

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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IML 2016 WRAP-UP
Meet the new IML and see photos from a weekend of IML/Bear Pride parties in Nightspots.
Photo by IML 2016 David "Tigger" Bailey (left) and IMBB 2016 Erick Joseph (right) by Verdell Shannon. **25**



'MOTHER' OF SHOWS

Staceyann Chin brings 'Motherstruck!' to Chicago

Staceyann Chin in Motherstruck!
PR photo

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

Poet Staceyann Chin's newest one-woman show, Motherstruck!, chronicles her journey to motherhood as a single, lesbian, immigrant woman of color, showing how pregnancy in modern society is at once unique and deeply personal as well as a universal and public experience.

The production—which debuted at New York City's Culture Project at the end of last year and received critical acclaim—was originally directed by Cynthia Nixon, with Rosie O'Donnell, Robert Dragotta and Culture Project co-producing.

Chin said it was interesting to work with two other lesbian mothers, each of whom had her own experience with becoming a mother and with having been mothered.

"It had these three amazingly different perspectives on motherhood and was deeply informed by the experiences we'd had," she said.

"Cynthia got pregnant and had children of her own in a marriage with a male partner and then partnered with a woman who actually gave birth to a child they had. So her lenses covered both sides of the coin," Chin said.

"Rosie had adopted children and she came into this with that perspective of being a mom who didn't give birth to her children.

"One of the things that was apparent is it isn't just birthing that makes a mother."

Chin said they all had differing experiences of being mothered as well.

"Rosie, her mom died when she was young, so she also had a lack of a mother figure in her life as she learned to mother herself," she said. "Cynthia had a good relationship with her mom, and I had no relationship with my mom at all.

"Working with them helped me to see how universal the story is, that we could all be so completely different in our experience, yet have the same moments," Chin said.

In fact, Chin said having become accustomed to living within the context of several marginalized identities, she's been most shocked by how Motherstruck! has tapped into so many women's experiences with pregnancy and motherhood.

"For a long time my work has been about sexuality, race and being an immigrant, and all of these marginalized identities," Chin said. "So I was surprised by how many women—women with children, women without children, women who were trying to conceive, women who were not trying to conceive, women who had tried and didn't get pregnant, women who adopted children, women who inherited children, women who had difficult relationships with their mothers and those that had amazing relationships with their mothers—I was shocked at how it's as if I turned a page and my experience became universal in a way it had never been."

Despite its universal elements, Chin's story, which chron-

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MEMORIAL DAY PARADE
AVER, Lakeshore Pride part of annual event.
Photo by Carrie Maxwell **15**



CONGREGATION OR CHADASH
Synagogue to merge with Temple Sholom.
Attendees at Or Chadash's 2015 gala. Photo by Carrie Maxwell **10**



FAMILIES OF CHOICE
WCT series launches with Phyllis Johnson.
Phyllis Johnson (left) with late wife Robbie Smith. Facebook photo **14**



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Please see Brief Summary of
Patient Information with important
warnings on the following pages.

Brief Summary of Patient Information about ODEFSEY

ODEFSEY (oh-DEF-see)

(emtricitabine, rilpivirine and tenofovir alafenamide) tablets

Important: Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with ODEFSEY.

There may be new information about ODEFSEY. This information is only a summary and does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about ODEFSEY?

ODEFSEY can cause serious side effects, including:

- **Build-up of lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis may happen in some people who take ODEFSEY or similar medicines. Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Lactic acidosis can be hard to identify early, because the symptoms could seem like symptoms of other health problems. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms which could be signs of lactic acidosis:**
 - feel very weak or tired
 - have unusual (not normal) muscle pain
 - have trouble breathing
 - have stomach pain with nausea or vomiting
 - feel cold, especially in your arms and legs
 - feel dizzy or lightheaded
 - have a fast or irregular heartbeat
- **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems may happen in people who take ODEFSEY. In some cases, these liver problems can lead to death. Your liver may become large and you may develop fat in your liver. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms of liver problems:**
 - your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice)
 - dark “tea-colored” urine
 - light-colored bowel movements (stools)
 - loss of appetite
 - nausea
 - pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side of your stomach area
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking ODEFSEY or a similar medicine for a long time.**
- **Worsening of Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection.** ODEFSEY is not approved to treat HBV. If you have HBV and take ODEFSEY, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking ODEFSEY. A “flare-up” is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before.
 - Do not run out of ODEFSEY. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your ODEFSEY is all gone.
 - Do not stop taking ODEFSEY without first talking to your healthcare provider.
 - If you stop taking ODEFSEY, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly for several months to check your HBV infection. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking ODEFSEY.

What is ODEFSEY?

ODEFSEY is a prescription medicine that is used to treat HIV-1 in people 12 years of age and older:

- who have not received HIV-1 medicines in the past and have an amount of HIV-1 in their blood (“viral load”) that is no more than 100,000 copies/mL, or
- to replace their current HIV-1 medicines in people who have been on the same HIV-1 medicines for at least 6 months, have a viral load that is less than 50 copies/mL, and have never failed past HIV-1 treatment.

It is not known if ODEFSEY is safe and effective in children under 12 years of age or who weigh less than 77 lb (35 kg).

When used to treat HIV-1 infection, ODEFSEY may help:

- Reduce the amount of HIV-1 in your blood. This is called “viral load”.
- Increase the number of CD4+ (T) cells in your blood that help fight off other infections.

Reducing the amount of HIV-1 and increasing the CD4+ (T) cells in your blood may help improve your immune system. This may reduce your risk of death or getting infections that can happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

ODEFSEY does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. You must keep taking HIV-1 medicines to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.

Ask your healthcare provider about how to prevent passing

HIV-1 to others. Do not share or re-use needles, injection equipment, or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them. Do not have sex without protection. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

Who should not take ODEFSEY?

Do not take ODEFSEY if you also take a medicine that contains:

- carbamazepine (Carbatrol[®], Epitol[®], Equetro[®], Tegretol[®], Tegretol-XR[®], Teril[®])
- dexamethasone (Ozurdex[®], Maxidex[®], Decadron[®], Baycadron[™])
- dexlansoprazole (Dexilant[®])
- esomeprazole (Nexium[®], Vimovo[®])
- lansoprazole (Prevacid[®])
- omeprazole (Prilosec[®], Zegerid[®])
- oxcarbazepine (Trileptal[®])
- pantoprazole sodium (Protonix[®])
- phenobarbital (Luminal[®])
- phenytoin (Dilantin[®], Dilantin-125[®], Phenytek[®])
- rabeprazole (Aciphex[®])
- rifampin (Rifadin[®], Rifamate[®], Rifater[®], Rimactane[®])
- rifapentine (Priftin[®])
- the herb St. John’s wort or a product that contains St. John’s wort

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking ODEFSEY?

Before taking ODEFSEY, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have liver problems including hepatitis B or C virus infection
- have kidney and bone problems
- have had depression or suicidal thoughts
- have any other medical conditions
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if ODEFSEY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking ODEFSEY.

Pregnancy registry: there is a pregnancy registry for women who take HIV-1 medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of this registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk with your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.

- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take ODEFSEY.
 - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
 - At least one of the medicines in ODEFSEY can pass to your baby in your breast milk. It is not known if the other medicines in ODEFSEY can pass into your breast milk.
 - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Some medicines may interact with ODEFSEY. **Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.**

- You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that interact with ODEFSEY.
- Do not start a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take ODEFSEY with other medicines.

How should I take ODEFSEY?

- Take ODEFSEY exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it. ODEFSEY is taken by itself (not with other HIV-1 medicines) to treat HIV-1 infection.
- Take ODEFSEY 1 time each day with a meal.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking ODEFSEY without first talking with your healthcare provider. Stay under a healthcare provider's care when taking ODEFSEY.
- Do not miss a dose of ODEFSEY.
- If you take too much ODEFSEY, call your healthcare provider or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.
- When your ODEFSEY supply starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to ODEFSEY and become harder to treat.

What are the possible side effects of ODEFSEY?

ODEFSEY may cause serious side effects, including:

- See **“What is the most important information I should know about ODEFSEY?”**
- **Severe skin rash and allergic reactions.** Skin rash is a common side effect of ODEFSEY. Rash can be serious. Call your healthcare provider right away if you get a rash. In some cases, rash and allergic reaction may need to be treated in a hospital. **If you get a rash with any of the following symptoms, stop taking ODEFSEY and call your healthcare provider right away:**
 - fever
 - skin blisters
 - mouth sores
 - redness or swelling of the eyes (conjunctivitis)
 - swelling of the face, lips, mouth or throat
 - trouble breathing or swallowing
 - pain on the right side of the stomach (abdominal) area
 - dark “tea-colored” urine

- **Depression or mood changes.** Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms:
 - feel sad or hopeless
 - feel anxious or restless
 - have thoughts of hurting yourself (suicide) or have tried to hurt yourself
- **Change in liver enzymes.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus infection or who have certain liver enzyme changes may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening liver problems during treatment with ODEFSEY. Liver problems can also happen during treatment with ODEFSEY in people without a history of liver disease. Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your liver enzymes before and during treatment with ODEFSEY.
- **Changes in body fat can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicine.** These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), breast, and around the middle of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system** (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome) can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having any new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.
- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before you start and while you are taking ODEFSEY. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking ODEFSEY if you develop new or worse kidney problems.
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take ODEFSEY. Bone problems may include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your bones.

The most common side effects of rilpivirine, one of the medicines in ODEFSEY, are depression, trouble sleeping (insomnia), and headache.

The most common side effect of emtricitabine and tenofovir alafenamide, two of the medicines in ODEFSEY, is nausea.

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

- These are not all the possible side effects of ODEFSEY. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

This Brief Summary summarizes the most important information about ODEFSEY. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about ODEFSEY that is written for health professionals.

For more information, call **1-800-445-3235** or go to **www.ODEFSEY.com**.

Keep ODEFSEY and all medicines out of reach of children.

Issued: March 2016

Odefsey
emtricitabine 200mg/rilpivirine 25mg/
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MILWAUKEE 2016

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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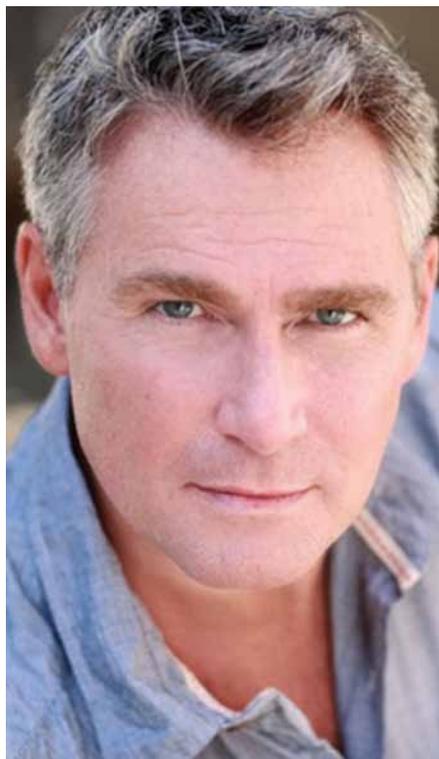
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'SOUND' ADVICE

Christopher Carl (left) is one of the stars of Broadway in Chicago's *The Sound of Music*.

Photo of The Plough and the Stars by Ashley Rose Photography

SWEET ENDEAVOR



The annual Sweets & Snacks Expo took place at McCormick Place.

Photo by Andrew Davis

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE



From food to history, Savannah, Georgia, has a lot to offer.

Photo of AJ's conch fritters by Andrew Davis

BEBE LOVE

WCT talks with singer Bebe Rexha talks musicals and famous collaborators such as Nick Jonas and Nicki Minaj.

'CLOUD' GATE

WCT reviews the book *The Dandelion Cloud*.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Dan Savage, Deborah Cox and Matthew McConaughey.

plus **DAILY BREAKING NEWS**



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**MACY'S ON STATE STREET
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Join us as we celebrate Pride Month with special live performance by the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus! Plus, be sure to sample delicious sweets from Fannie Mae, and show your pride with free Pride+Joy wristbands!



Event subject to change or cancellation.

States file suit over trans directive

Eleven states and state officials filed a lawsuit May 25 against the Obama administration over a federal directive instructing schools to allow transgender students to use restrooms and other facilities that match their gender identities.

The federal complaint for declaratory and injunctive relief, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas, states that the guidance "has no basis in law" and could cause "seismic changes in the operations of the nation's school districts."

The states are Texas, Alabama, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Tennessee, Arizona, Maine, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Georgia and Utah. However, Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin has lashed out at attorney general Steve Beshear, saying the state should already have joined the lawsuit.

In a press conference, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott accused Obama's administration of issuing directives on matters that Congress should handle.

Pro-LGBT groups decried the lawsuit. "By attacking laws that protect transgender people in

schools and at work these state officials are determined to perpetuate fear, enshrine discrimination and endanger transgender people—and students in particular, said Lambda Legal staff attorney Paul D. Castillo in a statement.

"The suit filed today by Texas Attorney General Paxton completely and willfully misunderstands who transgender people are and the challenges they face in life," he added. "We are already in discussions with our partners here in Texas and elsewhere on next steps, and will move quickly to fight this attempt to turn back the clock."

James Esseks, director of the ACLU Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and HIV Project, said in a separate press release, "This lawsuit is an attack from eleven states on transgender Americans, plain and simple. While the Obama administration is being sued, the real targets here are vulnerable young people and adults who simply seek to live their lives free from discrimination when they go to school, work or the restroom."



Phil Burgess.

Photo courtesy of Walgreens Communications Dept.

Chicagoan among pharmacists' group's newest officers

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) announced the election of Nicki L. Hilliard, PharmD, MHSA, BCNP, FAPhA, of Little Rock, Arkansas, as 2017–2018 APhA president-elect. Hilliard will succeed Nancy A. Alvarez, of Lake Forest, California, to the office of APhA president on March 19, 2018, at the end of the 2018 APhA Annual Meeting & Exposition in Nashville.

In addition, Philip P. Burgess, RPh, DPh, MBA, of Chicago, was elected 2017–2018 honorary president. All officers will be installed at the 164th APhA Annual Meeting & Exposition in San Francisco on March 24–27, 2017.

Burgess, who is gay, has been the president of the Community Pharmacy Foundation since its inception in 2002, on the Executive Committee of the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy. He is also serving his 14th year on the Illinois State Board of Pharmacy (five terms as chairman).

Also elected to serve a three-year term on APhA's board of trustees are Sandra Leal, PharmD, MPH, FAPhA, CDE, of Tucson, Arizona, and Randy McDonough, BS, PharmD, MS, CGP, BCPS, FAPhA, of Iowa City, Iowa. Both terms will begin in March 2017.

Report on LGBTQ singles released

Relationship company Match has debuted "LGBTQ in America," the largest nationally representative study of U.S. singles who identify as LGBTQ.

Conducted by Research Now in association with evolutionary biologist and gender-studies professor Dr. Justin R. Garcia (of the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University), the data reveals facets of the attitudes, behaviors and challenges of the LGBTQ single population.

