

WINDY CITY TIMES

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN, BI, TRANS AND QUEER COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

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Troy Winston.
Photo by Martino Ramos

GOODBYE, TROY

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Local LGBTQ icon Troy Winston dies

LAUGHTER LIFE


Queer trans comic
KJ Whitehead.
Photo by Lindsay Williams



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BURNING BOWL

Group bids ED
farewell at annual
event.
Photo of Imani Rupert-Gordon by Carrie Maxwell



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LGBTQ artist
rules music
realm.
Photo by Vince Aung



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MARCHING ON

Thousands attend women's march, rally



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Photo by Carrie Maxwell

BIG ISSUES AHEAD IN 2020 FOR

WINDY CITY TIMES



**PRIMARY
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ISSUE
MARCH 4**

**SPRING
MUSIC &
ARTS
ISSUE
MARCH 18**

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IML GUIDE
MAY 13**

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ISSUES
JUNE 10
JUNE 17
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UPCOMING 2020

WINDY CITY TIMES PRINT DATES:

Jan. 22, 2020	April 1, 2020	June 10, 2020
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March 4, 2020	May 13, 2020	July 22, 2020
March 18, 2020	May 27, 2020	Aug. 5, 2020

online exclusives at
www.WindyCityTimes.com

WHAT'S THAT BUZZ?

WCT reviews the book Buzz: A Stimulating History of the Sex Toy, by Hallie Lieberman.

Photo (left) of Lieberman by Eric Schatzberg

SCHOOL DAZE



Kelsi Williams (above) penned an op-ed about being an LGBTQ individual in college.

Photo courtesy of Williams

IT'S AN HONOR

See WCT's roundups of the movie and/or TV winners up through the Oscars.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Ryan Murphy, Molly Bernard and comedian Franqi French.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWSWhen A Great Deal Matters, Shop Rob Paddor's...
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'15 Toyota Prius One	...Automatic, Full Power, Silver, 23743A
'17 Toyota Camry SE	...Automatic, Full Power, White, 23330A
'14 Toyota RAV-4 XLE AWD	...Automatic, Sunroof, Blue, 6420A
'18 Hyundai Elantra SEL	...Automatic, Full Power, Silver, P6286
'13 Audi A4 2.0T Prem. Plus AWD	...Auto., Leather, Black, P6471A
'12 Nissan Murano SL AWD	...Leather, Moonroof, White, 23706A
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'18 Forester Prem.	...Automatic, Sunroof, Heated Seats, Silver, 23487	...\$20,995
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'17 Forester Prem.	...Automatic Sunroof, Heated Seats, White, 23458A	...\$18,995
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Federal court ruling benefits same-sex couples

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

A federal appeals panel of Republican appointees ruled Jan. 17 that the state of Indiana must treat same-sex married couples the same as male-female married couples when determining who to list on a child's birth certificate.

The case, *Henderson v. Indiana*, originated when the state of Indiana refused to list the non-biological mother of a child born by her female spouse on the birth certificate of the son. The lesbian couple sued, noting that Indiana would list a non-biological father on a birth certificate of a child born by his wife.

Indiana argued that birth certificates were meant to reflect biology, but the appeals panel noted that Indiana law states that a "man is presumed to be a child's biological father if [he] and the child's biological mother are or have been married to each other and the child is born during the marriage...." The state, it said, was refusing to provide a similar presumption if the child's biological mother was married to a woman. That, it said, contradicted the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which struck down state laws treating same-sex couples differently in marriage licensing.

The 7th Circuit appeals panel said the Indiana laws governing birth certificates "are products of a time when only opposite-sex marriages were recognized in Indiana" and that they also fail to recognize the "possibility" that a female-female couple could have two biological mothers (one who donates an egg and one who carries the child to birth).

The panel said *Obergefell* does not allow a state to provide all husbands the presumption of being fathers "while denying an equivalent presumption to parents in same-sex marriages." *Obergefell* held that same-sex couples must have the same rights and protections under state marriage laws as opposite-sex couples.

The *Henderson* decision also noted that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Pavan v. Smith* in 2017 that same-sex couples are entitled to marriage "on the same terms and conditions as opposite-sex couples." The *Pavan* case involved a refusal of the Arkansas health department to issue a birth certificate for a same-sex couple's child that included both mothers.

The Indiana case panel included judges Joel Flaum and Frank Easterbrook (both appointed by President Reagan) as well as Diane Sykes (an appointee of President George W. Bush). Easterbrook authored the opinion.

Sykes, who has been considered one of Presi-



7th Circuit Court Judge Frank Easterbrook.
Official photo

dent Trump's short-list nominees for a U.S. Supreme Court seat, appeared to ready to rule against the lesbian couple during oral argument. According to reports, she said, "You can't overcome biology."

The couple who pressed the challenge, Ruby and Ashlee Henderson, lived in Lafayette, Indiana and had one child before they were able to marry, following the *Obergefell* ruling. After they married, they tried to get their child's birth certificate amended to show them both as parents; the state refused.

The 10-page opinion took an extraordinary amount of time to produce: two and a half years. The case was argued in May 2017.

The Seventh Circuit jurisdiction includes Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin.

Meanwhile, in the same week the *Henderson* decision was released, Lambda Legal argued in federal district courts in Georgia and Maryland that a similar disparity is taking place for same-sex couples whose children are born abroad.

"Children born abroad to married different-sex parents who are U.S. citizens are routinely recognized as U.S. citizens," said Lambda in a press release about the cases, "but the State Department is deliberately misapplying federal statutes to deny similar treatment to the marital children of same-sex couples."

In Georgia on Jan. 16, Lambda filed suit on behalf of an Atlanta male married couple whose child was denied U.S. citizenship because she had been born in England where the surrogate mother lives. And in Maryland earlier this month, Lambda filed suit for another male couple who married in California and had their daughter using a surrogate mother in Canada. The State Department in both cases is claiming the children were born "out of wedlock" even though both couples were legally married at the time they had their children.

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Quigley part of letter calling for end of trans migrant detention

U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-Illinois)—vice chair of the LGBT Equality Caucus and a founding member of the Transgender Equality Task Force—led more than 40 members of Congress in calling for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to release all transgender individuals currently in detention.

LGBTQ immigrants are 97 times more likely to be sexually victimized in detention than straight and cisgender immigrants. At least two transgender women, Roxsana Hernandez Rodriguez and Johana Medina León, died in ICE custody.

The recently enacted FY2020 Appropriations package includes instructions for ICE to only detain transgender individuals in facilities specifically contracted for their care. Currently, no ICE facilities meet these standards.

Quigley and the letter's other signers—including House Assistant Speaker Ben Ray Lujan (D-New Mexico), House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold "Jerry" Nadler (D-New York) and Congressional Hispanic Caucus Chairman Joaquin Castro (D-Texas)—demanded that ICE immediately bring facilities detaining transgender individuals into compliance or ensure the release of their transgender detainees. The members have requested a response, including a detailed plan for addressing this issue, no later than Jan. 27.

Lambda Legal releases report on judicial nominees

Lambda Legal released the third edition of its annual report of judicial nominees, showing how the Trump-Pence administration, with the help of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, has filled the federal judiciary with what the organization called "an unprecedented number of unqualified, extremist judges whose records reveal deep hostility for the rights of LGBT people, women, immigrants, and other vulnerable populations."

Among other things, the 2019 report "Trump's Judicial Assault on LGBT Protections: After Three Years of Trump Nominees, Bias and Bigotry Remain the Norm" showed that 36 percent of President Donald Trump's circuit court nominees have a demonstrated history of anti-LGBT bias.

Recently, the U.S. Senate confirmed Lawrence VanDyke—who has a long record as an anti-LGBTQ activist—to a lifetime appointment on the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. VanDyke made news when he cried during his confirmation hearing after being asked whether he would treat LGBTQ litigants unfairly.

Eight of the country's 12 circuit courts are now made up of 25 percent or more of Trump-nominated judges.

The full report is at [LambdaLegal.org/Trump-Judicial-Nominees-Report-2019](https://www.lambdalegal.org/trump-judicial-nominees-report-2019).

Trans, undocumented students can now access college aid

Undocumented and some transgender students can now access state college aid, now that a loophole preventing them from doing so has closed, The Chicago Sun-Times reported.

The new statute—called the Retention of Illinois Students and Equity Act—providing a state mechanism for undocumented and transgender students to apply for Illinois financial aid took effect Jan. 1; however, the program did not actually start until Jan. 6.

Many Illinois students apply for aid using the U.S. Education Department administered program, which allows them to simultaneously apply for both state and federal aid. However, there was no sole application for state aid—meaning those who did not qualify federally could not apply for state-related assistance.

Gov. JB Pritzker signed the measure last June after it passed the General Assembly.

The full article is at <https://chicago.suntimes.com/education/2020/1/7/21055157/transgender-undocumented-students-immigration-state-college-aid-map-illinois-rise-act>.

Me Too movement founder at NU Jan. 27

Me Too movement founder Tarana Burke will keynote Martin Luther King Jr. Dream Week on Monday, Jan. 27.

Burke will speak on the Chicago campus at noon in Northwestern Pritzker School of Law's Thorne Auditorium, 375 E. Chicago Ave., and at 5 p.m. on the Evanston campus at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall, 50 Arts Circle Dr.

The university will commemorate the life and legacy of King with a series of events Jan. 15-28.

Burke has dedicated more than 25 years of her life to social justice and to laying the groundwork for a movement that was initially created to help women of color who survived sexual abuse and assault. The movement now inspires solidarity, amplifies the voices of thousands of victims of sexual abuse and puts the focus on survivors.

Both events are free and open to the public. To attend the Evanston campus event, online reservations are required; visit "Northwestern University MLK Dream Week 2020 Keynote - Tarana Burke" on Eventbrite.



Tarana Burke.
Photo courtesy of NU



@windycitytimes

Cassidy, Lightfoot among those at Pizer kickoff

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Out officials Illinois state Rep. Kelly Cassidy and Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot were among those joining community members, as well as other elected officials, present as openly gay Lake View resident and realtor Jonathan Pizer officially kicked off his bid to represent the 12th District in the Illinois House.

More than 200 persons attended the Jan. 16 event, which filled the "glass bar" at Sidetrack nightclub in Boystown to capacity. Pizer wants the seat that will be vacated by longtime state Rep. Sara Feigenholtz, who has been eyeing a seat in the state Senate. Feigenholtz's seat is being contested, however; openly LGBTQ candidates Ryan Podges and Marty Malone, among others, are also vying to represent the 12th District in the House.

In her remarks, Lightfoot said that she was "all in" in her support of Pizer. She added, "We have to have representation that understands our lives' experiences. ... We owe it to ourselves to support [Pizer's] efforts."

In his remarks, Pizer spoke about myriad issues, among them transgender rights and the increasing number of anti-semitic hate crimes across the nation.

"There are a lot of people who want to turn back the clock," he said. "...We're not going to let that happen."

He added, "Representation matters."

Pizer also spoke of a number of changes he'd like to see implemented at the state government level, among them term limits and restrictions on how soon a politician can register as a lobbyist when they leave office.



Jonathan Pizer.
Photo by Matt Simonette

"When I get to Springfield, we're going to have real ethics reform," he said.

Pizer was introduced by Cassidy, who is co-chairing his campaign. Cassidy said that Pizer "is exactly who we need in the General Assembly. ... I want someone as amazing as Yoni to sit in the chair next to mine, [and] in the office next to mine."

"I commend Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford on a historic run and am proud of her work tackling big challenges for working families. Without Kim's leadership we could not have raised the minimum wage, lifting more than a million Illinoisans out of poverty and I know she has more important work to do as Majority Leader."

State Sen. Robert Peters (D-Chicago) sent a statement to Windy City Times saying, "The new leadership under President Harmon will provide a fresh opportunity to reimagine safety and justice in our community. In 2019, we passed several major criminal justice reforms, but the way I see it, that was only the beginning. There's a lot more work to be done, and I'm confident that President Harmon will be a strong ally in that fight."

