump, there is no real consequential venue for having those debates. Trump and his enablers are draining the oxygen out of our democracy. Debating between left and center in the House of Representatives is no substitute for regaining the White House and the Senate. Only then can we have our debates, lick our wounds, and set a course for a better tomorrow.

This election will decide in a small number of states—perhaps as many as a dozen, more likely just a handful. In all of the battleground states, LGBTQ activists and our progressive allies are on the ground working to elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. Especially in a year when much of the campaign will be carried out on the air and online rather than in person, all of us—everywhere across the nation—can pitch in to help in those states where a boost for Biden is most needed.

Grab a bucket, adopt a state and dive in to the battle. None of us should wake up Nov. 4 wishing we had done more.

Trans candidate McBride makes history—again

Sarah McBride—who, in 2016, was the first openly transgender person to address the Democratic National Convention—made history again with a primary victory, setting her up for her likely win as the highest-ranking openly transgender legislator in the United States, The Washington Blade noted.

According to a Human Rights Campaign (HRC) statement Windy City Times obtained, McBride—national press secretary for HRC—won the Democratic primary for Delaware’s 1st state Senate District on Sept. 15.

HRC President Alphonso David said, in part, “Sarah is no stranger to making history. As the first transgender speaker at a national party convention, Sarah spoke for a community long ignored and pushed to the sidelines. As the first transgender person to work at the White House, she spoke truth to power advocating for her community in halls that were unfamiliar to anyone similar to her. Next year, as the first transgender state senator in our nation, Sarah will show that any child can achieve their dream, no matter their gender identity or sexual orientation.

“We will be sad to lose her as a staff member at the Human Rights Campaign, we are overjoyed to have been a piece of her story. Congratulations, Sarah.”
—Andrew Davis

Carey stepping down as Task Force director in 2021

On Sept. 23, the National LGBTQ Task Force announced that longtime Executive Director Rea Carey will be stepping down in early 2021. Carey has been with the organization since 2003 as a senior strategist, then deputy executive director, becoming executive director in 2008. The Board of Directors has unanimously selected Kierra Johnson, who has served as deputy executive director since 2018, as its next executive director beginning Feb. 1, 2021.

Johnson will become the first Black executive director of the Task Force.

On her departure, Carey said in a statement, “From overturning discriminatory policies and passing LGBTQ inclusive laws to celebrating marriage at the Supreme Court, to being arrested alongside immigration activists, to the energy of our Creating Change Conferences, it has been a remarkable ride. Just to be alive during a time of such progress over the last many years has been astounding, and to serve the LGBTQ community in my 17 years at the National LGBTQ Task Force has been the joy and honor of a lifetime.”
The National LGBT Media Association

WE BACK

BIDEN HARRIS

The National LGBT Media Association unanimously endorses Democratic ticket.
Gay business owner and promoter Robert “Bob” Yeaworth died Sept. 14 from complications due to his ALS (also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease) diagnosis. He was 64.

Yeaworth was born Sept. 17, 1955 in Cincinnati, Ohio, and graduated from that city’s Anderson High School. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in industrial design and MBA from the University of Cincinnati. Yeaworth worked in museum design and advanced applications consulting for Herman Miller, Inc.

Among Yeaworth’s many design clients were Bradbury Science Museum at Los Alamos National Laboratory, McDonald’s, IBM, Motorola, ComEd and Bank of Montreal.

Alongside his former business and romantic partner the late Samuel Davis Jr., Yeaworth operated several successful Chicago businesses, including Newbury Muffins and Grand Seafood Grill as well as entertainment venues Deeks Nightclub, Pangea and, in 1990, The Clubhouse—which, for several years, was Chicago’s foremost Black LGBTQ dance venue.

When The Clubhouse was sold in 1996, Yeaworth founded Clubhouse Productions. Among the many events The Clubhouse produced were the URBANO Blatino LGBTQ Pride parties at Fantasy (formerly Circuit) Nightclub and SX CHICAGO at Hydrate (formerly Manhole) and The Den.

Additionally, Yeaworth and Davis created and produced the original annual Belmont Harbor “Rocks” party, which was the Pride Parade’s after-party for many years until it ceased operations in 1997.

In 2017, Yeaworth and his business partner Warren Berger opened Club Escape on Chicago’s South Side because they wanted to bring entertainment to the LGBTQ community in that area of the city. Club Escape partnered with House of Tut Production to produce Saturday Night “Mz. Ruff and Stuff’s Show of Illusion” among other themed night events.

Yeaworth and his longtime life partner Daniel Bekoe met in 2002 and have spent 17 years together here in Chicago and traveling the world creating many memories with family.

He was preceded in death by his father James T. Yeaworth Sr. He is survived by Bekoe, their sons Martin and Samuel Bekoe, his mother Dr. Rosalee C. Yeaworth, brother James T. Yeaworth Jr., sister Susan E. Clarke (Kirby), niece Jessica Bentley (Michael), niece Dr. Nicole Dyer (Dustin), nephew Brett Clarke (Stephanie), many great nieces and nephews and countless chosen family members and friends.

“How can the dead be truly dead when they still live in the souls of those who are left behind?” Bekoe asked. “The journey does not end here. Death is just another path, one that we all must take. How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard. To me, you were more than just a person. You were a place where I finally felt at home and will be forever my love, Bob.”

“To My Favorite Uncle Bob,” said Dyer. “What more is there to say? Like so many others whose lives you have impacted, you have set such an example for me. You were always there to listen with an open mind and provide wisdom with a level of experience that I would only come to know with time. From telling me what drinks to order at the bar to sound sophisticated (martini straight up dry with a twist), to serenading only me with my favorite Boys II Men song once everyone left the room, to teaching me how to love someone who saw the world so differently than myself, I am so thankful for all our times together.

“In 2017, the diagnosis of ALS was devastating, but in some ways I am grateful because it brought me back to Chicago. During this time; I got to see you in action, realize all those you impacted, and truly see your mission in serving the Latino LGBTQ community and those impacted by HIV/AIDS. To me, you have always been a celebrity. I am so lucky to have been able to spend so much time with you and to care for you along this journey. Love always, Nikki.”

“Remember: If you do not follow your dreams you will never know what is on the top of the mountain,” said longtime friend and self-described “Chicago’s Heavy Diva,” Otis Mack. “I learned what it meant to follow my dreams from Bob. He was a kind spirited and soft spoken business man and guru promoter. Bob knew what he wanted and how he wanted it executed. Bob gave me the opportunity of a lifetime. It is because of Bob that I had a platform to create my life-long dream as a host, comedian, entertainer and promoter.

“Bob and Sam hired me to host their weekly Saturday night show at The Clubhouse which went on to be one of the longest running and most successful entertainment a drag shows in the city. The stage was graced by some of the best of the best, including Flame Monroe, Grace Jones, Barbara Tucker and Jamie Principal. I am who I am because of Bob giving me a chance. Thank you for being a friend.”

“When it came down to his businesses, Bob was fierce and always got the job done,” said longtime friend Thomas “Tut” Hunt. “For me personally, he was a genuine and loving. He spoke to everyone about everything. Bob's humor was very quick and sharp and he never missed a beat. I will miss the long conversations about myrads of topics and the great laughs we shared.”

“Entrepreneur, community advocate, promoter and friend—Bob was a man who put his energy and time into securing social outlets and entertainment for the African and Latin American same gender loving members or Chicago’s LGBTQ comm-

Gay business owner/nightlife figure
Bob Yeaworth dies

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

munity,” said longtime friend Charles Nelson.

“From the early days of our friendship, Bob has been a champion for HIV education and prevention. He was also a personal supporter of many campaigns, activations and intervention from the beginning of Chicago Black SGL-LGBTQ Pride and many Chicago LGBTQ institutions.

“We not only lost a friend but also lost a man who contributed much to the history and visibility of same gender loving men and women in Chicago and we must never forget what he did to affect positive change. I will always miss him and the friendship we had.”

A memorial service is pending, due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on large gatherings. Donations can be made in memory of Yeaworth to the South Side Help Center southsidehelp.org/ and/or directly to the family with a check payable to Daniel Bekoe, c/o Cremation Society of Illinois, 736 West Addison St. Chicago, IL 60613.

PASSAGES
Wayland D. Rogers

Wayland D. Rogers—a singer, conductor, teacher and celebrated composer based in Chicago—passed away Sept. 9 after a long illness. He was 78.

Rogers was born to Othal and Dova (Barrier) Rogers on Dec. 26, 1941, in Wayne County, Kentucky. He was the youngest brother of Lucille Eads (deceased), Inadene Tatum (deceased), Alice Van Hook (deceased), O.D. Rogers, Jr. and Harold Rogers.

He was artistic director/conductor of The Camerata Singers of Lake Forest for 15 years and music director at North Shore Unitarian Church (Deerfield, Illinois) for 25 years. He held faculty appointments at Northwestern, DePaul, Loyola (Chicago), North Park, Western Kentucky and Lambuth universities as well as the Music Institute of Chicago. In 1986, Wayland received a Grammy nomination for best chamber music award in a recording of Mozart with the Chicago Symphony Winds and was inducted into the Wayne County High School Hall of Fame in 2004.

Wayland is survived by brothers O.D and Harold Rogers and a host of adoring nieces and nephews. Celebrations of Wayland’s life will be held in Chicago and Lexington, Kentucky, once restrictions on large gatherings are lifted.

Gfits in memory of Wayland may be made to the North Shore Unitarian Church (Deerfield) for the Wayland Rogers Scholarship Fund and to the University of Kentucky School of Music Scholarship Fund for a scholarship in Wayland’s name. Please make checks payable to the University of Kentucky with Wayland Rogers memorial in the memo line. Mail to UK Philanthropy, 210 Malabu Dr., Ste 200, Lexington, KY 40502; or visit UKY.networkforgood.com.

Arrangements by Cremation Society of Illinois, 773-281-5056 or Cremation-society.com
Former Northalsted bartender Eric Sangster dies at 37

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Northalsted bartender Eric Sangster died Sept. 17 unexpectedly at the age of 37. At the time of this article’s publication, Sangster’s cause of death is unknown.

Sangster was born June 4, 1983, on a Jacksonville, North Carolina, naval base. Due to his status as a “military brat,” Sangster lived in Hawaii, Tennessee and California throughout his childhood. He moved to Chicago for college and received his BA from the now defunct International Academy of Design and Technology. After graduating college, Sangster worked in various retail and hospitality positions as well as real estate. He was also a bartender at various Halsted Street establishments, most notably at the Kit Kat Lounge and Supper Club.

Sangster moved to Miami a few years ago. According to his family, Sangster decided to move to California to be close to them due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He is survived by his beloved dog Dobbie, parents Michael and Theresa (Helton) Sangster; siblings Brandon (Monica), Brenton (Anastacia), and Caitlin Sangster; second mother figure and aunt Lady Debra (Frank) Basso; sister figure and close cousin Christie Sawochka; nieces and nephews Nevaeh, River and Jameson; and countless chosen family members and friends.

“He was so funny and full of himself,” said his mother, Theresa. “He thought he was all that and a bag of chips, and he was. He was my second son and I was hoping for a girl, but he was the sweetest little guy as a child and a hilarious sense of humor. He was always a bit sassy. The biggest impact he had on my life was when he was born and he literally broke my tailbone, and I tell everyone he came out kicking my ass, and he did throughout his life.”

“He changed my life when he was born,” said his father, Michael. “I most remember his smile and want people to remember his sense of humor.”

“I remember when Eric graduated from college,” said brother Brandon. “That was a huge milestone in his life, and from there, he grew to become very successful. He purchased a beautiful condo overlooking the area he lived in and had a great job and though this did not impact me directly, it impacted my perception of my little brother.

“With Eric’s growth and success he was a generous person who wanted to share his successes with everyone. I remember times going back home to Chicago and he would want to take me out and show me his world and treat me to all he had. One of my fondest memories with him was a night at the Kit Kat bar and he introduced me to all his friends and coworkers. He wanted to wine and dine his older brother. He did not have to do that, but he wanted to and this extended to everyone he loved and valued.”

Eric Sangster.
Photo courtesy of Anthony Martinez

“Eric was part of my chosen family,” said close friend and Civil Rights Agenda Founding Executive Director Anthony Martinez. “We were all part of a crew in our twenties that went out in what was formerly known as Boystown (now Northalsted) all of the time and danced, and had so much fun. We were always laughing. He was the person who would see someone down and do something funny or be the goofball to pick them up. We were both Gemini’s so we would always joke about our Gemini power and how together we were unstoppable; and maybe a little kooky.”

“Eric was an incredible guy,” said Kit Kat owner and Sangster’s former boss Ramesh Ariyannayakam. “He always had a smile on his face, was an extremely hard worker and was always working to better himself.”

“Eric started at Kit Kat as a bartender,” added Kit Kat Beverage Director Chuck Hart. “I had the pleasure and honor of training him and that is where we met and became friends. He was known throughout Chicago’s LGBTQ community for always willing to lend a helping hand to any of the Northalsted businesses that needed it.”

A memorial service will take place Thursday, Oct. 1, from 4-7 p.m. with a celebration of his life immediately following at Muzyka and Son Funeral Home, 5776 W. Lawrence Ave., in Chicago. Social distancing will be practiced and masks will be required for entrance to the service.

Donations in Sangster’s name should be sent to his family via Zelle pay at Theresas79@hotmail.com. To send flowers or a memorial gift, visit muzykafuneralhome.com/obituaries/Eric-Sangster/#/Obituary.
**IMPORTANT FACTS FOR BIKTARVY®**
This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

**MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BIKTARVY**

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you have both HIV-1 and HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking BIKTARVY. Do not stop taking BIKTARVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

**ABOUT BIKTARVY**

BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults and children who weigh at least 55 pounds. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements.

**BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

Do NOT take BIKTARVY if you also take a medicine that contains:

- dofetilide
- rifampin
- any other medicines to treat HIV-1

**BEFORE TAKING BIKTARVY**

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- Have any other health problems.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking BIKTARVY.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all your other medicines.

**POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIKTARVY**

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the “Most Important Information About BIKTARVY” section.
- **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking BIKTARVY.
- **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys. If you develop new or worse kidney problems, they may tell you to stop taking BIKTARVY.
- **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (6%), and headache (5%).

These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking BIKTARVY.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with BIKTARVY.

**HOW TO TAKE BIKTARVY**

Take BIKTARVY 1 time each day with or without food.

**GET MORE INFORMATION**

- This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- Go to BIKTARVY.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- If you need help paying for your medicine, visit BIKTARVY.com for program information.
Because HIV doesn’t change who you are.

BIKTARVY® is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in certain adults. BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.

Ask your healthcare provider if BIKTARVY is right for you.
See D’Eva’s story at BIKTARVY.com.
Trump nominates Ginsburg successor—and LGBTQs react

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

President Trump announced Sept. 26 his nominee to replace U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and, as expected, she is a jurist LGBTQ groups are expected to vehemently oppose.

In a crowded outdoor event at the White House, Trump said his nominee, federal appeals Judge Amy Coney Barrett, would receive a “very quick” confirmation.

Does this spell doom for existing protections for LGBTQ people under the law? Does it close the door to the Supreme Court for any future LGBTQ plaintiffs seeking their rights under the constitution? LGBTQ legal experts are both deeply concerned and somewhat confident.

Barrett comes to the nomination after serving just two years the Seventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals, where she did not weigh in on any LGBTQ-related cases. However, in her years prior to that, as a professor at the University of Notre Dame School of Law, she signed onto a letter from Catholic Women supporting the church’s views on various issues, including that “marriage and family [are] founded on the indissoluble commitment of a man and a woman.”

During her 2017 confirmation process, one senator asked Barrett, via written questionnaire, how she could assure members of the LGBTQ community that she is committed to rendering decisions impartially and without bias or prejudice?

Barrett responded: “I do not think it lawful for a judge to impose personal opinions, from whatever source they derive, upon the law. If confirmed, I will apply the law faithfully and impartially in accordance with the judicial oath.”

“Do you agree that the church’s view regarding marriage as a union between a man and a woman is irrelevant to the legal question of the right of same-sex couples to marry?” asked U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.s.) in the questionnaire.

Barrett responded with one word: “Yes.”

She then repeatedly stated that several important LGBTQ-related decisions at the Supreme Court were “binding precedent that I will faithfully follow if confirmed.” They included Bostock v. Bostock, U.S. v. Windsor, and Lawrence v. Texas.

LGBTQ groups opposed Barrett’s nomination then. They said her views on civil-rights issues would “fundamentally at odds with the notion that LGBTQ people are entitled to equality, liberty, justice and dignity under the law.”

In a letter to then-Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Charles Grassley, 27 national and state LGBTQ groups said in 2017 that they were concerned that Barrett’s “religiously-infused moral beliefs would inform her judicial decision-making” on issues of specific interest to LGBTQ people. And they expressed alarm that Barrett had delivered a paid speech to the “most extreme anti-LGBT legal organization in the United States” (the Alliance Defending Freedom).

In reaction to news that Trump would nominate Barrett to U.S. Supreme Court, Lambda Legal issued a statement, saying, “Barrett will unleash a Supreme Court majority that is hostile to all of our basic civil rights, and the impact will be felt for decades.”

In the coming U.S. Supreme Court session, the court is set to hear Fulton v. Philadelphia, a case in which a Catholic adoption service wants the court to declare that it has a First Amendment right to violate a Philadelphia law against sexual orientation discrimination. And a Virginia school district is expected to appeal its loss in a case that tests whether Title IX of the federal Education Amendments Act—which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education—prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

There is some optimism still around the Title IX case. That’s because, just last June, a six-to-three majority of the Supreme Court ruled that Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act—which prohibits job discrimination on the basis of sex—also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. That ruling, Bostock v. Clayton County, is expected to serve as precedent for the Title IX litigation, too.

While Ginsburg is gone now from that Bostock majority, Chief Justice John Roberts, who joined the majority opinion, and Justice Neil Gorsuch, who authored it, are still there.

And “because Justice Gorsuch’s opinion for the Court was so relentlessly textual,” said Stanford University Professor Pamela Karlan, who successfully argued the case for the gay employee in Bostock, “I don’t see the Court coming out the other way on the way on Title IX’s coverage.”

Jon Davidson, former legal director for Lambda Legal and current chief counsel for Freedom for All Americans, agrees.

“‘That majority [in Bostock] also should agree that other federal laws prohibiting sex discrimination [including laws barring sex discrimination in education, housing, and credit] encompass discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity because the Supreme Court’s decision [in Bostock] did not rest on anything unique to the federal employment nondiscrimination, but rather on the correct conclusion that, as a general matter, one cannot discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity without discriminating based on sex.’”

But Both Karlan and Davidson expressed concern for what the Supreme Court didn’t rule on last session: accommodating religious employers, such as the one in the Philadelphia case, set for oral argument Wed., Nov. 4.

“The outcome could have broad implications for the application of nondiscrimination laws and government policies around the country,” said Davidson.

Davidson said he doesn’t think existing marriages of same-sex couples are at risk.

“Those who married same-sex partners after the Obergefell decision did so in compliance with the law at the time and have strong due process rights in not having those lawful marriages dissolved against their will,” said Davidson.

“Whether a new justice will respect the precedent of Obergefell going forward, however, is of course of concern.”

But Jenny Pizer, senior counsel at Lambda Legal, noted that, even with the marriage ruling in favor of same-sex couples, “we still have had to continue fighting for family equality for LGBTQ people and their children.”

“For example, we are in court now fighting for two married same-sex couples whose daughters are being denied citizenship by the Trump administration even though the law is explicit that their American citizen parents’ being married entitles them to citizenship,” said Pizer.

And Barrett, said Pizer, “has been outspoken in her belief that same-sex couples do not have the same fundamental constitutional right to marry that different-sex couples have, and that the marriages of same-sex couples do not deserve legal respect.”

Barrett also wrote a law review article arguing that, while all Supreme Court decisions serve as precedent for lower court decisions and subsequent Supreme Court decisions, some are “super precedents” and others are more susceptible to change. Barrett’s super-precedent theory, said Pizer, “seems designed to create room for reconsidering and reversing precedents that justices do not consider ‘super.’”

Barrett is Trump’s third opportunity to select a Supreme Court justice. He previously nominated, and the Senate confirmed, two other federal appeals court judges to the Supreme Court: Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh. Gorsuch’s nomination was marred by the controversy that ensued when Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to give consideration to then-President Obama’s nominee, Merrick Garland, even though Obama still had 11 months to go in his second term. McConnell left the seat open until after the 2016 presidential election and, because Trump won that election, the Republican president was given the opportunity to appoint the seat left open by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February 2016.

Kavanaugh’s confirmation was marred by controversy surrounding accusations that emerged following his nomination that he had sexually assaulted women. He denied those accusations, and the Republican-controlled Senate approved his nomination.

The Senate approved Gorsuch’s nomination by a vote of 54 to 46; it approved Kavanaugh 50-48. Barrett’s nomination also begins in controversy: While McConnell claimed he couldn’t advance President Obama’s nominee because it was a presidential election year, he has promised to rush through Barrett’s nomination even though this, too, is a presidential election year.

McConnell has made clear he has to votes to confirm the nominee and that he intends to rush through that confirmation process ahead of the Nov. 3 presidential election.

President Trump said Saturday that Barrett “will defend the sacred principle of equal justice for citizens of every race, color, religion, and creed.”

Barrett professed “love” for the United States Constitution and said she is “mindful” of the legacy of Justice Ginsburg, whose seat she has been nominated to fill. Ginsburg died at age 87 on Sept. 18, following a long struggle with cancer.

Barrett noted that Ginsburg was good friends with Justice Antonin Scalia, for whom Barrett clerked, despite the fact that Ginsburg was one of the court’s most liberal jurists and Scalia one of its most conservative.

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Gay history podcast has new host: Studs Terkel

BY JOSHUA IRVINE

For four years, Eric Marcus has been the voice of Making Gay History, introducing listeners to both the infamous and the overlooked of LGBTQ history through his extensive personal archive of audio interviews.

But for the podcast’s eighth season, Marcus will cede interview duties to a more seasoned personality: the late Chicago broadcaster and friend of the LGBTQ+ community Studs Terkel (1912-2008).

For the latest season, Making Gay History has partnered with the Studs Terkel Radio Archive to produce eight episodes featuring Terkel’s interviews with LGBTQ icons such as Lorraine Hansberry, Quentin Crisp and Jill Johnston. The first episode, featuring a 1977 interview with author Christopher Isherwood, debuts Oct. 1.

The extensive use of the audio archive is a first for the podcast, which has pulled most of its content from tape recordings made by Marcus while working on his 1992 oral history of the gay rights movement, Making History.

Recent seasons drew on outside sources for episodes featuring Baynard Rustin, Ernestine Eckstein and a 1970 interview with trans icons Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson. However, this season will be the first to pull entirely from someone else’s archive.

Marcus will still introduce and close out each episode, but he plans to cede the majority of each episode’s 20 minutes to interviewer and subject.

“My goal here is to introduce the episode, get out of the way and let Studs and his interviewee present themselves,” Marcus said.

The season will also offer a new perspective on the history of LGBTQ persons. While Marcus’ interviews were recorded entirely in the late 1980s and early 1990s and featured interviewees reflecting on the social upheaval of the past decades, Terkel’s interviews were either recorded concurrent to or even predate the gay liberation movement. The earliest, with a then-26-year-old Hansberry, was recorded in 1959.

Marcus found many of these older interviews fascinating in the way their subjects reckoned with their identities in a pre-Stonewall environment. He singled out one episode featuring a “professional female impersonator” named Les-Lee, who Terkel interviewed in the performer’s Paris club in 1967.

“To hear how Les-Lee talks about impersonation, about his personal life... He never mentions the word ‘gay,’ but it’s clear that in talking about being different, he’s talking about being gay,” Marcus said.

Other interviews touch on world history in unexpected ways—like Isherwood’s encounters in 1930s Berlin with Magnus Hirschfeld, a German sexologist later targeted in the Nazi book burnings.