The study surveyed a representative sample of more than 1,000 LGBTQ singles between the ages of 18 to 70+ across the United States who are not currently in a committed relationship.

Among the revelations are that:

—Gay men: Twenty-five percent realized they were gay when they were less than 10 years old, 50 percent by 13 years old, and 75 percent by 18 years old.

—Lesbians: Twenty-five percent realized by 12 years old, 50 percent at 15 years old, and 75 percent by 20/21 years old.

—The typical gay man has had 30 lifetime sexual partners and lesbian women have had 12 sexual partners. Regionally, gay men in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Riverside have the highest average number of sexual partners, while gay men in Boston have had the least.

—Time in the closet: Twenty-five percent of LGBTQ singles came out the same year they say they "realized" their sexual orientation or gender identity; and

—Dating Online: Fifty-six percent of LGBTQ singles have dated someone they met online, with transgender singles dating the most online (65 percent).

For more detailed study findings on LGBTQ singles, visit SinglesinAmerica.com.

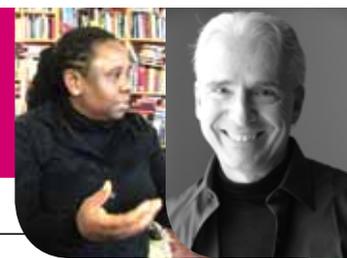
Correction

In the May 25 issue, it should have stated that the actual date for Leather Archives & Museum's 25th-anniversary weekend is Sept. 16–18.

Windy City Times regrets the error.

Open To Thinking

BY NICK PATRICCA WITH UNOMA AZUAH



Nigeria: Jail the Gays or kill them

The Law.

Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act:

"A marriage contract or civil union entered into between persons of the same sex: (a) is prohibited in Nigeria; and (b) shall not be recognised as entitled to the benefits of a valid marriage." Article One, Subsection One.

"A person who enters into a same sex marriage contract or civil union commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of 14 years imprisonment." Article Five, Subsection One.

"A person who registers, operates or participates in gay clubs, societies or organizations, or directly or indirectly makes public show of same-sex amorous relationship in Nigeria commits an offense and is liable on conviction to a term of 10 years." Article Five, Subsection Two.

This Bill was passed by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Dec. 30, 2013. It was signed into law by Nigeria's then-president Goodluck Jonathan Jan. 7, 2014 in a closed, unannounced action. The signing became public Jan. 13, 2014 and was quickly dubbed by the international press as the 'JAIL THE GAYS BILL' because its provisions went far beyond the banning of same sex marriage and civil unions. The link below displays a photostat copy of the original bill with the signatures of the Clerk of the National Assembly and Goodluck Jonathan. Please read the entire Bill—it is brief but deadly: <http://goo.gl/YryTVV>.

Many documented outbreaks of violence against LGBTQ peoples erupted throughout Nigeria in the wake of the signing of this bill. Strong international condemnation by human-rights organizations and governments only seemed to inflame anti-gay vigilante pogroms. (See: Erika Eichelberger, Mother Jones, March 13, 2014.)

Anti-homosexuality laws are not new to Nigeria. Under British rule, the Nigerian criminal codes, borrowing heavily from the British penal codes, carried harsh anti-sodomy laws. After independence in 1960, the various military juntas that ruled Nigeria strictly enforced the anti-sodomy penal code. The democratic governments that took power in 1999 not only expanded the provisions of these draconian codes to cover all sorts of sexual activities considered 'unnatural,' they also increased the punishments. (See Chapter 21 of the Nigerian Federal Penal Code: <http://goo.gl/dLKZTO>.)

Nigeria, the most populous and richest country in Africa, is a federation of 36 individual states, each of which has its own criminal codes, all of which proscribe homosexual behavior as do the federal penal codes. Four of the 12 northern states of the Nigerian federation adopted various forms of Shari'a law. In these states the crime of sodomy—variously defined—can be punished by stoning. (See: Shari'a Law in Africa p.70 <http://goo.gl/TCjg2F>.)

Anti-gay legislation in the states was enforced fitfully and in various ways until the signing of the Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act in 2014. This federal law, which applies to the whole country, marked a turning point for Nigeria's LG-

BTQ communities: its vigorous enforcement has forced hundreds to flee Nigeria and seek asylum.

Religion and Anti-LGBTQ Violence

Religion is of great importance to Nigerians. According to the Pew Research Center, Nigeria is almost evenly split between Christians and Muslims. Many Nigerians continue to practice local, indigenous religions alongside their professed adherence to Islam or Christianity. Generally speaking, the forms of Islam and of Christianity that are practiced in Nigeria today tend to be fundamentalist and most intolerant of homosexuality. In the Northeast Boko Haram mutilates homosexuals before stoning or crucifying them.

The Nigerian Anglican Church broke with Canterbury and other Anglican churches over the question of ordaining women priests and of accepting homosexuals as ordained ministers. The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria voted to support legislation criminalizing same-sex marriage and endorsed the Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act

This unholy alliance of fundamentalist religions with state power is the primary cause of the suppression of the rights of LGBTQ peoples in Nigeria and of the violence against them.

The impact of anti-gay laws on LGBTQ persons

The unfortunate reality for not just Nigerian homosexuals but for Nigerians generally who are living under this law is the fact that anyone can be accused of being homosexual, particularly because there are no canons or principles for determining what constitutes 'looking like' or 'acting like' a homosexual or 'encouraging' homosexual activities.

The law states: "The public show of same sex amorous relationship directly or indirectly is hereby prohibited." In this context when a man gives a lingering hug to his brother or a woman walks with her arms around the shoulders of her sister, they could end up in jail.

Furthermore, this law, though it has been billed as an anti-gay marriage law, prohibits 'civil unions' as well as forms of homosexual dress and activities. In other words, same-sex relationships that do not involve or include marriage, such as domestic or caring partnerships, are also proscribed and punished. This fact clearly shows the intention of the government to promote a witch hunt against homosexuals rather than its stated objective of protecting traditional 'natural' marriage between a man and a woman.

The Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act is fundamentally an attack on the civil and human rights of all Nigerians. This law goes against all provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights of which Nigeria is a signatory: <http://www.achpr.org/instruments/achpr/>. It also contradicts Section 37 of the Constitution of Nigeria which states: "The privacy of citizens ... is hereby guaranteed and protected." It is impossible to protect the privacy of Nigerian citizens when their neighbors

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DePaul professor explains controversial article

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Jason Hill, professor of philosophy at DePaul University, published, in late May, a harsh critique of gay culture in *The Federalist*, a conservative web magazine.

In the article, titled "Loveless, Narcissistic Sex Addicts: A Gay Man Critiques His Community," Hill asserts that gay men foster a hypersexualized, decadent culture that renders them unable to participate in meaningful relationships. He is blunt in many assessments, including that until gay men can get their moral house in order, that marriage equality is "a colossal waste of time."

Online commentators quickly took aim at the article. Queerty said, "If you're looking for a lesson in how internalized homophobia can mix seamlessly with antiquated puritanism to produce a toxic sludge dressed up in a three-piece suit of 'social analysis,' your search is over!"

LGBTQ Nation said the article "was sure to make your blood boil" and tagged it under the category of "internalized homophobia."

Hill told *Windy City Times* that the editors had changed his title and equally harsh subheads—one of which read, "We're so lonely, we almost want AIDS"—but stood by what he wrote in the main text of his article. In an age of Grindr and Scruff, he said, gay men will be unable to find harmony in their relationships unless they can develop a stronger moral contract.

Windy City Times: Did you come up with the titles and the subheads?

Jason Hill: That was my editors.

WCT: Do you think they reflected what you wrote?

JH: To some extent. I've worked in journalism before, and I know that writers have very little control over the subheads and headlines. The actual title of the piece was "The Content of Our Sexual Character: Gay Identity in the Age of Marital Equality," not "Loveless Sex Addicts"—that was *The Federalist's* titling. When I saw it, having worked for many years in journalism before I came to America, and realizing this is what happens, I just rolled my eyes and said it was fine.

WCT: What made you write the piece, and where do you place it in the context of your work overall?

JH: I wrote the piece because I'd been observing what I thought were not just pathological but very self-destructive tendencies in the gay community that went against what gay men themselves seemed to have been aspiring towards—sustained intimacy, long-term relationships. There were just certain behavioral traits and patterns both in the dating world and gay community at large that kind of upset me.

I'm a moral philosopher, an ethicist by training. I tend to look at things from an ethical standpoint. I thought I needed to write a piece that would hold those members, some members of the community guilty of these sorts of behaviors, accountable. But I [also] wanted to talk about the culture itself, and what constitutes gay culture itself—the ethos, pathos, mores, norms and protocols under which the people that suffuse that culture under which people are socialized. There seemed to be something pretty skewed in many respects.

WCT: What do you see as the key disconnects?

JH: One, I think, is the way I think the culture fosters sex addiction, I think, through the proliferation of certain apps that I think are incompatible with the desires and aspirations of gay men who I think want a monogamous or sustained relationship. I thought there was a huge disconnect in the aspirations of those individuals who want a certain life for them-

selves, and have certain behaviors or habits that cultivate and foster it. The two are diametrically opposed. One can't have one's cake and eat it as well. ...If you are faced with a multiplicity of options, the impetus to get to know one person, to hone in on one person and now them intimately, and to build up a bond, is completely lost.

WCT: How pervasive do you think that disconnect is, or is it just something that applies to certain segments of the community?

JH: I think it is pervasive. I think even among gay men not inclined to follow that behavior, the culture is one that I find quite broken and bankrupt. ...I don't see any pockets that are encouraging the kinds of things I articulated in the article. I'm not puritanical or a purist, but there is something old-fashioned in my approach towards sex that I don't expect everyone to hold. I don't expect everyone to hold to those sorts of values. But I do think it's



DePaul University professor Jason Hill. Photo courtesy of Hill

pervasive. I do say in the article that most gay men are sex addicts and I would stand by that. That's a harsh statement to make, I know, and, having said that, I know that even those who are not are being socialized under the auspices of an ethos that I think is very self-destructive.

WCT: Do you think that there might be some men who are "hard-wired" for multiple sexual relationships?

JH: I think that's a problem for men in general.

WCT: So you would see that as a problem?

JH: It is a problem, and this may sound heteronormative, but there is something about the female impulse, coupled with procreation. I think heterosexual men do sacrifice a great deal when they get married and do almost become sexual altruists. There's a way that the expenditure of their sexual energy is grossly curtailed, so they have to do it on the sly in the form of extramarital affairs. There are open marriages, of course, in heterosexual culture, but that's the exception and not the norm. There's nothing in heterosexual culture that encourages men to go outside the hearth. Whereas I do think gay culture encourages that sort of thing. As a cultural norm, I just don't see it as being sustainable.



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- 6:00pm Stache
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- 12:00pm Robbie Gold
- 11:00am Chicago Gay Men's Chorus

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- 2:30pm MaryOke Unplugged hosted by Kevin Florian
- 12:00pm Lucy Smith Trio

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- 8:00pm Nelson Street Revival
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- 8:00pm 7th Heaven
- 6:00pm Run Forrest Run
- 4:00pm The Plutonians
- 2:00pm Chi Town Soul
- 1:30pm Chicago Spirit Brigade
- 12:00pm Distant Brothers
- 11:00am Bear & Jake

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- 8:00pm ABBA Salute
- 6:00pm Irene
- 4:00pm Lynne Jordan and the Shivers
- 2:00pm Hugh Too
- 1:05pm Chicago Swedish Male Chorus
- 12:40pm Nordic Folk Dancers
- 12:15pm Merula
- 11:30am Dancing Around the Maypole
- 11:00am Festival Kickoff

SUN JUNE 12 11AM-10PM

NORTH STAGE Clark & Catalpa

- 8:00pm 16 Candles
- 6:00pm Rod Tuff Curls & The Bench Press
- 4:00pm Thank You Ma'am
- 3:30pm Chicago Spirit Brigade
- 2:00pm Derek Fawcett
- 12:00pm Al Rose
- 11:00am Lakeside Pride Strayhorns Jazz Combo

BALMORAL PRIDE STAGE Clark & Balmoral
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- 8:00pm "Let's Go Crazy" Prince Dance Party
- 4:00pm Tea Dance with DJ Moose and the Funday Dancers
- 2:00pm MaryOke Unplugged hosted by Kevin Florian & Apple Brown Betty
- 12:00pm Mister E. Machine

SUMMERDALE STAGE Clark & Summerdale
and the Alamo Shoes Family Fun Area

- 8:00pm Aphrodisiacs
- 6:00pm Part-Time Lovers
- 4:00pm Laura Doherty & the Heartbeats
- 3:30pm Mission Propelle: Girl Power Yoga
- 2:30pm Urban Pooch Training and Fitness Center Agility and Training Demo
- 2:00pm Dream Big Performing Arts Workshop
- 1:00pm Dr. Cool & Pride
- 12:00pm Andersonville Suzuki Academy
- 11:00am The pH Comedy Theater presents Adventure Library

CENTER STAGE Clark & Berwyn

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- 6:00pm The Boy Band Night
- 4:00pm Frisky Taylor
- 2:30pm Bric-a-Brac
- 1:30pm Bron Don
- 1:00pm Chicago Spirit Brigade
- 11:00am Deliverance Singers—Gospel Brunch

SWEDISH STAGE Clark & Foster
Sponsored by the Swedish American Museum

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- 6:00pm Cowboy JukeBox
- 4:00pm New Invaders
- 2:00pm Hodie Snitch
- 12:00pm Peter Nordberg
- 11:00am Nordland Band

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ALAMO SHOES

Congregation Or Chadash to merge with Temple Sholom

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Congregation Or Chadash, which has primarily served Chicago's LGBT Jewish community, will hold its final Shabbat service as an independent synagogue Friday, June 24.

The synagogue, which opened in 1975, will merge with Temple Sholom, 3480 N. Lake Shore Dr., in July. Sholom officials hope the merger will invigorate its LGBT group, Am Keshet, which has primarily focused on social-action projects and would like to expand its programming. Sholom serves about about 1,000 families.

Or Chadash has about 60 members. Its Torah scrolls will be transferred to Sholom and its remaining assets will be used for LGBT-related programming there.

"We knew that this moment was going to come," said Or Chadash Co-President Lilli Kornblum. "If not now, it was going to happen within the next three to five years."

The merger comes for a number of reasons, among them declining membership numbers, difficulties cultivating new board leadership and a mission that was beginning to no longer reflect the realities of most Jewish and LGBT communities. While Jewish LGBTs were struggling to find acceptance at the time of Or Chadash's founding, liberal Jewish movements and congregations became openly accepting of LGBT individuals and couples in subsequent years, reducing their possibility for social isolation in mainstream synagogues.

Rabbi Cindy Enger said that the merger was



Past Congregation Or Chadash President Carla Cenker.

Photo by Ross Forman

the result of a shifting and evolving landscape. "The world that gave life to the beginning of Or Chadash 41 years ago is not the world we live in now," she said. "The reality has called for Or Chadash to change. To me, this feels like a huge win, but of course there's also the bittersweet-ness that comes with something ending."