In a separate statement, state Sen. Laura Fine (D-Glenview) said, "I am excited to see Senator Harmon take Illinois and the Senate in a new direction, and I know that his experience as a champion of many progressive causes, like health care reform and enhanced public education, will serve our state well."

Don Harmon chosen to lead state Senate

During a special session on Jan. 19, Oak Park Democrat Don Harmon was chosen as the next Illinois Senate president, media outlets reported.

After more than a decade, John Cullerton retired from the position, making way for Harmon.

The selection came down to Harmon and Kimberly Lightford. Lightford—who is also chair of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus—would have been the first woman to lead either chamber of the General Assembly.

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker said in a media release, "With 17 years of experience in the upper chamber, I am confident that Don will ably serve and lead the Senate with a steady hand and hold integrity above all else. A staunch advocate for working families, Don was instrumental in shepherding the most sweeping and consequential legislative agenda through the state senate this past year."

Pritzker also congratulated Lightford, saying,

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Chicago LGBTQ icon/ dance group co-founder Troy Winston dies

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Imported Taste dance group co-founder and LGBTQ icon Troy Winston died Dec. 26, 2019 due to congestive heart failure. He was 56.

Winston was born June 15, 1963, on the South Side of Chicago and moved to the Cabrini-Green projects when he was a toddler. He attended Richard E. Byrd Elementary School and graduated from Wells Community Academy High School. Winston took classes at Wright College, Truman College and Columbia College Chicago for a brief time before embarking on a career as a licensed barber specializing in men's haircuts.

In 1982, Winston and the late Martin Rodriguez created the dance group Imported Taste, while they were in high school, for young people of color and LGBTQ folks to compete for the title of Best Dance Crew at teen clubs Rainbo Roller Rink and Jenals as well as other venues. This was his claim to fame throughout the '80s.

Winston is survived by his siblings Anton Winston, Robert Winston, Stacey Winston and Autumn "Kissy" Haynes; stepfather Jose Haynes; dog Lil Bow Wow; and countless chosen family members and friends. He was preceded in death by his mother, Sarah Francis Winston Haynes.

"Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, James Brown, Celia Cruz, Prince, Aretha Franklin and Troy; the world has lost another legend," friend Curtis Shed stated. "You will always live on in all of our lives. I love you so much and will hold your



Troy Winston.
Photo by Martino Ramos

hand again one day."

"Troy was an icon within our community," said longtime friend and Imported Taste dancer Melanie "Angel" Rolon. "He was an openly gay man with talent beyond words. Growing up in the late '70s and '80s—when times were changing with music, dance and society itself—Troy embraced it



Troy Winston (on float at Pride Parade).
Photo by Lugo Rosado

head on. As long as you could dance, Troy admitted you into his Imported Taste group. Troy took freestyle and House music and combined them into dance routines to share with the world. Other dance groups would compete against us but that did not stop everyone from being the best of friends/family and these bonds are still going strong to this day.

"Additionally, Troy was a huge advocate for helping people experiencing homelessness. He would dress up like Madea and go to Lower Wacker Drive with donated cooked food and feed as many homeless people that he could. Troy—with the help of his former employer, Yohel's Barber-shop—did haircuts for the homeless along with feeding and clothing them while they waited for their turn. Troy had a huge heart and was a person that befriended anyone who graced him with their presence. He will be deeply missed."

"In the early '90s, a friend of [Troy] rented him a bar that he named Troy's Bar on Milwaukee Avenue," said longtime friend Rogelio Velazquez. "This was a place where he could showcase his drag skills. Troy was the ultimate performer. His favorite drag performance was taking on the persona of his idol, disco queen Donna Summer, of which he bore an uncanny resemblance.

"Troy's drag performances were a natural outgrowth of his time with Imported Taste where he became a larger than life persona. His popularity only grew with his love for dance and his exuberance for living life to the fullest. If only Hollywood could have gotten a hold of my friend, he would have set that town on fire. He did appear

as a guest on the Bonnie Hunt talk show in 2008 and later told me that was one of the highlights of his life. I will truly miss my friend."

"Troy was the epitome of a Chicagoan," said longtime friend Byrd Bardot. "He was known and loved from the North Side, West Side, East Side and the South Side. Troy was true 'club royalty'. He made the entire city his playground and gave love to everyone he came across; especially on the dance floor and will be greatly missed by myself and everyone else who knew him."

"Do not get me wrong: Troy was not a saint," said longtime friend and Jenals owner Al Cisneros. "He had flaws. However, he also had the gift of gab, and his personality was larger-than-life. He did not go to parties; he was the party. He was not just someone you knew, he was everybody's friend. The biggest sin he ever made was leaving a hole in the lives of so many by leaving too soon. I will miss him dearly."

"Troy was one of a select few that I can honestly say has been to just about all the major events I have done over the past four decades," said yet another longtime friend, Tony Bitoy. "I am going to miss his energy and spirit on my dance floors. I would say rest easy but we all know that will not happen. Because we know as soon as you walk through those pearly gates, Troy, you will be saying, 'Let's get this party started.' So shine on brother—shine on."

A dance party memorial in celebration of Winston's life happened Jan. 11 at L.A.M.A., at 3519 W. Fullerton Ave. A funeral service took place at Leak & Sons Funeral Homes.



Andrea Perez.
Photo courtesy of IDPH

IDPH welcomes new HIV section chief

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced its new HIV section chief, Andrea Perez.

Perez will play a crucial role in overseeing the administration of HIV surveillance, prevention and diagnosis, and care under Ryan White Part B for IDPH.

Perez brings with her more than 15 years of experience in health care, HIV and state government. Her most recent position was man-

ager of strategic initiatives at Heartland Health Centers in Chicago.

Prior to her role at Heartland, she served at the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) for 10 years in the Division of HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis. While at ISDH, Perez co-authored the Statewide HIV prevention plan and helped to identify and manage the HIV outbreak in Scott County.

Perez will be integral to the successful implementation of the Getting to Zero plan and working with stakeholders, community-based organizations and HIV-impacted people in Illinois.

Access Living names new CEO

Access Living's board of directors announced that Karen Tamley has been named the next president/CEO of Access Living.

Tamley takes the role March 2, bringing experience with advocacy, public funding and policy, having served as commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities in Chicago for 14 years.

Access Living launched a public search for a new president/CEO last fall, after Bristo stepped down; she soon after passed away from cancer, on Sept. 8, 2019.

Established in 1980, Access Living is a disability led change agent committed to fostering an inclusive society that enables Chicagoans with disabilities to live fully-engaged and self-directed lives.

Photos by Carrie Maxwell



Women's March Chicago honors the disabled, highlights key issues

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Women's March Chicago (WMC) kicked off its fourth large-scale march on a wintry Jan. 18 morning in Grant Park.

The march—with more than 50,000 participants—honored people with disabilities and celebrated the historic number of women elected to city, county, state and national office across Illinois over the past two years.

Representing the many women officials across Illinois were Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, U.S. Reps Robin Kelly and Jan Schakowsky, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx, Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller, Illinois state Comptroller Susana Mendoza, Chicago City Treasurer Melissa Conyears-Ervin, Chicago City Clerk Anna Valencia and Metropoli-

tan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Debra Shore. U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin was also a march leader.

The march featured volunteer Wayfinders who assisted people with disabilities as they made their way from Grant Park to Federal Plaza in the Loop. The elected officials served as honorary Wayfinders.

Just before the march stepped off, Lightfoot said, "When people say stupid things that demonize our [LGBTQ] community I am going to speak up every time. This is broader than what happened this week at city council. We have an obligation as leaders to make sure that we are speaking up, expressing our values and having an unambiguous voice about the things that matter to our communities. I am going to continue doing that."

On Jan. 15, Lightfoot criticized aldermen for

objecting to a plan to determine if the LGBT community faces obstacles in obtaining city contracts—with a few aldermen using language that some considered borderline homophobic. For example, Ald. Walter Burnett (27th Ward) said, adding that while transgender business owners likely face discrimination, "white gay males, I don't think they're discriminated against," CBS Chicago reported.

"WMC exists to empower womyn across this city, state and country to use their voice towards the issues that matter most to them," said WMC board member Graciela Guzman. "For us, that means marginalized voices are at the center of our movement: they lead our issue work and tell us what their communities need to feel safe, included and welcomed at the march. Our partners challenge us as a board and community to be transformational in our solidarity: do something and that means not just attending the march.

"We have become strengthened from our coalition building with communities of color, the disability community and the LGBTQ+ community. These are communities that have been disproportionately under attack during this administration and our job is to lift up their voices, causes and solutions to make our communities and country better every day. We all gain so much from not just lifting up their voices but the invaluable expertise they have as some of this country's great-

est champions for justice."

Along the march were signs and supporters highlighting the issues WMC and coalition partners chose to focus on this year—the 2020 Census, climate justice, gun violence prevention, healthcare access and voting. LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS organizations were among the many entities listed as coalition partners on the WMC website.

WMC Board President Jaquie Algee told this publication, "Our goal today was for marchers to leave with a 2020 vision of what they marched for and how they can be actively involved in those issues and others throughout this year to support the 'must get right priorities' for them, their families and community."

See WomensMarchChicago.org.



Above: Marchers heading west on Jackson. Below: Trans rights supporters with the Trans flag. Left: Mayor Lori Lightfoot (left), Rep. Robin Kelly, Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx and Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton.



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Affinity bids outgoing leader goodbye at Burning Bowl

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Affinity Community Services' (Affinity's) annual kick-off event, Burning Bowl, got off to a rousing start with the return of the Drum Divas performance group Jan. 11 at the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center in Bronzeville. This year's theme was "Homecoming 2020."

The event served as a farewell for outgoing Executive Director Imani Rupert-Gordon, who also gave the keynote address. Rupert-Gordon will be moving to San Francisco to take on the role of National Center for Lesbian Rights executive director in the coming weeks.

After Affinity Board Vice President Aisha Davis spoke, Rupert-Gordon delivered her address, speaking about her obsession with the game-changers "who shift the way we think about things"—including people/companies/items such as Serena Williams, Magic Johnson, Southwest Airlines, IKEA and the game show Jeopardy!, specifically contestant James Holzhauer.

"I was at this talk and the person told us to pay attention to the things that give us goosebumps," Rupert-Gordon said. "She said it was how we knew we were getting closer to the things that we love. ... Jeopardy! does not give me goosebumps, but game-changers [like Holzhauer] do. What gives me goosebumps is when we find other people like us and create solutions for our problems so people like us do not have those problems anymore. We do it in a way that changes the game."

Rupert-Gordon said Affinity has been and will continue to be a game-changer. She spoke about



Imani Rupert-Gordon.
Photo by Carrie Maxwell

her journey with Affinity, how she became the executive director and what the organization has taught her and meant to her these past four years.

"Playing in Affinity's garden is one of the most important things I will ever do in my life—and that gives me chills," said Rupert-Gordon.

In addition, noted poet/activist e. nina jay wrote and performed a poem about how she came



At Affinity's Burning Bowl ceremony.
Photo by Carrie Maxwell

to find Affinity.

Affinity Board Treasurer Jas Thurmond and Affinity Board President Anna DeShawn presented the Barbara "Robbie" Smith Award of Excellence to Affinity 40+ peer leader Ann Rowell.

Among other things, Rowell spoke about how Smith, who was a realtor, is the reason why she is now a homeowner, adding that the dwelling and Affinity have been her sanctuaries for many years from the racism, sexism and homophobia that exists in the world. Rowell said that while there has been progress on many fronts society still has a long way to go, and that is why Affinity is such a vital organization.

Affinity Program Coordinator Erma Standley previewed the soon-to-be re-launched Affinity website and merchandise like the "This is Affinity" T-shirts, Affinity 25 co-chairs DeShawn and Mary Morten spoke about some of the "25 Events for 25 Years" they will be coordinating over the calendar year, while Affinity Interim Executive Director Chris Smith honored the work everyone has done to make the organization a success and said "25 years is not a moment, it is a movement."

