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Lily Tomlin in the new film *Grandma*.
Photo by Glen Wilson, courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics



AT THE GATES

Scholar Gary Gates discusses the past, present and future of the LGBT movement.

Photo from The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law

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TOMLIN'S TURN

Actor Lily Tomlin talks 'Grandma,' 'Grace' and being grateful

BY RICHARD KNIGHT JR.

How delightful is it to see Lily Tomlin, one of the heroes of Our Community, having such a good year?

First, there has been her reteaming with Jane Fonda (her onscreen pal from the adored feminist comedy *9 to 5*) in the Netflix series *Grace and Frankie*, in which Tomlin brings her endearing character, an aging hippie, depth, pathos and plenty of laughs. The series has been a hit; Tomlin has been nominated for an Emmy and she's four episodes into shooting the second season.

Now, Tomlin stars in her first movie in decades, the lovely road comedy *Grandma* (opening Friday), in which she plays feisty septuagenarian Elle Reid, an esteemed lesbian poet and avowed feminist who is enlisted by her pregnant 18-year-old granddaughter (the lovely Julia Garner) to find the money so she can have an abortion. Elle doesn't hesitate and off the two go in her vintage car, encountering a host of real characters.

Writer-director Paul Weitz wrote the part specifically for

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SARA SULLIVAN

Longtime Roscoe's staffer dies.

Photo courtesy of Sullivan's family

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LAVERNE JOINS LILY

Actress Laverne Cox also stars in the new film *Grandma*, alongside legendary Lily Tomlin.

Photo by Glen Wilson, courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics

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ZAC EFRON

Featured in new film *We Are Your Friends*.

Zac Efron on the set of *We Are Your Friends*, in a photo from his Instagram account

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TOMLIN'S TURN
Actor Lily Tomlin talks 'Grandma,' 'Grace' and being grateful

AT THE GATES
Lily Tomlin discusses the past, present and future of her iconic character.

SARA SULLIVAN
Linger! Sullivan's latest film, 'The Last Days of the American Republic,' is a political thriller.

LAVERNE JOHNS LEXY
Laverne Cox talks about her role in 'Orange Is the New Black' and her activism.

ZAC EFRON
Efron talks about his role in 'Neighbors' and his directorial debut.

online exclusives at www.WindyCityTimes.com



MADE IN THE 'SHADE'

Gay funnyman Bryan Safi talks about Trump, political correctness and his own name.

Photo (left) by Ricky Middlesworth Photography

VEGGING OUT

EATING OUT



WITH A GIRL

Windy City Times is running the new food column Eating Out with a Girl—and it's all about vegetarianism.

Logo courtesy of Ripley Caine

FURMAN TRANSLATION



Bent Nights looks at shows by Coin and Ezra Furman (above).

Photo by Vern Hester

KEARNS NOTICE

Actor/activist Michael Kearns makes his thoughts known in a thought-provoking acceptance speech.

HIGH AND LO

WCT talks with Swedish musician Tove Lo.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Rosie O'Donnell, Telly Leung and Josh Hutcherson.

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'07 Nissan Sentra 2.0 ..Auto., Full Power, 1-Owner, White, P4905	\$7,795	'08 Legacy 2.5i ..Manual, Full Power, Black, 12749	\$8,995
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Gary Gates on the past, present and future LGBT movement

BY SARAH TOCE

Researching the demographic characteristics of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender population is no easy task, but it's a business Blachford-Cooper Distinguished Scholar & Williams Institute Research Director Gary J. Gates has perfected over time.

"I see much of my work as attempting to make visible LGBT populations that have historically not been visible in data sources often used to inform public policy [like the U.S. Census]," Gates said. "This can promote further academic research, but also can help advocates for LGBT rights by providing data to support policy arguments. For example, Justice Kennedy cited my research in his majority opinion in Obergefell as showing that same-sex couples were providing loving and nurturing homes to hundreds of thousands of children."

Gates earned his B.S. at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, his M.Div. at St. Vincent College and his Ph.D. at Carnegie Mellon University.

"My doctoral dissertation involved the first large demographic analyses of same-sex couples and their families using 1990 U.S. Census data, which was the first time that cohabiting same-sex couples [who were not roommates or siblings] could be identified," he said. "Over the years, much of my work focused on understanding the characteristics of same-sex couples and their families using subsequent Census Bureau data resources. I have also promoted inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity measures in other large data sources to allow for the study of LGBT populations beyond those in same-sex couples."

One noticeable trend seems to involve the social acceptance of LGBT people.

"As social acceptance for LGBT people continues to grow, the visible LGBT population has become much more diverse with greater age, socio-economic, geographic, and racial/ethnic diversity," Gates said. "This means that the visible LGBT population is becoming less demographically distinct from the general population. In the 1990s, the limited data available suggested that adults who identified as LGB [here really wasn't any data then on the transgender population] were more white, male, urban, and educated than the general population. Today, data suggests that those who identify as LGBT are roughly 50/50 male/female, are about as likely as the general population to be racial or ethnic minorities, are becoming less urban, and have education levels that are more similar to the general population."

As such, ongoing research is likely to reflect social inequality and discrimination directed toward the LGBT population.

"Studies documenting various types of discrimination and disparities in health and socioeconomic outcomes that occur as a result of social stigma and discrimination will be important," Gates said.

While it was once estimated that the LGBT population added up to 10 percent, new reports indicate the number is much less.

"The 10 percent figure was a political, not scientific, estimate," Gates said. "Kinsey was a brilliant scientist, but his work did not attempt to estimate the size of the LGBT population nor could it be appropriately used to do so. In the absence of data and research to accurately estimate the size of the LGBT population, LGBT activists in the post-Stonewall era needed an estimate that was large enough to matter but not large enough to threaten a general population that was not yet very comfortable with LGBT people. The 10 percent figure, borrowed



Gary Gates.

Photo from The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law

from a single sentence in a Kinsey study about sexual behavior in middle-aged men, fit the bill."

The actual estimate is closer to 4 percent.

"Today we know that, in the U.S. at least, about 4 percent of adults identify as LGBT," Gates said. "Interestingly, some studies suggest that about one in 10 acknowledge some same-sex sexual attractions, though a large portion of that are people who say they are 'mostly' attracted to different-sex partners."

Gates is the author of the Lesbian and Gay Atlas, the first detailed geographic analysis of same-sex couples in the U.S., using data from the 2000 Census.

"I like to say that it really put same-sex couples 'on the map.' It raised the visibility of Census data as a source for studying a population that had become of great policy interest with the rise of marriage equality as a key LGBT-rights issue," Gates said. "It also provided advocates with data showing that LGBT people were 'everywhere' in the U.S., making it harder for policy-makers to argue that LGBT people 'weren't in my constituency.'"

Gates recalled that one of his most surprising study results involved parenting among same-sex couples.

"Parenting among same-sex couples has been declining over the last decade," Gates said. "This is because a large portion of children being raised by same-sex couples are from prior different-sex relationships that occurred while a parent now in a same-sex relationship was relatively young (and probably not out as LGBT). With greater social acceptance, LGBT people, especially lesbians and gay men, are coming out earlier in life, probably having fewer different-sex relationships that produce children. So overall parenting rates have declined. However, adoption and fostering among same-

sex couples, which likely reflects more 'intentional' parenting of LGBT people, has increased substantially. Just not enough to account for decreases in parenting with different-sex partners."

One of the least surprising study results involved parenting as well.

"Same-sex couples are three times more likely than their different-sex counterparts to have adopted or foster children," Gates said.

Some might argue that since the fight for marriage equality has been won, we're done. Gates didn't seem to agree.

"I don't think we're done, but I think the struggle will get a little easier," he said.



Alison Bechdel.

Photo by Elena Seibert

NLGJA names hall of fame members

The National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA)—celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2015 and the 10th year of its LGBT Journalists Hall of Fame—has named this year's inductees: Randy Alfred, Alison Bechdel, Alan Bell, Lou Chibbaro Jr., Charles Kaiser and Armistead Maupin.

Alfred, one of NLGJA's founding board members, may be best known for his 1980 probe of the portrayal of San Francisco's gay community in CBS Reports' "Gay Power, Gay Politics." In 1978, he co-founded the S.F. Bay Times, the first community newspaper on the West Coast to be produced equally by lesbians and gay men.

Bechdel has been writing for and about the LGBT community since 1983, when she began producing and self-syndicating the comic strip Dykes to Watch Out For, which she produced for 25 years. She also has published two graphic memoirs: Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic in 2006 and Are You My Mother? A Comic Drama in 2012. She also won a Tony Award for the musical adaptation of Fun Home.

Bell has been part of LGBT journalism for almost 40 years. Beginning in 1977, when he founded Gaysweek, New York City's first mainstream lesbian and gay newspaper, and continuing with BLK and Blackfire, Bell has been a pioneer of LGBT journalism and activism, particularly on issues surrounding HIV/AIDS.

Chibbaro has been a prize-winning reporter for the nation's oldest LGBT news publication, The Washington Blade, first writing for it in 1976. In 2011, Chibbaro made journalism history as the first LGBT inductee into the Society of Professional Journalists' Washington Pro Chapter Hall of Fame.

An award-winning author and journalist, as well as an NLGJA founding board member and the second president of the New York

"Broad-based social and political resistance to LGBT equality will continue to decline. My hope is that greater levels of acceptance and support will mean the movement toward both social and formal legal equality will move a bit faster and barriers will become weaker."

Gates added that the next big obstacle for the LGBT community had more to do with faith.

"The religious exemption issues will be difficult and have the potential to ensconce the acceptability of LGBT discrimination into the law," he said.

Read more about Gary Gates and The Williams Institute via www.williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu.

chapter of the NLGJA, Kaiser has been writing since 1971, when he started with The New York Times while still an undergraduate at Columbia College.

Maupin is the author of nine best-selling novels, including six Tales of the City books.

The 2015 Hall of Fame inductees will be honored at the Awards Ceremony on Sept. 5 at the Coming Home National Convention & LGBT Media Summit and 25th-anniversary celebration in San Francisco.

Cuban LGBT activist to tour Chicago

Cuban LGBT activist Alberto Roque Guerra will visit Chicago with media appearances and a public meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 1, at 7 p.m. at Nookies Restaurant, 3334 N. Halsted St.

Roque Guerra is a widely published activist on gender theories, sexualities, biopolitics and bioethics as well as the biomedical, cultural and political aspects of trans identities. He has taught at the university level for six years. He is a founder and coordinator (2010-2012) of the group *Hombres por la Diversidad*, an educational and advocacy group related to the National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), where he has worked with Mariela Castro, daughter of President Raul Castro, in Havana.

His published books include *Sexual Diversity in Cuba: A Human Rights Overview*, *Biological Aspects of Transsexualism*, and *Sexual Hormones and Its Use in Transsexualism*.

The Gay Liberation Network and the Chicago ALBA Solidarity Committee are co-sponsoring the public event.

White House hires first trans official

The White House has hired its first transgender official.

National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) staff member Raffi Freedman-Gurspan has been appointed as an outreach and recruitment director for presidential personnel in the White House Office of Presidential Personnel.

Freedman-Gurspan previously served as NCTE's policy advisor for the Racial and Economic Justice Initiative.

In a statement, NCTE Executive Director Mara Keisling said, "'I am elated that Raffi Freedman-Gurspan will become the first openly transgender staff member at the White House. President Obama has long said he wants his Administration to look like the American people."

"That the first transgender appointee is a transgender woman of color is itself significant. And that the first White House transgender appointee is of a friend is inspiring to me and to countless others who have been touched by Raffi's advocacy."

Previously, Freedman-Gurspan served as legislative director to Massachusetts state Rep. Carl M. Sciortino Jr.; a course/research assistant for the Boston University Women's Studies Program; and LGBT liaison for the City of Somerville, Massachusetts. She graduated from St. Olaf College in 2009.

City immigrant reform plan unveiled

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

Determined to put a stamp on Chicago as the most immigrant-friendly city in the United States, 35th Ward Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa unveiled a comprehensive immigrant integration plan at an Aug. 18 City Hall press conference.

Rosa was surrounded in unity by 10th Ward Ald. Susan Sadlowski Garza and representatives from 14 members of a coalition of civil rights and advocacy organizations which—for the past two months—pooled resources and ideas in order to formulate each of the plan's six major policy proposals.

While calling for support on reform initiatives currently in discussion in City Council meeting rooms, the plan recommended expansion of legal services and the provision of pro bono or low-cost representation to low-income residents who must navigate through Chicago's immigration courts.

It also seeks to significantly broaden protections for undocumented immigrants under Chicago's "Welcoming Cities Ordinance." Passed in 2012, the ordinance prohibits Chicago Police Department (CPD) officers from detaining undocumented individuals or questioning them as to their legal status without an individual having a warrant or prior felony conviction or unless they demonstrate "a clear threat to public safety or national security."

However, the plan states that such exceptions are "arbitrary" and suggests that ordinance protections include all immigrants in order to create a "clearer separation between law enforcement and federal deportation pursuits."

The plan's proposal for a municipal identification card to be carried by all Chicago resi-



Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa at the press conference.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

dents is similar to a program launched by New York Mayor Bill de Blasio in January of 2015. New Yorkers over 14-years-old can apply for the card which provides access to libraries, cultural venues and events, the ability to open a bank account or enroll in city services and benefit programs regardless of immigrant status.

The plan stressed that any data received from applicants should be kept well out-of-reach of

immigration enforcement officers.

Proposals also included an increase in current language access for non-English speaking immigrants to encompass the CPD, Chicago Fire Department and Chicago Public Schools, a mini-grant or low-interest loan program to benefit low-income Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA) applicants as well as improved access to Chicago agencies for immigrants who are victims of crime or civil and labor rights abuses.

Ramirez-Rosa said that meetings are already underway with Mayor Rahm Emanuel's office and that each of the plan's proposals are currently being workshopped to determine factors such as cost of implementation. "When you stop [immigrants] from being deported that has the benefit for the city," he stated. "It keeps a family from seeking public assistance and ensures that the breadwinner remains in the city."

"I see thousands of people who need to be represented," Garza added. "I stand with this 100 percent."

Her sentiments were echoed by advocacy group leaders and representatives.

Rafael Robles and his brother Carlos were two teenage honor-roll students who received nationwide media attention after their 2010 arrest and the beginning of deportation proceedings against them. Rafael has since graduated from college and attended the press conference as a representative of the National Immigrant Justice Coalition (NIJC)—which fought successfully for their release.

"We are all sons and daughters of our wandering ancestors," Congregational Coordinator for the Chicago New Sanctuary Project Rev. Sarah Wohlleb said. "We should show the rest of the nation and indeed the rest of the world a welcoming spirit is the only way forward for a world-class city like Chicago."

For details of the immigrant integration plan, visit http://www.Aldermancarlosrosa.org/city-plan#_ftn1.

Ramirez-Rosa opens at Sanders rally

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa (35th Ward), on Aug. 17, was asked to address a rally for Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, DNAinfo reported.

Ramirez-Rosa, a member of the City Council's LGBT Caucus as well as one of the youngest alderman in the city's history, said before his speech, "I found out earlier today. It's exciting. I'm 'feeling the Bern' and I think thousands of Chicagoans across the city are 'feeling the Bern.'"

Ald. Susan Sadlowski Garza (10th Ward) and Cook County Commissioner (and former mayoral candidate) Jesus "Chuy" Garcia joined Ramirez-Rosa.

"For four decades, Sen. Bernie Sanders has been a mighty stream in American politics, fighting for the rising tide that will lift all boats, fighting for the American middle-class and fighting to save the American Dream," Ramirez-Rosa told the crowd of about 600 at the Park West Theater in Lincoln Park. "So in this time of record inequality, of corporate handouts and corporate tax loopholes, we need a President Sanders."

Ramirez-Rosa defeated incumbent Rey Colon in a landslide victory in February. He was the only challenger in the aldermanic race to beat an incumbent without a runoff. In June, he was one of three aldermen to vote against a \$1.1-billion borrowing plan ostensibly intended to restructure various debts incurred by the city. At the time, Ramirez-Rosa said the city had no concrete plan to raise money to pay the new debt.

DNAinfo's story is at <http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20150818/lincoln-park/bernie-sanders-calls-on-chicagos-youngest-alderman-fire-up-crowd>.



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A Wider Bridge opens Chicago office

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A Wider Bridge, a San Francisco-based organization sponsoring programming that forges connections between the American LGBT community and the LGBT community in Israel, is opening a Chicago office.

According to Midwest Manager of Programs and Operations Laurie Grauer, "There's been a tremendous growth in acceptance in various Jewish denominations, but there is still that questioning, 'Where do I belong?' Because Judaism is not just a religion—it's a philosophy. It's a way of life and how you interact with people."

A Wider Bridge, Grauer said, looks to help LGBT individuals consider that question especially in relationship to Israel. The organization engages speakers about Israel as well as organizes trips there each year.

"It's helping people know what's going on in Israel beyond the headlines, because you see so much about the conflict and which side you fall on. Especially for Jews, it's showing a way that they can connect to the Jewish community at large, as well as how the Israeli identity is [relevant]," Grauer added. "One of the great things about being Jewish—and you can say this about just about any cultural identity—is that there is a global connection."

A Wider Bridge has frequently had to answer charges that the Israeli government and Israel supporters use LGBT rights to "pinkwash" human rights violations, heavily marketing images of modernity in order to counter opposition from the American and European left, many of whom maintain that Israel perpetuates an ongoing persecution against the Palestinians. Organization officials maintain that A Wider Bridge is apolitical and seeks to unlock more engagement and dialogue about Israel.

According to Grauer, "Israel is incredibly progressive: You can be openly gay and serve in the army. Your partner can be recognized [for benefits] through your employer. All of these things happened through fights in the courts, and there's still a long way to go. There's also intense homophobia in sections, as you saw at the Jerusalem Pride attack."