"We kind of put ourselves out of business," Kornblum added. "We needed to find the next version of ourselves."

Co-President John Griffith said, "Right now I'm excited to see it happen. I'm obviously a little sad—this has been my Jewish home and it's been a strong part of my life for years. But Or Chadash did fulfill part of its mission, to provide a space to be queer in a safe Jewish community."

Member Don Olson, who joined in 2006, said about the closing, "I'm sad about it. I've cried over it. It's been my home for the past 10 years. I really liked most how we did the High Holy Days. I don't think we'll find someplace that did them like that again."

Co-founder Norman Sandfield said, "Forty-plus years ago, when gay religious groups were forming, the philosophy was that if we did our job right, we would indeed put ourselves out of business. Now, after all these years, we don't want it to happen."

Or Chadash has not been alone in facing these existential challenges. LGBT-focused synagogues in many American cities have struggled, reducing their number of services, embracing non-LGBT members or merging with larger congregations. Synagogues in New York City and Los Angeles were able to acquire their own buildings in recent years, but those were largely exceptions. Even mainstream synagogues report difficulties in attracting and retaining new members.

"Membership has dropped because the world is changing," said Sandfield, who partially blamed the internet, noting that many people cultivate their social network online and don't necessarily need a religious community to meet or catch up with friends.

"When I was young, I went to temple for two reasons," he added. "The first was that my mother made me. The second was that, like everyone, I was going to meet the boy, girl, whoever, that I was going to marry."

Sandfield admitted that the loss of the synagogue, for many, involved grieving. "It's like the loss of a family member," he said. "One thing you can do is mourn, but then you can celebrate a long life."

Or Chadash, which was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame (now the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame) in 2006, first called itself The Jewish Group when its first members came together after seeing an ad in the Chicago Reader in 1975. They had their first religious service in April 1976 and began meeting at Second Unitarian Church (2U) in Lake View the following year.

Past President Carla Cenker recalled going to services for the first time in the early '90s. "I wanted to reach out to lesbian and gay Jews," she said. "I parked at Sport Mart, got a parking sticker and walked up the stairs at 2U. I met three 'Cindys' that night—one of them was Cindy Enger. I was there because I wanted to feel Jewish in a gay environment. I was living out in Palatine at the time, and I was gay in a Jewish environment."

Enger, who was then working as an attorney, was involved in Or Chadash's board leadership for many years, including a stint as the board president.

"At that point, there was a core group of us really exploring what it meant to be a synagogue. There was a lot of interest in delving into those questions," she said. That was one of the sparks that inspired her to become a rabbi.

"Growing up, I had a deep love of Judaism, but I don't know that I would have thought of becoming a rabbi had I not had the opportunities to lead services and participate that I did at Or Chadash," Enger added.

Except for a brief stint by a visiting rabbinic

student, the congregation was entirely lay-led until hiring its first part-time rabbi, Suzanne Griffel, in 1997. She left in late 2003 and was replaced by Rabbi Emeritus Laurence Edwards. Enger, who had been with a congregation in Washington State, came in after Edwards retired in 2013. Enger is Or Chadash's first gay rabbi; both Griffel and Edwards are straight.

"At the time I joined, it seemed members wanted more of a 'full-service congregation'—a service every week, life-cycle events, a robust adult education program, to give examples," said Griffel. "They also wanted to have someone who could connect Or Chadash outside in the larger LGBT and Jewish communities. Lay people didn't necessarily have the time to do that."

Past President Steve Weiser, who now lives in Wisconsin, credited Griffel and Edwards with invigorating his participation in the congregation. "I didn't feel comfortable going to a mainstream synagogue, and I wanted someplace where I could meet other LGBT Jews. I wasn't comfortable at Or Chadash at first, but what really got me involved was when I met Suzanne. It wasn't meeting my own spiritual needs until they had a rabbi, and for me Or Chadash was at its highpoint with Suzanne and Larry [Edwards]."

Cantorial soloist Judith Golden said she grew up in a congregation with strong lay leadership, so she enjoyed planning services with various members. "But all three rabbis each contributed a lot to the culture and the functioning of the congregation," she added. "Whatever I was bringing to the table was always welcomed. This was a very special 14 years for me."

Or Chadash moved into a traditionally "Jewish" space in 2004, when Or Chadash began holding services in the chapel at Emanuel Congregation in Edgewater. When members first saw the stone bricks in their new space, they informally named it the Stonewall Chapel.

"There were several pieces to that move," recalled Past President Carol Goldbaum. "We wanted a Jewish space, and Emanuel really pursued us going there. We were in transition between rabbis at the time. The fact that they had a separate chapel for us and our own office really made it feel like a true home."

Or Chadash had its share of challenges beyond membership numbers and finances. Members came with different Jewish backgrounds, traditions and levels of observance that could conflict—some members came from Orthodox backgrounds, others were from classical Reform, among myriad differences. Cenker, who also eventually became a rabbi and now lives in St. Louis, recalled that, at her first meetings, "The food on the snack table was as far from kosher-style as you could get."

"It was a strength and a weakness," said Edwards. "It's always easier when any community is more homogeneous, so we were faced with the question, 'Can we make one thing out of a plurality?' I don't think we ever would be able to answer that. In that sense, Or Chadash was always a work in progress. But that's the same for most Jews or Jewish communities—we have an obligation to wrestle with questions and find the meaning."

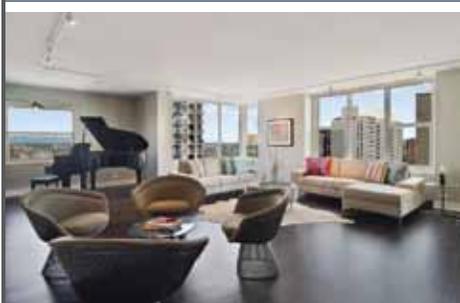
Enger likened navigating such differences to being in a Jewish community in a smaller town where there is only one synagogue, adding, "That's what a synagogue does. We have to ask ourselves, 'What do I need, and what am I willing to give up, in order to make this work?'"

"That was one of the things I loved about Or Chadash," said Griffel. "I can remember lots of fascinating ritual committee meetings where we were faced with those questions of respecting some people's backgrounds without alienating others."

Kornblum praised Or Chadash's ability to "be a full-scale temple on a low-budget and with a low-profile. We were able to celebrate our religious heritage, despite a number of limitations."

Many of the logistics of the merger have to be ironed out yet, she said. "Admittedly, given

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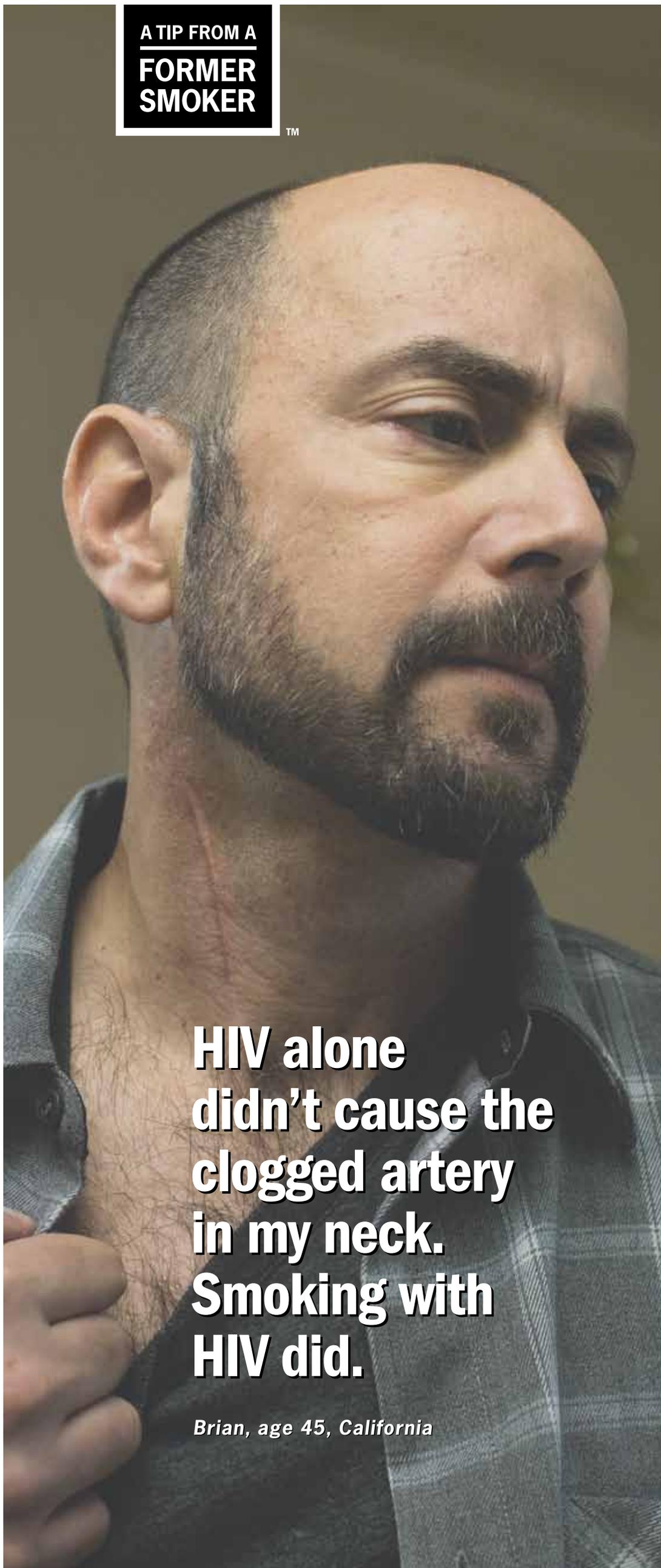
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Anti-LGBT message found in restroom at Hamburger Mary's

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

At closing time on May 28, one of the bartenders working for the Andersonville Brewing side of Hamburger Mary's/Mary's Attic did his regu-

lar check of the restrooms and found an anti-LGBT message—"Die Fags"—on the inside of one of the two single occupancy bathrooms in the establishment.

The bartender texted owner Ashley Wright,



Left: Mary's door with slur. Right: Repainted door.
Photos by Ashley Wright

who was at home and asleep at the time, to alert him. When Wright saw the text message the next morning, he immediately went to Andersonville Brewing to see the damage.

Wright called 311 to report the incident upon his arrival. The police have followed up with Wright a couple of times to check in and get more information.

The door has since been repainted by Wright in a multitude of colors and is currently open for use.

"I'm hoping to find something in the security footage that's recorded inside the all of our establishments even though there isn't a camera inside our restrooms," said Wright. "It's interesting that this occurred a week after we were featured on the CBS show Undercover Boss. Since then we've received a lot publicity and positive responses from our customers. I don't know if there's a correlation between the two incidents but it makes you wonder."

Student, others file motion to intervene in anti-LGBT lawsuit

Student A—a young woman at the heart of a public situation in suburban Chicago about locker-room access for students who are transgender—joined her parents, two other families with students (Student B and Student C) who are transgender in District 211 and the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance to file a motion with the federal district court in Chicago to join the lawsuit filed by two anti-LGBT rights groups early last month.

The lawsuit seeks to block Student A, as well as other students who are transgender in District 211, from using bathrooms and locker rooms consistent with their gender identity. The suit also seeks to stop the federal government from employing Title IX to benefit transgender students.

Student A attends William Fremd High School. Student B is a seventh-grade boy who will begin ninth grade at Fremd next year, and Student C is an eighth-grade boy who will attend a district high school during the 2016-2017 academic year.

"This lawsuit ignores the reality that policies granting transgender students access to bathrooms and locker rooms are working across Illinois," said Owen Daniel-McCarter, policy and advocacy director for the Alliance, in a statement. "We did not feel like we could permit these two anti-LGBT groups reversed years of good work in schools in Illinois—not without making sure that our voice is heard."

The case is before U.S. District Court Judge Jorge Alonso, who will decide if the ACLU's clients can join the matter.

The motion to intervene is at [ACLU-il.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Motion-to-Intervene.pdf](https://www.aclu-il.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Motion-to-Intervene.pdf).

Event to look at NY LGBTQ youth and survival sex

The Cook County Human Trafficking Task Force will host an event about the study "Surviving the Streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ Youth Engaged in Survival Sex" with senior research associate Meredith Dank from the Urban Institute.

The event will take place Tuesday, June 7, 1-4 p.m. at Fourth Presbyterian Church, 126 E. Chestnut Ave., in the Borwell Dining Room.

Based on interviews with 283 youth in New York City, this is the first study to focus on LGBTQ youth; young men who have sex with men (YMSM); and young women who have sex with women (YWSW) who get involved in the commercial sex market in order to meet basic survival needs, such as food or shelter.

Visit <https://ht2016lgbtq.eventbrite.com>.

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Longtime AIDS activist focuses on criminal-justice system

BY MATT SIMONETTE

For Megan McLemore, a longtime activist and attorney with the New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW), the HIV epidemic in the United States is being fueled by the epidemic of mass incarceration.

But McLemore, a senior researcher in HRW's Health and Human Rights division, has contended that the criminal justice system is largely absent from local and national conversations about HIV prevention and treatment.

"If you look at the [National HIV/AIDS Strategy] for example, you'll see about housing and violence, for example, but you'll see very little about criminal justice," she said.

McLemore has focused her work on prisons and HIV/AIDS for several decades.

"I've always focused in my career on prisoner's rights and the rights of the most vulnerable people," McLemore added. "The HIV part came in when, in the '80s, I got involved as a volunteer in various community groups. Then I worked with some friends of mine who were working on a documentary on the global AIDS crisis in the late '90s and early 2000s. We really focused on the fact that the AIDS drugs were not getting to sub-Saharan Africa even though they were already in Europe and the United States. When I got to Human Rights Watch, they were looking for a consultant to work on HIV in prisons, so my background was right."

McLemore said that she began her work with prisoners when she was in law school. "This is a population that has been so marginalized that it is literally invisible," she said.

Her current work goes beyond focusing on long-term prisoners. Rather, she's most concerned with people who are cycling in and out of the jails on minor drug offenses, sex-work charges and other low-level offenses. De-criminalizing such offenses, according to McLemore and her colleagues, is essentially HIV prevention.

"They're going in and out of jail very regularly, and that interrupts their ability to adhere to HIV medication, and if they don't already have HIV, it raises somebody's risk of becoming HIV-positive," she said. "The instability that it causes in people's lives causes disruptions as they relate to housing—the evidence is vast how housing is key to HIV prevention."

Even an arrest can be significantly disruptive, McLemore added. "So we're looking at the entire spectrum, from an arrest, to cycling through the system and having a criminal record. We're trying to step back and look back at how the criminal justice system in the United States is influencing the epidemic. There's growing evidence that, at every stage, it's very harmful."

