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Art by: Noah Henderson



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a note from our EDITOR

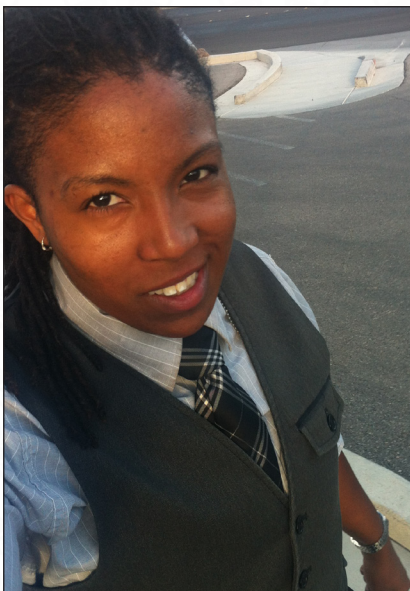
I LOVE this time of year! Eggnog, gingerbread houses, and more than 101 reasons to break your 'diet.' This year like every year has zipped on by, but not without making it's mark in history as one of the best years in LGBT history. Just two years ago, I can remember the excitement we felt beginning the battles with DADT and now we close this year with more states sharing marriage equality. We still have a long way to go towards equality.

December is the 'Year in Review' issue. I hope you enjoy all of the ways we have looked back at 2012, with QTease photos from the entire year, 2 Steps Forward 1 Step Back, as well as a feature article 'The Best Year Yet'.

I am a gay TV fanatic! That being said, we've tracked down one actor from LOGO's new TV series DTLA (Downtown Los Angeles). We interviewed JC Jones, who plays Trey. Check out the photos and interview on page 34.

HIV/AIDS awareness is this month, so don't miss Edward Padillas annual "Fallen Guardian Angels" play at The Center for Spiritual Learning on Dec. 1st. Tickets sales benefit AFAN and Golden Rainbow. Also this month, benefiting various organizations in the community, is the 8th annual OUTMUSIC awards to be held Dec. 16th at the Planet Hollywood. Purchase your tickets now and \$20 will be donated to your favorite charitable organization.

With the holiday season in full effect, I want to thank our loyal readers, advertisers, and distributors. Every month, here a QVegas we duel it out to bring the best LGBT magazine in Las Vegas and



you the reader show us so much love, and we are grateful. We've been through many, many changes this year and you've hung in there with us. In closing, everyone at QVegas wishes you a Happy Holiday and Happy New Year. See you OUT in 2013!

Janise "Noah" Henderson

twitter.com/noahsartak

facebook.com/janise.noah.henderson

I WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

Do you have something on your mind? Do you have something to say about an article in QVegas or any topic of interest to our readers? Do you have an idea for a future story? I want to hear from you! Simply send an e-mail to Editor@QVegas.com. Letters to the Editor may be printed in a future issue if signed and may be edited for clarity or length.



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WHEN CORPORATE MEETS EQUALITY

[by Russ White]

Most LGBT people, especially after this most recent election, relate the Human Rights Campaign to political activities. And while HRC continues to advocate for LGBT political issues at the local, state and federal levels, the organization also drives other initiatives, including the Corporate Equality Index.

In 2002, HRC created a national survey for corporate America to measure the corporate commitment to equality. This voluntary survey grades companies on the policies and benefits provided to their employees. The first CEI rated 319 companies, of which only 13 received a 100% score. In the 2013 report, released in November, 688 companies were scored with a record number of 252 receiving the 100% score.

Just completing the CEI demonstrates a company's commitment to LGBT equality. For a company to achieve 100%, they are scored across five criteria including a non-discrimination policy that expands on existing federal protection to include sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. Employee benefits, organizational LGBT competency, public commitment, and responsible citizenship also contribute to a company's score.

Completing the online survey is actually quite simple, but for most companies requires cross-functional support of the human resources, benefits, marketing, legal and public relation departments. Achieving and maintaining a 100% score, however, involves a year-over-year commitment. HRC evolves the survey over time to stay requisite with social and political climates as well as raising the bar.

Non-Discrimination Policies

Four years ago, HRC notified companies that the 2012 survey would require comprehensive partner benefits,

transgender-inclusive health benefits, organizational competency on LGBT issues, and public commitment to LGBT equality. It was no longer "good enough" to offer domestic partner benefits, and even with several years to prepare, several companies lost their 100% score in 2012.

In 1999, Nevada passed legislation prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, and as of 2011 now prohibits discrimination based on gender identity. Neither sexual orientation nor gender identity discrimination are covered by federal laws, making these components the foundation for an employer's commitment to LGBT equality. Even in states that prohibit discrimination, HRC requires companies to provide copies of their non-discrimination policies that specifically identify sexual orientation and gender identity.

When it comes to non-discrimination policies, companies have the right to extend protection beyond state and federal laws, and many companies have done so—and many states have followed. When the federal government passes a comprehensive ENDA, this criteria of CEI will become moot, yet will have served a prominent purpose for over a decade.

Equal Benefits

The second criteria of the CEI focuses on parity of benefits. The key here is parity of benefits, not special benefits. The CEI ensures that employees receive equal

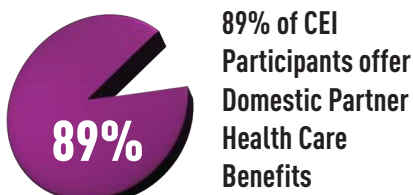
Editor's Note: San Francisco-based Wells Fargo, sponsor of Qmmunity Ties, is a longtime participant in the HRC CEI, first achieving 100% in 2004.

benefits regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. This can become challenging for many organizations, since many benefit programs have federal regulations or guidelines that must be followed.

One of the oldest and most popular parity benefits are domestic partner programs. These programs allow an employee's same-sex partner to receive the same benefits as an employee's opposite-sex spouse. For the company these added benefits can mean higher costs based on their plans. If an employer covers a portion of an opposite-sex spouse's premium, the employer must cover the same portion of a same-sex partner's premium.

Once a company decides to provide parity benefits, tax complications arise. Since the IRS does not recognize same-sex marriages, and considers the employer-paid portion of the domestic partner's "imputed income" for the employee, so the company must withhold additional tax for the employee. Depending on the benefit plan, this can result in a loss of income of several hundreds to thousands of dollars each year for the couple. More often, employers "gross up" the employee's salary to cover the tax, so that the employee's take-home pay remains as if the employee had an opposite-sex spouse.

Smaller businesses can and should aspire to the standards that CEI sets, but achieving these levels can be impractical. Federal programs like COBRA and 401K programs only recognize opposite-sex spouses. Companies wanting to offer parity benefits for these programs sometimes have to get creative in augmenting their benefits portfolios, and these are simply unmanageable for a small business.





**CEI-Rated
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Diversity Council.**

Transgender-Inclusive Benefits

One of the greatest challenges companies faced starting with the 2012 CEI was the implementation of inclusive transgender benefits. For many years, companies were hesitant to offer transgender benefits for fear of the high cost companies could incur from hormone therapy, gender reassignment surgery, and plastic surgery—even as San Francisco County demonstrated that costs were for less than expected. Today, 42% of companies in the CEI provide inclusive transgender benefits to their employees.

Organizational Competency and Public Commitment

The other two factors of the CEI, Organizational Competency and Public Commitment, ensure that a company's score builds from genuine support. Adopting corporate policies and changing benefit plans really only impacts and benefits LGBT employees inside a company. Building organizational competencies through workforce initiatives and training programs creates LGBT awareness throughout the company and begins to build pervasive ally support.

Through Public Commitment criteria, a company's external perception improves their score. These actions can include recruiting, supplier diversity, marketing or advertising, philanthropy or public support for LGBT equality under the law. The fifth criteria, Responsible Citizenship, deducts points. Exxon Mobile is the only company in 2013 to have points deducted and achieved a score of -25 through non-participation.

Las Vegas Equality

Five Las Vegas companies are listed on the HRC CEI.



In 2003, Caesars Entertainment (then Harrah's Entertainment) entered the CEI with a rating of 29. Two years later, their rating increased to 86 in 2005, followed by a 95 in 2006, finally achieving 100% in 2008. Caesar's has maintained their rating for 7 consecutive years, leading Las Vegas in support for the LGBT

Are you participating in your company's LGBT Resource Group?

Many employers have employee resource groups that support corporate diversity initiatives. Your company's HR department will have details about the employee groups. Get involved. You will build incredible leadership skills, network across your company, and drive change from within your organization. If your company doesn't have an LGBT employee group, start one. Many resources are available online to help you get started.

community on the CEI. Their ranking, combined with their public support of LGBT organizations, including this month's OUT Music Awards, underscores their commitment.

Wynn

Wynn Resorts entered the CEI in 2010 at 100%, a score it continues to maintain. Through its innovative LGBT concierge program, philanthropic support, and host of last year's HRC Gala, Wynn Resorts accomplished a corporate milestone by starting off with a 100% score.



This year marks the first year MGM Resorts International receives a 100% Score. MGM Resorts International, the largest private employer in the State, has been a long time supporter of LGBT employees and customers. Events such as My Fabulous Weekend, Temptation Sunday at Luxor, and Revo Sunday at The Mirage put MGM at the forefront of LGBT activities in the city.

MGM entered the CEI in 2005 with a score of 86, on par with then Harrah's Entertainment, followed by an 85 in 2006 where they remained until 2012 when they achieved a 90. Falling just short of the mark for so long, this year's perfect score places MGM in a victorious position that the company should be proud of.

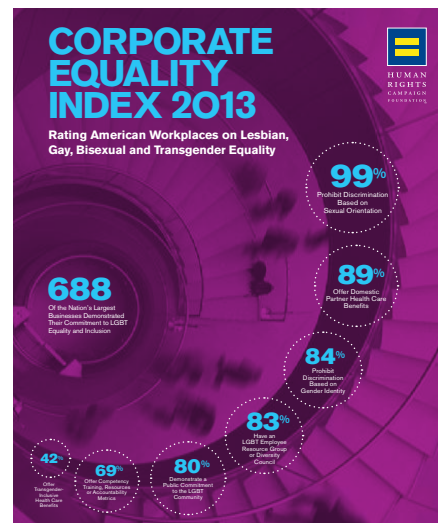
"As the first corporation in our industry to formally adopt a diversity initiative, we stand as a company fully committed to promoting human equality in our workforce as well as the experiences we offer our guests," said Jim Murren, Chairman and CEO of MGM Resorts International. "The essence of hospitality is treating others with the utmost level of respect and gratitude with excellence, and that at the core comprises the bedrock of our company's culture."