The burning ceremony, led by Affinity Board member Jovan Watkins and Thurmond, ended the festivities. Attendees were asked to write down their challenges and negative thoughts from the previous year on specially treated paper that was instantly burned with candles over steel bowls.

Attendees were also invited to write letters to themselves that outlined their goals and affirmations for 2020; the letters will be mailed to them this coming summer.

See Affinity95.org/accontent/ and Facebook.com/AffinityCommunityServices for more information.

El to honor Baim, youth center at gala

Equality Illinois will present its annual gala on Saturday, Feb. 1, at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave., starting at 6 p.m.

The organization will honor Tracy Baim—former publisher of Windy City Times and current publisher of the Chicago Reader—for her 35-year career in Chicago journalism; and the Rainbow Cafe LGBT Youth Center in Carbondale for its work on behalf of LGBTQ youth in southern Illinois.

The gala brings together 1,500 people each year to celebrate the power and energy of the LGBTQ community.

Visit EqualityIllinois.us/2020-Gala.

Lightfoot announces cannabis fair

Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot announced that the city will host a first-of-its-kind cannabis resource fair to connect residents with employment and business opportunities, expungement and legal aid assistance, and more information on cannabis regulations and laws within the city.

Led by the mayor's office, the upcoming resource fair, scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 1, at 10 a.m.-3 p.m., will convene cannabis businesses, industry experts, social equity leaders, advocacy groups, government agencies and legal aid organizations from across Chicago and statewide to serve as one-stop-shop for residents interested in joining or learning more about this new and emerging industry.

The fair is open to the public for free and will be hosted at the UIC Forum, 725 W. Roosevelt Rd.

Residents and businesses interested in attending the fair can register at Eventbrite.com/e/city-of-chicago-cannabis-resource-fair-tickets-87807421361.



From left: Chris Smith, Mary Morten, Ann Rowell with her award, Phoenix Matthews and Kim Hunt.
WCT photo

 @windycitytimes



A counterprotestor at the anti-abortion rally. Photo by Matt Simonette

Chicagoans march in counterprotest at anti-abortion rally

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Dozens of Chicagoans, among them members of the LGBT community, turned out in icy rain the afternoon of Jan. 11 to stand in counterprotest against the anti-abortion March for Life rally held in downtown Chicago.

The counter-protestors—organized by a local coalition that included Soundoff, the Gay Liberation Network, the Socialist Feminist Working Group of the Chicago Democratic Socialists of America, Illinois Single Payer Coalition, Physicians for a National Health Program and the Chicago for Abortion Rights—gathered at the corner of Dearborn and Washington Streets about an

hour before the anti-choice rally began.

As the demonstrators marched, activists and other community members spoke about their commitment to fighting for affordable, on-demand abortions for all.

Speaker Linda Jennings of National Nurses United, the U.S.'s largest organization of registered nurses, described her mother's near-deadly unsuccessful abortion attempt, which was nearly a decade before *Roe v. Wade*.

"All I remember is blood everywhere," Jennings recalled. "That moment has been seared in my mind. My mom almost died at the age of 37. ... This was before oral contraceptives, IUD's, school sexual information or drug-store pregnancy tests. It was only condoms, the rhythm method, abstinence or self-inflicted abortions in the bathtub."

Bridget Doherty Trebing of Chicago Teachers Union's (CTU) Women's Rights Committee added, "It is critical that we have control over our own bodies, and can make our own decisions about when, if and how to parent. We understand that abortion is normal. One in four women have had an abortion. We all know and love someone who had had an abortion."

A group of anti-abortion protestors, all wearing ski masks, stood facing the activists and mocked the various chants as the demonstration progressed. When counter-protestors chanted, "Back alleys no more—abortion rights for rich and poor," for example, the anti-abortion folks countered with, "Back alleys no more—don't be a whore."

Andy Thayer of Gay Liberation Network underscored that reproductive rights activists will have to be ever-vigilant and active in 2020, since the U.S. Supreme Court—now including President

Donald Trump's two arch-conservative appointees—will in March hear arguments on a Louisiana case limiting curtailing hospital privileges for abortion providers.

"Movements have been why we've made social change, both in this country and worldwide," Thayer said. "That is why we are out here on a cold, miserable day, in Chicago. We know that when the Supreme Court ratified the demands of the women's movement, it was the women's movement that was the driving force behind that decision in the early '70s. ... [But it was also] truly an intersectional moment that won us that right."

The coalition that planned the Jan. 11 demonstration are in the early stages of planning a March 4 action, coinciding with when the Supreme Court hears arguments for the Louisiana case. A planning meeting will take place Saturday, Feb. 1, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Lozano branch of Chicago Public Library, 1805 S. Loomis St. For more information, see facebook.com/chi4abortionrights or contact chi4abortionrights@gmail.com.

Black Gay Men's Caucus progresses with Prosperity Plan

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Members of Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus were themselves "caucused" in the literal sense at a town hall meeting the evening of Jan. 14.

That meeting—which took place at Stony Island Arts Bank, 6710 S. Stony Island Ave.—was the next step of the caucus' three-year Prosperity Plan. Launched in spring 2019, the plan, according to the organization, "focuses on Black same-gender-loving men to understand how health is impacted by living, working and loving in the City of Chicago."

An initial needs assessment survey carried out by stakeholders throughout 2019 revealed what caucus members perceived to be primary social determinants of health. Those determinants included education, safety, employment, racism and discrimination, finances, health concerns, healthcare [availability] and income.

Participants in the Jan. 14 meeting broke into small groups to discuss initial challenges and goals in the various categories. Caucus officials will develop a specific tactics regarding those categories over the course of 2020; implementation of those actions is slated to take place in 2021. The Prosperity Plan was developed in conjunction with the Chicago-based Morten Group consultancy, and financed with a grant from Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)

The overall project looks at "what's happening all over Chicago with Black gay men and same-gender loving men," said Caucus Chairman David Dodd, and will "tackle the interlink around the social determinants of health that have impact not only on HIV, but our overall health and well-being as Black gay men living and loving in Chicago."



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viewpoints

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THE AMAZON TRAIL

The tabloid edition

Bath Door Balks at Booting Hostage
Hostage Trapped for NINETY-MINUTES
Suspect Subdued with Electrical Weapon

A woman in a remote town in Oregon suffered a harrowing 90 minutes before her rescue by three brave public servants.

The woman, who wishes to remain unnamed for “professional” reasons, reports pounding on the hollow core washroom door and adjacent walls for at least three minutes to alert her lesbian “wife” about the ongoing crime.

The crestfallen wife, who also declined to give her name due to her humiliating failure to rescue the hostage, said she was elsewhere in the home, running water, hearing aids off. When the sounds of distress eventually reached her, she tore through the house in search of her damsel in distress.

The hostage complained she’d “[n]ever locked the stupid door in the first place.”

Her wife confessed, “There was no simple fix from the mistress bedroom side. That d-mn entryway might as well have been cemented shut.”

Close inspection revealed an unusual door closure. Eerily, instead of the emergency mechanism in normal doorknobs, this one merely offered a dummy device that could be turned manually, but had no function.

“It was decorative only,” was the wife’s amiable comment when the crisis was later resolved. “Bless their hearts, you know how some male designers like their deco.”

The suspect, a slim six-footer, had planned well; the windows in that room are arched and tinted, but do not open.

“Decorative again,” said the wife, later, with a wink.

She reported that her job during the calamity was to run back and forth to the garage, ferrying tools from a well-appointed toolbox. Together, with little ingenuity and much blunt force, wife and wife wriggled screwdrivers and other small tools under the door, but they were no match for the rugged culprit.

The suspect showed no mercy. As the desperate hostage struggled to escape, she was injured. Trying to staunch the outpouring of blood, she cried out for the wife to fetch a weapon, stipulating their heaviest claw hammer. The wife, so armed, swung ruthlessly at the suspect, swung again and again, battering the offender beyond recognition.

The hostage attempted every available solution to defeat her restraints. “I was sweating and bleeding and in great pain,” she said. The offender did not relent.

Despondent, the hostage managed a weak, vanquished plea to call the authorities. She dressed as she waited. About 10 minutes later, three uniformed men confronted the perpetrator. There was to be no

negotiation, no SWAT team, no bullhorns or crowd control.

But it wasn’t over yet. This was a wily miscreant. The men plied and prodded with screwdrivers, flashlights and penknives. They were as stymied as the occupants had been. The door remained closed. The officers had no choice but to storm the bastion.

One courageous man returned to the truck for a newly issued battery-operated weapon, surplus from the military, he said. Once in hand, the siege was over in no time. The latch apparatus, a spring-loaded cylinder used to open and close the door, had malfunctioned. In other words, the spring had sprung. The door was intact; the offending mechanism marched out to the metal bin for recycling.

At her release, the hostage was asked if she planned to press charges. “No. We fundraised for that electric saw and look how it’s come in handy.”

“You can’t beat a rural fire department,” the wife remarked, “for their bravado and know-how.”

Leaving, one of the firefighters agreed. “Because who keeps screwdrivers and saws in their bathroom?”

The freed hostage jerry-rigged a door handle with a thick washcloth that had no possibility of locking whatsoever and therefore no probability of going haywire. The couple plans to buy more.

“This one’s white for surrender. Next will be Red for Valentine’s Day,” said the freed woman.

“And green for St. Patrick’s.”

“Most importantly, rainbow for Pride.”

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1/20

letters

Impeachment

Dear Editor:

President Donald J. Trump has been impeached. These words, for me, mean an intentional check on Trump’s efforts to corrupt the 2020 election.

Dec. 18 was a reckoning for my ancestors who lived on a farm in Georgia in slavery, Jim Crow and civil-rights efforts of the 1960s. The impeachment is a defense of my mother’s and father’s efforts to register people to vote throughout Ohio; and their standing up to the police officer who stopped them

and flattened the car tires and stabbed the car seats telling them to never be caught in Xenia, Ohio.

It’s about my Aunt Florence Blackshear, who, during every election, could be seen at the East High School monitoring voting. The impeachment of Donald J. Trump is the defense of our democracy and our very republic.

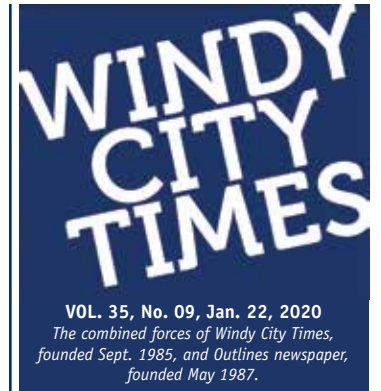
As an advocate for justice, I also see this impeachment is for every queer person who knows and understands that the Republican defense of this president is about hatred directed toward LGBTQI persons. The impeachment is about every Black and Brown person who understands the legacy that we

live under that is in jeopardy because of racism and white supremacy building and supporting systems of oppression.

The impeachment is about every Latinx family who has been living in fear of ICE for the past three years, and whose only “crime” is wanting to make a better life. This is not about hatred of Donald J. Trump, but about a love for our democracy and for the people who depend on it!

Blessings,
T.J. Williams-Hauger, M.Div

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



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ARTS + THEATER



KJ Whitehead.
Photo by Lindsay Williams

'The Haggard Unicorn:'

Queer trans comic talks representation, hurdles

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

KJ Whitehead wants to see unrepresented voices take over the comedy world and her latest project, *The Haggard Unicorn*, is a reflection of that ambition.

"Something strange. Something different. Something radical," she said when asked to describe the show, taking place Friday, Jan. 31, at The Salon. "Those who know me will know that the openers for this show are all a reflection of me and who I feel I am in one way or another."

Whitehead—who identifies as a queer trans woman—has been performing for the past six years in Chicago and around the Midwest and has never been what one would call a "classic standup comedian." Instead, she's focused her work on "what comedy can be." The performers joining her for *The Haggard Unicorn* all focus on sharing their unique experiences through comedy in their own ways as well.