It’s unsurprising that many of Terkel’s interviews feature LGBT persons: He was a longtime ally of the community. In the 1940s, he ran the aldermanic campaign for his friend Pearl M. Hart, a civil rights lawyer who fought for gay victims of entrapment and harassment. He aired one of the first interviews with representatives from Mat-tachine Midwest, Chicago’s first successful gay rights organization. A shortened version of that interview will appear on the new season.

A famous anecdote, included in Terkel’s entry in the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame, notes how in the 1970s Terkel came across a picket line outside an alderman’s ward fair that had refused to include a gay organization’s booth. Terkel spontaneously joined the picket line and then entered the fair, hosted by a local church, to denounce the exclusion of gays.

“Studs Terkel.
Photo by Raeburn Flerlage

“He had a vested interest in those who were oppressed and those who were fighting for their voices,” said Allison Schein Holmes, director of media archives at WTTW and WFMT, who distribute Terkel’s tapes.

His leftist politics cost him his television show in the 1950s when he was blacklisted by U.S. Sen. Joseph McCarthy, and the FBI kept an active dossier on Terkel for more than 40 years.

Terkel’s oeuvre is partially responsible for Making Gay History. Making History, Marcus’ book, was commissioned by an editor who told him he wanted an oral history like Terkel’s 1974 account of working Americans, Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do.

Terkel later interviewed Marcus about Making History on the former’s radio show and provided a quote for the book jacket.

Production is nearly wrapped on season eight, but the podcasters are already looking forward. Next, the podcasters aim to return the focus to Marcus as he documents the AIDS crisis from his perspective as a gay man living in New York in the 1980s. He pointed out he was now the same age or older than many of his interview subjects from 30 years previous.

That season is set to debut in June 2021, to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the New York Times’ first article documenting what would become known as HIV/AIDS.
Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Facebook Live Oct. 13

The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame was founded in 1991 to honor people and entities, nominated by the community, who have made significant contributions to the quality of life or well-being of the LGBT community in Chicago.

The inductees for 2020 were selected from a slate of candidates submitted by Chicago’s LGBT community. This year’s individuals, organizations, businesses and “Friends of the Community” (allies) inductees are as follows:

This year’s induction ceremony will be a virtual one, and will be webcast Oct. 13, at 6:30 p.m., a press release announced. Dean Richards will emcee. The event will be live-streamed via Facebook Live.

Individual nominees
John Ademola Adewoye: in recognition of his work in helping offer asylum and counseling to LGBT people from less welcoming environments such as Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe and for providing housing, connections and services to help them navigate their new world.
Caprice Carthans: in recognition for her work with many community agencies including AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Chicago House, and Heartland Alliance as a transgender advocate.
Dr. Raymond Crossman, PhD: as the longest-serving LGBT university president in North America, Crossman helped pave the way for LGBT leaders in higher education. He co-founded LGBT Presidents in Higher Education and brought the first national conference for LGBT leaders in higher education to Chicago.
Jay Paul Deratany: recognized for his work as both a human rights lawyer providing volunteer legal services during the AIDS crisis and working with homeless youth and as a board member of Human Rights Watch, which provides support for international LGBT individuals fighting for their lives in countries that have the death penalty for the LGBT individuals.
Ronald J. Ethemann: for 40 years of activism in Chicago’s LGBT community. In 1978 Ron Ethemann became one of Chicago’s first openly gay attorneys, representing many of the city’s bars and organizations. He co-founded Organization to Promote Equality Now (OPEN), Illinois’ first gay/lesbian political action party as well as the Greater Chicago Gay & Lesbian Democrats. While doing all of this he helped raise money for community organizations and charities too numerous to mention.
Denise Foy: for her long history of service to Chicago’s LGBT community. Beginning in 1993 when she served on the board of Horizons Community Services, fundraising to help establish The Center on Halsted. She was a founding member of the LGBT Community Fund at the Chicago Community Trust. She now serves on the national board of SAGE providing advocacy and services for LGBT elders.

Dalila Fridi: for 30 years of tireless work to advance the rights of LGBT people in Chicago. She has served as a grassroots organizer supporting marriage equality and political candidates who fight for equal rights for the LGBT community. Dalila has also been an advocate for LGBT rights among Chicago’s Muslim community advocating for the understanding of intersectionality between Islam and LGBT rights.

Terry Gaskins: for documenting life and activism in Chicago’s LGBT community through her services as a photographer and a humanitarian for more than 20 years. She is probably best known as the staff photographer for Gay Chicago Magazine, but she has also donated her time and talents to benefit numerous organizations within and beyond the LGBT community, including animal rights organizations.

Joel Drake Johnson (posthumous): was an award-winning, internationally produced Chicago playwright and teacher. He was nominated for a Joseph Jefferson Award five times, Emmy nominated and was a member of the Pen America Center. His most commercial successful work, Ra/sheeda Speaking, opened off-Broadway and was nominated for an Outer Critics Circle Award for best new work.

Steve Kulieke: honored for breaking barriers while covering and advancing the struggle for civil rights equal justice for Chicago’s LGBT community. Kulieke did groundbreaking work as a reporter an editor at Chicago’s GayLife weekly newspaper from 1977 through 1982. Kulieke was not only at the center of action he was integral to the community’s emergence as a social and political force. In the 1980s Kulieke gained recognition throughout the journalism world as the nation’s first ever municipal press corps reporter representing an LGBT paper.

Matt Stuczynski: for his work in founding the Chicago chapter of GLSEN (Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network). He has been instrumental in LGBT visibility in schools though out the Chicago area. Under his guidance, Chicago’s GLSEN chapter became one of the most successful in the nation. The chapter donated innumerable amounts of LGBT friendly educational materials to the Chicago Public Schools as well as spearheaded protections an inclusive language in the Chicago Teachers Union and Chicago Public School governance.

Michelle Zacarias: for more than a decade of work as a queer, disabled, Latina organizer, she has facilitated social justice, anti-oppression, and LGBT movement work as one of four founding members of the Trans Liberation Collective (TLC), a coalition that formed after the anti-transgender bathroom bills swept the nation in 2017. Michelle continues to positively impact queer communities in her role as a board member of The Brave Space Alliance, a black and brown trans-run non-profit on Chicago’s south side, and through her disability-centered community care workshops.

In addition to recognizing the extraordinary achievements of individuals, the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame also honored one LGBT organization and two businesses as well as three allies, dubbed “Friends of the Community”

The organization and businesses inducted are:

The Legacy Project: an award-winning cultural and educational non-profit dedicated to researching and promoting the contributions LGBT people have made to world history and culture. The Legacy Walk is the only outdoor LGBT museum walk in the world. It spans one-half mile of North Halsted Street. It is anchored by 20 two-story tall steel architectural pylons which feature forty 18” x 24” bronze memorials highlighting the contributions of LGBT people. The Legacy Walk was declared an historic landmark in 2019. In addition, the Legacy Project has developed an LGBT inclusive curriculum and offers a traveling exhibit of LGBT history.

Windy City Times: since its inception in 1985, under then publisher Jeff McCourt, through the current incarnation with publishers Tracy Baim and Terri Klinsky, Windy City Times has functioned as Chicago’s premiere news source for the LGBTQ community. The award-winning publication recently converted to a digital-only format.

Women & Children First Bookstore: since it opened in 1979, Women & Children First has been Chicago’s premiere feminist independent bookstore. As dozens of other bookstores closed during the 90s and 2000s Women & Children First has grown to be one of the largest feminist bookstores in the country stocking more than 30,000 books by and about women, children’s books, and the best LGBT literature.

Brennetta Howell Barrett: honored for her work in the fight for civic and economic rights on Chicago’s west side, since the 1960s and for her commitment to addressing homophobia and lack of access to resources in the community. She is notable for her inclusion of the LGBT community in all her endeavors. She has worked with public officials and faith-based community groups to bring greater awareness and resources in the fight against HIV/AIDS, helped reduce the stigma, and fostered greater acceptance. Barrett’s commitment to fighting homophobia continues as she enters her 87th year.

The National Museum of Mexican Art: for the inclusivity of its mission since it opened its doors in 1987. The NMMA has made it possible for Latinx within a cultural context to celebrate their full identity. The programming at NMMA has always intentionally included LGBT artists and performers, programming and displays.

Founded in 1991 as the Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame, the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame’s purpose then, as now, is to honor people and entities, nominated by the community, who have made significant contributions to the quality of life or well-being of the LGBT community in Chicago. It is the first city-sponsored hall of fame dedicated to LGBT people, organizations and community in the United States.

The new inductees to the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame were selected from a slate of candidates submitted by Chicago’s LGBT community. That slate of candidates was then reviewed by a selection committee comprised of individual inductees to the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame.

The first Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame ceremony took place during Pride Week and was held at Chicago City Hall. Mayor Richard M. Daley hosted the ceremony and afterwards, photos of the inductees were displayed in City Hall. The Hall of Fame has no physical facility but maintains a website, which allows anyone to visit the Hall of Fame at any time. Traditionally, the City of Chicago has displayed the Hall of Fame materials during induction periods, Pride and in October, Gay & Lesbian History Month.

From its founding in 1991 until 2016 the Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame relied on support from the City of Chicago. The city ceased funding the Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2016, at that time, it was rechristened the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame and has since been supported and maintained by the Friends of the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame, a 501c3 not-for-profit organization, with approval from the City of Chicago.

For more information, visit the organization’s web site chicagolgbthalloffame.org/ or its Facebook page, www.facebook.com/groups/56108152083/.
Lendale Johnson
Excelling on and off the tennis court

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Some would say that Lendale Johnson has accomplished enough in being the first male openly gay professional tennis player. (He’s part of the International Tennis Federation. It is separate from the Association of Tennis Professionals—which has figures such as Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic—but has thousands of players, nonetheless.)

However, the Chicago native is also an actor, model, reality-show figure (with his upcoming Deuces and Love) and director of The Johnson High Performance Tennis Academy (which has a branches in the Windy City, New York City and New Jersey).

Windy City Times: How are you doing with this pandemic living?

Lendale Johnson: It’s been pretty challenging, emotionally. It’s not just because of the Black Lives Matter movement, although just being a Black man during these times is difficult. The tennis academy has been really hot now, so that’s good; everyone’s keen to get outside and get fit. Things are okay, but they could be better, obviously. I’ve had some pretty big heartbreaks this year. I’ve had some friends and family members who’ve passed away; there’s been so much death this year.

WCT: So much has happened, and we still have an election to go. Could you give the readers a little background about yourself? I know you were born in Kalamazoo [Michigan], but I don’t know if you grew up there as well, even though you were also in Chicago.

LJ: It was, like, half-Kalamazoo and half-Chicago. My family’s from Chicago, and I feel like Chicago was [pivotal] for a lot of things, such as tennis. I got my first cover and my first acting gig [an appearance on the TV show Empire] in Chicago. That city has been a foundation for my success, and New York City has helped even more.

With Empire, I had a huge interview on Fox News. People recognized me in public; I couldn’t take the subway for a while. [Laughs] People would say, “Hey, Empire!”

WCT: What are your thoughts about the U.S. Open tennis tournament—about how it went, Djokovic [who was disqualified for accidentally hitting a line judge with a tennis ball], etc.?

LJ: Regarding them making it safe for players, I thought it was great. However, I don’t agree with some things that happened. There was some controversy about Novak, but I think they threw him under the bus. I think if it had been Roger Federer, they would not have done that. Let’s be real: A lot of people don’t like Novak because he’s been beating their favorite players.

Also, Novak and [player Vasek] Pospisil and other players are trying to form their own group [the Professional Tennis Players Association]. Tennis players get [a low] percent of what’s made off the top; the rest goes to organizers and others. Players are sick of it; you really don’t make much money unless you break into the top 500. The top players get a check for just being in a tournament; some people don’t know that.

So I think because of that, people went after Novak. Maybe he could’ve gotten a game taken away or a gotten a warning. But the other players got an opportunity, and there’s an extra $6 million put in the prize-money pool. That’s awesome. [Laughs]

WCT: Why do you think more male tennis players have not come out?

LJ: I really feel like it’s an American issue, a little bit. Being gay is taboo in the sports world. In individual sports, especially, it’s really tough. If it’s like the NBA or NFL, I think there would be at least a few teammates who say, “I support you.”

There’s also internalized homophobia within the system—decision-makers and organizers. All of that happens behind closed doors, and you don’t know what happens. Sponsorship makes and breaks you, and there are ratings to think about. That’s a reality—and I think it’s a bigger issue on the men’s side. You’re supposed to be manly and not cry.

Read the entire interview with Lendale Johnson at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.
Brad Edwards talks investigative journalism, coming out, making history

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Television journalist Brad Edwards has accomplished much in his life, such as winning multiple awards and including serving on the board of directors at theYWCA, whose goal is to “empower women and eliminate racism.” However, there’s one achievement that’s especially noteworthy—especially with this newspaper’s readers: He is the first out member of the LGBTQ community who’s anchoring a Chicago nighttime newscast (at 5, 6 and 10 p.m. on the local CBS affiliate, which is the fastest growing newscast at the latter time slot for 12 consecutive months).

In a wide-ranging interview, Edwards talked with Windy City Times about everything from coming out to dating ABC News meteorologist Ginger Zee to having a passion for investigative journalism.

Windy City Times: I’ll start with more of a general question: Of course you’re supposed to be objective when delivering the news, how hard is it to resist sometimes putting in your own two cents?

Brad Edwards: That’s a good question. I think we do now, at CBS 2, have a bit of an opinion—a bit of an attitude. But it’s neither right nor left, politically; it’s right in that it’s correct. We lean [toward] what should happen and what’s just.

An example was when we found out Chicago police were consistently raiding the wrong homes. We did stories on that—and reported that the cops were putting guns to children’s heads when the people they were looking for were already in prison. They were mind-blowing gaffes by the Chicago police. We did that story to the point where there is now new legislation, and where there was [serial killer] Jeffrey Dahmer—how he was sendo at that time gay anchor in Chicago, and the first—but I had been a journalist. So many LGBTQ people to hide behind books, articles and the history of journalism. So the opinion was “[These raids] shouldn’t be happening.”

WCT: And is that why investigative journalism is so important to you?

BE: Ah! To me, if you’re not using the microphone as an apparatus of accountability, you ain’t doing it right. If you’re not giving voice to the voiceless, if you’re not trying to right wrongs, please policies or better communities, then why even take it up?

By the way, there’s something that’s so great about this job. It wasn’t just an anchor change that happened [last year]; it was a change in how we approach the news. It’s data-heavy, FOIA-heavy and source-heavy. If you just want to see what happened throughout the day, you can watch one of the other channels; we’re aggressively uncovering news.

I enjoy anchoring our news because I like watching our news. There’s not a lot of news I enjoy watching.

WCT: You’re the first openly gay local nighttime news anchor. Do you feel any pressure to be a role model, or is there any weight with that designation?

BE: That’s a really good question. [Actually,] I do. When you’re first in anything, there is certainly an added pressure to succeed—and I feel that pressure, and I put that pressure on myself. That being said, it’s almost exacerbated because I never thought I’d have this large a role. Growing up in conservative western Michigan, I never allowed myself to dream this big.

When you’re gay growing up in the era I did [Edwards is 41], it was certainly better than the era before—the rule of the land, instituted by a Democratic president [Bill Clinton] was “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” That means “stay in the closet,” so you had to downgrade your dreams accordingly. I loved watching the news and 60 Minutes, but they painted a bleak picture of being gay in the ‘80s and ‘90s. They were letting gays die in California. Ryan White—who wasn’t gay—had our disease: AIDS; what they did to poor kid in his hometown of Kokomo, Indiana. And then there was serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer—how those stories being portrayed. With TV being my window to the world, it was a bleak, bleak place.

We still have a long way to go. There weren’t kids who were out back then. I had a truly remarkable coming-out experience but as a kid—when nobody knows you’re gay, and you’re not sure yourself—certain things can invalidate you. There were grown men saying the f-word and people you admire telling gay jokes. It’s constant invalidation that leads you to recalibrate your expectations for life—and my expectations were certainly not this [where I am now].

I look at some of the gay men in our community—the Stonewall generation and the AIDS generation—and I bow to them. I am a nighttime gay anchor in Chicago, and the first—but it’s not a big deal in Chicago, and it should be. However, many gay journalists reach out to me, and it’s surreal. I certainly don’t think of myself as a trailblazer, per se, but hopefully it is blazing a trail to equality.

America is going through a remarkable reconciliation with its past, and maybe I’m just a little part of that. But the key is the work, the content. To me, my work and my belief in investigative journalism come from having a chip on my shoulder; you’re damn right I have a chip on my shoulder, although I had a great coming-out experience. I came out to my mom and dad, and my dad hugged me; I went back to college and changed my major to journalism—and now I’m here. I was going to be a teacher; I was going to hide behind books, articles and the history of English, wondering how things would’ve been if I had been a journalist. So many LGBTQ people haven’t had that opportunity.

WCT: Were your parents the first people you came out to?

BE: No; I first came out to the girlfriend of my best friend in high school. The second person I came out to was my brother. He let me know of Chicago confirmed it.

WCT: October is National Coming Out Month. Do you have any advice for people who are trying to figure out how to come out?

BE: This is an important question. If you know you’re [LGBTQ], your best friend probably know—and I think everyone needs to enlist your best friend(s). Come out first to your people, your crew—the ones you know will have your back. You need your team behind you when you decide to come out to your loved ones.

As far as we’ve come—for reasons that confound me—when kids come out to their parents in 2020, there are still some parents who don’t accept their children. It’s inexplicable.

I’m on a regimen of medications, so you’d never know. It forced me to get really serious about my health. If we can keep it at bay through what we know works … it’s a long time.

WCT: I want to go back to journalism for a second. There’s a question I occasionally ask people but I especially wanted to ask you because you are a journalist: If you could ask the current president one question—and be guaranteed to get the truth—what would that question be?

BE: [Long pause] That’s such a good question. Well, our president is not that different from a lot of Illinois politicians. Sometimes, the first thing I want to do is put them under oath, and then interrogate them for hours.

First, I would ask a lot of Illinois politicians if I could put them under oath. If the answer is “yes,” I’d ask a thousand more questions. One of the questions I would ask Trump is “What’s in those tax returns?” When someone puts up a monumental fight to not disclose something that’s there—for years now—I’d like to know what’s happening. It may all be innocent; he may be doing this on principle. [Note: The New York Times, on Sept. 27, published a report claiming Trump paid only $750 in personal federal income taxes in 2016 and 2017, and he paid no income taxes in 10 of the previous 15 years.]

WCT: What would you say is the high point for you so far in your career?

BE: There are a couple of them. There was a woman named Marabel, in Detroit. She called me and was literally crying for help because she was the last one who was about to go on the street; she didn’t want to move out. We did so many stories on her, and eventually there was a half-hour special. She never moved out; she died. When she went to the morgue and I lost track of her. Then I got a call from a source at the Wayne County morgue—saying that no one had claimed her body. Following that story, we got her body claimed and buried. Then there was a fast-track of money to improve that morgue—and it started with one woman’s call to me.

I have no interest in interviewing stars or big-name politicians. I want to shine a spotlight on the downtrodden, like Marabel in Detroit; Shirley [Bennett] and the shack; and Rodney, the cabbie. Shirley was living in a shack near the Cook County Jail; because of the story, she was reunited with the daughter she hadn’t seen in a quarter-century. I fought like hell to tell that story.

I feel like I’m a conduit—like this is my calling.
Artemis Singers marks 40th anniversary with virtual panel

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

To celebrate Artemis Singer’s 40th anniversary, Gerber/Hart Library and Archives hosted a Sept. 26 virtual panel discussion on the past, present and future of the chorus.

Artemis Singers holds the distinction of being the first lesbian feminist chorus in the United States. Since its founding, the chorus has exclusively performed music written or arranged by women. The chorus made its debut performance at the December 1980 second annual Chicago Gay/Lesbian Community Band and Windy City Gay Chorus concert, “Don We Now ... II” and has performed at hundreds of venues since that time.

Artemis Singers President Diana L. Clegg moderated the event. Clegg also served as the board treasurer and secretary and co-chaired the 2010 Sister Singers Network National Choral Festival at Loyola University Chicago.

Panelists included Former Artemis Singers Winter Solstice and Samhain Artistic Director Ruth Clark; Former Artemis Singers President and current time-keeper, music scheduler and music librarian Meta Hellman; and Artemis Singers Visibility and Diversity Committee Member Elise Dunham.

Gerber/Hart Communications and Programming Coordinator and panel host Jen Dentel welcomed the approximately 75 people in attendance and played a slideshow featuring event fliers, the chorus performing over the years and other images from the organization’s archives. Dentel told participants that Gerber/Hart holds the Artemis Singers archives.

Clark spoke about the early days of the chorus and how they first met in a church basement and asked longtime member Vada Woods to speak about her experiences with the chorus. Clark mentioned that Artemis Singers first solo concert was held at the now-defunct lesbian feminist music venue Mountain Moving Coffeehouse. Kathy Munzer read from some of the Mountain Moving fliers promoting Artemis Singers she has in her archives.

Hellman said that what makes Artemis Singers unique and enduring is “we really like women.” She added that it was so great for her to see so many lesbians in one room during her first rehearsals with the chorus.

Dunham spoke about what makes Artemis Singers a community. She said that although she’s only been a member for one year it was apparent right away that everyone supports each other in myriads of ways. Dunham added that going to the Camp Artemis annual retreat made this even more apparent to her.

Clegg spoke about the choral music they have sung over the years and how they found pieces written by women to perform. She said it was important for them to “uncover those hidden gems” and share them with the world. Clegg added that Artemis Singers was an important part of the Illinois marriage equality fight including performing at the bill signing ceremony. She also spoke about the chorus’ other social justice outreach efforts.

Dunham said that due to the pandemic, many of the plans for 2020 had to be postponed or cancelled. She added that they have been meeting over Zoom and this has been an opportunity for them to get to know each other better. Dunham said the Zoom meetings have given them the chance to sing together in new ways, the time and ability to work on special projects as well as learn new technical skills.

As for the future, Dunham said it includes “being actively anti-racist before they can be inclusive” at Artemis Singers. She added that they will be doing a virtual concert next year. Details TBA.

The event also featured additional members speaking about their experiences with the chorus and a video of them singing.

Artemis Singers leadership is asking its supporters to donate to blacklesbianarchives.wixsite.com/info.

Donations can be made through PayPal to: krukaekdo@gmail.com.
Election 2020

US CONGRESS RACES

D = Democrat / R = Republican / L = Libertarian / G = Green / I = Independent
HRC = Human Rights Campaign 115th Congress, ratings are a percentage of total 100% based on HRC tracking of how candidates voted in the 115th Congress
IFT = Illinois Federation of Teachers
OIR = Our Illinois Revolution
PP = Planned Parenthood Illinois Action
RC = Reclalm Chicago

1ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Bobby L. Rush (D) 100
Philanise White (R)

2ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Robin Kelly (D) 100
Theresa J. Raborn (R)

3RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Marie Newman (D) Y
Mike Fricilone (R) Y

4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Jesus “Chuy” Garcia (D) Y
Jesus Solorio (R)

5TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Mike Quigley (D) 100
Tommy Hanson (R)
Thomas J. Wilda (G)

6TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Sean Casten (D) Y
Jeanne Ives (R)
Bill Redpath (L)

7TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Danny K. Davis (D) Y
Tracy Jennings (I)

8TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Raja Krishnamoorthi (D) 100
Preston Gabriel Nelson (L)

9TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Janice D. Schakowsky (D) 100
Sargis Sangari (R)

10TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Brad Schneider (D) 100
Valerie Ramirez Mukherjee (R)

11TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Bill Foster (D) 100
Rick Laib (R)

12TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Raymond C. Lenzi (D) Y
Michael Bost (R) Y

13TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Betsy Dirksen Londrigan (D) Y
Rodney Davis (R) Y

14TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Lauren Underwood (D) 0
Jim Oberweis (R)

15TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Erika C. Weaver (D) Y
Mary Miller (R)

16TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Dani Broyowski (D) 100
Adam Kinzinger (R)

17TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Cheri Bustos (D) Y
Esther Joy King (R)

18TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
George Petrilli (D) 0
Darin LaHood (R)

ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RACES

D = Democrat / R = Republican / L = Libertarian / G = Green / I = Independent / C = Constitution / DA = Democracy in America / PGPL = Pro Gun Pro Life
EI = Equality Illinois PAC
IFT = Illinois Federation of Teachers
PPAC = Personal PAC
OIR = Our Illinois Revolution

1ST SENATE DISTRICT
Antonio “Tony” Munoz (D) Y

4TH SENATE DISTRICT
Kimberly A. Lightford (D) Y

6TH SENATE DISTRICT
Sara Feigenholtz (D) Y

7TH SENATE DISTRICT
Heather A. Steans (D) Y

10TH SENATE DISTRICT
Robert Martwick (D) Y

11TH SENATE DISTRICT
Celina Villanueva (D) Y
Mary Ellen ‘Mari’ Brown (DA)

13TH SENATE DISTRICT
Robert Peters (D) Y

16TH SENATE DISTRICT
Jacqueline ‘Jacqui’ Collins (D) Y

19TH SENATE DISTRICT
Michael E. Hastings (D) Y

22ND SENATE DISTRICT
Cristina Castro (D) Y

25TH SENATE DISTRICT
Karina Vila (D) Y

28TH SENATE DISTRICT
Laura Murphy (D) Y

31ST SENATE DISTRICT
Melinda Bush (D) Y

34TH SENATE DISTRICT
Steve Stadelman (D) Y

37TH SENATE DISTRICT
Win Stoller (R)

Sept. 30, 2020
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STARTING MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
DOUGLASS PARK

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29
UPTOWN/LAKEVIEW

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30
DUNBAR PARK

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1
LOOP/GRANT PARK

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2
WASHINGTON PARK
HYDE PARK

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3
LOOP/GRANT PARK

AIDSRUNWALK.ORG
JUDICIAL EVALUATIONS

Windy City Times does not endorse candidates. Rather, we list the ratings of legal organizations so that readers can make informed choices when they vote.

