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Herndon has been a supporter of the LGBTQ youth-focused Trevor Project since 2002. He has appeared at benefits and fundraisers for LGBT youth, including co-hosting a major fundraising event in Nashville this June entitled The Concert for Love and Acceptance, which GLAAD is presenting with major corporate sponsors.

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“I can only speak from my heart and what it’s been like for me,” Herndon said. “When I walked out on the stage [before coming out], the only thing that made me authentic was the music. The minute I opened my mouth to speak, the camaraderie with the audience was all made up. There was nothing truthful about it, and it held me down for so long—it was such a true oppression for me.

COUNTRY PRIDE:

Pride officials announce grand marshal, other parade details

BY MATT SIMONETTE

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CITY OF ANGELS

WCT gives readers a tour of Los Angeles (left). Photo by Kelly Chauvin

A VIEW TO A KRILL

Out actor Sean Allan Krill talks about being in a local production of Sense and Sensibility. Publicity photo

LEGAL AID

Law student Kara Ingelhart has received a fellowship to work on LGBTQ youth issues. Photo by Andrew Davis

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Evaston Subaru in Skokie
Rauner, legislators take budget fight into summer

BY MATT SIMONETTE

For the moment, it does not look like legisla-
tors will be getting much of a break this sum-
mer. State legislators left town May 31 at the
close of their spring session, but leaders in
both houses warned them they’d have to be
back soon, likely within days.

Democrats approved a $36-billion budget
for the state, which exceeds the state’s pro-
jected revenues by $3 billion. Gov. Bruce Raun-
er, meanwhile, is sticking to his “turnaround
agenda,” which he wants the General Assembly
(GA) to attend to before he entertains new rev-
ue proposals. The legislature did not send a
budget to Rauner, who said he would not sign.

On May 29, as legislators headed into their
long weekend, state Rep. Greg Harris expressed
frustration at the logjam that had come
between legislators and Rauner, especially
those legislators concerned about excessive
cuts that came from Rauner’s budget proposal
this past February.

“Anyone being honest knows that we have to
raise additional sources of revenue,” he said,
adding, “There is a dialogue going on between
the four [legislative] leaders and the governor.
Whether that results in anything substantial
immediately, we’ll see.”

Nothing substantial did emerge for now. In
a May 31 press conference, state Presi-
dent John Cullerton said, “When I emerged
from that meeting I restated my commitment
to work with the governor on compromises that
will move this state forward. … But there was
something that I left out of my comments—
and that is my disappointment in the direc-
tion that this state is about to take under Gov.
Rauner’s leadership. The governor made it clear
that in the next few days, he will launch a mul-
timillion-dollar negative ad campaign designed
to demonize those who are standing up for
the middle class.”

Rauner has reportedly dipped into his cam-
paign funds to film a series of commercials
blasting his opponents, to be broadcast over
the summer. At a May 31 press conference, the
State Journal-Register reported, the governor
refused to discuss the matter and addressed
the moribund negotiations.

“We do not have a balanced budget,” said
Rauner. “We have an attempt to force major
tax hikes on the people of Illinois, and we have
absolutely no significant reforms and no sincere
effort that we can tell yet to achieve
significant reforms.”

Rauner had previously suggested he was scal-
ning his turnaround agenda back, and was only
focusing on two components, worker’s compen-
sation reform and a property tax freeze. But on
May 31 he indicated that three other compo-

nents would still have to be addressed: term
limits, tort reform and redistricting.

In an interview with WSIU-TV, House Speaker
Michael Madigan said that Rauner’s changes
would ultimately be too extreme for middle-
class Illinoisans. Rauner, in his May 31 press
conference, said Madigan makes his money off
“big, expensive government.”

Among the legislation pertinent to the LGBT
community still waiting for Rauner’s signature
as the session closed were bills amending the
state’s hate crimes ordinance to both redefine
the term “sexual orientation” to more easily
include gender identity and include incidents
of property damage; prohibiting anti-gay conver-
sation therapy on minors; and requiring funeral
directors to honor a person’s last instructions
pertaining to their gender identity.

Also still in question are the numerous cuts
that adversely affected HIV/AIDS funding,
mental health services and homelessness ser-

vices, among others. Rauner’s February budget
cut about $15.8 million for services towards
persons with HIV/AIDS, cervical cancer and
breast cancer, for example, as well as $3.1 mil-
lion for homeless youth shelters. Harris, who
chairs the House Appropriations—Human Ser-
VICES Committee, introduced legislation May 28
to undo those cuts, as well as others.

“The Democrats have been in favor of those
things, and the Republicans have not,” said
Harris, who, also on May 28, questioned why a
high-level Rauner official, Secretary of Educa-
tion Beth Purvis, was being paid out of the
Department of Human Services (DHS) budget
rather than out of the governor’s office.

On May 30, the Chicago Sun-Times reported that
a Rayburn staffer, policy advisor Jenni-
fer Hammer, was also being paid from the DHS
budget.

Chicago’s TransTech has D.C. office at HRC

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) an-
nounced that TransTech Social Enterprises
(TTSE) will maintain an office at HRC na-
tional headquarters, according to a press
release.

The development gives the Chicago-based
company a place in the nation’s capital to
advance its work in providing education,
jobs-skills training and workplace connec-
tions to transgender people.

Angela Ross founded TransTech as a
combination training academy and creative
agency offering services including graphic
design, web development and social media
management. She will maintain a part-time
office at HRC.

For more on TransTech, visit http://trans-
techsocial.org/

Marco Rubio: American Dream Candidate?

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio bills himself as
the “American Dream” candidate for presi-
dent. Playing on the immigrant status of his
parents who emigrated to the U.S. from fulgen~
tico Batista’s Cuba in 1956, Rubio casts himself as the candidate who best
understands the meaning of the American
Dream and who is best able to restore America as the land of opportu-
nity for everyone.

Young (43), articulate, passionate, La-
tina, the senator presents himself as a
fresh breeze in a Republican presidential
field of 20 declared and undeclared can-
didates headed by Jeb Bush, Rubio’s one-
time mentor.

“My parents came to the United States in
1956. The country they found was truly
a land of opportunity, where hardwork-
ing people with grade school educations
could afford a home, a car, and bullets for
their kids. A country where maids and bart-
enders could raise doctors, lawyers,
small-business owners, and maybe even
a U.S. senator. That was the American
Dream. … Yet today, I look around and
see the American Dream on life support.”

(Derviey to his book American Dreams:
Restoring Economic Opportunity for Ev-
eyone, January 2015.)

In developing this pitch of himself as the
American Dream candidate, Rubio links this theme to guns:

“Sen. Rubio’s assertion that the institu-
tion of marriage as the union of one man and one
woman exists prior to all government and
all laws is an astonishing claim for which he
presents no historical, legal, anthropological,
or philosophical argument or evidence.”

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tion of marriage as the union of one man and one
woman exists prior to all government and
all laws is an astonishing claim for which he
presents no historical, legal, anthropological,
or philosophical argument or evidence.”

It is hard to see this pledge as anything
other than an election gimmick.

On civil rights for sexual minorities, Sen. Rubio comments:

“You have to have a ridiculous reading of the U.S. constitution to reach the con-
clusion that people have a right to marry
someone of the same sex. … They [advoc-
ates of same-sex marriage] want to stig-
mate … anyone who disagrees with
them as haters. … I believe, as do a sig-
nificant percentage of Americans, that
the institution of marriage, an insti-
tution that existed before government,
that existed before laws, that institu-
tion should remain in our laws recog-
nized as the union of one man and one
woman.” (CBN interview marcorubio.
com)

Sen. Rubio’s assertion that the institu-
tion of marriage as the union of one man and one
woman exists prior to all govern-
ment and all laws is an astonishing claim
for which he presents no historical, legal,
anthropological, or philosophical argu-
ment or evidence. One wonders how he would explain Old Testament practices
of one man married to many wives or con-
temporary Islamic practices or polygam-
y anywhere, not to mention other forms of
sexual-social relations.

Finally, prior to his current run for the
Republican nomination for president, Sen. Rubio worked on immigration reform
legislation. Now he has
withdrawn his support from such legis-
lation and his website avoids all dis-
cussion of immigration except for these
four words: “modernize our immigration
laws.”

It seems that the Marco Rubio Ameri-
can Dream is not for everyone.

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Nick Patricca is professor emeritus at Loyola University Chicago, president of
Chicago Network and playwright emeritus at Victory Gardens Theater.

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Dennis Hastert faces federal indictment

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Former Republican U.S. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert, who held that position from 1999 through 2007, and represented Illinois’ 14th Congressional District for 20 years, is facing a federal indictment for trying to evade federal bank reporting requirements, and lying to investigators about the purpose of those bank transactions.

Hastert will appear in a Chicago court June 4 to face federal charges related to his alleged effort to hide millions of dollars in payments he was making to cover up past misconduct. Quoting sources familiar with the situation, the New York Times reported, on May 29, that Hastert was allegedly paying a man not to report that he had sexually abused him several decades ago. The abuse claims were not substantiated by the FBI, but reportedly stem from Hastert’s time as a teacher and wrestling coach in Yorkville, Illinois, from 1965 to 1981.

Hastert had agreed to pay the man $3.5 million, and was strategically withdrawing funds from a series of bank accounts in the hopes of avoiding bank reporting requirements, according to prosecutors; he had so far paid about $1.7 million. Hastert also allegedly lied to the FBI about the purpose of those bank transactions.

Judge Thomas M. Durkin of Northern District Court has been assigned to Hastert’s case. The former speaker has still resigned from the lobbyist firm for whom he had been working. Wheaton College has also removed his name from the J. Dennis Hastert Center for Economics, Government, and Public Policy.

Hastert’s colleagues, constituents and friends initially expressed surprise at the charges Hastert faced. “He was the coach,” said U.S. Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., in the New York Times. “He was a solid guy, he never raised his voice. This has really come out of nowhere.”

But, though many who know him have congenial recollections about Hastert, he left behind a voting record that was often at odds with the LGBT and progressive communities.

Man held without bond in fatal robbery

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A 22-year-old man is being held without bond for the fatal shooting of another man in Lake View. May 30

Kristopher K. Pitts, of the 1100 block of North Central Park Avenue, faces one count each of first-degree murder and armed robbery, according to the Chicago Sun-Times. He allegedly shot and killed Kevin O’Malley, of suburban Palos Park, reportedly over the robbery of a mobile phone. Pitts allegedly fled the scene and was apprehended a short time later. Chicago Police officers found O’Malley’s body in an alley beneath CTA Brown Line tracks near Sheffield Avenue.

Ald. Tom Tunney (44th Ward) said, on a May 30 Facebook post, that he would be calling for a heightened police presence in the area. He posted, “This senseless act of violence cannot be ignored. I am pushing for increased police resources to our community, including from area and citywide units, to ensure that our residents and visitors are safe walking on our streets at all hours of the day.”


Survey on Black lesbian history

Longtime Chicago lesbian activist and historian Melvyna Gaynor is seeking survey respondents for her new history project. She would like people to answer the questions below to help us compile data essential to producing a video documentary on the Black LGBT community in Chicago from 1970 until today.

Email awesome7@yahoo.com for more information.

Celebrate Pride month with Peace Corps

Join us for a panel event featuring LGBT volunteers who have served overseas:

Tuesday, June 16, 6 p.m.
Hostelling International, 2nd Floor
24 E. Congress Parkway, Chicago
Chicago@PeaceCorps.org | 312.353.4990
PeaceCorpsMidwest PeaceCorps_MW
Trans, queer immigrants demand ICE release LGBTQ detainees

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

About two dozen transgender and queer immigrants rallied in front of Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) headquarters in Washington, D.C., on May 27 to demand the release of LGBTQ immigrants from ICE detention centers.

The demonstration was part of Operation Break the Cage—a multi-organizational effort to raise awareness of the horrendous psychological and physical abuses suffered by immigrant transgender women currently detained in ICE facilities, in ICE custody, isolated and completely isolated without the personal or legal resources to find help.

Calling it the largest immigrant youth-led organization in the nation (comprising 100,000 immigrant youth and allies from 26 United We Dream’s organizations in partnership with the Washington, D.C.-based LGBT-advocacy organization Casa Ruby and the Trans Women of Color Collective (TWCC)—in tens of thousands to “explore the human rights violations against the undocumented LGBTQ community.”

Carlos Padilla is the national coordinator for the Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project (QUIDP) of United We Dream’s operation. He told Windy City Times [of the rally] was to demonstrate the human-rights violations and the torture currently taking place against our community,” he told Windy City Times.

“We wanted to make sure that the ICE leadership knows exactly what is happening in our facilities, that we are watching it and expect them to change their behavior.”

The 2013 Center for American Progress (CAP) report on LGBTQ immigrants in U.S. detention entitled Bility Denied detailed “incidents of sexual assault, denial of adequate medical care, long-term solitary confinement, discrimination and abuse, and ineffective complaints and appeals processes. Other complaints have documented LGBTQ detainees being called names such as “faggot” by guards and being told to “walk like a man, not a gay man” and “act male.” Furthermore, detainees are frequently housed with detainees of a gender with which they do not identify. This means that female transgender detainees are detained with men.

Windy City Times own series of reports published in January 2015 on LGBTQ immigration and those held in ICE facilities included the story of America, an LGBTQ woman who was assaulted by a fellow detainee while in ICE custody. “I started screaming and I called the guard,” America said during an interview with her. “The guard showed up and he saw that I was tied to the bed and he started laughing and saying ‘you guys are old enough. You can fix your own problems.’ He turned around and walked away.”