"As the co-chair of MGM Resorts' LGBT Employee Resource Group, I can't tell you how proud I am of my company and its leadership for earning this very coveted award," said James Healey, Executive Director of Housekeeping at New York-New York and former Governor of HRC

Las Vegas. "Some companies just 'talk the talk' when it comes to promoting human equality, however, MGM Resorts takes it very seriously. This recognition validates that diversity and inclusion plays an important role on all levels of our operations and is integral to our culture." NV Energy, the only non-casino company from Las Vegas on the CEI continues to hold a score of 70 as it has for the last 4 years, due to lack of benefits for LGBT employees. Earning partial points for some benefits, NV Energy does not appear to offer domestic partner benefits or transgender-inclusive benefits.

Las Vegas Sands Corporation, the owner of The Venetian, The Palazzo and the Sands Expo Center, received another consecutive score of zero for non-participation in the survey. Despite holding 342 on the Fortune 500, Las Vegas Sands is the only Hotel Casino in the nationwide survey that does not actively participate, offering no transparency into the company's position toward LGBT employees, customers, or issues.

Only one other Las Vegas company historically placed on the CEI. Sierra Health Services, now UnitedHealth Group based in Minnetonka, MN, still maintains a sizable presence and operations in Las Vegas and achieved its fourth consecutive 100% score this year.



The 11th Annual Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index is available for download at hrc.org/corporate-equality-index

COMMUNITY TIES

COMMUNITY NEWS

SPIRIT DAY 2012

The City of Las Vegas Goes Purple

[by Charles Béraud]

Las Vegas is an amazing place. On the surface – and for outsiders – Vegas is synonymous with The Strip, and everything you do there is to remain the best kept secret. But the best kept secret about “what happens in Vegas” is how engaged a community we have. This was never more obvious than on October 19, 2012, when the community stood in solidarity and delivered in a united call to end bullying – by going purple.

“Great things happen when business and community come together... Can you imagine anywhere else IN THE WORLD where competing businesses along a 4-mile stretch of road would come together and broadcasting the same message simultaneously, in solidarity for our LGBTQ youth?”

Latoya Holman, Director of Projects and Community Outreach for the R&R Partners Foundation

Spirit Day is a National movement spearheaded by the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) when “millions of people went purple for Spirit Day in a stand against bullying and to show their support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth. Hundreds of celebrities, media outlets, local and national organizations, schools, places of worship and even landmarks participated, sending powerful messages of acceptance to countless young people across the globe.”

Just how widespread was the movement, nationally? Everyone from the White House to Chelsea Clinton (“Today’s #spiritday, when millions of Americans stand up against #bullying & show support for #LGBT youth.”) to Dianna Agron (Are you going purple for #SPIRITDAY in support of @GLAAD? That’s why my icon changed. We’d love to see your support as well! XO) and pretty much everybody else you can imagine in between joined the movement.

And that’s part of the recipe for this success: GLAAD’s ability to engage people from all fields of the public sphere and make them ambassadors of the anti-bullying message. The National Basketball Association, one of the eight sports leagues to join the movement, produced a PSA featuring basketball legend Shaquille O’Neal and many others. Those who publicly showed solidarity reached audiences as diverse as those of MTV’s The Jersey Shore, NBC’s The Days of Our Lives, and TLC’s Here Comes Honey Boo-Boo.

Locally, the movement was as wide-reaching: From Fremont Street to the many properties of the Las Vegas Strip – individuals and corporations alike donned their best purple.

“Great things happen when business and community come together,” said Latoya Holman, Director of Projects and Community Outreach for the R&R Partners Foundation, who spearheaded the Las Vegas Spirit Day initiatives, “and this community is greatly supported by the groups that do business

SPIRIT DAY

We are united and we'll flip the script on bullying in Nevada.

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here in Las Vegas, not just for Spirit Day but year-round. Can you imagine anywhere else IN THE WORLD where competing businesses along a 4-mile stretch of road would come together and broadcasting the same message simultaneously, in solidarity for our LGBTQ youth? Or a community where dozens of people come out in the middle of a work morning to support the unveiling of a landmark made purple for the day? I can't. That's what's so great about Las Vegas!"

The day kicked off with great fanfare as community members joined invited guests at the "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Sign" for the big reveal. Former Mayor Goodman and LVCVA's Official Ambassador of Las Vegas, accompanied—as per usual—with his showgirls, members of the cast of Zumanity by Cirque du Soleil, and The Chippendales. Miss Nevada Randi Sundquist, Councilman Bob Coffin and State Senator David Parks. Herndon Graddick, GLAAD National President, The Center, Equal (Caesars Entertainment), MGM Resorts International, Together We're Better

(Luxor-Excalibur) and HRC, among others witnessed the greatest show of purple to date.

The program for the latter part of the day included special programming for youth on Fremont Street: "Imagine a place where kids from all over meet in one location covered in purple from head to toe to get a visual message from the entire community of love and acceptance through millions of purple lights that form a canopy across four city blocks!" says Holman of the gathering downtown. Meanwhile, the adult set convened at the Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas' Marquee Club offering a very special vantage point to watch marquees all along the strip go purple at the stroke of ten. Some even displayed anti-bullying messages on their electronic billboards.

"I was astounded," says Holman, of the highly anticipated moment. "Wondering if we

could actually pull this off up until the very last moment, and then seeing the frenetic multicolored lights transform purple—it felt surreal and peaceful at the same."

Spirit Day put bullying and LGBTQ youth front and center that day. It elevated the issue from "headline" to opening up the dialogue. But what remains once Spirit Day is over? Well, for starters, Spirit Day contributed to the ongoing dialogue about the bullying epidemic. But considering how isolating being bullied can be, having millions of people from all walks of life stand united in solidarity is a great way of saying "you are not alone. You are heard." And that's amazing!





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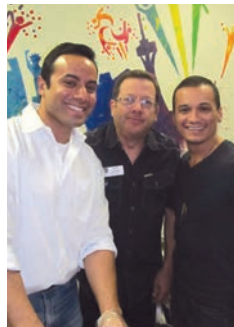
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LGBTQ YOUTH THANKSGIVING DINNER

The Center's 5th Annual Youth Thanksgiving Dinner on November 13 was a tremendous success! More than 60 community volunteers donated food and time to serve a free meal to over 150 LGBTQ and allied youth of Las Vegas.

Turkey, stuffing, ham, carrots, cranberries and a full table of desserts were available for youth to enjoy in a safe space, among friends. Joyful faces and a giving spirit filled The Center, making the evening an outstanding and enjoyable one for everyone!

The Center wishes to extend thanks to all of the food donors and volunteers who made this night such a success. We could not do it without the continued support of such an amazing community in the valley!



CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The Community Pledge Drive has been extended until December 31, 2012.

We invite every member of our community to support Opening New Doors. Every person and every gift counts in this effort! In appreciation of our community's generosity and belief in the mission and vision of The Center, all campaign donors' names will be listed on a special recognition wall within the building.

To find out how you can be a part of this defining moment in The Center's history, please call us at 702-733-9800. Thank you!

YOUTH HOLIDAY PARTY

To continue our celebration of the holidays, the annual Youth Holiday Party will be held at The Center on December 13. If you would like to help send our youth home with a gift, we are asking for \$20 Target gift cards to be delivered to The Center for gift bags. Thank you.



The Board of Directors and Staff of The Center wish you a safe and happy holiday season and a prosperous 2013!

STAY CONNECTED!

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Celebrate

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2 STEPS FORWARD ...

2012

A quick look at 2012. We hope to create awareness surrounding the accomplishments that have been achieved over the past year. Though we have moved forward tremendously in 2012 we must also remember where we are moving forward from with a look back at the discrimination, hate and stumbling blocks that remain in the path toward equality.

... 1 STEP BACK

MARK CUBAN

Mark Cuban, the gay-friendly owner of the Dallas Mavericks, told TMZ recently that he believes the NBA will see an openly gay athlete before the league sees a female head coach.



RICK PERRY

Rick Perry was confronted by a teen girl after a town hall in Decorah, Iowa about his views on gays in the military. She asked, "I just want to know why you are so opposed to gays serving openly in the military, why you want to deny them that freedom when they are fighting and dying for your right to run for President." His response, "this is about my faith, and I happen to think, there are a whole hosts of sins. Homosexuality being one of them."

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey voters support 52-42 percent allowing same-sex couples to marry, the first time support tops 50 percent. There is a strong divide between those who attend religious services weekly and those who attend less frequently, according to a Quinnipiac University poll.

MAYOR SANDERS

Mayor Jerry Sanders goes to Washington to launch "Mayors for Freedom to Marry." Sanders and Boston Mayor Thomas Menino announce the campaign to "end marriage discrimination." Joining the campaign: mayors from some 70 U.S. cities.

LAMBDA

On April 10th, Lambda Legal filed a federal lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for Nevada on behalf of eight same-sex couples challenging the State's constitutional ban on marriage equality. The couples represented in this case are glaring examples of why marriage discrimination laws are unfair and uphold a double-standard meant to lock same-sex couple out of socially sanctioned relationships.

BEAUTY QUEEN

Embattled beauty queen Jenna Talackova won the right to compete in the Miss Universe pageant next year. Thanks to Talackova the Miss Universe Organization joins a growing number of organizations that support gender equality.

JANUARY

APRIL

SEN. MCCOY

Nebraska state senator Beau McCoy introduces law attacking gay rights ordinances throughout Nebraska and it will void Lincoln Law and block an attempt in Omaha to protect gays.

GOV. CHRISTIE

Gov. Chris Christie has been clear on his view of "not supporting same-sex marriage" but is now backing away from a promise to veto any bill and will see what the public input says on the tradition of marriage before he decides.

GROWING PAINS

Growing Pains actor Kirk Cameron played twink teen Mike Seaver in the popular TV sitcom, but after rapidly fading into obscurity, he reemerged as a fervent anti-gay activist. Cameron recently told TV host Piers Morgan that homosexuality was "unnatural" and "destructive."

CUB SCOUTS

Ohio resident Jennifer Tyrrell was banned from serving as den leader of her son's Cub Scout chapter by the District Council. The Boy Scouts of America is one of the last institutions with an open ban on LGBT members.

VP BIDEN

Vice President Joe Biden started a domino effect when he announced his support for marriage equality the day after North Carolina outlawed gay marriage. His endorsement compelled Obama to go on record and express his support for gay marriage.

REV. SPEARMAN

In an overwhelming win, Rev. Patricia Spearman unseated incumbent Democrat Sen. John Lee of District 1 in North Las Vegas. Spearman is the first openly gay woman to serve in the Nevada Legislature and, despite being outspent by Lee, won by double digits.

HIP HOP AND OUT

Hip Hop/ R&B artist Frank Ocean stunned the music world when he came out of the closet last month. In an open letter to R&B Star, Ocean recounts an early attraction to another male friend, feelings that weren't reciprocated.