Key to Organizations:
CCL = Chicago Council of Lawyers
CCBA = Cook County Bar Association
DSL = Decalogue Society of Lawyers
ISBA = Illinois State Bar Association
LAGBAC = Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago
WBAI = Women’s Bar Association of Illinois
IFT = Illinois Federation of Teachers
PPAC = Personal PAC

Key to Ratings:
Q – Qualified
NQ – Not Qualified
WQ – Well Qualified
HQ - Highly Qualified
R - Recommended
NR - Not Recommended
NE - Not Evaluated
(D) = Democrat
(R) = Republican


1st Supreme (Freeman vacancy)
P. Scott Neville, Jr. (D) WQ HR R HQ R R Y
5th Supreme (Karmeier vacancy)
Judy Cates (D) Y Y
1st Appellate (Neville, Jr. vacancy)
David K. Overstreet (R) Y
1st Appellate (Simon vacancy)
Sharon O. Johnson (D) Q R R Q R R Y
5th Appellate (Chapman vacancy)
Sarah Smith (D) Y
Cook Circuit Court (Bellows vacancy)
Mark M. Boie (R) NR NR NR NR NR NR
Cook Circuit Court (Caghlin vacancy)
Kelly Marie McCarthy (D) Q R HR Q R R
Cook Circuit Court (Ford vacancy)
Laura Ayala-Gonzalez (D) Q R R Q R R Y
Cook Circuit Court (Funderburk vacancy)
Celestia L. Mays (D) WQ HR R Q R R Y
Cook Circuit Court (Larsen vacancy)
Levander “Van” Smith, Jr. (D) Q R R Q R R Y
Cook Circuit Court (Mason vacancy)
Chris Stacey (D) Q R R Q R R Y
Cook Circuit Court (McCarty vacancy)
Teresa Molina (D) Q R R Q R R Y
Cook Circuit Court (Murphy Gorman vacancy)
Sheree Desiree Henry (D) Q R R Q R R Y
Cook Circuit Court (O’Brien vacancy)
Elizabeth Anne Walsh (D) Q R R Q R R Y
Cook Circuit Court (Patti vacancy)
Lynn Weaver Boyle (D) Q R HR Q HR R Y
Cook Circuit Court (Roti vacancy)
Lorraine Mary Murphy (D) Q R R Q R R Y
Cook Circuit Court (Sheehan, C. vacancy)
Maura McMahon Zeller (D) Q R R NQ R R Y

Cook Circuit Court (Sheehan, K. vacancy)
Jill Rose Quinn (D)
Cook Circuit Court-1st Sub (Brooks vacancy)
Krista D. Butler (D)
Cook Circuit Court-1st Sub (Crawford vacancy)
Tyril B. Walton (D)
Cook Circuit Court-2nd Sub (‘A’ vacancy)
Sandra Nicole Denmark (D)
Cook Circuit Court-3rd Sub (Filan vacancy)
Daniel Edward Maloney (D)
Cook Circuit Court-3rd Sub (Flynn vacancy)
Erin Haggerty Antonietti (D)
Cook Circuit Court-6th Sub (Nega vacancy)
Jaimie Guerra Dickler (D)
Cook Circuit Court-6th Sub (Pantle vacancy)
Eileen Marie O’Connor (D)
Cook Circuit Court-7th Sub (Jackson vacancy)
Pamela Reaves-Harris (D)
Cook Circuit Court-8th Sub (Fleming vacancy)
Jonathan Clark Green (D)
Cook Circuit Court-8th Sub (Gubin vacancy)
Michael A. Forti (D)
Cook Circuit Court-9th Sub (Axelrod vacancy)
Thomas M. Cushing (D)
Cook Circuit Court-9th Sub (Luckman vacancy)
Julie Bess Aimen (D)
Cook Circuit Court-10th Sub (Allen vacancy)
John G. Mulroe (D)
Cook Circuit Court-10th Sub (McGing vacancy)
Maire Aileen Dempsey (D)
Cook Circuit Court-10th Sub (O’Brien vacancy)
Mary Catherine Marubio (D)
Cook Circuit Court-12th Sub (Hanlon vacancy)
Patricia M. Fallon (D)
Frank R. DiFranco (R)
Cook Circuit Court-13th Sub (Kulys Hoffman vacancy)
Suzanne Michele Groebner (D)
Cook Circuit Court-14th Sub (Lacy vacancy)
Perla Tirado (D)
Cook Circuit Court-15th Sub (Giffen vacancy)
Nichole C. Patton (D)
18th Circuit Court (Bakalis vacancy)
Margaret “Peggy” O’Connell (D)
James F. McCluskey (R)
18th Circuit Court (Sutter vacancy)
Jill Otte (D)
18th Circuit Court (Anderson vacancy)
Jeffrey M. Jacobson (D)
Monique O’Toole (R)
19th Circuit Court, 3rd Subcircuit (Schippers vacancy)
Marnie Michelle Slavin (D)
Christopher Morozin (R)
We are proud to support Windy City Times and honor their 35 years of representing Chicago’s LGBTQ+ Community!

Alderman Tom Tunney
44th Ward

Congressman Mike Quigley
Illinois’ 5th District

Paid for by Citizens for Tunney & Quigley for Congress.

Congratulations to the Windy City Times on 35 years of invaluable service to our community. It is bittersweet to see the print version come to an end, but I know the talented people behind the paper can and will achieve great success as a digital-only publication. We are all looking forward to the next 35 years and beyond.

- Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot
1. Karla Bailey-Smith
   Race: Illinois state representative (88th District)
   Website: Unite88.org
   The skinny: Bailey-Smith was born in Green-
   castle, Indiana. She earned an undergraduate De-
   gree at Illinois Wesleyan University in 1990 and a
   graduate degree from the University of Illinois at
   Urbana-Champaign in 1993. Bailey-Smith’s ca-
   reer experience includes working as a painter and
   scenic artist.

2. Kelly Cassidy
   Race: Illinois state representative (14th District)
   Website: CitizensForCassidy.com
   The skinny: Cassidy, who is married to activ-
   ist Candice Gingrich, has served her district since
   2011. She is unopposed in the general election.

3. Kody Czerwonka
   Race: Illinois state representative (110th District)
   Website: KodyCzerwonka.com
   The skinny: Kody was born in Montrose, Illi-
   nois, and graduated from high school in 2011 as
   well as Eastern Illinois University in 2017. He’s
   pitted against incumbent Republican state Rep.
   Chris Miller.

4. Michelle Darbro
   Race: Illinois state representative (20th District)
   Website: DarbroForRep.com
   The skinny: A Norwood Park resident, Darbro is a
   career firefighter and paramedic who is a 2015
   inductee to the University of Chicago Athletic
   Hall of Fame.

5. Michael Forti
   Race: Cook County Judicial Circuit Court (8th
   Subcircuit/Gubin vacancy)
   Website: None
   The skinny: Forti is a judge for the 8th Subcir-
   cuit of the Cook County Judicial Circuit Court in
   Illinois. However, his current term expires Dec.
   7, necessitating a run. He faces no opponents
   in this race.

6. Jackie Gunderson
   Race: McLean County Board (9th District)
   Website: GundersonFor9.com
   The skinny: Gunderson has gone from being an
   Illinois State University student to a full-time
   employee. Also, she is director of the Penguin
   Project of McLean County—a non-profit organi-
   zation creating unrestricted access to the per-
   forming arts for children and young adults with
   developmental disabilities.

7. Greg Harris
   Race: Illinois state representative (13th District)
   Website: GregHarris.org
   The skinny: House Majority Leader Harris, who
   was chief co-sponsor of SB10, the legislation
   that brought about marriage equality in Illinois

has a district that includes several North Side
neighborhoods. Harris (who was first elected to
the state House in 2006, and is the first openly
gay person in Illinois to become a member of
legislative leadership) is unopposed.

8. Val Laymon
   Race: McLean County Board (7th District)
   Website: VoteValLaymon.com
   The skinny: Laymon moved to the county two
decades ago to attend Illinois State University.
Her three-pronged platform embraces sustain-
ability, accessibility and equity. A lover of ani-
mals, Val and wife Jean have spent the last two
years fostering dozens of dogs for Pet Central
Helps.

9. Ken Mejia-Beal
   Race: Illinois state representative (42nd Dis-
   trict)
   Website: KMBfor42.com
   The skinny: First-time political candidate in
the DuPage County district, Mejia-Beal’s plat-
form centers on three major issues he intends

to change in his district: halting any revenue
increases on alcohol, establishing simpler dis-
trIBUTION OF Affordable insulin and HIV medica-
tION, and ending puppy mills in Illinois. He was
recently in the news when his opponent, state
Rep. Amy Grant, stated (and then apologized for)
anti-gay and racist remarks.

10. Jill Rose Quinn
    Race: Cook County Court judge (K. Sheehan
    vacancy)
    Website: VoteJillRoseQuinn.com
    The skinny: Quinn, a transgender attorney, has
private practice experience includes working at
general legal practices in Chicago, Bloomington,
Lombard, Glen Ellyn and Franklin Park. She is set
to make history as the state’s first trans judge, as
she is running unopposed.

11. Lamont Robinson
    Race: Illinois state representative (5th District)
    Website: VoteLamontRobinson.com
    The skinny: Robinson—who runs two Chicago
Allstate Insurance offices, in Bronzeville and
Humboldt Park—made history as the first openly
gay African-American person in the General As-
sembly. He is running unopposed.

12. Brian Sager
    Race: Illinois state representative (63rd Dis-
    trict)
    Website: People4BrianSager.com
    The skinny: Sager is a retired college profes-
sor and administrator who has been the mayor of
Woodstock since 2005. Among his top legislative
priorities are economic and job growth as well
political ethics and early childhood education.
He faces Republican incumbent state Rep. Steven
Reick.

    Race: Cook County Circuit Court (Larson va-
cy)
    Website: SmithJrForJudge.com
    The skinny: Smith, an Oak Park resident, is
waging his first campaign for Cook County Circuit
Court judge—but he already sits on the bench.
In February 2019, the Illinois Supreme Court ap-
pointed Smith as a judge (in the domestic-vio-
ence division), with a term to expire Dec.

14. Maggie Trevor
    Race: Illinois state representative (54th Dis-
    trict)
    Website: MaggieTrevor4il54.net
    The skinny: Trevor, who identifies as lesbian,
defeated Ryan Huffman in the Democratic prima-
ry and now faces incumbent Tom Morrison in
the general election. Trevor was born and raised in
Rolling Meadows, where her parents were among
the city’s original residents.

15. Sam Yingling
    Race: Illinois state representative (62nd Dis-
    trict)
    Website: SamYingling.com
    The skinny: Grayslake resident Yingling ran
unopposed in the primary for his fourth term. He is
the first openly gay House member from outside
metropolitan Chicago. Yingling proposed to long-
time partner Lowell Jaffe at the party former Il-
inois Gov. Pat Quinn threw to celebrate the pas-
sage of Illinois’ marriage-equality bill in 2013.
(They married in 2015.)

Cassidy photo courtesy of Matt Steffen. All other photos courtesy of individuals campaigns or WCT staff photos.
Equality Illinois extends our profound and heartfelt THANKS to Windy City Times for faithfully chronicling LGBTQ lives, history, social change, and the pursuit of justice in Illinois for 35 years.

We especially recognize the leaders of WCT: Tracy Baim, Jean Albright, Andrew Davis, Terri Klinsky, Matt Simonette, and Kirk Williamson

Equality Illinois builds a better Illinois by advancing equal treatment and full acceptance of the LGBTQ community.

LEARN MORE, ACT, AND SUPPORT OUR MISSION AT WWW.EQUALITYILLINOIS.ORG
Our ship will come in.
Those are the words Tracy and I used to say all the time. Well, she’d say it and later during a particular rough time, I’d ask: “So, where’s the damn ship??” I started with the company in 1995. Back then we had Outlines monthly and Nightlines weekly. We joked that when we were older, we’d publish Agelines. We all did everything in those days from delivery to sales to helping with layout (on giant boards with wax) to covering events, photos, ad design and every-thing in between. The changes in technology from then to now is staggering. We had a stat camera (used to make photos copy ready) that took up a room. We took giant boards to the printer to get the paper printed. A deadline was truly a deadline.

I ended up working for the paper after someone at a Dining Out for Life dinner told me that Outlines was looking for a sales person.

The information superhighway…
That old synonym for the internet (con- juring up days of AOL Instant Messenger and really loud modems) served as my entry into Windy City Times—way back in 1995. Two friends suggested that I pitch Tracy Baim about that, and she accepted.

I guess Tracy liked what I wrote because she then had me write about other things, such as business and health/fitness, and I also wrote for the affiliated publication Blacklines and En la Vida. In 2004, she asked me to be a full-time reporter for Windy City Times.

I didn’t know how much of (or how won- derfully long) a ride this would be. Howev- er, I knew the position would challenge my very essence. Previously, my life was very structured—a job where I worked 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., five days a week. But Eleanor Roosevelt, of all people, entered my mind with that famous quote: “You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

Journalism was not initially my “thing,” as I was a law-school grad. However, I knew I liked writing, and I was bolstered by two things Tracy said about me: that she liked how I wrote and that I turned in everything on time. (I guess the latter was a relatively rare thing.)

I was hired in the midst of the 2004 political season, so it was a trial by fire. One of the first interviews I remember doing was with then-Cook County State’s Attorney Dick Devine. He had a phalanx of people standing behind him at one end of a long table, while I was alone at the other. Once I got through that experience (and Devine was congenial), I thought I might have a future in this business.

There have been innumerable highs and lows during my time at Windy City Times, where I am now executive editor. When I started full-time, I thought the LGBTQ community would be one that was cohesive. (After all, weren’t we all in the same boat?) It took me about two weeks to realize that it wasn’t the case: Classism, racism, biphobia, transphobia, corruption and fat-shaming were just some of the things I witnessed—and that left me disillusioned.

However, I also saw times when the community came together and supported each other—most notably during times of tragedy (the Pulse shooting and, most recently, the death of George Floyd), but also during times of celebration (like the 2006 Gay Games that took place in Chicago, and the legalization of marriage equality across the nation).

Windy City Times has covered it all, entertaining (and, thankfully, brief) ar- ticles.

Then there’s Tracy Baim. What can you say about her that hasn’t already been said? Not many people would’ve had the guts to co-found a newspaper straight out of college. What she has done for the LGB-TQ community—in Chicago and beyond—is simply incalculable. She made this publica- tion into a vehicle that allowed people to realize that there were/are others like them, whether it’s through a hard-news article or a human-interest story—something that was especially important in the days before social media, but which still holds resonance.

I’d like to thank everyone else associat- ed with Windy City Times—including web- site developer Martie Marro, the delivery drivers and, especially, the many talented writers and artists who have devoted their time and talents to this newspaper. I’d also like to thank the people who have allowed us to interview them and have allowed so many others to peek into their lives—and maybe learn something. Lastly, I’d like to thank the readers; you have made and con- tinue to make this newspaper as it enters the next phase.

Windy City Times looks forward to pro- viding even more news as a digital-only publication. Yes, COVID-19 severely hurt our revenue—but it has not taken away the resolve to inform and entertain.

It has truly been an honor being part of this newspaper.
I was already a faithful reader of Outlines and I was in need of a job that I could feel good about. I was very excited about the prospect of working in the community. I met with Tracy and about 3 minutes after I was there, she asked when I could start. That was the beginning of our now 25-year working relationship and friendship.

While I have always been a news junkie, I never planned on working for a newspaper. I came from a sales background. I believe that to sell something, one has to really believe in the product. This was not a problem for me selling all of the publications. I've loved them all and believed in our message in its entirety. I'm proud of all the different publications we've had over the years.

I've learned a lot over my 25 years here. Aside from learning things like graphics programs, I learned how to go with the flow a bit (not one of my strong suits) and I learned that many of Tracy's seemingly pie in the sky ideas actually come to fruition—the Gay Games in Chicago, buying the Windy City Times, the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality to name a few.

No one gets rich working for a community newspaper. Newspapers, in general, have had a very tough time. And while our ship never did come in, we did have a great ride and we brought a ton of people with us. Outlines, WCT, etc. has employed hundreds of people over the years and many at a point when they really needed it. From employing people to reporting on and covering the entire community to helping promote all the non-profits and their missions, to working for change for all LGBTQ+ people, it's been an honor to work for a company that truly believes in serving our community.

**My life at Windy City Times**

I came into LGBT media completely by accident, having begun as editorial assistant at Windy City Times’ competitor Chicago Free Press in 2005. I had done a favor for CFP's managing editor, Louis Weisberg, and he in turn got me some work editing and proofreading at a time when they were particularly short-staffed. Thanks in large part to attrition, I became managing editor in 2008, staying with the paper until the end of 2009.

I freelanced for a few years and came to work as a freelancer for Windy City Times in 2013 at the behest of then-Senior Writer Kate Sosin, who invited me to take part in one of the paper’s investigative series. WCT was for years my sworn competition, but I freelanced for a bit (not one of my strong suits) and I learned that many of Tracy’s seemingly pie in the sky ideas actually come to fruition—the Gay Games in Chicago, buying the Windy City Times, the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality to name a few.

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Ruth Bader Ginsburg bent the moral arc toward justice

Like so many Americans across the country, I, too, am mourning the news that U.S. Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has died due to complications from metastatic pancreatic cancer. She was 87.

As a soft-spoken firebrand and feminist icon, Ginsburg leaves a titanic influence on the law, a legacy unmatched by any other jurists. As a feisty octogenarian on the Supreme Court bench, Ginsburg earned the moniker “Notorious R.B.G.”—a take on the deceased rapper Notorious B.I.G. And, as a pop-culture phenom, her image as the “Notorious R.B.G.” is on T-shirts and coffee mugs. A 2018 film, On the Basis of Sex—which depicts Ginsburg’s life as an attorney—has inspired a new wave of young feminists and little girls to follow in her footsteps.

Ginsburg followed in the footsteps of a legal giant, too. Ginsburg was called the Thurgood Marshall of the 1970s women’s movement. (Marshall most famous court victory was Brown v. Board of Education (1954).) In referring to Marshall in a September 2014 interview in The New Republic, Ginsburg stated, “He was my model as a lawyer. You mentioned that I took a step-by-step, incremental approach; well, that’s what he did until he had those building blocks to end separate-but-equal.”

One of Ginsburg's famous dissents was the 2007 case of Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, on gender discrimination. Lilly Ledbetter argued pay disparity because of her gender, citing that was a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A five-to-four vote favored Goodyear. Ginsburg wrote the dissenting opinion, stating, “Pay disparities often occur, as they did in Ledbetter’s case, in small increments; cause to suspect that discrimination is at work develops over time. Comparative pay information, moreover, is often hidden from the employer's view.” In a bold move, Ginsburg read her dissent publicly from the bench. In 2009, President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, making it easier for women to challenge wage discrimination.

Ginsburg’s fight not only for women’s right but also, among other things, LGBTQ+ rights, like same-sex marriage (Obergefell v. Hodges, 2015), African American voting rights (Shelby County v. Holder, 2013), the rights for persons with disabilities (Olmstead v. L.C., 1999) and environmental justice (Earth v. Laidlaw Environmental Services, 2000).

Ginsburg’s lens on justice was intersectional before the word became popular in the public sphere because of her identity with a persecuted group, citing her Jewish history and the Holocaust. “My heritage as a Jew and my occupation as a judge fit together symmetrically. The demand for justice runs through the entirety of Jewish history and Jewish tradition. I take pride in and draw strength from my heritage,” Ginsburg said in a 2004 speech at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Ginsburg’s death comes as a crushing blow to those of us who believe in building a multicultural democracy and a participatory government, where protests are understood as a citizen’s First Amendment right to do so. As Ginsburg is laid to rest, thousands of Americans we have lost in the last couple of months—civil-rights icon Congressman John Lewis and Black Panther star Chadwick Boseman—and who bent the moral arc toward justice, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg did, too.

R.I.P., RBG.
“A gay play?” playwright Robert Patrick wrote, “Is that a play that sleeps with other plays of the same sex?”

We think a gay play reveals one of three things in a significant way: (1) how the world views members of our diverse LGBTQ+ communities; (2) how members of our communities view themselves; (3) how members of our communities choose to engage the world around them. A gay play need not have been written by a queer author. It doesn’t even need to have LGBTQ+ characters, although that may seem counter-intuitive.

For this final print issue of the Windy City Times, the paper’s longtime theater reviewers have collaborated on a list of “The 25 Most Important LGBTQ+ Plays of All Time.” They are not necessarily the best plays ever written (some are, some are not) or the most exciting plays, and certainly our choices are not the most sexually graphic plays with which the gay play genre is replete. Instead, for this list the theater of the Western World (indeed, mostly American works), which is to say white-dominant theater, we have prioritized plays that deal with an overt issue rather than their otherness. Whatever, they were unacceptable to society. Possibly gay himself, Marlowe created homo-erotic themes in several other works.

La Prisonnière (The Captive) by Edouart Bourdet, 1926—A success in Paris, Vienna, Berlin and other European cities, it was shut down after 160 sold-out performances on Broadway, where reportedly 80% of the audience was female. La Prisonnière was among the first Broadway plays to deal with lesbianism. What’s more, the heroine was depicted as feminine, attractive and seductive, thereby countering the mannish lesbian stereotype and offering a protagonist much more threatening to hetero-normativity.

The Drag by Jane Mast (pen name of Mae West), 1927—The Drag was shut down in tryouts before reaching New York, and wasn’t performed until 2019. A loosely structured melodrama, it was intended to be an open depiction of gay life. West cast exclusively gay actors and allowed them to semi-improvise the script, with a drag ball final scene. The Drag was meant as a celebration of gay men, but also touched on drug addiction and violence within gay culture. West cited La Prisonnière as her inspiration for the play.

NOTE: Collectively, La Prisonnière, The Drag and Design for Living by Noel Coward, 1933—New York audiences were rapturous over Coward’s sophisticated menage-a-trois, written for himself and dear friends Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. Critics and censors didn’t seem to understand that Otto and Leo didn’t just trade off living with Gilda. Coward—who remained semi-closeted all his life—scrupulously avoided any overt suggestion of homosexuality, but it’s there anyway.