According to Padilla, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson recently requested recommendations from advocacy organizations to address vulnerable populations in ICE detention such as LGBTQ individuals. “He’s been asking for a better way of housing, treating and processing these populations,” Padilla said.

On May 8, United We Dream—alongside Immigration Equality, Lambda Legal, the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Immigration Justice Center—issued those recommendations.

At the top of the list was a simple request: Let them go.

“The most humane and the least expensive way to keep LGBTQ immigrants safe from mistreatment in custody is to release them on parole,” the document stated.

PASSAGES

Ronald Zierer

Ron Zierer died on March 28 from a sudden cardiac event. He was 81.

Ron was a longtime resident of the Austin/Irving neighborhood on Chicago’s northwest side. He was also active in the gay community since the early 1960s, regaling friends with stories of good and bad pre-Stonewall gay life in Chicago. Ron would usually be found on his trusty bicycle during his visits to gay watering spots. He was an early member of the Lincoln Park Lagooners.

Zierer was noted for his love and vast knowledge of classical music, actively supporting the Civic Orchestra of Chicago [the CSO’s training orchestra for young musicians] and WFMT classic radio. Ron rarely missed a Civic Orchestra performance, and was usually at the Civic Opera House for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Ron was a long-time resident of the Austin/Irving neighborhood on Chicago’s northwest side. He would have been enormously successful at a classical music version of Name That Tune. While he worked at simple jobs during his lifetime, he was able to quietly build a small fortune that, per his direction, is being given to charities supporting the homeless, the hungry, and the elderly. Support is also being provided to classical music organizations.

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A memorial service and gathering in Ron’s honor will be held on Saturday, June 6, at 1 p.m. at the United In Faith Lutheran Church, 6525 W. Irving Park Rd. Burial of his ashes in the family plot at All Saints Cemetery in Des Plaines will immediately follow the service. For further information, call 773-275-1460.

Ronald Zierer. Photo by Jassiel Perez/United We Dream

Anti-conversion therapy bill sent to governor

By Matt Simonette

HB 217, the Youth Mental Health Protection Act, passed the State Senate 34-19 on May 29 as the Illinois General Assembly hurried through the final days of the spring session.

The bill protects youth from so-called “conversion therapy,” which purports to turn help an LGBT patient straight. The practice has been denounced by numerous medical and psychological associations, and the legislation says that service providers who practice conversion therapy on a minor will be referred to their professional organizations for discipline. It furthermore says that providers who willfully market their services by indicating that homosexuality is a mental illness could be subject to consumer fraud charges.

HB 217 was sponsored in the Senate by state Sen. Steven Landian and in the House by state Rep. Kelly Cassidy. Gov. Bruce Rauner has not yet indicated whether he would sign the bill, but Cassidy told Windy City Times the week of May 18 that Rauner had spoken with Curtis Galloway, of downstate Benton, who had been subjected to conversion therapy. Galloway testified before both House and Senate committees about his experience.

Shortly after his House committee testimony in April, according to Quad City Times, Galloway said of the experience, “Some people just aren’t as lucky. There are people committing suicide. I consider myself a survivor, but for those who are the victims, the ones that don’t make it, the ones that commit suicide, there are people kicking out their homes because they can’t change their sexuality. I want to reach out to them.”

AFC gala raises $400K

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago’s (AFC’s) May 16 gala at the Hilton Chicago raised approximately $400,000 for ongoing prevention, care and advocacy services.

Actress Amy Landecker, of the Golden Globe award-winning series Transparent, emceed the event.

Among other development, two longtime board members were honored for their contributions to AFC: Ernie Rodriguez of Gilead was presented with the Illini Volunteer Award, and Thomas Kehoe of Kehoe Designs received the Community Impact Award.

To learn more, visit www.aidschicago.org.

June 3, 2015
PARADE from cover

“...It matters if you come out, no matter what you’re doing in this world. It’s important for people to see the truth in a person. I’m so sorry it’s taken me so long to do that. I feel sad about that, but I’m going to put that aside and celebrate now. I’m going to work with young kids and older people who need help being authentic so they can live perfectly happy lives.”

Parade officials also said that the Pride Parade would remain in Lake View and Uptown this year, but with heightened security to curtail excessive and/or illegal alcohol consumption as well as unruly behavior.

“In addition to the large number of police officers who staff the event, [Parade coordinators] are providing a security team of 90 off-duty police officers to supplement the police presence,” said officials in a June 1 statement. “Penalties for open containers of alcohol include, but are not limited to $1000 or more) tickets being issued and/or the immediate disposal of open containers of alcohol beverages into trash receptacles.”

The 2014 Pride Parade was marred by reports of disturbances from spectators both during and after the parade, though city and police officials said actual arrests were minimal, as well as concerns that local resources were being overwhelmed. Residents started dueling online petitions—one asking that the parade be moved, another asking that it stay on the North Side. In April, Alds. Tom Tunney and James Cappleman said that the outcome of the 2015 parade would be closely watched by city officials said actual arrests were minimal, as well as concerns that local resources were being overwhelmed. Residents started dueling online petitions—one asking that the parade be moved, another asking that it stay on the North Side. In April, Alds. Tom Tunney and James Cappleman said that the outcome of the 2015 parade would be closely watched by city officials and, if no improvement came to safety concerns, the parade might be moved the following year.

Information on Pride events can be found at www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org.
‘Gender-bender’ scholar talks activism, her arrest and race

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Dr. Jennifer Lisa Vest—philosopher, scholar, former professor, poet and activist performer—was a guest lecturer this past April at Illinois State University (ISU), and Southern Illinois University (SIU), where she gave a speech entitled, “Peculiar Requests for Peculiar Bodies: Black Lives Matter. [Trans] Gendered Violence, Disability, and Women in the Post-racial, Post-sexist Present.”

“A self-described mixed-blood person, Vest is Black, Native American Seminole and white. Raised in Chicago’s Old Town neighborhood, Vest moved to North Chicago when her father got custody of her and her sister after their parent’s divorce. Following a stint at Chicago Public Schools (CPS) during elementary school, Vest got a scholarship, along with her sister, to attend high school at North Shore Country Day School in Winnetka, Illinois. This was a far cry from Vest’s experience at CPS since she was one of only a few people of color at North Shore.

Vest got her bachelor’s degree in Physics from Hampshire College; master’s degree in history from Howard University; and Ph.D. in ethnic studies and philosophy from the University of California at Berkeley. She was awarded a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at UCLA at the Center for the Study of Women. For 10 years (2002-2012), Vest taught cross-cultural philosophy and women’s studies at two universities—Seattle University for two years and University of Central Florida for eight years. Since leaving academia, Vest has been performing and speaking at venues across the country and continuing to publish her work in various academic journals and other publications. She currently resides in Los Angeles.

“I’m gay and genderqueer,” said Vest. “I have a non-normative gender presentation and call myself a gender-bender. I dress in androgynous ways. It’s just a part of who I am.”

“I combine poetry and theory to address issues of social justice. I primarily look at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and disability. I do these philopoetic performances where I combine spoken word storytelling and theory/analysis. Philopoetic work is something I created as a genre. It’s similar to some of the earlier work of Gloria Anzaldúa where she combined poetry with theory.”

Vest’s recent talk at ISU and SIU touched on a number of social justice issues including transgender people, genderqueer people, race and feminism. While the ISU talk was open to the public the ISU talk was given to the philosophy department.

“I was invited by two Black philosophy grad students at ISU who are in an all-white department to come speak,” said Vest. “Their philosophy department is made up of 10 white men and one white woman from England. They’ve been dealing with some problems regarding race and the two students were familiar with my other work and that’s why they invited me.”

ISU philosophy professor Dr. Allison Bailey saw Vest give a keynote address at a conference in Arizona and asked her to speak at the school.

“There were about 200 attendees at the ISU talk,” said Vest. “I talked about my own experiences being genderqueer but I also talked about the rates of police violence against transgender people. Part of the performance was a testimony because I told a lot of stories about all the Black people who were being killed but I also focused on the Black women whose stories aren’t being told and why their stories are different. Why Black women are specifically brutalized during arrests and detentions including being sexually brutalized.

“I talked about the fact that LGBT Black people have a lot more encounters and abuse by the police. I also noted the way Black people are seen as fear inspiring instead of fearful or afraid. I talked about how we have to see these things in through the lens of intersectionality between groups.”

“Almost every Black student that I talked to at ISU afterwards told me they had been harassed by the campus police at the college. They didn’t feel comfortable talking about it publicly and they told me how glad they were that I was talking about it,” said Vest.

“The talk that she gave at ISU and SIU wasn’t the only time Vest has addressed these kinds of issues. Five years ago, Vest was stopped by the University of Central Florida’s campus police when she was a professor at the college and she wrote about the experience in ‘What Doesn’t Kill You: Existential Luck, Postracial Racism, and The Subtle and Not So Subtle Ways the Academy Keeps Women of Color Out.’

“The article talks about an idea I developed that I call existential luck where I talk about the experiences of people with certain kinds of bodies. The victims of what would appear like random violence and micro-aggressive assaults on people,” said Vest. “My appearance has resulted in my being at the repeated hands of law enforcement. It’s a constant source of conflict for people in many aspects of my daily life. People thought it was problematic that I looked the way I did and that’s one of the things I talked about when I was stopped by the police. They didn’t know if I was a man or a woman when they stopped me. There was some bad behavior where they were rough with me. They had a woman cop come and feel me up.”

“Due to her experience with the campus police, Vest explained that she had students come to her who were genderqueer or were in the process of making their transition in their appearance and identity. She ended up mentoring some of them.”

“I became more politicized as a result of my own experiences and have included that in my scholarship work and performances,” said Vest.

When not writing or performing, Vest works as an archivist for Sovereign Wisdom Consulting Services, for which she helps tribes and organizations with intellectually sovereign archives. Most recently, she worked with the Mashpee tribe in Massachusetts to create a plan for its archives. She has also worked with African-American organizations and is a medi-intuitive and healer.

As for the future, Vest said she hopes to give more activist performances on campuses. She is also planning on publishing the talk she gave at ISU and SIU, and is looking at publishing a book that compiles all of her philopoetic lectures/performances.

See www.jenniferlavest.com for more information.

Jennifer Lisa Vest. (Photo by Storme Webber)

Really?

Did you know that colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer? But there is one cancer you can prevent. Get screened! Screening tests help find polyps so they can be removed before they turn into cancer. So, if you’re 50 or older, do everything you can to prevent colorectal cancer. Screening really does save lives!

1-800-DEX-CANCER (339-2262)
www.cdc.gov/screen CRC

‘Step Up. Get Tested’ campaign expands

The scope of the 2015 “Step Up. Get Tested.” (SUGT) campaign for June has been enhanced by a new partnership with Harmony Health Plan of Illinois, a subsidiary of WellCare Health Plans, Inc.

The SUGT campaign, developed by the Chicagoland HIV Testing Collaborative (CHTC), will now include both HIV and hepatitis C testing as well as linkage to care services as part of the campaign’s initiatives throughout the month in areas across Chicagoland as a result of this partnership.

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‘Step Up. Get Tested’ campaign expands

Jennifer Lisa Vest. (Photo by Storme Webber)

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WCT30

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New Town Alano Club survives to aid LGBTs in recovery

By Ross Forman

Gloria W. first walked into the New Town Alano Club about 25 years ago. She went to meetings, got a sponsor and started school. She eventually chaired meetings, graduated with a second college degree and started her career.

Gloria now works at a major health institution on the South Side of Chicago, “and I am so very grateful—miracles happen every day.”

New Town Alano Club (NTAC) is the nation’s first Alano Club with a specific LGBT outreach. It is a not-for-profit corporation that provides meeting space for more than 50 12-step recovery meetings, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Al-Anon, Co-Dependents Anonymous (CODA), Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA), Sexual Compulsives Anonymous (SCA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and more.

NTAC provides such services as educational opportunities regarding the disease of addiction, sober living and sexual health; meeting opportunities regarding the disease of addiction. Narconomics Anonymous (for those recovering from mental illness as well as addiction) and Sexual Compulsives Anonymous with a focus on porn addiction.

“The majority of the meetings at NTAC are Alcoholics Anonymous. The fastest growing is Crystal Meth Anonymous. It recently added another Underarmers Anonymous, Dual Diagnosis Anonymous (for those recovering from mental illness as well as addiction) and Sexual Compulsives Anonymous with a focus on porn addiction.”

“We have roughly 20,000 encounters a year, based on the number of people attending each individual meeting,” Gloria said. “Some people may attend several meetings a day and others once a month, or even less, so it is impossible to know exactly how many individuals come through our door. I am sure that over the years there have been thousands. At least 50 percent of those who come to NTAC are from the LGBT community. And we have a meeting specifically for transgendered people and their supporters.”

Gloria said people from all walks of life, from all professions walk into NTAC. “I myself am a licensed medical professional, and we have people coming from the four corners of the earth to see the first Alano Club in the USA with an LGBT outreach. I am honored and humbled to be president,” she said.

NTAC works with the Chicago Round Up, another 501(c)(3), which organizes a yearly event of multiple speaker meetings, a play, dinner and dance. “We provide volunteers and attend fundraising events. We also support, and are supported by, the Rec Room, which is another Alano Club with an LGBT outreach,” she said.