On July 30, six parade-goers at the Jerusalem Pride Parade were stabbed; one of the victims ultimately died. Police arrested Yishai Shlissel, an ultra-Orthodox man who had only recently been released from prison after waging a similar attack in 2005. Shlissel was indicted for murder, among other charges, on Aug. 24.

"It was really hard for me to see that," Grauer said. "Half a world away, an ally was struck down for being an ally. Here's this man who wanted to do damage because he didn't agree with who they were. That was horrible. Even



Laurie Grauer.
Photo by Matt Simonette

though this man acted alone, the sentiment and the hate rhetoric that people tie into supposedly religious beliefs, are horrible. It was just announced by [Israeli Minister of Education] Naftali Bennett, that they've now doubled the funds to support [the youth activist organization] Israel Gay Youth. ...It's horrible that this girl lost her life and other had to live through these traumatic events, but because of it, at least really good conversations can come out of it now."

Unlike most of the Middle East, "Israel is the only nation that offers any comprehensive protection [to LGBT individuals] whatsoever," Grauer said. "There was one Arab youth we met, a Bedouin youth, who had to leave his community in the Golan Heights and live in Tel Aviv in order not to be harassed. Even though he's eligible for citizenship because the community's in the Golan Heights, he can't accept that citizenship because his family would disown him. ...The youth did say that he has experienced racism there. Israel, like every other country, is sadly very human."

Grauer emphasized that A Wider Bridge was committed to opening wider conversations about Israel, not pushing a particular political agenda. "It starts with going there, and seeing for yourself, and having conversations. When I went there [with A Wider Bridge in 2015], there was such a diverse spectrum of people, in terms of gender identity, sexual orientation, ages, affiliation and views on Israel. It says in our mission statement that we welcome all views. We just want people to learn more and get involved."

Manning was accused of brushing food onto the floor during meal time, disrespect of an officer, "medicine misuse" for possessing a tube of expired toothpaste and possessing prohibited reading material, including the Vanity Fair issue featuring Caitlyn Jenner as well as copies of The Advocate and Out magazines.

Two years ago, the Army private was sentenced to 35 years at the military prison at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas for leaking hundreds of thousands of top-secret military documents to the whistleblower news site WikiLeaks.

Cook County Dems slate 2016 candidates

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The slating committee of the Cook County Democratic Party met, on Aug. 18-19, to determine its election slate for the March 2016.

The slating process determines which candidates can enjoy the full backing—and thus financial and manpower resources—of the party. Candidates pitch their platforms to party officials, often receiving support from various members.

Only one member of the LGBT community presented credentials to the committee during the sessions held at the Erie Cafe, 536 W. Erie St. Attorney and activist Jacob Meister put in a bid to compete against Dorothy Brown for clerk of the Cook County Circuit Court. Brown has held the post since 2000.

Meister said that inefficiencies in the court system have resulted in squandered resources and people languishing in jail.

"The clerk of the court's office is very dysfunctional," Meister said. "It hasn't been modernized and needs to be brought into the 21st Century. I've been practicing law in the courts of Cook County for 25 years and I know how to get it fixed. I know where the problems are and I know how to solve those problems."

The party ultimately chose to give its endorsement to Brown, however. In a surprising move, it did not endorse a candidate for Cook County state's attorney. Incumbent Anita Alvarez is backed by powerful politicians such



Hillary Clinton.
Press photo

as House Speaker Michael Madigan, but challenger Kim Foxx has worked closely with Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, who will put her weight behind Foxx. Other challengers include Donna More, a former prosecutor who is currently a gaming attorney, and Cook County Commissioner (and former state Rep.) John Fritchey.

The party also did not endorse a candidate for U.S. Senate, a post being vied for by U.S. Rep. Tammy Duckworth and former Chicago Urban League CEO Andrea Zopp.

Other endorsements included Hillary Clinton for U.S. president; current Chicago City Clerk Susana Mendoza for state comptroller; and Karen Yarbrough for Cook County recorder of deeds.

Caitlyn Jenner.



Caitlyn Jenner to headline Nov. 12 Chicago House event

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Chicago House and Social Services Center announced, on Aug. 24, that Caitlyn Jenner will give the keynote address at Chicago House's 2015 Speaker Series luncheon on Nov. 12.

Jenner, a former Olympian and a winner of the 2015 Arthur Ashe Courage Award, made headlines earlier this year when she revealed details of her gender transition, first in a 20/20 interview with Diane Sawyer, then in an extensive Vanity Fair interview. She has also been the focus of a reality TV program, I Am Cait.

According to a statement, this year's luncheon "will be especially effective at highlighting the marginalization and suffering disproportionately experienced by transgender individuals. Offending the values of fairness and equity, transgender men and women face enormous intertwining barriers to stability due to discrimination, societal and family rejection, and pervasive hostility."

Chicago House CEO Rev. Stan Sloan noted, "Together, we stand at crossroads of progress in HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ civil equality, but that progress is not being felt by those who are homeless and low income in those communities. With the help of its supporters, Chicago House looks forward to the continued celebration of the lives of individuals and families that it serves with dignity and respect."

Previous speakers in the Chicago House series have included former President Bill Clinton, designer Kenneth Cole, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, actress Laverne Cox and screenwriter Dustin Lance Black.

The luncheon takes place Nov. 12 at Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave., from 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information, contact Tyler Lewis at 773-248-5200, ext. 304, or visit www.chicagohouse.org.

Chelsea Manning found guilty

Chelsea Manning was found guilty on four charges of breaking prison rules and will receive 21 days of restrictions on recreation as punishment, although she did not receive indefinite isolation.

After the hearing, she tweeted, "I was found guilty of all 4 charges @ today's board; I am receiving 21 days of restrictions on recreation--no gym, library or outdoors," according to Advocate.com.



@windycitytimes1

Roscoe's staffer Sara Sullivan dies

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Sara Sullivan, 52, Roscoe's volunteer staff leader and life-long Chicago resident, died Aug. 15 following a 27-year battle with Lupus.

Kevin Putz relayed Sullivan's death to Windy City Times.

Sullivan was active within the LGBT community for 20 years as a straight ally.

She was born May 21, 1963 in Chicago and graduated from St. Ignatius High School. Her father served as Mayor Richard J. Daley's press secretary for a number of years.

Sullivan is survived by her parents Sally and Frank Sullivan, sister Molly Sullivan (Hon. Thomas Murphy), brother Matt Sullivan, nephew Bo Turek, nieces Eleanor Turek and Clare Sullivan, goddaughter Riley Somers, friend Lucas Hawkins, many cousins and a large circle of friends.

She founded Chicago Bride magazine in the mid-1990s and was also the publications editor-in-chief. Additionally, she sold all the ads for the 48 issues of her dad's magazine, Avenue M, many from her hospital bed.

In 2001, Sullivan was featured in a Chicago

Tribune article alongside other individuals with Lupus.

"Sara possessed the most glorious personality any of us has ever encountered in this world, along with immense kindness and a natural leadership which drew everyone to her," said Frank Sullivan. "Arriving at a mainly boys school, she was immediately elected the first woman class president. In the business realm, she was a universally effective salesperson who drew everyone to her. She also had proven creative skills. Most of all, in her entire short life, she deserved the summation of the special award the nuns who taught her awarded her all those years ago—'To Sara Sullivan, For Spreading Joy.' That's what she always did—and will now do in heaven. From her mother, father, sister, brother, nieces and nephew. We love you Sara forever and we will constantly be lonely without your vibrant presence to enrich our daily lives."

Lucas Hawkins, long-time friend and editorial hairstylist, said, "Sara was on the board of the Lupus Foundation of Illinois and she took the job very seriously. She single-handedly put Lupus on the map and was always an advocate



Sara Sullivan.

Photo courtesy of Sullivan's family

to our community in so many ways that words won't be able to describe," said Jim Ludwig, long-time friend and owner and founder of Roscoe's. "She handled physical adversity with such grace and generosity always making you feel that she could accomplish anything. She appreciated and listened to so many HIV-positive people with optimism and helped them with their self image. Anyone she dealt with felt important and blessed to know her including myself.

"She was a major influence in building the Roscoe's brand and the image of Northalsted to always to be inclusive and welcoming to diverse elements beyond just the gay male majority that frequent Halsted Street. I was fortunate to collaborate with her on developing the community managed Space Park project for Triangle Neighbors Association, craft the look and feel of Northalsted Market Days and the Chicago Pride Parade for Roscoe's and reorienting the difficult collaborations of residential and commercial improvements in the city streetscape programs for Halsted Street in Boystown."

"Sara's courage and optimism radiated from her smile even when she faced the never ending complications of Lupus," said Putz, long-time friend and president/creative director of Toolbox, Inc. "She rightfully had much to complain about, but she rarely did. Sara and I would spend hours on the phone trading hospital war stories often with her trademark humorous spin. Her sense of humor was always the best antidote for feeling down. I'll forever miss her positive spirit and caring, selfless generosity."

A visitation will take place Saturday, Aug. 22, at noon, at Christ The King Parish 9235 S. Hamilton St., just prior to the 12:30 p.m. funeral.

In lieu of flowers, the family has asked that all donations go to the Lupus Society of Illinois (www.lupusil.org) via the organizations donation link or by check to 525 W. Monroe St. #900, Chicago, IL 60661.

PASSAGES

Mark Palermo

BY ROSS FORMAN

Mark Alan Palermo, a retired high school teacher and prominent member of the Presbyterian Church supporting the LGBT community, passed away Aug. 10 after a heart attack at his Chicago home. He was 62.

Palermo taught at Carver High School from 1974-80, then at Senn High School from 1980-94 as an ESL teacher. From 1994 until retiring in 2008, he was Senn's attendance coordinator/homeless liaison.

Palermo has for years spent summers in Chicago and the winters in Palm Springs, California.

"Everyone who has emailed or called has described him as loving, caring, gentle and patient—and that's how he was with his family, too," said Eileen Boehler, his older sister and lone sibling who lives in Rockford, Illinois. "He was the most wonderful listener. When anyone talked to him, he was really tuned in to you; there was nothing else that was on his mind [other] than what you were telling him.

"He really had a genuine interest in people."

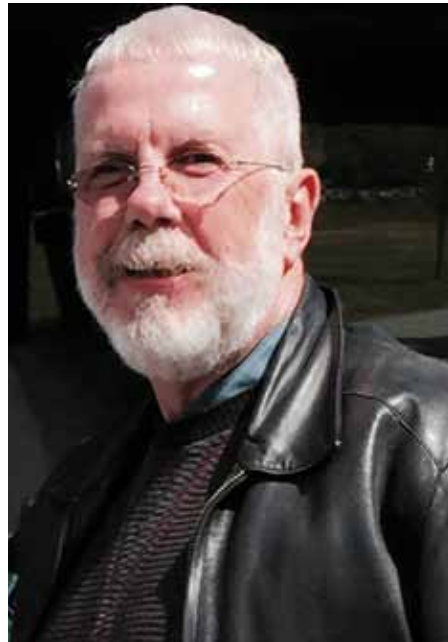
Palermo enjoyed the symphony, opera and plays as well as shows at Ravinia in suburban Highland Park. He also was a foodie. "I don't know of any restaurant in Chicago that he had not visited," Boehler said.

Palermo was a member of the Edgewater Historical Society and a walking club in Palm Springs.

"He spent a lot of time with his friends," Boehler said. "He was a real peaceful person to be with."

Jim Yeaman, who lived in Chicago for 21 years and now lives in Montgomery, Alabama, where he runs a bed & breakfast, met Palermo in 1990. "He was a very caring, giving person, who always had a smile on his face, a great laugh," Yeaman said. "He was very well respected at Senn High School."

Palermo attended the Stony Point Center gathering, Rock Stars and Prophets: Generations of Justice and Love, through the Presbyterian Church. Palermo was involved with PGC/PLGC; More Light Churches Network, and the eventual formation of More Light Presbyterians,



Mark Palermo.

Photo courtesy of That All May Freely Serve

according to They All May Freely Serve.

He was one of the original members and prophets of the movement in the Presbyterian Church (USA) for equality and full-welcoming for the LG BT community. "We are so grateful to him, as we are to all who walked with and since Mark in the gospel we share," said They All May Freely Serve.

Rev. Christine Vogel of Chicago posted online, "[I am] stunned and deeply saddened by the news of Mark's death. I first met him more than 20 years ago when I was doing a seminary placement at Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church. He was kind hearted and committed to the quest for justice for LGBTQ persons."

Palermo had dinner Aug. 8 at Chuck Williams' home in Chicago. Williams said he is "shocked to the core" to hear of Palermo's passing. Williams posted online that Palermo experienced "shortness of breath on Friday evening and was also winded coming up our back stairs from the patio. He was feeling better [on Aug. 9]."

A memorial service will be held in Rockford and his ashes will be scattered/interred in Cathedral City, California.

for the under-dog. I remember how driven she was when we traveled to Springfield to raise awareness and money for Lupus research. Sara believed everyone deserved a chance and most importantly a second chance at a great life.

"Sara and I would be out and about doing whatever and if a homeless person walked up to us, it was their lucky day, because she always slipped them 20 dollars. She never judged them or anyone else for that matter. She had the biggest heart out of everyone I've known and I'll miss her terribly."

"Sara brought such creativity and enthusiasm



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Together for 29 years, Hill and Jones leaving Chicago for Santa Fe

BY ROSS FORMAN

It started as SID, named for a rabbit who had been named after Sid Vicious from the movie Sid and Nancy, which was the favorite for Chris Hill and Stephen Jones.

Grohe Faucets had approached Hill to suggest he set up shop on his own so they could work with him directly. That was the simple formation of SID, which later became Strategies in Design.

Their design firm started in 1989.

And by January 1990, Hill and Jones were working together.

"With a large client like Grohe to pay the bills, SID was able to go after the clients it thought would be fun," Jones said. "We prepared a mailer introducing ourselves that would fit into our #10 envelopes, so we could save on printing and sent it to five potential clients."

Two responded right away: Berlin Nightclub and Hanig's Footwear.

Art Johnston, meanwhile, the co-owner of Sidetrack in Lake View, tacked their flyer to his wall to keep an eye on them. Two years later, after seeing what they had been doing for Berlin and ActUp, Sidetrack became a client, too.

"When Art called, we said we could not talk to [Sidetrack] until we confirmed with Berlin that it was OK. Turns out Art and [Sidetrack co-owner Jose] 'Pepe [Pena] had offered generous assistance to Tim Sullivan and Shirley Mooney when they opened Berlin, so they were willing to share us."

Hill and Jones remain, into 2015, an integral part of Sidetrack's success—and others, too, in the gay community.

"Sidetrack has been a 23-year series of highlights," Jones said. "Our first assignment was for the [Sidetrack] 10th Anniversary, [and mind you the bar celebrated its 33rd year in 2015], when the team of Budweiser Clydesdales visited Sidetrack and closed down North Halsted [Street]."

"Supporting the opening of Glass Bar [at Sidetrack], helping name the slushies, and working with [former general manager] Chuck Hyde on designing the crayon float and the race at float are also highlights, along with being Facebook friend No. 1 with thousands of posts and photos earning Sidetrack nearly 15,000 Facebook friends now."

Hill added that he is most proud of the annual summer shirt logos and the website that he learned to do at the behest of Team Sidetrack.

"Since before our 10th anniversary, Stephen Jones and Chris Hill have been the brilliant talents creating, developing [and] producing the graphic design which communicates what is Sidetrack," Johnston said. "We are most fortunate to have had Stephen and Chris on the same team with us since 1982. We will miss them terribly."

That's because Hill and Jones are leaving their Bucktown home and Chicago in late August. They are moving Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Hill does fine art sculptures, and has been featured at Ann Nathan Gallery in River North since 1996. But now his work is "becoming ever more in demand" in the Southwest, with his showing at Tansey Contemporary in Santa Fe.

Plus, the oldest florist in Santa Fe came on the market. Barton's Flowers, established in 1962, did not have a logo, or a sign, or a custom website. Hill and Jones stepped in.

In less than a month since Hill and Jones took control of Barton's, the city has been very welcoming, Jones said. "The mayor came out as gay during the election and was elected with a strong majority. Marriage equality came to New

Mexico before it came to Illinois, so Santa Fe has proven to be a popular wedding destination for the community."

Hill added, "The palpable 'art vibe' is really inspiring to us and to the florists working at the shop."

Their first week included 14 deliveries and by week three, with the addition of a logo, social media [presence], window and vehicle signs printed in Chicago by American Signs but Tomorrow and thirst for Wicker Park's Propaganda, Barton's was doing 15 deliveries a day, they said proudly.

"[I am] most proud of the fact that during this transition [the] friends we made in Chicago will continue to be part of our lives and SID:Santa Fe, since Hanig's and Berlin will continue to be clients in addition to special assignments from Sidetrack," Jones said.

Hill, 53, grew up in Boonville, Mississippi, and moved with a girlfriend to West Chicago in 1983 and lived in her sister's basement while he worked at Arby's. Hill eventually went to College of DuPage, studying design then graduated from the American Academy of Art where he later taught desktop publishing. Jones, 57, grew up in Clinton, Iowa, and Indianapolis, and graduated from Auburn University with a degree in interior architecture and then got his MBA from Indiana University.

The gay men on July 23 celebrated the 29th anniversary of the day they met on the Belmont Rocks—and their anniversary, though they did get married on March 15, 2014. It was Chris' first time finding the 'gay beach' and it was Stephen's first day back in Chicago after living in New York for a year. With two days before his new ad agency job was to start, Jones went to the Rocks to maintain his Fire Island tan, he said, and fortuitously put his towel on the rock next to Chris', he admitted.