The Children’s Hour by Lillian Hellman, 1934—Pure poison surges through Hellman’s notable drama, in which slander and innuendo wreck lives and careers. Even today, accusations of lesbianism would be ruinous if those accused ran a girls’ school, as Martha and Karen do in the play, and their accuser is one of their students. Hellman reserves a closing twist about the additionally destructive power of suppressed sexuality. Although without overtly sexual situations, the play was denied performance permits in Boston and Chicago due to its subject matter.

A Taste of Honey by Shelagh Delaney, 1958—This remarkable British play, written by a 19-year-old woman, addresses class, racism, gender and sex identification, which still were mostly taboo topics in Great Britain and the USA. It portrays racial, sexual and social otherness through several characters, with a young, gay art student as the heroine’s one true friend. The play isn’t about being gay, but about being outside norms. This work helped change British attitudes about homosexuality (still illegal then).

Design for Living by Noel Coward, 1933—New York audiences were rapturous over Coward’s sophisticated menage-a-trois, written for himself and dear friends Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. Critics and censors didn’t seem to understand that Otto and Leo didn’t just trade off living with Gilda. Coward—who remained semi-closeted all his life—scrupulously avoided any overt suggestion of homosexuality, but it’s there anyway.

The Boys in the Band by Mart Crowley, 1967—Appearing in New York a year before the Stonewall riots, this monster hit was the...
first commercial success to humanize gay men and their day-to-day life issues. Yes, it uses gay stereotypes and, yes, it’s an apologia for being queer and, yes, it’s improbable and, yes, most of its characters are unhappy—but it’s nonetheless a pioneering and daring work which has more to say to non-queer audiences than to LGBTQ+ viewers. Warts and all, this is a courageous work.

Fifth of July by Lanford Wilson, 1978—This ’70s dramedy concerns several generations of the Talley family in rural Missouri. There’s absolutely nothing gay about it, and that’s precisely its power: The Vietnam vet son who inherited the family home and his botanist lover just happen to be gay, and nobody cares. The matter-of-fact acceptance of their relationship makes Fifth of July a landmark; a work with a central gay relationship that’s not about being gay. Wilson received a 1980 Pulitzer Prize for another play, but always felt it should have been for this one.

Bent by Martin Sherman, 1979—This is, perhaps, the most widely produced play in the entire canon of modern LGBTQ+ drama, and the first to examine Nazi persecution of homosexuals. Set in 1934 Germany, it centers on Max and his coming to terms with his own gayness while a concentration camp prisoner. Filled with horrors—Max murders his own lover at one point—the play also boasts a famous erotic scene in which the clothed lovers never touch, emphasizing the power of love and suggestion.

Last Summer at Bluefish Cove by Jane Chambers, 1980—This pioneering LGBTQ+ work was the first lesbian drama with mainstream appeal. It concerns eight women at a summertime cottage complex on Long Island where love and relationships, life and death are explored. Similar to The Boys in the Band, Chambers portrays various types of queer women (or womyn, if you prefer), with the most important focus on a coming-out story. The work is rightly celebrated for its humor and warmth.

One by Jeff Hagedorn, 1982—This one character, one-act drama was the very first play written about AIDS. It concerns a young man bewildered by his illness (at that time still minimally understood), seemingly passed on to him after finally connecting with his dream bartender. Wisconsin-turned-Chicago playwright Hagedorn co-founded Lionheart Gay Theatre and SYZYGY, focusing much of his work on AIDS-related stories. He died of AIDS in 1995.

Torch Song Trilogy by Harvey Fierstein, 1982—This huge hit presented the pre-AIDS tale of drag queen Arnold Beckoff who, despite his romantic illusions or perhaps because of them, lands two handsome hunks. Of course, there are complications as Arnold pursues a sitcom style of drag queen Arnold Beckoff who, despite his romantic illusions or perhaps because of them, lands two handsome hunks. Of course, there are complications as Arnold pursues a sitcom style relationship that’s not about being gay. Wilson received a 1980 Pulitzer Prize for another play, but always felt it should have been for this one.

La Cage aux Folles by Jerry Herman (music/lyrics) & Harvey Fierstein (book), 1983—A 1973 hit French farce (1,800 performances in Paris) became a multiple Tony Award winning musical, and was the first LGBTQ+ experience for tens of thousands of theater-goers. Nay-sayers ask why that first impression had to center on a drag queen and a stereotypically butch/femme gay couple. The answer is that true love has neither rhyme nor reason. It’s about family too, and also mocks institutionalized political homophobia. And the tunes are great!

As Is by William M. Hoffman and The Normal Heart by Larry Kramer, 1985—Opening Off-Broadway just weeks apart, these two hit plays put a human face on AIDS and on the inaction of medical and government authorities to address it, in substantial part because of institutionalized homophobia. The plays are tremendously important today as documents of the time and mindset, and were tremendously important because of how widely they were produced in regional theaters across the country. They also both happen to be bang-up dramas that really grab an audience.

Angels in America by Tony Kushner, 1991—One of the great works of 20th century world drama, it incorporates elements of magic realism in an epic about American politics and the threat of neoconservatism, brilliantly using the 1980s AIDS crisis as its framing device. Written during the Reagan Presidency, and peopled with real and fictional gay characters, Angels in America challenges political power which attempts to narrowily define what it means to be American. We need this play now more than ever! The arch-villain of this work, the real-life closeted Roy Cohn, was mentor and teacher to the young Donald Trump.

Marvin’s Room by Scott McPherson, 1990—Chicago playwright McPherson shot to fame with this play as he was dying of AIDS. Although without gay characters or situations, it was McPherson’s deeply compassionate, quirky-funny response to the AIDS crisis. Focusing on a small extended family—mother, her two sons, her two sisters and unseen dying gramps—the play is about family responsibility, fear/acceptance of mortality and healing emotional wounds. Marvin’s Room is simple, spellbinding, often funny and heartfelt and just begins to reveal the writer McPherson might have become.

Love! Valour! Compassion! by Terrence McNally, 1995—Another “gangbang” in which a cohort of gay men spend summer holidays together in Upstate New York. Most characters are showbiz professionals, which makes this one of McNally’s most personal plays. The boys in this band are witty, wise, funny, lonely, hungry, devi-ous and self-centered. No apologia here; good, bad or ugly, they are who they are in this strong expression of being gay in the early 1990s. McNally’s 1998 Corpus Christi—an allegory about a gay Jesus and Disciples—was a runner-up for this list.

I Am My Own Wife by Doug Wright, 2002—A one-person play about Charlotte von Mahlsdorf,
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PLAYS from page 32

born Lothar Berfelde, a transgender woman who survived the Nazi and Communist regimes in Berlin after killing her Nazi father during WWII. Her home became a gathering place for East Berlin’s repressed LGBT community, although her actions were not always supportive. This tale of an ultimate survivor requires the solo actor to play 40 characters. A transgender actor played the role for the first time in a 2016 About Face Theatre revival.

Take Me Out by Richard Greenburg, 2002—An extremely important “what if” play, Take Me Out concerns Darren Lemming, the charismatic mixed-race slugger for the New York Empires, who could win the pennant. When Darren comes out, he quickly comes into conflict with the team’s star relief pitcher, a Southern-born, racist homophobe. When written in 2002, no Major League Baseball player ever had come out publicly during his career (has any done so yet?). Despite extremely serious plot twists and themes, Greenburg tempers the play with brilliantly funny passages for which he is known.

The Color Purple by Marsha Norman (book) and Brenda Russell, Allee Willis and Stephen Bray (music and lyrics), 2004—Alice Walker’s miraculously simple but profound tale was a hit as a novel, film and Broadway musical, with Celie’s discovery of sexuality, love and self-love through a lesbian romance at the center. Set within a Deep South rural Black community of the early 20th century, Walker’s work and powerful characters have an authenticity that carries into this musical.

The Temperamentals by Jon Marans, 2009—Those ignorant of history are doomed to repeat it! Before Stonewall, before Gay Lib there was the Mattachine Society, the first sustained LGBT+ rights organization in the United States, founded in 1950. This well-written docudrama chronicles the founding of the Mattachine Society and the relationship of co-founders Harry Hay and Rudolph Gernreich. This play helps us know our roots, and honor those who went before us.

Fun Home by Lisa Kron (book, lyrics) and Jeanine Tesori (music), 2013—This Tony Award winning musical is based on Alison Bechdel’s autobiographical work, and was the first Broadway musical with a lesbian protagonist, let alone an autobiographical work, and was the first Broadway musical with a lesbian protagonist, let alone an autobiographical work, and was the first Broadway musical with a lesbian protagonist, let alone an autobiographical work. Almost like A Star is Born, the success of the Marlene’s girlhood chum, African-American scientist Needra, whose research into genetic manipulation—specifically, the therapeutic viability of “erasing” DNA-linked memories of crippling trauma—has earned her a teaching fellowship at an Alabama university.

Even playgoers ignorant of eugenics, lobotomies, the myth of “pre-natal influence” and the wisdom of heeding past errors to avoid repetition of the atrocities documented in this 16th Street Theater production. Director Lanise Antoine Shely has rescripted Langford’s intelligent and articulate text to radio-drama configuration featuring the voices of seven actors, meticulously arranged by sound designer Olarewaju Adewole and audio engineer Nathan Cox-Reed. Visual narrative is conveyed in graphic novel fashion as a series of silhouette-collages, created by Roy Thomas and animated right before our eyes by video editor Peter Marston Sullivan.

STREAMING THEATER REVIEW

Rastus and Hattie
Playwright: Lisa Langford
At: 16th Street Theater online at 16thstreettheater.org
Tickets: free with donation
Runs through: Oct. 24

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Content warning: Rastus and Hattie includes racist caricatures, racism and violence.

Since their inception in 1920, robots in fiction have typically looked like humans and talked like machines. Nowadays, in our age of world-wide style technology, "bots" can be heard discussing in the soothing tones of nannies and yoga instructors, but trade practice among real-life manufacturers of mobile mannequins advises strenuously against precision accuracy in replicating androids and gynoids (even sex dolls are carefully crafted to evidence overt reminders of their artificial infrastructures).

The robots in Lisa Langford’s fable can trace their ancestry to an automaton invented by the Westinghouse Electrical Corporation and exhibited at the 1939 World’s Fair, before its line of succession was abruptly curtailed by the onset of World War II. Its sole descendants are Rastus and Hattie, a pair of household appliances made in the image of antebellum house servants, but recently restored by Marlene’s husband David to assist the busy parents in their childrearing chores. The presence of this antiquated iconography in the white couple’s home proves disconcerting to the Marlene’s girlhood chum, African-American scientist Needra, whose research into genetic manipulation—specifically, the therapeutic viability of “erasing” DNA-linked memories of crippling trauma—has earned her a teaching fellowship at an Alabama university.

Even playgoers ignorant of eugenics, lobotomies, the myth of “pre-natal influence” and the wisdom of heeding past errors to avoid repetition of the same, can identify the potential menace inherent in this proposal.

Not until after a wrong turn on the route to Dixieland propels Needra, her husband Malik and their infant son through a hole in the Space-Time Continuum into the Deep South circa 1850, however, does she come to understand the unforeseen consequences of her benevolently-conceived but ultimately inhumane manifesto. Marlene and David undergo enlightenment as well: after discovering that Needra has stolen/kidnapped/emasculated their—uh, property, they proceed to pursue their neighbors across the Mason-Dixon line, where they are likewise hurtled into a social system flagrantly designed to facilitate the worst aspects of their cruel WASP heritage.

Langford’s parable, densely packed with insights elevating it far above simplistic finger-pointing, includes descriptions of racist caricatures, practices and violence, but the restrictions on group performance imposed by current group performance conditions spare audiences live-action depiction of the atrocities documented in this 16th Street Theater production. Director Lanise Antoine Shely has rescripted Langford’s intelligent and articulate text to radio-drama configuration featuring the voices of seven actors, meticulously arranged by sound designer Olarewaju Adewole and audio engineer Nathan Cox-Reed. Visual narrative is conveyed in graphic novel fashion as a series of silhouette-collages, created by Roy Thomas and animated right before our eyes by video editor Peter Marston Sullivan.
Thank you, Windy City Times, for representing and giving voice to Chicago’s LGBTQ+ community for 35 years.
Reviewing the films of Reeling 2020

BY STEVE WARREN

For complete festival information and to buy tickets, visit http://reelingfilmfestival.org/2020. Ratings are on a ★★★★★ scale but I'm a tough grader, so nothing gets over ★★★★.

Note: This year’s installment of Reeling: The Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival officially takes place online and begins Sept. 24. The festival lasts through Oct. 4, although select films will be available for screening for a few days past closing.

Tu Me Manques (★★★★) (Sept. 30-Oct. 3)

Writer-director Rodrigo Bellott makes his drama needlessly complex but handles it so well it’s worth sticking with to develop strong feelings for the characters in one of the festival’s best films. Two Bolivians meet in New York in 2014. In 2015, Sebastian (Fernando Barbosa) is back in Bolivia staging a play he wrote about his love affair with Gabriel, who was still repressed from his Catholic upbringing. It ended with Gabriel’s death, which Sebastian heard about from Jorge (Oscar Martinez), Gabriel’s father, who came to New York to learn about the son he never knew. His family than I realized.

Minyan (★★★1/2) (Oct. 4-7)

This coming-of-age story of a gay teenager in New York in 1986 follows David (Samuel H. Levine), who moves in with his newly widowed grandfather (Ron Rifkin) to a subsidized apartment. David starts to become sexually active, especially in two hot scenes with a bartender (Alex Hurt)—who should be practicing safe sex. Minyan’s various attempts to spread its appeal to diverse audiences may limit the film’s appeal to any of them, however.

Sublet (★★★★) (Oct. 4-7)

With its intergenerational leading men, will Sublet be a story of love or friendship? Michael (John Benjamin Hickey), a New York Times travel writer doing a piece on Tel Aviv, sublets an apartment from Tomer (Niv Nissim), a film student half his age. He winds up rooming with because Tomer has nowhere to go. More important than the sex they may or may not have, one gives the other memories of youth, in return for a projection of a possible future. Israeli filmmaker Eytan Fox, making his first English-language film, builds the story slowly and carefully, with very fine results.

MOVIES

‘Disarm Hate’ features LGBTQ+ gun-control activists after massacre

BY VIC GERAMI

Narrated by the iconic actor Harvey Fierstein, the film Disarm Hate seeks to create awareness about gun violence against the LGBTQ+ community following the 2016 Pulse Nightclub massacre in Orlando that took 49 lives as the impetus.

Directed by Julianna Brudek, the film chronicles nine diverse LGBTQ+ activists who come together after the Pulse nightclub massacre to join Jason P. Hayes, a hairdresser, and an activist from New Jersey who is on a crusade. Without political experience, Hayes builds a national rally to demand LGBTQ+ equal rights, fight the NRA, and challenge America’s obsession with gun violence.

“I wanted to bring awareness to how disproportionately gun violence has affected the less privileged members of our community. Two weeks before Matthew Shepard was brutally murdered, Rita Hester, a trans woman of color, was murdered, and the media buried the story. Forgotten forever,” said Julianna Brudek. She added, “I did not want that to happen to the Hispanic LGBTQs that lost their lives at Pulse Nightclub. As a community, we must remember the hate crimes, and work together to stop the violence perpetrated on each one of us.”

Beginning as a road trip, the journey turns into something even more than anyone could have expected. Exploring their similarities and differences, the group develops a life-changing bond as they visit prominent sites of gun violence that have affected LGBTQ+ people nationwide. This common ground opens discussions between the travelers and the people they meet along the way, that look to alleviate these horrific hate crimes and bring a better understanding for all.

The renowned trans activist and media personality Ashlee Marie Preston who is a cast member and an executive producer said, “The threat of gun violence is intersectional. When someone’s identity overlaps with multiple marginalized groups, their risk is compounded. Black Americans are 10 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than white Americans. Being a woman and trans exacerbates those odds.” She continued, “Disarm Hate,” which focuses on the discriminatory culture within America that informs the violence marginalized communities face. If we are ever to eradicate gun violence, we must interrogate the attitudes and beliefs that fan the flames of hate. Our journey was not about taking away people’s guns, it was about removing the barriers that obstruct their ability to recognize our humanity.”

The documentary successfully probes the emotional journeys of the activists, who squabble, laugh, cry, and even fall in love throughout their trip. It also examines opposing views and counterpoints to their calls for gun reform from a pro-gun perspective, as they visit a shooting range and engage with a member of the Pink Pistols, a pro-gun LGBTQ+ group.

Harvey Fierstein, who narrated the film, said, “Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one’s definition of your life; define yourself.”

Disarm Hate is available on multiple streaming platforms including Amazon Prime Video, FandangoNOW, Google Play/YouTube Tube Rentals, On Demand (Comcast & Cox), Microsoft Store, and Vudu.

A noted journalist and columnist, Vic Gerami is also a radio-show host and media contributor who is also publisher and editor of The Blunt Post. Gerami is the host and producer of his prime-time radio show, THE BLUNT POST with VIC on Independent Radio KPFK 90.7 FM (Pacific Network).
Windy City Times,
Thanks for 35 years of great print stories. We’ll see you online!

Thank you Tracy Baim for bringing me into this incredible family of journalists almost 20 years ago. What a fabulous ride!

Amy Matheny
Journalist and Host of Windy City Radio, Windy City Queercast, Windy City Times Theatre series, Windy City Gay Idol and more

“I decided very early that I wanted to write. But I don’t think of it as a career. I didn’t even think of it as a profession...It was the most exciting thing, the most powerful thing, the most wonderful thing to do with my life.”

—Mary Oliver
STREAMING THEATER REVIEW

Broadway by the Decade
Playwright: Various composer & lyricists
At: Streaming on Vimeo
Tickets: PorchlightMusicTheatre.org; $15-$50
Runs through: Oct. 25

BY JONATHAN ABRABANEL

Most musical-theater fans will get a kick out of this well-produced and very well-sung 45-minute dive into Broadway history. Inevitably, however, serious students of musical theater (me) will have quibbles about what's been included and what hasn't.

This streaming revue is narrated by Porchlight artistic director Michael Weber, who also directed it. Weber offers a general introduction about the origins of American musical theater (which didn't exist 150 years ago) leading to 10 songs, one for each Broadway musical decade from the 1920s to the present. This eliminates George M. Cohan, Victor Herbert and early shows by the Gershwins, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin among others (although the Gershwins and Berlin are represented by later works). Why not a one-hour show (vs. 45 minutes) so early 20th-century songs could be included?

What IS included is choice material performed by an ensemble including Neala Baron, Blu, Darilyn Burtley, Lucy Godinez, Donterrio Johnson, James Earl Jones II, Michelle Lauto and Michael McBride (pianist and musical director), each of whom participates in several numbers either solos or combos.

Burtley kicks off with a smoky rendition of "Can't Help Lovin' That Man of Mine" from Show Boat (1927), accompanied by McBride at a white grand piano. The physical vibe says "nightclub," with potted palms, red velvet drapes and shadowy lighting.

The clubby setting of the first four numbers appears to have been shot in a dance studio (not that it matters) before videographer Austin Packard takes us elsewhere. There's a wonderful endless tracking shot down a corridor, as Blu and Donterrio Johnson perform the title song from Guys and Dolls (1950). Then, various rooms of a spacious all-white loft apartment host the remaining numbers.

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We're Gonna Die
Playwright: Young Jean Lee
At: Theatre Y, streaming online at Theatre-Y.com
Tickets: Free
Runs through: Oct. 4

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

"To be, or not to be" may have once been a dilemma to bequeath wealthy Danish princes, but the riddle baffling us today is why we continue to endure so many terrible things—pain, sorrow, injury, abandonment, imminent extinction. What can we do to halt these "thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to" and what solace can we offer to those undergoing them?

In 2011, playwright Young Jean Lee mused on this enigma in a series of monologues with music that recounted moments in her earlier life when she was spurned to confront the perplexities of our inexorable journey to the grave: eavesdropping on an uncle beset by self-loathing, a sister obsessed with lurid murders, a cohabitant lover whose merciful efforts to banish evidence of his previous occupancy prove futile, a mother's lullaby promising, "you will sleep, by and by" and, finally, the story of her father's death after an excruciation steeped in suspense, suffering and unimaginably bitter irony.

You can present this material as a straightforward spoken-word solo performance (its premiere featured Lee herself gently assuring her audience, "I won't try to make you smile") or you can serve it up as a screw-you-reaperboy rock concert like the 2017 Haven Theatre production did. A small screen viewed in solitary seclusion, however, invokes an intimacy beyond any achieved in a communal setting—circumstances making for Theatre Y's visual concept composed almost entirely of enigmatic objects viewed in extreme close-up, with only a few brief glimpses of live human beings.

Said objects encompass such personal treasures as black-and-white snapshot photographs, postcard-sized artwork, a Nikon-style camera in a leather case, and a Peter Max-style animated cartoon. A recurring motif is suggested in a pair of lighted Christmas-Caroler candles whose slow meltdown is echoed in a time-lapse filmed sequence of a gradually thawing ice-cream sundae and in portraits of our narrator with her face masked under thick makeup that cannot stop the flow of her tears.

Accompanying this gallery of images is an audio montage in which traces of chamber orchestra, music-box and rewinding reel-to-reel and cassette recorders can be detected. Oh, and did I mention that all this takes only a little more than an hour?

Lee is not content to leave us floundering in melancholy, though, instead proposing death—not as a cataclysmic tragedy conceived to punish each of us individually, but as the inevitable conclusion to the life that we share with everything in the universe. Whether that brings you comfort or not, the multisensory collage assembled for this streaming production by an ensemble of talented artists—most notably, actor Emily Bragg as our questioning pilgrim, along with cinematographer Justin Jones and film editor Kevin Hurley—delivers a mesmerizing contemplation on the great mystery even science has never been able to solve.

EMMYS from page 36

obscenity when they uttered the word “Schitt’s.”
RuPaul, who had already won an Emmy the night before at one of the Creative Arts Emmys ceremonies for hosting RuPaul’s Drag Race—his fifth consecutive honor in that category—won another Sept. 20 when his show was named Outstanding Competition Program.

“It is an honor to make television,” RuPaul said. “All the kids get to tell their story on our show and it’s beautiful.” He further urged the show’s viewers: “Don’t give up on love.”

LGBTQ programming and creative personnel were most prominent amongst streaming and cable offerings; major networks got only a minute number of nods associated with LGBTQ material in major categories, thanks largely to the final season of Will & Grace, which received five nominations this year.

Among LGBTQ performers who did not win were lesbian actress Holland Taylor for her portrayal of Ellen Kincaid in executive producer Ryan Murphy’s series Hollywood. Openly gay actor Jim Parsons was also nominated for his portrayal of agent Henry Willson in Hollywood.

Tituss Burgess earned another nomination for his portrayal of Titus Andromedon in this year’s Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt: Kimmy vs. The Reverend. Billy Porter received another nomination for Pose this year—but lost to Jeremy Strong’s performance in HBO’s Succession. Lesbian actor Cherry Jones won for a guest-starring role on Succession in the Sept. 19 Creative Arts ceremonies; she also won last year for a guest appearance on Hulu’s The Handmaid’s Tale.

Tyler Perry was also given the Academy’s Governors Award Sept. 20. During his acceptance speech, he emphasized principles of diversity among employees at his Atlanta-based studio, noting that LGBTQ individuals were among the workers there. Transgender actor Laverne Cox was among the presenters that night—a group which, aside from television personalities, also included essential workers across the United States.
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Miss Toto builds a full-bodied career in Chicago

BY JERRY NUNN

Miss Toto blew into the Windy City toting a tornado of talent after leaving Cumberland, Maryland behind. Toto quickly made a name for herself as “Chicago’s Bodybuilder Barbie” and landed bookings all over the city. Toto identifies as queer and in drag uses she/her pronouns. Out of drag, Toto uses pronouns they/them.

Toto talked about their blossoming career and an upcoming gig at the Soldier Field parking lot for Toto’s Miss Toto. Photo by Adam Ouahmane

Toto is a full competitor and has won competitions. I actively working before I moved here and made it public that I was moving.

WCT: Who is someone you looked up to?

MT: No, because I was visiting for a year before I moved, so everyone was familiar with me. I was actively working before I moved here and made it public that I was moving.

WCT: What do you bring to the table that others don’t?