The New Town Alano Club has participated in the annual Chicago Pride Parade over the years “to let people know we exist and are happily, joyful, sober and gay,” she said. “We let our presence and demeanor be the magnet for new-comers. We never tell people what to do, but are available when people seek help.”

Gloria said Tunney “has been very supportive.”

“When the recession hit [seven or eight years ago], it hit us very hard,” she said. “We were often behind in our rent. We owe a lot to Tom. It isn’t easy for any not-for-profit to survive [over the past] eight years. Our primary mission is to be available to those in recovery, especially the newcomer. Those in early recovery seldom have employment.”

“In its efforts to be financially stable, NTAC has downsized the number of rooms it rents and it solely operates with volunteers. We have added meetings despite the reduction of our physical footprint,” she said.

NTAC is part of Amazon Smiles; thus, a portion of each purchase gets earmarked for NTAC, if the buyer identifies NTAC as the organization they wish to support.

“Our short-term goals are to satisfy the needs of the recovering community, provide a safe space for all, provide meetings that are as relevant as they are varied, strengthen the bonds we share with our fellow organizations and become financially sound. To that end we are exploring grant opportunities,” Gloria said. The NTAC’s long-term goal is “to be fiscally secure,” she said. “There are many changes happening in Boystown and I would like to see NTAC be able to weather any financial storm. After all, another generation is looking for their miracle to happen to them.”

For more information, contact the New Town Alano Club by email at info@newtown-
Martin Luna used to be a go-go dancer at various bars on Halsted Street in Boystown, and he often made his own costumes to help spice up the parties where he performed. He's still designing costumes, just now on a much bigger stage—such as for the Pride weekend festivities associated with Neverland Events. For instance, there is a pool party on Saturday, June 27, from noon to 7 p.m. at Deuce's and The Diamond Club. On Sunday, June 28, there is the Neverland “Boogie Ball” at Metro; and the Sunday night Pride closing party at The MID. (Tickets for all events, or weekend passes, are available at www.showclix.com/event/neverlandpride). A portion of the Pride weekend proceeds will be donated to the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

"My work is a dream come true," Luna said. "[We] started Neverland three years ago, and never knew it would grow to become my career. I get to design these crazy, elaborate costumes every day that come to life in our photo shoots and on stage at our parties.

"I want to keep growing Neverland and get more gay tourists to come to our city to check out our parties. I also want to create bigger, better parties in Chicago."

Luna said the best part of his job is simply seeing the faces of people in the crowd when they see the dancers and performers come on stage wearing costumes he's created. The worst part is, the pressure the week of an event, though Luna said he thrives under pressure.

"Neverland is about fantasy and sex; that's the rule for our costume design," Luna said. "Everything has to be about fantasy, but needs to be sexual at the same time. That's why our models are never fully covered up, and you don't see them in wigs or anything that would take away from the sex appeal.

"Even when designer Kyle Krueger turned Carlos Tejero and Richard Matthews into Yoshi and Donkey Kong for our party [that was titled] 'The Arcade,' they were wearing jockstraps and were mostly nude. I love how Victoria's Secret does their fashion show. They create these elaborate wings, but the women are still in lingerie. That's our inspiration at Neverland."

The first costume Luna ever created was a harness for IML several years ago. Someone at that IML actually bought it from him on the spot.

"We did a photoshoot for our 'Arcade'-themed party at an actual arcade in the suburbs," Luna said. "We started shooting before it was open to the public, but were running [late]. When the arcade opened, all these kids came in, and our models were still running around in underwear and costumes. It was a funny scene."
THE AMAZON TRAIL

My body is telling me to slow down, even while my mind says go, go, go.
When was the last time I climbed a tree, a favorite pastime? I don’t know when it was, but it’s time again. As the fall season approaches and the leaves begin to turn, I find myself yearning for the great outdoors.

NEDY LYNCH
Gay playwright Bixby Elliot is a bit nervous regarding About Face Theatre’s Chicago premiere of his play Abraham Lincoln was a F*gg*t. Not only is the title’s derogatory gay term provoking, the play itself is being produced in this proudly proclaimed “Land of Lincoln.”

“I think I am a little trepidations because people really love Lincoln. But I love that people want to talk about it and that they have strong opinions about Lincoln or the word ‘faggot,’ ” Elliot said, “When people actually see the play, it will seem less controversial than the title suggests.”

Previously seen in Chicago in 2014 in an About Face workshop reading following its 2013 world premiere in Louisville, Kentucky, Abraham Lincoln was a F*gg*t focuses on a 17-year-old boy named Cal who is desperately looking for guidance as he comes to terms with his burgeoning sexuality. Given an assignment to write about the iconic 16th President of the United States, Cal seizes upon recent research suggesting Lincoln that had intense friendships with men. Cal’s essay wins a national prize, putting him in a position with fraught family conflicts, bullying at school and the fear of revealing too much of one’s self too soon.

Elliot came up with the idea for the play during the 2008 election year and when his partner started collecting some very rudimentary mid-20th century children’s books that were part of the “Step Up” series about famous people.

“One was about Abraham Lincoln and it was so reductive,” Elliot said. “I was thinking why don’t we teach our children the nuances of people and especially our heroes because there’s been a lot of academic research on Lincoln’s sexuality and also his mental illness of depression... Why do our heroes have to be so unblemished? Why do they have to be held to depression… Why do our heroes have to be so reductive,” Elliot said. “I was thinking looking for guidance as he comes to terms with his burgeoning sexuality.”

Remains returns

Most people will have seen the work of gay Canadian playwright Brad Fraser from his time as a writer for the Soapbox series Queer As Folk. But it is his controversial play Love and Human Remains that really put him on the map in the theater world—shocking for its frank language, violence and sexual explicitness at its 1989 world premiere in Calgary and later in 1991 for its American debut in Chicago.

It was originally titled Unidentified Human Remains and the Nature of True Love, but Fraser has allowed theaters to use the alternate title which was first shortened for the 1993 film adaptation. After an absence of 20 years in the Chicago area, Love and Human Remains is back courtesy of Cor Theatre in what will likely be an uncomfortably intimate production at Rivendell Theatre.

“I wanted a play with a gay protagonist who wasn’t dealing with AIDS or coming out,” Fraser said, wanting to go against several theatrical norms of the time in creating his fragmentary and raw play. “It was for me about creating a character who was gay and wasn’t a spokesperson, wasn’t a victim or being victimized but was just another guy in a play like anyone else.”

And though several critics at the time of its debut saw the play’s inclusion of a serial killer as a metaphor for the AIDS crisis, Fraser said he didn’t intentionally include that plot point in the play for that reason.

“Serial killers weren’t the hoary old chestnut of theatrical storytelling that they have become,” Fraser said. “For me, it never is play about who is the serial killer. For me it was what would you do if you found out your friend was a serial killer. And metaphorically that opens up a lot of territory and I think people are free to interpret it in whatever way they want.”

Though Fraser has had very productive theatrical career in the U.K., most notably with the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, he thinks that American theater companies tend to bypass his work because it is too envelope-pushing. Nonetheless, Fraser is glad Love and Human Remains continues to be produced worldwide and that it is returning again to Chicago.

“When people read Remains, they think that this could be happening now,” said Fraser, noting that some of his other work like Poor Superman that touched upon the AIDS crisis can come off like a period piece. “Maybe it’s the universality of the themes in Remains of dealing with our sexuality, betrayal by friends and the search for love that is very universal for people in their 20s and 30s, so that’s why...”
Les Liaisons Dangereuses

Playwright: adapted by Christopher Hampton from Pierre Choderlos de Laclos' 1782 novel

Ain't so, McGee. Crime Scene: The Next Chapter unhappily brought this back to me. This third annual edition of Collaboration's effort to combat urban violence is too 12-step for me, too one-size-fits-all, especially at the beginning, when audience members cannot sit but must mingle onstage with cast members. When the performance does begin, viewers are asked to hold hands, asked at random to comment on Chicago and challenged to share complicity for Chicago's endemic violence, which is traced back to 1812. MSB

Les Liaisons Dangereuses. Photo by Emily Schwartz

The Diary of Anne Frank

Critics' Picks

The Next Chapter

Playwright: Anthony Moseley (also director) and Adam Seidel

Crime Scene: The Next Chapter

Playwright: Anthony Moseley (also director) and Adam Seidel

The December Man

Playwright: Colleen Murphy

THEATER REVIEW

Les Liaisons Dangereuses


Les Liaisons Dangereuses. Photo by Emily Schwartz

by Joel Maisonet

June 3, 2015

Hardcore addiction. Ain't so, McGee. Crime Scene: The Next Chapter unhappily brought this back to me. This third annual edition of Collaboration's effort to combat urban violence is too 12-step for me, too one-size-fits-all, especially at the beginning, when audience members cannot sit but must mingle onstage with cast members. When the performance does begin, viewers are asked to hold hands, asked at random to comment on Chicago and challenged to share complicity for Chicago's endemic violence, which is traced back to 1812 race laws when Illinois became a state (before Chicago was incorporated). The lengthy opening history lesson jumps to the Civil War's Camp Douglas, the Everleigh Club whorehouse (1900), Al Capone (1930s), redlining (1950s), the Robert Taylor Homes, John Burge and corrupt politicians among other examples and implies a cause-and-effect link between them and today's criminal violence. I don't buy it. When the show's heart finally rolls, it presents five true-life histories of Chicago individuals who overcame violence to become community leaders and beacons of non-violence and hope in our city. They are inspired, courageous and unique people whose endurance humbles me. Some are well-known, such as the parents of Hadiya Pendleton; some are less-known (perhaps especially in the white community), such as rap poet/gymnast Sir Taylor (founder of Exemplar Sets Youth Poetry). Some have stories of moving and unexpected compassion, such as Project NIA founder Marline Kaba. As profound as the personal stories are, the production is discomforting (even beyond the opening) for two reasons. The first is that the ensemble of nine (among them two of the actual story heroes, Sir Taylor and Luis Crespo) tells us rather than shows the tales. Their given bald narrative, even bullet points, rather than being allowed to discover characters and connections. The exception is professional actor Benito, who makes on multiple characters in a compelling show-within-the-show. The second reason is more serious: The show focuses exclusively on violence in minority communities. Surely violence in Chicago has no boundaries of race or neighborhood? Crime Scene: The Next Chapter is performed within energy and directed, much of it moving and compelling. Unfortunately, its opening pushed me away rather than pulled me in, and some of the writing (such as the TV news scene) is heavy-handed and unnecessary.

by MARY SHEN BARNDIGE

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The Diary of Anne Frank, Writers Theatre, Glencoe, extended through Aug. 2. The revised script of this familiar drama incorporates long-exigurated diary passages which make Anne more human and less saintly. The production also looks afresh at the characters to make them less archetypal and more nuanced. JA

The Next Chapter

Playwright: Anthony Moseley (also director) and Adam Seidel


When I was in my 20s I was busted for minor marijuana possession—then still a misdemeanor—when I was in my 20s I was busted for minor marijuana possession—then still a misdemeanor. Every Saturday I gave a urine specimen and participated in the state's attorney program. Every Saturday I gave a urine specimen and participated in the state's attorney program. Where do you go from there? Where do you go from there? Perhaps it will be to the December Man, Irish Theatre of Chicago at the Robert Taylor Homes, John Burge and corrupt politicians among other examples and implies a cause-and-effect link between them and today's criminal violence. I don't buy it. When the show's heart finally rolls, it presents five true-life histories of Chicago individuals who overcame violence to become community leaders and beacons of non-violence and hope in our city. They are inspired, courageous and unique people whose endurance humbles me. Some are well-known, such as the parents of Hadiya Pendleton; some are less-known (perhaps especially in the white community), such as rap poet/gymnast Sir Taylor (founder of Exemplar Sets Youth Poetry). Some have stories of moving and unexpected compassion, such as Project NIA founder Marline Kaba. As profound as the personal stories are, the production is discomforting (even beyond the opening) for two reasons. The first is that the ensemble of nine (among them two of the actual story heroes, Sir Taylor and Luis Crespo) tells us rather than shows the tales. Their given bald narrative, even bullet points, rather than being allowed to discover characters and connections. The exception is professional actor Benito, who makes on multiple characters in a compelling show-within-the-show. The second reason is more serious: The show focuses exclusively on violence in minority communities. Surely violence in Chicago has no boundaries of race or neighborhood? Crime Scene: The Next Chapter is performed within energy and directed, much of it moving and compelling. Unfortunately, its opening pushed me away rather than pulled me in, and some of the writing (such as the TV news scene) is heavy-handed and unnecessary.