"The host, Arts & Culture Club's Devin Middleton, is a musician/comedian that represents my pride in my Black culture and heritage," Whitehead said. "Chicago comedy newcomer Jolly Bean is my joy in being different and just doing what makes me happy, and hoping I can brighten up someone else's day doing it. Then we have the co-founder—producer and house member of *Bad Taste, Mo Less*—a burlesque performer who lives within the extreme and absurd and doesn't hold that part of their being back for anyone, nor should they."

In *The Haggard Unicorn*, Whitehead continues to mine her personal experiences, telling *Windy City Times* she's endured several crises. "This year, I've been diagnosed with PTSD; I've attempted suicide; I've lost a friend to cancer; I've faced racism and transphobia in the workplace; was suspended from my teaching job at Second City under accusations that I was bullying my students because

I critiqued their work—which, unfortunately, they don't seem to understand that critique coming from their cisgender, white instructors will go over easier than from someone like me; lost all my money from unemployment, [dealt with the] lack of opportunity for Black and Brown trans people; and [was part of] the recent CTU strike. Oh, and I had a really bad breakup. That's a few of the things going into this show."

While Whitehead is processing her own experiences through her work on stage, she said she is also working to change the face of comedy: "So, this show very much is inspired by my life experiences and what I wish to see in the comedy world today: a complete takeover of unrepresented voices."

Whitehead said she's seen comics put in half the time as she has and surpass her in terms of opportunities, so she knows the road ahead is long—but she won't give up.

"The biggest challenge is to keep doing it, even if no one notices," she said. "Honestly, it doesn't feel like enough people notice. When I work my ass off for several years and comics come along who have been doing this in less than half the time I have and they get a club spot or a festival I worked really hard on the submission for, not enough people have noticed. When I, a Black transgender woman, have to work twice as hard to get booked as a white or white-passing counterpart, not enough people have noticed me. This challenge hasn't really evolved so much as it has been added upon."

"So many folks want to say that they support QTPOC [queer and trans people of color who] are performers, but our comedy circuit has trouble finding them? C'mon! We're here! Support us! That's what I'm not seeing. That's what's lacking. The support of a community that says it cares but doesn't really know

Turn to page 21

THEATER REVIEW

The Gulf

Playwright: Audrey Cephaly

At: Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: AboutFacetheatre.org

Price: \$32

Runs through: Feb. 15

BY KAREN TOPHAM

You walk into the theater and the first thing you see is veteran actress Kelli Simpkins standing on an old, worn-out motor boat repeatedly casting a fishing rod while Deanna Myers lies in the back of the boat reading *What Color Is Your Parachute?*

Scenic designer Joe Schermoly has surrounded the dilapidated boat with buckets of water, obviously there to let the actors create the illusion of actually floating somewhere and to tell us that, though they are not in the open sea, they might as well be. For however long it takes until the play begins, they remain in their own private worlds. This is how their characters, Kendra and Betty, find themselves in Audrey Cephaly's *The Gulf*: two lovers adrift in their lives.

The broken-down boat clashes with the self-help career choice book in a quiet, subtle manner, much the same as the passive-aggressive way in which Betty endlessly suggests possible new

Deanna Myers and Kelli Simpkins in *The Gulf*.

Photo by Michael Brosilow

careers for Kendra, who she feels is wasting her life in a meaningless job. Betty is about to go to a community college to get a degree, but Kendra, with no similar ambitions, is content to float through life doing only enough to afford her the

ings for her, is threatened with internment. Lily shields him, but Christopher—his father lost in the South Pacific—reports them to the local sheriff (T. J. Anderson, who doubles on trumpet).

Under musical director Micky York, the singing and playing are excellent. There are charming instrumental combinations of, say, bass clarinet and horn or reeds and harp, and the singing ghosts—played by Mikaela Sullivan and Black Button Eyes veteran Kevin Webb—drive the show along.

But the pleasant, jazz-influenced score isn't especially memorable, and Christopher and Yasuhiro hardly sing a note. The entire cast is only six people so they all need to carry some musical weight. In addition, much of the music and lyrics describe situations or past history rather than expressing the emotions or desires of the characters. Time is spent on the ghosts' backstory although they don't influence the story's outcome. Rule #1 of drama, remember, is "show us, don't tell us."

Beyond the music, the dramatic conflict is heavy-handed and the characters are not especially well-developed. The racist sheriff is a bludgeon and Christopher is a child without charm. The actors don't have a lot with which to work, and director Ed Rutherford can't fill in the missing pieces.

There's a good scenic design in the intimate studio theater by Nikolaj Sorensen, who combines a semi-abstract seascape with a false proscenium arch to create a space for the band in back—as if they were in the ocean—and the rough-hewn lighthouse interior in front.

Like other Black Button Eyes shows, *Whisper House* is stylishly executed but may be for die-hard Duncan Sheik fans.

time to fish in the Alabama coastal shallows.

It takes only minutes for the two seasoned actors to establish these characters. Betty, the talkative half of this pair, flits between subjects with ease, filling the empty space with conversation that Myers peppers with childlike, sing-songy elucation suggesting someone not entirely sure of herself. Meanwhile, Kendra's contributions are

THEATER REVIEW

Stop Kiss

Playwright: Diana Son

At: Arc Theatre/Pride Films and Plays at the Pride Arts Buena, 4147 N. Broadway

Tickets: \$30-\$40

Runs through: Feb. 9

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

What could be more romantic than love at first sight, unless it's love poised on the verge of bloom, only to suffer calamity before its opportunity to blossom? Love that refuses to surrender, though! Love that stubbornly thrives, stunted but steadfast, to ultimately triumph over adversity—now that's romantic! It's no impediment, either, when the lovers are young, hip, relentlessly charming women whose affections reflect an indisputable social message.

Our protagonist is sleek, cosmopolitan New Yorker Callie, whose go-along-to-get-along attitude has not hindered her acquiring a degree from NYU, a job as a TV traffic newscaster and a rent-controlled apartment in the West Village—material gains mostly facilitated by other people's incentive. Our precipitator is Sara, a St. Louis native brimming with enthusiastic aspirations for making the world a better place, starting with a prized teaching position in a Bronx grade school. The two meet when Callie agrees to cat-sit for Sara, triggering an immediate mutual rapport. As their camaraderie gradually intensifies, however, we dread the moment—revealed by the playwright at the very outset—when a homophobic hate crime will threaten to destroy all

often terse and uninflected as Simpkins creates her more contemplative character. When a broken motor strands the two on the water overnight, they find themselves facing some difficult truths involving their relationship, their motivations, and their fidelity to each other.

Two-person plays can be inherently a bit claustrophobic, but *The Gulf's* claustrophobia is somewhat ironic: though they literally have an entire sea surrounding them, the women are confined to the tiny space of their stalled boat. Director Megan Carney makes the most of this limitation, using it both to bring them together and to pull them apart. Much of the time, Betty and Kendra confine themselves to their own ends of the boat, remaining separate while together.

Relationships are tricky to build and trickier to maintain; it's easy to wake up one day and discover that you've drifted further apart than you ever realized. Both women would like their relationship to continue. There is even a dreamy Titanic-like moment that finds them entwined with each other at the boat's bow, locked in a loving dance under lighting designer Rachel Levy's starlight. But the moment passes, and the play leaves them nearly dashed to pieces on waves of anger before their relationship drifts on without any sign of resolution.

The Gulf is as much about the gulf between these two lovers as it is about the Gulf of Mexico in which they float without the power to move on seemingly destined to remain in this limbo forever.

potential for a future together.

A narrative structured in alternating time frames, its individual scenes flowing freely between flashbacks of happier times and a present fraught with foreboding, can make for cognitive delay while we struggle to locate ourselves in our dramatic universe, but an advantage to its fluidity is that the swift changes in mood never allow us to become bogged down in gloomy anticipation. On the contrary, the frequent reminders of Sara's propensity for nudging people out of their comfort zones and Callie's increasing willingness to embark on new experiences, are what sustain our hopes, much as they do those of the soulmates about whom we have come to care deeply.

This joint Arc Theatre/Pride Films & Plays production features a creative team helmed by director Kanome Jones with an assurance keeping the stage picture vibrant and engaging for every second of its 90-minute duration. Kylie Anderson and Flavia Pallozzi embody warmth and charisma to evoke an atmosphere of sunny nostalgia (enhanced by the script's name-checking of its neighborhood landmarks), while Joe Faifer and Shane Novoa Rhoades deftly skirt stereotype in their portrayals of assorted clueless males, as does Sheila Landahl in the role of a sympathetic elderly bystander.

Diana Son probably didn't suspect in 1998 that her play, set in up-to-the minute contemporary surroundings, would find itself, decades hence, rediscovered by new generations taking heart from its lessons in courage and constancy. Indeed, far from being irrelevant in light of the progress enjoyed today, fables of enduring love have not diminished with age, but may be more important than ever.

Sean Hayes at Feb. 5 Goodman event

Goodman Theatre, now in its 95th season, will host the "Legacy & Promise" Education and Engagement Luncheon Wed., Feb. 5, featuring Emmy-winning and Tony-nominated actor Sean Hayes. The event will take place at The Palmer House Hilton, 17 E. Monroe St., at noon.

Hayes is best known for his role as Jack McFarland on the NBC sitcom *Will & Grace*, for which he won a Primetime Emmy Award and four SAG Awards, along with six Golden Globe nominations.

Tickets start at \$250 each; call 312-443-3811 ext. 220. Proceeds benefit Education and Engagement at the Goodman.



Sean Hayes.
Photo courtesy of Goodman Theatre

Patin at Hyde Park through Feb. 28

Hyde Park Art Center, 5020 S. Cornell Ave., is welcoming Nikki Patin as its new flex space resident through Feb. 28, 2020; she will be developing ongoing performative work combining text, music and movement.

Patin is a writer, performer and educator whose practice addresses issues of body image, sexual assault and the needs of the LGBTQ community. Also, she is the creator of *Surviving the Mic*—an organization dedicated to creating safe spaces for the creation and telling of stories of survivors of all kinds of trauma, with a special focus on Black- and female-identified survivors of sexual and domestic violence.

Patin was featured on the fourth season of HBO's *Def Poetry Jam*; has been one of *Windy City Times* 30 under 30 honorees; and took the gold medal in the poetry-slam competition at the 2006 Gay Games.

See HydeParkArt.org.

Young Playwrights Festival running through Jan. 25

Pegasus Theatre Chicago is presenting the 33rd Young Playwrights Festival through Saturday, Jan. 25, at The Courtyard Theatre in The Getz Theater Center at Columbia College Chicago, 72 E. 11th St.

SPOTLIGHT



Glamorous young widow Hannah Glawari has all the money to save the bankrupt country of Pontevedro, but all she wants is a reunion with her childhood sweetheart, Count Danilo. After many complications, Franz Lehar's evergreen, ravishing 1905 operetta, **The Merry Widow**, concludes with a party at Paris's Café de Maxim's. The original 1907 New York and Chicago productions starred Lina Abarbanell, distant cousin of WCT's theater editor. In this new production at the McAninch Arts Center (The Mac) in Glen Ellyn, the lusty widow is played by soprano Alisa Suzanne Jordheim with baritone Jesse Donner as Count Danilo, heading an ensemble of 35, accompanied by the New Philharmonic under Maestro Kirk Muspratt. The production is staged by Michael La Tour and is sung in English. Performances of *The Merry Widow* are Jan. 24, 25 and 26. Tickets: 630-942-4000; AtTheMAC.org; \$59.

Photo: Costume designs for *The Merry Widow* by Kimberly G. Morris



Lisean 'Ling Ling' McElrath in Clause 42.
Photo courtesy of Pegasus Theatre Chicago

The Young Playwrights Festival (YPF) celebrates the 33rd year of the program that aims to inspire Chicago students to explore their histories, research their communities and mine their personal journeys to write dynamic one-act plays for the

stage.