"We met while Chris was still in college and [I] was an account supervisor at Euro RSCG Advertising after previously working at Leo Burnett. After graduation Chris worked at two small River North graphic design firms," Jones said.

This was, mind you, during the era when ActUp Chicago was making noise, Hill said.

Partnered and still new to the gay community, Hill and Jones' exposure to the gay community was the people they met at Berlin, Sidetrack and Christopher Street.

And when Hill learned that Al, a favorite doorman at Sidetrack, died from AIDS, he was motivated to find a place to work off his anger and heartbreak, he said.

Hill found his way into ACT UP.

"Some of our fondest [early] memories are using our Berlin connection to have the bar serve as host to the post-demonstration party for the 1990 National ActUp demonstration against the AMA," Hill said. "With the screens broadcasting the news coverage, the crowd gave heroes welcomes to those entering the bar after their releases from jail."

"Parties at Berlin with Pussy Tourette and the Del Rubio Triplets were Berlin highlights, too."

Jones added, "Just as SID was starting, Act Up was exploding with energy. Up until 1980 activist and cartoonist Danny Sotomayer was handling most [of] the propaganda, but as Danny became the energetic spokesman and 'soul' of Act Up Chicago, Chris became the propaganda committee, working with others on the posters, flyers and t-shirts of the organization. And with a FAX machine, copier and computers, [which were] much less common in 1990, SID became the de-facto office of Act Up, particularly in the lead-up to the April 1990 demos."

Jones later became the treasurer because



Stephen Jones (left) and Chris Hill.
Photo by Stephen Jones

he still had suits from his days working at ad agencies, so conducting business at the Oak Street Bank was easier for him.

Their memories aren't just old. In fact, they said that working with Sidetrack's Brad Balof, Bill Stadt and Bryan Smith on the Market Days booths and 2014's Halloween Sideshow awning and graphics and helping launch the successful OUTspoken! storytelling events also are highlights.

"The business has radically changed," Hill said. "The early 2000s were occupied with lots

of big budget real estate projects, like The Dakota and Banknote Place. Real estate has moved to nearly all digital. The number of publications have dropped and therefore the need for ads has dropped. Gay Chicago, Chicago Free Press, Time Out Chicago are gone and Night-spots merged with Windy City Times. Events are becoming more important at the bars and support for them is frequently digital with some marketing materials being generated by the promoters rather than the venue."

ASA forum looks at infertility treatment disparities

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Ann Bell (assistant professor of the department of sociology and criminal justice at the University of Delaware and author of *Misconception: Social Class and Infertility in America*) was one of the many people who presented findings at the American Sociological Association (ASA) annual meeting at the Hilton Chicago Aug. 23.

Bell's talk, "Medicalization's marginalization: The role of gender, class & sexuality in the medicalization" was one of four talks featured at the thematic session—No Sex, Just a Baby: Birth Without Sex—which focused on the medicalization of reproduction, specifically infertility.

The study was an outgrowth of Bell's book which focused on 41 women of low socioeconomic status and 17 women of high socioeconomic status and the ways in which both groups were treated by doctors in terms of their infertility status. In her findings, she discovered that the low socioeconomic status women were the focus of inaccurate stereotypes in which doctors assumed that infertility wasn't a problem for them.

Bell expanded her research to include men and same-sex couples with this new study. She interviewed 95 people—41 heterosexual women of low socioeconomic status, 30 men who were part of an infertile couple and 24 women in same-sex relationships. These individuals were accessing medical treatment in order to conceive a child.

"The people [in my study] are on the margins of our understandings of infertility, as it is generally viewed as a white, wealthy, heterosexual women's issue," said Bell. "Yet, half of all infertility cases can be attributed at least in part to men, poor women of color have slightly higher rates of impaired fecundity, and over seven percent of women in same-sex relationships are receiving fertility treatment."

Her findings indicated that there are infertility treatment disparity between opposite and same-sex couples whereby same-sex couples encounter more obstacles than opposite-sex couples.



Ann Bell.
Photo by Carrie Maxwell

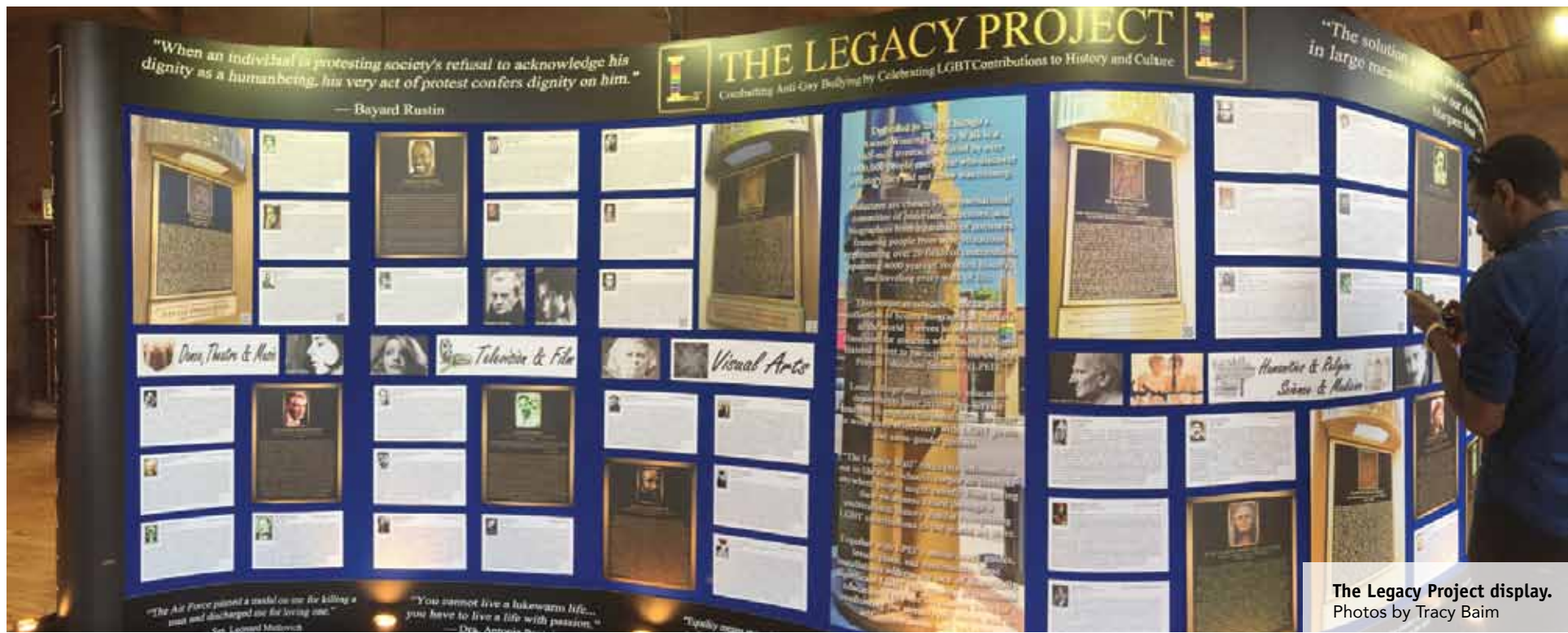
"The heteronormative underpinnings of medical and insurance institutions initially prevent lesbian women from accessing treatment to assist in pregnancy," said Bell. "For example, same-sex couples often must undergo psychological evaluations before being treated for infertility, a process that isn't normally required for opposite sex couples."

Bell explained that women in same-sex relationships oftentimes have negative interactions with physicians because the doctors frame their questions through a heteronormative lens. One of the participants, Bell noted, was told by her doctor that she should go home and have sex in order to have a baby. Another participant told Bell that her doctor only wanted her to try fertility treatments three times and if it didn't work then her partner could try the treatments. Both of these encounters, Bell explained, discounted the couple's identity as lesbians due to the types of questions and comments the doctors made to them.

"The heteronormative and standardization of medicalized infertility caused doctors to overlook and miscommunicate with same-sex couples receiving treatment, resulting in negative feelings or failed pursuit of a child," said Bell.

"It's important to remember that while research, including this study, often highlights the negative aspects of medicalization, the process also has its advantages," said Bell. "Medical treatment for infertility has allowed millions of individuals to attain parenthood. Moreover, although still unconsciously deterring and discouraging alternative family forms, medicalization has allowed same-sex couples and single individuals to become biological parents, a previously unattainable and unimaginable prospect."

A Q&A session followed the thematic session.



The Legacy Project display.
Photos by Tracy Baim

Legacy Project launches wall exhibition

BY TRACY BAIM

Several dozen supporters of The Legacy Project gathered at the Bridgeport Art Center Aug. 23 for the first showing of The Legacy Wall, a highly detailed traveling exhibition debuting to the public at the Illinois State Library in Springfield Oct. 1-28, which is national LGBT History Month.

The Legacy Project is a Chicago-based LGBT organization focused on preserving history through The Legacy Walk on Halsted and other outreach efforts. The Legacy Wall is an interactive exhibit featuring a diverse cross-section of LGBTs that will travel across the state for 15 months, after which it is expected to tour around the United States, highlighting the contributions of LGBT people to world history and culture.

Legacy Project Founder and Executive Director Victor Salvo was joined by others at the kick-off of The Legacy Wall. Ellen Meyers of Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White's office said her agency worked with the Illinois Department of Human Rights, the Illinois State Library and the Illinois Department of Tourism to bring the exhibit to Springfield.

Anthony Papini, head of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, spoke of the importance of The Legacy Project to students trying to learn about LGBT history, and teachers looking for resources. Mona Noriega, commissioner of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, said the project helps break down barriers and decrease crimes against the community.

Also addressing the crowd were Legacy Board President Ralph Kennedy and Legacy Development Director Christopher Barrett Politan.



Victor Salvo.



Owen Keehnen and Lori Cannon.



Anthony Papini, head of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance.



Ellen Meyers of Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White's office.

Hall of Fame to induct 11 people, one group and two allies

Eleven individuals, one organization and two allies will be inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame, the country's only known government-sponsored hall of fame that honors members of the LGBT communities, on Tuesday, Nov. 10.

The Hall of Fame's annual induction ceremony will take place 5:30-7 p.m. at the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St. The reception will begin at 5:30 p.m., and the program is scheduled for 6 p.m. The event will be free and open to the public.

The inductees were selected by a committee composed of former inductees, which reviewed nominations submitted by members of the public. The names were released by Friends of the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame, a section 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Inductees fall into one of three categories: "individual," "organization," or "friend of the community." Nominees represent all of Chicago's sexual-minority communities—including LGBT Chicagoans, past, present, living and dead—as well as those who have supported or assisted them.

Those honored in 2015 are:

"Individual" Category

—Jean Albright, 63, retired Air Force master sergeant, for her work to increase awareness of LGBT veterans and military members and to overturn the military's ban on LGBT service.

—Fred Eychaner, 70, chairman of Newsweb Corporation, President of Alhambra Founda-

tion, for his philanthropy, his public service, and his support of Chicago's LGBT communities.

—Emmanuel Garcia, 33, journalist, youth mentor and community leader, for his tireless advocacy and his pivotal role in organizing Chicago's Latina and Latino LGBT communities.

—Stanley Jencyk, 71, for his dedication and perseverance to establish a monument to LGBT veterans and service members in the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.

—Phoenix Matthews, Ph.D., 48, associate professor and clinical psychologist (University of Illinois at Chicago), for more than 20 years of research on determinants of cancer health-disparities, with a focus on African-American and LGBT populations.

—Gail Morse, 57, attorney, for helping to secure civil rights for Chicago's LGBT communities through her professional, community and political leadership.

—Michael O'Connor, 58, for his long-term contributions to the quality of life of Chicago's LGBT communities, specifically in public policy, communications, social services, and health care.

—Barbara Smith (1946-2015), founding board member of Affinity Community Services, for her leadership, managing Affinity's finances for 12 of its 20 years, founding its Forty Plus and Trailblazers groups, and for her advocacy role in the mentorship and support of black lesbians throughout the broader community.

—Lauren Verdich, 69, for her key efforts in the establishment of Open Hand Chicago and

And the inductees are ...

Pictured below are four of this year's inductees for Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame.



Emmanuel Garcia.
Photo by Vernon Hester



L: Fred Eychaner. R: Barbara Smith.
Left photo by Tracy Baim



Jean Albright.
Photo by Hal Baim

her leadership in Chicago's LGBT business community and in progressive and women's politics.

"Organization" Category

—Lesbian and Gay Police Association-Gay Officers Action League, founded to provide support for its members and to promote understanding between the police and the LGBT communities; its membership now includes firefighters, public safety officers, and associate members.

"Friend of the Community" Category

—Jan Schakowsky, 71, U.S. Representative, for being a leading advocate on issues of importance to the LGBT communities, focused on creating change that brings about equality and justice.

—Camilla B. Taylor, 44, attorney, for her successful prosecution of Lambda Legal's marriage equality lawsuit in Iowa and her further legal work on behalf of the LGBT communities.

The Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame was established in 1991 under the auspices of what was then the Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on Gay and Lesbian (later, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Issues, a municipal government agency. At the end of 2011, the advisory council ceased to exist after a commission restructuring, and the Friends organization succeeded it as caretaker of the Hall of Fame in partnership with city government.

Beginning with the first ceremony in 1991, former Mayor Richard M. Daley personally participated in the Hall of Fame's induction ceremonies. Current Mayor Rahm Emanuel has done the same.



From Trikone-Chicago's April 2015 Jai Ho! party at Big Chicks. Photo by Kirk Williamson



Trikone-Chicago: A safe haven for LGBTQ South Asians

BY BEN SANDERS

Trikone-Chicago—a not-for-profit organization for queer, trans and gender non-conforming individuals of South Asian/Desi heritage and their families, friends, allies and community—takes pride in filling a void in the Second City. After Sangat/Chicago and Khuli Zaban had both dissolved by the late 2000s, there was the lack of a stable organization for South Asian men and women in Chicago who identified along the LGBTQ spectrum.

But there's Trikone-Chicago, now in its eighth year.

For president Sal Salam, secretary Jay Nair and general member Lakshmi Sundaresan, Trikone-Chicago provides more than just a community of individuals with similar experiences; it is a source of education, they said, adding that it gives them an opportunity to be active in larger social movements and to be involved in fun events as well.

The most popular events that Trikone-Chicago hold are the Bollywood dance parties (or, "Jai Hos") at Big Chicks Bar in Uptown. These parties, held several times a year, give people a chance to let loose and dance to familiar tunes.

But perhaps its greatest purpose is one that's easy to miss from an outsider's perspective.

Salam, Nair and Sundaresan all said that being queer isn't exactly accepted by South Asian culture. In fact, not only are there anti-homosexuality laws in almost every South Asian country but, according to Sundaresan, people might be "cast out entirely" and "killed" by their community for being out.

Members of Trikone-Chicago, many of whom are immigrants, are fully aware of this, which can make the coming-out process even more difficult for them, even within the United States.

"Being in a space where you're not the token queer person or the token Brown person, dancing away, having fun, letting your hair down and being visible and asserting that visibility—that's the function of something like Jai

Ho," Salam said.

And while Jai Hos, and other socialized events, were the original backbone of Trikone-Chicago, Nair—an openly gay male who's been involved since 2010—has seen it progress from strictly a social group to one that has a structured purpose.

"From just doing potlucks and Bollywood dance nights and performance nights, we've advanced to other things like supporting other queer and social justice causes," he said.

Its actions speak for themselves: Trikone-Chicago had 20 or so members marching at this year's Pride Parade, participated in the Dyke March, and co-sponsored the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA) National Conference with Invisible to Invisible (i2i) earlier this month.

This shift in focus has even changed the types of conversations they're having. During potluck dinners and other gatherings, the members are now discussing things like safer sex practices, and issues related to immigration, the trans community, social justice movements, etc.

As far as what the future holds, each person emphasized something different. Sundaresan—a current medical student at Rush University Medical Center who's been involved with Trikone-Chicago for around eight months—would like the organization to take on an even more active role in things related to social justice.

"I hope that there's at least a small group of people who are committed to organizing and taking actionable steps," Sundaresan said. "In the past it has been tricky to get people to show up to things that might give them political visibility when it comes to issues that extend beyond their gender and sexuality."

Nair spoke of his desire to do more outreach campaigns in order to build membership and visibility.

"Coming out of this [NQAPIA] conference we feel that we'll be able to galvanize support," with the help from other South Asian orga-



Trikone-Chicago president Sam Salam. Photo from Salam

nizations, he said. "There are a lot of people out there who are going through their sexual and gender identity issue, and they still do not know that there's a support structure available [for them]."

Lastly, Salam, who identifies as queer non-binary, would enjoy a more active membership, where people go out of their way to take on leadership roles, in order for Trikone-Chicago to reach its potential of "growth, education and empowerment within the South Asian/queer community."

Here's what they can agree on, though: Trikone-Chicago is a place to develop lifelong friendships; a place where they're accepted for who they are—and a place they can call home.

Visit TrikoneChicago.org.

Designer Dolce apologizes

Italian fashion designer Domenico Dolce of Dolce & Gabbana has apologized for controversial comments he made opposing gay adoption and in-vitro fertilization, The Huffington Post reported.

"I've done some soul-searching," Dolce told Vogue. "I've talked to Stefano a lot about this. I realized my words were inappropriate, and I apologize." The designers, who are both openly gay, came under fire in March when Dolce told Italian magazine Panorama "we oppose gay adoptions" and "the only family is the traditional one."

The original comments immediately caused a backlash. Singer Elton John posted on Instagram, "Your archaic thinking is out of step with the times, just like your fashions. I shall never wear Dolce and Gabbana ever again. #BoycottDolceGabbana"

Celebrity chef Art Smith, who has adopted four children with husband Jesus Salgueiro, hosted a pro-family benefit in Chicago in March as a response. At the time, he told Windy City Times, "Children come in our lives in all different ways. Children are loved, families are loved. Let's not define 'family'—let's just love family."