The work requires a multi-level approach to engage the different facets of the system, she said. "A few months ago I released a report on HIV services in Louisiana jails. So there's an entire document now that has Human Rights Watch recommendations having to do with keeping people out of jail in first place. So now I'm going to be deeply engaged in that report for the next few years with the Department of Public Corrections, with the Department of Public Health, with the Governor's Office. It's leading by leading and strategy by strategy."

HRW and partner organizations wrote a letter about the National HIV/AIDS Strategy's failure to address criminal justice issues. "I'm beating the same drum, but I'm beating it at different venues and different targets," McLemore said, adding that administration officials were at least responsive.

"We met with them and they agreed to look at them for the next version of the strategy.



Megan McLemore.
Photo courtesy of McLemore

We continue to meet with CDC people and having ongoing discussions about it," she added. "The road to HIV prevention leads through the criminal justice system for all these vulnerable populations."

McLemore will be in Chicago Monday, June 6, speaking first at a brown-bag presentation, "35 Years on the Frontlines: Local, National and Global HIV/AIDS Prevention," at AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC), 200 W. Jackson St., 13th Floor, at noon.

Jim Pickett, director of advocacy for AFC will also speak along with Erik Glenn, executive director of Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus. Kim Hunt, executive director of the Pride Action Tank, co-host of the event, will moderate. The program is free, but all guests must RSVP to Jackie Thaney at jthaney@aid-schicago.org. Guests should bring ID and allow time for security entrance procedures.

Report looks at trans community and the law

A new report states that restroom-access measures that target transgender people contribute to a pattern of criminalizing individuals solely on their gender identity.

"Unjust: How the Broken Criminal Justice System Fails Transgender People" analyzes how transgender and gender non-conforming people face high levels of discrimination in many areas of life putting them at risk for economic insecurity, the experience of homelessness and reliance on survival economies.

"Unjust" spotlights laws regarding restrooms as well as HIV and sex-work criminalization. Among the facts the report unveils is that, during the 2015-2016 legislative session, at least 20 states proposed legislation restricting restroom access for transgender people.

The Movement Advancement Project (MAP) and the Center for American Progress (CAP)—in partnership with the Advancement Project, Forward Together, JustLeadershipUSA, the National LGBTQ Task Force, the National Center for Transgender Equality and the Transgender Law Center—authored the report. It is online at LGBTMap.org/criminal-justice-trans.

Trans-measure testimony set for June 8

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The City Council's Committee on Human Relations on June 8 will hear testimony on a new measure that prohibits public accommodations—such as hotels, restaurants or grocery stores—from requiring that patrons show a government ID to prove their gender identity in order to access facilities such as restrooms or changing facilities.

The measure was introduced in the May 18 City Council meeting. The June 8 meeting will take place in the City Council chambers at City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle St., second floor, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Proponents of the bill are asking that persons in favor of the legislation register their support by either providing written or oral testimony and emailing members of the committee or their alderman, said Kim Hunt, executive director of Pride Action Tank.

"It's always good when city council members can see that their constituents are in support of something like this," she said.

Written testimonies can be taken up until the day of the meeting, but supporters are asking people to submit by Friday, June 3, at 5 p.m. to make sure committee members have time to read the testimonies before the hearing. Documents should be addressed to Ald. Pat Dowell, chair of the Committee on Human Relations, and emailed to Renee Barrera (rbarrera@cityofchicago.org), with Ald. Dowell (ward03@cityofchicago.org) and Jackie Thaney (prideactiontank@aidschicago.org), copied.

Oral testimonies should be three minutes or fewer in length, Hunt said, adding, "The more you can humanize the issue, the better." Testimonies from trans and gender non-conforming people, and cisgender people, who have been harassed, and/or asked for ID to validate their gender, will be especially important. Please show up early to testify in case there is a lengthy line.

Contact information for members of the Committee on Human Relations can be found at <http://bit.ly/1NCOHf9>. To determine your ward and alderman, go to <http://bit.ly/ZGLkOS>.

Trans activist dies after being shot

Pakistani transgender activist Alesha, 23, has died after being shot and allegedly deprived of hospital treatment.

She was shot eight times in Peshawar May 22 during an altercation between a group of men and several transgender people. Although the specific cause was not immediately clear, but transgender Pakistanis are frequently victims of violence and extortion.

Immediately following the shooting, Alisha was transported to Lady Reading Hospital. Allegedly, she was ignored by doctors and refused access to either the male or female wards following complaints from staff and patients.

Police arrested Fazal Gujjar for Alesha's shooting and have launched an investigation, PinkNews reported.

Alesha had been a coordinator for Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Trans Action Alliance.

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Carla Barreca of The Second City with Hubbard Street Dancer Jeffrey Duffy. Photo by Todd Rosenberg.

FAMILIES OF CHOICE SERIES

Phyllis Johnson

BY JACQUELINE BOYD

Families of choice in LGBTQ communities provide comfort, support and safety throughout a lifetime. A strong personal network has significant benefits for LGBTQ people of all ages. During June and July, in celebration of Pride, we will explore the concept of families of choice through individual interviews.

Interviewee: Phyllis Anne Johnson
Age: 65
Relationship status: Widowed
Neighborhood: Roseland on Chicago's South Side
Activities: Affinity Community Services, coordinates programming for Trailblazers (60+ LBT women of color) affinity95.org/accontent; and WACCT: Women of All Colors and Cultures Together, co-founder

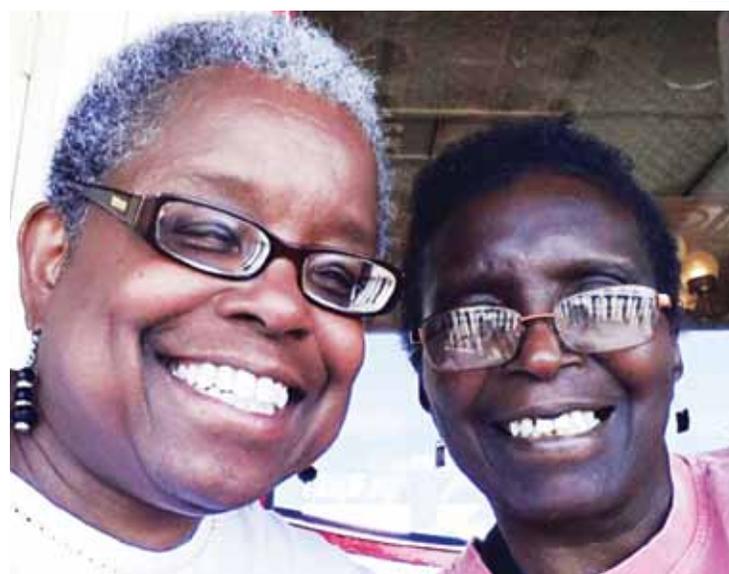
Windy City Times: What is your definition of family?

Phyllis Johnson: Well I think of family basically as family of origin, I'm just wrapping my head around the family of choice idea. I've always had family of choice, 'go to' people. But I mostly think of family as the folks you don't choose. The folks you are connected to by fact of birth.

I've thought that for a long time, even when I wasn't sure I belonged in my family. But I think now of family of choice as including those other people; my nephew and niece, my best friend from high school, people from Affinity activities and other friends I've gathered.

WCT: Was there for you any distinction between casual friends and those you could rely on?

PJ: No, they were all friends, some were friend-friends, and some were acquaintance-



Phyllis Johnson (left) with her late wife, Robbie Smith.
Facebook photo

friends. And go-to people are definitely friend-friends but they have their limitations. Like they might be homophobic, but love me.

WCT: What do you do to stay connected to all the people in your life you count as**friend-friends, or close friends?**

PJ: Facebook! Facebook and texting. I stay connected to one of my work brothers, we were family from different moms and dads, through Facebook. Others I run into at events.

WCT: Who are the members of your family of choice?

PJ: My sort-of daughter [Chris Smith]—we decided on that terminology a long, long time ago, even before [her mother] Robbie [Smith] and I were married. Her best friend from childhood who I've become very close to, my niece, my nephew, my mom—even though at 95 she's not really a fall-back person. My best friend from high school.

WCT: Are they family to each other?

PJ: Well my sort-of daughter and her friend of course are related to each other through their own wonderful friendship (chuckles), and my niece fits in with them more, and my nephew is less engaged. I think all of them recognize my friend in Boston, but she's in Boston. Oh and my brother in New York! I always get sound advice from both of them. When I was really in the totally acute stages of grief, those are the people that kept up with me, which was amazing.

WCT: You've had different life experiences where people have really been there for you, and it solidified the relationship in new ways, is that fair to say?

PJ: Yeah, yeah, I always thought of some of the Affinity folks as my wife's friends, not really my friends. But then I found out as she was dying that I'm a very lucky person ...

WCT: That they were your friends?

PJ: That they were.

WCT: And has that changed your expectations for what family of choice means for your future?

PJ: Yeah, I'm very very grateful and I'm very lucky. It changed my expectations. It changed how how I relate to people. When they are in difficulty I notice.

WCT: What does it mean to you to be a family member to someone?

PJ: In some ways I feel obligated to my mother, like everybody, that's why you have kids. She was sort of there for me, so I'm going to be there for her. But at the same time I'm acutely aware I don't, my kids are all four-legged. They are wonderful but they aren't going to go to the grocery store for you. The ability to be supportive of someone—I think it's a really special gift. I enjoy being able to check in and reach out to people.

WCT: You seem to be going down the path of aging. How do you see your family fitting into that picture?

PJ: I feel like they would help me out like they did when I lost Robbie. I had a friend who went grocery shopping and that was really wonderful.

WCT: Would you be comfortable talking about how you and Robbie were family to each other?

PJ: Oh, so, you think family is going to support you and be there for ups and downs, push you when you need a little shove, hug you when you don't. One of the things I miss most

Trans ID Lobby Day at City Council June 8

Activists and elected officials are working to amend the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance to remove a requirement that patrons show a government-issued ID upon request to access public accommodations that are private in nature, including bathrooms. This is problematic for many reasons, and the Pride Action Tank is urging individuals to lobby for this change.

Mayor Emanuel, the City Council's LGBT Caucus and Ald. Burke introduced the amendment to City Council May 18. There will be a public hearing Wed., June 8, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. in City Council chambers, 121 N. LaSalle St., hosted by the City Council Human Relations Committee, to hear testimony (no more than 3 minutes each). Testimonies from trans and gender non-conforming people, and cisgender people, who have been harassed, and/or asked for ID to validate their gender, will be especially important. Please arrive early.

You can also send letters to your alderperson, and please send a copy to the Pride Action Tank's Chicago Restroom Access Project (CRAP) for their files: CRAP's goal is to increase restroom and public facilities access for trans and gender non-conforming people in Chicago. The City Council members who are on the HR committee are listed below; if your alderperson is not listed, please still let them hear from you.

Written testimonies: Submit by Friday, June 3, at 5 p.m. Documents should be addressed to Ald. Pat Dowell, Chair of the Committee on Human Relations and emailed to Renee Barrera, rbarrera@cityofchicago.org, with Ald. Dowell, ward03@cityofchicago.org, and Jackie Thaney, prideactiontank@aidschicago.org.

#BiggerThanBathrooms

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Turn to page 16

LGBT veterans, band part of Memorial Day Parade

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

The City of Chicago held its annual Memorial Day parade May 28 along State Street in the Loop.

Among the numerous contingents in the parade were the Chicago chapter of the American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) and the Lakeside Pride Freedom Marching Band.

AVER has participated in the parade for the



Members of AVER after the Memorial Day Parade. Photo by Carrie Maxwell

past 15 years. The organization carried the U.S., rainbow and POW/MIA flags as well as the flags of each branch of the armed services. Behind AVER's contingent, Lakeside Pride Freedom Marching Band played a medley of songs along the parade route.

As AVER passed the reviewing stand, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and other dignitaries saluted them while the announcer made note of AVER's status as an LGBT veterans organization.

"On this Memorial Day weekend, we're thankful that we're able to remember our fallen comrades," said Jim Darby, AVER Chicago president. "We're also grateful as LGBT veterans that our comrades can finally be remembered for their

service and sacrifice to this country, including at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, Illinois, where we laid a wreath and acknowledged our fellow LGBT servicemembers at the first anniversary of the dedication of the only LGBT Veterans Memorial in the VA Cemetery System."

The parade marked one of several activities AVER participated in over the weekend, including providing the Color Guard for the opening ceremony of IML and traveling to Abraham Lincoln National VA Cemetery to hold the first-anniversary celebration to the monument to LGBT veterans.

Hinde out after groups' restructuring

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Deborah Hinde, longtime chief development officer at Heartland Health Outreach, will be leaving her post in June because of a corporate restructuring at the organization as well as Heartland Alliance.

Hinde's position will be eliminated once the organizations' development and communications offices are merged, she said in a statement to Windy City Times.

"I have been with the Vital Bridges program for 20 years. During that time, we have grown, changed and evolved as the HIV epidemic shifted," Hinde said. "Thanks to our stalwart staff and amazing volunteers, Vital Bridges has provided nutritious food for nearly 15 million meals, over 700,000 nights of housing and more than 350,000 hours of counseling. While we lost many clients to AIDS, we now are able to see many more live and thrive. I am honored to have had the opportunity to be a part of this work. I am confident these services will continue as a vital part of HHO."

Lori Cannon praised Hinde's work for the



Deborah Hinde. Photo courtesy of Jamie Kelter-Davis

organization. Cannon is program manager at North Side Food Center and a founder of Open Hand/Chicago, which was renamed Vital Bridges after a merger and is now part of Heartland Alliance. She remembered when Hinde came to work for Open Hand when that organization was having difficulty in the mid-'90s.

"I do want to give her a lot of credit," Cannon said. "She ensured that people were able to eat and that back rent was paid. We were able to survive largely because of her. Debbie sized up the situation and single-handedly saved us."



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NIGERIA from page 8

can condemn them to the police as 'being homosexual,' 'looking homosexual,' 'acting homosexual,' 'supporting homosexuals,' or 'encouraging homosexuals.'

Gimme Shelter

Hundreds of LGBTQ Nigerians have had to flee their native country in order to escape jail or death and in order to live free constructive lives in keeping with their character and identity. Many of these refugees have found shelter in the greater Chicago area.

Dennis Ojiyoma Akpona, John Ademola Adewoye and Bunmi Johnson are some of the Nigerian refugees fleeing anti-gay violence. John and Dennis have successfully achieved U.S. resident status; Bunmi Johnson is still hoping to secure refugee status. John and Dennis are working to provide shelter and resources to gay Nigerians and others through two organizations they co-founded: the Center for Courageous Living and CLASP—<http://www.rmnetwork.org/newrmn/clasp/>.

CLASP—Chicago LGBTQ Asylum Support Program: Helping LGBTQ People Seeking Safety in Chicago—assists asylum seekers who come to the United States to escape persecution in their



Left: John Ademola Adewoye. Right: Dennis Ojiyoma Akpona.
Photos by Lucina Kathmann

home countries. It is illegal to be LGBTQ in 76 countries around the world, seven of which impose the death penalty.

In this month of June, the month of our PRIDE in who we are and what we have achieved not only for our own communities but for all the peoples of our great nation, let us take time to remember the fate of our sisters and brothers throughout the world who still cannot live their lives openly with dignity.