MT: The way my mind works creatively is not the same as other people. My thought process works differently than others. With going digital, I wanted to make it bigger and crazier than what anyone else has ever done.

There is also the obvious, with me being a bodybuilder and I have this physique. This gives me a little edge that others don’t have.

WCT: How often do you work out?

MT: Five days a week.

WCT: How have you exercised during the pandemic?

MT: For the first five months, I was living in Pennsylvania with my partner. We did home workouts. I was still training and doing fitness classes over Zoom. Now that gyms have opened up again, I try to be in there only 45 minutes and off times where I am not around people.

It’s a mix of working out in the home and not being in the gym too long.

WCT: What do you think of Kameron Michaels, who was also known for a strong drag body?

MT: She’s cool, but not a bodybuilder and has not competed. She’s a fit person. If someone calls themselves “The Bodybuilder Barbie” they need to have competed onstage at least once. I am a full competitor and have won competitions. I think it’s great that Kameron has a brand, but she also hides her physique in drag, so not sure why she has that brand.

You see my bodybuilding in my drag. You see my arms and abs. You see my work in the gym, as opposed to hiding it in a sleeve.

WCT: Where have you competed with bodybuilding?

MT: I competed mostly in Miami and once here in Chicago last year. I am very familiar with the South Florida NPC circuit, which stands for National Physique Committee. I prefer to go to Florida to compete, because I feel more comfortable there. I know the competitors, so it feels very family oriented and welcoming.

I won the Miami Classic in 2018. I had lost that competition the year prior with second place, so it was really gratifying to return and win my class.

WCT: Do you lift onstage or pose?

MT: I do posing. Power lifting is a different competition and this NPC competition is all about physique.

WCT: Is being on RuPaul’s Drag Race a goal of yours?

MT: Not really. I think it is great for people that have that as a goal, but I feel I am carving my own path very well by myself without using the show as a platform. I am happy for my friends who have been on the show, but I am forging my own path my own way.

For me, right now, I am focusing on what I am doing. I am putting out the best content and art for people to enjoy safely at a time like this, because we are looking for a moment to disconnect from the world.

Doing drag and giving people drag gives me a mental break to be able to do something creative and put it into the world. People connect with me still, despite not being able to be in the clubs.

WCT: I saw you speak at the Drag March for Change. How was that moment for you?

MT: It was full circle for me. I was looking at the panel that I had looked up to since before even doing drag the first time. I felt validated and in the right place. I have worked very hard to get to where I am. I was sitting on a panel with people that I have admired for five years. I was able to hold my own and hopefully be an inspiration for other Black drag performers, too.

WCT: What inspires your cosplay drag looks?

MT: It is really all over the place. I love horror movies, but I want to stand out as a character. If I watch a cartoon and see myself in that costume, it might spark something where I want to transform the 2D character into a 4D person, but it also has to be a drag look as well. I may put nails on with lashes and bigger hair. I crank it up to the next level.

I feel that is what separates regular cosplay from drag cosplay. There is something special about the way drag performers do cosplay. We are not just making a look, but also a story to the character.

WCT: What is your latest song to lip-synch to?

MT: On the digital platform it is more about creating music videos. Once I make a music video then I run it around to different shows. When I am done I put it on my social media for everyone else to enjoy.

For the Drive-in, I am performing an Ariana Grande song, but with a spooky Halloween twist. I have only performed a few times live since the pandemic and didn’t love the experience because I am not comfortable being around crowds currently. I don’t touch money and that is part of the issue. Some places that are booking queers still want people to walk around, interact with the crowd and touch dollars. We have to make our money somehow, but I don’t feel safe doing that.

This is my first opportunity to perform live onstage and not feel the pressure to be in the audience. I have been working with CircuitMOM for a year now as a dancer, choreographer and in drag. This level of production hasn’t been seen in a drag show in forever, so I am looking forward to it!

The Drop Dead Drag Pageant has two shows from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 16, at the Lakeshore Drive-In, 1362 S. Linn White Dr.

Tickets for car passes are available at CircuitMOM.com and LSDriveIn.com.

For more on Toto, visit TheMissToto.com.
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Local musician/comic
Becky Raisman aims to show passion in performing

BY EMILY REILLY

Becky Raisman—a 38-year-old singer and comedian who is part of the LGBTQ+ community—has been singing ever since she was in elementary school. She now both covers and writes her own songs, performing them in local venues.

Raisman is originally from Highland Park. She sang in choirs throughout her time at school and eventually pursued performing arts in acting and singing at Columbia College. She recently moved to the Charleston area in South Carolina and has been performing at venues there since. Raisman discussed how she goes about her song-writing and creation process.

“Usually I would write lyrics and a melody and I would get tracks off of soundbetter.com. It’s a website where you can find people to collab with or get tracks and stuff,” said Raisman. “I’ve done many singing competitions and open mics in the Chicagoland area.”

When it comes to competitions, Raisman has performed on stages in both Chicago and Charleston.

“I’ve been in a singing contest at RJ’s Idol, a restaurant I used to go to,” said Raisman. “I was in a few contests at Club Icon, a gay nightclub in Kenosha and one time I did a Highland Park’s Got Talent Contest. I had a friend I knew in high school who owned a store in Highland Park called Silk Thumb and she was running the contest and convinced me to do it. I’ve tried out for all those singing shows like The Voice, I tried out for America’s got Talent, all those shows. Unfortunately I didn’t make it on, but I’m hoping to one day get my big break hopefully.”

Raisman records many of her songs at Charleston Sound Studios and Omnisound Studios and has released them on ReverbNation and YouTube. She spoke about how she has been out of the closet for 20 years and stressed the importance of listening to artists that are supportive of the LGBTQ+ community.

“I really like the LGBTQ+-friendly artists like Ariana Grande and Taylor Swift,” said Raisman. “I like all kinds of pop music. I was a teenager in the ’90s so I also like a lot of ’90s stuff. I’ve also listened to Dolly Parton since I was a little kid. She’s really amazing.”

Beyond singing, Raisman also plays the keyboard, acts and frequently performs stand-up at local venues.

“I have been doing stand-up for over three years,” said Raisman. “I took a class at the Annoyance Theater and then I did a showcase there and some open mics at the Laugh Factory. I also studied improv over at Improv Playhouse in Libertyville.”

When it comes to inspiration for writing and performing, Raisman talked about how she really enjoys late-night comedy shows. She looks up to Jenny Hagel, an LGBTQ+ comedian and comedy writer who has appeared on Late Night with Seth Meyers’ desk segment Jokes Seth Can’t Tell.

“I like to write jokes about my sexuality, I write jokes about the ‘softball lesbian,’” said Raisman. “I also write jokes on straight women, queer women and you know stuff in general that a lot of people think would be funny and stuff like that.”

As of right now, Raisman has moved her comedic and musical talents online due to performance venues being closed. She is keeping up creatively by writing songs and performing at virtual comedy showcases.

“I’m working on another song right now actually, it’s called Moment with You,” said Raisman “And I do write some comedy. I’ve been doing some Zoom stuff for open-mics.”

Becky also has other original songs that she’s written called “What Ya Say Baby,” “Sun,” “Girlfriend” and “Summertime Sugar.” Clips of her stand-up performances can also be found on YouTube.
Sky's season ends with loss to Connecticut

The Chicago Sky's season came to an end Sept. 15 with a 94-81 loss to the Connecticut Sun in the single-elimination first round of the 2020 WNBA Playoffs at IMG Academy in Bradenton, Florida.

When asked if he thought the team showed its true identity during the game, Sky General Manager and Head Coach James Wade responded, "No, like [I] knew some things that we wanted to do that we needed to do to win the game and we didn't get it accomplished. So, it's tough. "We live in a profession where it's hit or miss and if you don't set yourself up for success by doing the little things then you're more than likely gonna lose."

Wade added, "I told [the players] thank you and how much I really appreciated them coming. I know, you know, because of COVID [19], because of, you know, social-injustice issues. It was just a tough time for everybody, especially some of the players that play overseas that haven't gotten a chance to see their parents or their loved ones. For them to commit to the team, for them to commit to us as a coaching staff, commit to the Chicago Sky, I thought it said a lot from them."

On leaving the Florida bubble where the teams were stationed, guard Allie Quigley said, "Just mixed emotions; obviously it's sad because, you know, we just ended our season. I feel like the end always comes just faster than you would want it to come. I don't know—it's kind of an emotional roller-coaster."
MUSIC

Davis Mallory name-drops Jane Fonda with new song

BY JERRY NUNN

Openly gay singer Davis Mallory has debuted a new pop song called “Jane Fonda” for the masses. The track was written in Stockholm, Sweden and the video was directed by Cooper Smith in Nashville, Tennessee.

Many may recognize Mallory from his MTV Real World days in 2006 or his later appearances on the network’s Challenge competition shows.

He has gone on to DJ and write music over the years. His EP Loud dropped in 2017.

Along with the “Jane Fonda” single, songs such as “Shirtless,” “Sun and Moon” and “Getting 2 Close” are planned for a forthcoming album.

Windy City Times: Where does the name “Davis” come from?

Davis Mallory: I’m a fourth, so my full name is James Davis Mallory IV. My mom wanted to differentiate me and had me go by “Davis.” Everyone above me went by “James.”

WCT: You grew up in Atlanta, Georgia?

DM: Yes—I was born there.

WCT: You knew you were gay in sixth grade?

DM: Pretty much. I remember liking a girl in sixth grade, but also remembering liking a guy around that age. I told my mom, then realized I let out something I shouldn’t have, because of the way she responded to it.

It grew as I got through high school and I was more aware of guys.

WCT: How did you celebrate Pride this year?

DM: I was going to play some Pride festivals this year, but those were cancelled. I was booked in California, North Carolina and was in talks with Germany and Australia. All four of those would have been new to me.

When Pride actually happened, I didn’t really do anything.

WCT: How was being an out cast member on MTV overall? Was it positive or negative from fans of the show?

DM: Mostly it was positive. I am sure there was some negativity, but I remember the positive. Many people identified with me and still message me to this day that they came out after seeing me on that show. That is always nice to see.

WCT: Do you watch the current MTV Challenge show?

DM: I watched some of last year’s shows. MTV used my song “Shirtless” on one episode.

WCT: This new music was planned to be released before the pandemic?

DM: Yes. Two summers ago I was in Sweden for a performance and I wrote five songs. I have only released two of them so far. “Shirtless” was the first and “Jane Fonda” was the second. I started writing more and more in the same style. One of them is called “Atlanta,” which is produced by the same person that did “Jane Fonda.” I was going to call the album Atlanta, but decided to name it something different. I haven’t announced it yet, so I will hold that back until later.

WCT: Why did you pick actress Jane Fonda for the new song?

DM: She held a big name in Georgia, being married to Ted Turner. Turner Broadcasting was based out of Atlanta. Her name felt like a melody and I built the concept around it.

I will admit I had heard the Mickey Avalon song by the same name in my youth and I always thought it was cool.

WCT: Do you have the rights to use the name?

DM: I reached out to her team and showed them the song prior to releasing it. I asked for her involvement. She declined to be in the video, but gave permission to use the clips.

Her rep said she is very focused on her activism and doesn’t want to distract from that.

WCT: Why not pick Ricky Martin as the subject instead?

DM: It’s not necessarily a heterosexual song. The lyrics are “you are stunning and fine like Jane Fonda” and, for me, that’s about a guy.

Prince was a big inspiration for that song, because after he died I listened to every song he made. His [androgyne] influenced me as an artist, as well as George Michael’s career. My management suggested that I could be the next George Michael made me want to cater to a female fanbase.

The song is not me. I did “Shirtless,” which is about how good looking men are when their shirts are off. I didn’t want to make a career off of me being gay.

WCT: Was there a moment in Jane Fonda’s career that was your favorite?

DM: Her workout videos were inspiring. I do watch Grace and Frankie, her recent work too. Barbarella is super-cool with the styling.

WCT: Is your song “Anyone Would Know” about coming out?

DM: That song was about a guy I dated in New York prior to moving to Nashville. I find myself journaling about things when they are not good to help with stress. I brought that journal into the co-writing session. The words “anyone would know that I’m with you” are from my journal. I wrote it to boldly show him how much I loved him. He was jealous of me and Mike C. Manning from The Real World: DC having a friendship. That was the reason we broke up in the end.

It was a big song for me because it got me as-

signed to a label.

WCT: You put out a song called “Lost” with a Peruvian DJ?

DM: Yes. I wrote that with a girl that I lived with at the time and stars in the music video with me. It was a topline, where a DJ needs lyrics written over his music. I wrote it and he approved it. The video was nominated in DJ Mag Peru for Best Music Video the year it came out.

I like the message of the song. It’s about if someone’s life is not heading the right way that God has their life under control. I was raised with a Christian upbringing.

WCT: How is living in Nashville working out for you?

DM: Nashville has been a great place for me. I moved here after living in New York, Chicago and Atlanta all for two years in each place.

Now, I have been in Nashville for seven years. People are here for music. It is not just country music, but many different genres. I have been able to write and produce songs here. I do have an itch to go live in LA, or maybe Europe.

WCT: How has COVID affected your career so far?

DM: I have not been able to go out and perform, so I have mainly stuck to online promotions. I just did a virtual Chicago Ryan Banks Academy fundraiser with Jeff Garlin as the host this past June where I sang one song. I think I’m putting the song on the album. I wrote it at the start of COVID and it is very churchy!

Put your leg warmers on and dance over to DavisMallory.com for information on “Jane Fonda” and Mallory’s other work.

GALECA announces inaugural Dorian TV award winners

Hugh Jackman, Janelle Monae, Billy Porter, John Oliver and Schitt’s Creek creator-star Dan Levy, plus stars and producers of Killing Eve and Watchmen, offered heartfelt thanks as they virtually accepted awards—and were treated to a symbolic raise of the glass—from GALECA: The Society of LGBTQ Entertainment Critics during the group’s recent first TV special.

The Dorians TV Toast 2020—a recorded two-hour program hosted by opinionated talk-radio figure Karel and airing on the LGBTQ+ streaming platform Revry—was a hybrid of awards and chat/variety shows.

Presenters included actor Josh Thomas (Freeform’s Everything’s Gonna Be Okay), Alex Newell of NBC’s hit Zoey’s Extraordinary Playlist), comic actresses Margaret Cho and Lea DeLaria, Hollywood wit Bruce Vilanch and RuPaul’s Drag Race All Stars champ Chad Michaels.

Watchmen star Regina King—a nominee for the miniseries and a previous Dorian film award winner for If Beale Street Could Talk—thanked the Society for “not one but two Dorian Awards. Love it, Love it!”

Monae—accepting her joint-win with singer-actor Billy Porter for Best TV Musical Performance for their duet at the start of last Feb-

uary’s Academy Awards—said the experience of performing that night “was a dream” and that, when it came to asking Porter to join her, “There was no other person I could think about sharing that stage with.”

Jackman won Best TV Performance—Actor for his portrayal of a true-life public school embezzler in HBO’s Bad Education. The actor thanked GALECA, his director and co-stars (including Rafael Casal, who played Jackman’s character’s lover), said his Dorian award “really, really means a lot ... [making Education] was just one of those incredible experiences. This is just icing on the cake.”

The full list of contenders, across 14 categories, can be found at DoriansToast.com. For more about GALECA, see Galeca.org.
AFFINITY COMMUNITY SERVICES
25 YEARS OF BLACK LGBTQ+

HOMECOMING WEEKEND
VIRTUAL EXTRAVAGANZA

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AFFINITY IS CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF COMMUNITY + THE LEGACY OF BLACK LGBTQ+ LEADERSHIP!!

Thank you, Windy City Times for being a vital part of our 25 year legacy. Let’s continue the journey and congratulations on 35 years!
“There will not be a magic day when we wake up and it’s now okay to express ourselves publicly. We make that day by **DOING** things publicly until it’s simply the way things are.”

—Tammy Baldwin, U.S. Senator  
First openly gay senator elected to the U.S. Senate

Thank you, for **DOING** publicly & in print for the **LGBTQ+** Community. You are magic!  
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Liz Weck • Jackie Weinberg • Jennifer Welch • Keaton Wooden
my article about the new Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues appointed by Mayor Harold Washington.

The years 1985–87 were among the most devastating and exciting in Chicago’s gay community. AIDS was tightening its terrifying grip on our city, slightly delayed from the East and West coasts. We lost some of our own staff and one of our WCT founders, Bob Bearden, to AIDS. There was a large push for the city’s gay-rights bill, gays were running for office, more gay businesses were opening, sports and culture groups were thriving, new nonprofits were starting, the 1987 March on Washington sparked a huge growth in local groups back in cities such as Chicago, and ACT UP formed to take a no-prisoners approach to fighting for access to a cure for AIDS.

During my 18 months as managing editor of Windy City Times, until May 1987, I was so excited and honored to cover this incredible growth in the community. The highlight was a huge downtown rally in July 1986, when all parts of the community came together to push for a city gay-rights bill vote. There was a buzz unlike any I had witnessed earlier. There were people of all races and genders, thousands strong in Daley Plaza. I snapped photos, took notes, and had tears in my eyes seeing such community unity. We ran the phone numbers of all 50 aldermen and encouraged readers to call their elected officials.

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

Of course, there are also the sinister elements, those who are gays gone bad, who steal from nonprofits, abuse drugs and alcohol, destroy businesses and organizations, or even in some cases commit murder. I have covered my share of serial and spree killers within the gay community, those so distorted and so ashamed of their own true selves that they have to kill to cope, from John Wayne Gacy (who was arrested long before I started but who was put to death in 1994) to Larry Eyler (who was on the scene when I started at GayLife) and later Jeffrey Dahmer and Andrew Cunanan.

The high-profile cases of murders and suicide have been especially traumatic to write about. The 1998 killing of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming, the murders of numerous transgender, lesbian and gay Chicagoans, and the spike in reported LGBTQI youth suicides are very difficult to report. Windy City Times did a series on youth suicide in 2010, youth suicides are very difficult to report. Windy City Times did a series on youth suicide in 2010, but it is not easy getting so personal to relate the stories of our personal difficulties to relate the stories of our movement, but it is not easy getting so personal to relate the stories of our movement, but it is not easy getting so personal to relate the stories of our movement, but it is not easy getting so personal to relate the stories of our movement, but it is not easy getting so personal.

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

Notable Moments

There were many other notable moments over my 36 years:

— Meeting and interviewing Mayor Harold Washington in 1986 was a highlight for me as a 23-year-old journalist. He was a big teddy bear of a man, warm and fierce at the same time. Covering his re-election was exciting and rewarding. And I even had the guts to ask him about the rumors about his sexuality. (He denied them.)
— The push for the city’s human-rights ordinance was at a fever pitch in the mid-1980s. The forced (and failed) vote under Washington led to heightened community activism, and eventual passage under Mayor Eugene Sawyer in 1988. The work of the Gang of Four and hundreds of other activists and politicians was fantastic to watch and cover. Reporting about the City Council for the final winning vote in 1988, under Mayor Sawyer, was phenomenal.
— In 1985, I drove to northern Minnesota to interview Karen Thompson in one of the more tragic stories of the 1980s gay movement. Her partner, Sharon Kowalski, was severely injured in a November 1983 car accident, and Sharon’s family won court victories to keep Karen out of her life. This badly affected Sharon’s recovery and future health. Interviewing Karen less than two years after the accident, and after Sharon had been moved to a nursing home, was difficult, but her story served as an example to gay couples across the country to get their legal paperwork in order. Sadly, these types of cases still happen.
— Attending and covering the 1987, 1993 and 2000 Marches on Washington were life-changing experiences, as was being at the 1994 Stonewall 25 March combined with the Gay Games in New York. Priceless. The 1987 march and related events were especially pivotal and inspiring, including taking photos of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, and Chicago attorney Renee Hannover and others being arrested at the U.S. Supreme Court protest.
— I witnessed the courage of Black LGBTQI activists in pushing for inclusion in Chicago’s Bud Billiken Parade. Janice Layne recommended applying to be in the parade, and when activists won (with the help of Lambda Legal) and subsequently marched in the event, I was happy to walk the route taking photos. This was a wonderful event to cover, and the acceptance from the onlookers brought tears to my eyes. I had watched the parade as a child, because my mom, Joy Darrow, covered the parade for the Chicago Defender. It inspired Latino/a activists to march in other Chicago parades including Mexican and Puerto Rican events.
— Starting BLACKlines and En La Vida newspapers brought emotional highlights for me, especially the first-anniversary party for BLACKlines at the DuSable Museum, with my mom mixing the punch. This was just shortly before she died, so it is an important memory for me. Since Joy, as a white woman, had been managing editor of the Defender for eight years, she was especially proud of me for launching BLACKlines. The economics couldn’t support those papers after 10 years of publishing, but I was very happy to have been a publisher of such important monthly media.
— Receiving the 2005 Community Media Workshop’s Studs Terkel Award, presented by Terkel himself, was a career highlight. I am also thankful for the other journalism and community awards I have received, including induction into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame at age 31, and induction into the Halls of Fame for NLGJA (the association of LGBTQI Journalists), and Chicago’s Society of Professional Journalists and Association of Women Journalists chapters.
— Being co-vice chair of the board of Gay Games VII in 2006 was a once-in-a-lifetime experience as an organizer, showcasing Chicago to the world—and breaking even financially. I think we did our city proud, despite the odds (and people) against us. Doing outreach for the Games and speaking in more closeted towns, including Crystal Lake (where our rowing events were held), proved educational even to this jaded journalist. It also forced me out of my newspaper bat cave and across the world, especially to Europe and South Africa.
— Founding the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce in 1995 was also an important accomplishment for me. I believe it was the first gay and lesbian business group to use the word “chamber” in its title, and now that has been replicated all over the country. Around that time I also received the Crain’s Chicago Business 40 Under 40 Awards, which made me feel accepted beyond the gay community. They are now the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois.
— The chicagogayhistory.org website has been a labor of love for me, interviewing hundreds of current and former Chicagoans on gay issues. I want to do many more—only time and funding restrict all it can be. I also loved making the That’s So Gay! 2,400-question trivia board game in 2013.
— Producing the films Hannah Free, starring Sharon Gless and terrific Chicago actors, and Scruggs & Marley with a host of actors—well, those are experiences I can’t even compare to anything else. And they are simply other ways to tell our community’s stories—journalism on the big screen. I was also proud to produce a film of poet e. nina jay as she spoke the words of her book Body of Rooms.
— Interviewing Barack Obama in 2004 for his U.S. Senate run, and doing a 2010 in-depth book on him, Obama and the Gays: A Political Marriage, are certainly high points of my journalism career. Going to the White House for his June 2012 Pride Month reception, and getting a hug and kiss from the president, was amazing. I have since done other books that touch on segments of Chicago gay history, including biographies of prominent gay and lesbian leaders, some co-written with Owen Keehnen (Chuck Renslow, Jim Flint, Vermila Gray and national legend Barbara Gittings). Owen is an amazing collaborator.
— Producing the 2013 March on Springfield for Marriage Equality was absolutely one of the highlights of my life. Most LGBTQI leaders said it couldn’t be done, but I believe too much in my own community to listen to those who don’t. With four months planning, and by recruiting support from across the state, we were able to get 5,000 people in the rain to lobby for marriage rights in our state capitol. Combined with insider lobbying, the march helped lead to the successful marriage vote within a few days.
— My work on LGBTQI youth homeless projects started in 2014, after WCT had done a large, award-winning series on the topic, but nothing seemed to change. I am so proud of the conferences we did, and the projects we completed, including a foundation-funded Chicago Youth Stor- age Initiative, and pushing the needle on tiny homes for the homeless. The work continues as Pride Action Tank, a project of AIDS Foundation of Chicago, with my PAT co-founder Kim Hunt at the helm.
— The funniest thing happened to me two years ago, which I could have never predicted or...
THANK YOU
WINDY CITY TIMES
for lifting up our voices and always speaking truth to power.
For 35 years, you’ve championed our cause for equality...celebrating our progress and holding us all accountable for the work that remains.
We are a stronger community and better advocates because of you.