Wis., Ind. schools make Campus Pride list

Campus Pride has released its list of the top 25 LGBTQ-friendly colleges and universities in the United States.

For seven years, the listing has highlighted the most LGBTQ-inclusive colleges and universities when it comes to policy, program and practice in higher education. This is the first year Campus Pride has released a Top 25 list based on the higher LGBTQ benchmarks recently released on the updated version of the Campus Pride Index.

No Illinois school made the list. However, Indiana University-Bloomington and the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay are listed. Some of the others on the list include Tufts University, Williams College, Southern Oregon University, Cornell University, The Ohio State University and the University of Louisville.

Visit CampusPrideIndex.org.

UChicago announces LGBT research study

The University of Chicago has announced "Your Voice! Your Health!," a new research study focusing on the health-care experiences of LGBT people of color.

Marshall Chin, MD, MPH, is the principal investigator.

Those interested in learning more about the project are invited to attend one of four community launch events across the city, all of which are open to the public:

—Tuesday, Sept. 1, 6-7:30 p.m., South Side Help Center, 10420 S. Halsted St.; and

—Wed., Sept. 2, 10 a.m.–12 p.m., Esperanza Health Centers, 2001 S. California Ave.

Any community organizations or health-care centers that wish to learn more about participating in the study should call 773-442-2591 or email ResearchStudy@mortengroup.com.



in the LIFE

Kevin Lee

TEXT BY ROSS FORMAN
PHOTOS FROM LEE

- **Age**
"30, but eternally 22."
- **Neighborhood**
"On the North Side"
- **Orientation**
Gay
- **Background**
"I was born in Utah, but I'm not Mormon. Was raised in Charleston, South Carolina, but I'm not racist. I have lived in Chicago for 10 years."
- **Favorite TV show**
RuPaul's Drag Race
- **Favorite pizza toppings**
"Supreme ... load it up."
- **Hobbies**
Cooking, working out and studying news/current events.
- **Preferred drink at a bar**
"A free one."
- **Little-known fact**
"I love to read. A good book and some sun at the lakefront is a perfect day."

Kevin Lee has an overflowing business card. Well, he would.

He is a personal trainer, dating back to 2008—and still has the first receipt transaction for his training services. "I'm very proud of my training persona and take it very seriously. I'm a professional and love helping people reach their goals," he said.

Lee also is a gay entertainer, who started as an Internet personality, turned club performer, turned Titan Men Media Entertainer.

"I started off doing go-go dancing in the city," he said. "I wanted to travel though and hit up the clubs [outside of Chicago]. I used my marketing skills and campaigned for a tour, and it worked."

He then started working with Titan Men, so he could travel even more—and also earn more money. He has two scenes with Titan, both Grabby Award-nominated.

"I started out in 2010 making a name for myself, [and] 2012 is when things started to take off," he said.



Lee's sidekick on the entertainment side is Lamby—a stuffed animal.

"Lamby says things that I won't say," Lee said with a smile. "I'm very polite and down to earth. Lamby, on the other hand, holds nothing back, but he is so cute that you can't help but to laugh."

Lee said working in the entertainment industry "is a fantasy; it's not real."

"When I saw the movie 'In Old Chicago' back in 2010, I wanted to be just like the stage woman. I wanted to be adored and in the light," he said. "Most club entertainers do what they do to escape reality, to feel a fantasy and to give the customers a few hours of entertainment so they can escape their own reality."

Lee said he aspires to have his own personal training studio one day.

"I've done many charity events, fundraisers, etc.," for the gay community, he said. "If I can help, I will be there. Outside the gay community, I've raised money for the Lincoln

Park Zoo. It's the last free zoo in North America, and to know that I can help schools take kids there for educational field trips is awesome."

Lee has, admittedly, battled with substance abuse—and offered thanks to the South Suburban Council for its aid.

"I have been fortunate recently to be able to get help for it. The rehabs I have been to have been really great and it's helped tremendously," he said.

LGBT RIVIA

This lesbian filmmaker is known for such works as **Living With Pride: Ruth C. Ellis @ 100** and **Sisters in Cinema**, a look at African-American women filmmakers.

Answer on page 30

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viewpoints



**Lee
LYNCH**

THE AMAZON TRAIL Dykey Dorothy and friends

Near where I live, closeted lesbians built and installed a bench on a mostly hidden concrete path between grassy sand dunes, out of sight of any casual observer. The bench was created in the mid 1990s to pay respect to members of the group who had died.

These women did not dare to name their dead. Even the full name of their sisterhood—a name that included the word lesbian—was too terrifying to engrave. Yet, I can guarantee that every group member read Rubyfruit Jungle and for the hours they spent with it they were unafraid. Because of such books, they dared to gather. They learned to value, in a way society did not, lesbian lives.

Where did this book come from? Was it pulp fiction? Was it some straight guy's fantasy? No. It was a crossover book before there were lesbian crossover books, a lesbian classic before such a concept existed, and it was written by a radical lesbian feminist who was one of the founders, in 1971, of The Furies Collective of Washington, D.C., and who wrote for that newsletter and for "The Ladder."

Rubyfruit Jungle helped us to rise from the primordial patriarchal ooze of fear, humiliation and silence. Audre Lorde might have been speaking of this author with her oft quoted words, "Your silence will not protect you."

This year, I had the honor of presenting the Golden Crown Literary Society (GCLS) Lee Lynch Classic Award to Rita Mae Brown for her 1973 novel Rubyfruit Jungle.

Published initially in 1973 by the early feminist press Daughters Inc., which was founded by novelists June Arnold and Bertha Harris and by feminist political theorist Charlotte Bunch, this was a novel of its time, a slap in the face of the heterosexist world and a daring gift to lesbians. It—along with *Desert of the Heart* (1964), and *Patience and Sarah* (1969)—was a voice of lesbian liberation, parting the curtains we hid behind with humor and insight. From it, lesbians learned they might be alone, but they weren't the only lesbians on earth. Readers felt buoyed, felt human for a few hours or days. It changed lives and, still very much in print, continues to do so to this day.

Author JD Glass, in *AfterEllen*, quoted from Rita Mae Brown's acceptance speech: "You're alive—you fight. You keep fighting." Glass reported that Brown, "...reminded us all to continue to speak our truths, to tell our stories and that if we are 'defined by our oppression,' then we are still oppressed."

The award was presented on a historic night for lesbian fiction. As *advocate.com* editors wrote, "The Golden Crown Literary Society's 11th annual literary awards in New Orleans brought together lesbian fiction pioneers Rita Mae Brown, Lee Lynch, and Dorothy Allison, all sharing a stage for the first time."

Author Karin Kallmaker presented Joan Nestle, in absentia, with the GCLS Trailblazer award, in recognition of her writings including *Restricted Country* and *Persistent Desire* and her activism for lesbians.

Dorothy Allison—best-selling author of *Trash and Bastard* and *Out of Carolina*—gave an impassioned and profoundly moving keynote address. She said, of a visit to the original Lesbian Herstory Archives, which originated in Joan Nestle and Deb Edel's NYC apartment, "Oh children, I

wish you could have seen that living room." Her words brought the audience to tears.

The Golden Crown Literary Society (golden-crown.org), founded in 2004, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, all-volunteer organization whose mission is education, promotion and recognition of lesbian literature. Known for its well-attended annual conference and its programs, including The Academy (for emerging lesbian



Dorothy Allison.
Photo by Watty Boss

writers), the Cate Culpepper Mentoring Program, and its awards—The Goldies—the GCLS brings authors, readers and publishers together for the betterment of lesbian literature.

GCLS is for lesbians and like-minded women. Lesbian members run it, members do the

teaching and mentoring, members staple and greet and administer and judge books for the Goldies. It is one of those incredible institutions created out of sore need by a few dykes—writer Lori Lake, publisher Cathy Bryerose and promoter Kathy Smith—with stars in their eyes and ambition for their people. The annual conference draws lesbians from around the world, the U.S. and Canada.

Seeing the other writers and readers is like going to a huge family reunion. There is never enough time to spend with the women we want to see and want to meet. Yet meetups happen without planning and are some of the best experiences. My sweetheart and I bumped into author Catherine Friend the first morning we were there and we took off on the typical NOLA adventure: Cafe du Monde beignets, a trolley ride and the French Market for Loretta's Pralines.

One evening we happened across Donna McBride, co-founder of Naiad Press, who I hadn't see in many years. We strolled through the underground mall to the Mississippi River, catching up. Sandy Thornton, organizer of the Jewel Book Club, a large lesbian readers group in Dallas, Texas, invited us to accompany her while she picked up Dorothy Allison at the airport. I'll always remember a smiling dykey Dorothy slowly descending that escalator. Lesbian royalty.

I could go on and on with my highlights, but would rather make more highlights with lesbian book lovers and writers in Alexandria, Virginia next year.

Lee Lynch's most recent book, *An American Queer*, a collection of "The Amazon Trail" columns, was presented with the 2015 Golden Crown Literary Society Award in Anthology/Collection Creative Non Fiction. This, and her award-winning fiction, including *The Raid*, *The Swashbuckler*, and *Beggar of Love*, can be found at <http://www.boldstrokesbooks.com/Author-Lee-Lynch.html>.

Photo of Lynch by Sue Hardesty
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Letters to the editor

Make some noise

Dear Editor:

After reviewing numerous recent articles concentrated on many ongoing controversies concerning purported LGBTQ issues, I thought I'd seek clarity on several unsettling observations and questions concerning what constitutes an importance to broader LGBTQ organizations.

Firstly, I continue to wonder in utter amazement at the deafening silence among organizational leadership within the broader LGBTQ organizations, especially the LGBT organizations with mission statements that purport to advance "equal treatment and social justice through education, advocacy and protection of the rights of the LGBT community?"

Where are the public outcry and the numerous protests that should be taking place concerning advancing equal treatment and social justice, advocacy and protection of the rights of the LGBTQ youth of color—mostly African-American individuals who are routinely stopped and frisked by Chicago police any time more than two of them are gathered anywhere on Halsted or Broadway or Belmont avenue, from the lake to the Belmont Red Line "L" train stop! Where are the broader LGBTQ organizational visibility and support around the civil-rights violations that adversely affect these LGBTQ Chicagoans?

Where are the legions of self-appointed and sometimes anointed (but usually selected) LGBTQ organizational leaders who once gathered busloads of queens from bars in Boystown to demand marriage equality for all Illinoisans! They screamed and shouted in front of any television camera, newspaper reporter, television or radio personality that would give them on-air or print visibility! Why isn't there more public outrage by the broader LGBTQ organizations that aim to protect LGBTQs?

Why is it that, 30 years ago, my friends and I couldn't gather on a public sidewalk, either, on what was known commonly known as the gay strip? On the Broadway strip, Black gay men couldn't gain entrance into a gay bar unless they presented every kind of I.D., including their "grandmother's footprint" as evidence of their age. Now, 30 years later, the same kind of discrimination exists! It's an interesting old adage that the way many things change, they actually stay the same—this problem still exists, this time on Halsted Street!

Oh, by the way, am I expected to believe that it's still a coincidence, 30 years later, that LGBTQ youth of color aren't being targeted by Chicago police? Where's the LGBTQ organizational outcry from LGBTQ organizational leadership that screamed and jumped up and down in front of cameras concerning marriage equality?

Where's the public outrage and public protest from most of the broader LGBTQ leadership? Why is there the deafening silence?

Sincerely
Michael O'Connor

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Firefly's roasted chicken.



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Amanda Lepore at Berlin.



'Drift' away

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Elyse Dawson is featured in the production *Patchwork Drifter*.

Photo by Steve Townshend

SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Fringe options

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The Chicago Fringe Festival is back for its sixth season, returning again to the Jefferson Park neighborhood at five different venues. This time the Fringe features nearly 50 companies presenting 198 performances from Thursday, Sept. 2, to Sunday, Sept. 13. As in past years, all the shows selected were by lottery and a few are of likely interest to LGBTQ audiences.

Two autobiographical works in particular are written by first-time Fringe visitors who offer representation for the "B" and "T" in LGBTQ acronym. Queer Heartache is a slam poetry show by Asian American Hawaiian transgender poet Kit Yan, while Turn That Thing Around: A Manic Narrator's Longest Ride is based upon bisexual playwright Aaron Harris Woodstein of Lincolnshire, Illinois, and his own mental health episode as a college freshman stressing out over the unknown results of an HIV test.

"It is the first time I'm doing a solo piece of theater," said Brooklyn-based Yan, who took inspiration from a Boston lecture by trans* activist Gunner Scott to create theatrical material about his own life. "(Scott) was the most formative voice in my mind in terms of somebody who wasn't talking about art, but he was talking about trans* work and trans* justice. He put the idea in my mind that it's important to keep telling the story of what you want to see out in the world."

In the case of slam poet Yan, he takes audiences on a time-hopping autobiographical journey which includes stories of growing up in Hawaii, going to college in Boston and notions of family and queer identity.

"Some of the pieces will be about the medical industrial complex in terms of medical care and funding, testosterone and the emergency room and things that happen in there," Yan said. But another big focus in Queer Heartache deals with Yan's family.

"In Asian-American communities, there's a whole different set of values and issues in terms of coming out to your family and talking about queer identity with your parents," said Yan, noting that there's not only a communication barrier between his queer life and his more heteronormative family, but a literal language barrier due to his mother being more comfortable speaking in Cantonese rather than English.

Family misunderstandings also play a prominent part in Aaron Harris Woodstein's non-linear drama Turn That Thing Around: A Manic Narrator's Longest Ride. As someone diagnosed

with bipolar disorder, Woodstein would have liked his parents to pick up on clues about his erratic behavior before he left to work as a New Hampshire summer camp counselor a few years ago.

"The idea behind the play is that it should have stopped before it started. The play is primarily talking about my mental health and how the people in the main character's life didn't notice something was wrong before it was too late," Woodstein said. "There's a lot of things in this play that a lot of people don't think about: being bipolar and bisexual if you've had an HIV scare or relationship problems."

Kit Yan's Queer Heartache plays 10 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 3; 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 5; 4 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 6; 8:30 p.m. Monday,

Sept. 7; 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 11 and 12 and 1 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 13 at the Congregational Church of Jefferson Park Meeting Hall, 5320 W. Giddings St.

Turn That Thing Around: A Manic Narrator's Longest Ride plays 8:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 11; 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12 and 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 13 at the Congregational Church of Jefferson Park Meeting Hall, 5320 W. Giddings St.

Other shows of possible LGBTQ interest include:

Judah Leblang's One Man's Journey Through The Middle Ages, which looks at bad dates and unrequited love after the age of 40. It's performed 8:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 4; 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 5 and 10 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 6 at Windy City Music Theatre, 5340 W. Lawrence Ave.

Sit My Ass Down Comedy presents a "sexistential" comedy called Occupy Your Vagina! to empower women to take personal responsibility for their own sexual satisfaction at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 6; 7 p.m. Thursday and Sunday,

Sept. 10 and 13 at Windy City Music Theatre, 5340 W. Lawrence Ave.

The Wulfden presents Zipped & Pelted which tells the story of "Furries" at the 2014 Midwest Furfest in Rosemont when a mysterious chlorine gas leak led to the hospitalization of 19 guests. It plays 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 5; 8:30 p.m. Monday and Friday, Sept. 7 and 11; 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12 and 7 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 13 at the Congregational Church of Jefferson Park Gymnasium, 5320 W. Giddings St.

The Chicago Fringe Festival requires a one-time button purchase of \$5 with all subsequent individual performances at \$10. Passes with a discounted ticket price are available when attending multiple performances: four-show pass is \$36, ten-show pass is \$80 and an unlimited pass is \$175. Each venue will have a box office for day-of purchase and the box office for the entire festival is located at Fringe Central at Fischman's Liquors, 4780 N. Milwaukee Ave. For a full schedule of shows and to buy tickets in advance, visit ChicagoFringe.org.



Kit Yan.
Photo by Sydney Angel

THEATER REVIEW

Things You Shouldn't Say Past Midnight

Playwright: Peter Ackerman

At: Windy City Playhouse,

3014 W. Irving Park Road

Tickets: 773-891-8985 or

www.windycityplayhouse.com; \$25-\$60

Runs through Oct. 4

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Peter Ackerman's 1999 New York sex comedy *Things You Shouldn't Say Past Midnight*, now being revived in a strongly acted production at the swanky Windy City Playhouse, certainly begins with a great premise. How do you react when your lover says something totally offensive to your core while also sexually climaxing?

Specifically, the comedy takes off when cookbook editor Nancy (Emily Tate) ecstatically calls her med-school lover Ben (Peter Meadows) a "hook-nose Jew" mid-orgasm. Understandably, Ben is thrown for a loop and the ensuing argument he has with Nancy is an uncomfortable, yet hilarious back-and-forth sparring match played to the hilt by Meadows and Tate.

Unfortunately, things lose a lot of steam once Emily leaves in a huff and the scene shifts to the bedroom of her friend, Grace (Patrese McClain), and her hitman acquaintance, Gene (Shane Kenyon). Ackerman creates a scenario where Gene wants to be seen as more than a



Robert Spencer and Chris Sheard in *Things You Shouldn't Say Past Midnight*.

Photo by Michael Brosilow

boy toy, while Grace just wants sex.

Although McClain and Kenyon do their best to make the scene work (and garner a lot of

laughs in the process), they're ultimately let down by Ackerman's writing which feels very generalized in terms of switched heterosexual

desire dynamics. It also distracts too long away from the initial conflict.

Thankfully, things pick up when Nancy barges into Grace's apartment seeking advice, which leads to an early-morning call to Gene's gay younger brother analyst, Mark (Chris Sheard), who has a predilection for much-older men like Mr. Abramson (Robert Spencer). Soon all three couples begin debating Nancy's anti-Semitic outburst and her insecurities that Ben might also be secretly gay.