HIV PREVENTION

In July the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first drug, Gilead Sciences' Truvada, shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection.

Gilead Sciences' pill Truvada has proven successful as a preventive measure for healthy people who are at "high risk" of contagion through sexual activity i.e. people with HIV+ partners.



ST REP GIPSON

Mississippi State Rep. Andy Gipson (R) took to his Facebook page to warn of the evils of "unnatural" behavior, "associated with the spread of HIV/AIDS," and expressed his concern over the confusion gay marriage may cause in children.

MANNY PACQUIAO

Boxer Manny Pacquiao went on record to criticize the President's stance against marriage discrimination. Pacquiao is also a lawmaker in the Philippines and is fighting to pass LGBT discrimination laws there.

WOMANS RIGHTS

The Michigan House has passed HB 5711, the nation's most restrictive anti-choice bill, which combines some of the worst attacks on women's access to abortion care, into one bill.

CHRIS KLUWE

Chris Kluwe pens a colorful letter in support of LGBT rights to Maryland state delegate, Emmert C. Burns, Jr. in response to Burns letter to the owner of the Baltimore Ravens.

DADT

September marked the one year anniversary of the repeal of "Don't Ask Don't Tell." Surprise, surprise - the world didn't end and the US military is still intact. According to the Pentagon; repealing the ban had absolutely no adverse effects on morale, recruitment or preparedness.

BRENDON AYANBADEJO

The testosterone fueled culture of the NFL isn't know for its gay friendly atmosphere. Brendon Ayanbadejo became the first player in the NFL's history to publicly support gay marriage.

DOMA

One more victory for marriage equality as a Manhattan federal appeals court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act as unconstitutional last month. After weeks of hearing arguments on a lower court's finding that the law was unconstitutional, the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the finding in a 2-1 ruling.



BOY SCOUTS

Deron Smith, the National Spokesman for the Boy Scouts, announced that the 11-member panel reached the unanimous conclusion that it was "absolutely" in the Boy Scouts best interest to continue their policy of discrimination against gays.

EMMERT C. BURNS JR.

A democrat in the Maryland House of Delegates representing Baltimore County's District 10, Burns sent a letter to the Baltimore Ravens to express his dismay that a member of the team had been voicing his support for same-sex marriage.

RUPERT EVERETT

Rupert Everett, a gay British actor from the films "My Best Friend's Wedding" and "Shakespeare In Love," recently told the Sunday Times Magazine that he, "can't think of anything worse than being brought up by two gay dads."

PAY THE GAY AWAY

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) reported that the Catholic Church is now the top donor in the fight against marriage equality - having donated over one million dollars to opponents of same-sex marriage. Most of the money comes from the Knights of Columbus.

THAT'S SO
VEGAS

Tidbits from the Strip & Beyond

THE NEVADA BALLET

The Nutcracker

This is The Nutcracker like you've never seen it before – a brand-new, original production featuring new sets, costumes and surprises, yet to be revealed. Choreographed by the ballet's very own Artistic Director James Canfield, this highly-anticipated rendition will be a treat for all ages and is sure to become a Las Vegas favorite. Performed by the talented dancers of the Nevada Ballet, The Smith Center is the perfect venue for this popular holiday treat. Beginning December 15th through December 23rd, this is sure to be a performance you won't want to miss. For more information visit thesmithcenter.com

DAVE KOZ AND FRIENDS

Christmas Tour

This high-energy holiday tradition celebrating its 15th anniversary, will perform at The Smith Center for the Performing Arts in Las Vegas on Dec. 18. Tickets go on sale Sept. 28 at 10 a.m. and are available at The Smith Center box office, www.TheSmithCenter.com, or by calling 702-749-2000. Ticket prices start at \$29.

MARTIN LAWRENCE GALLERIES

For a very limited time—from now until the end of January—, Martin Lawrence Galleries is offering its exclusive collection of contemporary works of fine art at the Grand Canal Shoppes at the Venetian Hotel and Casino. And just in time for all your holiday shopping, Martin Lawrence Galleries has opened a seasonal gallery with 26,000 square-feet located inside The Forum Shops. The four-month, pop-up gallery offers 5,000 square-feet of inspirational art including original and graphic works by Picasso, Warhol, Miro, Kondakova, and more. The new Martin Lawrence Galleries is located near Barney's inside The Grand Canal Shoppes at The Venetian. Hours are 10 am - 11 pm weekdays and 10 a.m. - midnight on weekends. For more information, contact (702) 948-8887 or by e-mail at venetian@martinlawrence.com



ANNUAL CELEBRITY POKER

An annual celebrity poker tournament will be held this year on Dec. 8th at The Venetian Hotel & Casino. This event incorporates the who's who of celebrities, poker pros, high rollers and average Joe's coming together for a very important cause. Overwhelmingly successful in the past, this event has grown each year. To date this event has helped raise over \$460,000 towards making Cerebral Palsy a thing of the past. For more information visit onestepcloserfoundation.com.

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Polar Express

Local parents looking for a few hours to do some holiday shop—without their children in tow—will have that chance when the Spring Preserve hosts its annual, kids-only "Night at the Museum" event. Drop the kids off for



a safe night of entertainment. Friday, December 14, 5:00 p.m. - 9 p.m. \$25 per child ages 5 to 12. Registration deadline is December 12. First come first serve, only 125 spots are available.

STAY AT HOME GALA

December 13, trade party clothes for pajamas this holiday season in support of the Easter Seals in Nevada and its mission to serve more than 7,000 Nevadans living with disabilities. Enjoy this charitable event from your home by indulging in the spirit of giving by purchasing a \$35 "un-ticket" and spend the evening at home with friends. Family and you'll be eligible to win an exciting door including, 3-day 2-night state at the Plaza and VIP tickets to the brand new Phat Pack Show, Two Tickets to Le Reve and two tickets to Manheim Steamroller Christmas Las Vegas by Chip Davis and much more! Tickets can be purchased at Stayathomegala.org.



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New Year's Eve with Benny Benassi. Passed hors d'oeuvres and open bar 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. Champagne Toast at midnight.

LAVO (inside the Palazzo)

3325 S. Las Vegas Blvd.

Brandy hosts New Year's Eve 2013 at LAVO Nightclub. General admission ticket includes premium open bar 9pm-11pm, heavily passed hors d'oeuvres 9pm-Midnight, Champagne toast at Midnight, and free entry into TAO Nightclub after Midnight.

LAX NIGHTCLUB (inside Luxor)

3900 Las Vegas Blvd.

Reality TV's favorite couple Ice-T and Coco will take over LAX Nightclub inside Luxor Hotel and Casino as they welcome in 2013. The hot spot will offer an open bar from 9 p.m. to 12 a.m., party favors and world-renowned beats that will keep partygoers dancing well into 2013. \$80 OPEN BAR TICKETS. Doors open at 8 p.m. Guests must be 21 years of age or older.



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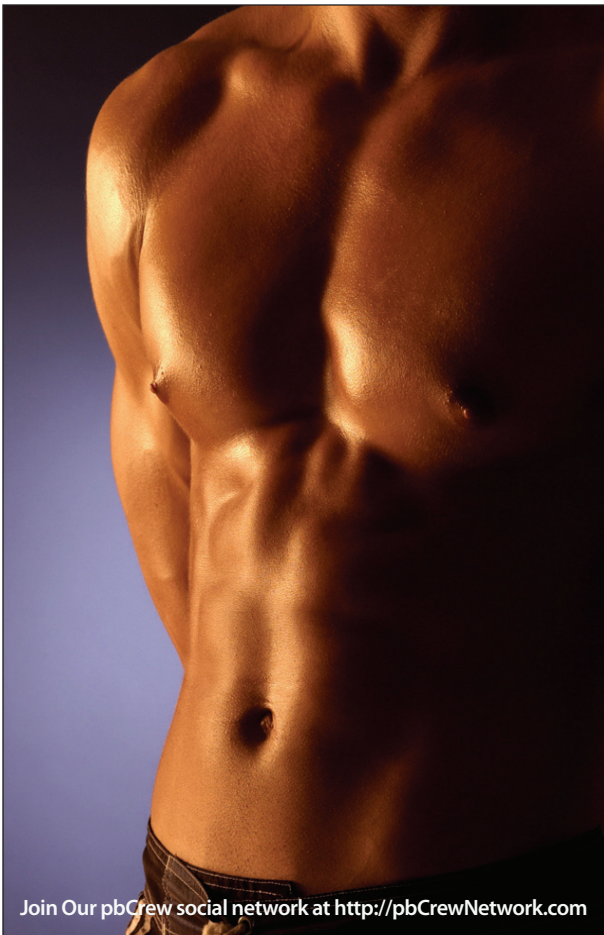
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EXPERIENCE THE ALL NEW NUCRACKER BALLET

[by Randy Slovacek]

*December will mark the debut of an elegant, all new production of **The Nutcracker** choreographed by artistic director James Canfield for Nevada Ballet Theatre in its first holiday season at The Smith Center beginning December 15.*

This will be Canfield's first full-length story ballet for Nevada Ballet Theatre and Las Vegas audiences.

In speaking to the timelessness of the ballet, Canfield says, "I think because of its longevity, it's history, it's music and the fact that it's around a holiday – it's about celebrating community."

"In terms of interpretation, it's a fairy tale. Clara is dreaming. There's a fairy in it. So you can go anywhere with the story. I went back to the ETA Hoffman story (that the ballet is based on) and one of the things most people don't know is that the story takes place in Clara's bedroom; it's a dream. So I wanted to explore why we dream and what in our real lives affect our dreams."

Canfield is also intrigued by the theme of "time" in the ballet. "There are gongs, the grandfather's dance, the grandfather clock because he's a clock maker, the passing down of traditions – obviously there are generational things there. And in her fairy tale she's leaving little girls' things saying "goodbye dollys;" then first love, Nutcracker, Prince, and first kiss. So time is a thread that will exist all the way through this piece for me."

From extraordinary and ornamental figures such as a flying rocking horse, waltzing flowers and a fairy for all

seasons, to some of the most beloved and traditional characters including Clara, Drosselmeyer, Mother Ginger and the Sugar Plum Fairy, these fantasied beings will be brought to life within the walls of a stunning life-sized Victorian dollhouse, complete with a 30 foot tall growing Christmas tree -- and doors and grandfather clocks that range over 15 feet tall.

"NBT's production will be especially memorable because James has conceived an approach that blends innovation and tradition in order to achieve something that is free and beautiful," said Costume Designer Sandra Woodall. "During the creative process, we look at what is happening in the world around us and seek to combine that with ballet history and tradition. This particular version of *The Nutcracker* allows me the unique opportunity to be a part of both ballet as art and ballet as spectacle!"