With love and solidarity,
The Lambda Legal Midwest Team

Join us October 21 for our virtual Bon Foster celebration.
Details at lambdalegal.org/bonfoster
BAIM from page 48

even planned for. In October 2018 I took over as publisher of the Chicago Reader, the city’s legacy alternative paper, founded in 1971. The new owners asked me to try to keep this legendary media company, and as it moves to a nonprofit in 2021, we are doing our best to celebrate its 50 years in style—and by staying alive in this new media world. When I started this work in 1984, having an open lesbian publisher of the Reader or any mainstream paper would have been quite an aberration. Now, my work in community media has been an asset. Thanks to the owners who saved the Reader, Elzie Higginbottom and Leonard Goodman, and to the first board members, Eileen Rhodes, Jessica Stites and Dorothy Leavell.

Journalism Juggling 101

The funny thing for me all these years has been the multiple hats I have had to wear, just to keep doing what I love most: reporting. Some people have criticized the conflicts of interest I have to navigate in doing this, but it was the only path I knew to follow in order to keep doing the work. I decided to run my own paper in my early 20s so that I could control my own destiny—as a writer. It took me a long time to claim the title of “publisher” at Outlines, even though that was what I was—and nobody else was doing that work. For decades, I have been lucky enough to have shareholders in the paper who have allowed me to make a lot of mistakes as I worked through sleepless nights on a very long learning curve.

So I did sales, writing, editing, photography, delivery, opinion columns for The Huffington Post, and whatever else it took to keep Windy City Times visible and thriving. And I did not take that surviving lightly. Having almost died a few times in my life, I have never taken my days for granted. I also came of age as a gay media reporter when the city had just a few dozen diagnosed cases of AIDS. This was like coming into a war zone, as people on our own staff, and all over the gay community, began to die very quickly, with no end in sight. I was covering the deaths of men (and some women) my age or just slightly older. Many of them never received coverage in the mainstream media, so it fell on the gay press to document their lives. Looking back over thousands of obituaries over the years, and hundreds of funerals I attended, it was the greatest honor to cover the war years, as a young person just getting to understand what her “community” was, making sure our community’s heroes are not forgotten.

I remember their faces, their smiles, their anger and their tears. And that is what keeps me motivated. It is unbelievable that HIV/AIDS is still rampaging across this planet, nearly 40 years after it first felled humans.

Thank yous

As we come to an end to this era of Windy City Times, closing our print editions on the 35th anniversary of the paper’s founding, there will never be enough ways that I can thank this community, my friends, my family, my partner, my staff, and all who played a role in LGBTIQ media these past 36 years of my career, and 35 years of WCT. I list a lot of specific people in the Windy City Times essay, but here are a few more below.

I especially want to thank my full-time staff these past two years, some of them with us more than 25 years: Publisher Terri Klinsky, Executive Editor Andrew Davis, Managing Editor Matt Simonette, Art Director and Associate Editor Kirk Williamson, and my partner Jean Albright, who has worn many hats but most importantly as digital editor and circulation director. Our bookkeeper Ripley Caine has helped us hold it together these past eight years, along with our accountants and other vendors. Some of our delivery drivers and freelance writers and photographers have been with us for decades. Their work has always been key to what we do.

I also want to thank the many and various owners of WCT/Outlines over the decades, for their patience and support, especially early backers Nan Schaffer (and Karen Dixon), Scott McCausland and Pete Thelen (and Terry Childers). Our advertisers, donors, event attendees, and readers, have kept us motivated, have fueled our work in many ways, and there is no way we could have done it without all of these things.

In addition, hundreds of people helped support WCT through donations and friendship. Especially important have been Michael Leppen, Sam Coady, Sari Staver, Peggy Garner, Deborah Schmall, Mona Noriega, Evette Cardona, Jane Saks, Emma Ruby Sachs, Art Johnston, Jackie and Ann Kaplan-Perkins, Laura Ricketts, Brooke Skinner-Ricketts, Jackie Boyd, Kathy Munzer, Sam Abeysekera, David Strzepek, Tod Tatsui, Sandra Klein, Diane Dodin, Sharon Zurek, Lisa Kouba, e. Nina Jay, Fawzia Mirza, Barb Kay, Julia Simmons, Sharon Brown, Karen Griebel, Martie Marro, Lisa Hernandez, Katie Jacobson, Nancy Johnson, Kelly Martin, Deb Badly, Precious and Myles Brady-Davis, Kim Hunt, Mary DeBacker, Diane and Jeanne Statts-Mare, Sharon Mylrea, Kat Fitzgerald, Mary Morten, Willa Taylor, Kelly Saulsbury, Dr. Traci Beck, Michael Bauer, Kevin Boyer, Suzanne Arnold, Joanne Siebers, Leslie Fisher (and her late wife Geegee), Cathy Seabough, Becky Frey, Alison Stanton, Jan Dee, Janet Gutrich, Gail Morse, Lauren Verdich, Pat Ewert, Susan Blake, Nabeela Rashid, Emmanuel Garcia, Theresa Volpe, Liz Valenti, Vivian Gonzalez, Mercedes Santors, Sam Kirk, Cathy Milano, Pat McCombs, Paige Greer, Claudia Allen, Deb Murphy, Kay Miles, Ann Christophersen, Linda Bubon, LV Jordan, Yvonne Welbon, Megan Carney, Eric Kugelman, Lori Cannon, Victor Salvo, Julio Rodriguez, David Sinski, LaGenia Bailey, Marilyn Wilson, Sarah Hoagland, Anne Leighton, Toni Weaver, Mark Ishaug, David Munar, John Pell, Imani Rupert-Gordon, Evey Grace, Lisa Roehl, Kim Pierce, Nancy Poore, Riva Lehrer, Tina Feldstein, Alex McCann, Kay Lahusen, and yes, I could go on and on. And the order above is as random as I could get: I thank everyone who in any way made WCT, Outlines, BLACKlines, En La Vida, OUT!, Nightlines/Nightspots, and the other media possible, through money, work, and so much more.

Finally, my family. In addition to Jean, my sister Marcy and her son Anthony, my brother Clark and his daughter Eden, my late mom Joy Darrow and stepdad Steve Pratt, my dad Hal Baim, and my close and extended family. They are my rocks, endlessly supporting and encouraging all my crazy dreams.

We will keep the website www.windyctymetines.com active and hopefully with a lot more to come online. But I will miss the print issues, those curated weekly or biweekly summaries of our Chicago LGBTQI world.

Windy City Times is trying to cover its bills to also pay its staff and drivers severance. If you can donate, for all the years we have been free in print and online, please see http://www.windyctymeadigroup.com/donate.php. You can also buy extra copies of this last issue at that link, and soon, copies of a new book of WCT and other local gay media covers.

This essay is adapted and updated from an essay in the 2012 book Gay Press, Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America, by Tracy Baim.
AVER SALUTES THE WINDY CITY TIMES FOR 35 GREAT YEARS
We thank you for your service to Chicago!

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Thank You!
On behalf of the LGBTQ Latinx community in Illinois, we want to thank The Windy City Times for capturing our community’s stories when no one else would.

Your commitment to our communities have made our city and state a more equal and fair home.

¡Gracias!
En parte de la comunidad latina LGBTQ en Illinois, queremos agradecer a The Windy City Times por capturar las historias de nuestra comunidad cuando nadie más lo haría.

Su compromiso con nuestras comunidades ha hecho que nuestra ciudad y estado sea un hogar más justo.
WINDY CITY TIMES
IN PRINT 1985-2020

Windy City Times’ first issue was Sept. 26, 1985. The staff was primarily from GayLife newspaper, which had been around since the 1970s and lasted until 1986. From the start, WCT focused heavily on Chicago-area HIV/AIDS news, politics, legislation, crime, culture and sports. It also covered national and world news important to the LGBTQ community. Around 1994, Outlines newspaper first went online, and when Outlines purchased WCT in 2000, the online push continued. For almost all of its 35 years, WCT was a weekly newspaper. About two years ago, it went to a biweekly format. Now, as WCT finishes this last regular print edition, the windycitytimes.com website will continue. It includes hundreds of thousands of articles and photos going back to the late 1990s, and will continue to be updated, along with its companion website chicagogayhistory.org.
Happy Anniversary to the Windy City Times. Congratulations!

Your work to tell LGBTQ stories with great dignity and integrity is imperative today and always.

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...to Windy City Times, for 35 years of serving Chicago’s LGBTQ community.

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SUPPORT | EDUCATION | ADVOCACY
For most of my life, I’ve had a print paper, a physical product, to show for my efforts each week. I’ve got far too many copies of Outlines, Windy City Times and even Stars & Stripes, where I worked for many years, in boxes, serving not just a record of the work but as a diary of moments of learning.

The yellowing souvenirs remind me of the state of the world on each of those publication dates and the state of my understanding at those times. One gay newspaper in one big Midwestern city founded in turbulent times and published through decades of change has meant more to me than an index of the headlines would show. Remember the times:

While LGBTQ+ people were right to be afraid for loss of jobs and family, the front pages of Windy City Times and Outlines showed how nontraditional lives could be lived and challenges overcome.

While some people died from a misunderstood disease and others turned heartless out of fear, Outlines and later Windy City Times had headlines about, on one side, ineffective treatments, privacy, stigma and quarantine and, on the other, protest and a historic volunteer response. Each new year’s headline for Coming Out Day or World AIDS Day had a different tone and reflected an evolving world.

In 2014 and 2015, Windy City Times had headlines about homeless LGBTQ youth. During that winter, community members stayed out all night in the snow to learn firsthand about that hardship.

When LGBTQ+ kids suffered bullying or neglect by government agencies, they saw respectful attention paid in the pages of Windy City Times.

When Chicago’s gay community had internal struggles, Windy City Times helped the self-examination begin, challenging leaderships and supporting the new insights in service of all stakeholders. The paper sometimes took the hit for exposing difficulties but those challenged organizations later became partners again for the larger vision.

And during each and every Pride celebration since 1985, Outlines/Windy City Times recorded our community speaking out and showing up in words and photos. Thousands of photos. Because, let’s face it, our community is pretty interesting to look at.

In 1994, shortly after completing 20 years in the military, my learning curve was steep when I started with Outlines. One good lesson was that people with means would write checks and those without would volunteer time. And I didn’t know that what it took was some clear-eyed community journalism showing people where the needs were and where their money or time would do the most good.

As director of circulation, I learned a life lesson in loyalty from our drivers. We’ve been lucky to have a dedicated team of delivery drivers with us through every season, every Pride and every deep winter storm. Each of our current drivers has been getting the paper out regularly and reliably for nearly 20 years, including the major-event winter storm of 2011 when we knew the storm was coming, went to press early and, as it turns out, were the only newspaper available in news boxes on the publication date. Reaching each newsbox involved digging through a snowbank to clear a path to it.

Our deepest appreciation for years of behind-the-scenes heroics goes out to Allan Zlatarich, John Collins, Vee Sonnets, Sue Landon, Dan Noone and Ashina Hamilton.

If you’re reading this in print right now, it’s because our drivers have made their last regular delivery of this community newspaper, undeterred by the risks and obstacles of COVID and downtown protests.

So, as Windy City Times goes out of print, I’m having another learning moment. I realize that it was comforting to think that the information, voices and viewpoints committed to paper were firm and complete and fully represented their moments in time. I realize that it was a triumphant and hopeful act to place those newspapers in the news boxes. I realize that I’ll miss the concreteness of a newspaper, with a certain weight for postage, a certain heft for delivery and a certain inherent optimism.
THANK YOU

Congratulations to everyone at Windy City Times for an amazing 35-year run and for the recent induction into Chicago’s LGBT Hall of Fame!

The Andersonville Neighborhood thanks you for serving our community and uplifting LGBTQ+ voices. You will be sorely missed.

THANK YOU

to Tracy and the whole WCT family for your decades of support and commitment to our community. What an amazing ride you all have had these past 35 years. You have been an important source and refuge to many in the LGBTQ+ family. We are forever in your debt and wish you much happiness and success for the future.

Dalila Fridi
(2020 Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame Inductee)

Elizabeth McKnight
(Long time LGBTQ+ Supporter)

John Litchfield
(2009 30 under 30 WCT Honoree)

Joe Olszewski
(2016 30 under 30 WCT Honoree)
The Passing Parade: Cultural Reporting in an Age of Heroes

BY JORJET HARPER

There are several large plastic storage bins in my office filled with stacks of clippings of articles I wrote for the Chicago gay and lesbian newspapers GayLife, Windy City Times and Outlines during the 1980s and early 1990s, and for other LGBTQI publications, including New York’s OutWeek magazine, the Bay Area Reporter in San Francisco, Frontiers in Los Angeles, Bay Windows in Boston, the Washington Blade, the Dallas Voice, TWIN in Miami, Southern Voice in Atlanta and the Lambda Book Report.

Looking through these articles and photos from decades ago is a weird experience for me. The stories themselves are from a bygone era—with names and faces, events and controversies that seem so distant now, in light of where we are today—and yet I can relive the emotional environment of that time as if I’d been there just yesterday.

It’s difficult to convey how exciting—sometimes even thrilling—it was to work in Chicago’s gay and lesbian media at that time in U.S. history. To be in the midst of the gay and lesbian cultural renaissance (or more accurately, nais-sance, since nothing like it had ever happened before) that took place in the latter half of the 1980s, to think about it and to report on it, was nothing short of exhilarating. All those passionate discussions we had about the burning issues of the day, and marches, and demonstrations, and kiss-ins! At the same time, the appalling horror of AIDS—the plague that came out of nowhere and snuffed out so many gay lives—cast its shadow over everything and everyone I knew. The highs and lows we experienced were steep, to put it mildly, and sometimes followed so closely on another that there was hardly room to take a breath in between.

Feminism First

The first newspaper I contributed to in Chicago, after moving here from New York in 1979, was a little feminist periodical called Blazing Star. Blazing Star—named, for some symbolic reason I no longer remember, after the lilac flower—was the project of a group of socialist-leaning lesbian feminists I met sometime in 1980 who were members of a Chicago chapter of a national socialist-feminist organization called the New American Movement (NAM). Judy MacLean, Hannah Frisch, Chris Riddiough and Elaine Wessel were the core members of the Blazing Star group. There were quite a few other, more occasional participants whose names I no longer recall, some of whom had nothing to do with NAM and simply wanted to work on a lesbian-feminist newspaper.

We met weekly at each others’ apartments, discussed ideas for articles we thought would be good to have in the next issue, and parsed out who among us would write them or who we could tap in the women’s community to write on a particular topic. During production time, at a storefront office location, we met with a lesbian (unfortunately, I don’t recall her name, either) who never offered input on content but donated her time typesetting and laying out the pages for us.

The paper was all-women-written and all-wom-en-produced, and it was one of a number of feisty little lesbian-feminist, we-are-women-hear-us-roar newspapers that appeared and disappeared in the feminist adrenalin surges of the 1970s and early 1980s. In general, these papers communicated news, ideas and literature of various political and social congruences, sometimes not overtly lesbian but usually with a core of lesbian-feminists to spur them on, and were part of the larger Women in Print movement that was politically robust at that time.

Times have definitely changed, but it should be said that when women got together without any participation by men, without being observed by men, it was often profoundly freeing and powerfully creative. Events that took place in “women-only space,” produced by women, were, in my opinion, a vital component of the women’s liberation movement. In those days, meetings of lesbians interested in print media could be by turns inspiring, enlightening, touching, heart-wrenching, stirring, amusing and goofy—and occasionally lunatic (not in the good sense of the word) when they became dominated by strident separatist ideologues.

As one example of many, I remember a Women in Print conference I attended in Madison, Wisconsin, where discussion went on in all seriousness for about an hour on the merits of including in the group’s statement the “demand” that public libraries keep all lesbian books and periodicals under lock and key and allow only lesbians to view or borrow them. Questions of how this was to work in practice were fielded: How can librarians determine who is a lesbian? Should there be a separate card catalog as well for these women-only books? If the librarian is a man, can he look at the books? And even: But aren’t we “allowing librarians too much power” if they are the gatekeepers of “our” books, unless the librarians are also lesbians? Etc., etc.

The first time I sat through a meeting where this kind of radical posturing was going on, I was astonished, looking around to see if the speakers were tripping; later on at these types of discussions I just gave up expecting any attempt to emerge that had practical consequences, and amused myself doodling in my notebook.

There were also discussions about the best way to spell “women” so as to eliminate the “m” from the latter half of the word—“wimmin,” “womyn,” “womon” and even something like “womnmoon” were proposed and used in various radical separatist contexts. It was silly, yes, but also an indication of how, in those heady days of second-wave feminism, everything, even orthog-raphy, was scrutinized for signs of sexism.

In contrast, the Blazing Star group was very sharp, witty and sincere about effecting social change, and I gravitated towards them. We distributed each issue of Blazing Star ourselves, of course, delivering bundles of papers to designated lesbian locations. I remember that once, in Hannah Frisch’s car, we got a flat tire in the rain and had to pull up right outside a gay bar on Clark Street a few blocks north of Fullerton Parkway.

The car was so loaded down with newspapers that we had to take the heavy bundles out of the trunk in order to jack up the tire. Though Blazing Star was an all-women (code: lesbian) newspaper, some gay men in Chicago certainly knew of it. Rather than pile all the bundles on the street and ruin papers in the rain, we went into the gay bar to ask if we could stack them there for a bit. Initially, all the men inside (and it was only men) were very unfriendly and treated us like intruders—one loudly shouted “Fuck off!” at us—until they saw what newspaper we were delivering. Then they instantly became very nice to us, helping us lug the paper bundles inside, and in minutes three of them had even fixed the tire for us.

I mention this story to illustrate that while there was certainly a cultural energy barrier between many gay men and lesbians in the early 1980s, there was still a very real sense of community that was protective, and a recognition that we were all in it together.

During our weekly Blazing Star meetings, much time was spent discussing the intersections among lesbian liberation, feminism and socialist politics; the latest ideological crisis (there always was at least one) inside the lesbian community; and the gossip about which couples had broken up or gotten together. As a newcomer in Chicago, I often had no idea who was being gossiped about, but as a newcomer to the community, I found both the ideological discussions and the trash talk highly educational.

I was a feminist former hippie acid head, not really a revolutionary leftist politico, so I was much more interested in our discussions of gyn/ecology, compulsory heterosexuality and archeological evidence of ancient goddess worship than I was in talking about cultural hegemony, dialectical materialism or the differences between the Leninists and the Trotskyists—but I was willing to hear about Gramsci as long as we also got around to talking about Adrienne Rich.

Even with our enthusiasm, feminist zeal and the latest gossip, it was a shitload of work to put out each new issue all on a volunteer basis, and those who had been at it quite a bit longer than I had were in various stages of burnout or looking to do something different with their politics. Also, as I recall, NAM was becoming reluctant to foot the paper’s printing costs. After not too many months, and many discussions that were both heartfelt and heated, the core group of women of Blazing Star decided to stop printing as an independent newspaper and become a section in the city’s main gay newspaper, GayLife.

GayLife

Embedding Blazing Star in GayLife worked out pretty well for a time, but the Blazing Star group as a whole disintegrated. Judy MacLean moved to San Francisco (and went on to write for the San Francisco Chronicle and The Advocate, among other publications), and Chris Riddiough moved away (to Washington, D.C., and continued her feminist and socialist activism there). Attempts to recruit new group members failed. Several of the less-active volunteers, who didn’t like the idea of working in any way with “the boys” and were therefore not happy with the “merger” decision, splintered off to create more new and, unfortunately, short-lived women’s newspapers.

Soon after Blazing Star “merged” with GayLife, GayLife changed management from Grant Ford—the publisher who had invited Blazing Star into GayLife and who, the group felt, was sincere in his desire to boost lesbian readership of the pa-
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Congratulations to Tracy Baim, who has made gay history by reporting our LGBTQ history in the pages of the Windy City Times for the past 35 years!

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Join us beginning October 1 for our 8th season, produced in association with Chicago’s Studs Terkel Radio Archive. You can find us at makinggayhistory.com or subscribe wherever you get your podcasts.
After the photo paper dried, the art director and dropped it out of a chute on the side of the paper internally in a self-contained “darkroom,” margins on photographic paper, developed the setter retyped by hand every sheet of paper in The editor read the pieces of paper, maybe archal den of iniquity) Man’s Country on Clark just two doors north of Renslow’s well-known it moved to the Andersonville neighborhood, dise Mart in the Blazing Star “merger” days, then my story, I took the bus to the GayLife office to copious rewrites and had a clean typed copy of in a setting that was darkly Dickensian rather Men, except everybody is queer and in bluejeans, dures back then. Imagine a newspaper office new women’s section in the paper, Sister Spirit. I could also begin to help out with the typeset — well, she showed me how to use the typesetter so I could also begin to help out with the typesetting and make more money. She also instituted a 1985, that shook things up a bit. I started doing writing and interviews for $15 an article. Which I took. Chicago entertainer Christopher Street, someone I had known from my open-mic guitar-playing days at His n’ Hers bar. He had come down with a cold that turned into pneumonia, and he died three weeks later. That was typical then; almost as quickly as you heard someone had been diagnosed, he (or, much more rarely, she) was already dead. No cocktails, nothing. Gay papers and magazines were all speculating with increasing urgency as their obituary sections became noticeably longer, and the tabloids were shouting about the “gay plague.” The general public was just beginning to realize the scope of the epidemic. Reports about AIDS at that time were confusing and often conflicting. Nobody really knew how contagious it was — only how lethal. Everyone was spooked. The mainstream media began reporting widely about AIDS only after actor Rock Hudson died in October 1985. Many straight people were doubly shocked, because they’d had no idea he was gay.

In early 1985, Bob Bearden’s lover Jeff McCourt, whose nom de plume was Mimi O’Shea, became GayLife’s entertainment editor. We met one evening at the old Parkway diner at Clark and Fullerton to discuss future articles I might write. Jeff had a closeted day job downtown Chicago as an options trader; his style was the antithesis of Bob’s. Bob was calm, soft-spoken and charming. Jeff was operatic and hyper — but he certainly had a lot of energy. At our meeting, he talked nonstop, hardly letting me get a word in edgewise. He had big ideas for how to improve the entertainment section, he said, and was writing articles in that week’s paper not only as Mimi O’Shea but also as Hans Gunther.

He said the Mimi O’Shea name started as “a kind of joke.” He didn’t tell me what the joke was, but I sat there trying to interject a sentence now and then about my concerns as a writer, and I managed to get in one or two remarks that seemed to register. I mentioned that I wanted to review the recent biography of Alan Turing by Andrew Hodges. Jeff had never heard of Turing, but was quite interested when I began telling him about Turing’s vital importance to British intelligence in World War II and in the history of computer science, and how as a gay man he was later sentenced in court to a “rehabilitation therapy” of estrogen injections that probably led to his suicide. Jeff said by all means I should go ahead with the review. My Turing story ended up as the lead feature in the entertainment section of the Pride Week issue. Jeff was effusive in his praise. He said it was the best piece he’d ever seen in GayLife and it “saved” the entertainment section on this week issue.

After that, Jeff was receptive to all my ideas for biographical and cultural features. And as managing editor, Tracy was a little human dynamo, filled with seemingly boundless enthusiasm for the gay and lesbian movement and how she could contribute to it as a journalist. But GayLife was in bad shape financially. Paychecks began bunging — more and more frequently — and there’s nothing that erodes employee loyalty like having to hastily cash a paycheck for fear it will bounce. Sometime in the late summer, Jeff and Bob were in negotiations with Renslow to purchase GayLife. Then Jeff told me that after reviewing all the finances, he and Bob were thinking of simply starting an entirely new paper.

Bob, who was bringing money into the paper as sales manager only to see his own paychecks bounce, was ready to walk. Tracy’s — whose paychecks had also been bouncing — trusted and admired Bob, and if he went, so would she. And I trusted and admired Tracy, so if she was going to leave GayLife to help start a new paper, I was onboard with that. The art director, Drew Badanish, came in as the third investor (with Bob and Jeff) to start the new paper.