As staged by director William Brown, the space of the Windy City Playhouse is smartly played along a diagonal as audiences bounce their heads back and forth following each interjection—particularly when the second-act three-way phone call hilariously entangles all the characters at 3 a.m. in the morning. Even if the characterizations are barely skin-deep, Brown and his ensemble certainly scratch out plenty of laughs along the way.

Take, for instance, the character of Mr. Abramson, whose only purpose appears to let Ackerman humorously inject in some old-Jew shtick. But given that, Spencer works wonders with such paltry material with great comic delivery, playing well off of Sheard whose main duty appears to be looking well-toned in his underwear.

Given the inherent weaknesses in the writing of *Things You Shouldn't Say Past Midnight*, one wonders why the Windy City Playhouse chose Ackerman's sex comedy for its initial season. But when you see the great talents assembled to bring the play to life, the Windy City Playhouse gets a pass for skillfully serving up some silly sexual fun at the end of summer.

THEATER REVIEW

Patchwork Drifter

Playwright: Jennifer L. Mickelson

At: Babes With Blades Theatre

Company at City Lit in Edgewater

Presbyterian Church,

1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.

Tickets: 773-904-0391;

www.babeswithblades.org; \$22

Runs through: Sept. 19

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Wyoming granted women the right to vote and to serve as court officers more than 50 years before the 19th Amendment was ratified, so it's

appropriate that Jennifer L. Mickelson's Sergio Leone-tinged yarn of how the west was won should highlight the historical contributions of enterprising females during the years before the opening of travel routes across the Rocky Mountains brought with them the "civilizing" influences of sexism, bigotry and social injustice.

The widow Harriet Cooper and two daughters she guards closely are storekeepers in a remote border outpost, where the business left them by Harriett's late husband serves the needs of settlers bound for California, rendering his surviving kin comfortable as they await the opportunities for expansion presented by the coming of the Union Pacific railroad. When a lone vagabond appears at the door one day, Harriet senses a kindred spirit in the orphaned Emma Fox and offers her a job for the winter.

Soon Emma becomes privy to elder daughter Martha's covert liaison with the son of a Mexican rancher—a match disapproved by her mother—but it takes the arrival of a bounty hunter in pursuit of a murderer to expose secrets that threaten the peace of the Cooper household.

This latest production from the Babes with Blades (BWB) Theatre Company—a troupe better known for martial spectacle—features two shootouts, brandishing of Bowie knives and scenes of frontier surgery, but the play's dominant focus is a plot generating suspense through exploration of the crimes that spurred Harriet and Emma to venture forth on their own, discoveries leading to conflicting loyalties and to sacrifices engendered thereby. In a rugged and untamed wilderness, the decisions faced by rootless pioneers fleeing the law are

portrayed as no less critical or the solutions no less morally ambiguous by virtue of the gender attached to those who must grapple with them.

Wide open spaces usually mandate likewise sweeping dramatic narrative, but brevity necessitated by modern theater practice force Mickelson to combine two nemeses into one character and compress much of the explanatory information into tightly worded revelations delivered amid potentially distracting physical action. The intimacy of City Lit's auditorium, however, ensures an environment sufficient to keep playgoers alert to, not only the textual intricacies of a show marking BWB's transition from stunt-squad to full-fledged theater company and Jeff eligibility, but also the uncommonly complex performances of an ensemble long experienced at conveying the strength of sisterly bonds.

CRITICS' PICKS

Art, Amazing Sammo Productions at Gorilla Tango Theatre, through Aug. 29. It's the most viscerally and comically accessible—not to mention the most American—version of Yasmina Reza's play that you'll ever see. MSB

The Boy from Oz, Pride Films and Plays at Stage 773, through Aug. 30. The real-life Peter Allen self-destructed too soon to ensure his place in pop history, but Chris Logan (so sexy in the recent *Murder Ballad*) endows his portrayal with all the charismatic dazzle missing from the original. MSB

Brilliant Adventures, Steep Theatre, through Aug. 29. A little Pinteresque menace, a lot of kitchen-sink drama and British post-industrial funk. But it's young playwright Alistair McDowall's sci-fi twist and well-etched characters that mark it as special, along with the best damn acting I've seen in a long time. JA

Grand Concourse, Steppenwolf Theatre, through Aug. 30. An enthusiastic young volunteer at a New York soup kitchen prompts several crises of faith in Heidi Schrecks' drama that features great performances from Mariann Mayberry and Francis Guinan. SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

THEATER REVIEW

Assassination Theater: Chicago's Role in the Crime of the Century

Playwright: Hillel Levin

At: The Museum of Broadcast

Communications, 360 N. State St.

Tickets: 800-838-3006;

www.assassinationtheater.com; \$49

Runs through: Nov. 7

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Even with the current fashion for talking-heads symposiums posing as docudramas (but leaving out the drama), Hillel Levin's decision to present his journalist's investigation of the role played by organized crime in the 1963 assassination of U.S. President John F. Kennedy as a *play*—rather than as a book, film, graphic novel or television miniseries—is a curious one. At one time, when literacy was less widespread in the general population, disseminating news through live performance

may have been necessary, but why choose this old-school medium in 2015?

It's not as if Levin's paper chase offers additional opportunities for physical action (forensic-based Hollywood whodunits like *NCIS* to the contrary). Anthony Churchill's scenic design converts a gallery in the Museum of Broadcast Communications into a classroom-lecture hall with a projection screen replacing the traditional chalkboard. Occupying this forum are characters representing Levin and former FBI agent Zachariah Shelton, who proceed to recount their tale of our government's attempt to preserve peaceful cold-war relations with the USSR at the expense of lying to the U.S. public. Assisting these two in their expository duties is a carefully researched collection of vintage collaborative material, along with a pair of actors portraying the real-life personnel involved. (For playgoers anticipating a quiz afterward, the playbill also includes diagrams—labeled "Overworld" and "Underworld"—illustrating the connections between the key historical figures).

Fortunately, the production budget provided by Russell Lane LLC permits the hiring of top-flight theater professionals. Director Kevin Christopher Fox strives mightily to intro-

duce kinetic elements to the script's lengthy recitations of dry facts—bringing the co-narrators down into the audience's space, Federal Theatre-style, for example—and Christopher Kriz contributes some plucked-strings quasi-"Radio Mystery Theater" incidental music, while Michael Joseph Mitchell and Mark Ulrich employ their extensive oral-interpretation skills to lend variety to Levin's agenda. Ryan Kitley and Martin Yurek have the arguably easier assignment of replicating—with newsreel-accurate vocal impressions—assorted bureaucrats, medical examiners, witnesses and criminals sporting a dizzying array of languages, dialects and body stances.

A chronic hazard of prose writers-turned-playwrights is a tendency to lose track of running time; as Shelton reminds his colleague during the protracted second act, he can always write another play. In the meantime, whatever your opinions regarding the events of that fatal Dallas day, if you enjoy true-crime "reality" shows like *48 Hours* or spy-fiction in the David Baldacci/Daniel Silva mode, feel free to revel in the atmosphere of conspiratorial unity generated by Levin's provocative thesis.

“IT’S SOME KIND OF
WONDERFUL!”

-NY1



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KNIGHT at the movies

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Lily Tomlin; the late, great Laird Cregar

Lily plays a grandma

In *Grandma*, from writer-director Paul Weitz, Lily Tomlin plays a character who is a lesbian—a big one. Elle Reid is a loud, proud, majorly out lesbian who is unapologetic in her feminist, humanist views and isn't exactly shy about expressing them to all and sundry. Tomlin has played a lesbian character before—in *Tea with Mussolini*, co-starring with Cher, Maggie Smith and Judi Dench—but it was miles from the raw, funny and brilliantly complex character of Elle Reid she plays in *Grandma*. So let's take a moment to rejoice that one of *Our Own* is playing one of *Us*—spectacularly.

Elle has just broken up with her lover of four months (Judy Greer) at the movie's outset when Elle's 18-year-old granddaughter, Sage (Julia Garner), appears. The somewhat ditzzy Sage, with her Harpo Marx curly blonde hair and diffident manner, is pregnant and needs a little more than \$600 (\$630, to be exact) in order to have an abortion late that same day. Elle, a respected, published poet, has just cleared up mountains of debt, going so far as to cut up all her credit cards in the process, so she's broke. But she's also a practical woman of action. Her daughter—Julia's mother, an uptight, finger-wagger—is the last person either wants to go for the money.

So, hopping into Elle's vintage 1950 car (Tomlin used her own for the movie's 19-day shoot), she and Julia drive around the L.A. area trying to scrounge up the cash. Along the way, as they encounter everyone from Elle's ex-husband (a surprisingly moving Sam Elliott) to the owner of a bookstore who obviously had a thing for Elle (Elizabeth Pena, in her last role) to a funny transgender tattoo artist (Orange Is the New Black's Laverne Cox), the two span the wide generation gap and slowly find common ground. At one point, Elle decides to sell some signed, treasured first edition books, including Betty Friedan's seminal *The Feminine Mystique*, which Julia has never heard of. "You don't know what *The Feminine Mystique* is?!" the genuinely stunned Elle queries of Julia. "A character in *X-Men*?" her granddaughter tentatively guesses. That response allows Elle to go on yet another frustrated rant about the sea change that has taken place culturally.

The fearless Elle—who takes no prisoners as she and Julia roam the city—isn't nearly as caustic as she sounds but she's not exactly a warm, fuzzy Mimi, either. Tomlin gives this tart-tongued woman a wonderful humanity and the audience knows all along that Elle is grappling with life after the death of her beloved partner Violet a year and a half earlier. ("Violet" is tattooed on the inside of her right wrist.) Eventually, the other missing piece—Elle's daughter, Judy (Marcia Gay-Harden), enters the scene and other aspects of Elle's life become clear.

Director Paul Weitz wrote the movie specifically for Tomlin, and his gift to her becomes a gift to all of us. Without her performance, *Grandma* is a diverting, slice-of-life generation-gap dramedy. With her, it's elevated to art and Tomlin is firing on all cylinders. (She must have been thrilled after first reading the script.)

It's been 40 years since the sensationally talented Tomlin made her film debut in Robert



Laird Cregar and Linda Darnell in *Hangover Square*.

Altman's masterpiece *Nashville*. She's had great film roles in the ensuing years and is having a great career resurgence with both this part and her Emmy-nominated role (her 22nd!) in *Grace and Frankie*, but Tomlin's acting in *Grandma* is altogether on a level that her work in *Nashville* was—it reminds us of how deeply gifted this unique woman is. And it's a pleasure to stand back and watch her go.

Laird Cregar

On Aug. 28-Sept. 3, the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave., partnering with the Film Noir Foundation, will present **Noir City: Chicago 7**, the annual film-noir festival that returns for the seventh edition with a raft of little-seen 1940s and early '50s noir classics.

With 17 films in the lineup, there are enough shady dames and vicious killers prowling through the dark underworld to keep noir fans enthralled. *Crime of Passion* and *Witness to Murder*—two unsung Barbara Stanwyck thrillers both on the bill this year—are hallmarks of the series' dedication to presenting rarely screened gems. Many of the entries are presented in restored 35mm versions.

This year I'm particularly happy to see two Victorian-era thrillers in the mix—1945's *Hangover Square*, with queer star Laird Cregar in the title role, and 1941's *Ladies in Retirement* starring Ida Lupino (both screening Aug. 31). *Hangover Square*, from director John Cromwell, is a doozy—dripping in the gothic atmosphere of a foggy, threatening London in which Cregar plays George Harvey Bone, a composer driven to murder every time he hears a dissonant chord. Bernard Herrmann, the acknowledged dean of film composers, supplied the masterly "Concerto Macabre" that is played at the film's furious climax. (The soundtrack has just been released, at long last.) George Sanders is the acid-tongued police detective who pieces together Bone's crimes and Linda Darnell plays the sluttish cabaret singer who uses Bone with drastic consequences.

Cregar had played character roles but had a hit the previous year with *The Lodger*, a fictional variation on the Jack the Ripper murders in which he starred, just four years after he began in films. He didn't want to film *Hangover Square*, tired of playing demented killers but eventually changed his mind and determined

to give the character a romantic edge. Always a big man, Cregar lost more than 100 pounds to film the role but died from a heart attack after losing the weight too quickly. Ironically, two months following his death, the movie was released to great acclaim and Cregar's future as a leading man seemed assured. <http://www.musicboxtheatre.com/features/hangover-square>

On the same evening, the series will also present an ultra-rare screening of 1941's *Ladies*

Chicago Fashion Fest Aug. 29-30 in Wicker Park

Chicago Fashion Fest is returning to Wicker Park for a seventh consecutive year Aug. 29-30.

The event will feature local designers, retail and couture runway shows under the stars. The weekend celebration of local fashion talent also features summer street-fest fun, including local food vendors, a Shopper's Row, family and pet activities, a VIP Fashion Suite & Sangria Lounge, and live music programmed by Wicker Park's own Subterranean nightclub.

A new element this year is the "IT GIRL" runway competition presented by Jaslene Gonzalez, winner of America's Next Top Model.

See ChicagoFashionFest.com.

Local museum to host 'Downton' exhibit in 2016

The Richard H. Driehaus Museum, 40 E. Erie St., will exhibit "Dressing Downton: Changing Fashion for Changing Times" on Feb. 9-May 8, 2016.

The exhibit features more than 35 costumes from the popular British television series *Downton Abbey*. The show is filming its sixth and final season.

The award-winning costumes are produced by renowned London costume house Cosprop Ltd. Many use original fabrics and embel-

ishments from the early 20th century, while others are re-created from old photographs, paintings, patterns, and magazine pictures. Due to the anticipated popularity of the exhibition, Driehaus visitors will be required to purchase advance tickets online or by phone. Tickets will be available for purchase starting Oct. 7, 2015, at DriehausMuseum.org or 312-482-8933, ext. 21.

Upcoming movie calendar

Highlights from films opening in Chicago, Aug. 28 and Sept. 4 (or available digitally)

We Are Your Friends (8/28)—It's the latest from hunky heartthrob Zac Efron. This time out, he plays a DJ trying to hit the big time in Hollywood and, naturally, hedonistic complications galore (in the personage of his mentor's luscious girlfriend) throw up roadblocks along the way. Emily Ratajkowski, Wes Bentley, Shiloh Fernandez and Jonny Weston co-star. See the interview with Efron, Ratajkowski and director Max Joseph in this issue.

Grandma (8/28)—Lily Tomlin shines in this dramedy from writer-director Paul Weitz. Julia Garner, Marcia Gay Harden and Judy Greer co-star. See the review above.

Tangerine (9/4)—It's Sean Baker's audacious comedy, a day in the life of two feisty transgender hookers and their raucous adventures on the streets of Los Angeles on Christmas Eve. Shot entirely on an iPhone but you'd never know it. Playing at the Gene Siskel Film Center (164 N. State Street). <http://www.siskelfilm-center.org/tangerine>

Bloodsucking Bastards (9/4 and 9/5)—It's a blood-spattered horror comedy set in an office described as a cross between *Office Space* and *Shaun of the Dead*. Director Brian James O'Connell (a Chicago native) and cast members will attend the two screenings Sept. 4-5 at Facets Cinematheque, 1517 W. Fullerton Ave. <http://www.facets.org/cinematheque/films/sept2015/bloodsucking-bastards.php>

lishments from the early 20th century, while others are re-created from old photographs, paintings, patterns, and magazine pictures.

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Equity Jeff Award nods announced

Stage, screen and television actor Michael Shannon announced the 2014-2015 Equity Jeff Awards Aug. 21 at JeffAwards.org.

Six world premiere plays, three world-premiere musicals and three new adaptations seen first by Chicago audiences were among those receiving Jeff nominations by the Jeff Awards Committee. More than 180 nominations in 36 categories honor Chicago Equity theatrical productions that opened between Aug. 1, 2014 and July 31, 2015.

In its first year of Jeff Awards eligibility, Paramount Theatre led all theatres with 16 nominations, all for musicals in the Large Theatre category. Nominations for plays at Large Theatres were led by Steppenwolf Theatre Company, with 12; Chicago Shakespeare Theatre received 11 nods.

All are invited to the 47th Annual Jeff Awards ceremony honoring excellence in Chicago theatre; it will be held Monday, Oct. 5, at Drury Lane Oakbrook, 100 Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace. Emceeding the festivities are multi-talented award winning performers Cheryl Lynn Bruce and E. Faye Butler.

To purchase tickets, visit JeffAwards.org.

Gilded lilies: Lily Tomlin, Laverne Cox unite in 'Grandma'

BY LAWRENCE FERBER

A pair of LGBT icons from different generations—beloved septuagenarian Lily Tomlin and more recently minted trailblazer Laverne Cox—come together in the acclaimed feature dramedy *Grandma*. It's certainly an apropos collaboration, since one of the Sundance Film Festival hit's themes is how generations collide and, despite some friction, can potentially join forces in the spirit of support for a mutual cause.

Written and directed by Paul Weitz, *Grandma* stars Lily Tomlin as Elle, a prickly, seventy-something lesbian poet-intellectual whose granddaughter, Sage (Julia Garner), shows up at her doorstep in need of \$600 for an abortion. Neither woman wants to approach Sage's alpha businesswoman mother, Judy (Marcia Gay Harden), so, strapped for cash and having recently cut up her credit cards, Elle revs up her dusty 1950s Dodge—along with its memories of her deceased life partner, Violet—and hits the road with Sage to try and scrape up those funds by any means possible in time for a 5:45 p.m. clinic appointment.