by BY JONATHAN ABAARANEL

By Mark Shen Barndige

The December Man

Playwright: Colleen Murphy


Here's some straight talk. McVeigh, if you do anything to hurt 400 people in Oklahoma City you're going to put a bullet in your head. As you can see, I have a bullet here. The December Man is also a play, by the way, and you're going to be in it. The mess left behind is what Colleen Murphy explores in her microcosmic portrait of PTSD as communicable disease. The first victim of survivor's guilt, to use the more traditional term, is Jean Fournier, one of the young men dismissed by the self-proclaimed defender of masculine privilege. Granted a reprieve, Jean fled in terror; however, like most males in our culture, he later ruminates on whether he could have prevented the bloodbath, his deadly rampage as a protest against feminism—separating a classroom of engineers, engineers, engineers, and that the taking of a human life—ever one's own—only perpetuates the suffering. Whatever considerations Benito and Kathleen may have implemented in orchestrating their demise, there is still the latter's sister, who will arrive in the morning to discover her kin unliminally deceased and her future forever scarred by the memory. Under Murphy's concise, written parable is rendered appropriate-ly grim through the subtle nuances bestowed by Mike Speiler, Rudy Galvin and Barbara Marks in their roles as the book's narrator and Kathleen's Alcatraz inmate, respectively. This conceptual leap would be difficult enough to bring off by itself, but McGee's approach also mandates actors adopting a curiously flat-tended style that has its declaratory speak—Valmont's passion, lust and suicidal melancholy the unhurried detachment of air-control dispatchers. Sara Pavlik McGuire's Merteuil projects an adolescent petulance and Robert Tobin's Valmont conducts his seductions in a slurring Midwestern croon more soporific than stimulating. (Courtscouts and servants, by contrast, sport playfully Russian material in their very own words.) The December Man is also conspicuously absent—costumes appear to have been pulled from storage following a country-bumpkin comedy by Chekhov or Ostrovsky, and the scenery looks like it resides heavily on cumbersome rolling furniture and manually-operated curtains, likewise so. The ambiguities of McGee's dramatic universe were made for an undeniable classroom ambiance at the final preview of this AstonRep production. Whether this reflects inadequate preparation, or irrevocably misguided choices in Costoj, whom makes on multiple characters in a compelling show-within-the-show. The second reason is more serious: The show focuses exclusively on violence in minority communities. Surely violence in Chicago has no boundaries of race or neighborhood? Crime Scene: The Next Chapter is performed within energy and directed, much of it moving and compelling. Unfortunately, its opening pushed me away rather than pulled me in, and some of the writing (such as the TV news scene) is heavy-handed and unnecessary.

by BY ABAARANEL, BARNDIGE and Morgan

by ABAARANEL, BARNDIGE and Morgan
steppenwolf

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THEATER

Gloria and Emilio Estefan
land on their feet

BY JERRY NUNN

Gloria Estefan still remains on her feet after a historic career over the years. The Cuban singer started with Miami Sound Machine where the single “Conga” took off. Hit singles continued until a tour bus accident almost took her life.

She came back with a new album titled Into the Light, followed by a Spanish-language album, Mi Tierra, that became the first diamond album in Spain. The talented performer has starred in movies, written books and sold more than 100 million albums worldwide. She has won seven Grammy Awards as well as an American Music Award for Lifetime Achievement, and has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Gloria and Emilio Estefan have won 26 Grammy Awards combined, and became grandparents in 2012.

Their latest project, On Your Feet, is a jukebox musical telling the story of their life and career (starring Ana Villafane and Josh Segarra). Directed by Jerry Mitchell with a book by Alexander Dinelaris, this production debut in Chicago covers the life of two people pursuing the American dream. New music is penned by the Estefans, but there are classic hits such as “Rhythm Is Gonna Get You,” “1-2-3” and, of course, “Get On Your Feet.”

Ge: There is a little Gloria and a little Emilio, it goes way back in spots. It is not linear. Ge: We go back and forth in time. It goes from when I was 17 years old, when I joined the band, to age 32, right after I got back onstage after my accident at the American Music Awards.

Whatever happens—you need to accept you the way you are. In our time, they tried to get us to change our name and our sound. We didn’t do that. I think it is important to stick to what you believe in. I hope this will allow a lot of people to follow their dreams and make them come true.

WCT: How far into your career does the show go?

Ge: There is a little Gloria and a little Emilio, it goes way back in spots. It is not linear. Ge: We go back and forth in time. It goes from when I was 17 years old, when I joined the band, to age 32, right after I got back onstage after my accident at the American Music Awards.

WCT: Why is the title On Your Feet?

Ge: On Your Feet because that is what we have done repeatedly in our lives. We just get back on our feet. We are hoping that the people that come to our show will learn the universal message that there will be curve balls thrown in your life, you may be at the top of your game, a superstar, then—boom!—something happens and you are learning to walk again. We have constantly had to get back on our feet in many ways, from leaving our country, starting in a new place, starting school, Emilio trying to make a living doing a band that he loved for fun and then, physically, when I had to literally walk again. That is why we didn’t put Get On Your Feet—we didn’t want to tell people what to do. We want them to realize that is what you have to keep doing in life. Whatever happens, get on your feet!

WCT: Speaking of feet, do you have a favorite pair of shoes?

Ge: My favorite pair are the ones actually signed by Louis Vuitton. It was for his 20th anniversary. He is a big fan and he signed the sole of my shoe.

WCT: Is there anything in your massive career that you would like to accomplish but haven’t?

Ge: Oh, my gosh; we have really gone beyond any dream but I think one day singing in a free Cuba. Being able to actually sing “Mi Tierra” in a free Cuba would be phenomenal. Hopefully I am not too old by the time that happens!

WCT: If you were to literally walk again, that is what you have to keep doing in life, whatever happens, get on your feet!

On Your Feet! dances to life June 2-July 5 at the Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph St., before a Broadway debut Nov. 5. Call for tickets at 800-775-2000 or look online at www.BroadwayinChicago.com.

Gloria and Emilio Estefan with director Jerry Mitchell (center). Photo by Bruce Glikas

ON YOUR FEET!
ON YOUR FEET!
ON YOUR FEET!

THEATRE

Gloria and Emilio Estefan Land On Their Feet

BY JERRY NUNN

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Ge: We are so fortunate to have had so many hits—including “Conga” that became the first diamond record. Mi Tierra, their 1991 album, went on to become one of the best-selling Spanish-language records of all time.

Ge: I know! When we did that in the studio I kept thinking the Zumba classes are going to go to town on this one.

WCT: How long was the creation process of this musical?

Ge: I started working with Emilio and he was very fast to have a musical onstage. We worked with Alexander Dinelaris, our writer, for a year and a half before he wrote the book. He blew me away when he did.

All of a sudden we are here in Chicago. It is like mind-blowing to me! It has been very fast. Emilio Estefan: I think this musical will inspire a lot of people because it shows that it doesn’t matter if you are Latino, gay or whatever—people need to accept you the way you are. In our time, they tried to get us to change our name and our sound. We didn’t do that. I think it is important to stick to what you believe in. I hope this will allow a lot of people to follow their dreams and make them come true.

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You can’t tell my whole life story. It is impossible. It was hard enough to get that much in. We are so fortunate to have had so many hits that it is impossible to put everything in the show. We let Alex pick the songs that would advance the story.

WCT: Why is the title On Your Feet?

Ge: We are on Our Feet because that is what we have done repeatedly in our lives. We just get back on our feet. We are hoping that the people that come to our show will learn the

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL FESTIVAL THRU JUNE 6

The Chicago Association of Black Storytellers presents AESTRY, a storytelling form from West Africa, on June 5. The festival classes with Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago.

THEATER REVIEW

Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South

Playwright: E. Patrick Johnson
At: Project& at Northwestern University’s Wallis Theatre, 1949 Campus Dr., Evanston
Tix: www.communication.northwestern.edu or www.projectand.org; $10-$15
Runs through: June 7

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

“This show needs some kind of thesis statement.” That was my main thought back in 2010 when I saw About Face Theatre’s professional Chicago premiere of Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South. The show was E. Patrick Johnson’s theatrical adaptation of his own 2008 scholarly book of the same name.

A one-man performance where a chameleon-like Johnson craftily embodied a number of his book interviewees drawn from all over the South, Sweet Tea was full of colorful and specific details about how folk from an often misunderstood minority group functions from within a wider U.S. minority group that has carried a burden of centuries of servitude and discrimination. But Sweet Tea, back then, seemed to meander along without a clear-cut goal or framing device to tie the stories together.

Now that Sweet Tea is back again in a limited run produced by Project& at Northwestern University in Evanston, I’m very impressed to see that Johnson has found stronger way to tie together all of his collected characters’ stories. And he’s done it via a thoroughly revised script and a streamlined production directed by Joseph Megel.

Sweet Tea is so much richer this time around, since Johnson has injected many of his own stories of growing up gifted and gay in Hickory, North Carolina, and how that upbringing has impacted his life in relation to his many interview subjects. This approach doesn’t allow Johnson to hide behind the mask of his real-life characters, so Sweet Tea is much more emotionally direct and incisively personal this time around.

Megel’s staging also helps you feel like you’re traversing on a number of life journeys through the South thanks to Alex Maness’ map-filled projection designs that flit across the dominant dressing screen in David Navalinsky’s simplified scenic design. Megel and lighting designers Kathy Perkins and Jim Davis also help to keep the transitions speedy as Johnson adds costume designer Marissa Erickson’s suggestive adornments to help delineate between the wide array of African-American men from different generations and classes.

Understandably, with the inclusion of more Johnson’s autobiographical stories, some of the previous material in Sweet Tea had to go. I particularly miss the explanation of why so much sugar is necessary in recipes for Southern sweet tea and the joked about health hazards that came with it.

Yet Sweet Tea is so much stronger in Johnson’s new and deeply personal brew this time around, so there’s not much to quibble about. Johnson’s stories of his subjects sing and dance again on stage in Sweet Tea, but this time around he’s bravely sharing right up alongside all of them.
‘54’ and more

The movie 54—out writer-director Mark Christopher's fictional portrait of Studio 54, the glittery, heady disco palace that epitomized the hedonistic party scene—was a flop when it was released in 1998. Although Christopher's film certainly had its strong points (Mike Myers' performance as gidgetting, drugg-upped club's gay owner Steve Rubell was perfection), it also had many flaws. The biggest was the disappearance of the bisexuality of its leading character, Shane, a gorgeous blonde Adonis with a "Joisey" accent (portrayed by hunky Ryan Phillippe) whose body finds him work at the club as a shirtless barback.

Screening audiences strongly responded to Christopher's darker vision, which focused on Shane's discovery of his hot body and angeling looks have appeal for both men and women and are his ticket out of his working class roots. They also loved the sexes-love triangle between Shane and his new best friends (Breckin Meyer and Salma Hayek), a married couple who are, respectively, another barback and a hot-check girl at the club. But as Christopher has explained in recent interviews, after filming completed, several of the movie's young cast (which also included Neve Campbell in a minor role) started blowing up. What had been intended for urban audiences now seemed to have mainstream appeal.

With that in mind, producer/distributor Miramax poured onto that money and ordered a batch of new scenes, lightening the overall tone of the film and replacing Shane's bisexuality with an improbable romance with the character of the rising young actress that Christopher played. But the tampering pleased no one and the film died a quick death upon release with both audiences and critics. For some—myself included—the prospects for a much more interesting movie were left on the table.

Now, after strong word-of-mouth reaction to the UK premiere of the restored version, the film is available for complimentary viewing at the film's website, DylanMovie.com.

Upcoming movie calendar

Highlights from films opening in Chicago, June 5 and 12 (or available digitally)

**Entourage (6/5)** — The HBO series centered on the antics of a rising young movie star and his three best friends (including his brother) makes the leap to the big screen. Adrian Grenier plays the movie star (based on the life of Mark Wahlberg, who produced the movie and makes a cameo), Jeremy Piven plays cast-associate, Ari Gold (based on Rahm Emanuel's brother) and out actor Rex Lee returns as Lloyd, the gay man who is Gold's one-time flustered assistant.

**Spy (6/5)** — Melissa McCarthy's latest comedy finds her as a nebbish CIA analyst who volunteers to infiltrate the organization of a nefarious art dealer and thwart a plot to create a global disaster. Rose Byrne and Jason Statham co-star.

**Purple Sea (6/8)** — Based on a true story, this Italian-made LGBT film-festival favorite is the story of the illicit love affair of Angela and Sarah, who must go to great lengths (think Albert Nobbs) in 19-century Sicily in order to protect their romance. A free screening will be presented by the Queer Film Society and the Bezazian branch, 1226 W. Argyle Ave., at 6 p.m. http://queerfilmsociety.org/pages/events.html#event2

**The Farewell Party (6/12)** — A drama with comedic overtones, the movie follows a group of senior citizens in a nursing home in Israel (including a gay couple) who help end the life of a terminally ill friend and who suddenly find themselves asked for similar help by others. Opening at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave., and the Renaissance Place Cinema in Highland Park. http://www.landmarktheatres.com/chicago/film-info/the-farewell-party

**Jurassic World (6/12)** — Decades after the tragic and hair-raising events chronicled in the first three movies, Jurassic Park has become the renowned tourist attraction founder John Hammond envisioned. But with visitors and profits declining, a new attraction is brought back to life and, naturally, new tragic and hair-raising events occur. Chris Pratt, Judy Greer, Ty Simpkins and Bryce Dallas Howard star.

**Testament of Youth (6/12)** — Based on the true story of a young British woman who leaves her studies at Oxford to become a nurse during WWI, following in the footsteps of her brothers and fiancée. Based on Victoria Brittain's post-WWI memoir, the film stars Swedish actress Alicia Vikander (The Fifth Estate, Ex Machina).

Midler touring, in Chicago June 18

Grammy-winning singer and legendary performer Bette Midler's first major tour in a decade, “Divine Intervention,” has launched. She started her tour with shows in the Flor-ida cities of Hollywood and Tampa, and she’s slated to stop by Chicago’s United Center on Thursday, June 18.

Accompanied on stage by a 12-piece band as well as backing vocals by the Harlettes, the show features a stage production courtesy of stage designer Michael Cotten. For complete tour and ticket information, visit bettemidler.com and www.livenation.com.