The 2020 festival includes full productions of winning plays from the annual playwriting competition for high-school-age writers in Chicago. Pegasus Theatre Chicago professionally produces three one-act plays. The second oldest such festival in the country, this annual tradition regularly receives more than 500 submissions from Chicago-area teens. From those, the winning playwrights are chosen to connect, workshop and produce their production with professional artists.

Tickets are \$18 for students, \$25 for seniors and \$30 for general admission; visit PegasusTheatreChicago.org or call 773-878-8864.

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King
Princess.
Photo by
Vince Aung

NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

King Princess: Ruling the musical realm

BY JERRY NUNN

Born in Brooklyn, New York and raised in the studio thanks to a recording engineer father, Mikaela Mullaney Straus eventually evolved into pop singer King Princess.

In 2018, she released the single “1950—a tribute to the Patricia Highsmith novel *The Price of Salt* by and to the LGBT community. One Direction’s Harry Styles tweeted a lyric from the song that brought her international attention. Her career took off, and she was signed to Mark Ronson’s label Zelig Records.

Her debut studio album, *Cheap Queen*, brought fans a variety of songs about happiness, heart-break and bottoming.

Windy City Times: Where did the name King Princess come from?

King Princess: I was in the studio when I was 14 years old with my friend Doug. We would say, “This is King Princess Day” and it would set the mood of whatever song we were working on. I realized later that it was just me in general.

WCT: I met you briefly at Lollapalooza.

KP: Cute—I had so much fun!

WCT: You played a set at Berlin Nightclub afterward.

KP: Yes. I always enjoy playing in Chicago. I feel there’s an energy about it. It’s kind of grungy, like New York.

WCT: Are your live shows like Berlin Nightclub, with a variety of types in attendance?

KP: There’s a dominant gay and female vibe at the shows. I had never gone to events that were directed toward gay women even though, for a long time, I identified strongly as a lesbian. That wasn’t the community I felt welcomed into.

Lesbians are traditionally stereotyped with us being academic and into books. Which is fine, but I feel that the gay women who are at my shows embody that queerness with a type of excitement. It makes me happy that queer women are queening out and busting it.

I’ve seen more trans inclusion at the recent shows, which makes me happy. I feel my crowd is diverse, but it can always be more. We can do better.

I think with drag and club culture reemerging into popular media, it’s a lot easier for gay women to feel included in traditionally male or queer environments. For me it’s the most fun to see gays, lesbians and trans people coming together to dance.

My shows are really safe. There’s no violence and everyone’s nice to each other. People make friends, which is really cool. I can’t name a show where people are really kind to each other in a crowd like that.

WCT: Do you want Chicagoans to bring rainbow flags to the concert, like they have in the past?

KP: Oh, they will. We have a whole wardrobe kit that we dedicate to fan stuff.

WCT: I heard Cody Critchelo, also known as SSION, made the sets for your tour.

KP: Cody and I are both theatrical. We wanted the richness of theater sets. When you look at old rock ‘n’ roll shows, they had worthy set pieces that were physical. They weren’t projection screen-based, obviously because of the time period.

We wanted to have pieces that felt like a weird circus ornament. We had to brainstorm on how we could bring that theatricality and three-



dimensional vibe to the stage, but still making it rock ‘n’ roll with something decrepit about it. There are hands with dripping red nails—which is very gay, rich and lux.

The backdrop is something Cody painted. I love the idea that when you go see a play a backdrop is painted to look like a forest or a lake. That was important to have a nature element to it.

WCT: Do you have a favorite cover song on this tour?

KP: I haven’t done a cover song in a while, because I’m getting through a lot of material from my record and EP at my shows. I did do a cover of Perfume Genius’ “Queen” that was really fun.

WCT: Why is the “Useless Phrases” song so short?

KP: Because it’s an interlude.

WCT: But I want it to be a full song.

KP: Me, too—but that’s why you need to stream it over and over again.

WCT: Which I do.

KP: I know you do. I can totally tell! [Laughs]

WCT: Why are there so many downtempo tracks on the album *Cheap Queen*?

KP: I have been thinking about this as I work on more music. There’s one song for the gays and then one for the sad dykes. These are two very prominent parts of myself that I can pay homage to. For this album, this was reflective of how I felt. I felt sad and downtempo.

My next project is not going to be like that. It was cool, but I don’t necessarily want to do the same thing for long periods of time. With my background, I look at myself as a musicologist. I love the history of music. I want to reference shit that makes me smile. My taste is eclectic and so is my music.

WCT: It must be amazing working with Mark Ronson, with his eclectic style.

KP: Mark is an amazing mentor for a lot of reasons. I’m a young producer coming up under him. I played some stuff for him yesterday. I want to do him proud. He’s a DJ, so I keep him in mind. Like you were saying, some songs of mine are slow, but I want to make stuff that he would spin. I think that’s the highest honor for him to say he would spin a song of mine.

WCT: Who is your best friend for the dance video of your song “Hit the Back?”

KP: Oh, Henry Metcalf. He’s my Judy. He’s great because he’s a teacher and a friend. Dancing with him has been really freeing. If you are someone like me, my femininity has been learned. It wasn’t inherent. I think that meeting people like Henry, who defy gender or any type of binary, was an experience where saw each other eye to eye in so many ways. We are two people that exist in between. So much is unspoken without having massive discussions about who we are. The proof is in the pudding.

WCT: How do you identify now?

KP: I identify as gay. But if you want to get technical, I’m definitely a genderqueer person.

WCT: I saw a RuPaul picture in your video. Do you have a favorite Drag Race queen?

KP: I love so many of them. I love Bianca [del Rio] and Jinx [Monsoon]. They are all so talented.

My mom bought me an authenticated RuPaul headshot and my girlfriend had it framed. I love it and it’s in my kitchen. She watches me cook!

WCT: I will invite some of the local Chicago RuPaul Drag Racers to your show.

KP: Absolutely. I have learned a lot from drag with my live shows. It’s been a huge part of my life. I think the best way to pay homage to that is give local queens a time slot in my concert to show their stuff. I think it’s important to have that energy at my shows. It hypes me up. The only thing I want to watch before my show is that. It’s helpful!

WCT: Do you feel about opening for Harry Styles on the European part of his tour this year?

KP: I’m very excited and I feel it’s a really good pairing. He’s a very kind person. I’m not an opener. I’m a fucking main act, but if I have to open for somebody, it would have to be Harry!

King Princess rules at Riviera Theatre, 4746 N. Racine Ave., on Wed., Feb. 5, at 7:30 p.m. Ticket information can be found at RivieraTheatre.com.

Mayor appoints new members to city's cultural advisory council

The Chicago City Council approved the appointments made by Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot to the Cultural Advisory Council of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), including Council Chair Amina J. Dickerson and Vice Chair Alison Cuddy.

The appointees are a diverse group of Chicagoans from across the city representing a broad cross-section of arts genres. They include practicing artists, representatives from major cultural organizations, neighborhood and community organizations, and the community at large.

New council members include:

- Paola Aguirre Serrano, founding principal, Borderless Studio
- Alison Cuddy, artistic director, Chicago Humanities Festival
- Sandra Delgado, theater artist, writer, actor and producer
- Amina J. Dickerson, president, Dickerson Global Advisors
- Juan Días, co-founder and executive director, Sonos de Mexico Ensemble
- Bob Faust, owner, Faust and Special Projects Director, Nick Cave Studio



Alison Cuddy.

Courtesy of the Chicago Humanities Festival

- Robert Gomez, owner, Subterranean/Beat Kitchen/Underbar
- Esther Grisham Grimm, executive director, 3Arts
- Tracie D. Hall, director of the culture program, Joyce Foundation
- Akilah S. Halley, executive director, Marwen
- Tempestt Hazel, arts program officer, Field Foundation of Illinois



Kevin Iega Jeff.
Photo by
Ken Carl

- Kevin Iega Jeff, creative director, Deeply Rooted Productions
- Ginger Lane, arts & culture project director, Access Living
- Josephine Lee, president & artistic director, Chicago Children's Choir
- Tonika Lewis Johnson, artist, Folded Map Project
- Bill Michel, associate vice president and executive director of UChicago Arts and the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, University of Chicago
- Heather A. Miller, executive director, American Indian Center
- Cesareo J. Moreno, chief curator and visual arts director, National Museum of Mexican Art
- Margaret C. Murphy-Webb, executive director/co-founder, South Side Jazz Coalition
- Coya Paz, artistic director, Free Street Theater

- Claire C. Rice, executive director, Arts Alliance Illinois
- Silvia Rivera, managing director, Vocalo
- Myrna Salazar, co-founder and executive director, Chicago Latino Theater Alliance
- David Schmitz, executive director, Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- Jennifer A. Scott, director/chief curator, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, University of Illinois at Chicago
- Paul J. Szniewajs, executive director, Ingenuity
- Vivian Teng, managing director, Cinema/Chicago and the Chicago International Film Festival
- Omar Torres-Kortright, executive director, Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center
- Tanner Woodford, founder/executive director, Design Museum of Chicago
- One additional member to be named later

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Actors honor their own at 2019 SAG Awards

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The acclaimed South Korean thriller *Parasite* won the Screen Actors Guild's (SAG) Award for outstanding performance by a motion picture cast the evening of Jan. 19, the first time that peer honor has been given to a foreign-language film. The ceremony was held at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles.

On the movie side, a number of the SAG honorees otherwise duplicated those who were previously honored at the Golden Globes on Jan. 5, and are favorites to win further accolades at the Oscars on Feb. 9. Those persons include Joaquin Phoenix (Outstanding Male Performance in a Leading Role) for his acclaimed turn as Batman's future arch-enemy in *Joker*, and Renee Zellweger (Outstanding Female Performance for a Leading Role), for her portrayal of iconic performer Judy Garland in *Judy*.

"I'm so grateful for the privilege of reflecting on the life of one of our own, and one our most beloved," said Zellweger, who was accepting her third SAG honor. "Judy Garland, 50 years later, your community is thinking of you tonight."

Other film honorees included Brad Pitt and Laura Dern, for their supporting turns in *Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood* and *Marriage Story*, re-

spectively.

On the television side, Sam Rockwell and Michelle Williams were both honored for their lead performances as Broadway legends Bob Fosse and Gwen Verdon in the FX miniseries "Fosse/Verdon." Peter Dinklage was awarded Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Lead Role for Drama for his turn as Tyrion Lannister on *Game of Thrones*. Jennifer Anniston won Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Lead Role for Drama for *The Morning Show*. Anniston beat out Jodie Comer, who played a lesbian assassin on *Killing Eve*.

Phoebe Waller-Bridge continued her sweep-up through various awards shows this season; she won Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Lead Role for Comedy for *Fleabag*. Tony Shalhoub won for lead actor in a comedy program for *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*; that series won Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series. *The Crown* won Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series.

As is the trend with many awards programs recently, there was no host at this year's SAG Award ceremony. For a list of nominees and winners, see <https://www.sagawards.org/nominees-and-recipient/26th-annual-screen-actors-guild-awards>.



Marc Patton in *Scream, Queen! My Nightmare on Elm Street*.
Photo ©2019 Scream Queens

LGBTQ critics name film, TV honorees

GALECA: The Society of LGBTQ Entertainment Critics—composed of 260 mainly U.S. journalists covering film and television—named its final-round choices for 2019's finest movies, performances and more across a host of mainstream and LGBTQ-focused categories.

South Korean director Bong Joon-ho's *Parasite* won in five categories, including Film of the Year, Director and Screenplay. Renee Zellweger took Performance of the Year—Actress for *Judy*, with Antonio Banderas the top choice in the actor race. The Society's Rising Star of the year was deemed to be Florence Pugh (*Little Women*).