Along the way, Elle dishes out hurt and verbal abuse on a barista played by John Cho, a friend portrayed by the late Elizabeth Pena and the ne'er-do-well young cretin who impregnated Sage. Elle also encounters her own recently dumped younger girlfriend, Olivia (Judy Greer), an old male flame from several decades back (Sam Elliott) and a tattoo artist who owes Elle money named Deathy (Cox).

"I love that the Deathy character, as opposed to almost every other character in the movie, is not having conflict with Lily's character," noted Weitz. Best known for co-directing *American Pie* and *About a Boy* with sibling Chris, he memorably appeared in the 2000 indie queer dramedy *Chuck & Buck* as an object of gay man-child Mike White's affection/obsession. "It shows there are loving friendships and relationships in Elle's life," Weitz said, "and Deathy knows a lot about her past and relationship with Violet."

Weitz previously worked with Tomlin on his 2013 Tina Fey-Paul Rudd film, *Admission*, and wrote the part of Elle specifically with her in mind. He knew that Tomlin certainly could pull off the more abrasive aspects of the character, having seen the infamous footage of Tomlin clashing with director David O. Russell on the set of *I Heart Huckabees*. "When I first sent her the script she said, 'gosh, this character has a real temper and I'm not sure I can understand that,'" he recalled. "I gave her a look and she went, 'I know, I know, you've seen that video.' People get passionate on set sometimes."

Tomlin admitted, damning *Huckabees* video aside, in real life she tries to keep ripping people new ones at a minimum. "You learn pretty fast not to do that," she said. "You can lose your temper and act up, but you better apologize." As for the most rebellious thing she has done off-screen in recent years? "I suppose just keep on keeping on," Tomlin, 76, replied. "That's rebellious in Hollywood."

In fact, Tomlin's presence and success in film and TV seems to fly in the face of Hollywood's ageism when it comes to actresses (there have been at least a couple of trend pieces on this, citing examples like the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel films franchise). Her Netflix series, *Grace and Frankie*, which co-stars 77-year-old Jane Fonda, has been greenlit for a second season, and their 9 to 5 companion, *Dolly Parton*, 69, has expressed interest in joining the cast. "That makes me happy," Tomlin remarked of Parton's comments, "because it means she still

believes in our friendship and feels comfortable with Jane and me. We would like that."

Although Elle was written with Tomlin in mind, she brought some new and personal elements to the role once signed on, including her own 1950 Dodge vehicle. "She asked, 'what kind of car are you looking for,'" Weitz recalled, "because she had one behind her garage and hadn't driven it a long time. Her partner Jane Wagner told her not to drive it because it was really old and had no anti-lock brakes and was a bit of a battleship."

Tomlin's attachment to *Grandma* is also what secured *Orange Is The New Black* star Laverne Cox, whom Weitz approached after seeing her on the Netflix hit series. Weitz says the character of Deathy had always been conceived as transgender, and he never considered casting other than a transgender actress. For those who take issue when queer or transgender roles are bestowed upon heterosexual, cisgender actors, as opposed to drawing from the pool of talented, openly LGBT thespians—a *la* Dallas Buyers Club, which received heat for casting Jared Leto despite the acclaim—this is a refreshing turn.

That said, the Emmy-nominated Cox (who's currently working on the other side of the camera as an executive producer of the documentary *Free CeCe!*, about an incarcerated African American transgender woman jailed for killing a violently bigoted attacker in self-defense) was most drawn to the character's work as a tattooist.

"I was really intrigued by Deathy's choice of doing that for a living, and what that means for her," Cox said. "People I know who have been tattoo artists or have a lot of tattoos, there's something very ritualistic about getting a new one and there's always a significance and an intimacy between someone and their tattoo artist."

Due to time restraints and a busy travel schedule as public speaker, Cox admitted she garnered her knowledge of professional tattooing technique from studying hours and hours worth of YouTube videos during downtime in hotels and airports. She certainly proves a convincing mimic, to both audiences and Tomlin, during a scene shot in a Los Angeles tattoo parlor during which Deathy gives Elle a bit of ink.

Working with Tomlin, meanwhile, proved an even more inspiring study for Cox, who said, "I learned that she's who I want to be when I grow up!"

"She's a woman in her 70s at the top of her game, and she just kills it," Cox elaborated. "I want to be as whip smart and alert and still in love with the work and craft. I can listen to her talk all day about her career, her life. The history she's walking around with is an amazing treat. She's a delight and legend and I'm really honored to have worked with her and to know her."

Perhaps the Netflix gods will smile upon the pair and Tomlin could appear on *OITNB* as a new prisoner alongside Cox's Sophia Burset. Tomlin, for one, lights up at the suggestion and says she would love the opportunity. Who else would make for an amazing new *OITNB* co-star? When asked, Cox reeled off Regina King, Charlize Theron, Viola Davis, Meryl Streep and Oprah Winfrey.

Cox started laughing. "I'm laughing because I imagine Oprah going, 'You get soup! You get soup! You get soup!'" she said with a giggle. "I love Oprah. She has been such a gift to the world and so life-changing for me through her work. I'd die for Oprah."



Laverne Cox as Deathy and Julia Garner as Sage in *Grandma*.

Photo by Glen Wilson, Courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics

Sondheim to receive Sandberg Award

The Chicago Public Library Foundation and the Chicago Public Library have announced that the 16th annual Carl Sandburg Literary Award will be presented to legendary composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim.

Heralded for his immense contributions to musical theater in a career spanning more than 50 years, Sondheim will be honored at the Carl Sandburg Literary Awards Dinner Wed., Oct. 21, at The Forum, 725 W. Roosevelt Rd., on the campus of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Also being honored is Eric Charles May, who will receive the 21st Century Award, which salutes emerging authors with ties to Chicago.

One of the highlights of the annual benefit is that each guest has the opportunity to get to know an esteemed author with ties to Chicago personally. This year, guests will engage in table conversation with one of more than 70 notable authors, including chef Rick

Bayless, Obama campaign strategist David Axelrod, "Mr. Fix-It" Lou Manfredini, Chicago cabaret performers Beckie Menzie and Tom Michael, artist/educator Nick Cave and attorney/writer Scott Turow.

Play to mark 10th anniv. of Katrina

The Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark St., will observe the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina with *The Play About My Dad*.

The Play About My Dad, by Boo Killebrew, opened at New York's 595 E 59 Theatres in June 2011. It tells of the author's father—a doctor in Gulfport, Mississippi—who stayed behind to take care of patients as the storm hit in August 2005.

Previews will be Wed, Oct. 21-Sunday, Oct. 25, with press openings Monday, Oct. 26 and Tuesday, Oct. 27. The regular run will be Oct. 30-Nov. 28.

Tickets are on sale now at www.raventheatre.com or 773-338-2177.

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Julia Garner (left) as Sage and Lily Tomlin as Elle in *Grandma*.
Photo by Aaron Epstein, Courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics

TOMLIN from cover

Tomlin, 76. The movie—a dramedy that also has wonderful supporting characters populated by Sam Elliott, Marcia Gay Harden, Laverne Cox, Judy Greer and Elizabeth Peña—is unthinkable without her.

Forty years after being Oscar nominated for *Nashville*, her first movie, there is buzz about Tomlin getting a second chance at Oscar gold. For Tomlin, who married her longtime partner Jane Wagner last year, that's about the only honor that hasn't been bestowed on her over the course of her laudable career. And as she reveals in this exclusive interview with *Windy City Times*, she isn't done yet.

Windy City Times: I want to take a moment here at the outset to say “thank you” on behalf of *Our People* for holding the torch aloft. I just want to rejoice that our own darling Lily Tomlin is playing one of us on-screen so spectacularly.

Lily Tomlin: Well thank you—thank you, thank you!

WCT: I love the irony that Paul Weitz—a man—wrote this beautiful part for you.

LT: I know. It's so amazing.

WCT: How close is the character of Elle Reid to you? Did he sit with you and observe you?

LT: No, he didn't. He totally surprised me by springing this script on me. I had no idea. After we finished *Admission* he called me and asked me to go out to lunch and then he said, “I've written a movie with you in mind” and that sort of struck terror in my heart because I liked him so much after we'd done *Admission* and I loved his *About a Boy* and so I said, “Oh God, what if I don't like it? I'll have to tell him that I don't like it. So, I was kind of fearful.” Anyway, I loved it; I thought it was a terrific script and he got the most wonderful people to be in it. Every performance is just wonderful. I tell you, I don't know if it's because we did it in 19 days or because we had a low budget but it's just a special movie.

WCT: A real labor of love with you driving your own car...

LT: ...and wearing my own clothes! [Laughs] And everyone who came on the picture was just great. Sam [Elliott] was absolutely fabulous, Marcia Gay [Harden], Julia [Garner], who plays my granddaughter, was delectable and luscious and sweet. Everybody in the movie was good.

WCT: And how unusual to see a movie driv-

en by the abortion issue.

LT: Yes, right—and it's got lots of other issues layered in.

WCT: Yes, yes.

LT: Parenting and kindness, mouthiness, everything. But it's not about those things. It's about the relationships. About creating human beings and not dehumanizing them around an issue.

WCT: For someone to hand you a piece like this that is so deeply layered and complex—as it goes along you find out more and more about the character of Elle—how do you work with a director on something like this? Does he say, “Well, you know what you're doing, given your experience...” or do you talk about specific scenes? And also, you had very little time.

LT: Paul and I had time to work on it in advance. I had a lot of other concert and standup dates and other stuff to do. I'd just finished a season of *Grace and Frankie* and it hadn't come out yet so I didn't know if that was going to have traction. We just gradually talked about it. Mostly, we tried to question everything and see if everything was covered. Any contribution I made was asking questions and Paul answered them by rewriting or thinking about it himself.

WCT: Somehow the planets aligned. One of the things that is so lovely in the film is the generational aspect. That you give this granddaughter the courage to speak up for herself.

LT: Yes, yes. So important and to bring the three of us back together in some semblance of family. When Marcia Gay, the mother, says, “Come for dinner, I'll order pizza” [Laughs]—it's just very...moving. And it's got a lot of comedy in it which I had no idea it was going to play as funny as it does.

WCT: Well, that's inherent in almost everything you do. Now, having gone through the feminism, the gay liberation, the ACT-UP movement in the '80s, when you go out and do these concert dates and young people come, do they know your work ahead of time?

LT: Well, a lot of young people don't come. I mean, they really don't know who I am or have my history. Some young people come; their parents bring them or they get on to me for some reason. A lot of people are middle aged and I play to them because they're my fans and I love to perform live.

WCT: Well, that's one of the lovely things about this movie and the effect it's having

and is going to continue to have is that it will speak to a whole new generation. The scene between you and Laverne Cox—

LT:—Yeah, yeah!

WCT: It's so wonderful to see a scene with a transgender actor and I was thinking about how groundbreaking that was but, then, I realize who she's acting with: Lily Tomlin, the trailblazer who, 40 years ago, was doing male drag with Tommy Velour and other characters.

LT: [Laughs hard] Yeah!

WCT: There you were, “hiding in plain sight” for all the world to see.

LT: You know, all those people interested me. I just wanted to do as many different kinds of people as I could or have the opportunity or find the vehicle for them.

WCT: Is there any chance that your wife Jane Wagner is at some point going to write a sequel to “*In Search for Intelligent Signs of Life in the Universe?*”

LT: I am sooo eager for her to do it; I just beg her and push her and beg her and push her but she'll do what she wants to do.

WCT: I was inspired to take my film-critic gig because of Vito Russo, your dear friend; I wanted to write about movies from a queer perspective, and he set the standard with *The Celluloid Closet*. I know that you passionately fought to get that documentary made after his untimely death and here we are, all these years later and you're starring in a movie where you play a lesbian; you're on a hit television show—congratulations on your Emmy nomination and probably the Oscar, too—and the premise is that these two men leave their wives for each other, right?

I mean, all of a sudden, gay is good again or trendy or something. Are you just a little bit gobsmacked by this?

LT: I am, I am. I'm gobsmacked by the last 10 years. The things that have turned around ... but I'm very vigilant, too. I don't take anything for granted. I so feel that the wrong people could get in a position of power and I just don't know what could happen. So you have to be aware; you have to hold dear those things that ... the progress that's been made.

WCT: Absolutely. I'll never forget watching the March on Washington on C-SPAN in 1993 and the announcer came out and said, “We just got a call from Lily Tomlin and Jane Wagner saying, ‘You guys are doing great.’” It was so delightful to have just that little bit of encouragement so long ago.

LT: Oh, thank you, thank you.

WCT: I know you're working on a second season of *Grace and Frankie*, and you've hinted that Dolly Parton is going to [appear]. Can you talk about that?

LT: Well, we don't have any specific plans for Dolly, Jane and I. She's still an old pal and the only thing we're trying to guard against for this next season is to keep a *Grace and Frankie* identity and not bring in Dolly in to make it look like 9 to 5 but we'd like to work something out if we could in the future. I think that would be great fun.

WCT: You've done pretty much everything but is there anything left that you haven't done that you want to do?

LT: I guess that I'd like to do a new Broadway show that Jane would write—that's what I would really like to do, or just a show. I don't care where it goes. We say “Broadway” because that's like, “Well, when it's good enough, we'll take it to Broadway.” That would be one of my wishes.

WCT: Will you write a book at some point? I mean, I know you've done most of your life onstage and Jane's written things for you.

LT: I don't know; we might. Only if we could think of a really funny, clever way to do it. You know lots of people have written wonderful books—Fonda included and Lauren Bacall. Some people are really good writers. Jane [Wagner] and I thought about writing like, you know, I'd write one half of the book and then you'd turn it over and she's written the other half.

WCT: [Laughs] A “she said, she said.”

LT: Or else we might do it from the perspective of all the characters writing about it. Mrs. Beasley and Tommy Velour would have a chapter...

WCT: ...the *Tasteful Lady*.

LT: The *Tasteful Lady* would have a chapter. All these characters would have some sort of say about the kind of life they had with us.

WCT: I just want to again thank you so much for giving us so much pleasure.

LT: Oh, Richard, thank you.

WCT: It's meant the world and continues to mean the world and I wish you all the best as you and Jane go forward. If she doesn't write the show, then I think you should divorce her. [Laughs]

LT: [Laughs] Ooh!!!

www.lilytomlin.com

MOVIES

Becoming 'Friends' with Zac Efron, Emily Ratajkowski and director Max Joseph

BY JERRY NUNN

There's a new group of Friends in town and this time there is a musical spin to it. Max Joseph, from MTV's *Catfish*, is directing the new film *We Are Your Friends*.

The story surrounds Cole Carter, played by actor Zac Efron (*Hairspray*; *Neighbors*), who's to be a DJ from celebrity musicmaker James Reed. Emily Ratajkowski—who many know from the "Blurred Lines" music video and the movie *Gone Girl*—plays Carter's girlfriend, Sophie.

Windy City went to The MID, a dance club in the West Loop, to interview the trio before the movie opened.

Windy City Times: First off, thanks for all of the LGBT representation on your *Catfish* TV show.

Max Joseph: Of course.

WCT: What did the title of your new movie come from?

MJ: It was originally called *The Unknown DJ Project* for a while.

WCT: Not as catchy...

MJ: The problem was it was too catchy. People would read the script and they felt it was more than just a DJ or EDM movie. We thought of a lot of DJ puns but it felt cheesy. I looked through my iTunes library and found "We Are Your Friends," which is [by] Justice vs. Simian. It resonated with so many themes of the movie not just working in one way but many ways. It was an anthem and was one of the first big electronic music songs to cross over.

WCT: It is a bromance movie. Did the group hang out before filming?

Zac Efron: We rehearsed at my house. Once we started this movie, it kicked in really quickly. We started filming right away.

MJ: We rented an Airbnb over a course of a weekend in the Valley where it was me and the guys.

ZE: We all had a big hangout session. We realized overnight that we were instant best friends. From that point forward we had a really cohesive energy. They were great with improvisation. We have a really young, talented cast.

MJ: They bonded really quickly so when we started shooting in the car scenes or just hanging out they were talking and ribbing each other. It felt very authentic. We could step back and film it.

WCT: Who is the celebrity DJ James Reed based on?

MJ: He's based on a bunch of different people.

ZE: Mr. Miyagi, Obi-Wan Kenobi...

MJ: I had done a documentary about DFA Records while I was writing the script and many of the ideas came from that.

WCT: The pool scene was perfect.

ZE: It was a fun day. We took over that house

for three days.

MJ: It was so hot when we were shooting that in the Valley. We shot it literally a year ago today. That was the one nice location that had a breeze.

WCT: I noticed a drag queen in the movie.

MJ: There was a nod in that scene to the underground house movement, which started here in Chicago. I had done a lot of research on electronic music. I know the movie is about straight white guys but the origins of that music is in the gay and Black music scene in Detroit and Chicago. When James, who knows more about music, is opening the world to Cole, he takes him to an underground house party. That is based on a party thrown at that very club in Los Angeles called Los Globos where we shot that. It is a much more eclectic group of people, with gay, straight and drag at the club.

WCT: Are you now a DJ, Zac? Are you spinning tonight?

ZE: No, I think it is like anything else that you put time and effort into to be truly great. It opened my eyes to the world of DJing. It is complicated and not easy. I give those guys so much credit. It was a lot of fun and made me gravitate to that style of music.

WCT: The movie seems about finding your own niche and style. Was that the point you were trying to get across?

MJ: Yeah. Everyone in their early '20s is searching to find themselves. If you want to be an artist of any kind then you need to find your voice. Part of that involves trying on a lot of different hats and seeing what fits and what doesn't. It is figuring out who you are and what is pure to you. I think that is important if you want to make anything that will resonate with anyone else. Each of the boys had their own arcs and Sophie does as well.

Emily Ratajkowski: Sophie doesn't know what she wants and, by the end of the movie, she still doesn't know. When she is done she has sacrificed all the things that she used to identify with that makes her feel comfortable and a real person. She is taking a step in the right direction to figure out who she is.