Tambor, Henson win critics’ awards

Jeffrey Tambor added to his accolades by winning the award for best actor in a comedy (for his groundbreaking role in the Netflix series Transparent) at the fifth Critics’ Choice Awards that took place May 31.

Also, Empire actress Taraji P. Henson showed that she’s just as unstoppable as her character, Cookie Lyon, as she won best a- ccess in a drama.

Bessei Smith that stars Queen Latifah and McNibique—won for best television movie. HBO's Olive Kitteridge took three awards, including best limited series, best actress in a movie or limited series (Frances McDormand) and best supporting actor in a movie or limited series (Bill Murray). In addition, out actress Sarah Paulson won for best supporting actress in a drama series for Or- ange Is the New Black.

**Jenner cover unveiled**

The upcoming Vanity Fair cover with the woman formerly known as Bruce Jenner has been revealed—and it features the caption "Call Me Caitlyn.

The picture, shot by the magazine's longtime star photographer, Annie Leibovitz, and the headline are the only things on the cover. Inside is an interview with Jenner by journalist Buzz Bissinger. Speaking publicly for the first time since completing gender transition, Caitlyn Jenner compares her emotional two-day photo shoot with Leibovitz to winning the gold medal for the decathlon at the 1976 Olympics.

On Twitter, Caitlyn posted, “I’m so happy after such a long struggle to be living my true self. Welcome to the world Caitlyn. Can’t wait for you to get to know her/me.”

Bette Midler.

Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.
THEatre Series 2015-16

THE BOY FROM OZ
By Martin Sherman and Nick Enright
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015
PRIDE FILMS & PLAYS @ STAGE 773
The Award-winning musical about the dazzling life and talents of Peter Allen.

THE (curious case of the) WATSON INTELLIGENCE
By Madeleine George
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2015
THEATER WIT
A Chicago Premiere comedy from the lesbian writer of Seven Mammoths Wander New England.

104th REVUE OF SECOND CITY
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2015
SECOND CITY
Hilariously smart comedy from the outstanding Second City!

THE LISBON TRAVIATA
By Terrence McNally
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2015
ECLIPSE THEATRE @ ATHENAEUM
An extremely funny and deeply moving play of an opera queen’s devotion to the divine Callas.

THE GLASS MENAGERIE
By Tennessee Williams
SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2016
THE HYPOCRITES @ DEN THEATRE
Hans Fleischman directs and re-imagines his critically acclaimed and compelling revival.

COCKED
By Sarah Gubbins
FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2016
VICTORY GARDENS THEATRE
A World Premiere thriller from the lesbian playwright of The Kid Thing.

DREAMGIRLS
By Henry Krieger & Tom Eyen
THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2016
PORCHLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE @ STAGE 773
The Tony and Academy Award-winning musical from the Jeff Award-winning Porchlight

COMPANY
By George Furth and Stephen Sondheim
WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2016
WRITERS THEATRE
Experience this brilliant and beloved musical in the brand new Writers Theatre.

$265 for all 8 shows!

EMAIL AMY@WINDYCITYMEDIAGROUP.COM FOR AN ORDER FORM
Shows, locations, dates/times subject to change. No requests for alternate dates will be guaranteed.
The bold standard: Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Lily Tomlin was watching Jane Fonda weep. As the showbiz icon released a steady stream of waterworks—she’s “wiping tears away.” Tomlin noted—Fonda pauses slightly to collect herself before answering.

The question? Why gay men have forever re- vealed older women even when the rest of the world—and Hollywood—have not.

“I find the question so moving that it makes me cry,” said Fonda.

There was one unanswerable moment among many during this candid conversation with the 77-year-old actress and Tomlin, 75, who ap- pear together in the new Netflix original series Grace and Frankie. The beloved pair play two golden girls forced to start anew after their husbands drop a big truth bomb: They’re in love with each other.

“I remember when this show was an- nounced, everyone was really hyped about it. Because they danced together so well! They were beautiful, tall blonde people! They were just kind of breathtaking, and they did make a nice looking couple, but that was about as far as it would go,” said Fonda.

I had a girlfriend and we got into a big fight about being gay when I first moved to New York. She was watching Night with Art- hury Quinn, who is so macho as Gauquin in that movie, and I said something like, “Look how macho this guy is—he’s unbelievable!” She said, “If I were gay, I’d beat down the door of the nearest gay bar.” I said, “If I fell in love with my refrigerator, I’d give it lamb chops.”

SAY? I said, “You said, ‘purse nelly.’ I wanna understand why so-and-so didn’t, you know, take them into their own, and sweep them away. Because they danced together so well! They were beautiful, tall blonde people! They were just kind of breathtaking, and they did make a nice looking couple, but that was about as far as it would go,” said Fonda.

Netflix has really been a pioneer in reaching beyond LGBT stereotypes and being LGBT-inclusive, and it’s done it again with Grace and Frankie. How do you feel about the state of gay characters on TV as a whole? And what is it about this platform that al- lows Netflix to tell LGBT stories without getting gimmicky or exploitative?

“I think it’s the right time coming. Although, it’s happened because of so many things that have gone before, and this culture has changed. Large parts of the culture have changed. Not the culture as a whole. You know, there’s still a lot of—”

Homophobia. I lived in the South for 20 years, and, unfortunately, homophobia is all too alive and rampant, but because there are so many more gay men and women in mass media and they’re very knowledgeable—and more and more people are coming out—Americans know somebody who’s gay and lesbian. Once that happens, it’s a lot harder to remain homopho- bic.

But I mean, I began to suspect. The last gen- eration on the come along, they so demanded to be visible and they’ve taken for granted everything that the gay community had fought for so hard for a long time—it was wiped away from them that they were not accepted or not loved. I mean, they may have known it but they didn’t own it. I agree, and I’m very optimistic. I found what Justice Kennedy said—that it should be granted everything that the gay community would be a reality in your lifetime?

“I think it’s the right time coming. Although, it’s happened because of so many things that have gone before, and this culture has changed. Large parts of the culture have changed. Not the culture as a whole. You know, there’s still a lot of—”

To a friend of mine when I lived in Atlanta, and she told me about it and it was very hard for her because she really loved him a lot. Because she loved him, she was able to understand that he needed to become who he really was, and they remained very, very close friends and they still live in the same building. I think that’s the way to do it. Compassion, empathy, love, understanding—we understood it.

WCT: Did that come to mind as you were shooting this show, where you are married to a gay man?

JF: [Laugh]! Not until you made me think of it right now.

WCT: Lily, have you had any similar experi- ences?

JF: No, I didn’t; but I had girlfriends who dated gay guys in college and they couldn’t un- derstand why so-and-so didn’t, you know, take them into their own, and sweep them away. Because they danced together so well! They were beautiful, tall blonde people! They were just kind of breathtaking, and they did make a nice looking couple, but that was about as far as it would go,” said Fonda.

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WCT: Did you ever think that gay marriage would be legal in your lifetime?

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The awkward comedy of manners The Overnight has Alex (Adam Scott) and Emily (Taylor Schilling) anxious about having to make new friends in Los Angeles, where they recently moved. When their son, RJ (RJ Hermanson), befriends Max (Max Moritt) at the playground, Max’s father, Kurt (Jason Schwartzman), invites RJ and his parents over for pizza with his wife, Charlotte (Judith Godreche). The bond that starts to form between the adult couples quickly mirrors the easygoing friendship between the kids. However, after RJ and Max are put to bed, things become a bit more intense. Alcohol is consumed, bongos are shared, and clothes are shed. Then Alex reveals his concerns about inadequacy, and things get even more sexually explicit and intense. Writer/director Patrick Brice met with Windy City Times to talk about his inspiration for the sexual shenanigans that happen during The Overnight.

Windy City Times: So, let’s talk about penises. Why are they a source of awe and shame for the film’s adult male characters? Patrick Brice: I wanted the movie to be about this guy [Alex] overcomeing this issue [inadequacy] and gaining self-acceptance.

WCT: Did you write about this issue because it is taboo? You find it funny? It’s something you grew up with?

PB: [laughs]. I have never seen it done in this context or point of view where it’s almost taking an empathetic approach to it. I wanted it to be funny, but not in a way where you are laughing at the characters. You are laughing with [Alex] as you are discovering stuff.

WCT: So given the penises on display, and discussions about them in the film, I’m curious to know about your issue with nudity and body image?

PB: I wouldn’t call them issues! Obviously, I saw it as fodder for comedy. It goes back to this joke I pull on my wife, where I do this impression of Buffalo Bill from Silence of the Lambs and do a little dance. Nothing brings me more joy than that.

WCT: I would love to see that! It’s a shame we are in a hotel lobby and not in a private room.

PB: [laughs]. I know! ... I saw it as being this kind of interesting almost bait and switch. That 20 minutes into the movie, you find out about the crux of the main character is that he has this body issue. I also knew that because the movie takes place in 24 hours, there could only be so much of an emotional arc, or growth or journey for the character in that amount of time. I wanted his thing to be overcoming this small—no pun intended—issue.

WCT: The film is about various bad decisions, uncomfortable moments, inappropriate behavior and awkward exchanges. Why did you explore these aspects of human nature?

PB: I don’t know. Maybe it’s a reflection with how I deal with this human journey as well. An awkward interaction can feel like life or death in the moment. I wanted to take that roller coaster model of a crazy journey and make it about human interaction going wrong or right.

WCT: What can you say about the morality in the film?

PB: It’s a comedy of manners. I think one of the things that’s driving Alex and Emily’s characters to stay in the house is their fear of offending Max and Charlotte. How far do you go with that?

WCT: Which character are you most like: Kurt, who is expanding and open to experience, or Alex, who is more of a puke-and-rally kind of guy?

PB: I’m a puke and rally kind of guy, for sure. It’s something I actually do. I’m known for it. I have stomach issues. My anxiety manifests itself in my stomach. But I respond to this dynamic of Alex and Emily for sure. I’ve been married to my wife for three years but we been together for ten. It’s very much me stepping in potholes and my wife berating me about it. And I’m obsessed with sex.

* 2015 Gary M. Kramer

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Multi-instrumentalist singer-songwriter Honeybird aka Monique Mizrahi’s journey as an out bisexual has culminated with her new album, “Out Comes Woman.”

“The title refers to the fact that I came out for the second time about a year ago. The first time was ten years ago and I feel like if you come out and no one listens it’s not exactly coming out,” said Honeybird. “I realized that the only way I’m going to get past this is to try coming out again so that’s partially why I titled this album ‘Out Comes Woman.’ The title is empowering to me and it can also refer to any woman’s rebirth. In my case I was inviting everyone to accept me and who I am.”

The album has 14 tracks, six of which are related to her coming out process. The theme song is “TMLGBT (They Might Be LGBT)” and the other LGBT-focused tracks are “Must Get To You, Ypsilon” (about her ex-girlfriend), “Wanted In, Wanted Out” (about leaving her husband) and “Come Out” (about pride).

“The final LGBT song is 88 BI Dead Chickens,” said Honeybird. “It’s the name of the band I had when I was 13 years old which consisted solely of me and my electric bass. I thought it was apropos to include that title in the album, as a flashback to when I realized I was bisexual versus when I actually owned it, some 24 years after that. It gives me courage.”

Honeybird’s journey as an out bisexual began when she attended the Pride Festival in Bologna, Italy in 2013. She met Chiara from Le Cose Cambiano, the IL Gets Better affiliate in Italy, at the festival and after that meeting Honeybird decided to record her coming out video for the site. This was the first time she came out publicly and since then she’s only gotten positive responses from the video.

Recently, Honeybird played at the LGBT expo at the Javits Center in New York City and is making arrangements to play at other LGBT events in the future.

Mizrahi chose Honeybird as her stage name in 2002 while she was living in Rome. “I think that birds are glorious. They wake up and just sing. I love that they are instinctual like that. I chose honey because I love honey. It’s sticky and sweet and delicious,” said Honeybird.

Music has always been a part of Honeybird’s life. “As a young kid, I would play the piano really loud and I always really enjoyed that but that was when I was three years old. When I was 13 I started playing electric base and punk stuff,” said Honeybird. “My parents always supported my musical aspirations and even gave me the chance to study it.”

Honeybird plays a variety of other instruments, many of which are featured on “Out Comes Woman.” They include the charango (a 10-string traditional Andean instrument that she found in Bolivia in 2003), a salmon-colored electric P-bass, woodwinds, double bass and assorted percussion instruments.

Not only did Honeybird study music at home, she also attended Interlochen Arts Academy at the Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan during her senior year and then went on to get a degree in music production and engineering from Berklee College of Music in Boston.

Honeybird spent the first year out of college working for a recording studio as an audio engineer in Los Angeles and then moved to Rome when she was 22-years-old. She spent the next 14 years there before moving back to the states. She now resides in Brooklyn.

A first generation Los Angeleno, Honeybird was born in 1977 and spent her childhood in Los Angeles with her now divorced parents and a younger brother. She first realized that she was bisexual when she was 13-years-old but it wasn’t until she attended a boarding school in Rome (her dad grew up there) during her sophomore year that she acted on those feelings with one of her friends.

“When I was in boarding school, I went to a place near the Coliseum with my friend and that’s where we kissed. I could feel some attraction to her, that she was bisexual or a lesbian and I almost wonder if either of us had said something if we could’ve empowered each other to be more comfortable with our sexuality,” said Honeybird. “I think one of the reasons why it took me so long to come out was her rejection. After the kiss she didn’t want to talk to me and not only was she not my friend anymore she was also really angry and that hurt me for many years. In my mind, I knew there was nothing wrong with it but the way she reacted after the fact was jarring. That’s why I’m happy to be doing this album because if someone hears it and begins to think that it’s OK to be an out and proud bisexual that would be amazing. If I had at least one positive experience earlier in my life then it would’ve made the world of difference to me and I hope this album helps other young people accept themselves for who they are.”