Let us resolve to continue to make Chicago: A City of Refuge for all in need.

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

Unoma Azuah, a Nigerian gay-rights activist, is an award-winning poet and novelist. She teaches writing at the Illinois Institute of Art, Chicago. *Blessed Body: The Secret Lives of LGBT Nigerians*, her most recent book is published this spring.

JOHNSON from page 14

is when Robbie was in the kitchen making her salad—she actually really did eat healthy for lunch! And I'd just lay on her back or shoulder when I needed a little Robbie support.

We began to nourish each other's likes. When we were in each other's space we both felt better. I knew that she was totally in my corner and I knew I was totally in her corner. And we'd joke with each other. I was lucky enough to get to ask her to marry me, it was great. She's still the only person I could imagine spending my life with.

WCT: For many LGBTQ people, traditional family isn't safe. Do you have any advice for people who want to create meaningful relationships or family of choice?

PJ: I learned it backward, so that is the advice I'd give. I would look and see who shows up, and what's happening when there's trouble. See who you can depend on, and for what. Just like your family of origin you can't depend on each member for everything, sometimes you can't depend on them for anything. Which is okay, and is not about you—which is a hard-won lesson. But you'll find that there are people who genuinely care about you, it's better to not question it but to observe it. I began to realize I had people who were showing up for everything, and they counted to me a lot. Human life is a team sport, as humans we all need a team.

Interviews are conducted by guest writer Jacqueline Boyd, owner of The Care Plan, the country's first LGBTQ-centered healthcare-management company. For more information and resources, The Care Plan can be reached at 630-479-0083 or The-care-plan.com.

On Friday, June 10, Chicago-based national board members of SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders) will host their annual SAGE & Friends reception. This year, SAGE will honor U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley, co-chair of the Congressional LGBT Caucus, for his advocacy on behalf of LGBT rights and older Americans. SAGE will recognize Phyllis Johnson and Toi Williams for their pioneering Affinity Community Services' Trailblazers, and for their grassroots advocacy on behalf of LGBT older adults in Chicago.

The event will be 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Wyndham Grand Hotel, 71 E. Wacker; visit SAGEUSA.org/chicago.

MERGE from page 10

our size and Sholom's, it's going to be much the opposite of O.C. But we'll be part of a large mainstream congregation and have the advantages that that entails—clergy, education, social-action projects—but we'll still have our own LGBT services at times and maintain a safe space for LGBT Jews."

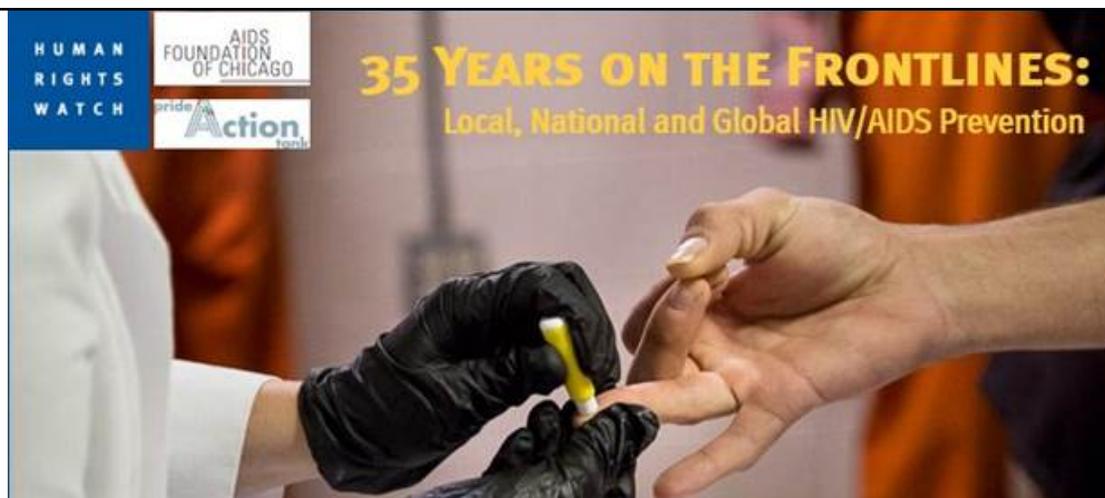
Griffith added, "Temple Sholom has been very excited about the prospect of merging with our congregation. From the senior rabbi on down, they've been enthusiastic, which has helped with the planning."

Sandfield said he has confidence in the merger, saying that the new plan still provided for a safe place for LGBT Jews to go. "I hope we keep the things that have made us valuable. I think the congregation has done everything we can to keep us alive and I really give the leadership credit," he said.

Edwards said that Or Chadash's joining with a mainstream synagogue demonstrated that it had indeed made a meaningful contribution to Chicago's LGBT Jewish life.

"By making our presence felt, we were saying, 'Here we are,'" he said. "It is a 'Jewish' thing to break out of the closet—coming out is a mitzvah. It's something one has to do to reflect how human beings reflect the divine. Any idea of Judaism that is going to make sense is going to be able to see that. Two verses in Leviticus is not going to be the answer to any question."

Note: Reporter Matt Simonette has been a member of Congregation Or Chadash since 2003.



MONDAY, JUNE 6 | 12:00 PM

35 Years on the Frontlines: Local, National and Global HIV/AIDS Prevention

AIDS Foundation of Chicago
13th Floor Conference Room
200 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago

On the 35th anniversary of the first HIV/AIDS diagnosis, join the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, and Human Rights Watch for a discussion on the present and future of prevention efforts from both a local and global perspective. Panelists include **ERIK GLENN** executive director of the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, **MEGAN MCLEMORE** senior researcher in Health and Human Rights for Human Rights Watch; **JIM PICKETT**, director of prevention advocacy, AIDS Foundation Chicago; and moderated by **KIM HUNT**, executive director of Pride Action Tank.

While there is no charge for this brown bag lunch program, please note all guests must RSVP to Jackie Thaney at jthaney@aidschicago.org. Guests should bring ID and allow time for building security entrance procedures.



ERIK GLENN is executive director of the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, where he advances their mission of reducing HIV infection rates among Black MSM. With nearly a decade in the HIV/AIDS field, Erik has dedicated his career to the cause, supporting friends, family and community members affected by the epidemic. Erik holds a Masters in Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago.



MEGAN MCLEMORE is a senior researcher in the Health and Human Rights Division of Human Rights Watch, where her work focuses on access to HIV/AIDS and drug treatment, as well as healthcare in prisons and other detention settings in the United States. Megan holds a JD from New York University and a Masters in International Human Rights from the University of Toronto.



JIM PICKETT began his current position as Director of Advocacy at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago after five years as a senior consultant at the Chicago Department of Public Health, international AIDS advocate. As a leading advocate for new HIV prevention strategies, Jim co-founded the International Rectal Microbicide Advocates in 2005. As AFC's representative on Capitol Hill, Jim helped shape and advance Ryan White CARE Act reauthorization legislation, which was signed into law in 2007.

Photo credit: an inmate receives a voluntary HIV test at Lafayette Parish Correctional Center, Lafayette, Louisiana, © Bryan Tarnowski for Human Rights Watch.

Church, Black gay caucus host 'Empowerment' event

BY VERN HESTER

In collaboration with The Lighthouse Church of Chicago, The Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus (CBGMC) presented "Spiritual Empowerment," a faith forum/discussion meeting that took place May 22 at Uptown Underground.

With so many strides in LGBTQ civil rights in recent years, it has become apparent that some religious institutions—in particular, the African-American Church—have been stubborn in accepting or embracing members of this particular community. The focus of this gathering was to discuss and share experiences of LGBTQ



Attendees of "Spiritual Empowerment" at Uptown Underground. Photo by Vern Hester

individuals of color with their churches while also creating effective ways of healing and reconciliation.

The gathering began with a worship service from Lighthouse Church, which out Pastor Jamie D. Frazier heads. After a short brunch, a segment from the BET documentary *Holler if you Hear Me: Black and Gay in the Church* was shown as a lead-in for the forum. Before breaking the group into smaller discussion groups, CBGMC Executive Director Erik Glenn asked attendees if they had witnessed or been subjected to religious abuse (condemnation from a church leader). In answer to the question, a majority of the audience stood.

The gathering then split into two discussion groups for a dialogue session that addressed the question "What role can 'the church' play in empowering both your spiritual and sexual identities?" When the group reunited, with Frazier and Glenn moderating, many ideas and courses of action were aired. A key factor in

the discussions that many of the participants shared was the process of "coming out" to themselves while sincerely embracing God.

Frazier later said, "Hopefully, today was the start of a beginning. ... I wanted people to do critical thinking on these subjects and to come up with concrete ways of healing. When I am involved with the church I want to bring all of me—my gayness, Blackness and sassiness."

Glenn added that it was important for "people to be honest and themselves. That is where true transformation happens."

This event was designed as a kickoff for more discussion forums in the future to specifically address the relationship between the church and the individual.

The Lighthouse Church of Chicago is a multiethnic church focused on inclusion and has been operating for two years. The church holds services every Sunday at 11 a.m. at Uptown Underground, 4707 N. Broadway. The website for the church is LighthouseChicago.org.



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MOMBIAN Making museums welcoming to all families

May is National Museum Month, and LGBTQ families have a growing source of support in museums—including ones aimed at children—that have been reaching out to welcome all kinds of families. Margaret Middleton—a Boston-based designer, speaker and consultant—has been a leader in helping to make this happen.

Middleton, who has spoken at numerous museum conferences and been profiled on NPR, has been doing museum work for about ten years and family inclusion work for half of that. She told me in an email interview that the latter “began as a melding of my queer activism with my museum practice. But I quickly realized that it wasn’t just queer families who were being left out in museums: single parents, adoptive families, foster families, and families with divorced parents weren’t taken into consideration.”

She recently collaborated with photographer Matthew Clowney on a show at the Boston Children’s Museum titled “Mimi’s Family,” about the everyday life of transgender grandparent Erica (aka Mimi) Tobias and her family. (While it is no longer on view, those interested in renting it or sponsoring its travel should contact the museum.)

And in 2012, she worked with curator Lisa Ellsworth at the Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose on an exhibit inspired by San Jose Pride. It showcased a selection of photographs of a Bay Area family with two moms and two kids, chosen from Courtney Coolidge’s collection *American Families: Beyond the White Picket Fence*.

Both Mimi’s Family and American Family “were challenging sells to the museums that ran them,” she said. At first, some senior staff “were concerned about offending visitors who may be morally or religiously opposed to all things queer.” Ultimately, however, “both institutions realized that the exhibits were on mission and important opportunities for representation and education.”

Middleton said that when she talked with visitors in the exhibitions, “the response was overwhelmingly positive. Both shows had sharing stations where families could draw or write a response to the prompt, ‘Tell us about your family.’ We got so many wonderful little family portraits and stories. I consider that a success.” While the exhibits felt like risks to the museums, “I applaud them for taking the risk because I think both exhibits had a very positive effect on our visitors.”

Apart from Middleton’s work, other museums have been including LGBTQ families, too. As part of LGBT History Month in the U.K., the Museum of London partnered with Schools OUT UK to hold a free day of talks and workshops



Margaret Middleton.
Photo from Middleton

for families and teachers, including a performance by the London Gay Men’s Chorus and a reading of several LGBTQ-inclusive kids’ books by actor Sir Derek Jacobi.

The Chicago Children’s Museum launched an All Families Matter initiative in 2009 to welcome the LGBTQ community, and has partnered with the Family Equality Council for several years on events and activities for International Family Equality Day, including a giant rainbow staircase and a community chalkboard where visitors can share ideas on what makes a family.

And as far back as 1991, the Boston Museum of Science included a page about a family with “Two Moms” in a book that was part of its “How Your Life Began” exhibit. Coming up, it is hosting a talk on May 25 with transgender advocate Nicole Maines and her identical twin Jonas, who will discuss their family journey as Nicole transitioned. Also speaking will be Dr. Norman Spack, co-founder of the nation’s first clinic for transgender children.

Middleton herself is also working on inclusion beyond just LGBTQ families. For example, she says, “While children’s museums and some science centers have a history of being welcoming to breastfeeding parents, traditional art and history museums do not. I’m interested in helping museums update their policies and improve their facilities to better accommodate visitors with infants.”

Generally speaking, museums can better welcome diverse families, she suggests, by “updating membership policies, representing all kinds of families in exhibits, providing all-gender restrooms, and consciously choosing language that is inclusive of families of all kinds.” To help with the latter, she has created a helpful poster on Family-Inclusive Language, available at zazzle.com/magmidd.

While there has been some progress, more remains to be done. “Some museum associations have been encouraging museums to be more inclusive and have made suggestions for welcoming queer visitors,” she said. “However, I have not seen them take on family inclusion.” They could do so, she suggested, by “hosting workshops, helping museums find funding for new programming and facility upgrades, and making recommendations for family-inclusive practice.”

While she noted that it is not visitors’ responsibility to help museums improve their practice, those who wish to do so should remember: “Museums tend to respond better to being called in than being called out. Instead of penning an open letter or tweeting the museum, set up an appointment with a museum staff member and bring concrete action items.”

She also advises, “Museum workers are often overworked and underpaid so be prepared to be asked to volunteer your time to help implement these changes. Have an idea for a possible donor if your changes require funds. Change is hard for museums and every museum will respond to criticism differently, but hearing from visitors (especially members!) in person can be powerful.”

And these changes can have a widespread impact. Middleton observed, “Family is an intersection where people of so many different identities meet. Incorporating family inclusion across all aspects of museum practice can improve the visitor experience for everyone.”

Find out more about Middleton and her work at margaretmiddleton.com or @magmidd on Twitter.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.

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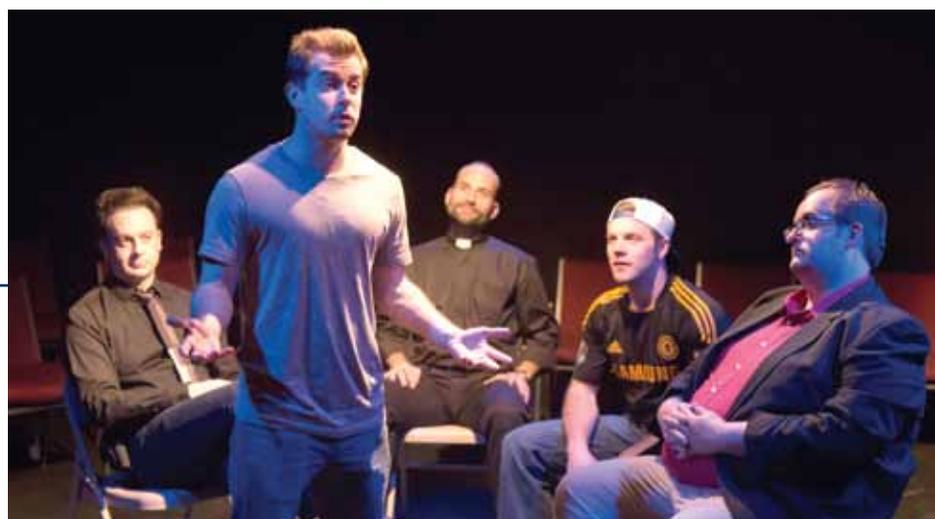
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'Cursed'

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WCT reviews the theatrical production *The Irish Curse*.