This was the first staff “mutiny” in the so-called Chicago Gay and Lesbian Press Wars. But it wouldn’t be the last. Jeff came up with the new paper’s name: the Windy City Times. He told me he thought it would be best — easier to sell ads to non-gay businesses — if the room temperature was higher than proper if the room temperature was higher than the typesetting machine was quirky; it didn’t run warm. By late January, he was hospitalized, near death from AIDS, on a respirator. He got better, and worse, and better again. Bob managed to

Turn to page 64
Thank you Windy City Times for increasing the visibility of LGBTQ candidates, helping to change public views, and giving a voice to the community.

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Congratulations to Windy City Times for 35 years of must-read news and entertainment.

Thanks to Tracy for her tireless devotion to the first draft of our city’s LGBT history and to EVERYONE who contributed their invaluable services during those 35 years.

We salute you all!

~ Gail Morse and Lauren Verdich
Harper from page 62

fight off the pneumocystis but then developed some other immunodeficiency-related problems, including a blood infection.

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

We published issues that I thought were far better, more comprehensive, more wide-ranging and readable, more balanced in reporting, than GayLife had been. After a while, Jill Burgin assumed the sales rep responsibilities. Drew Badanish continued as art director for a few more months. Tracy was running the entertainment section as well as the news. Jon-Henri Damski divided his time between writing his whimsical, philosophical columns and visiting Bob in the hospital.

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

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

At this stage, I remember a lot of arguing and shouting. A lot. At the condo, I think people retracted from shouting since Bob was sick in the next room. There were no such restrictions now, and tempers were just as frayed.

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

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

At the time, Bob was still alive, home from the hospital but not capable of returning to work again or of doing much of anything. He mostly stayed in his bedroom at home. After a final, terrible bout of seizures, Bob died in January 1987; it was just a year and a half after that AIDS television report we watched at the GayLife office.

In the year of Windy City Times’ founding, 12,000 people in the U.S., mostly gay men, were diagnosed with AIDS—and half of them were already dead. It was a chilling, alarming statistic then—two years before ACT UP was founded, two years before the first AIDS quilt panel was sewn. Today, while thousands of people worldwide still become infected with AIDS every day, it’s no longer the science-fiction-made-fact, apocalyptic crisis it was within the LGBTQI community when every week young, otherwise healthy gay men, whom you knew and liked, vanished off the face of the earth from a rampaging disease caused by an as-yet unidentified organism.

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

By the summer of 1987, many of the staff of Windy City Times, including Tracy, myself, Jill Burgin and others, were poised to start a new paper yet again. There was a certain inevitability to this, since Jeff was no longer someone any of us wanted to work for, but we still wanted to do gay and lesbian journalism—and there was an attitude that, hey, we’d done it once, so we could do it again.

Outlines

Outlines, the newspaper that was founded by refugees from Jeff McCourt’s Windy City Times, began publishing in June 1987. (In 2000, Tracy Baim and her company bought the name Windy City Times from McCourt, and the Outlines name was transformed back into WCT.) Tracy initially tried to buy the paper (with investors) through an anonymous offer but, when Jeff found out she was behind it, he was outraged—even though he had considered selling it after Bob died. After driving his staff away with his crazy behavior, Jeff’s animosity toward his new competition was sometimes cloak-and-dagger, sometimes Laurel & Hardy. I recall one organizational meeting of Outlines in which a columnist who had previously written for WCT, sitting on a sofa, bent over and a tiny tape recorder fell out of his pocket and bounced onto the rug—he was recording our meeting to take back to Jeff! I never found out if Jeff had sent him on this burlesque attempt at espionage, or if it was his own idea, but this same fellow was spotted more than once lurking in the street, looking up at the Outlines office windows late at night. Weird stuff like that went on during Outlines’ beginning year or two.

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

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

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

When I think back to all the LGBTQI newspaper offices I spent any time in, the first Outlines office is the space I remember best, probably because it was filled with light. It was essentially one large open space, on the third floor of a loft building on Belmont Avenue at Lakewood, about six blocks west of the Belmont el stop and eight blocks west of what was then fast becoming “Boys Town” on North Halsted Street. A few people found it annoying that the space was so open, because almost everything in the office could be overhead by everyone else. But this stimulated really interesting off-the-cuff office conversations that sometimes led to new ideas, articles and opportunities.

The building housed a number of little corporations, arts groups and some light manufacturing. Right next door to our offices was, I remember, a business that manufactured action figures and other small toys. Its staff often kept their doors open and, walking by, I could see people inside making little figurines from molds; the smell of hot resin and plastic often wafted into the corridor. For a while the Chicago-based progressive monthly newspaper In These Times (which coincidentally had some ties to NAM and former Blazing Star members) had offices on the floor below us, and the building was owned by that paper’s publisher.

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

We had a lively pigeon hangout on the roof and, more often than not, during our frequent, animated office conversations about the current state of homos and homo sapiens, the wind outside would shift and we could hear a chorus of cooing and mating noises from the birds upstairs.

Rather than the standard behemoth typesetting machine, Tracy invested in multiple early Apple computers—which themselves would be considered antiques now, of course—that were a great advancement in sizing and arranging articles on a page. We learned to use Quark as the layout program, and now writers could “typeset” their words onscreen or, if they had a home computer, bring them in on a floppy disk so they could flow right into the layouts without the need to be re-typed. This was a huge time saver. But every story
TRACY, ANDREW, MATT, TERRI, KIRK, AND JEAN

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that came into the office on paper from a free-lancer still had to be hand-typed into the computer, because there was no such thing as email.

Plus, every phone call still came through a single land line that had an extension at each desk. How was that even possible? How did reporters ever find out about anything in a timely fashion, all of us clicking extension buttons and shuffling through paper Rolodexes to find phone numbers? And anyone who was out of the office and not at home was simply unreachable. I can’t fathom how we managed anymore. Stone Age. Pre-Gutenbergl.
Our beloved Shaman is gone ... the silence is deafening.

Jon-Henri Damski
Gay Writer/Queer Thinker

Belair Hotel #317
424 W Diversey Parkway
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A Sad Day for LGBTQ Journalism
Thank you, WCT, for 35 Incredible Years

Best wishes to Tracy Baim and team.
My hope is that my kids come to read and depend on the online version, as much as we all do!

Love, Dawn Ennis

THANK YOU TO THE LATE JEFF McCOURT AND BOB BEARDEN, TRACY AND ALL AT WCT FOR THE MARKETING/PUBLICITY SUPPORT GIVEN TO MY COMPANY/MY CLIENTS. WITHOUT IT THERE WOULD BE NO LMG.

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Susan O’Dell, PhD

Thank you for thirty-five years of chronicling our heartbreaks, triumphs, and fighting the good fight.

the Kitschy Cabinet
Cheers to Windy City Times and its induction into the Chicago LGBTQ Hall of Fame. 2020 wouldn’t look as different from 1985 without Windy City Times.

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OUTLINES
1987-2000

Outlines newspaper started the first week of June 1987. Tracy Baim and most of the staff of Windy City Times left to launch Outlines after major disagreements in personality and goals. Outlines started as a weekly, then had to go monthly for many years, converting back to weekly in the late 1990s. In the summer of 1999, WCT suffered another staff walkout, and within a year was closed. A few weeks later, Outlines purchased WCT and merged into WCT that September of 2000. The next year, WCT purchased LesBiGay Radio and turned it into Windy City Radio, which ran for more than a decade, with primary host Amy Matheny.
Thanks for the memories
You helped us find community. Here’s to 35 years and the monumental difference Outlines & Windy City Times made to our lives and collective march forward. Tracy Baim, your voice is still needed.

Nan Schaffer & Karen Dixon

Photos by Keli Fitzgerald, Lisa Howe-Elbright, Tracy Baim, Hal Baim and more
You did good

Because I was once quite the gay-press guy, and that began in Chicago, they asked me for 600-800 words. I wrote some drafts but in the end, all that's needed is a few sentences:

The paper version of the venerable Windy City Times was done in by the internet, the smartphone, the mainstream media's embrace of LGBTQ news, the success of the LGBTQ movement and, in the end, by COVID-19.

The goal of everything we did was to create a world where LGBTQ is unremarkable. Apart from the attempted backtracking on trans by the current administration, which courts have mostly blocked, we have pretty much done that.

You can get married, you can't get fired for being LGBTQ, you're all over the TV, the pride parade is many cities' biggest annual event, and go ahead and kiss your spouse at the airport.

Goodbye, dead-tree WCT. You did good.

Rex Wockner was based at Outlines (now Windy City Times) from 1988 to 1993. His work from around the world appeared in hundreds of gay newspapers from 1988 to 2011, and included going to the Netherlands in 2001 for the dawn of marriage equality, reporting from the first LGBT pride events in Moscow and Leningrad in 1991, and covering the U.S. political conventions, ACT UP, marches on Washington, California's Proposition 8, and New Orleans after Katrina, as well as local news in Chicago.

REX WOCKNER

Right: Wockner (center right, beard, glasses, camera) covering the world's first registered partnerships granting same-sex couples the rights of marriage in 1989 in Denmark. Photo by Peter Jørgensen

KATE SOSIN

The Times We Wrote About:
The gift of Windy City Times

"I feel like we're living in times people write about," Matt said as we walked home from the train, dusk settling into Brooklyn for the night.

I didn't know what he meant. It was 2008. From where I was standing, everything seemed painfully dull. My $200,000 liberal arts degree had scored me the opening shift at The Victory, a coffee bar the size of two phone booths in downtown Brooklyn.

"The economy is crashing," Matt explained. "Right, right," I replied.

Matt was a writer for the New York Times, ostensibly at the peak of his career, a career in the field I wanted. It wasn't lost on me that we took the same train home, to the same dingy two-flat building.

Everybody warned me that the first year out of college was the hardest. Nobody told me that if you decided to be a reporter, the first year was actually a preview of most of your career.

It was three years until I finally found a full-time job in journalism, a job I hoped was a stepping stone to something better. Tracy Baim made me a full-time reporter for Windy City Times in 2011 for a salary of $23,000.

I never wanted to work in LGBTQ media. I wanted to be at the Chicago Tribune or the Sun-Times, some place my parents would want to tell their friends about, some place less gay. But being visibly queer and an out trans person in the middle of an economic downturn foreclosed that. Tracy and Andrew Davis gave me a chance when
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Friends of The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame would like to thank Windy City Times for 35 years of covering the stories of the LGBTQ community.
Windy City Times: Making 35

BY TRACY BAIM

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

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

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

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

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

But by 1985, GayLife was being criticized as part of the old guard, and its publisher, Chuck Renslow, was especially under fire. Renslow was politically active and an owner of multiple businesses—the newspaper, bars and a bathhouse (at a time when AIDS was just beginning to strike hard in Chicago). He led the local Democratic gay organization and had run to become a convention delegate for U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy’s presidential campaign in 1980. People were concerned that he had unfair influence over the community through the newspaper. I started working for Renslow in June 1984 and never saw a misuse of power, but in our community, perception becomes reality.

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

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

We worked out of Jeff and Bob’s apartment on Melrose Street just west of Sheridan Road, a third-floor walk-up. There were images of naked guys in the bathroom—blatant sexual images I had to get used to at GayLife and at many subsequent gay newspaper offices. We originally did typesetting at a downtown firm, Tangible Type, owned by Chris Cothran and Sarah Craig. (Craig died in 1994; Cothran, in 1996.)

Weeks after the paper launched, to take bar photos and work his accounts. But Bob could not deal with his diagnosis. His friends were dying, his partner was pressuring, and a newspaper was being run out of his home. We would be working late hours and hated to be in the way when Bob would shuffle out of his room to the kitchen—where we were pasing the art boards.

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

Many people stepped up to help—in a freezing basement with the typesetting machines, writing articles and helping our reputation in the community. But I felt I was letting them down—Jeff and I were having power struggles. Jeff had no journalism background—he had only written gossip and entertainment prior to starting the paper—and I was very young.

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

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

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

I started looking for investors to buy Jeff out. Jeff had indicated he was burned out and depressed, so it seemed like a good idea at the time. We made an offer through an attorney, but when Jeff found out I was behind the deal, he was furious. Sales Manager Jill Burgin had to step between us for fear something might happen. I wanted to walk out right then, because I was ready to start a new paper, and most of the dozen or so full-time staff were coming with me. But several of the staffers, including reporter Bill Burks, convinced me the right thing to do was stay and put out two more editions of the weekly Windy City Times. I agreed, as long as Jeff stayed away from me (we were on separate floors).

After those two weeks, we moved full force into starting Outlines, in the In These Times office building at 1300 West Belmont Avenue. As Chicago magazine noted in September 2007: “McCourt also enjoyed a good fight. When Tracy Baim left to found her own publication, Outlines, five months after Bob Beadon’s death, she touched off what will probably go down in history as Chicago’s last great newspaper war.”

Even though I was the same gender as before, the fact that I was a woman with her name on “top” of the masthead made it easy for Jeff to really play the gender card. He successfully influenced advertisers away from Outlines, saying it was “just” a lesbian paper. He said I hated men, even though most of the people who left his em-
Thanks to the Windy City Times for your contributions to print media and the LGBTQ+ community in Chicago.

Thresholds

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MAKING 35 from page 74

ploy to start Outlines were men. But just as with GayLife’s demise, perception is reality. Outlines always struggled with the gender issue and advertising. If getting ads in a gay paper was hard in the 1980s and 1990s, getting ads in a paper stereotyped as lesbian was even harder. Our reader statistics always showed a balance of around 60 percent male and 40 percent female. A typical gay newspaper at the time was 90 percent male.

Windy City Times and Outlines went head-to-head as weeklies for a few months, but by February 1988 I knew we could not keep up with the bills or get more investment money, so we went to a monthly newspaper format for the next nine years. The Reader declared Jeff the victor.

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

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

WCT became one of the top gay newspapers in the country. Jeff was especially brilliant at getting mainstream businesses to advertise, which is what helped his paper grow in size. He was very much about size, and proudest of his ever-growing circulation numbers of WCT. But Jeff also alienated a lot of people and was just as erratic and substance-influenced as he had been when I worked for him. Eventually, those internal demons would catch up to him, but for more than a decade he thrived—on the competition, the journalism and the business.

Jeff also got very involved politically, and WCT endorsed candidates at almost every level of office. While I was criticized for working on sports (I was co-vice chair of the Gay Games when they came to Chicago) and business (I founded the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce), Jeff had his hands in politics and entertainment. He tried to influence elections and lobbying efforts, he produced plays, and he was briefly president of a theater company. Jeff also was part of the National Gay Newspaper Guild to increase the clout of regional gay media. Windy City Times also lobbied successfully along with 46th Ward Alderman Helen Shiller for increased AIDS funding under Mayor Richard M. Daley. Those moves had their own conflicts of interest, particularly with AIDS funding under Mayor Richard M. Daley.

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

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

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

Louis Weisberg was editor of Windy City Times for five years until he was among those who left to start another competing paper in 1999. He told Chicago magazine: “We’d have editorial meetings where Jeff would be sitting there with white powder around his nose, drinking booze out of a bottle with Ryan Idol asleep on the couch. At some point we just knew this wasn’t going to work—that this was no way to run a business.” Jeff had a relationship with the porn star that was complicated and at times disturbing to Jeff’s friends and employees.

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

We also started BLACKlines and En La Vida, monthly newspapers for the African-American and Latino/LGBTQI communities; both began in 1995, and they ran about 10 years each (eventually merging into Identity before closing). Our website for Outlines started in 1996. (Jeff never owned the domain name WindyCityTimes.com, and later we had to fight in an international tribunal to get it back from one of Jeff’s former employees.) We were trying to fill different media needs and niches, staying afloat with the generous support of community investors including Nan Schaffer, Scott McCausland, Pete Thelen and many more. Nan was with me from the very beginning, providing amazing, consistent financial and moral support. They were our angels in those early years, and so many remained supportive, even as we added Windy City Radio after buying the old LesBiGay Radio in 2000 (the best thing to come of that was our longtime sales rep Amy Matheny, a critical employee for more than 15 years).

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

Newspaper War, Part 2

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

In the summer of 1999, Jeff McCourt suffered another walkout, but this time the way it happened (with no notice) somehow hit him so hard that he rebounded all the way back to me—he called me for the first time in 13 years, and we commiserated about the way they left him. I sympathized with him, but never underestimated
With deep love and gratitude, we give thanks to:

TRACY BAIM and the entire team
over the last 35 years of WINDY CITY TIMES

for reflecting our joys, heartbreaks, celebrations, aspirations, questions, differences, imaginations, curiosities, beauty, losses, bruises, participation, wounds, passions, strength, weaknesses, growth, pleasures, battles, victories, dreams and our QUEER FABULOUSNESS

With love and respect
ONWARD,
Jane & emma & esmé xxx

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Jane M Saks, Emma Ruby-Sachs, & Esmé Alan Geoffrey Bayard Ruby Saks
MAKING 35 from page 76

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

Jeff was left far more vulnerable after this staff defection than when I left, for a few reasons. First, when I had started Outlines, I did not have the type of deep pockets supporting us as the new CFP had. I was able to get friends and community members to buy shares in my company, and they trusted me to run it. (Some people believe I am an heiress to a nonexistent Clarence Darrow fortune, which is not true; my mom was a distant relative to Darrow, and my parents were very middle-class. All I received from them was a distant relative to Darrow, and my parents had encouraged him to go to his Michigan summer house. …)

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

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

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

We purchased it for around $400,000—the value of the paper’s one year of national advertising, the only number that could be proved. Jeff had almost changed his mind about the sale—but his lawyers knew better (no one else expressed serious interest, and certainly not for that price), and they walked him through the sale until the final signature was completed. I was able to get new investors, but the rest of the money came from putting my home on the line for a loan from the bank.

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

Jeff and I met at my bank on the sale day. My lawyer was Mary York, and she kept me calm and really helped nail the deal down. Jeff and I sat outside Bank of America, reminiscing about the old days. How hard it was—how it actually never got much easier. About people we had lost, about Bob, about their old-three-story walkup apartment on Melrose. It was surreal, acting like old friends, when we had fought tooth-and-nail for 13 years. But sometimes that phrase “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” comes true—Jeff had been so wounded that he actually turned back to me as an ally. Jeff was chain-smoking and looked very frail. He had the shaves and looked far older than he should have. I honestly don’t know how he survived another seven years after that day, dying in 2007 at age 51.

The buyout of the Windy City Times name was important for Outlines, because it gave us a mainstream recognition to face the continual media wars in Chicago. Some in the community did not support us buying WCT, because they viewed it as helping Jeff get out of debt. But I tried to see the value to the community, and to our business, and in the end it was the right decision. Even though 20 years later I am still paying off the loan.

We merged the two weeklies into one Windy City Times in September 2000, and I felt as if I had got my baby back after it had been in foster care.

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

Jeff’s brother Dan McCourt said that at the end Jeff had nothing left; and it’s true that Jeff got very little from the sale of his paper. He had almost $400,000 in debts (the IRS, his printer and his lawyers), so the sale cleared his name but left him little remaining.

Of course, the battles were not over. CFP continued to go after the new WCT, and a new rivalry was begun. CFP did change ownership in the mid-2000s, and eventually it was closed in May 2010. Meanwhile, Gay Chicago, which had been Chicago’s oldest surviving gay publication, itself went through internal struggles and closed in September 2011.

One very ironic twist of fate, one that would have made a good ending for a book, was that the same week CFP closed, I went into the hospital. I had been having a lot of issues, but nothing specific. I could feel was wrong. It turned out I had multiple organ problems and ultimately needed around eight surgeries, some of them emergency, and certainly not for that price), and I am pretty glad I lived to see more days, and the chicagogayhistory.org website is still operating. I am working like a maniac to get this history down before I go for good.

The Next Generation

Once the two papers merged, Windy City Times continued covering LGBTQI news, politics, entertainment and more. Outlines had a strong team to move to WCT and retained some of the WCT staffers who had remained, in particular Karen Hawkins as news reporter, Marco Fernandez as sales representative, and Tony Peregrin, Jonathan Abarbanel, Mary Shen Barnidge and other well-known freelancers. Jonathan even joined on as a new shareholder.

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

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

Other stories important during that time included the growth in the transgender-rights movement, the alarming increase in reported murders of transgender women of color (especially African American), the rise in LGBTQI youth suicides, the fight to repeal the military’s Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell gay ban, and the ongoing battle for the equal right to marriage.

But sometimes even simple business profiles can have a profound impact. In 2007, when Chicago’s Women & Children First bookstore was struggling, its owners allowed Windy City Times to tell their story in a front-page article. The store has been a key player in the Chicago LGBTQI community since their founding in 1979, and we knew our readers would want to know if it was at risk of closing. As soon as the article came out, thousands of dollars in donations poured in, and numerous other media picked up the story. The store is still in business in 2020, and did a successful ownership transition several years ago. WCT has also done stories about family members and partners looking for donations to help cover funeral costs for loved ones, and the community steps up each time to help out.

With a team of staff and freelancers, WCT has covered local, national and international stories that affect the community. Sometimes this is the coming out of the latest celebrity; other times, a violent anti-gay attack. What’s important is to
Thank you, WCT!
for 35 years of dedication to
Chicago's LGBTQ+ community

On behalf of everyone in CMSA, thank you to
Tracy Baim and the Windy City Times for 35
great years. We appreciate your support and look
forward to being a part of your future journey.

chicagomsa.org

AgeOptions and our partner agencies salute
Windy City Times for serving as the voice of Chicago's
LGBT+ community since 1985.

Our programming for LGBT+ older adults has gone virtual,
too! Check out our Thrive with Pride project at
http://www.ageoptions.org/gallery/
thrivewithpride/

Tracy, we thank you for 35 years of WCT! You were the inspiration for GayDesertGuide! Brad Fuhr
Making 35 from page 78

keep a balance of news, entertainment and features, representing the full lives of WCT’s readership.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

Jeff McCourt died of AIDS complications at age 51 in 2007. Soon after, I nominated him for the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame—see the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame.

Few people are neutral on Jeff’s legacy. Even those who left his employ have mixed feelings, about his mood swings, his drug use, his highs and his lows, his manic behavior and passionate loyalty—and his fierce competitiveness. I imagine that once I die, the reviews will also be mixed, though perhaps not with such “high” drama.

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

Of course, if I were to do it over again, I would change many things. I am glad I helped start Windy City Times, but I would have gotten more of the deal in writing. Mostly, I would have tried to be a better boss. When I would go sometimes three or four days with no sleep, never going home, I had difficulty trying to run a business and be an editor and reporter all at the same time.

Co-founding WCT at age 22, and then Outlines at 24, was a bit crazy if I do say so myself. Taking photos at a sports league in the morning, at a leather bar at midnight, going back to the office to write an editorial, and then trying to balance the books for payroll—that was just plain difficult. But in truth, I had much help in keeping it all afloat. And I got to do what I had always wanted to do since I was 10 years old and producing my family newsletter.

There have been many key players at Windy City Times and Outlines over the years. I hesitate to even start listing them all. And because I separated from WCT for 13 years, I did not work closely with many of the key middle-years employees. There were hundreds of people, including delivery drivers, photographers, salespeople, reporters, business staff, editors, interns, and the supportive investors and advisers.