When Honeybird came out to her family her brother was the first one to accept it. “My dad has dealt with it a lot better than I ever expected and my mom is slowly accepting that it was impossible for her to be an out bisexual in Italy. While in Rome, Honeybird started writing poetry and songs. She says she wouldn’t have pursued music again if she’d stayed in the states because she wasn’t listening to her intrinsic creative self. She got Italian citizenship through her grandfather which meant that she could work so she formed a band in 2006 and they began performing shortly after that. In 2013, Honeybird did 200 shows throughout Europe and it was then that she realized she should be making music for a living. Over the years her musical style has evolved from punk to jazz/jazz inspired tunes.

As for Honeybird’s musical inspirations, she singled out jazz bass player Charles Mingus, Perry Farrell, Paul Simon and Tom Ze from Brazil. Honeybird’s favorite artists as a kid were Siouxsie and the Banshees and Sonic Youth.

Another musician that has influenced her recently is the English rock singer Skin. “I teach Italian, and Skin contacted me about learning Italian so we had one week of lessons. What struck me the most about her was that she was an out and proud bisexual artist and amazing,” said Honeybird.

When it came time to move back to the states Honeybird decided to live in Brooklyn because her brother lives in the area and New York City is a place where musicians converge.

“Brooklyn was a happy medium between California and Rome and it seemed like a good place for me to discover new territory musically and explore myself creatively,” said Honeybird. “It’s such a vibrant community and I’ve had some great encounters. It was interesting moving back to the states after being overseas for years.”

Honeybird will be holding a release party for the album May 14 at Nublu in New York City.

“There’s going to be a luau hooping,” said Honeybird. “I want this release party to be more of a celebration of coming out than a traditional release party. After that I’m going to try and do as many shows as possible and here in the states.”

See www.honeybird.net for more information.

UChicago to honor Joffrey’s Wheater

Joffrey Ballet Artistic Director Ashley Wheater will be awarded the University of Chicago (UChicago) Jesse L. Rosenberger Medal at the school’s 523rd convocation on Saturday, June 13.

Wheater is the 51st recipient of the Rosenberger Medal, which was established in 1917 by Mr. and Mrs. Jesse L. Rosenberger. The medal recognizes achievement through research, in authorship, in invention, for discovery, for unusual public service, or for contributions deemed of great benefit to humanity.

Wheater joined The Joffrey Ballet as its artistic director in 2007. The Joffrey Ballet previously announced its 60th-anniversary season of celebration in 2015-16, including three world premieres.

DJ competition at Center on June 13

Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., will host “By Women For Women: Everything Old is New Again,” which will pit female DJs of the LGBTQ community against each other while promoting an evening of music and dance.

The event—to take place on the rooftop terrace, reception hall and theater Saturday, June 13—will crown the DJ, DJ All The Way, DJ Gemini Jones, DJ Kirby, DJ Kristin, DJ Rhated, and DJ Sandra Susue who will compete for the title.

Doors open at 5 p.m. with a cocktail reception until 7 p.m. and the DJ competition to follow until 9 p.m. Tickets are $30 before June 10, and $45 after that date.

Event sponsors include B. Blyss, Dyes on Bikes, L-Stop and Red Fox. The evening will benefit both Center on Halsted and the Veritas Gray LGBTQ Youth Fund. For more information, visit www.centeronhalsted.org.
‘Becoming Us’
A real-life ‘Transparent’

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

 Evanston teen Ben Lehwald lets television viewers into his world when he introduces us to his family on the ABC Family docuseries Becoming Us, premiering June 8.

This is not another family sitcom. Ben’s parents divorced only a few years ago. The plot twist came later: when Ben’s dad, transitioned from being Charlie Lehwald to Carly Lehwald.

The series follows Ben, his family and friends as they live this non-traditional family life. This includes his girlfriend Danielle, who also has a transgender father, which the two did not realize upon initially meeting.

Ben said his first reaction to the news he got left him understandably dumbfounded and wondering if his parents were going to be okay.

“I tried running away from how I felt for a really long time,” said Ben. “I got into a really bad phase. That’s my number one thing now is being in touch with my emotions because it’s not good to hold it in. I was just trying to run away for a really long time and I just got to a point where I couldn’t do it anymore and I just had to deal with it.”

Ben is usually the one taking photos and named himself “Abstractive” on Instagram. He also enjoys video games and practices his artistic (hereditary) talents by playing guitar.

“At first, it was like meeting a stranger that I’ve known for a really long time because I still saw Charlie, but I saw all those Carly things now,” said Ben about taking in his dad’s transition. “She was free, basically. She didn’t hold anything back.”

Ben is close with both his parents; however, as Ben and his mom, Suzy Crawford, talked with Windy City Times, they were in sync and finished each other’s sentences. When asked how they would describe Carly, Ben says, “butterfly.”

“She’s delicate as hell, she’s just all over the place sometimes,” said Ben. “She’s just a delicate, little butterfly. Butterflies are compassionate, pretty and sweet … and they change; they transition.”

“They hop from thing to thing,” Crawford added lightheartedly.

Ben and Crawford said the whole decision has flung open the doors and opened their eyes to the LGBT community. As for how Ben understands his trans parent’s big decision, he said, “For people to understand it better, I would say the show can help normalize the transgender experience and empower trans men and women to live their authentic lives. And to get the people on board who aren’t on board today.”

“We’re just normal people,” Carly said of what viewers can expect to see. “We’re loving, we’re creative, we’re energetic, we have families, we go to work, we are normal everyday people that deserve a chance at life.”

For more on Becoming Us, visit: http://www.abcfamily.go.com.
Chicago native helps make others look great

BY ROSS FORMAN

Alma Izquierdo was attending Columbia College, majoring in photography, when she decided to take a makeup class. The Instructor, Sarah Mayer, asked Izquierdo during the class if she’d be interested in training to be a substitute makeup artist for the NBC-S News. She accepted the offer and was trained to do TV news makeup, which led her to the makeup departments at CBS, WGN, PBS, the Lyric Opera and elsewhere. She’s done makeup for TV, film, video, photography, theater, and fashion shows.

“My intentions were to become a photographer like my father, but life took me in a different direction and I couldn’t be happier,” she said.

Izquierdo is a North Side native who now lives in Chicago’s East Lake View neighborhood and is a multitalented lesbian in a committed relationship with Michelle Figueroa. Izquierdo is a self-employed business owner (Art & Soul Bodyworks, Inc.), a massage therapist and freelance makeup artist. She is the makeup department head on the TV show Chicago PD. She has been doing makeup since 1982.

“With technology, social media and our current culture being as [it is], there aren’t too many people [who] don’t have an idea of what being on [a television show] set may be like,” she said. “However, most cast and crew members reflect the true experience of it when you ask them ‘How’s it going?’ and they reply ‘Oh, living the dream’ or ‘Living the glamorous life,’ with a light tone of sarcasm.

“Working on set is an intense experience: it’s exhilarating, exhausting, demanding, fun, educational, and stressful to name a few [adjectives].”

As a makeup artist on set, Izquierdo is responsible to keep an eye on the television monitors to make sure that the actors look as they should for that scene, she said. “It also requires one to be prepared for any changes that the director may ask for, to have your set bag stocked in order to be able to supply the actors with anything they might need like lotion, eye drops [or] fascist,” she said. “You’d be surprised what we’ve asked for and how much we carry in our set bags. My set bag easily weighs 45 pounds.

“Most importantly a makeup artist is responsible for continuity. That means, one needs to be mentally aware of the sequence of scenes, how the actor is supposed to continue to look in each one and when there should be a change. Since all scenes are not shot in order, it can be a challenge. For this reason you’re always on, always watching the actors and the monitors, always ready to jump in when necessary.”

Izquierdo said her experience working with celebrities has been, for the most part, "an incredible experience." She said she’s worked with some “wonderful, gracious, down-to-earth, talented celebrities,” including Leonard Nemoy, Mike Ditka, Raquel Welch, David Caradine, Oprah Winfrey, John C. Reilly, Rosie O’Donnell, Jane Lynch, Cheech Marin, Quincy Jones, Placido Domingo, Dany Hannah, Kristin Chenoweth, Ernie Banks, Deepak Chopra, Blair Underwood and others.

“I’ve had the opportunity to have conversations with some of these talented people. It’s really one of the most fulfilling parts of my job,” she said. “What amazed me most in the beginning of my career is how ‘regular’ they are. For the most part, they’re just like you and me.”

Izquierdo’s resume is impressive, as she’s worked on such shows/productions as Boss, Playboy Club, Mob Doctor, Shameless, Chicago Fire, Chicago PD, The Dark Knight, Public Enemies, Contagion, Divergent, Man of Steel, CBS News, NBC News, WGN News, Telemedicine (news), Lyric Opera, Wicked and Easy Abby. Naturally, she has fond memories, such as:

— Doing makeup on Jesse Jackson during the Democratic Convention while he spoke to a dozen of his advisors at the head of a conference table. “He didn’t blink an eye or pause for even a moment,” she said.

— “I watched as Rachel Welch took off her sweater and skirt in front of me without a word of warning in a small makeup room.”

— Placido Domingo gave her a private performance and sang an old romantic Spanish song when he learned she is Mexican.

— “I did makeup on Rosie O’Donnell [during] one of her R Family cruises when the ship was rocking back and forth on turbulent waters. All I could think to myself was ‘Don’t throw up on Rosie … don’t throw up on Rosie.”

— While doing makeup on David Carradine, he rolled a cigarette and put it in his mouth. Carradine said that smoking was not allowed in the building, to which he replied, “Who’s going to stop me?” He never lit up, Izquierdo said.

So what’s the key to making someone look incredible for TV?

— Experience, and a fairly large bag of tricks, she said, laughing.

— “Not all celebrities are naturally beautiful and flawless,” Izquierdo said. “Over the years, I’ve been fortunate to work with some very talented makeup artists who’ve shared their secrets. Sometimes, like in any profession, you learn through trial and error or when flying by the seat of your pants.

—the media and our culture continuously promote the notion that people in the limelight should be flawless when the truth is that very few people, compared to the majority, actually are and then of course it doesn’t last forever. I can’t say there’s any particular product or technique that makes everyone look incredible. It’s different for everyone. However, I take it upon myself to find the beauty in each person and accentuate it, then camouflage and downplay any flaws.”

Izquierdo said the main difference between getting ready for TV and getting ready to go out on, say, a Friday night, is lighting. “The lighting on set varies of course and colors translate differently through the lens and onto the TV,” she said.

For example, some shades of red lipstick translate more blue than how they actually look.

Izquierdo said the time in her makeup chair for each actor/actress varies greatly, depending on the person and the situation. An actor can take as little as 10 minutes or as long as several hours. On average a female actress with regular beauty makeup takes about 45 minutes. Izquierdo’s specialty is corrective and beauty makeup. “I’m a stickler for corrective makeup and make-up artists should look its absolute best before applying color, [such as lipstick, eye shadow or blush],” she said.

“Being the makeup department head of a TV show or movie is extremely challenging. The hours are long and the work is challenging, physically and mentally. My longest workday on Chicago PD was 17 hours; my longest workday was 23 hours on Public Enemies. On a daily basis, I’m responsible for making sure we’re adequately staffed and supplied, that the actors are done on time, that everything goes well on set, and that we keep within budget.

“Additionally, before each episode I read the next script, take notes on any FX makeup that goes into play, pre-plan to schedule my staff, order supplies, and meet with my key makeup artist (FX specialist) and [the] director. My mind is always working and I’m constantly communicating via text with my staff, the crew, the assistant director and the production office. As part of keeping track of continuity, all of the makeup artists are responsible for taking pics of every actor with each makeup change and filing them in a continuity book. There are other not-so-glamorous tasks as well like washing the facial towels and sanitizing the makeup brushes. There’s always something to do.”

But still, “I love helping people look their best,” she said. “I love interacting and working with talented people. It’s a dream job.”

at the 2015 exposition include: Austria, Belgium, China, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States.


‘Dance for Life’ on Aug. 15

Seven of Chicago’s dance companies will once again come together for Dance for Life on Saturday, Aug. 15. The gala reception will be at Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave., at 5 p.m. The performances will take place at Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy., at 7:30 p.m.

Participating companies include Giordano Dance Chicago, Dance Chicago, Joffrey Ballet, River North Dance Chicago, CCA, Chicago Human Rhythm Project and Same Planet Different World Dance Theatre.

Tickets are $25-$75 (performance only) and $250-$600 (includes admission to the gala reception and premiere seating at the performance); call 312-922-5812 or visit www.danceforlifechicago.org.

Black Alphabet Film Festival July 23-26

The Black Alphabet Film Festival (BAFF) returns for its third outing of showcasing films and other works that highlight and explore the Black LGBTQ and same-gender-loving (SGL) community. This year BAFF’s international film festival will now take place beginning Thursday, July 23, and closing on Sunday, July 26, at Center on Halsted, 2433 N. Halsted St. The Black LGBTQ and same-gender-loving (SGL) community.