Photo by Sam Bengtson

SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Russian horror story

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It can often take years for foreign plays and novels to receive an English translation. So it's impressive that it only took one year for Vladimir Zaytsev's gay Russian drama *Out of the Blue* to receive its U.S. English-language premiere in Chicago, courtesy of Organic Theater Company.

Organic Theater artistic director Alexander Gelman said he considers himself lucky to have been in the right place and right time to see *Out of the Blue* just days after its debut at the respected Moscow theater known as the Satirikon in May 2015.

"When I saw it, I immediately knew this was a play that needed to be done in the states," said Gelman, who was able to fast-track a Chicago production of *Out of the Blue* thanks to his many connections to Russian theater colleagues. "It's a brave production."

Out of the Blue hints to its subject matter in the title, since "blue" is Russian slang for gay. Zaytsev, a heterosexual-identified Russian playwright who wrote the drama in his late 20s, essentially exposes the potential horrors in store in modern-day Russia for a gay teenager who comes out as a way to try to keep his sparring parents together.

In their quest to "cure" their son of his homosexuality, the parents and grandmother grasp at a myriad of unsettling ideas. A female prostitute is hired by the father, while an exorcist of sorts is also called upon.

Given all the homophobic and repressive Russian laws that have been passed—not to mention what Gelman says are the backward mindsets of many Russians who conflate homosexuality with pedophilia—*Out of the Blue* is understandably a tragedy.

"As with any good play, this is a play about family. It's not strictly speaking a political play and I don't feel it was necessarily written to make a political statement," Gelman said. "It's a very honest, genuine investigation of the human condition that includes substantially and centrally the issue of something as private as this becoming public and the treatment of gays in modern Russia."

It's been reported that Zaytsev based *Out of the Blue* from a real-life incident in 2012, when a Russian father put his 16-year-old son into a psychiatric clinic for being gay. A way that Moscow producers of *Out of the Blue* have amazingly steered clear of the 2013 Russian law that supposedly bans any spread of "homosexual propaganda" to minors is by only admitting audience members over the age of 21.

But even then Gelman said *Out of the Blue* has come in for lots of condemnation by Russian authorities. He said a tour of the production to St. Petersburg prompted a bomb scare, picketing and one local politician to demand a government investigation.

"It's ironic because the play has been investigated among other things for pornographic content and there's very little physical contact in the play," Gelman said. "And whatever there is, it's between the mother and father characters—not with the same-sex lovers, friends and so on."

As with many Organic Theater productions, Gelman has chosen to present *Out of the Blue* in repertory with another play—Neil Simon's 1973 comedy *The Good Doctor*, which draws from a number of short stories by the celebrated Russian playwright Anton Chekhov. One could argue that this selection serves as a reminder to some of the past cultural glories of Russian culture to counterbalance a modern work that is much more critical. Gelman also said doing repertory performances allows the actors cast in both productions to stretch themselves and find correlating overtones.

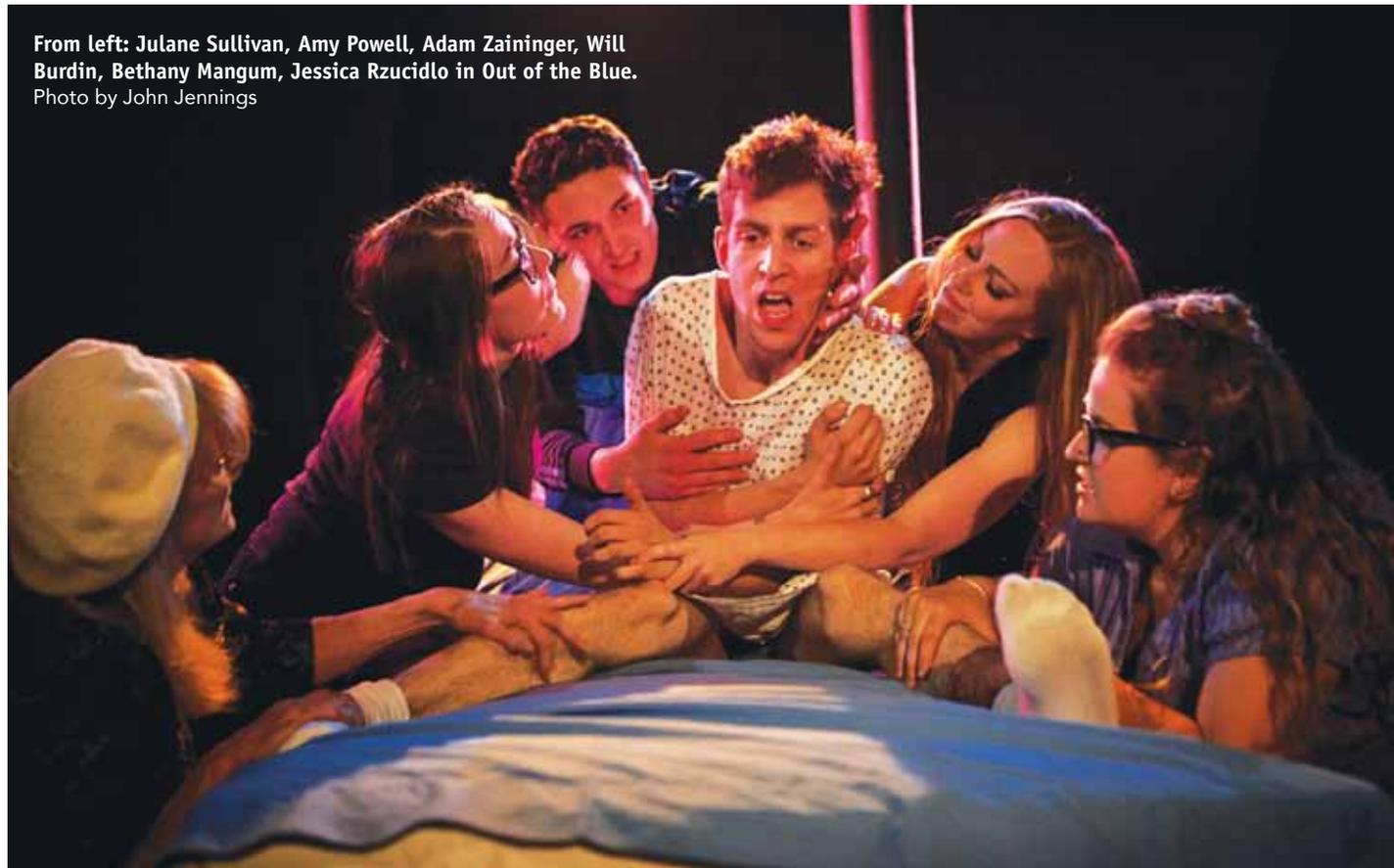
"You get a sense of both the otherness of

friends across the ocean and the extraordinary commonality we have them," Gelman said. "The sorts of travails that the main character in *Out of the Blue* suffers are not unlike what his American counterpart would have suffered as recently as 20 years ago—the sort of argument and conversation and vitriol that comes out from some of the other characters about him and his plight and his orientation are not anything that is going to be foreign to our audiences."

Organic Theater Company presents the U.S. premiere of Vladimir Zaytsev's *Out of the Blue* in a translation by Tatyana Khaikin and Robert Duffy at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave. now through July 10 (in repertory with Neil Simon's *The Good Doctor*).

Tickets are \$30 and \$20 for students to each separate production; call 773-404-7336 or visit OrganicTheater.org.

From left: Julane Sullivan, Amy Powell, Adam Zaininger, Will Burdin, Bethany Mangum, Jessica Rzcudlo in *Out of the Blue*.
Photo by John Jennings



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THEATER REVIEW

The Boys Upstairs

Playwright: Jason Mitchell

At: Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark St.

Tickets: 800-737-0984;

PrideFilmsAndPlays.com; \$25-\$30

Runs through: July 2

BY JERRY NUNN

The Boys Upstairs script was first read back in 2008 and has now made its way to Chicago with a Pride Films & Plays production in 2016. There are some updates with new references, such as RuPaul's Drag Race, and newer transition music, while some things are dated, like same-sex marriage not being legal. Either more fun can be had with the time period or a complete update should be made.

The story centers around three friends in New York City and their gay misadventures together. Besties Josh and Seth live together in Hell's Kitchen when a third friend, Ashley, comes to visit the two while celebrating his birthday.

The Three's Company environment works fine in the Mary's Attic space and drinks flow both onstage and off. One prop did stick out like a sore thumb, as crudites is not the same as a bowl of fruit.

Several times during the first act on premiere night, lines were spoken like they were being read directly from the script. It did smooth out a great deal in the second act. The show has been compared to Sex and the City but the actors should continue perfecting the delivery, as Sarah Jessica Parker (SJP) and the gang did.

The rest of the cast should follow Gary Henderson's lead as the hippy Seth, who appears natural in his characterization and is the most



From left: Luke Meierdiercks, Shaun Baer, Nelson Rodriguez, Gary Hernandez and Tristian Winfree in *The Boys Upstairs*. Photo from Pride Films & Plays

likable in the group. On the other hand, Shaun Baer (as Ashley) doesn't have the Southern charm quite needed to channel Blanche Devereaux from *The Golden Girls*. Nelson Rodriguez wants to be SJP but instead is a poor man's Perez Hilton—until later in the show, when he finds his footing.

Other than knowing each other for a long time, it is a wonder this trio remains friends. Ashley should be up for the Worst Friend of the Year Award. He not only uses his friend's home like a brothel but continually betrays them, and creepily molests their neighbor. He needs

therapy to find out why he sleeps with people that he doesn't even like night after night.

Luke Meierdiercks has the tough road of playing multiple smaller parts throughout the story. His leather-man depiction drops the ball, but then he redeems himself by stealing the show with Broadway lover Gabriel, also known as Gabie. The musical references keep coming until the audience can't help but laugh. "The twink of Glee" is worth the price of admission.

Tristian M. Winfree plays Eric the neighbor but isn't given enough to do in the script.

Shouldn't it be called *The Boy Downstairs*?

The current title suggests it is told from Eric's perspective, which it is not.

The Boys Upstairs needs some more fine tuning before becoming the funny sitcom it so yearns to be.

While there's not much crossover appeal for our straight friends, this is a good theater choice for Pride month with a friendly gay play that gets better in the second half. Head upstairs at Mary's to see *Upstairs* before time runs out.

THEATER REVIEW

The Irish Curse

Playwright: Martin Casella

At: Level 11 Theatre at The Den, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Tickets: 708-831-3787;

Level11theatre.org; \$32

Runs through: June 12

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

I always thought I had eight inches, like every normal white guy. Then I saw a 10-inch porno star, and if he was 10 inches then I was only five inches. Of course, I'm a grower, not a shower. Size doesn't matter. It's not the meat, it's the motion and I really know how to use my four inches.

All these clichés and stereotypes are, uh, raised in Martin Casella's crisply written play *The Irish Curse*, and many more besides. I thought the Irish curse meant drinking (it's mentioned briefly) but, apparently, the curse relates to lack of size. I believe science has empirical evidence that endowments are not subject to race, religion or ethnicity, but popular cultural myths say otherwise and it appears that a number of Irishmen believe they are disadvantaged with regard to, um, membership.

So, Father Shaunessy (James Bould) uses his Brooklyn church to host a weekly support group for Irish males with size-related issues. The regulars are Joseph Flaherty (Rob Grabowski), an attorney and father of two; Rick Baldwin (Logan Hulick), a jock and sports medicine student; and Stephen Fitzgerald (Neil O'Callaghan), perhaps the most troubled fig-

ure as a gay undercover cop. Joining them is newbie Kieran Reilly (Dennis Bisto), a roofer who's the only one actually born in Ireland. The structure is simplicity itself, as each attendee introduces himself and speaks his mind. Because of the newbie, the three regulars repeat personal stories they've already told each other, and also Father Shaunessy opens up for the first time.

The 95-minute play swings between comedy and drama as all but Kieran recount humiliations and sexual rejection by others, and feelings of shame and inadequacy in themselves. Joseph's wife has divorced him for an Italian lover (you know what they say about Italian men), gay Stephen provides only anonymous blow jobs so he never has to undress, and Rick has a girlfriend but compulsively relates stories of other conquests. The final focus comes to

Kieran, madly in love and engaged but still a virgin out of fear of rejection. Rick states the only and ultimate point: "The curse is not having a wee willie—it's letting a wee willie define your life."

Under director Justin Baldwin, all performances are on-the-money in a simple in-the-round staging. They enhance the distinct temperament and narrative voice Casella gives each character in his skillfully written text. The dialect work—especially O'Callaghan's New York cop and Bisto's Irish-born lad—is very good. The play occasionally is too raucous for the room's hard acoustics and clarity is lost. A little less volume would make these funny moments more effective.

THEATER REVIEW

Prowess

Playwright: Ike Holter

At: Jackalope Theatre at Broadway

Armory, 5917 N. Broadway

Tickets: \$15-\$30; JackalopeTheatre.org

Runs through: June 25

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

What would happen if self-made comic-book heroes took on the endemic gang shootings on Chicago's South Side? That's the question Ike Holter brings up in his hilarious, yet ultimately tragic, world-premiere play *Prowess*, for Jackalope Theatre.

Now die-hard fans of superhero franchises might assume that Holter has ripped off the premise of the film and comic book *Kick-Ass*. But Holter keeps his characters very much grounded as everyday Chicagoans whose actions are motivated by a genuine fear and desire for self-protection. The comic-book stuff largely comes later to knowingly spoof the film genre clogging up so many multiplexes.

But as the play goes on and the characters

become violent vigilantes, there's the touching and complex need for redemption and forgiveness, too.

Prowess deftly assaults the senses of audiences throughout in a number of ways. Holter's dazzling use of overlapping dialogue always commands attention. He also deploys a cornucopia of pop cultural references to continually leave audiences in stitches whenever the characters jab each other with cutting shade.

But more importantly, Holter honestly cares for his damaged characters and their arguably skewed motivations to build and strengthen themselves up as fighting dynamos. The amazing four-person ensemble of *Prowess* grabs onto Holter's complex characters and they wring out every necessary drop of physical sweat and sad emotion.

As the fighting physical trainer Mark, Julian Parker is a great coach battling his own past demons. And as his two fledgling pupils Zora and Andy, Sydney Charles and Andrew Goetten respectively work wonders with the physical comedy while also infusing their characters' drive with their frightening back stories.

Rounding out the cast with another dynamic

performance is Donovan Diaz as the mysterious and conscientious graffiti tagger Jax who initially mocks Mark and his trainees. But Jax soon develops tender feelings for the fighting trio, and Holter provides a plot twist that you won't often see in mainstream superhero films.