Discussing the design elements for the ballet,





Canfield is effusive: "The set is amazing. Amazing. It's a better house than I live in." However, he's clear that from a design standpoint everything is not only gorgeous, but it's justified: "Is it elaborate? Yes. Is there a reason for it to be elaborate? Yes. It's our spectacle. This is our vehicle that reaches beyond a community to a bigger community that we then have to exercise our expertise in keeping them throughout the rest of the year."

One of the hallmarks in staging *The Nutcracker* is that it lends itself to pleasing all types of audiences. "There's something for everyone in *Nutcracker*. You can utilize some contemporary choreography in the *Divertissements*. You have kids being kids. You have effects. You get to see all of that throughout the evening," says Canfield.

In keeping with tradition, the new production of *The Nutcracker* will expand the NBT community by including many roles for student dancers. Over 100 children from the Academy of Nevada Ballet Theatre and NBT's Education and Outreach programs will perform in the ballet. "This level of exposure and commitment prepares these young people for what lies

ahead in their performance careers and therefore is probably the most important aspect of their training," says Canfield.

Not only younger generations of performers get to be a part of the production though. Canfield encourages older, seasoned, perhaps retired performers to be a part of this big, new production. Says Canfield, "Retired performers – what are you doing in the month of December?" There are character roles for performers who may be retired or semi-retired and want to



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perform in one production a year. And there you have another generational layer to add to this community-based endeavor.

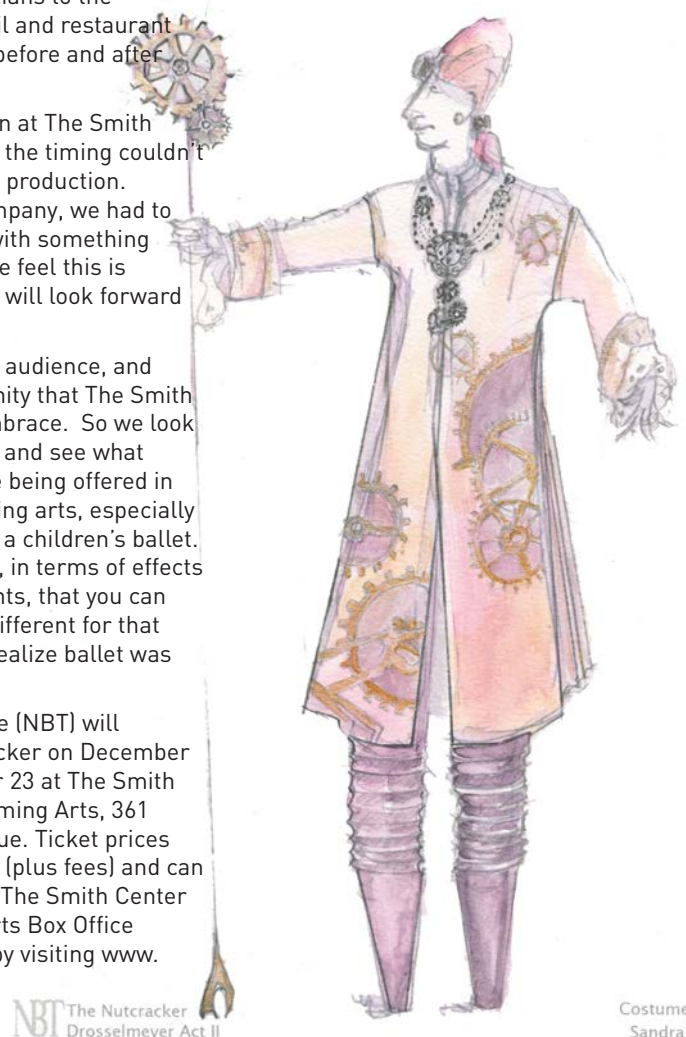
Canfield also believes the production will give back to the community on another level by creating revenue and jobs here in Las Vegas – from building sets and hiring musicians to the “ripple” effect of retail and restaurant spending by patrons before and after performances.

As the first full season at The Smith Center, Canfield says the timing couldn’t be better for this new production. “Being a resident company, we had to come out of the box with something really spectacular. We feel this is something audiences will look forward to year after year.”

“I hope to expand our audience, and embrace the community that The Smith Center is trying to embrace. So we look out at the community and see what other productions are being offered in terms of the performing arts, especially to kids – because it is a children’s ballet. There will be aspects, in terms of effects and theatrical elements, that you can bring in; something different for that “Oh my god, I didn’t realize ballet was this.”

Nevada Ballet Theatre (NBT) will premiere The Nutcracker on December 15 through December 23 at The Smith Center for the Performing Arts, 361 Symphony Park Avenue. Ticket prices range from \$45-\$158 (plus fees) and can be ordered by calling The Smith Center for the Performing Arts Box Office at (702) 749-2000 or by visiting www.nevadaballet.org.

Dates for the 2012 production of The Nutcracker are: Saturday, December 15 at 7:30 pm, Sunday, December 16 at 1pm, Friday, December 21 at 7:30 pm, Saturday, December 22 at 2 pm & 7:30 pm and Sunday, December 23 at 1 pm & 5 pm.



NBT The Nutcracker
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FRANK MARINO'S

DIVA DANCER CALENDAR

BY RICHARD DAVIS

Frank Marino is showing his love for his fans --eight days a week with his new 2013 Divas Dancers Calendar featuring the ten hot male dancers from "Divas Las Vegas" and available exclusively for sale to his fans after each show. The \$10 cost for the calendar includes two free tickets to any "Divas Las Vegas" performance between now and the end of 2013. Frank says, "Spend ten bucks and get a \$150 value for free!"

Frank said, "It's always been my dream to have male dancers as part of the show and since introducing the Divas Dancers they have become major audience favorites for both men and women." Because the dancers are starting to get as much recognition from the audience and critics as the impersonators, Frank wanted to feature them in his first calendar. "Plus because I'm the boss, I get to pick the costumes!" Frank is captured in highly erotic poses with a different scantily-clad dancer each month. For example, a military look for the 4th of July and big Christmas bows and not much else for December.

Frank said the introduction of male dancers has enhanced the illusion created by the female star impersonators, "These men are big and well-built and they help to make the impersonators look more feminine." Frank said that although none of the female impersonators in the show are professional dancers, they are all "very good" and keep the professional male dancers on their toes. Frank said the show has "heavy,

heavy choreography" that leaves the male dancers exhausted by the end of the evening.

The Imperial Palace, the home for "Divas," is being transformed into The Quad in 2013 with a new casino double the size and renovations throughout. Project Linq will connect the new Quad and the recently renovated Flamingo with fabulous retail stores and restaurants, all leading up to the giant Ferris wheel, the High Roller that will dominate the Strip. Frank said that "Divas Las Vegas" is the only show currently at the Imperial Palace staying with the new hotel because "they wanted upbeat and edgy and felt that I really fit that." He said, "This is the second time that I've lived through a renovation, but the pay-off will be amazing."

Expect new things from "Divas Las Vegas" in 2013 also. Frank said, "I promised the show would be constantly changing." With



For first time in 28 years Frank and his partner will be home in Las Vegas for Christmas. Divas Las Vegas the show will perform the week between Christmas and New Year's Eve. The show is dark on New Year's Eve and will reopen on New Year's Day at a new, earlier start time, 9:30 p.m.

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"It's always been my dream to have male dancers as part of the show and since introducing the Divas Dancers they have become major audience favorites for both men and women."

Shania Twain taking up permanent residency across the street at the Coliseum at Caesar's Palace, "Divas Las Vegas" will be featuring Andrew Ryan as the first Shania Twain female impersonator performer on the Strip. Frank said, "The Divas Dancers will be in chaps and thongs." Frank is also creating a new number for an Adele impersonator.

"I religiously go to Opportunity Village's Magical Forest," Frank

says it's his favorite Las Vegas holiday tradition, and then he takes a week off at Disney World. But for the first time in 28 years Frank and his partner will be home in Las Vegas for Christmas. If you don't know what to do with your boyfriend's mother over the holidays take her to see "Divas Las Vegas," the show will be performing the week between Christmas and New Year's Eve. The show is dark on New Year's Eve and will reopen on New Year's Day at a new, earlier start time, 9:30 p.m. Frank says, "I expect a whole new audience at this earlier start time."

Always ahead of himself, Frank is looking forward to 2016, he says, "I'm glad the election's over, but next time I'm running for President. I'll save the country a lot of money because I can be First Lady, too! I won't start any more wars and the parades will be fabulous!"



Male Dancers, who perform in chaps and thongs are one of several exciting new additions to the Divas Las Vegas show.

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WHAT'S THE T IN...

DTLA DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

A QVegas Interview with "Trey" played by
multitalented JC Jones.

[by Randy Slovacek]
TheRandyReport.com



LOGO TV recently launched a new scripted drama TV series, DTLA. Starring, written and produced by Darryl Stephens of Noahs' Arc fame, the show follows eight friends with varied ethnic, cultural, and sexual orientations living in downtown Los Angeles, all at a crossroads in their lives.

JC Jones, who plays "Trey" on the new series, has previously appeared in Ebony Magazine as one of Americas Top Black High School Seniors in 2007; appeared in television shows such as Fox's Glee, TNT's The Closer, and CBS's The Bold and the Beautiful; and is also successfully stepping into the music world as a R&B/Pop artist. JC spent this past summer touring with LGBT music favorites Karmin and Kimberly Caldwell (American Idol).

QVegas recently spoke with JC about his new TV series role, new music projects and how he hopes they impact audiences.

Cliff G Photography
www.cliffgphoto.com

Congrats on your new TV show, DTLA on LOGO TV. I'm enjoying the series.

Thank you! Thank you! I really appreciate it. Every time I see a new episode I'm watching it with the TV audience for the first time, so I get to experience it in much the same way as the viewers. It's been a long process in terms of bringing the show to life. We shot the pilot almost two years ago, and then over the past year shot the rest of the series.

How was the creative process of shooting the series for you?

It was great! We all had a lot of input on our characters: who are characters should be and why we think they feel a certain way. It was a very supportive environment in which to be creative.

The show also has several "name" guest stars - Leslie Jordan, Melanie Griffith, Tiffany Pollard and Sandra Bernhard...

Absolutely. And everyone gets along great and supports each other. We really are a great, big family.



Right now we've seen only the first few episodes, but relationships are getting kind of "crunchy" and it's not a very happy time for people in "downtown LA", is it?

No, everyone is changing. And as the plot thickens people change even more. But I will say things get better toward the end. There are some surprises along the way, but it does get better.