Among the professional LGBTQ journalists group's trademark categories, *Booksmart* scored as Unsung Film of the Year, while *Cats* took the Campy Flick of the Year category. FX's *Pose* again won TV Drama of the Year and LGBTQ TV Drama for the second year—and its star Billy Porter took another Dorian win as well—while Comedy Central's *The Other Two* was named best Unsung TV Show. Amazon's *Fleabag* was anointed TV Comedy of the Year, with star-creator Phoebe Waller-Bridge reigning as TV Performance of the Year—Actress and *Wilde Wit* of the Year.

Lady Gaga won a special vote as *Wilde Artist of the Decade*. Gaga's duet with Bradley Cooper on "Shallow" at last year's Oscars also counted with the group as the TV Musical Performance of the Year.

Olivia Wilde, the first-time director of *Booksmart*, will be receiving a special honor at the group's Dorian Awards Winners Toast on Sunday, Feb. 2, in Los Angeles.

The full list of winners is below:

- Film of the Year: *Parasite*
- Director of the Year: Bong Joon-ho, *Parasite*
- Film Performance of the Year—Actress: Renee Zellweger, *Judy*
- Film Performance of the Year—Actor: Antonio Banderas, *Pain and Glory*
- Film Performance of the Year— Supporting Actress:

Jennifer Lopez, *Hustlers*

—Film Performance of the Year—Supporting Actor: Song Kang-ho, *Parasite*

—LGBTQ Film of the Year: *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*

—Foreign Language Film of the Year: *Parasite*

—Screenplay of the Year: Bong Joon-ho and Han Jin-won, *Parasite*

—Documentary of the Year: *Honeyland*

—LGBTQ Documentary of the Year: *Scream, Queen! My Nightmare on Elm Street*



Beanie Feldstein, Kaitlyn Dever in *Booksmart*.

Photo by Annapurna Pictures

—Visually Striking Film of the Year: (tie) *1917* and *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*

—Unsung Film of the Year: *Booksmart*

—Campy Flick of the Year: *Cats*

—TV Drama of the Year: *Pose*

—TV Comedy of the Year: *Comedy*

—TV Performance of the Year—Actor: Billy Porter, *Pose*

—TV Performance of the Year—Actress: Phoebe Waller-Bridge, *Fleabag*

—LGBTQ TV Show of the Year: *Pose*

—Unsung TV Show of the Year: *The Other Two*

—TV Current Affairs Show of the Year: *Leaving Neverland*

—TV Musical Performance of the Year: Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga, "Shallow," The 91st Academy Awards

—Campy TV Show of the Year: *The Politician*

—The "We're Wilde About You!" Rising Star Award: Florence Pugh

—Wilde Wit of the Year: Phoebe Waller-Bridge

—Wilde Artist of the Decade (Special Accolade): Lady Gaga

—Timeless Star (Career achievement award): Catherine O'Hara

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Yehuda Jacobi.
Photo by Matt Simonette

Area author Jacobi addresses love, loss in acclaimed book

BY MATT SIMONETTE

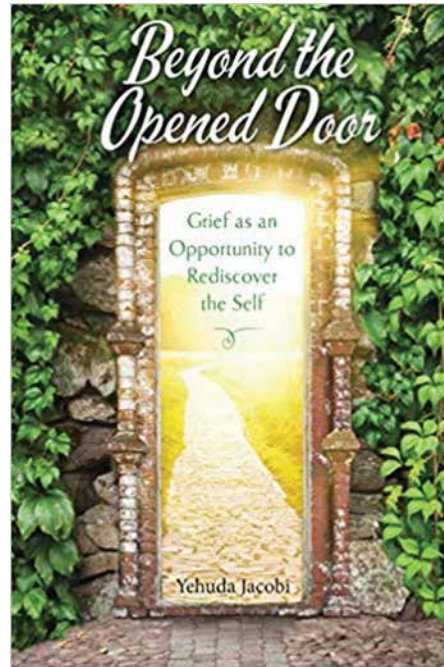
Glenview-based author Yehuda Jacobi often received some pivotal advice from his late partner, Arthur.

Jacobi recently recalled that Arthur would say, "Everybody is going through something. You may not see it in their face. Give them the benefit of the doubt, and if you can help them, do so, as long as you don't compromise your own integrity."

Jacobi wrote a book addressing how he came to terms with Arthur's death, tackling one of humankind's most complex emotional processes, grief.

That book, *Beyond the Opened Door: Grief as an Opportunity to Rediscover the Self*, traces how Jacobi processed Arthur's loss and reconnected with his positive memories of their time together. Jacobi also wrote about living with HIV and his subsequent relationship with Michael, to whom he is now married.

Beyond the Open Door "covers the four steps of the grieving process, but I think it covers



much more than that," Jacobi said. "It covers how you can rediscover yourself after someone so important in your life, who has been with you for so long, suddenly leaves this earth. It doesn't matter how they die—you still have challenges ahead of you."

Jacobi came to numerous revelations as he grieved for Arthur. Foremost was, "I realized that I had laid an awfully large amount of guilt on myself," he recalled. "I learned to resolve that guilt, and learned that I'm stronger than I realized—and better than I realized. But I punished myself a lot, for all the things that I didn't do for him."

In journaling, Jacobi realized all that he had contributed to Arthur's well-being.

"I was there for him for many situations where he was struggling," Jacobi said. "He had a weight problem; that never bothered me. He would go into these periods of depression and I would say, 'I love you just the way you are—you're fine.' It was that sort of thing. These little [recollections] start creeping up as you move away from the grieving process, and you remember, 'I did do this, and this is a good thing.'"

Beyond the Open Door has won Jacobi two literary awards. He recently retired from his job as an accountant and will keep on writing.

"I don't need people to agree with me, but there's something in the book that will make people think—and make them think differently," Jacobi said. "If you stimulate your thoughts and open a door, you might discover some things about yourself that you didn't know before."

Show examines life of Barbara Jordan

The life of the late lawyer, educator and politician Barbara Jordan will be examined in City Lit Theatre's *Voice of Good Hope*.

Voice of Good Hope is being described as "a dramatic portrait" of Jordan's life.

Jordan (1936-96) was the first African American elected to the Texas Senate and the first Southern African American woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Jordan (who was lesbian) is best known for her opening statement at the House Judiciary Committee hearings during the impeachment process against Nixon.

Performances will take place through Feb. 23, at the venue 1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., with previews Jan. 10-18. For tickets, visit <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4254900>.



@windycitytimes





Anthony Arnoni.
Photos courtesy of Arnoni

'Positive reactions' follow local hockey player coming out

BY ROSS FORMAN

Anthony Arnoni is the senior skating king for the co-op Leyden Eagles, a four-year varsity hockey player in jersey No. 22 who shoots left-handed and plays defense.

The 17-year-old Franklin Park resident attends East Leyden High School and still is undecided on his schooling plans for next fall.

"It is very hard to pinpoint one single memory, but I would definitely say that the state hockey tournaments have been my favorite," he said.

The 2020 Illinois High School Hockey State Tournament kicks off in late January, culminating with the state championship at the United Center in March. Arnoni and the Eagles will look to

upend defending Combined Division State Champion Waubonsie/Metea—a tall task, as the reigning champions have been ranked in the state's Top 25 all season and Waubonsie/Metea features some of the most skilled players in Illinois.

Arnoni's final state tournament also will be his first as an openly gay hockey player.

"I slowly started to come out to individual people, [beginning] with my best friend Julie in December 2018. After that I [told] my closest friends until [last] March when I finally made an Instagram post for everyone to see," Arnoni said. "My coming out wasn't a normal coming out. Typically, when people [come out], especially in the [sports] world, there is a stigmatism or hesitation that other people [might not face]. In my case, I had an immediate outpouring of positive reactions. My family, friends, coaches, teammates and others were super happy. I figured the locker room atmosphere would change, and I couldn't have been more wrong. Everyone was extremely [supportive]; you would have thought nothing had happened."

Arnoni said coming-out instantly changed his life—for the better.

"School became easier; hanging out with friends became stress-free, and life just got more fun," he said. "It definitely was the right thing to do for my mental health."

And his hockey, too, which dates to his younger years skating for the Franklin Park Panthers.

Arnoni praised Leyden head coach Pat Terretta and the entire coaching staff. They talked to him after coming-out and Terretta said that if he needed anything, they will be there for him. "My coaches reassured me that they are by my side."

His teammates also have been supportive, starting with his defensive partner Daniel Determann, a longtime and close friend.

The players also have talked about off-ice relationships, good and bad—including Arnoni.

"Sitting and talking with my teammates one day and discussing our boy/girl troubles," he began, "This is one memory that resonates with me because I remember thinking to myself how, a conversation that I was never really able to participate in, I was now being listened to just as my other teammates are used to and thought of how beautiful it was that these people still cared about what was going on in my life, regardless of whether it was a boy or girl [I was attracted to]."

"Another memory that comes to mind was one time when I was out with my friends. I was thinking to myself how different, yet how normal, things have evolved into within a matter of a month. Every aspect of my life had stayed the same, except I was looking through a completely different lens."

Arnoni has received worldwide responses and support since coming-out, including coverage in the Chicago Tribune. Within 72 hours after a column about his coming-out was posted on Outsports.com, Arnoni had people reaching out to him from such countries as Turkey, Poland, Canada, Hungary, France and the Dominican Republic.

Arnoni also heard from other in-the-closet students at his school and nearby schools.

Even out CNN broadcaster Anderson Cooper reached out to him.

"About a week after my Outsports article was released, I received an email from Anderson Cooper, [who] congratulated me and told me how inspiring my story had been," Arnoni said.

"All you have to [do] in life is [be] a good person and a good friend to others," adding that sexual orientation does not matter.

Arnoni has only heard anti-gay trash-talking in one game, and was admittedly surprised. "Almost every team that we played has been respectful and not crossed the line when trash-talking," he said.

"When I was playing while in the closet, I felt like I wasn't mentally in the sport like I wanted to be. I was more worried about the way that I acted, talked, and presented myself than how I played. After I came out, I was allowed, ironically, by myself, to just play the game from raw emotion without any worries."

So, Arnoni's advice is to not worry about whether coming out is going to make others upset.

"For years people have been fighting to get where we are today and even though the fight isn't over, being your true self is the best way you can help," he said. "Unapologetically, be who you are because at the end of the day, as long as you can live your life, that's all that matters."

Arnoni's coming-out was assisted by Dylan Geick, who was a wrestler at Stevenson High School in suburban Lincolnshire. Arnoni watched Geick's coming-out video on YouTube and "got my last bit of courage to do it myself," he said.

Geick went on to wrestle for Columbia University in New York.

"Last January I [was] a scared boy who didn't have a clue about the events that [were] about to unfold. I [was] desperate for someone to reach out and help, or guide me in some way, to show me that everything is going to be OK," Arnoni said. "Today, I [am] a completely new person, yet someone who hasn't changed at all. I am still the same loud, annoying, funny person that I have always been, except I now have a stronger sense of self-confidence and joy when I look into the future."

"Before my journey, whenever I would think of the future, I would be scared and shutter at the thought of moving forward. Now I am eager to take on new adventures and am not scared to go through life, waiting to see what each chapter holds. I can now see a future that all I have to be worried about is the uncertainties and unfamiliarity just as everyone else normally is."

"I no longer have to be scared to be myself."

This past fall, Arnoni was named his high school's homecoming king—a development that surprised him.

"I was overwhelmed with love from everyone in my school, even [from] kids that I don't know," he said. "Hearing everyone cheer for me made me feel happy that there is proof that times had changed, and people look past others' sexuality and judge one another off personality."

As Arnoni skates his final high school games over the coming months, his future is anchored on a tattoo he shares with his mom. It reads "EX-HALE," and it's based on the movie *Love, Simon*.

"There is a scene [in the movie] where the mother tells her son that since he came out, he can now exhale," Arnoni said.

Nancy Pelosi play debuting Jan. 26

The Adult in the Room, a new play by Bill McMahon about the life of U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, will receive its world premiere Sunday, Jan. 26, at 2 p.m. at Chicago's Victory Gardens Theater's Richard Christiansen Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.