BAFF is conducting an Indiegogo campaign at http://blackalphabetfilm.org to raise $6,200 to support the films that will now take place beginning Thursday, July 23, and closing on Sunday, July 26, at Center on Halsted, 2433 N. Halsted St. The Black LGBTQ and same-gender-loving (SGL) community. This year BAFF’s international film festival will now take place beginning Thursday, July 23, and closing on Sunday, July 26, at Center on Halsted, 2433 N. Halsted St.

Tickets will be available for purchase as of June 16. More information on indiegogo campaign and the film festival will be available at www.blackalphabetfilm.org.

EXPO Chicago names exhibitors

EXPO CHICAGO, The International Exposition of Contemporary & Modern Art, today announced the list of premier galleries that will exhibit Sept. 17-20 at Navy Pier’s Festival Hall, 600 E. Grand Ave.

President/Director Tony Karman released the 2015 exhibitor list of 140 leading galleries representing 15 countries and 40 cities from around the world. Countries represented
Late gay baseball player Burke to be honored

BY ROSS FORMAN

Glenn Burke, the late gay professional baseball player who died from AIDS-related causes in 1995, is receiving an honor from the Baseball Reliquary Inc., a Southern California-based nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering an appreciation of U.S. art and culture through the context of baseball history.

Burke is one of three inductees—in his eighth year on the ballot—for its 17th class of electees to the Shrine of the Eternals, the national organization’s equivalent to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Burke will be honored in a public ceremony on July 19, at the Donald R. Wright Auditorium in the Pasadena (Calif.) Central Library, along with fellow inductees Sy Berger and Steve Bilko.

Of the 50 eligible candidates on the 2015 ballot, Berger received the highest voting percentage, being named on 33 percent of the ballots returned. Bilko and Burke each received 35 percent. Runners-up in this year’s election included Bob Costas (30 percent), Bo Jackson (29 percent), J.R. Richard (29 percent), Lisa Fernandez (26 percent) and Charlie Finley (26 percent).

“It’s great to see Glenn Burke not just remembered, but honored,” said Chicago-based sportswriter Christina Kahrl. “The pressure he faced as an out athlete, and the harassment he dealt with that undermined his career, are critically important for the lesson offered, that the major sports have an obligation to not let them live powerfully in a supportive and inclusive environment. “As an event producer, StarEvents believes in supporting local nonprofit groups and giving back to the community,” she said.

“The lakefront party will be bigger and better than [last year], with some of the best DJs in the industry who will start Pride Week off with a bang,” Krage said. “We encourage participants to dress up in colorful costumes and will have beads and boas on-hand for everyone. If participants sign up as a team of 10 or 20, they will get access to a private tent/cabana with costume essentials, snacks and complimentary champagne.”

The party will feature DJs Matthew Harvat and Adam LeBlanc. “These industry veterans know how to engage a crowd and will set the perfect pace for the party and Pride week,” Krage said.

Last year’s race winners (individual male and female and top couple) were pampered with services from a local spa, said Krage, who would not reveal the winners’ names.

Participants can register for the Pride 5K walk/run and reserve their team cabana at http://starevents.com/events/pride-5k/.

Bigger, better Lakefront PRIDE Party, race planned

ORGANIZERS FOR THE SECOND ANNUAL LAKEFRONT PRIDE! PARTY & 5K RUN/WALK HAVE LOFTY GOALS FOR THE EVENT, SCHEDULED FOR 6-10 P.M. ON THURSDAY, JUNE 25, AT FULLERTON AVENUE AND LAKE SHORE DRIVE.

Last year, the event drew about 500 participants and raised more than $1,000 for charity. This year, organizers are shooting for more than 1,000 attendees and they are hoping to raise $10,000 for the Center on Halsted.

"Our goal is for this year’s event to be bigger and better than 2014 and to get the community excited and engaged for Pride weekend by hosting an unforgettable lakefront party and 5K walk that will benefit a well-deserving local community organization," said Michelle Krage, president of StarEvents, which is producing the event.

"Last year, the event focused on the 5K run/walk, which culminated in an after-party for participants to celebrate with their friends. This year, we’re inviting the larger community—runners and non-runners alike—to kick off their Pride weekend with an unforgettable lakefront party. The 5K run/walk is just one part of the party."

"This will be an unforgettable party for a great local cause—a chance for participants to show their true colors. There’s no better feeling than having fun with your friends while knowing you’re helping to advance the good work of a respected local community organization."

Krage said the Center was selected because of its mission of advancing the LGBTQ community and people of the Chicagoland area to have them live powerfully in a supportive and inclusive environment. "As an event producer, StarEvents believes in supporting local nonprofit groups and giving back to the community," she said.

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Chicago singer Sami Grisafe goes forward with music career

By ROSS FORMAN

Sami Grisafe launched her third album earlier this year, and it’s her first solo project. “This album is about progress both individually in fulfilling our dreams and collectively in what we can do together to inspire social change,” said Grisafe, now retired from her illustrious football career as the starting quarterback for the Chicago Force to fully focus on music. “Musically, we have merged a raw, classic rock style of the past with lots of soul and modern arrangements.”

“The focus of this album is about telling untold or rarely told stories with unique narratives. The title track specifically speaks to the worldwide marriage equality movement but the over-arching message is about being the author of your own life’s story. If you can’t find your dreams depicted in a storybook, write them. This theme is present throughout the album. Progress is made when we stretch beyond the limitations of comfort. My hope is to provoke conversation, action and smiles with Brand New Fairy Tale,” Grisafe said. “I began working on songs for this album, the work, the sound and the people who inspire me” after garnering national attention for singing the pre-chorus until 7 p.m. and the DJ competition will be held at the Westin O’Hare Hotel, 6100 North River Rd., Rosemont. Among those slated to attend are over 100 people. Volunteers are needed for a variety of committees, including sponsorships, hockey operations, Chicago Pride Parade/Parade events, giveaway/game, marketing and video-producing and tournament weekend groups. Visit http://www.ChicagoGayHockey.org/ChicagoPrideClassic or email anthony@chicagoPrideClassic.com.

‘Turn It Up for Change’ June 13 at W City Center

W Hotels of Chicago and The Human Rights Campaign, in partnership with Lesbians and Gays fro Justice, Events, will host “Turn It Up for Change: Casino Royale” on Saturday, June 13, 7-11 p.m., at the W City Center, 172 W Adams St.

The event will feature roulette, blackjack, slot machines, pokers—and a secret mission. April marks the launch of the music video for “Brand New Fairy Tale” as well as a Kickstarter campaign for the rest of the album. On June 27, Grisafe will perform with her band at the Back Lot Bash in Andersonville as part of Pridefest.

“I have spent years writing the songs for this [third] album and the last nine months polishing and fine-tuning them. I have been lucky to work with people on this album who are supportive, brilliant and honest,” Grisafe said. “When I was a kid, the fairy tales I dreamed about looked different than anything I could find in the storybooks: from having crushes on girls to wanting to be a professional baseball/football player like Bo Jackson. Brand New Fairy Tale is about standing by your dreams, even if you don’t have the support from others and even if there is no example of what you are striving for. Brand New Fairy Tale isn’t about seeing what’s been written and using that as an outline for your life. Rather, it’s about having the guts to write your own life story.”

Grisafe certainly is proud to incorporate the marriage equality message into her music. “Everything we do is shaping our future through the eyes of young people,” she said. “What will they learn if we give up on fighting for equality? Hate wins. I want to have a hand in changing the way people view the LGBTQ community. The feelings of love are the same whether you are straight or gay. The youth and young adults of today are part of the most diverse generation in U.S. history and I believe they will become known as the greatest advocates for equality. We like to refer to them as the Equality Generation.”

Grisafe confirmed she is close to the final draft of the story for a children’s book. She said the first renderings of the illustrations for the book are “fantastic.”

“So what about the Force? ‘My former teammates, who I call my sisters, are going to be very strong this season,” Grisafe said. “They have a talented squad, [primarily] the same wonderful coaching staff and management team. I have faith they will continue to dominate in the Women’s Football Alliance (WFA) and keep the Chicago Force legacy alive and well.”

Sami Grisafe is performing Sunday, June 7, at 2 p.m. at the Landshark Beer Garden at Navy Pier. For more about Grisafe, visit www.samigrisafe.com.

Second City Tennis Classic June 12-14

The Second City Tennis Classic will take place June 12-14 at Northwestern University. At least 100 people are slated to compete.

Proceeds from this year’s tournament will benefit Chicago House. Visit http://sctclassic.com/ for more information.

Chicago Pride Classic calls for volunteers

The Chicago Gay Hockey Association will host the Chicago Pride Classic hockey tournament June 25-28, during the city’s annual Pride weekend.

The tournament will be held at Chicago Park District’s McFetridge Sports Center, 3843 N. California Ave. Online registration is open. Volunteers are needed for a variety of committees, including sponsorships, hockey operations, Chicago Pride Parade/Parade events, giveaways/game, marketing and video-producing and tournament weekend groups. Visit http://www.ChicagoGayHockey.org/ChicagoPrideClassic or email anthony@chicagoPrideClassic.com.

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The event—to take place on the rooftop terrace, reception hall and theater Saturday, June 13—will crown the DJ. DJ All The Way, DJ Gemini Jones, DJ Kirby, DJ Kristin, DJ Rhonda R and DJ Sandra Suave will compete for the title.

Doors open at 5 p.m. with a cocktail reception until 7 p.m., and the DJ competition to follow until 8 p.m. Tickets are $30 before June 10, and $45 after that date.

Event sponsors include B.Blyss, Dykes on Bikes, L-Stop and She100. The evening will benefit both Center on Halsted and the Ver- nitas Gay LGBT Youth Fund. For more information, visit www.centeronhalsted.org.

Frankie Knuckles CD released

Defected Records has released House Masters Frankie Knuckles—with tracks the late DJ personally selected, according to a press release.

The two-CD set is a charity release in collaboration with Def Mix Management and the estate of Frankie Knuckles. A few of the tracks include Knuckles’ mix of Inner City’s “Whatta Gonna Do With My Lovin’,” “Knuckles’ ‘The Whistle Song’ (Sound Factory Mix) and Pet Shop Boys’ “Let’s Go My Own Devices” (Frankie Knuckles Royal Piano Version). All profits are donated directly to The Frankie Knuckles Fund/Ellan John AIDS Foundation.

To purchase the CD, visit http://store.defected.com.
Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel, 1 W. Wacker Dr., has always seemed to have a reputation as a more formal place with a sustained air of tradition.

Not that tradition is bad (in most cases), but sometimes it’s also good to shake things up here and there. A recent visit to the hotel—and the eatery Stayton (http://renaissance-hotels.marriott.com/events/renaissance-chicago-downtown-hotel/04-09-2015-mix-bite-and-play-at-stayton) confirmed this.

Executive Chef Daniel Perez told Savor that the name comes from the fact that Stayton is supposed to resemble a CTA station. Indeed, the name comes from the fact that Stayton is the idea of having eateries with a Chicago mind, such as the murals on the north sides of some of the surrounding pillars and the window from which chefs dispense their wares.

The idea of having eateries with a Chicago theme is hardly new. However, Stayton certainly brings a different (and modern) take on the approach—from unique wall maps on the wall to artwork of a taxi made with pencils. There is also a game of sorts at the bar area, as patrons can match depictions of Chicago-based celebrities behind the bar counter with names that are painted on the ceiling.

The decor also reflects sleekness and openness. (I know I’m talking a lot about how Stayton’s decked out, but there’s a lot of innovation here.) There are very unique chairs (some more comfortable than others), stadium seating in a corner and what’s called the “artists’ lounge.”

As for the cuisine, it’s impressive. (It’s being advertised as a unique take on street food.) The burrata was among the best I’ve ever had and my friend really liked the large cup of potato chips (which is a deal at 99 cents). The mushroom sage flatbread and tuna crudo were also top-of-the-line.

However, be sure to save room for dessert, as they might even be better than the appetizers and entrees. My friend and I sampled different varieties of eclairs, for example, filled with chocolate goodness—but even those are outshone by the deep-fried croissant pieces that were rolled in chocolate and topped with drizzles of chocolate.