"Trey," is a drag performer. How was shooting those scenes for you.

Very interesting (laughing). Wearing heels, moving around, dancing, having to shoot scenes over and over, sometimes five and six times - it was a challenge. But there were people on the set who have lived that life, and know the ins and outs of drag performance who were very helpful and supportive. I wouldn't change a thing about the whole experience.

Your character "Trey" has been dating "Stefan," who is older but isn't very nice so far. And in a recent episode "Trey" stood up for himself when "Stefan" discovered that you perform in drag. "Trey" showed some real self-love for himself and didn't allow "Stefan" to disrespect him.

When I first got the role and I read the entire storyline, I wanted to make sure I didn't portray the character as a victim. I took a lot of time to research that life and the person that would live that life. And I realized that "Trey's" story is universal: someone who's not being accepted for who they are and being looked down upon. I wanted to play "Trey" as someone who is proud of who he is. It's kind of like "one bad apple can spoil the whole bunch" - but I wanted him to be the "good apple" in a bad bunch,

and have his influence turn the bad apples right. I didn't want him to conform to other people's views.

"Stefan" finds out that "Trey" performs in drag in a scene at the dinner table with Trey's mother and sister. And they make clear their support for who Trey is. And there was a lot of humor mixed in with acceptance.

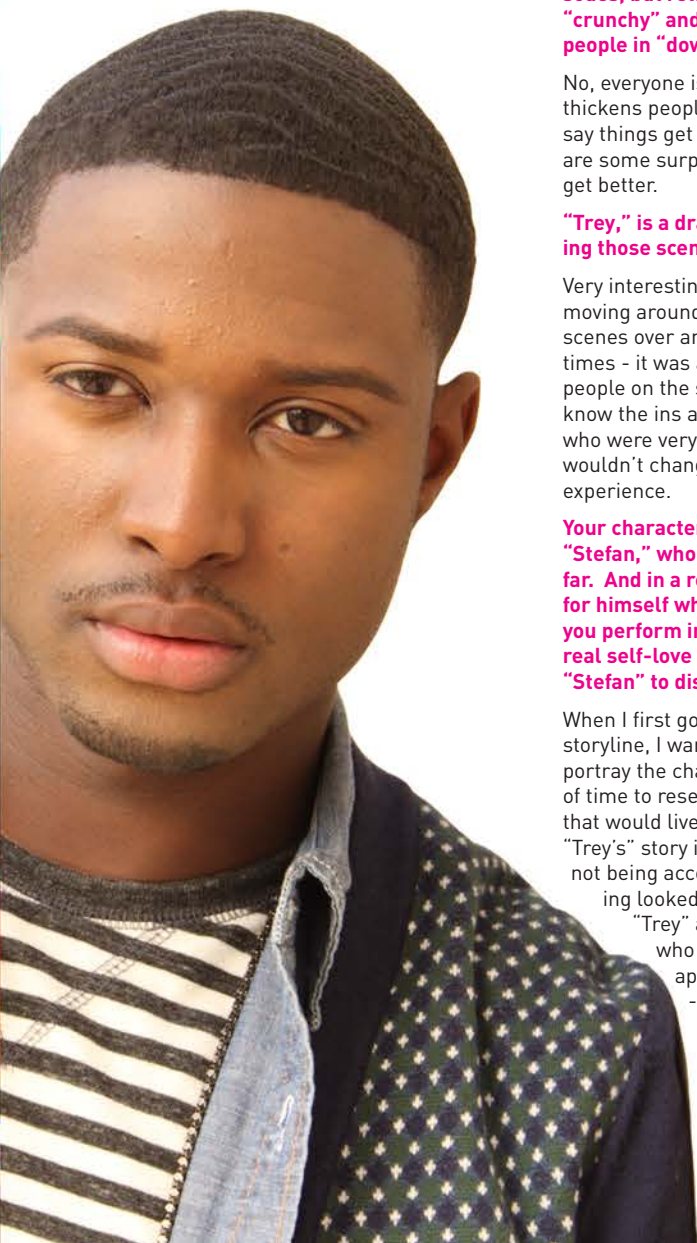
The show does have a lot of serious undertones, but we try to break that up with humor when we can. On a positive note, we want people to accept each other for who they are, especially people's families. So many times, people don't have a support system or a refuge to turn to. We knew from the beginning that we wanted to show Trey's family as supportive no matter who he is or what he does. If I can help change someone's negative view of a gay person or a drag queen, or instill some sense of tolerance for people who may be perceived as "different," then that's what I want to do. It's important that we not only talk about the things we need to do, but put ourselves out there and do them.

I have to say, playing a drag performer on DTLA is a big departure from appearing on GLEE as a "Warbler."

(Laughing) Yes. Yes. It's a very different role. Very. (Still laughing).

I'd heard LOGO was considering dropping their LGBT programming to a degree, so it's nice to see LOGO supporting the show.

Yes. It's something that's very positive. It's about more than just whether people are gay or straight. It's about people's lives and things that happen every single day. I think everyone - gay, straight, bisexual, black, white, whatever - can get something from the show and relate in some way.





Let's talk about your music. Your new song "Driving Me Crazy" was featured in the premiere of DTLA, but this wasn't your first single?

I released a single and music video last year called "Let Me Love You" currently available on iTunes. I had a great time touring this summer with Karmin and Kimberly Caldwell (from American Idol). The song from DTLA - "Driving Me Crazy" - will be available soon, along with remixes, and I'll also be shooting a music video for that song.

Congratulations. You're very busy!

Thank you for that. To have my music released and to be on a TV series like DTLA is amazing. This is a long way from growing up in my hometown of Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm so blessed and thankful to God because I'm living my dreams.

"DTLA" airs Fridays at 12amEST/11pmCST on LOGO TV and OUTtv.

Randy Slovacek is the author of The Randy Report, covering entertainment & political news of interest to the LGBT community. Follow him at www.therandyreport.com.

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A close-up photograph of a hand popping a champagne cork. The cork is flying off to the right, creating a large, dynamic splash of white foam against a bright yellow background. The hand is holding the neck of a green champagne bottle, which has a gold foil label. The scene is filled with numerous small, sparkling droplets of champagne. The text 'Pop THAT Cork' is overlaid in a white, elegant script font, with 'Pop' and 'Cork' being significantly larger than 'THAT'.

Pop THAT Cork

TO GOOD CHAMPAGNE [by Russ White]

'Tis the season for celebrating, and nothing says celebration like popping the cork off an ice cold bottle of champagne. Whether entertaining at home, on the town, or at the holiday office party, the bubbles put us all in a feel good mood. But New Years Eve is the signature night for champagne, ringing in the new year with toasts and resolutions.

Champagne and sparkling wine comes in a wide variety of quality and price. True Champagne comes from the Champagne region in France. No other variety bears the "Champagne" name and are collectively referred to as sparkling wine. A discerning palette will know the difference.

When choosing the right bottle, consider your budget and the occasion. For a large crowd, look for a more affordable bottle. A small party will enjoy a moderately priced bottle. An intimate celebration demands a more expensive brand.

When in doubt, Veuve Clicquot Brut is a safe bet for any occasion. Created by Madame Clicquot, the inventor of the modern champagne process, "Veuve" is available at most grocery stores for \$40-\$50. This moderately priced bottle with the iconic yellow label is perfectly priced for a special evening and also makes a great gift.

Many popular champagnes are considered "non-vintage" and are produced with a blend of grapes and wines from previous years. This ensures a consistent taste from year to year. The sweetness of a champagne ranges from a very dry "brut" to a sweeter "doux." Some people don't like champagne because it's too sweet or too dry. Taste a variety until you settle in on the sweetness or dryness that appeals to you.

A good champagne stands alone, but bellinis and mimosas are also popular. Unlike cocktails where well and shelf brands are noticeably different, adding a splash of OJ to a fine champagne can improve the taste of the orange juice, but is a waste of champagne. Serve champagne cocktails with the less expensive brands.

PROPER SERVING

The pop of a cork and the spraying and spillage of everescence certainly creates dramatic excitement, but it also wastes bubbles. Savor more in your mouth than on the floor with these serving techniques.

- Chill to 45°
- Remove the foil
- Twist off the wire cage
- Grasp the bottle firmly in one hand and hold the cork in the other
- Pointing the bottle away from your body and other people.
- Slowly twist the cork, not the bottle.
- Place your thumb in the bottom of the bottle and support the bottle with the palm of your hand. Holding the bottle in this manner minimizes contact with body heat, retaining the crisp chill longer.
- Hold champagne flutes at an angle as your pour to prevent a head from forming and overflowing the glass.

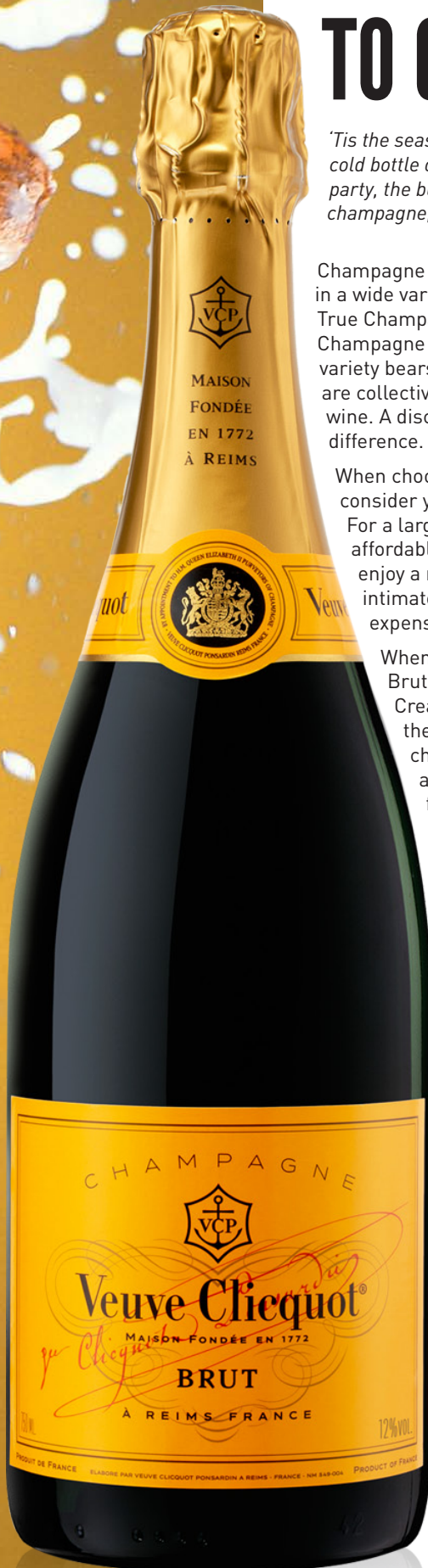
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Veuve Clicquot..... (\$\$)
Lamarca Prosecco..... (\$)



THE SHAPE OF A CHAMPAGNE FLUTE

The shape of a champagne flute is designed to retain the signature carbonation in the beverage. The flute is designed to be held by the stem to help prevent the heat from the hand from warming the liquid inside. Additionally the flute design adds to the aesthetic appeal of champagne, allowing the bubbles to travel further due to the narrow design, giving a far more pleasant visual appeal.