WCT: She goes on a journey.

ER: Yeah, and I love that. I don't think there are enough stories where someone hasn't found their passion yet and they are trying to get out of something. People find themselves in that situation at age 40 and have to let go of everything that is comfortable. It is like coming out of the closet.

WCT: Who did the art in the PCP scene?

MJ: These two really talented guys that had just graduated from the Art Institute in LA. They were game to do it and we had fun going back and forth deciding on what it would look like.

WCT: What is everyone working on next?



Emily Ratajkowski and Zac Efron in *We Are Your Friends*.

Photo from Warner Bros.

ZE: I start *Neighbors 2* in a week.

ER: I start a movie in October that I can't talk about but it doesn't take place in the present day.

MJ: I start filming another season of *Catfish* right after this movie opens.

WCT: Are you all doing parties everywhere

to promote the movie?

ER: We have been to so many cities. We have been to London, Toronto, France and Miami. Tomorrow, we leave for San Francisco for the big opening—then we are done!

We Are Your Friends opens in theaters Aug. 28.

LOCAL SPORTS

Chicago team places second at World Series

BY ROSS FORMAN

They had a softball in their dugout with the initials "CS" emblazoned on it. And Glen Rexing added the word "whatever." The ball was there for every game, a tribute by the Chicago Dragons B-Division team that played in the annual Gay Softball World Series, held Aug. 17-22 in Columbus, Ohio, to Carl Sharp, who passed away this spring. Sharp often wore a baseball hat with the word "Whatever" on it.

Sharp would have been with the Dragons for this yearly trek, and no doubt was looking down and smiling, as the Dragons claimed the second-place trophy.

They dedicated their season to Sharp "and we kept talking about Carl all week long," at the series, said Dragons player-coach Frank Kisner, the team's pitcher.

(The Dragons actually were the third-place finisher, but a protest against the eligibility of players on the first-place team from San Francisco was upheld. San Francisco thus was kicked out of the tournament and lost its championship, resulting in the Dragons being pushed into second place.)

"I think we over exceeded our expectations. Our goal was to play on Saturday, [meaning] top six [teams in the division]. Everything on top of that was a bonus," Kisner said. "The key was, team chemistry; everyone really got along ... and great team defense. Everyone pulled for one another; we didn't let anyone get to down."

Offensively, Rexing and Brian Redar were strong throughout the Series for the Dragons. Hill had several home runs. Kevin Tebbe also had a game-winning, walk-off home run.

Offensively, Rexing and Brian Redar were strong throughout the Series for the Dragons. Hill had several home runs. Kevin Tebbe also had a game-winning, walk-off home run.

Defensively, the team was anchored by Marcus Perez and others. The four-person outfield of Hill, James Platt, Brian Percival and Ted Cappas "played amazing," Kisner said.

Redar has now been on three second-place teams in the Series (1997 and 2003) and said this year's team "was my favorite, mostly because of the team that we came here with; everyone had a great time."

Meanwhile, the Chicago Menace scored the third-place trophy in the top-tiered A-Division, the team's second-ever third-place finish (2012).

Read more about the World Series online at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

WINDY CITY TIMES

30TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION



September 23, 2015

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Portrait
from
Fearless.
Photo by
Jeff Shang



BOOKS New book spotlights out high-school and college athletes

BY ROSS FORMAN

Jeff Sheng played tennis his first three years at Thousand Oaks High School in California, but opted not to play as a senior. He was closeted, afraid to come out at the time.

Now 34, and still based in Southern California, Sheng is back on the court. He's not holding back his swing, nor his sexual orientation. After all, he plays in a Gay and Lesbian Tennis Alliance (GLTA) league and also on the club tennis team at Stanford University, where he is a PhD candidate in sociology.

Sheng spent 13 years, from 2003 through 2015, photographing out LGBT athletes—and 202 of them from high schools and colleges across the U.S. and Canada now appear in Sheng's brilliant coffee table book, released in early June—Fearless: Portraits of LGBT Student

Athletes. The 316-page book is published by Somebody Books, and it retails for \$39.50 at www.fearlessbookstore.com.

"The book is a personal memoir about my experience as a closeted high school athlete and of photographing Fearless later in life as a way to capture the stories and portraits of student-athletes who were out to their teammates, something that I could never be," Sheng said.

The book features an afterword essay by retired NBA player Jason Collins, who is gay.

"Coming out is one of the bravest actions that a person can take," Collins said in a statement. "The fact that these individuals are so young, still in high school and college, makes their decision to step forward even more remarkable. It gives us hope and makes us proud to see the next generation boldly embracing their true selves at such a young age. They are individuals that come from different races, religions, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Their images displayed in this book are truly inspirational."

The book pays tribute to the original eight-stripe LGBT pride flag, designed by artist Gilbert Baker in 1978. Instead of just one cover, FEARLESS has eight different specialty athlete

covers showcasing the diversity of the LGBT sports community. (All books are identical inside). When stacked together, the eight different book versions form a three-dimensional representation of the original 1978 LGBT pride flag.

"I'm very happy about the book's release. It's been a very long project and I'm very proud of the book," said Sheng, who, in mid-June, read from the book at the annual Nike LGBT Sports Summit in Portland, Oregon. "I hadn't read the text out loud before to anyone else, so that was definitely rewarding, but also emotional at the same time."

Sheng said he was "very fortunate" that Collins agreed to contribute.

"I didn't tell [Collins] what to write at all; I just gave him a bunch of sketches of the ongoing book. He returned an essay back to me that was more than I could have hoped for. It's a really great piece of writing," Sheng said.

Later in the summer and into the fall, he will be doing a series of book-signings at various retail Nike stores around the country. (A full schedule has not been finalized yet.)

For more information about the book, or to order, go to www.fearlessbookstore.com.

BOOKS

Angela Koenig: Lesbian Chicago novelist on her works, influences

BY JORJET HARPER

Chicago lesbian novelist Angela Koenig grew up in rural Nebraska and lived in Sioux City, Iowa. Then, she lived in Denver and San Francisco for a number of years before returning to the Midwest.

She's the author of *Rebellion in Ulster*, a novel that followed a dashing lesbian scholar's path to becoming a revolutionary. Its sequel, *Rendezvous in the Himalaya*, was a finalist for a Goldie Award in the category of Romantic Suspense/Intrigue/Adventure.

Windy City Times: Congratulations on your Goldie nomination for *Rendezvous in the Himalaya*.

Angela Koenig: Thank you. I'm so thrilled to be thought a good storyteller. Just goes to show that nothing is sweeter than a dream come true.

WCT: What dream was that?

AK: Having a book published. Ever since I could read, I wanted to hold one with my name on the cover.

WCT: Well, then, congratulations are doubly in order! In *Rendezvous in the Himalaya*, the sequel to *Rebellion in Ulster*, protagonist Jeri O'Donnell has become a skilled soldier of fortune who meets her match in the brave tourist, Kelly Corcoran. How would you sum up the story for those who haven't read it yet?

AK: I think of Jeri, the main character, as a lesbian Jason Bourne—someone trained to fight who tries to use her skills for good. In this story, Jeri is guiding a UN official through the mountains and into Tibet to get information about how China is oppressing the country. Since this is around the time of Tiananmen Square, there's hope that China, like Russia, will free its satellite countries. When an American tourist joins the trek, possible romance gets added to the adventure.

WCT: I'm sure you've been asked this before, but why did you use "Himalaya" rather than the more common "Himalayas" in the title?

AK: I thought "Himalaya" would suggest the region of both Tibet and Nepal rather than just

the mountain range. And I thought it sounded better with "rendezvous."

WCT: Not to offer any spoilers, but do Jeri and Kelly, her major love interest, have a future together in upcoming books?

AK: They're in the next [not yet published] book in the series, *Requiem for Vukovar*, and one more, *Reckoning in Bosnia*. Jeri may be the scholar knight errant, but Kelly also learns to hold her own while becoming less an innocent abroad in the world.

WCT: How much and what sorts of research have you had to do to write these books?

AK: Trying to get realistic background takes me in some surprising directions. With *Rebellion in Ulster*, what began as an attempt to give Jeri a believable back story took me through a lot of research to understand the Troubles in Ireland in the '80s. For *Rendezvous*, I researched geography as well as history about the countries in order to make the landscape real. In *Requiem for Vukovar*, what started as a simple adventure soon needed some serious research into the history of Yugoslavia and why it came apart.

WCT: Will *Requiem for Vukovar* be out soon?

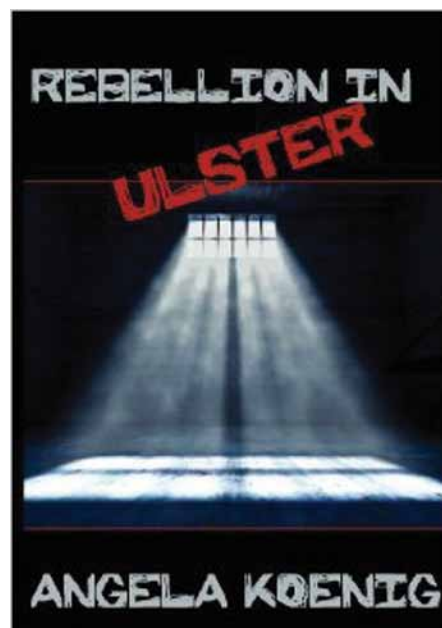
AK: Blue Feather Press had it scheduled for publication this year when, unfortunately, the company dissolved, and now I'm in search of another publisher. I've kept *Ulster* and *Himalaya* available as ebooks at Amazon but I'm hoping to be picked up by a new publisher. I'd like to see *Vukovar* in print soon, so I may publish it myself although I'd prefer to leave that to the professionals.

WCT: So ... you're looking for another lesbian press?

AK: Definitely. Those of us who are writing by, for, and about lesbians need presses that accept a wide range of stories, from science fiction to erotica to mystery and adventure and everything in between. Genre bending—that's something I'd say we're pretty good at.

WCT: With the current acceptance of LGBT people, what are your thoughts on whether there's a need for specifically lesbian books?

AK: Just because there is acceptance now doesn't undo generations of invisibility. I want books that show us where we have always



been: living the same history as the people around us. We should be in more than subplots and subtext. I want to find lesbians in the Middle Ages, on pirate ships, in Rome and China and India, in concentration camps and armies and convents and 22nd-century space stations. We haven't been erased from that history—we were never included in the first place.

WCT: So you try to imagine the lesbians who must certainly have been there in real life, and give them back to the world?

AK: When I do historic research for my books, the absence of lesbian lives makes it clear that someone could easily think no lesbians existed in these places and situations. That's what I want my books to do: show lesbians in history. This was brought home to me so very poignantly in the film and book, *Aimée and Jaguar*. Of course there were lesbians and lesbian couples whose lives were destroyed by the Holocaust. Throughout history I know there have been so many other lesbians whose stories were never told. I want us to have a library and not just be found in random footnotes or references in an index. That's what lesbian presses do—they put our lives front and center. And that's what the Golden Crown Literary Society supports.

WCT: Are you working on something now?

AK: Oh, yes. I have a chronic case of the need to be writing something. [Laughs] My current project is *Reach of the Heron*. It's about a minor character from *Rebellion in Ulster* who wanted her own book.

WCT: How did you know that character wanted her own book? I'm guessing she didn't send you a tweet.

AK: I think it was C.J. Cherryh who said that when a tall dark stranger walks into the bar and threatens to take over the story, give her a book of her own. A number of people asked me

about *Arkadia O'Malley* and I wondered myself what her story was. So *Reach of the Heron* will be about *Arkadia* and Ireland in 1959. I'll be combining mystery, the Magdalene laundries, shamanism, and Old Irish legends. How's that for genre bending?

WCT: You have a particular fascination with Ireland and the Irish. Is this based on your own background, or something else?

AK: The fascination is with Celtic as well, but the Irish held out longer against the Roman Empire in its Christian version. I think that Rome and Roman Christianity are still an ongoing disaster, and the Romans told some whoppers about the Celts. Looking through a Celtic lens lets you see deeper into the past. Did you know it's probable that the famed Roman roads of Europe were first built by the Celts? Their chariots would have been useless if the continent had been the trackless forest that Julius Caesar implied. Every year, more received history is being overturned and I love it. I'm a contrarian when it comes to history, I rarely meet a revision I don't like.

WCT: What is it that appeals to you about this type of storytelling? Why write lesbian spy novels or action/adventure rather than some other form, like mystery or science fiction?

AK: I prefer "adventure" as a description since Jeri hated the time she was a spy. She's more of a modern ronin, a samurai with no lord or master. A paladin. As the basic concept became more real to me, I found I wanted to say something about contemporary issues, specifically the harmful legacy of the proxy wars between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. A lot of time has passed since I started the stories, but that legacy is there in *Rebellion*, and definitely part of the two books about the break up of Yugoslavia. I understand my books are just little fictions, but I want them to be as factual as possible and to reflect what they can of larger issues while telling a story.

WCT: What other authors have had an influence on you as a writer?

AK: My very favorite writer is Manda Scott, particularly her four novels about Boudicca, the British queen who fought a resistance war against Rome. Some other favorite writers are C.J. Cherryh, who writes sci fi; Val McDermid, who writes great mysteries; and Nicola Griffith, who can do it all. I want to write interesting stories with true emotions. If you get that right, I don't think the genre matters so much.

Angela Koenig has a website at <http://glasowl.wix.com/maryground>.

Her novels, *Rebellion in Ulster* and *Rendezvous in the Himalaya*, are in search of a new home but can be found as ebooks at Amazon.com.

30TH ANNIVERSARY

WINDY CITY TIMES

PARTY

SUN., SEPT. 27
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SIDETRACK

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weekly nightlife section in



BERLIN

Fantastic faces from the Plastics party featuring Amanda Lepore, Thursday, Aug. 20.
Photos by Jerry Nunn



PROGRESS BAR

Joey's Bucket List benefit, Wed., Aug. 19.
Photos by Kirk Williamson

SIDETRACK

Showtunin' on Monday.
Photos by Jerry Nunn



Filth: disgustingly offensive dirt, garbage, anything viewed as grossly indecent or obscene.

That's how Mr. Webster defines "filth," and who would argue with him? With that definition and those words, this column was launched 20 years ago. Back then, it was called "Filth" and it was supposed to be a temporary gig. But here I am, two decades later, wondering what I did right ... or wrong!

When I look at the very first story I tackled, it gives a very clear view of things to come. I researched the rumor that **David Geffen** had married **Keanu Reeves**—and whatever happened to his career? Anyhoo, I squelched that rumor with what would become my customary wit: "Do you think the man who guided Cher's singing career can't spot talent? Well, do you?" I was off and running.

When I started this column, it was a different world, kiddies. There was no *Will & Grace*. Ellen had a sitcom. Rosie wasn't out. Elton was bisexual. Chastity had a vagina. Admittedly, nobody wanted to see it. And that's the point—people didn't talk about gay things. I'd like to think I helped make a change. The Internet was in its infancy, and many people who weren't in big cities didn't know any gay people—well, they didn't think they knew any gay people. I can't tell you how many emails came in from folks who were just coming out and wanted to connect with anyone who was gay. For better or worse, I was it—and I was there. And I'm still there. So there.

I hate to make this all about me. But, you know, the column is called "Billy Masters," and I am Billy Masters. For the time being, let's put that aside. You'd think, after all these years, I would have tackled every conceivable topic. In fact, that's what I thought while reading the old columns (which are on BillyMasters.com). And yet, I don't believe I've ever written a story about somebody being "fingered." Oh, yes—"fingered." Dare I say, we're going to rectify that right now with not one, but two stories about fingering. The first story comes from *Big Brother*. Apparently, this guy named Austin "fingered" his girlfriend, Liz, during the live feed. I checked out the footage and it does appear that Austin played a little hide-and-seek with a few digits—perhaps up to the elbow!

Fingering Story #2 (and that's certainly the right name for it) comes from singer **Morrissey**. Last week, he told Larry King that he was fingered by the TSA. I'm shocked—and somewhat hurt. I travel more than anyone I know. And nobody has ever come close to my anus—well, not until we've left the ground and I've slid the word "ocupado" into place. Morrissey said, "I had been through the full scanner and the second bit, but then he went straight for my private bits and then put his finger down my rear cleavage." Welcome to the friendly skies, indeed.

Twenty years ago, I met **Sarah Jessica Parker** and **Matthew Broderick** during an intermission of *Death Defying Acts* off-Broadway. Matthew was quiet and reserved. SJP was bouncing from person to person. The duo's joint show in Provincetown mirrored that dynamic. (The two sold-out shows were produced by the Provincetown Art House as a benefit for the Tyler Clementi Foundation.) Since both are friends of host Seth Rudetsky, they were in good hands. They each sang ditties, told some stories and even joined forces for a song from the only show they



Bette Midler wants to put a spell on you on the big screen.

Photo from Warner Bros.

did together—and since I was the only one who yelled out *How to Succeed in Business*, I guess I was the only one who knew that bit of trivia. I found one thing peculiar. How does one do an evening with Matthew Broderick in Provincetown and not utter the words "Torch Song Trilogy?" Maybe they discussed it in the early show.

There was even a bit of dish. While discussing *Sex and the City*, Seth asked Sarah about her favorite storyline. Curiously, Parker chose the last few episodes of the series where Carrie moved to Paris with Mikhail Baryshnikov. So, in other words, from what I always considered an ensemble show, SJP's favorite memory was the one that didn't involve the other three ladies. Interesting. When asked about the possibility of a third movie, Parker was coy, saying that they do have a story to tell and that sometime in the future, when the time is right, and if everyone wants to do it, it will happen. To that, her friend John yelled up from the audience, "You already confirmed it to me on your steps a month ago." Parker took this in stride, saying nothing was definite, adding, "That was a private conversation between you and me, John." So, who do you believe? Sarah or John?