There have also been some key people present from the very first issue of WCT. I list some of the current staff in my other essay. But some of the original people include Tori Armstrong Jr., Torr Hayter and Yvonne Zipter. Many started in the late 1980s and lasted for years, including Rex Wockner, Jonathan Abarbanel and longtime writer Marie J. Kuda. And there were hundreds more, including staff and freelancers Mona Noriega, Amy Matheny, Trudy Ring, Pat Bechdolt, Scott Duff, Kate Sosin, Kathleen Ulm, Danica Milich, Sukie de la Croix, Alison Bechdel, Owen Keehnen, Sari Staver, Suzanne Kraus, Robert Schultz, Jessica Layne, Cathy Seabaugh, Amy Wooten, Richard Knight Jr., Robert Castillo, William Burks, Jill Burgin, Lynn Hull, LaAunnessee Jordan, Amparo Jimenez, Mary Shen Barmidge, Scott Morgan, Mary Morten, Jim Bennett, Ross Forman, Liz Baudler, Tony Peregrin, Miranda Stevens-Miller, Salem Collo-Julin, Otis Richardson, Carrie Maxwell, Scott Galiner, Larry Alter, Richard Small, Rhonda Craven, Janet Provo, Jerry Nunn, Gretchen Rachel Hammond, Midge Stocker, Victor Salvo, Mel Ferrand, Lori Weiner, Katie Bergquist, Jane Lowers, Achy Obejas, Lynnell Stephani Long, C.C. Carter, Michèle Bonnarens, Stephanie Bacon, Genny Goodrum, Sarah Hoagland, Cynthia Marquard, Sanford Gaylord, Norton Kopfler, Mel Wilson, Shani, Vivian Larsen, DJ Harry T, Mike Spitz, Rachel Pepper, Johanna Styova, Raven Rodriguez, Ann Hageman, Judy Lansky, Marcia Willkie, Karen Topham, Charlise Dewey, Rev. Irene Monroe, Angelique Smith, Sarah Toce, Melissa Wasserman, Sheri Flanders, Veronica Harrison, Ariel Parrella-Aureli, Kerry Reid, Regina Victor, Steve Warren, Rick Karlin, Gregg Shapiro, Lisa Neff, Jason Smith, Louis Weisberg, Dave Quano, Neda Ulaby, Mark Schoofs, Albert Williams, David Olson, Jon Barnett, Bruno Mondello, Marc Moder, David Magdazier, Jennifer Parello, Chris Hamm, George Grayson and truly so many, many more.

Many of those above also took photos, but we also had some stand-out people who were professional photographers, including Lisa Howe-Ebright, Genephyr Novak, Kat Fitzgerald, David Miller, Susan Swingel, Israel Wright Jr., Barb Kay, Hal Baim, Anthony Meade, Ed Negron, Joseph Stevens and M.J. Murphy.

Our appreciation for years of behind-the-scenes heroics goes out to drivers Allan Zlatarich, John Collins, Vee Sonnets, Sue Landon, Dan Noone and Ashina Hamilton. Plus so many others who delivered off and on over past 35 years. They dealt with rain, sleet, snow, wind and really obnoxious people putting horrible stuff in these boxes.

Again, I did not run WCT for a period of time from mid-1987 through the end of 1990, and there were many more who were part of those teams.

Our final team of Terri Klinsky, Andrew Davis, Matt Simoneet, Kirk Williamson, Jean Albright and Ripley Caine really held it all together, with our drivers and freelancers, after I left for the Reader in 2018.

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

We have also had to say goodbye to far too many young colleagues, most because of AIDS, some because of cancer and other tragedies: Jeff McCourt, Bob Bearden, Marie J. Kuda, Vernita Gray, William B. Kelley, Richard Cash, Paula Walowitz, Gabor, Bob Kraus, Mel Wilson, Mike Simonowicz, John Schmid, Jon-Henri Danski, Danny Sotomayor, John Pennycuff, Eli Burick, Paul Adams, Joseph Bean, Tony Hassan, Marvin Patterson, Alfredo Gonzalez, Fernando Flores, Sarah Craig, GayBoy Ric, Chris Cothran, Chris Clason, Earnest Hite, Kathleen Rose Winter, Kathleen O’Malley, Paul Vernall and our attorney Mary York.

The advertisers in Windy City Times and our other media have really made most all of this possible. Our national ads have come through Rivendell in New Jersey for decades, and our sales team sells locally, headed by Terri Klinsky. Some longtime advertisers were with us almost every issue of our various media. Thank you to them. Thanks also to our various vendors over the years, including Newsweb printing company, now called Topweb, for all the newsprint printing of gay media since the 1970s, plus Graphic Image Corp. for special projects printing (Nightspots, OUT! Guide, Clout!, etc.). Plus thank you to Da- vid Strzep and Total Promotions. Martie Marro and her LoveYourWebsite company has been the backbone of our web presence since the 1990s. I can never thank her enough for holding our digital presence together despite attacks foreign and domestic. And to David Schaefer, who helped us as a teenage Apple expert when we were robbed of all of our equipment three decades ago. He stepped up to help, and has been our Apple/Mac guy ever since. Steve Macintosh also helped us so much with early tech issues.

Next Up

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

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

We were never intimidated by “giving it away” for free online, since our papers were always free. The dilemma is on the revenue side—who pays for all that free content. As part of an effort to streamline costs, the company went to a “virtual” office in 2008, just two months before the U.S. economy collapsed. Given the closing of so many gay print publications over the past decade, Windy City Times has been fortunate to stay in print 35 years serving the Chicago-area LGBTQI community. We benefited from an odd mix of luck, good timing, amazing support and wonderful staff. It was a unique blend, but it worked. For a long time.

The next phase has been sad to face. The decision to close print was something we saw as inevitable, and doing so on the 35th anniversary made sense. Having a curated weekly or biweekly print issue does matter for archivists and historians. But from this point, our work will live on in the digital universe.

Thanks for putting up with all the ink stains and paper cuts these past 35 years. Now, we wish you a bright digital future.

Windy City Times is trying to cover its bills to also pay its staff and drivers severance. If you can donate, for all the years we have been free in print and online, please see http://www.windyctymediagroup.com/donate.php. You can also buy extra copies of this last issue at that link, and soon, copies of a new book of WCT and other local gay media covers.

This essay is adapted and updated from an essay in the 2012 book Gay Press, Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America, by Tracy Baim.
I wonder if Tracy Baim knows what a difference she’s made in my life.

Tracy gave me opportunities at the time I needed them, and those opportunities have had great significance for my journalism career.

I started working for Outlines (later to acquire Windy City Times and take over the name) and Nightlines as a freelancer in 1992. I was between jobs and looking to increase and diversify my clip file. I had been a reporter and editor for a couple of daily newspapers in downstate Illinois, and in Chicago I had worked for a specialized financial trade publication and for a reference book publisher. For the dailies, I had covered a little bit of everything—politics, business, entertainment—but when I went job-hunting, it seemed like prospective employers just looked at the financial publication and rejected me out of hand for anything else. A career counselor even said she wished I could get it off my résumé—like, duh, no, I worked there seven years; that’s an idiotic suggestion.

So I had to prove I could write about other things, even though I felt I shouldn’t have to, because I already had extensive and diverse experience. But I knew people who’d had good experiences with Tracy, and as a regular reader of Outlines and Nightlines, I knew they were high-quality publications. And I was committed to LGTBQ+ equality and LGBTQ+ culture. So in the summer of 1992, Tracy took me on as a freelancer. I wrote mainly about film and theater, doing both reviews and interviews. One of my first interviews was with Gregg Araki, who was promoting The Living End. I didn’t realize then he would become a lion of the New Queer Cinema.

In 1993 I got a job doing public relations and fundraising for Chicago House, an AIDS service organization where I had volunteered for several years. That kept me too busy to work much for Tracy. I had loved being a Chicago House volunteer and cherish memories of that experience to this day, but being a staff member there was a far different situation and extremely stressful, so when I had a chance to go back into publishing at the start of 1994 I jumped at it. The guy who had run the reference book company I’d worked for was starting a new one; would I like to join him as an editor? I would and did.

That worked out well for a while, and it left me some time to freelance, including an article for the first issue of Clout, Tracy’s new business publication, in the spring of 1995. Then that summer, things blew up at the reference book company; the boss wasn’t satisfied with my performance, even though I worked extremely hard, and frankly, there was no way to produce the books on schedule and maintain quality with the meager resources we had. Plus I was trying to wrangle dozens of freelancers who often missed deadlines or didn’t turn in their assignments at all. But at the time I got fired, I felt like a total screw-up and that no one else would ever hire me.

Tracy came to my rescue. Shortly before everything went bad at the book publisher, she had asked if I wanted to come on as a full-time reporter for Outlines, Nightlines, Clout, and whatever other publications she might start (Blacklines was in the future). I said no then, but after
BLACKLINES/EN LA VIDA/IDENTITY

BLACKlines newspaper started in February 1996, and remained a monthly newspaper produced by Outlines for many years. It started after Robert Ford of Thing ‘zine died. A Black gay man, Ford had created a wonderful queer ‘zine for Chicago and the U.S., and his death left a void for the local Black LGBTQ community. So Outlines asked the community if it wanted us to run a Black newspaper, and in a unanimous vote at the Generator nightclub, the plan was agreed to. It would be run by and for Black LGBTQs. A few months later, the Latinx community asked for the same, and En La Vida was born in July 1996. In the early 2000s, the papers were merged into a glossy monthly, Identity, but eventually it too had to fold. There was not a sustainable advertising model to keep them going.
A LEGACY IN PRINT

Celebrating 35 years of the LGBTQ Community’s Beloved Newspaper

Howard Brown Health would like to thank Tracy Baim and the entire Windy City Times staff for their untiring dedication to the LGBTQ community.
Godzilla, the Abominable Snowman, and the codes embedded in great Renaissance art works. The emergence of matter-of-fact, widely circulated gay newspapers was in itself a form of coming out. (The first time someone got up the nerve to read a gay paper on a bus or train was a common, memorable, coming-out toe-in-the-water experience for a lot of people. The first time the person’s face at a social event appeared in the gay newspaper was another—after all, not everyone in the photo was necessarily gay . . . ) And by supporting and encouraging individuals to come out, gay newspapers created the momentum for the paradigm shift that we see everywhere today.

Working for the LGBTQI press in Chicago was a rare opportunity to combine activism and culture, and to feel that I was contributing something tangible to the movement for LGBT rights. Plus, I was constantly learning new things and meeting fantastic, admirable people. I look back almost in awe on the hope and the triumphs of those times amid the poignancy of our tragic losses.

Decades ago, a friend of mine told me that her fundamentalist Christian sister had remonstrated with her about being a lesbian, saying, “Why can’t you at least have the sense to lie about it?” Her immediate answer was, “Because that would make me a liar.” Ironically, homophobes who persist in vilifying our sexuality as something “indecent” will never understand or acknowledge the basic sense of decency that has propelled much of the LGBTQI movement. I saw many instances of actual heroism in those days, of otherwise ordinary people who realized that coming out, however difficult for them, was an act of dignity, of personal integrity, of openness, of risking personal safety for the sake of honesty. And I saw many instances of bravery in the face of bureaucratic nonsense, ignorance, violence and hatred—and the struggle continues in many places today. The LGBTQI media solidified and amplified our collective courage.

I feel lucky to have been among the people who documented those exciting, historic times of struggle as they unfolded. And I feel very privileged indeed—as the era of Windy City Times as a print newspaper comes to a close—to have worked there in “The Old Days” with the dedicated colleagues who shared my abiding commitment to our gay and lesbian movement for equality.

THANK YOU TO OUR NEIGHBORS & PATRONS. WE’LL SEE YOU SOON!

2BEARS TAVERN GROUP

5025 N. CLARK

4923 N. CLARK

5025 N. CLARK

6405 N. CLARK
Many of you might know me only through my byline on the masthead or, if you’re a bit older (and drunker), by my time in the bars as editor of Nightspots. Hey, I WAS that guy from the magazine. But if you have never really met me, I’m about to tell you something which may shock and appall you: I, Kirk Williamson, am a huge nerd. Okay, so no shocked faces out there? I suspected as much.

But so many people say they’re a nerd without the track record to back it up. I can prove it, because in terms of specific nerd taxonomy, I am what is called an obsessive nerd. Try to make small talk with me and I’ll plod along, half-interested and anxiety-ridden, until you bring up one of a few topics I am obsessed with and then say goodbye to your friends, because you are mine. I hope you poured yourself a big drink; you’re gonna need it.

Within the last decade, one of the primary nerd-out topics that has constantly been on my mind is genealogy. I was raised by my mother and my grandmother, an imposing Sicilian-American woman whose parents (and their parents and their parents and ... well, you see where I’m going) all came from the same village about 35 miles outside of Palermo. My grandma shared this passion for genealogy and was the keeper of all the family history. After she passed away in 2007—and I realized that almost everyone from that generation was gone or on their way out—I logged onto ancestry.com and that kicked off a deep fascination with my family’s past. I was able to trace that side of my family back at least eight generations on many branches. Last year, I even took a bucket-list trip to Sicily to visit the very town that my ancestors came from. Looking out every morning to the peak of Mt. Calogero, as my people had done before me for hundreds of years, was a grounding and eye-opening experience.

My people had always been simple folk. Farmers, fishermen, dutiful Catholic wives. The type of people not typically written of in any great detail in history books or newspapers. When they came to America, they sold produce from horse-drawn carts and got thankless jobs in filthy factories, all to fulfill the American promise. Even down to my generation, most in my immediate family work to live. No CEOs or inventors or really any profession that brings joy or fulfillment.

In the past year, my attention was brought to the stories—or rather, the lack thereof—of two of my great-great-grandfathers, Salvatore Quattrocchi and Salvatore D’Angelo. Within two weeks, I had discovered that each of these men were put into unmarked graves here in the Chicago area, their families having been too poor to afford a more honorable burial.

Mr. D’Angelo lived with his family on the defunct Purple St., in what is now the campus of UIC. The neighborhood was blighted with crime-filled saloons and barrels of toxic waste, which I imagine contributed to his death in 1906, leaving my then 13-year-old great-grandmother fatherless.

Mr. Quattrocchi had come to America ahead of his two very young sons and wife, who was already widowed. He died here, alone, in 1892, and for all I know, none of his many descendants here in Chicago ever knew where he was buried, much less that he died here. It turns out, he’s a mile away from my apartment at Calvary Cemetery in Evanston.

After a vigorous fundraising effort, I was able to afford a proper grave marker for Mr. Quattrocchi. I was not able to raise enough for Mr. D’Angelo’s, but he’s only been dead for 114 years, not 128 years like Mr. Quattrocchi. His day will come.

Their lives were not so remarkable as to merit documentation. They lived, loved, probably yelled a lot (because Sicilian) and their memories were left to disperse into dust, leaving no trace. I’ve tried to rectify that and to tell their stories.

Since the announcement of the final issue of Windy City Times, I’ve been forced to assess what exactly it is I have been up to in the past two decades at the paper. I can list individual memories and try to extract lessons like some mad fabulist, but I am too awestruck by the general lessons I’ve learned.

What can seem like a day-to-day grind reveals much deeper truths when you get a chance to step back and view it as a continuum. For as much as I grumble about deadlines and incorrect margins and develop neck pains from stress, I’ve come to the realization that this job has been everything to me. It’s not only given me a chance to tell the stories of Chicago’s LGBTQ community—in many cases, stories that may not have been told, lived by people who may not have thought themselves worthy of documentation—but in so doing, I have found real fulfillment and connection to truth. It is the fruition of the unsung efforts of my ancestors, who perished in anonymity so that I could write this essay today.

Okay, so maybe they may not have foreseen the whole gay newspaper part, but I’d like to think they would have found some slice of pride in it all.

You may have noticed that earlier in this essay, I referred to my ancestors as “my people.” When I think back on all of the wonderful souls I have worked with and for and in the service of during my time at Windy City Times, I can only regard you all as my people, as well. And as much as I’ve needed out about telling the stories of those who came before me and shared my DNA, it pales in comparison to the stories I have been even a small part in telling about you. My people.

And that’s my story.
Rene VanHulle, Jr.

Empress Fabiola
The Great Buckingham-Fontaine

Heidi Snoop
Gossip Columnist for Gay Chicago Magazine

Did you know them?
Do you have a story?
A photo?

I’m working on a celebration of life and seeking interviews and artifacts.

Email: FabiolaBiography@gmail.com

Photos Courtesy of Windy City Times
NIGHTLINES/NIGHTSPOTS

Throughout the 1990s, Nightlines focused on the LGBTQ entertainment scene, from the bars to the stage and everything in between. With the new millennium came a significant format change as Nightspots focused in on the bar scene, covering special events and just plain ol’ drinking nights in every gay bar in the greater Chicago area. Among the many pictured below are the first issue of Nightlines from March 28, 1990; the first issue of Nightspots from November 14, 2001; the first glossy issue from October 29, 2003; the final issue from June 25, 2015; and the only issue ever of Nightspots to feature a national star rather than a local luminary on the cover. See if you can pick that one out for yourselves!
my firing I called her back and said yes.
The job was a wonderful experience, even though there were some tense times worrying about finances or whether I would get in the middle of a fight between factions in the Chicago LGBTQ+ activist community. I got to interview fantastic people such as the great actor Sir Ian McKellen, film directors Marleen Gorris and Patricia Rozema, Frasier star Dan Butler, playwright Paul Rudnick, theater director Frank Galati, choreographer Bill T. Jones, and more. I covered local politicians such as Larry McKeon, the first out gay state legislator in Illinois, and activists including Pat Logue, Rick Garcia, Vernita Gray, and Renee Hanover. And I got to report on the 1996 Democratic National Convention, a highlight of my life.

My coworkers were super. Tracy was a dynamo, and a fair and supportive boss. Terri Klinsky, sales rep and now publisher, was funny and delightful. Cathy Seabaugh, who split her time between editorial and advertising, was a sweetheart. So was Jean Albright, Tracy’s life partner, who handled circulation and many other tasks. And late in my tenure, Andrew Davis, a smart and extremely nice guy with whom I’d volunteered at Chicago House, started writing for our publications. He ended up rising to executive editor. I left at the end of 1996, mostly due to financial worries (although I should have known Tracy would persevere), so I started 1997 at another trade publication, this one on the credit card industry. I regretted the move but once—continuously. But later in the year, my sister, who still lived in our hometown of Galesburg, Ill., and was considering moving to Chicago, suggested the alternative plan that we move together to Los Angeles, as her twin daughters had been recruited for jobs near there and she had an empty nest (she was widowed, and one other daughter was living in Europe at the time). So I applied to The Advocate, based in L.A., got an offer, and off we went.

I have now been at The Advocate for 23 years, doing copy editing, fact checking, and, for the past decade or so, a lot of writing, and this year I got the title of senior politics editor in addition to copy chief. I’ve also worked on whatever else our parent company owned at the time—Out, Alyson Books, erotic mags, etc. I’m pretty sure I wouldn’t have gotten hired at The Advocate if not for my experience with Outlines and Tracy’s other publications. So I am ever grateful for the opportunities I had there, and I am glad to have stayed friends with my colleagues from those times. As Windy City Times goes to digital-only, which is the wave of the future, I wish everyone well. I think WCT will be an important voice for years to come.
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**SAVOR**

**The Outpost Mexican Eatery; Mercadito**

**BY ANDREW DAVIS**

The Outpost Mexican Eatery

The Outpost Mexican Eatery (520 W. Harrison St.; ThTheOutpostMexicanEatery.com) is seemingly not accurately named. An outpost is a remote spot, and this quaint eatery is a two-minute walk from the Clinton Blue Line stop.

However, that’s just a quibble about this spot that specializes in authentic Mexican cuisine.

Owner/ operator Anna Kamilis and chef/ business partner Jesus Martinez were strategic in opening this restaurant, as it’s near the Old Post Office (a nine-story structure that was recently in the news for its 3.5-acre rooftop park that has tennis and basketball courts). However, the timing was unfortunate, to put things mildly. “We opened March 1,” said Kamilis, who is straight forward but very amiable. “Unfortunately, the pandemic hit and the shutdown happened. Then we reopened only curbside and delivery in April and half of May. On June 3, we opened the interior.”

When asked about opening during a pandemic, Kamilis replied: “We’re here anyway. What am I going to do—stay closed and not make any money?” She added that some nearby residents and construction workers “have been wonderful.” However, she said that the place “is missing about 300,000 people from other adjacent buildings,” such as the Old Post Office and the FBI building.”

However, Kamilis said that the pandemic is only part of the problem. “It wasn’t just the COVID; it was also the rioting and looting. The pandemic was the cake and the rioting and looting were the icing. I live in the suburbs and people looked at me like I was crazy when I said I was going into the city—because of how Chicago was being portrayed.”

The menu is as straightforward as Kamilis. When there are only a few items on the menu, they better be done well—and they certainly are. “I like making what people like the most.” Martinez told Windy City Times, “but I like putting a traditional twist to it. So, like instead of the regular ground beef, I have a picadillo—which is Mexican-style—that’s like a stew.” And the horchata doesn’t get more authentic: It’s Martinez’s dad’s recipe.

Authentic tacos, burritos, sides and snacks are all made with premium ingredients, including steakhouse-cut USDA Prime Angus beef, fine local produce, housemade tortilla chips and hand-crafted salsas. The steak burrito bowl I had was sublime, as well as the Becky chorizo/eggs combo. (Breakfast is served all day.) The horchata was pretty good, although I detected a little grit.

Hopefully, when the dust has settled and a COVID-19 vaccine is found, I’ve no doubt The Outpost will still be here. It should, for at least two reasons: the will of Kamilis and the cuisine from Martinez.

Mercadito

If The Outpost is blue-collar, then Mercadito (108 W. Kinzie St.; MercaditoRiverNorth.com) may be its white-collar equivalent. Mercadito specializes in Mexican dishes, but it also has that River North vibe (which doesn’t work for everyone).

Starting with a cocktail is seldom wrong—and it’s a wonderful thing to do here. My friend loved her sangria while I went with the delightful Misty’s Sleeve (which includes Don Julio Blanco, ginger, hibiscus, orange, lime, green yucateco and hibiscus salt).

That drink set the scene for quite the experience. For an appetizer, I opted for the divine street quesadillas (with Mexican cheese, corn, poblano, zucchini, tomatillo salsa and crema fresca) while my dining companion couldn’t stop raving about her crispy chipotle shrimp, falling in love (or at least heavy like) with the jicama that’s part of the dish. Entrees then went in different directions for us: I loved my steak tacos (with avocado salsa), but my friend only liked her shrimp tacos, much preferring the beer-battered crustaceans in her

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When I’m identifying stray peni, it’s time to end yet another column. I’m kinda like that old show, Finder of Lost Loves—with Simon MacCorindale or Tony Franciosa or someone else who is either deceased or much older than moi. Anyway, that’s what I do. That and update BillyMasters.com—the site that’s filled many a gaping hole. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@Bil-lyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Bloomberg buys my vote. Until next time, remember: One man’s filth is another man’s bible.

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*The Dish/Gazette* September 30, 2020

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Real Men. Real Community.
SOSIN from page 72

no one else did. So, I went to work.
I was in Millennium Park the morning that the first LGBTQ couples in Chicago got civil unions. I sat in the dark at Center on Halsted at a memorial for transgender trailblazer Lois Bates days after she died. The night that the Defense of Marriage Act was overturned and people flooded the streets of Lakeview to celebrate, I was there to cover it. I was there on the day in 2013 when families filled the state capitol to watch marriage equality pass, and when Rep. Greg Harris stood up and tearfully told those families he didn’t have enough votes to pass the measure.

Somewhere in that time, I stopped wanting another job. I realized that being a trans person reporting on trans stories was powerful, rare even. Ten years later, it’s still powerful and rare. Windy City Times didn’t just give me a chance at a career. In humanizing the queer people whose stories I told, I learned to celebrate myself. I found a calling.

I sometimes wonder if anyone will remember the state-by-state battles that were waged for LGBTQ rights and the people who waged them. For years, I wondered why Tracy felt a need to cram so many names into every article, to tack on mentions of every last organization in attendance at every event. I knew she was keeping a historical record, but it didn’t occur to me why.

Now I know. It wasn’t just about who was there. It was about demonstrating for a future generation that the one before it had shown up, had fought for them. It was about being able to look back and see just how big that movement was, even in the moments it felt mundane.

This, to me, is the real legacy of Windy City Times. I can flip through pages of old papers and see thousands of names that pushed the needle toward equality. I have lived through times that people wrote about.

DISH from page 92

appetizer. If you have room after trying the apps and entrees, try the tres leches cake, which was delicious and more than moist. (Can a cake be wet?)
In addition, there are vegetable sides, including esquites/elotes, Brussels sprouts with chorizo (absolutely wonderful), and mac and cheese with poblano and Chihuahua cheese. And of course, there are various salsas and guacamoles, of differing heat levels.

Guests may pre-order meals and cocktail kits to go directly online, or with Uber Eats or Grubhub. However, if you choose to dine at the venue, be aware that conditions were extremely safe (including coded menus that you download to your phone), adhering to the city’s guidelines.

One note: I want to thank the people who have read Dish in the print issues of Windy City Times. Your feedback has meant so much.
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