[by Joey Amato]



Radisson Blu Aqua is a luxury downtown hotel in Chicago, located near Millennium Park and Lake Michigan.

When a city boasts a neighborhood appropriately named “Boystown”, you know you are in for a treat. Although it’s the 3rd largest city in the country in terms of population, Chicago seems vastly different from Los Angeles and New York. Maybe it’s the Midwestern mentality that generates passion and hospitality amongst the locals. Or quite possibly its picturesque border along Lake Michigan is what makes the Windy City a truly magical place.

Getting around Chicago is simple. Guests arriving at either O’Hare or Midway airports can board a train to downtown making transportation virtually painless and inexpensive. Once downtown, visitors can stay at any one of dozens of large hotels or opt for smaller boutiques. I chose to stay at the spectacular Radisson Blu.

The first of its kind in the United States, Radisson Blu, part of Aqua Tower, is a chic, 86-story towering oasis designed by Jeanne Gang near the border of Lake Michigan, which features luxurious guest rooms, state-of-the-art fitness center, conference space and Felini, an Italian-inspired restaurant and bar which was bustling with patrons almost every time I passed by. The hotel is located a short 10-minute taxi ride from Boystown, the heart of the LGBT community.

This fall, the Art Institute of Chicago will present a tribute to Jeanne Gang, the developer of Radisson Blu and Aqua Tower. The exhibition titled, Building: Inside Studio Gang Architects will be on display from September 24 until

February 24, 2013 in the museum’s Architecture and Design Galleries.

The exhibit will feature over a dozen projects framed around four major issues facing contemporary architecture: its relationship to nature, questions of density, building community, and architecture as performance.

In addition to Aqua Tower, SGA has developed other awe-inspiring projects including the Hyderabad O2, a high-rise community in Hyderabad, India; an ecological revitalization project for Lincoln Park Zoo’s South Pond in Chicago; and Harbor Knot, a concert venue, maritime museum, and public park designed for Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

After an afternoon at the museum, head to Halsted Street, the heart of LGBT activity. The street is lined with dozens of gay bars, shops and restaurants perfect for a gay-getaway. The Kit Kat Lounge & Supper Club is a premier destination venue for any occasion. The restaurant offers an innovative martini and cocktail menu, contemporary cuisine,



here as extremely friendly and pour great drinks.

entertainment by the world famous Kit Kat Divas and sleek decor.

Entrees are given names of famous television and movie actors. Standouts include Gregory Peck, wagyu beef meatballs served with whole wheat spaghetti in a tomato-basil sauce. Another great selection is Bea Arthur, a delicious skirt steak accompanied by baby spinach, gorgonzola and bacon with a mustard vinaigrette.

For traditional American fare, visit Halsted's Bar & Grill where diners can choose from a large selection of starters and entrees including the restaurant's famous selection of burgers. Some of my favorites included the Brie Mushroom Burger and Halsted's Homemade Shrimp Burger made with fresh shrimp mixed with peppers, onions and topped with an avocado and herb aioli.

Boystown comes alive at sundown, where the streets are filled with revelers until the wee hours of the morning. There are almost too many gay bars to visit on one trip, but bar hopping is encouraged so you can feel the vibe of this wonderful destination. Start off at Sidetrack, the largest bar in the city, which features a great rooftop beer garden, and seven large rooms catering to nearly every musical taste and style.

Just a few doors down is Minibar Ultra Lounge, one of my favorite destinations in the city. The cozy space is perfect for an evening cocktail with friends or a great opportunity to meet the locals in an intimate setting. The bartenders

Roscoe's is one of Chicago's must-see venues and caters to a younger crowd. Food is served in the attached cafe next door and the outdoor patio gets packed in the summer. Check out the wet underwear contest the last Thursday of each month hosted by drag diva Frida Lay.

If partying isn't your glass of vodka, catch a Cub's game at Wrigley Field or during football season, head to Soldier Field and watch the Bears take on one of their NFC rivals for an experience not to be missed.

You can't truly experience Chicago without a trip to Navy Pier. The 50-acre oasis of entertainment, museums, activities, restaurants, and shops is the perfect place for some fun time with your partner or friends. The pier's most eye-catching attraction is the 150-foot Ferris wheel, which offers great views of the city and Lake Michigan. Also check out the whimsical musical carousel, Wave Swinger lift-and-twirl ride, miniature golf course, and remote control boats.

Catch a movie on Chicago's largest movie screen at the IMAX Theater. Or take a dynamic high-speed motion thrill ride to Antarctica on the Transporter FX. Navy Pier is always a great place to spend the afternoon if this is your first time visiting the city.

Just a brisk walk from the hotel is Millennium Park, located in the heart of downtown Chicago. The park is an award-winning center for art, music, architecture and landscape design. The result of a unique partnership between the City of Chicago and the philanthropic



Cloud Gate —referred to by locals as “The Bean”, for obvious reasons—is a public sculpture by talented British artist Anish Kapoor.

community, the 24.5-acre park features the work of world-renowned architects, planners, artists and designers. Among Millennium Park's prominent features are the Frank Gehry-designed Jay Pritzker Pavilion, the most sophisticated outdoor concert venue of its kind as well as the interactive Crown Fountain by Jaume Plensa and what locals refer to as “the bean.”

While in Chicago, don't forget to pick up a copy of GRAB Magazine or the Windy City Times for local LGBT news and events. Plan to stay a minimum of five days to truly experience all of the wonderful sites and attractions Chicago has to offer.



Jay Pritzker Pavilion, a centerpiece in Millennium Park in the Loop community area of Chicago. Designed by Frank Gehry.

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THE BEST YEAR YET?

Why 2012 Should Take Its Place Next to 1969 in LGBT History

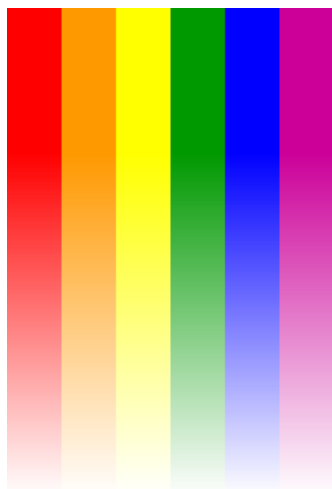
[by Abby Dees, author of the bi-weekly column *Thinking Out Loud*]

Fights and fabulousness make history; good news and policy shifts rarely do. As an example, I don't think I've seen more than two pictures from the 1969 Stonewall riots, but my mind is filled with images of those amazing '60s-era drag queens using handbags like weapons and kicking out the back of a police van with stiletto heels. Stonewall is so burned into my consciousness as The Beginning that it hardly matters that I've never really seen what it looked like.

Did you also know that four years earlier there was an organized gay rights protest in front of the White House? In 1965, brave members of the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis put on suits (the men) and dresses (the women), carried signs and politely picketed one Saturday afternoon. This was no small thing, considering that homosexuality was still listed as a mental disorder. Still, it looked more like a bunch of accountants protesting tax code changes.

I've seen a lot of pictures from that day, and I might even argue that 1965 is Year One of the modern LGBT rights movement, not 1969. Yet that protest has become not much more than an interesting footnote in our collective historical memory compared to the sheer brass of Stonewall.

I have a feeling 2012 might go down like 1965. There's hardly any photographic evidence this year of a critical mass of queers pushing down the fences and stopping traffic, and I don't remember a word being about LGBT rights in the Presidential debates, though I did nod off a few times. You could even say 2012 was boring, which would be a shame, because I believe that historians will one day look back and declare 2012 a great civil rights turning point.



Let's not say goodbye to 2012 without giving it its due:

Obama "evolved" on same-sex marriage. Right, overdue, whatever. But then he went on to become the first president elected on a platform of full LGBT equality. That didn't happen in 2008, and it couldn't have. For the last 12 years, LGBT rights have been used as a wedge issue to get out the conservative vote. Notice how little of that there was this time around, though there were marriage initiatives in swing states – oh, and Obama took all the states that put marriage on the ballot.

We didn't have a Prop 8. We didn't even have a loss. After 28 straight defeats for marriage equality at the state-level, by popular vote, since 1998, we won four marriage referenda in one shot, three of which were ballot measures legalizing same-sex marriage. We've never been able to vote down a marriage ban and



suddenly people are all for it in places as un-swishy as Maine.

Emboldened by the passage of North Carolina's draconian Amendment One in May, The National Organization for Marriage decided to bet the house on the overwhelming opposition to marriage equality among racial minorities. Then NOM lost. Nov. 6 exit polls show that both African-American and Latino voters support marriage equality by a large margin. [Can we finally put that myth to rest, everyone?]

Tammy Baldwin, from Wisconsin, became the first openly gay member of the U.S. Senate, and she was just one of the 152 openly LGBT candidates up for election on Nov. 6. Seventy-seven percent of them won in such notoriously pink bastions as North Dakota and West Virginia.

Stacie Laughton of New Hampshire became the first openly trans person elected to state office, and self-described pansexual Mary Gonzales of El Paso became a Texas state representative.

2012 also set the stage for what could be our biggest legal victory yet: Three different circuit courts (the 1st, 2nd and 9th) ruled for marriage equality. The odds favor at least one of these cases making it to the Supreme Court next year, which has implications for LGBT rights far beyond marriage. While the Court could rule against us, good money says it won't, especially if it chooses to hear the DOMA cases instead of the Prop 8 case. Either way, the outcome will send us out in the streets, in celebration or fury. And watch: that will be the day we remember.



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THAT'S SO VEGAS

Bottoms Up: Bar Review

The Chandelier

[by Michael Barbieri]
www.myvegasobsession.com

I'm sitting at a flashy, yet elegant bar in the Cosmopolitan Casino Hotel. The bar is cocooned by what seems like thousands of strands of Swarovski crystals, lit in a beautiful pinkish lavender hue. I take a sip of my cocktail, garnished with flash frozen raspberries. I bite down on one of the berries and smoke shoots out my nose! My drink is called the Fire Breathing Dragon and the bar is The Chandelier.