For years, **Bette Midler** has bemoaned the fact that Disney hasn't made a sequel to *Hocus Pocus*. Whenever asked about it, she said, "Inundate the Disney Company, because I have canvassed the girls and they are willing to do it, but we have no say in it, so if you want a *Hocus Pocus 2*, ask the Walt Disney Company." Because the film is so popular at Halloween, Disney World is staging a live show featuring the Sanderson Sisters alongside other Disney villains. The "Hocus Pocus Villain Spelltacular" will run Sept. 15-Nov. 1.

Of course, this is not exactly what Midler had in mind. To show the studio what she envisioned, she's staged her own mini "Hocus Pocus: Live" as part of her latest tour. While chorus girls are filling in for Kathy Najimy and Sarah Jessica Parker, Bette is in full Winifred drag and belts out "I Put a Spell On You." We'll run a video of it on our website, just so you can see how divine it is.

When Morrissey is getting more action than me, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Because celebrity nudes have been a big part of our success, we're going to play a little game with you—Name That Penis. If you can correctly identify 20 celebrity penises featured over the past two decades, you'll win a prize. So get yourself over to www.BillyMasters.com, the site that's barely legal. If you need a bit of personal attention, email Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Geffen pays Keanu 20 years back alimony. Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Firefly Kitchen

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Most of the restaurants I've profiled here—no matter how amazing or unimpressive they are—have one thing in common: They're in Chicago.

However, contrary to what some may believe, there are some interesting culinary experiences in the suburbs—and Wilmette's **Firefly Kitchen** (111 Green Bay Rd.; FFKitchen.com) is definitely one of the area's more promising restaurants.

Firefly has an interesting decor. On one level, it comes across as almost rustic, although it's advertised as a Brooklyn-style bistro. However, it's also pretty fun and intimate at the same time. On one side, there is a group of suspended light bulbs near a wall that reads "Neon heart/day-glow eyes. A city lit by fireflies"—a quote from U2's "City of Blinding Lights." I could almost see this restaurant in Chicago's Andersonville. (There I go, wandering back to the city.)

The restaurant did reach to Chicago in one im-

portant way. Firefly plucked James Pierce, who previously worked at The Bar at the Peninsula Chicago, to manage the place as well as oversee the drink lists. I have to say that the drink I ordered—Knocking on Heaven's Door (Death's Door Vodka, lemon and rhubarb tea, with a raspberry garnish)—was pretty refreshing. Pierce said it's Firefly's most popular drink. It's easy to understand why.

Chef Dean Salerno, a native New Yorker, has concocted a menu that's pretty enticing. (I wanted to try almost everything.) Appetizers include Maine lobster spring rolls (especially tasty with a little cumin-citrus sauce), hibachi skewers, grilled veg goat cheese terrine and Maryland-style crab cakes.

One of the highlights of the meal my friend and I had was the smoked pork mac and cheese. (Lulla's Southern Kitchen probably has the best mac and cheese I've had this year—but this is a close second.) Salerno described a process with the pork that includes brining (for eight days) and smoking—and you can practically taste his love of cooking in every bite.

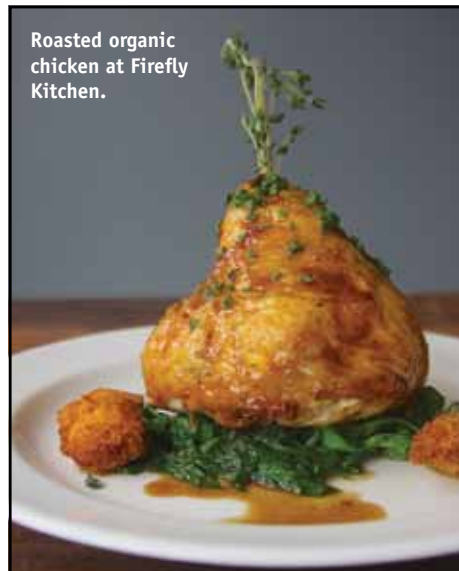
We also got the Salerno burger and the roasted organic chicken. The former had a delightful kick, while the latter (served with potato croquettes) is as notable for its presentation as its distinctive taste. Salerno manipulates the chicken (in a good way) unless it resembles some sort of avian volcano. I almost didn't want to touch this piece of art, but it was pretty tasty—especially when coupled with garlic.

Firefly is a place for everyone. On the evening we went there, I saw families as well as people

on dates and women enjoying ladies' night. (There were a lot of the latter there, interestingly.)

Also, be sure to check out the outdoor dining area/beer garden. Patrons have to walk up an alley beside the restaurant to reach a beautiful area that happens to be next to residential and commercial units—but that also happens to feel worlds away.

The only drawback was experienced as we left the indoor area, as the noise level was definitely increasing to a conversationally challenging standard. However, that's what sometimes happens at a popular place—and Firefly definitely deserves to be popular. Take a trip to the suburbs.



Roasted organic chicken at Firefly Kitchen.



Pan-seared salmon.



Hibachi skewers.



TOUCHE

Western flair at the annual Cowboy Eye For the Leather Guy makeover contest, Sat., Aug. 22, with Alcalá's Western Wear and IL Gay Rodeo Assn. Photos by Kirk Williamson

nightspots the big TO-DO

OUR WEEKLY PICKS TO PLAN YOUR NIGHTLIFE CALENDAR



'Sync It lip-sync-off

Wed., July 29

Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.
Lip-syncing is all the rage! Show your stuff at this second installment of Sidetrack's new monthly contest, hosted by the inimitable Dixie Lynn Cartwright. No drag required to perform. Enter to win great prizes.



All Geeks: Saturday Morning Cartoons

Fri., August 28, 10 pm

Berlin, 934 W. Belmont Ave.
Celebrate your geeky youth with a cosplay variety show dedicated to Saturday Morning Cartoons. Everyone from He-Man to Pokemon will be coming so show your turtle power and plan your Powerpuff squad goals.



The Pit: New monthly all-male kink play party

Saturday, August 29, 9 pm

Man's Country, 5015 N. Clark St.
Kinky sexy is back ... and it has a new (old) home! The Pit will transform the old Eagle space into a dungeon play space for one night. Slings, benches, St. Andrew's Crosses, the whole deal. Bring your kinky gear.
Photo from Nightspots archive by grayson



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Aug. 26

Networking on the Lake 9th Annual Boat Cruise Chicago Area Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. \$100 members \$125 non-members. Info from grodriguez@gl-chamber.org 6:30pm - 10:00pm SE corner of Michigan and Wacker downstairs on the Chicago River. 112 E Upper Wacker Dr, Chicago <http://business.glchamber.org/events/details/2015-networking-on-the-lake-9th-annual-boat-cruise-2834>

Cyber Center Open Seniors This open time in the cyber center is available on a first-come, first-served basis for seniors over 55 to use the computers. Volunteers and staff are available for computer help at this time. For other Open Senior times, check with Center On Halsted, (773) 472-6469. 1:00pm - 3:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St.

9th Annual Chicago Dancing Festival "Modern Women" presented by Lori Belilove & The Isadora Duncan Dance Company, accompanied by a live solo pianist, with the Kate Weare Dance Company, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and Pam Tanowitz and members of the Chicago Philharmonic. Free. Tickets must be reserved in advance starting noon on July 10 at the MCA Stage Box Office. 6:00pm Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) 220 East Chicago Ave Chicago (312) 397-4010

Thursday, Aug. 27

Open Gym Volleyball Every Monday and Thursday for 18 and over. All gender and experience levels welcome. Cost \$7/night or \$30/month. 6:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago

Take It Easy Queer Variety Show Comedy/ Drag Show fundraiser supports award winning Chicago-based web series Easy Abby. Hosted by Chicago drag entertainer Christina Rose with comedy, drag and burlesque,



REEL LOVE Saturday, Aug. 29

Filmmakers Lana (above) and Andy Wachowski will be at 'TransReelization' at Kinoworks Studio, 5645 N. Ravenswood Ave. Photo by Hal Baim

plus acoustic performances by local songwriters. Easy Abby on Youtube features female and LGBT lead characters. 7:00pm Mary's Attic 5400 N Clark St.; <http://easyabby.com>

Queer Tango A beginner and intermediate Argentine Tango class designed specifically for the LGBTQ communities. \$15/class. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St.

3rd Annual Purple Tie Affair Celebrate Anna DeShawn & Bonsai's Birthdays. Annual benefit gala supports Anna's favorite non profits: this year the Youth Empowerment Performance Project (YEPP). 6:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1579483608982787&set=a.1515789948685487.1073741830.100007634898077&type=1&theater>

9th Annual Chicago Dancing Festival Dancing at the Harris. Chicago Human Rhythm Project with the Joffrey Ballet, the Miami City Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and soloists from the American Ballet Theatre. Tickets at the box office. 7:30pm The Harris Theater Millenium Pk 205 E Randolph St.; 312-334-7777

Friday, Aug. 28

Man Cave A peer-led group for individuals that were assigned female at birth (AFAB) AND ALSO who identify as either: FtM (female-to-male), trans*masculine, genderqueer/non-conforming and masculine, or who are questioning their gender. Free. 6:30pm - 8:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago

Alternative Super Party LGBT or straight, singles or couples. Come meet, dance, party, connect in an accepting and comfortable atmosphere. 21+ Questions to EncountersClub@aol.com 8:00pm - 1:00am CED Network and Brian Boru's Formerly Molly Malone's Nightclub, 7652 W Madison St., Forest Park <http://CasualEncountersClub.com>

Saturday, Aug. 29

LGBT Equality Institute Panels on non-discrimination, mental health care, transgender equality, safe schools, adoption and family services, faith, HIV/AIDS prevention and services, addiction recovery, ally development, youth, criminalization of the LGBT community, aging, state initiatives and policy. Presented by Equality Illinois 10:00am Illinois State Capital, Springfield, IL <http://www.equalityillinois.us/events/lgbt-equality-institute-in-springfield/> Tickets: <http://eqil.org/springfield-institute-2015>

TransReelization film fest Cocktails, celebrities and films highlighting transgender characters and stories. Stars from the series Sense8 will attend. Supports the work of the Chicago House TransLife Center.

6 pm VIP. 7:00pm Kinoworks Studios, 5645 N. Ravenswood Ave., Tickets: <http://tinyurl.com/nclbbu5>

Randolph Street Market Pride Party Urban antiques market hosts around the clock entertainment, a beer garden with vintage carnival games and concessions, rainbow themed bites and drinks, and fest fashions from 300+ vintage and indie vendors. Makeup artist and body painter Orlando Barsallo will be painting Lady Liberty. Natasha Douglas in drag will be entertaining guests on Saturday. Fun N' Games area for kids. Advance tickets \$8, general admission \$10, students with ID \$3 or \$5 at the gate. Children 12 and under free. Through Aug. 30. 10:00pm - 5:00pm Beaux Arts Plumbers Hall 1340 W. Washington St. Chicago 312-666-1200 <http://randolphstreetmarket.com>

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

Feel Good Fair An agency-wide health fair. Free. Questions to 773-472-6469 ext. 459 or email culture@centeronhalsted.org. Full schedule at the link. 10:00am - 2:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=9574>

Sunday, Aug. 30

WACT picnic brunch Tennis, lagoon, Bynum Island, ball fields. Bring dish to share with other WACT members. Come and enjoy our first annual WACT picnic brunch. Parking is close, free and accessible. WACT is a brunch and social support group for all lesbians and bisexual women across ethnicities, ages, incomes. To sign up for a brunch, please contact Toi Williams at 773-731-7355 or e-mail torlene@comcast.net 10:00am - 5:00pm Washington Park, 55th and King Dr, across from swimming pool and Refectory bldg., Chicago

2nd Annual Chicago Trans Pride Beach Party Independent and public gathering

to celebrate the beauty, diversity, and resilience of the trans community in Chicago. While beaches are traditionally not trans affirming or body positive spaces, the gathering will claim it and be visible and proud. Coolers, chairs, beach wear, any trans pride flags welcome but not required. No alcohol or smoking. 12:00pm - 5:00pm Ardmore Hollywood Beach, Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/events/921746784535516/>

Monday, Aug. 31

Raise Your Glass! - A Benefit for Chicago Women in Trades Tickets are \$20.00 and include great food, music, raffle (including 2 airline tickets worth \$1,600!), and a silent auction. Craft Beer will be sold for \$5 per glass. All proceeds will benefit Chicago Women in Trades. 5:30pm - 8:30pm 2607 West 17th St.; <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/raise-your-glass-benefit-for-chicago-women-in-trades-tickets-16437157982>

Tuesday, Sept. 1

Vives Q Independent cultural arts project committed to creating an LGBTQ movement building experience through art, music, spoken word, dance, and oral history 6:00pm National Museum of Mexican Art 1852 W. 19th St. <https://www.facebook.com/events/121322038211628/>

Cuban LGBT activist Alberto Roque Guerra Activist and author on gender theories, sexualities, biopolitics, bioethics, & biomedical, cultural and political aspects of trans identities. Co-sponsored by the Gay Liberation Network and the Chicago ALBA Solidarity Committee. Info LGBTliberation@aol.com 7:00pm Nookies Tree 3334 N Halsted St.

Wed., Sept. 2

Genderqueer Chicago A grassroots group that works to create safe spaces for everyone to talk about, think about, explore and express gender. Free. 7:00pm - 8:15pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted

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VEHICLE REVIEW

2015 Toyota Camry hybrid is still young and restless

BY SAM GOMEZ, GAYWHEELS.COM

You have to wonder how anyone can afford a new car these days when the average price for a new vehicle is running about \$28,000, and the monthly payment on a new car starts at around \$400. In this scenario, this year's Toyota Camry Hybrid (completely redesigned for 2015) is average. But in every other field of consideration, it is far above average and truly a contender for Gayest Car of the Year.

In short, there was nothing I did not like about the Camry. Critics will say it's not a fun car to drive. I say that sometimes My Favorite Husband is a bit of a bore but he is reliable, dependable and has a savoir faire that is always a draw. The Camry is not a bore, but perhaps not as exciting as a leather and fetish fair in Wisconsin.

Inside and out, this hybrid looks classier and more refined. What the heck does that mean, Sam? Okay, okay, let me think of some words ... and I can't, really. The materials inside are better, and outside, the look is more pronounced. To the average eye, I'm not sure you could tell the difference between 2014 and 2015. No new exterior colors have been added: you can still get this club chub in Crème Brûlée, Parisian Night Pearl, Super White or Attitude Black. Last year's model was also given a 'That's So Gay' award from me, and this year's Camry-Hybrid gets the same award with a few more o-o-o-o's. Did that help?

Inside, there is plenty of room for your Pink



2015 Toyota Camry.

Photo from Gaywheels.com

or Pinkberry party. I had no trouble getting my friends of size in and out of the Camry. This is important, because many LGBTs don't want a large vehicle, but they do want space—for their friends, their children, their pets or just for all their stuff. With this hybrid, gone are the days when interior space was sacrificed so you can strap-on a battery to the undercarriage. Now there is 13.1 cubic feet of cargo space with no bumps—that means more 'gay' for your Gay Pride.

Safety on the Camry is tops, as it consistently receives either five-stars-out-of-five or a good (the highest) rating on all kinds of smash-up tests. The Camry does offer automatic braking, the life-saving feature which keeps you from

plowing head-first into a car because you were painting your nails or shaving. Unfortunately, you have to get the top-tier XLE trim to get it—and it will cost you. Until such time as automatic braking is standard, try to pay attention. We at Gaywheels want to keep you alive so you can keep reading our reviews.

This automotive segment of affordable small sporty hybrids is very competitive. If you are reading this and considering buying a Camry hybrid, you are no doubt also looking at the Ford Fusion Hybrid and the Honda Accord Hybrid, both of which give the Camry a fast and long run for the money. I can't tell you which one is better and most automotive writes can't either, since every year, the cars just keep get-

ting better and better—and more expensive (yet still cheaper than rent, healthcare and education—Go USA!).

Long and short, I like the hybrid. It's refined, it's great on gas (40 city/38 highway), it's a breeze to drive—though it's tricky to park and not very sporty, unless you get the SE trim, which is sporty. Grrrr!

U.S. News and World Report gave the Toyota Camry Hybrid the blue ribbon award for 2015 Best Hybrid Car for the Money. That's some very serious high praise from one of the most respectable names in journalism. Of course, they forgot to mention how gay the car is and how great you will look in it ... which is why you come to Gaywheels.

Read more on Gaywheels.com.

Auto news

—**X factor:** Chinese startup Youxia Motors announced its first-ever production car, the all-electric Youxia X, Mashable reported. To some, it looks mostly like a Tesla Model S—down to the tall touchscreen center console and the retracting door handles—with design cues from Lexus, Audi and Maserati as well. Its designer, Huang Xiuyuan, is reportedly a big Knight Rider fan.

—**Get your motor running:** Vice.com recently ran an article on Homoto, possibly Russia's only gay motorcycle gang. "In Russia, bikers and gays are both oppressed groups," says Yuri, the founder of Homoto. This year's May Day protest in St. Petersburg was the first official outing of the club, when they rode with the LGBT section of the march, although not all their members took part. The majority of the club's members are male, and the women tend to hang out separately.

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COUNSELING

SUPPORT/THERAPY MEN'S GROUP There are currently two openings in an ongoing support/therapy group for gay men over the age of 40. If interested in being part of a milieu exploring what it means to be gay and middle-aged, consider joining. Contact: scylle.me@gmail.com. (9/26/15-1)

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LGBTRIVIA

From page 11 **ANSWER:**
Yvonne Welbon

Questions from That's So Gay! A Game of LGBTQ Discovery, a 2400-question board game available from Women & Children First Books and on Amazon.com.

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