Director Marti Lyons and her technical collaborators ensure that *Prowess* remains a visceral experience from start to finish. Lyons finds the right balance of quiet emotional scenes to punctuate the elaborate and nerve-racking fight choreography sequences devised by Ryan Bourque. Courtney O'Neill provides a great urban unit set to allow for lighting and projection designer Michael Stanfill to create a Chicago that is both gritty and fantastical at the same time.

In *Prowess*, Holter cleverly taps into the cultural zeitgeist of comic-book superheroes while also bemoaning the very real and upsetting problem of senseless violence in Chicago. In this vastly entertaining stage fantasy rooted in unsettling reality, *Prowess* raises a lot of tough questions for its characters to wrestle with, but vitally for Chicago audiences, too.

CRITICS' PICKS



Chimerica, TimeLine Theatre, through July 31. Nick Bowling directs an incisive take on Luck Kirkwood's Olivier-winning drama questioning what might happen if a determined American photojournalist tried to uncover the identity of the famed "Tank Man" in the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre in Beijing. SCM

Once in a Lifetime, Strawdog Theatre Company, through June 4. What could be more appropriate for a final farewell to this venerable loft theater than a screwball comedy about rolling with the changes and moving on? MSB

The Producers, Mercury Theater Chicago, through June 26. Go and laugh your head off at director L. Walter Sterns' masterful stage reduction of Mel Brooks' mammoth 2001 Broadway musical hit. SCM

Tug of War, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, through June 12. This dazzling mash-up of Edward III, Henry V and Henry VI focuses on England's long, fruitless wars to conquer France, yet stages none of the famous battle scenes, and you needn't follow the story. JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan



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THEATER REVIEW

One Man, Two Guvnors

Playwright: Richard Bean
 At: Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis Ave.
 Tickets: 773-753-4472 or
 CourtTheatre.org; \$45-\$65
 Runs through: June 12

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It's been joked that the United States and the United Kingdom are "two nations divided by a common language." Unfortunately, that quip applies to Court Theatre's disappointing U.S. stab at Richard Bean's hit British comedy One Man, Two Guvnors in its Chicago premiere.

Bean's 1960s British updating of Carlo Goldoni's 1743 Italian *commedia dell'arte* play The Servant of Two Masters was greeted with critical hosannas when it debuted in 2011 at London's National Theatre. The show commercially

transferred to London's West End and onto Broadway, serving as a marvelous vehicle for actor/writer James Corden (His Tony Award-winning performance as the harried servant Francis Henshall caught the attention of late-night CBS-TV executives and the rest is Carpool Karaoke history).

So understandably expectations were very high for Court's take on Bean's knock-about farce—especially since the cast is filled with expert Chicago actor/musicians like Timothy Edward Kane, Hollis Resnik, Ross Lehman, Francis Guinan, Elizabeth Ledo, Alex Goodrich, Allen Gilmore, Erik Hellman and more who share a number of Jeff Awards between them. So why does Court Theatre's production feel like a recipe for comedy gone awry?

One culprit is the very Britishness of Bean's script, with references that often slip past Americans. One Man, Two Guvnors is also filled with fun Grant Olding "skiffle music" songs, a briefly popular and goofy British music craze of the late 1950s and early '60s.

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From left: Timothy Edward Kane, Elizabeth Ledo, Francis Guinan, Allen Gilmore and Hollis Resnik in *One Man, Two Guvnors*.

Photo by Michael Brosilow

But blame also can be aimed at director Charles Newell working in tandem with clowning movement consultant Christopher Bayes. A lot of the slapstick bits—particularly people getting bashed in the face—wear out their welcome pretty quickly.

Newell also is hampered by the venue's space restrictions. Bean's script calls for multiple locations. Original director Nicholas Hytner adeptly deployed those skiffle songs to keep the comic energy up while concealing scene changes.

For Court, set designer Collette Pollard provides a lovely generalized Brighton pier. Unfortunately it doesn't adapt too well for the other locations—particularly in an upper-floor restaurant anteroom that should hint at some

stairs for an elderly waiter to repeatedly trip down.

Newell's unclear delineation of the actors as the musicians also lessens the dramatic thrust. Rather than characters caught up in comic situations, the show becomes more about actors preening and messing about with instruments.

If you want to see what made One Man, Two Guvnors such a comedy phenomenon, see the cinema retransmission this summer of the NT Live taping that captured the original production (a full list of local screenings can be found at www.nlive.com). You'll also see how the Brits ultimately defeated the typically stellar American cast and crew assembled for Court Theatre's One Man, Two Guvnors.

Writers Theatre running 'Company'

Glencoe's Writers Theatre, 325 Tudor Ct., concludes its 2015/16 season with *Company*, featuring music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by George Furth.

The show runs June 15–July 31 in the Alex-

andra C. and John D. Nichols Theatre.

Winner of seven Tony Awards, *Company* looks at contemporary relationships and features some of Sondheim's best-known songs, including "Side by Side by Side," "Marry Me a Little" and "Being Alive."

Tickets are \$35-\$90; visit WritersTheatre.org or call 847-242-6000.



SPOTLIGHT

The ongoing Drinking & Writing show VS: A Battle of Art takes on the colors of the rainbow flag this month as it becomes **Pride VS Prejudice**. See what happens when opposing teams of writer/performers are pitted against each other in creating instant art, dance, song, monologues, sketches and more with LGBTQ themes for the month of June. *Pride VS Prejudice* plays 4 p.m. Saturdays and 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through June 25 at the The Drinking & Writing Theater at Haymarket Pub and Brewery, 737 W. Randolph St. Tickets are \$10; visit DrinkingAndWriting.com for more information.

Caption: Lady Grace Murphy and Alex Kump in *Pride VS Prejudice*. Photo by Steve Mosqueda



CHIN from cover

cles growing up in the care of extended family members without the presence of either of her biological parents and eventually realizing how much becoming a mother was a necessity for her and deciding to pursue motherhood as a single woman through in vitro fertilization, is uniquely personal.

She noted that, as a lesbian, she had to face the challenge of who and what society considers a legitimate family.

"In today's interpretation of family, we've had to fight so hard to legitimize our own grouping of family as LGBT people," she said. "The identity marker LGBT isn't necessarily immediately coupled with the idea of family."

She also noted her experience as a single woman revealed a lot about who society thinks deserves to have a child.

"The other one that maybe I got is that I don't have a right to be pregnant because I'm a single, lesbian, Black, immigrant artist," she said. "Why are you spending time and money to get pregnant when there are children who need to be adopted? How dare you make that choice? Even those of us who do believe you should be able to parent, think go find a child that is already there."

"But, when married couples, men and women, get pregnant the whole world smiles at them. No one asks, 'Why are you getting pregnant?' There are children in the world—why don't you go and get one of them and raise them?"

Chin said she's come to realize the heteronormative idea of motherhood is very narrow, while the actual experience of motherhood is "as wide as the sky or as deep as the ocean."

Chin's daughter is now 4, and she said she continues to chronicle her experience as a mother and how it is impacting her.

"I think maybe as a single lesbian my life was very formed by the need to create the now,"



Staceyann Chin.
PR photo

she said. "I was very caught up with being in partnership now and finding happiness for myself now."

"Being with this kid is showing me how to be in a long term relationship and how to be okay with the ways of life, the ebb and flow of happiness, sorrow, joy, isolation, hope, gratitude, excitement, togetherness and apartness," she said.

"This relationship I have with my kid, I don't imagine it won't last forever. It forces me to practice skills I hadn't before within the context of relationships—forgiveness, not sweating the small stuff. That is an unusual byproduct of this relationship that I haven't really processed yet."

Chin said she is eager to bring MotherStruck! to Chicago.

"To date, it's been the most crazy experience, getting pregnant and having a kid and moving through the world as a mother—and to tell the story on stage and to hear about other people's experience [are] mind-blowing," Chin said.

MotherStruck! will kickoff the Greenhouse Theater Center's "Solo Celebration!" Performances will take place at the Greenhouse, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., June 11-July 17. The performance schedule for MotherStruck! is Wednesdays-Sundays at 7:30 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m.

MotherStruck! is one of 12 plays featured in Greenhouse's "Solo Celebration!" which will include 10 full productions and two limited engagements running June 2016 through July 2017.

Flex passes to the Solo Celebration! series, which offers admission to five plays at a discounted rate, are now on sale. Single tickets are \$32-48, and are on sale now. Flex passes and tickets can be purchased by contacting the box office at 773-404-7336 or GreenhouseTheater.org.

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David Cerda (left) and Ed Jones in *The Divine Sister*.
Photo by Rick Aguilar Studios



NUNN ON ONE: THEATER

The 'Divine' David Cerda now plays a twisted sister

BY JERRY NUNN

The talented David Cerda is not only the artistic director but the co-founder of Hell in a Handbag Productions. He also has written many campy inspired tales over the years for the group, including *Lady X*, *Touched by Jayne Mansfield* and *Caged Dames*.

Some theater troupes he's worked with include *The New Colony*, *Corn Productions* and *Red Orchid Theatre*.

Topping his theater work, he found time to found *The Joans*, a Joan Crawford inspired band that plays tunes to her quotes from her films.

Handbag's latest endeavor, *The Divine Sister*, has Cerda playing a twisted sister named Mother Superior who rules over a new school in Pittsburgh. Plenty of antics are expected, as the Charles Busch-written production mixes movie classics like *The Singing Nun* with *Agnes of God* among others.

Nunn met up with nun for a sister-to-sister interview.

Windy City Times: Hi, David. Where are you originally from?

David Cerda: Hammond, Indiana.

WCT: Did you study theater in school?

DC: No; I was in drama club in high school

and that is what sparked my interest in theater. I signed up for a theater class in college but I never went. I was too terrified to go.

WCT: When did you move to Chicago?

DC: I moved here 35 years ago. I stopped partying in my early 30s and joined a company called Sweetback Productions. It was the storefront theater on Clark Street in Andersonville where the *Jimmy John's* is now. I had a bit part in an unauthorized version of *Female Trouble* by John Waters.

I wrote my first play with Sweetback. It was a Russ Meyer parody called *SuperPussy Vixens, Go Faster! Kill!* They produced it and that was the beginning for me. I left and formed my own company.

WCT: What was the first show with Handbag?

DC: It was *Poseidon! An Upside Down Musical*. That was a big hit and we took it to the International Fringe Festival. We were in the *New York Times* and then things didn't happen liked we hoped. That was the first time that I learned people don't always tell the truth. Maybe they thought the show couldn't work but I just kept going.

WCT: Why do you think many theater companies can't do camp well?

gay king—and this is Tilda Swinton's breakthrough movie.

—Monday, June 20: *The Girl King* (2015): This is a widely acclaimed adaptation of the Queen Christina story—this time with the lesbian romance intact.

For more information on this series and other LGBTQ-themed events throughout June at the Chicago Public Library, visit ChiPubLib.org.

Chicagoan in 'Danger & Eggs'

Transgender Chicagoan Angelica Ross announced on Facebook that she's joining the cast of Amazon's *Danger & Eggs*.

"So excited that I can finally announce my next big BOSS role!" she posted. "Yesterday I joined the cast of Amazon Studios new animated series *Danger & Eggs* as THE MAYOR!"

The animated comedy *Danger & Eggs* (featuring the voice of Saturday Night Live's Aidy Bryant) focuses on teal-haired D.D. Danger and her giant egg best friend, Phillip.

DC: They have to fully commit to it and it has to have some heart to it as well. Sometimes it is crude to be crude or if it is a guy wearing a wig that is all they need. It has to go beyond that. You have to assume your audience is very smart because most people who enjoy camp are very smart people.

I like a crude joke myself but you have to give them more to munch on. They need thought provoking jokes.

WCT: So this show is Charles Busch putting together different nuns' stories?

DC: It's a mishmash and a parody of every nun movie ever made, from *The Trouble with Angels* to *Agnes of God*—even *The Da Vinci Code*. I really enjoyed reading it when I first read it. This was about three years ago.

We had been rehearsing at the Ebenezer Lutheran Church for quite a while but we hadn't rehearsed in an old sanctuary before. The *Chi-Town Squares* rehearse there and it is a huge arched building. It is stained glass and beautiful. It was inspirational. I knew it would be hilarious to do a play about nuns in a church. The set is there and we are just enhancing the space.

We want to immerse everyone in the total nun experience!

WCT: Like when you did *The Birds*?

DC: Exactly.

WCT: The *Mary's Attic* space has been tight for your growing following to fit into recently.

DC: Yes, we love *Mary's*. Our audience likes to drink and eat so we will still have refreshments for them at the space. We are arranging it with a special license.

We are excited to see how it will turn out. The director, Shade Murray, is amazing. I got to know him when I did *Accidentally, Like a Martyr* for *Red Orchid*. We share a lot of the same sensibilities so I feel very fortunate.

Half the cast is Handbag and half are new people.

WCT: How is that mixing?

DC: It is mixing very well. Shade cast it very well and has the right people. We are having a blast at rehearsals and having a good time being nuns. These are the nuns from the '60s with false eyelashes and lipstick.

WCT: Are there a lot of rules with nuns about makeup and such?

DC: I think there used to be. There is that one nun on *The Voice* in Italy singing a cover of "Like a Virgin."

WCT: How is it not having control not writ-

ing or directing?

DC: I never direct. I would make people cry if I directed.

WCT: Like Joan Crawford!

DC: Exactly like Joan. I'm not very subtle sometimes. They need a director that can take that ego from an actor and make them feel they are creating it themselves. Actors are a precious bunch.

I think the success of *Handbag* and any group is that you have to find people you can trust and give them the space to do what they need.

WCT: You have such a loyal group of performers in *Handbag*.

DC: Yes, we have been around long enough to see people grow and leave the company but stay friends. I will see people in a show that just had a baby. Everybody is growing up!

WCT: Actor Ed Jones is in *The Divine Sister*?

DC: Oh, yes. He's been in practically everything. I think I have been in less shows than Ed. He is a *Handbag* favorite. He's naturally funny. You can always count on him to deliver. I feel more like the straight man around Ed!

WCT: What your plans after this?

DC: In August, we are doing the *Bette Midler* show that we did last year. That will be a limited run at *Stage 773*.

I am currently writing a Halloween show called *Scooby-Don't*. It is a parody of *Scooby-Doo* but takes on trans issues and sexual identifications. In *Scooby-Doo* things never appeared what they seemed to be but they always took off their masks. We are taking the mystery and playing with it.

WCT: When are *The Joans* playing again?

DC: We are doing *Midsommarfest* June 11 at 4 p.m. The *Joans* when we first started were very different. We are all doing different things now and getting older. It is hard for *The Joans* to get together even for a rehearsal these days.

I would like to do some new *Joans* material. We have been getting together and the dynamic is always interesting with *The Joans*. It's kind of like *Fleetwood Mac*...without the sex!

The Divine Sister flies into Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 1650 W. Foster Ave., June 4-July 10. Tickets and info can be found at HandbagProductions.org.