By the way, there’s also a huge June 11 event to officially open the hotel with singer Robin Thicke at 7-10 p.m. An RSVP is required at www.renassaincechicagodowntown.com.
June 3, 2015

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., June 3

Remembering the Pink Triangle: A public event commemorating the fate of gay and lesbian children in Nazi Germany. The Pink Triangle was found “never again!” See the mock-up of “The Pink Triangle” planned for Tuesday, June 2, in this issue. A Legacy Project, Safe Schools Alliance, 155 Holcomb Memorial Mau- uen Event Center, 3656 N Halsted Chicago. Tickets: https://www.dropbox.com/s/4i7imr22mz7qF/ 17ThepinkTriangle/17th%20event.pdf?dl=0

Sweet Ties: Men at the Men’s House
A play exploring blackness, sexuality and Southern hospitality. Based on his award- winning book, B.J. Patterson Johns steps in this one-man exploration into the Southern black gay community. 7:30pm Hal and Marty Holler MultiTheatre, Northwestern University, Evanston. http://www.projectand.org

Author Reading: Cherylín Velán
Stop Giving It Away: How to Stop Self-Sacrific- ing and Start Building the Life You Want (Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Thursday, June 4


Friday, June 5

Kick-Off Ceremony: Commemorating Chi- cago 2015 Women’s Health Expo. Testing sites: Clara L. T. Stallings: Roosevelt (Red, Orange, Green lines); 87th & S. Ryan, Howard (Red Line); Central & Lake (Green Line)- 63rd & Halsted St., Harvey Bus Terminal and Halsted Park 9:00am - 4:00pm Various locations as listed. http://www.StopMstedTested.com

First Friday Films: The Birdcage Starring Robin Williams and Nathan Lane, a remake of the face “La Cage Aux Folles.” Adults and seniors are invited to join us for cof- fees, donuts, and a movie. 10:30am Chi- cago Public Library Roosevelt Branch, 1001 W. Taylor St., Chicago. http://chibib.org Milwaukee Pride Fest Celebration of local LGBT culture and community. 100% pro- former entertainer line-up, LGBT com- munity icons, including headliners Ani DiFranco and Esperanza Spalding, an emerging national talent and local Milwaukee favorites on ten stages. Through June 7, 12noon-10pm Milwaukee, WI. Milwaukee, WI Tickets: http://pridefest.com/tickets/

Crayons 2 Cans - Evolution of an Artist Chicago based artist Camilo Cumin shares the evolution of his art from the origins of graffiti, to painting, to exploring mixed media. Through June 28. 6:00pm-10:00pm, 1235 W. 31st Chicago

Voices A Musical Performance Their album Sailing A Fication is a collection of songs that espouse and Latin rhythms to this vet- eran political folk group 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Chicago Sky opening game vs. Indiana Fever Women’s National Basketball Associa- tion, $16 or $25. 7:30pm Allstate Arena 6920 N Meacham Rd, Rosemont, IL 60148 http://www.wnba.com/sky/

Ben Kesler, 16-year-old singer-song- writer from Philadelphia Sina of the 2014 Chicago Songwriters Project’s annual songwriting contest and an award winner of the National Youn- gHarts Foundation’s annual national talent search. 110 All ages. Reserve by phone 800-662-9397 Union Ground on Clark 300 N. Clara St. 773-929-3880

Launch of Off the Sidelines Chicago 1st local chapter of the national organization that calls upon women to take action - civ- ically, philanthropically and politically - on

Saturday, June 6

Move Your Body! Support Alliance (LGBTQ) Support meeting to talk about ill- nesses, symptoms, treatment, doctors, and personal histories and experiences, and work. Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted 11:00am - 12:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://dsbgb-chicago.com


Sunday, June 7

FNL Summer Kick-Off at The Lighthouse Church
Pray and support your local church and summer kick-off event.

Tuesday, June 9

Learning to be a Rainbow Ambassador 101, Tools for the Casual Activist Discuss how to interact with others, family, friends, strangers, or gay-pride events, with plans to attend a small group event. 9:00pm Youth Services Project 3942 W. Lake Ave., Chicago. Tickets: http://www.lambdalegal.org/events/150604_education-federal-rights-101

The Fourth Annual Chicago Alternative Comic Expo Panel and round table con-versation: The Hernandez Brothers; Comic Cartoonists discussing creative nonfic- tion, curated showcases and open salons for binary artists to express creative work. 4:00pm Thursday, June 4 - 4:00pm Friday, June 5. $20 Pre-reg-istered members, $25 members at door, $30 non-members. 7:00pm - 9:30pm EL Chambac- lah, 1032 N. Magnificent Mile, Chicago, Chicago 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://www.cake- comic.com

Laugh It Off: Comedy Night & Talent Show Torre and Staff Attorney Kyle Palazzo will present throughout. RSVP online. 9:00am - 10:30pm Halsted St Chicago, http://www.lambdalegal.org/events/150604_education-federal-rights-101

Pride Day Celebration: "Proud to be…Me!" artemis Singers 5th Anniversary Chicago 6/7/15. 7:00pm - 9:30pm Chicago Cultural Center 7:00pm - 9:30pm Chicago 7:00pm - 9:30pm Chicago 7:00pm - 9:30pm Chicago

Monday, June 8

Transfer Drop-Off Resource Center Trans and gender non-conforming. Hang out, socialize, enjoy some food. Access medi- cal, housing, legal and employment New day and location. 1:00pm - 4:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://www.transfercenter.org

If You Feel Too Much book tour Jamie Tostoway, SWB Theatre Write Love On Her, a non-profit organization dedi- cated to presenting hope and finding help for people struggling with addiction, de- pression, self-injury and suicide. 7:00pm Chicago. Tickets: http://www.ifyoufeeltoolittle.com

Tuesday, June 9

For more information please see:

June 10

For more information please see:

Wednesday, June 10

Saturday, June 13

Sunday, June 14

Affirmation of Faith in Jesus Christ Friday Con- tinues. Turn it Up For Change 2015

Annual Luncheon-Latin Pride week 10:00am - 1:00pm Westin Defence Park Center, 3942 W. North Ave., Chicago http://www.unitedlatinopride.org

Trying to find a gay-friendly space? $5 suggested donation.

Through Nov. 7. A French comedy about blackness, sexuality and Southern hospitality. Based on his award- winning book, B.J. Patterson Johns steps in this one-man exploration into the Southern black gay community. 7:30pm Hal and Marty Holler MultiTheatre, Northwestern University, Evanston. http://www.projectand.org

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**WINDY CITY TIMES**

**BILLY MASTERS**

Grease may be the word for Nick Jonas, according to Billy.

"Girl, I got one or two you could have of mine. I’ll give them to you!"—Sherri Shepherd returned to The View and responded to Raven-Symone’s desire to have a child. Some people have taken Sherri to task for this quip but, given the context, I thought it was hilarious. You know summer is here when ABC tosses out The Bachelorette. And I’m totally happy spending my Monday nights with a gaggle of guys vying for my attention ... er, Kaitlyn’s attention. Or are they? The show has always featured bromances between contestants. But this week, we are being teased with promos for "Brokeback Bachelorette" showing contestants Clint and JJ spending oodles of time gazing into each other’s eyes. Clint says, “Falling in love with a man never crossed my mind.” But has it now? He continues, “Kaitlyn’s not the right girl for me. I love JJ, so I need the rose tonight.” We hear from people in the know that this footage has been manipulated—with the boys’ blessings. Clint tweeted a photo comparing himself to one of the “Brokeback stars with this message: “If you have to be a #BrokebackBachelorette, Be Heath Ledger. Always be Heath Ledger.”

Over the years, there has been lots of cross-over between Grease, Bachelorettes and The Go-Go’s. When Charlotte Caffey’s pregnancy coincided with one of The Go-Go’s reunion tours, Bangles Vicki Peterson filled in. When Michael Steele retired from The Bangles, she was replaced by Abby Travis, who subsequently replaced Go-Go Kathy Valentine. So it’s somewhat poetic that last weekend, Valentine took her place alongside The Bangles at the renowned Troubadour in West Hollywood. While I don’t expect this will be a regular occurrence (Valentine is quite busy with her own band, The BlueBonnets), you can see some of our exclusive footage on BillyMasters.com.

In more good news, Netflix has renewed Grace and Frankie for a second season. For those of you who felt the first episodes were somewhat slow, you will be rewarded if you stick with it—the last few episodes of the season were great. And I’m not the only fan out there. Milly Cyrus tweeted “I found my show!*GraceandFrankie*. On a bender! Jane & Lily are so bad a$$” Shortly thereafter, the brass at Netflix renewed the show. Thank you, Milly. Whenever Jane Fonda is acting, she provides plenty of fodder for this column. In an interview with W magazine, Jane shares her initial impression of Warren Beatty: “I thought Warren was gay. He played piano, and all his friends were gay.” Based on that, I should be gay— which actually worked out. Warren recalls that their meeting took place 56 years ago, when they both did their first screen test in 1959. Warren says the two of them were “thrown together like two lions in a cage and kissed until we had practically eaten each other’s heads off.” Proving how different memories can be, Fonda claims to have no recollection of the screen test! According to Star magazine, Brad Pitt has a penchant for gay male hookers. The rag quotes the ravings of a deluded gay gossip (obviously not moi), who tells them, “I don’t want to define Brad Pitt’s sexuality, but whatever it is, he’s into guys.” That sounds like a definition to me. The story claims that Pitt often hires fetching young lads who strike his fancy from escort websites. But just getting that call doesn’t mean you’ll be having sex with Brad Pitt. According to the report, Pitt will make that decision once he meets you. If he’s not suitably impressed, you’ll be dismissed—but not before being paid for your time. The source claims that the late porn star Cameron Fox was someone Pitt hired and dismissed after meeting him at a hotel in Monterey, California. The reason? Pitt didn’t think Fox looked that good in person. As someone who knew Fox intimately, I can tell you that: a) he looked as good or better in person than he did in photos and b) if he had ever met Brad Pitt, he would have told everyone he knew. On the positive side, Cam did make the cover of Star—that would have tickled him.

I understand that alcoholism is a disease and that people with this disease should be supported and get help. That said, let me tell you that you should ever be fortunate enough to meet Jonathan Rhys Meyers, pray that he’s drunk. I can tell you from personal experience that after he’s had a few, he’s all hands. Admittedly, he’ll grab anything to stop from falling down, but I’ll take what I can get. It must also be said that when he’s drunk, he’s not so pretty. Last week, the paparazzi snapped him stumbling home in the morning hours, looking unwashed, unshaven, unkempt, and carrying two bottles of vodka—one of which he took a swig from! I forgot the best part—his button-fly jeans were unbuttoned, which means at some point his penis was exposed. Of course, we’ve all already seen his penis—and if you haven’t, get thyself to BillyMasters.com.

After the photos were published, JRM said, “Sorry for my disheveled appearance as I was on my way home from a friends and had not changed.” Or washed or showered for a few days. But he doesn’t appear to be too concerned, as he said, “I feel I made a mistake and feel quite embarrassed, but this was just a blip in my recovery otherwise I’m living a healthy life.” We spoke to some of our sources at FOX about the upcoming Grease Live, the network is planning for Julianne Hough and Vanessa Hudgens. Last week, it was announced that Keke Palmer will be playing Marty (who sings “Freddie, My Love”). While no other casting has been officially announced, I hear they are this close to landing Nick Jonas as Danny Zuko. That may be exciting, but even more thrilling is the hope of coaxing Olivia Newton-John into making a cameo as Principal McGee—memorably played in the film by Eve Arden. I’d suggest John Travolta in the role of Coach Calhoun, but that idea may be too hot to handle. You know—shades of Sandusky.

When I’m connecting John Travolta with one of the few sex scandals he wasn’t involved in, we’ve definitely come to the end of yet another column. A little Broadway, some TV, some music, some films, and some penises—all in a day’s work at www.BillyMasters.com, the site that’s one-stop shopping. We didn’t have room for an "Ask Billy" question this week, but that doesn’t mean you can’t ask me directly. Email Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Brad Pitt sends Jonathan Rhys Meyers a case of vodka. Until next time, remember, one man’s filth is another man’s bible.

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BOOK REVIEW
Bettyville:
A Memoir
by George Hodgman
$27.95; Viking; 279 pages
BY TERI SCHLICHENMEYER

Throughout your life, your parents ignored many things. That time in high school when you snuck out to party? They often “didn’t see” more than you’ll ever know. Did they, for instance, know who you really were? In the new book Bettyville, by George Hodgman, one man wondered.

Elizabeth Baker Hodgman—Betty, to most people—didn’t sleep much. At age 90, she was prone to wandering, fussing at the kitchen, piling and restacking paperwork, and playing the piano in the middle of the night. She was “suffering from dementia or maybe worse.”

Unfortunately, that also meant her son, George, didn’t get much sleep, either.

An out-of-work editor and freelancer, George Hodgman had moved to Paris, Missouri, from New York for what was supposed to be a week. Or a month. Or a year to take care of his mother. Betty didn’t like it; she hated needing someone. Hodgman didn’t like it, either; too much had changed.

“I was Betty’s boy,” he says, and he’d been that way all his life. Hodgman loved his father fiercely, but he absolutely favored his mother. Still, he desperately wished he’d been able to tell his parents he was gay, that he felt alone, that he’d survived too many failed romances, that he’d had substance abuse issues. Surely, they knew but no one ever talked about it.

Now, as he cared for her, there were times when Betty infuriated him. She could be rude and stubborn, prone to fits of anger for no reason, and loud. She flatly refused any thoughts about nursing homes or assisted living. The problem was her dementia, Hodgman reminded himself repeatedly. He understood that she was rightfully fearful because she knew she was losing herself and “I can only imagine how scary it is.”

And yet, “I think I have survived because of Betty, more than anyone,” Hodgman said as she eased away. “There are so many things I will carry when I leave Bettyville with my old suitcase.”

Without a doubt, you’d be forgiven for reaching for a tissue while you’re reading this book. Heck, you might want a whole box of them—but there’s a lot more to Bettyville than heartstring-tugging.

I found joy inside this story, in between its inevitable sadness. Author Hodgman keenly remembers his small town childhood from all sides: churchgoers and alcoholics, kindness and bullying, adolescent crushes, baffling foes, and off-limits subjects that no small-town teenage discusses. We meet, through the eyes of Hodgman, Betty’s friends and family and we’re told a story about a time past, a life well-loved, and losing a mother long before she’s really gone.

Be prepared to laugh a little, but be prepared to cry, too, as you’re reading this fine memoir—especially if you’re a caretaker for an elderly parent. For you, for sure, Bettyville is a book that can’t be ignored.

Want more? Look for The Man I Might Become: Gay Men Write about Their Fathers, edited by Bruce Shenitz, foreword by Andrew Holleran; or Mothers and Sons: Stories, by Colin Toibin.
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