The Chandelier is a fantastic, three-level bar located near the Strip entrances of the Cosmopolitan. It's unmistakable - all those shimmering ropes of glittering crystals draped down from the ceiling of the atrium, creating spaces in which you can sit, chat and enjoy unique cocktails that exemplify the word "mixology"! On each level, you have your choice of sitting at the bars, or in various plush conversation nooks. The lighting levels are sexy and flattering, and although the sounds from the casino filter through, they are never really intrusive.

Then, of course, there are the cocktails. Ah, the cocktails!! Created by General Manager and head Mixologist Mariena Mercer, these are not your run-of-the-mill gin and tonics or whisky sours. These are delicious, often surprising concoctions, created by someone who truly understands the concept of

balance. Each level of the bar has it's own specialty cocktails, featuring ingredients as varied as they are fascinating - some, like whipped egg whites, fresh lemon or lime juice, and classic bitters, harken back to the heyday of cocktail culture. Others, like maple syrup foam, or maraschino cherry caviars, are prime examples of the molecular gastronomy movement that has become popular in modern cuisine.

I've now visited The Chandelier several times,

and just put myself in the hands of the friendly, professional, highly knowledgeable bartenders. I've simply said "Surprise me!" and boy, do they!

Level 1 is just off the casino and feels very open and comfortable. The bar itself is covered with a bright canopy of crystals, which are reminiscent of a traditional chandelier.

Here, I sampled what was once one of their signature drinks, the White Cosmopolitan - a lovely pale pink take on the classic Cosmo, with a bouquet that was as intoxicating as the liquor with which it was made. I also ordered one of the specialties: The Libertine - Maker's Mark 46, orange



FIRE BREATHING DRAGON



THE LIBERTINE



THAI DOWN



THE COSMOPOLITAN COSMO



marmalade, lemon juice, rosemary simple syrup, topped with maple syrup foam and garnished with a sprig of fresh rosemary. In telling friends about this libation, many have said that it sounds sickeningly sweet. Not so! As I mentioned before, Mariena Mercer understands balance. The ingredients played perfectly off each other and the one flavor that really came through, was the warm, subtle taste of the Maker's Mark. I'm not a bourbon lover, but I enjoyed it tremendously. The Libertine earned Ms. Mercer First Place in the Maker's Mark Mixology Competition.

Now...climb the wraparound glass staircase, lit from beneath, and ascend to Level 1.5. On this level, you truly feel like you're inside the chandelier. You'll also find some of the most fabulous, fascinating, and delicious cocktails you're likely to encounter anywhere. This, to me, is where Mercer's artistry really explodes! My first visit was with my partner, who ordered the Thai Down - tequila blanco, strawberry puree, Thai chili syrup and Thai basil leaves. I had heard about several of their drinks, so I actually ordered two cocktails for myself; the Verbena: an Asian take on a Margarita, served with a tiny Szechuan button - the dried heart of a flower which, when eaten, pumps your salivary glands into high gear and changes the flavor profile of the ingredients from tart, to smooth, then back again. The Verbena is not on any menu, but they'll mix one for you if you ask, and it's well worth it! I also ordered the Fire Breathing Dragon - Dragonberry rum, raspberry puree, lemongrass and Thai chili syrups and a pink peppercorn rim. The kicker, of course, is that garnish of the dehydrated

raspberries, treated with liquid nitrogen. When you eat them, that nitrogen fog comes out your nose and mouth. Gimmicky, for sure, but also quite delicious. On a separate trip with my friend Danny, we tried the Fit To Be Thai'd - coconut vodka, Thai chili syrup, peanut butter, coconut cream and a mini coconut as a garnish. This tastes like the best Thai peanut sauce you've ever had, but turned into a delicious milkshake! We ordered the Cereal Killer, which includes Cinnamon Toast Crunch infused milk and is really yummy, and the Cherry Smoked Coke, which features a cherrywood smoked ball of ice, Mexican Coca-Cola, and leather infused bourbon! I kid you not!

The top level, features cocktails with more fruity and floral ingredients. Up here, we tried The Butterfly, made with Hangar One Mandarin Blossom, Aperol mango and strawberry puree, and yuzu sour - a gorgeous, light, fruity concoction. I also ordered the Kaffir The Reaper - Coconut vodka, Chinese five-spice, yuzu sour, coconut-ginger tea and ginger beer. This was a refreshing drink with distinctly Asian flavors, and a lovely way to end a very pleasant night of research.

From my several visits to The Chandelier, I have to say, I'm rather in awe of Mariena Mercer's talents. Her drink menus are always changing and evolving and I look forward to sampling her newest creations. I was actually able to meet her on my last trip there, and she told me about a new holiday themed cocktail for Level 1.5; The Immaculate Conception. It features gold, frankincense, and myrrh! Seriously! So stop by The Chandelier and have a very spirited holiday!

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SAGITTARIUS

(NOV 22-DEC 21)

Working all of those festive pre holiday gigs will certainly line those pockets of yours this month. However, please don't be tempted to over book/overextend yourself. No amount of money is worth getting sick over. Weekend getaway from the 7th-10th proves dazzlingly happy & surprising. That invite on the 22nd is tempting, but we suggest that you politely decline.



CAPRICORN

(DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

Unlike Sag., you'll be working "nose to the grindstone" right up til the 23rd. It's uncanny how easily you can shift from the work mode to party "mood", and back again. Purchasing that new vehicle surely puts you in a super festive frame of mind. Leave the new "wheels" at home on Xmas day. Don't pout!. Just take a super cool pic of your new "baby" on your iPhone.



AQUARIUS

(JAN 20-FEB 18)

Wondering if there are enough holiday decorations at your home? Here's a tiny hint. They can be seen from OUTER SPACE. Enough already! Try being understated (look it up-or ask a Virgo) for a change. A surprise Xmas eve guest shall have you grinning from ear to ear. The 18th & 19th look like "super crunch" days at work. Don't even try to correct the big boss.



PISCES

(FEB 19-MAR 19)

How lovely to see Pisces so aglow with holiday cheer. Or could it also be that love is in the air? In the air? Hell, it looks and feels as though a "pinata" exploded. When you fall, you really fall. How about a reality check? Bills need to be paid and commitments honored. Then it's alright to put the "rose colored glasses" back on. What a lovely glow they give.



ARIES

(MAR 20-APR 19)

Pisces doesn't fall in love half way and you surely don't skimp when it comes to hosting an Xmas party. Do close off the "east wing" and make certain that the "heliport" is tastefully decorated. A little subtlety would be nice. Let someone else pick up those guests at the airport. You've got more than enough to do. You'll spend the 31st having "champagne for two."



TAURUS

(APR 20-MAY 20)

Please don't allow health concerns for a loved one to put a damper on your (and especially their) festivities. It's time to tell a needy sibling NO and stick to it. Try nurturing/spoiling yourself for a change. It's easy once you get the hang of it. Speaking of which, isn't it time for a new family pet to enter the picture. You thrive around canine companions.



GEMINI

(MAY 21-JUN 21)

It'll be such a nice change of pace to have actual "nice money" for purchasing Xmas gifts instead of the usual McD's gift certificates or "chia pets." Even so, please stick to a budget, as you do tend to overspend a bit. A word to the wise. Don't host this year's party. Let someone else slave over a hot stove. Splurge for some new clothes. The new slim you deserves it.



CANCER

(JUN 22-JUL 22)

Those Aquarius decorations were a bit much. At least yours can only be seen from Mount Charleston. That's quite a feast you've got set up for Xmas day? Expecting the cast of "A Christmas Carol" or just making sure nothing runs out? Either way expect a lot of satisfied & sleepy guests. Crucial business appointment on the 28th goes beautifully. Let the compliments begin.



LEO

(JUL 23-AUG 22)

The decorations and food marathons are covered, so where does the oh so creative Lion/ess get to show off this year? What about trying out for best dressed? That sense of style you possess is certainly an eye catcher (think "Electric Horseman"). How about hosting a New Year's Eve fashion show for charity? It'll be for a good cause and all thoses poses you can strike!



VIRGO

(AUG 23-SEP 22)

Those recent financial "shots in the arm" vault you to a place that's not experienced too often. It's called being in the "black" or being "flush". Enjoy and revel in it, Virgo. While you're at it, have a Taurus buddy work up a budget that can be stuck to (caviar helper works in a pinch). That New Year's week getaway will seem like a gift from heaven. Good for you.



LIBRA

(SEP 23-OCT 22)

Just because it'll be low key for the holidays doesn't mean there won't be tons of fun. It's generous of you to take a back seat as far as the decorations go. Trying to illuminate the "monorail" last year was well intentioned, but ultimately a bit much. How about a swanky dinner party for 8? The best cuisine & bubbly. With you as host, how can it miss?



SCORPIO

(OCT 23-NOV. 21)

Though you might not be feeling especially social this holiday season, there are plenty of good friends who just won't let you hide out. Face it! That's what happens when you're charming and popular. The lucky folks you'll be playing "Secret Santa" for will be thrilled and delighted. So, a secret pat on the back, Scorp. Your humanity truly does shine.



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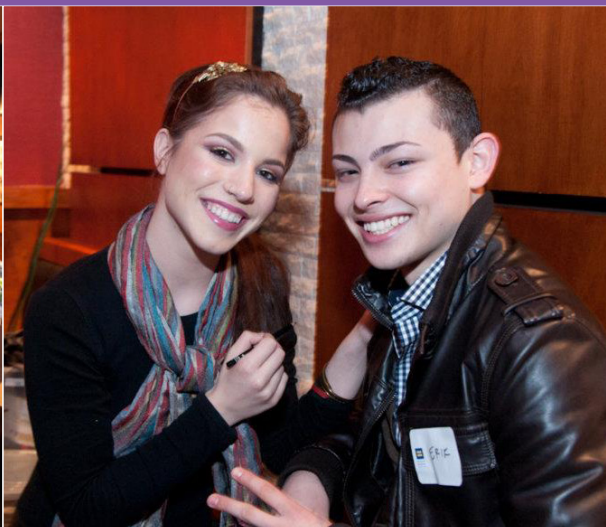
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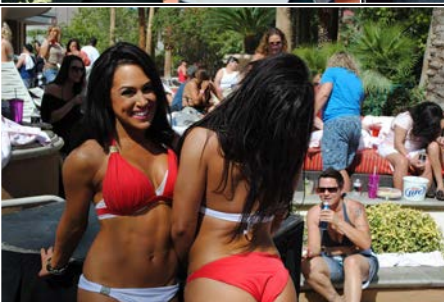


YEAR IN REVIEW

QVEGAS.COM/PHOTOS



MARCH 2012



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A NEW QVEGAS BUSINESS ALLIANCE

National Affiliation Brings Supplier Diversity to Vegas in 2013

Last month, QVegas announced the spin off of the QVegas Business Alliance. What was a small collective of businesses and entrepreneurs would enjoy monthly networking lunches around town. The New QBA is now a stand-alone non-profit corporation.