Directed by Heather Arnson and Conor Bagley, the play is produced by Tony/Emmy/Olivier Award-winning producer Jim Kierstead (Kinky Boots, Pippin, Hadestown) Emmy-winning producer Linda Karn (Matt Shepard is a Friend of Mine) and Broadway producer William Fernandez (The Inheritance, The Great Comet). Previews begin Jan. 22.

Tickets are \$49 each; visit VictoryGardens.org or call 773-871-3000. For more about the production, visit TheAdultInTheRoomPlay.com.





BILLY Masters

"OK, people, time to recalibrate our gaydar. Batwoman is a lesbian? Not that there's anything wrong with that, but talk to me, Gotham—what ever happened to politics staying out of our superheroes?"—Not only did Batwoman just out herself, it was discussed in the on-air commentary of Vesper Fairchild, as voiced by **Rachel Maddow**.

"Some people call it a train wreck. We call it The View." Truer words were never spoken than during this Saturday Night Live spoof of the talk show's opening (said by **Cheri Oteri** as Barbara Walters). Whatever you may think about The View, it is appointment television. The show not only reports the news—it makes news.

And it opened the new year with a bombshell—the departure of right-of-center **Abby Huntsman**. A popular co-host's departure would be news at any time. But a co-host's departure during an election year is huge—especially for a show the New York Times recently dubbed "The most important political TV show in America." The first question is why—why is Abby leaving? The immediate answer is that she's going to help her father, who is running for governor of Utah. But then, more tidbits trickled out. First, who knew that **Meghan McCain** was pregnant? Hands? Anyone? Apparently, she was pregnant last summer and even wrote a New York Times piece about her miscarriage. So, bad Billy—I missed this entirely (in my defense, in the summer I am at my most self-involved and promiscuous). According to sources, Meghan considered Abby's on-air "child-centric chats" during this difficult time "insensitive." While this isn't the only reason Abby left, the term "toxic work environment" was brought up more than once. Abby's dad running for governor may simply be a good excuse.

This leaves us with the bigger question: Who will fill the seat? An election year is not the time for a revolving door of co-hosts. Friday fill-in **Ana Navarro** would be a perfect fit, but she won't relocate to NYC. Perpetual also-ran **Rachel Campos** has surely already made herself available. What I believe the show needs is a newswoman. Of course, **Meredith Vieira** is the obvious answer. **Diane Sawyer** likely doesn't want to continue being a Barbara Walters stand-in. But what about ABC's former golden girl **Elizabeth Vargas**? She'd fit in perfectly. Or, if the show wants to be really edgy, why not reach out to **Megyn Kelly**? Replace one Bombshell character with another?

Speaking of former Fox News anchors, we've been hearing stories about **Shepard Smith's** next move. Since his departure from the network in October, Shep has had several meetings with CNN and MSNBC. His non-compete clause doesn't run out for another six months, but that would be a perfect time for him to slip into a new seat.

Last week, **Mayor Pete Buttigieg** had a fundraiser scheduled in Providence, Rhode Island. The event, which was hosted by the mayor's hubby, **Chasten**, was supposed to take place at The Dark Lady. At the last minute, the venue was changed—but not because The Dark Lady is a gay



RuPaul's success has led to some woes, Billy says.

Photo by Kevin Lynch

bar. It's because it's a gay bar with a stripper pole! Someone from the mayor's camp checked out the venue and felt there was a "visual element" that wasn't appropriate for a fundraiser. Personally, I've made lots of money on a pole—but that's neither here nor there. The event was moved from here to there—there being the Backstage Bar at the Hotel Providence.

If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times—**Jussie Smollett** is his own worst enemy. After last year's "incident," he could have simply paid the City of Chicago \$130,000 to compensate for the investigation. By refusing to pay, he's opened the whole case up to scrutiny. Last week, a judge signed a search warrant for Smollett's Gmail account to be turned over to investigators. And you people laughed at Hillary having a private server!

Despite his legal woes, rumors continue to swirl that Jussie may return to Empire for the series finale. If they want him, I hope they don't send him an email!

It's been a great few years for **RuPaul**. She's everywhere. OK, perhaps not on FOX, which took a hard pass on Ru's daytime talk show. But it certainly isn't slowing the drag diva down. She's starring in *AJ and the Queen*, which has a 10-episode commitment from Netflix and producer **Michael Patrick King**. And she's got another season of the award-winning *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Then there's a Las Vegas residency coming up at the Flamingo Hotel (formerly the home of Donny and Marie). And *RuPaul's Drag Race: UK* was a huge hit.

Alas, that also led to some woes. Last weekend, the UK hosted its first-ever DragCon—a popular event for drag queens and their fans. Alas, DragCon was a victim of its own success, with too many tickets being sold and people queuing in lines for hours. Photos at the Olympia London (the venue) reveal hordes both inside and out. World of Wonder (the producers) issued a statement offering to honor tickets the next day, or offer refunds.

With all this hoopla, more producers are cashing in on the drag craze. TLC has announced a

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new show, *Dragnificent!*, that will star Drag Race alumnae **Jujubee**, **Bebe Zahara Benet**, **Thorgy Thor** and **Alexis Michelle** as sort of a drag version of *Queer Eye*. The ladies will travel around and try to make people's lives better. I hope they let them loose on some of those people from *My 600-lb Life!* The show debuts in the spring.

When Jujubees aren't just for eating, it's definitely time to end yet another column. You know what's never a drag? Checking out *BillyMasters.com*—the site where you'll never wait to be serviced. If you'd like to cut to the front of the line, drop a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before RuPaul replaces Abby Huntsman on *The View*. Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.



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the DISH

Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Galit; Chicago Restaurant Week

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Friends of mine, who happen to be a couple, told me they had to wait two months to get into the Lincoln Park restaurant **Galit** (2429 N. Lincoln Ave.; GalitRestaurant.com).

I discovered two reasons for this long wait. One is that it turns out that a certain section of the spot is reserved for walk-ins—meaning that they might've gotten in much sooner had they just entered directly one night.

The other is that the cuisine there is most impressive, resulting in a backlog of reservations.

James Beard Award-winning chef Zachary Engel puts his spin on Middle Eastern fare, inspired by travels to Israel as well as co-owner Andres Clavero's Palestinian heritage.

However, as delicious as the food is, be sure to start with something from Galit's drink menu. Whether it's the cocktail of the week (as I had Last Year's Resolution, although the latest is Danny Took Some Thyme Off); mocktails and other cocktails, like The Flowering Fox, with vodka, hibiscus, mezcal, sumac, honey and rose;



Hummus at Galit.

Photo by Sandy Noto

or one of the Middle Eastern wines you can't get anywhere else in Chicago, there's something for everyone.

As for cuisine, my dining companion and I had a hard time deciding which route to take: selecting our own items or going for "The Other Menu," which are all the chef's choices for the evening. (All of your choices have to be given to the server at once.) We ultimately decided to do our own thing—and it made for a fascinating culinary journey.

I urge you to start with the hummus and the large, round, wood-fired pitas. There are a few hummus varieties, and we went with one with

trumpet mushrooms, collard greens, harissa (giving it a kick) and gribenes (chicken-skin cracklings). However, there wasn't quite enough bread for all the spreads that came next: labneh, pickles, ezme, pumpkin tersh and cipollini onions. My favorite was probably the tersh, a mix of the Turkish chili pepper urfa biber, cumin, garlic, nigella and cilantro. (Fortunately, the server gave us another pita in our doggy bag.)

Then, there are the entrees. My friend liked the chicken thigh immensely, but I favored the Tunisian-style fried fish, accompanied by dips and herbs. We both also really liked the halloumi (Jerusalem artichokes, with chiles, kohlrabi and pecans) as well as the most brilliantly green falafel I've ever had.

But please make room for dessert, especially the phyllo apple pie, which a staffer described as "apple pie meets baklava meets bread pudding"—an apt description for a delicious and deceptively complex item. It's no secret why this sweet is a favorite of patrons.

Galit is worthy of the buzz it's been getting—whether you wait for two months or try your luck and just stop by one night.

Chicago Restaurant Week is here

On Jan. 24-Feb. 9, Choose Chicago will host the return of the city's 13th annual **Chicago Restaurant Week (CRW)**.

During Chicago Restaurant Week, diners can enjoy special prix fixe menus at various restaurants throughout Chicago and nearby suburbs. These multi-course meals are \$24 for brunch or lunch, and \$36 and/or \$48 for dinner (excluding beverages, tax and gratuity).

More than 400 restaurants will be participating,

including at least 350 restaurants in the city neighborhoods and 50 in the suburbs. Just a few of the new restaurants participating in Chicago Restaurant Week 2020 are Offshore Rooftop and Bar (Streetsville), Tzucu (River North), IL Culaccino (McCormick Square) and Queenie's Supper Club (Near West Side).

A complete list of restaurants can be found at ChooseChicago.com/chicago-restaurant-week/participating-restaurants.

Note: Profiles/events are based on invitations arranged from restaurants and/or firms.



BEHIND THE NAME

"I used to work a small store inside a strip club and Laila sounded like a pretty stripper name that none of the other girls had. And as far as McQueen, I was paying homage to one my favorite designers—but also its sorta a joke, because the brand of McQueen is so impeccable and my style is the opposite."

MY MUSE

"I'm more inspired by films like Rocky Horror, Party Monster, Beetlejuice (my walk-in look on RuPaul's Drag Race season 8 was inspired by him!), Hedwig... I'm practically a fictional character myself, so I'm drawn to other weirdos in films. Oh—and the '80s!"

GO-TO NUMBER TO SLAY A CROWD

"I love doing feel-good rock songs that when it comes on, you immediately want to start singing out loud. I'm all about invoking those good vibes! But my favorite to close out a show is Bon Jovi; nothing gets drunk straight girls at a drag show to scream louder and hand over money faster than Bon Jovi."

MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW THAT I ...

"... went to the same high school that the Lifetime movie 'The Pregnancy Pact' was based on, I'm terrified of sharks and I don't eat soup because it grosses me out."

WHEN I NEED A PICK-ME-UP, I ...

"Sometimes, when I'm feeling tired, I like to scream really loud or shout weird-sounding words or scream monologues from movies in different inflections. It gets my momentum back up!"

WHERE CAN WE CATCH YOU

"Nearly every month I perform at Berlin for Drag Matinee and also Smartbar for Queen!"

SOCIAL MEDIA

Instagram: @misslailamcqueen
Twitter: @lailamcqueen on twitter

Photo by Adam Ouahmane

GoFundMe page launched for DJ Teri Bristol

A GoFundMe campaign has been launched to help Teri Bristol, who has been a longtime DJ at various LGBTQ venues as well as spots such as Smartbar.

After DJing a New Year's show with long-time mixing partner DJ Psycho-Bitch in Milwaukee, Bristol was admitted to St. Thomas Rutherford Hospital in Tennessee with kidney failure on Jan. 3, BigShot magazine noted.

Bristol underwent surgery and is undergoing dialysis treatments.

Donations for Bristol can be made at GoFundMe.com/f/gofund-teribristols-kidneys.



DJ Teri Bristol.
PR photo



MARY'S ATTIC

Seeing red at Jerry Nunn's 50th birthday/fundraiser for Heartland Alliance.

Photos by Jerry Nunn



From 2019's Mr. Chicago Leather contest. Winner Saber Onyx (center), with IML 2018 James Lee (right) and American Leatherwoman 2018 Sky Cotton.

Joseph Stevens Photography

Mister Chicago Leather 2020 contest Jan. 23-26

Mister Chicago Leather 2020, the contest to choose a representative for the Windy City at this year's International Mr. Leather, kicks off Thursday, January 23, and continues through the weekend. The highlight of this action-packed weekend is the contest on Saturday, January 25, at Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview. John Pandal (IML 2003) will return for his 17th consecutive year as emcee of the event.