After attending the NGLCC conference in Chicago this fall, Dina Proto's business hit a windfall. Dina and her wife Dom founded Teazled, an LGBT inspired line of greeting cards. Through connections made at NGLCC and the Pacific Region affiliated LGBT Chambers of Commerce, Dina was able to make the right contacts and secured a distribution agreement with Albertson's. "We decided we needed other businesses in Las Vegas to have easier access to these resources," said Proto.

New QVegas publisher Russ White also attended the NGLCC conference a year prior in Las Vegas and was impressed with the organization. "I learned there were great resources to help small businesses grow through local LGBT chambers, and that large businesses can leverage LGBT-owned businesses as part of their supplier diversity initiatives."

White and Proto, representing QBA at the NGLCC National Dinner in Washington DC, met with other of small business leaders, LGBT Chamber of Commerce leaders from around the country, and corporate supplier diversity managers at many Fortune 1000 companies.

QBA continues its monthly luncheons on the first Wednesday of every month and will be adding new programming in 2013 with regular events that include a Breakfast Speaker Series, After Hour Mixer, webcasts, conference calls, and small group collaboration and mentorship. Pending NGLCC approval, QBA will also become the regional contact for LGBT-owned businesses seeking national certification, and will maintain a regional directory of supplier diversity programs to help match local

vendors with regional supply chains.

QBA has completed its filings for and is in the process of becoming the NGLCC Affiliated Chamber of Commerce serving Las Vegas and Southern Nevada, joining the Pacific Region Council of Chambers and Business Organizations serving Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.

QBA membership is open to any business organization or individual in the Las Vegas area. Whether a small business owner, or an individual working for a business that is LGBT-owned or an ally-owned business or employee serving LGBT customers, anyone is welcome to join.

Many of the member benefits will apply to any business, however, NGLCC affiliation provides a specific benefit to LGBT-owned businesses. In early 2013, QBA members applying for business certification in the NGLCC Supplier Diversity Initiative will have their application fee waived.

The SDI offers businesses a tool to make connections and open doors with America's top corporations and each other. The SDI certifies Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and/or Transgender owned Business Enterprises (LGBTBEs) and works to provide opportunities for LGBTBEs to gain exposure within corporate procurement processes.

The flip-side of this benefit is that QBA can provide all businesses with locally-sourced LGBT-owned businesses to help grow a diverse supply chain.

QBA and NGLCC will host a Roadshow in early 2013 to educate local businesses about the benefits NGLCC extends to affiliated chambers like QBA.



QBA Membership

There are 6 membership levels available along with sponsorship opportunities.

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For organizations that want to maximize their involvement with QBA while getting the most exposure for their company. (\$1,000/yr)

Premier Membership

Ideal for a company that would prefer a greater presence in QBA. This membership builds upon the Business Membership level. (\$750/yr)

Business Membership

For independent business owners or lone representative of a larger company that plans to engage in business development and networking. (\$500/yr)

Association & Non-Profit Membership

Designed and specially priced for associations and other nonprofit organizations. (\$250/yr)

Individual Membership

For individuals who are interested in networking, meeting like-minded professionals and business development. (\$175/yr)

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Meeting future employers, professional enrichment, scholarship and volunteer opportunities are just a few of the benefits to joining the Chamber while in school. (\$50/yr)

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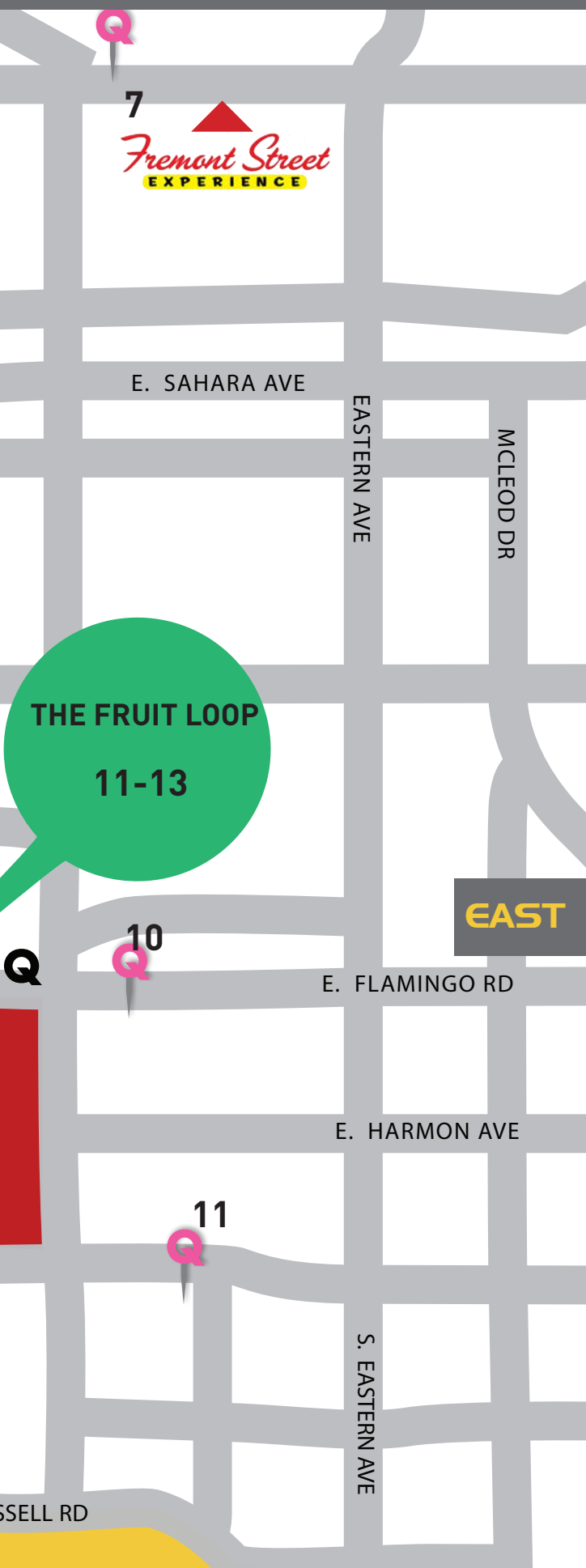
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Q NIGHTLIFE

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QBA membership is open to any business organization or individual in the Las Vegas area. Whether you are a small business owner or an individual working for a business that is LGBT-owned or an ally-owned business or employee serving LGBT customers, you are welcome to join.

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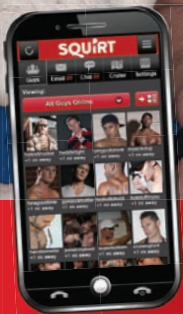
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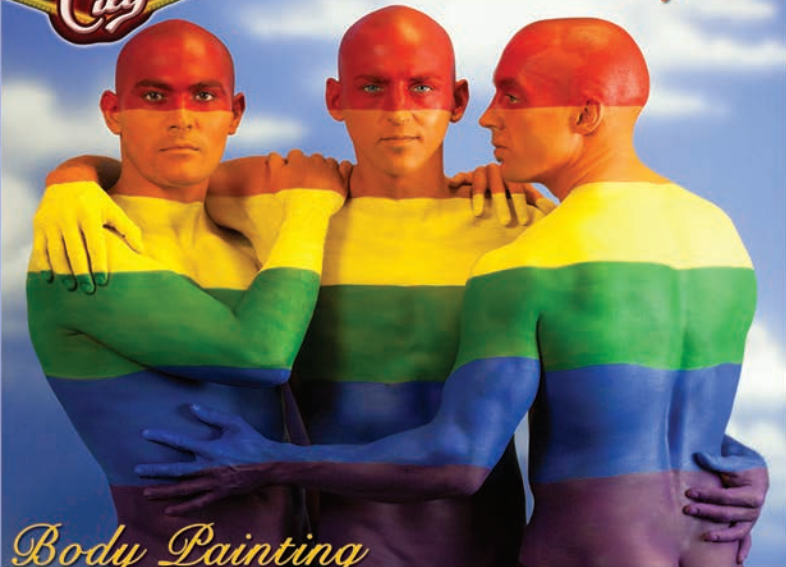


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MEANS ONLY 25% OF AMERICANS WITH HIV ARE RECEIVING EFFECTIVE TREATMENT

[by Dr. Sam Ho, M.D.]

56,000
Americans
become
infected with
HIV each
year
and more
than
14,000
people
die each year.

Twenty-one years ago, on Nov. 7, 1991, America was jolted with the news that basketball legend Magic Johnson had contracted HIV and would immediately retire from the sport.

Almost immediately, Johnson began taking the antiretroviral drug AZT, and his health quickly improved.

Just three months later, Johnson returned to basketball to play in the 1992 All-Star Game, where his performance earned him the MVP award.

Johnson's fans and supporters were delighted by his triumphant return. And through Johnson's experience, mainstream America began to understand that HIV infection was no longer an automatic death sentence, but a largely treatable, chronic condition.

We are fortunate that during the past two decades there has been great progress in the treatment and care of people living with HIV and AIDS. With early detection and increasingly effective treatments, Johnson's story is now just one of many high-profile examples of how people can manage their HIV and live long, productive lives.

But while proper treatment for people with HIV has become much more available and effective, only 25 percent of Americans with HIV are receiving it.

At the same time, people born after AIDS first emerged in 1981 are now most at risk of becoming infected with HIV. This sad fact highlights how important awareness and education is as we mark World AIDS Day Dec. 1.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), HIV infection rates are increasing for Americans between 13 and 30,



and most of the new HIV infections reported in this country involve people under 30.

It is so important to ensure that all people – especially young people – are aware and educated about HIV/AIDS prevention and the availability of effective treatments.

Let World AIDS Day remind us that about 56,000 Americans become infected with HIV each year, according to the CDC, and that more than 14,000 Americans with AIDS die each year. The CDC estimates that nearly 1.2 million Americans are living with HIV, and that about one in five don't know they have the virus.

Regularly testing people of most at risk for HIV – and then providing antiretroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS patients – dramatically reduces the number of new infections.

Preventing HIV is not complicated. If you're sexually active, get tested. Don't use IV drugs or share needles. Abstain or practice safer sex. With preventive care, patients and their health care providers can fight and manage this disease and slow its spread.

As was the case with Magic Johnson and other courageous Americans 20 years ago, we can't allow today's more effective treatments to make us complacent or ambivalent, or to lessen our resolve to find a cure and an AIDS-free generation.

To learn more or to find a place near you to get tested, visit www.actagainstaids.org.

Dr. Sam Ho, M.D., is the chief medical officer for UnitedHealthcare.

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