The contest will be the highlight of a full weekend of events, including a welcoming cocktail party and the roast of Mr Chicago Leather 2019 Saber Onyx, both taking place Friday, January 24 at Touche, 6412 N. Clark St. Joining Saber on the judging panel will be International Mr. Leather 2019 Jack Thompson; Gene Mar, executive board member of the Chicago Hellfire Club; Lady MJ Spezia, President of Trident Windy City; and Kylon Hooks, one of the Founding Fathers of LORE (Leatherfolk Of Recovery).

The weekend also includes the tenth anniversary party of Full Kit Gear, 5021 N. Clark St.

For a full schedule of events and contest information, see <https://touchechicago.com/mr-chicago-leather-2020>



MCL emcee John Pandal.
PR photo

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CATHEDRAL CITY

UNICORN from page 13

what that care should look like. I'm not saying there aren't people who don't do that for me now, but it takes more. So much more that others have and that I don't; that's a challenge."

But Whitehead said she's buoyed by some of the small changes she does see taking place around her, particularly the audience. "I'm definitely seeing more vulnerability and more boldness in using comedy to call out issues," she said. "I like this. It's coming from the exhaustion of how things used to be. In a new age where comedy, film and art in general is not what it was when I was a child, the audience has changed most of all. The demand for uniqueness has changed in the favor of those who wouldn't have otherwise gotten a

shot decades ago."

As she faces the start of a new decade, Whitehead said, "I'm hoping to finally be successful, to pay off my debts, to right the wrongs I created in the last decade, to finally bring pride to my family and have them be financially secured for after I'm gone. I'm hoping to open up opportunities for those who've be waiting for someone like me."

KJ Whitehead and Radical Comedy Present: "The Haggard Unicorn," at The Salon, at 1579 North Milwaukee Ave., on Friday, Jan. 31, at 8 p.m. Outside Amy Schumer, "the comedy show featuring feminist stand-up comedians other than Amy Schumer, because some people still think she's the only one for some reason," returns Tuesday, Jan. 28, at The Playground Theater, at 3209 N. Halsted St., at 10 p.m. Tickets are \$10 at the door.

WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Thursday, Jan. 23

Fishhead. Republic of Want Author Ignatius Valentine Aloysius in conversation with local author Sarah Connell. Amidst the teeming tenements of 1970s Bombay (Mumbai), a hungry teenage boy struggles through life in a poverty 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Full Kit Gear 10th anniversary party Kicking off Mr. Chicago Leather 2020 weekend. Giveaways, champagne, hors d'oeuvres, music and more. 6-9 pm, 5021 N. Clark St.

Friday, Jan. 24

Andy Warhol-From A to B and Back Again Acclaimed traveling Andy Warhol exhibit debuts in Chicago-with a hotel package and exclusive Absolut Warhol cocktail and an immersive experience at its rooftop bar 4:00pm - 12:00pm theWit Hotel, 201 N. State St. <http://WarholAtTheWit.com>.

About Face Theatre's The Gulf Six years into a relationship, tensions and passions flare as a lesbian couple clash over past infidelities, life-choices, and job struggles. Through February 15 7:30pm Theatre Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. Tickets: <http://AboutFaceTheatre.com>

Saturday, Jan. 25

19th Annual Polar Plunge The CPBC hosts to raise funds for local families challenged by difficult circumstances. Pic-



PARTY TIME Saturday, Feb. 1

Candidates and elected officials will be among those at the Equality Illinois gala.

Photo of Debra Shore by Kat Fitzgerald

ture a teeming crowd, stripping down and jumping into the freezing waters of Lake Michigan together, all in the name of charity! 12:00pm Oak Street Beach, Chicago <http://www.chicagopolarbearclub.com>

Proud Oak Parkers: OPALGA+ at 30 gallery discussion This will also launch the new publication, The Oak Park Lesbian

and Gay Association: Stories from the History-Making First Decade. Twenty early members have written stories recalling the dramatic day when OPALGA+ was formed. 2:00pm - 3:30pm Oak Park River Forest Museum, 129 Lake St., Oak Park, IL <http://opalga.org>

LezSING! Thirty singers/musicians! There are only two performances. Continues Jan. 26 at same time and venue. 7:30pm Broadway Theatre, 4139 N. Broadway. Visit <http://pridefilmsandplays.com/second-annual-lezsing>.

Lakeside Pride Ensembles Aural Borealis

Celebrate the great Arctic phenomenon of the Northern Lights with an eclectic mix of Lakeside Pride's Chamber Ensembles with a mysterious and colorful selection of music as unpredictable as the Aurora Borealis itself 2:30pm Logan Center for the Arts' Performance Hall, 915 E. 60th St. Tickets: <http://do312.com/artists/lakeside-pride>

Tuesday, Jan. 28

The Haggard Unicorn KJ Whitehead wants to see unrepresented voices take over the comedy world. Whitehead-who identifies as a queer trans woman-and other feminist stand-up comedians. \$10 10:00pm The Playground Theater 3209 N Halsted St, Chicago

Wed., Jan. 29

The Boys in the Band An iconic piece of LGBTQ culture with a fresh, immersive production. Limited preview week availability. \$50. 7:30pm Windy City Playhouse, 3014 W. Irving Park Rd. Tickets: <http://boxoffice.diamondticketing.com/windycityplayhouse/events>

First Called: Andrew of Capernaum, By Nicholas A. Patricca An ordinary fisherman, struggling against the hypocrisy,

cynicism, and greed of religious and political leaders, witnesses the beheading of John the Baptist in whom he had placed his hope for true reform. A choice confronts him -- to live in fear and despair or once again to dare to hope by committing himself to the call of Jesus of Nazareth. Part of Valiant Theater's New Works Festival 2020. Evenings A and B in rotation through Feb. 14 and Frist Called is part of Evening A. 7:30pm Otherworld Theatre, 3914 N. Clark St. Tickets: <http://www.valianttheatre.org/nwf>

Thursday, Jan. 30

The Cake When Jen, the girl she thinks of as her 'godddaughter' asks Della to make her wedding cake, not for one bride but two, it's hard to follow one of her tried and true recipes. Faith, family and food impact one another in the discovery that love is the key ingredient to any recipe in this timely play from a writer of NBC's hit "This Is Us.". Free pre-show discussion from 6:45 - 7:15p 8:00pm McAninch Arts Center at College of DuPage 425 Fawell Blvd Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 Tickets: <http://www.atthemac.org/events/bte-the-cake/>

Friday, Jan. 31

The Haggard Unicorn KJ Whitehead wants to see unrepresented voices take over the comedy world. Whitehead-who identifies as a queer trans woman-and other feminist stand-up comedians. \$10 8:00pm The Salon, 1579 North Milwaukee Ave.

Saturday, Feb. 1

Equality Illinois Gala 100+ public officials, dozens of business leaders, and hundreds of LGBTQ champions. Honoring Tracy Baim, publisher of the Chicago

Reader for her over 35-year career in Chicago journalism and the Rainbow Cafe LGBT Youth Center in Carbondale, IL for their work on behalf of LGBTQ youth in southern Illinois. 6 p.m. Silent Auction & Cocktail Reception, 8 p.m. Seated Dinner & Awards Program, 10:30 p.m. Dancing & Music. VIP \$500, general \$300. 6:00pm Chicago Hilton and Towers, 720 S Michigan Ave. Tickets: <http://www.equalityillinois.us/events/equality-illinois-2020-gala/>

Mr. Chicago Leather 2020 contest/afterparty Which contestant will go on to represent Chicago at this year's IML? Contest taking place at Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview, doors open at 7; contest at 8. Followed by the victory bash at Touche, 6412 N. Clark St., <https://touchechicago.com/mr-chicago-leather-2020>

Tuesday, Feb. 4

Transfemine Alliance Chicago (T-FEM) Peer-led discussion group for anyone who was assigned male at birth and identifies as female, feminine of center, or questioning their gender. Meets every Tuesday in Room #200. Free. Gearah Goldstein, tfemchicago@gmail.com 7:00pm - 8:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.tfem-chicago.com>

OUTspoken monthly storytelling event Celebrating uniquely personal stories from across the LGBTQ community. OUTspoken is held on the first Tuesday of each month at Sidetrack. Doors to Main-Bar open at 6 p.m. 7:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago <http://side-trackchicago.com>

Oscar nominations out, with favorites and surprises

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced its 2019 Oscar nominations Jan. 13. As widely expected by commentators, films with multiple nominations included critics' favorites such as *The Irishman*, *1917* and *Marriage Story*. *Joker*, the gritty origin story of Batman's fiercest adversary, also bagged 11 nominations—the most of any film this year.

As is frequently the case with the Oscars, however, what wasn't mentioned was just as noteworthy as what was. For example, Taron Egerton was widely anticipated to be nominated for his performance as openly gay musician Elton John in *Rocketman*; such a nod would have seemingly put the actor on a similar career path as Rami Malek, who last year won playing Freddie Mercury in *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Egerton had supposedly widely campaigned for the nomination and

won a Golden Globe statue Jan. 5 for his work on *Rocketman*. Egerton was not mentioned Jan. 13, however, *Rocketman*—specifically, John himself and his frequent writing partner—was nominated in the Best Original Song category only.

Other 2019 Golden Globe winners proverbially snubbed by the Academy included Eddie Murphy



Joaquin Phoenix in *Joker*. Photo by Niko Tavernise

in *Dolemite Is My Name*, and Awkwafina in *The Farewell*.

Another omission that will surely raise eyebrows will be Greta Gerwig's direction for *Little Women*, which otherwise received six nominations. Gerwig was nominated for the film's adapted screenplay, but her exclusion from the Best Director category undoubtedly will raise discussion about the academy's historical ambivalence to female directors.

Among the major nominations, personnel from and themes related to the LGBT community were pretty sparsely represented this year. Gay director Pedro Almodovar's *Pain and Glory* was nominated in the newly-renamed International Feature category, as was Antonio Banderas for his lead role in that film. Margot Robbie received one of the three nominations for the drama *Bombshell*, in which she played a sexually fluid (and fictional) Fox News employee. As was widely expected, Renee Zellweger was nominated for her role as iconic performer Judy Garland in *Judy*. Zellweger took home a Golden Globe statue for the part on Jan. 5.

The ceremony will take place Sunday, Feb. 9. The complete list of nominees is at [Oscars.org](https://www.oscars.org).

'Freedom Ride' talk, performance Jan. 29

Newberry Library is hosting a discussion and performance with Chicago Opera Theater (COT) involving the production *Freedom Ride* on Wed., Jan. 29, 6-7:30 p.m., at the library's Ruggles Hall, 60 W. Walton St.

The production's plot is as follows: When the Congress of Racial Equality comes to New Orleans in the sweltering summer of 1961, Sylvie Davenport is torn. Handed a pamphlet and asked to board a Greyhound bus, Sylvie is forced to choose between her academic future and the future of the nation.

In this conversation, theater director Tazewell Thompson will discuss this new work with Chicago Opera Theater and Staley Music Director Lidia Yankovskaya. Their discussion will guide viewers through exclusive excerpts from the opera, performed by *Freedom Ride* stars Lauren Michelle, Cornelius Johnson and Robert Sims.

COT is running *Freedom Ride* on Feb. 8, 14 and 16.

Admission is free to the Newberry event, but RSVPs are required; visit [Newberry.org](https://www.newberry.org)

CONNEXIONS

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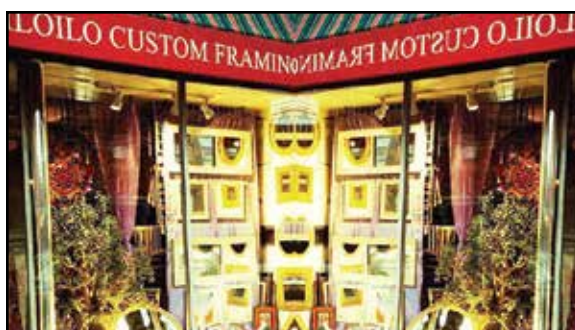


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