Jerusalem troupe in Chicago June 18

A Wider Bridge—the LGBTQ advocacy group that aims to connections between the Israeli and North American LGBTQ communities—announced the U.S. tour of c.a.t.a.m.o.n., a Jerusalem dance group.

Arthur Slepian, executive director of Wider Bridge, said in a statement, "Through arts and culture that challenge the boundaries of religion, race, gender, and sexuality, these young artists are cultivating a new and hopeful environment of pluralism, diversity and understanding in a city that has seen much tension and division."

The troupe will stop in Chicago on Saturday, June 18, at Canvas, 2313 W. North Ave., at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$15-\$18; visit <http://bit.ly/1NtzEm9>.

'Jazz for Women' benefit June 5

Chicago jazz singer Elaine Dame will host a benefit concert, "Jazz for Women: An Evening of Music and Fellowship," on Sunday, June 5, 6-9 p.m., at Southport and Irving (SIP), 4000 N. Southport Ave.

Sponsored in part by WDCB Jazz and Blues Radio, there will be a \$10 suggested donation at the door and raffles throughout the evening, with continuous music from over 40 local jazz artists. SIP will donate 10 percent of the evening's proceeds to the Chicago Foundation for Women.

See CFW.org or ElaineDame.com.

'Queer Kings & Queens' screenings in June

The Queer Film Society, in association with The Chicago Public Library, is presenting "Queer Kings & Queens," a free series celebrating Victorian-era LGBT movies in honor of Gay Pride Month.

The screenings will take place at the Beazian branch of the Chicago Public Library, 1226 W. Ainslie St., at 6 p.m. (Doors open at 5:30 p.m.)

This series contains films with mature subject matter. Viewer discretion is advised.

Screenings are:

—Monday, June 6: *Queen Christina* (1933): Bisexual screen legend Greta Garbo is at the height of her ironic beauty in this MGM classic, as the queen of Sweden, the ruler who wants to remain "a bachelor girl" but who finds herself drawn into an illicit romance.

—Monday, June 13: *Edward II* (1991): Queer activist/filmmaker Derek Jarman's poetic and highly erotic biography of England's

nightspots
 weekly nightlife section in **WINDY CITY TIMES**

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International Mr. Leather 2016 David "Tigger" Bailey (second from left) with first runner-up Todd Harris (right), second runner-up Adam "Pup Vino" Henderson (left) and International Mr. Bootblack Erick Joseph.
 Photos by Verdell Shannon

International Mr. Leather 2016

International Mr. Leather, Chicago's annual celebration of the leather lifestyle, culminated in the contest to choose the new titleholder, Sunday, May 29, at Harris Theater, 205 E. Randolph St. When the dust settled, Mr. New Jersey Leather 2016 David "Tigger" Bailey was named the new International Mr. Leather, the 38th man to hold the title since the contest's inception in 1979.

Rounding out the top three were two Chicagoans: Mr. Chicago Leather 2016 Todd Harris was named first runner-up, while Mr. Midwest Leather 2015 Adam "Pup Vino" Henderson took second runner-up.

The new International Mr. Bootblack is Erick Joseph of Anchorage, Alaska.

The Sunday-night contest rounded out a weekend jam-packed with parties and leather/fetish community get-togethers. The annual IML Victory Party immediately followed the contest at House of Blues Chicago. The Black and Blue Ball, the final official event of the big weekend, took place Monday, May 30, at Sound-Bar, 226 W. Ontario St.



Rick Storer (right) accepts a \$20,000 donation from Centaur MC to Leather Archives & Museum.



IML founder Chuck Renslow.



A number of different scenes (including the Pup Play Party) from the IML Leather Market, Sat., May 28, at the Congress Plaza Hotel.
 Photos by Kirk Williamson



FURBALL 2016

IML and Bear Pride converge at this annual hirsute sweatfest, Sat., May 28.
 Photos by Verdell Shannon



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OUR WEEKLY PICKS TO PLAN YOUR NIGHTLIFE CALENDAR

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Mariah Lynn: Live in Concert



Sat., June 4, 8 pm
Seven Nightclub,
3206 N. Halsted St.
See the star of VH1's Love & Hip-Hop. Doors open at 8. VIP meet and greet with hosted bar 9-10 for \$25. Advance general admission tix \$12 (or \$20 at the door). VIP bottle service packages available. Contact sean@lkhgmt.com.

DILF: Pop Daddy



Sat., June 4, 9 pm
The Sofo Tap,
4923 N. Clark St.
Welcoming one of our most beloved daddies to celebrate Prince's birthday. Superfan of all POP LIFE, David Paul steps in as Daddy Pop, working with DJ Moose to funk it up for one night only. Celebrating Prince and all his surrounding court and influencers, new and old skool. Party like it's 1999.

Sidetrack Outspoken!



Tue., June 7, 6 pm
Sidetrack,
3349 N. Halsted St.
LGBTQ storytelling the first Tuesday of every month, curated by David Fink. Everyone has a story.



Mr. Chicago Leather Todd Harris welcomes the world to the "Best of Chicago," Wed., May 25. Photos by Kirk Williamson

the DISH
Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR
Gene & Georgetti

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Gene & Georgetti (500 N. Franklin St.; GeneAndGeorgetti.com) is not just a restaurant—it's an institution. In a world of restaurant trends, this restaurant has always been steady, offering patrons a generous helping of tradition.

The old-school Italian steakhouse has earned this label not only because of its extensive history (with 2016 marking its 75th year of existence since Gene Michelotti and Alfredo "Georgetti" Federighi founded it) but because of how the staff seemingly treats every customer to walk through the restaurant's doors. Each patron is treated like an extended part of the Gene & Georgetti family—treatment that practically ensures a loyal following.

The family mentality extends to the staff itself. During a media visit, it was revealed that the



Chicken alla Joe at Gene & Georgetti. Photo by Ed Negron

shortest time one of the servers has been with Gene & Georgetti was 19 years—with the formidable JJ proudly stating he's been with the restaurant for more than 35 years.

By the way, said history has included an influx of celebrities, including Frank Sinatra, Lucille Ball (the subject of a fascinating story involving the restaurant), Keanu Reeves, Russell Crowe, Bob Hope and one of this writer's favorite actors, Dennis Farina. (It turns out that Farina went to school with Tony Durpetti, who married Michelotti's daughter, Marion, in 1969.) Carol Burnett—who was in town for her shows at The Chicago The-

atre—was slated to stop by the day I was there.

And then there are the murals. While you can practically smell the cigars that were smoked back in the day, there are visual feasts through the place—including the one in the Chicago Room on the second floor that even shows Durpetti as a kid.

General Manager Rich Ciota (who's pretty busy constantly commuting between the long-established River North location and the Rosemont branch that opened last year) discussed several aspects of Gene & Georgetti. (Ciota went to Kendall College, adding, "I graduated in '93. I graduated on a Friday and started here the following Monday—and I've been here ever since.") Ciota comes off as pretty old-school himself; talking about the culinary concept of molecular gastronomy, he said, "I'm here to eat. I'm not here to experiment. What am I—a science major?"

And, of course, there's the food. At Gene & Georgetti, it's about dishes meant to satisfy in terms of quantity and quality. Even a side of garlic spinach looked like it could feed a family of four. However, there were plenty of other delicious items, including the chicken alla Joe, garbage salad and perfectly cooked New York strip as well as desserts such as the lemon creme cake, spumoni and tiramisu.

Service, history and hearty food are three of the reasons Gene & Georgetti has been around for several decades—and probably will be for several more.



BIG CHICKS

Record Box with DJ Hifi Sean, Thu., May 26. Photos by Kyle Henderson

HYDRATE

Getting into the club with Initiation, Thu., May 26. Photos by Verdell Shannon



"She's a lucky girl 'cause there's a lot of good-looking guys. If I was gay, I'd be in paradise!" — Bachelorette contestant **Daniel Maguire**. On the season premiere, Daniel is the guy who was poking male contestants in the belly button, cruising the waiters, stripping down to his underwear to show off his body and then jumping drunkenly in the pool. Kinda sounds like he was in paradise. Maybe *If I Was Gay?* could be the name of his spin-off.

Many times, people in the public eye use their position as a platform to air dirty laundry. Remember when Donald Trump gave out Lindsey Graham's cellphone number? I was reminded of this while following the evolving story of **Ozzy Osbourne** cheating on **Sharon** with a hairdresser. Last week, **Kelly Osbourne** posted this to her 4 million Twitter followers: "Anyone looking for cheap chunky LOW-lights a blow out and a blow-job call" and added the private phone number of the hairdresser. While most people applauded her for attacking the alleged homewrecker, one person took her to task, saying, "Hate your father not the woman. He did this 2 ur family." Kelly was not having it: "Are you in my family? No you are not you have no idea what she did! So keep ur high-mighty opinions to yourself!" She then added: "My father is almost 70 ever heard of elder abuse?" I must be missing something—how is giving a 70-year-old married man a blow job elder abuse? Maybe she used her teeth!

One of our first stories of 2016 was when police raided the home of *Glee* star **Mark Salling** and arrested him for possession of child pornography. Now, five months later, a grand jury has indicted him for receiving and possessing child pornography on his computer and a flash drive. According to the indictment, Salling used the Internet to receive a still image and a video on Dec. 26, 2015. The second count charges him with possessing two videos of child pornography on Dec. 29. Just to be accurate (and because I know you're wondering), in both instances, the images were of young girls. In addition to these two instances, reports are circulating that Salling's computer was also found to hold thousands of images of children "significantly younger than 15 or 16 years old." If found guilty, receiving child porn has a minimum sentence of five years in prison.

So now we know what happens if you receive photos of naked, underage youths. But what if you send naked photos of yourself to underage youths? Because that's the charge against **Bruce Lancot**, a high school teacher in New Hampshire. It should be noted that Lancot is not only a teacher, but co-advisor of the Gay Straight Alliance Club. Lancot is currently on paid administrative leave while the investigation continues.

Allegedly, Lancot was communicating with several students via the gay hook-up app Grindr. According to reports, all of the alleged "victims" are boys (well, duh, it's Grindr), and the youngest is 15 years old. However, if the "victims" are on Grindr, they are looking for sex and open to all sorts of communication—including receiving messages and photos. And, I hasten to add, Grindr does make all users confirm that they are 18 years of age or older. While reports say that the teacher specifically targeted his students, I have yet to hear any evidence of that. Plus, have you looked at some of the profile photos on Grindr? You could be chatting with me and never know it. PHEW!

Last summer, **Jake Gyllenhaal** flexed his thes-



Jake Gyllenhaal is flexing his (acting) muscles, Billy says.
Still from the film *Enemy*

pianistic muscles in a semi-staged production of *Little Shop of Horrors* at New York's City Center. Not only did he have a blast, but the sold-out production made oodles of money for Encores!—the group that puts on limited runs of classic shows in semi-staged productions. In an attempt to top himself (and take a moment to picture that), Jake has committed to do another show with them. This time, he'll take on Sunday in the Park with George for a single performance on Oct. 24 as a benefit for City Center. The tickets went on sale May 25 at noon and were sold out at 12:40 p.m. Rumor has it that they will be adding at least one more show soon enough, so stay tuned.

Whoopi Goldberg is executive-producing a new show for Oxygen next season. *Strut* is a reality show about Slay Model Management, the world's first transgender modeling agency. Goldberg stated that we would be surprised how many of the models we see hawking products are transgender. "You may even be surprised to discover that you have been seeing and interacting with transgender men and women in ways you didn't even realize," she said.

A number of you have been asking me if *Dancing with the Stars* winner **Nyle DiMarco** is in a relationship. We don't know specifics, but he has been spending a lot of time hiking (shirtless, naturally) with **Rodiney Santiago**—yes, the same Rodiney who appeared on *The A List* with **Reichen**. (Remember Reichen?) In addition to modeling, Rodiney appears to be available for "private training sessions" and also private Skype calls at the price of \$150 for 30 minutes. Anyone surprised he's found a profession where he can charge by the minute? Hands? I'll run some photos of the two (together and separately) on BillyMasters.com.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Patrick in San Diego: "Do you know model **Mark Brent**? I've heard there are some nude photos of him floating around out there. If anyone can find them, you can."

Much like Lana Turner at the soda counter, **Mark Brent** was just a normal 18-year-old boy who was discovered in a shopping mall. In the past few years, the fetching fella has been featured in a number of high-profile campaigns for H&M, Calvin Klein, Abercrombie & Fitch, etc. Allegedly, Brent sent out some photos and videos of a very graphic nature. He was smart enough to not show his face. But, alas, his downfall was a distinctive tattoo on his hip. And, as you know what they say—hips don't lie! You can see every inch of Brent on BillyMasters.com.

When I'm trotting out a reference to Lana Turner, it's definitely time to end yet another column. I think it bears mentioning that while I am willing to bend over backward (and forward) for my fans, you must be at least 18 years of age to ride www.BillyMasters.com, the site that doesn't have a height restriction. If you have a question for me to tackle, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before **Mark Brent** appears in a video with **Shakira**! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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The annual IML house music jam moves to Rogers Park, Sat., May 28.
Photos by Kirk Williamson

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BOOK REVIEW

Stone's Throw

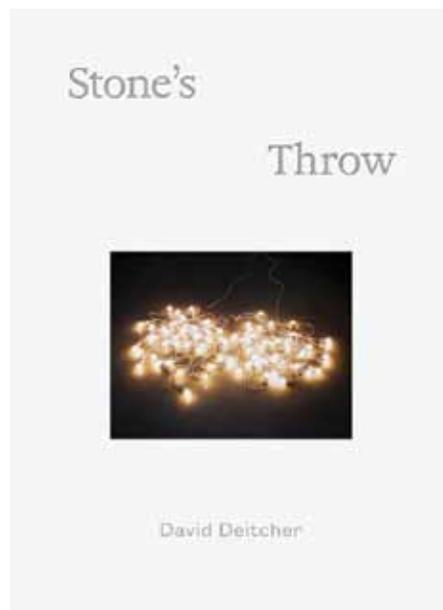
by David Deitcher

\$28.99, Secretary Press; 158 pages

BY LIZ BAUDLER

As an art critic in the 1980s, David Deitcher had firsthand experiences with gay artists confronting the AIDS crisis and the general mortality of their peers and themselves. *Stone's Throw* grew out of a lecture about the art of Felix Gonzalez-Torres, and eventually expanded into its current state. Now in lush book form, Deitcher dissects Gonzales-Torres's works, and their themes. Deitcher also recollects his friendship with the artist and curator Bill Olander, influential in promoting LGBTQ artists and also an AIDS victim.

Much of what gay artists created in this period memorialized the fallen, and common themes appear to be collapse and dispersal, though Deitcher points out that Gonzalez-Torres was unique in choosing everyday objects to bear the weight of his symbolic meanings. In "Untitled (Perfect Lovers)" Torres paired two clocks supposed to run in synchronicity, but whose batteries were eventually destined to fail. His piece "Untitled (Placebo)"



where viewers were invited to take a piece of candy from a pile strewn all over the floor, seems especially mutable, and was a tribute to his lover, Ross Laycock, who died of AIDS.

Deitcher writes of finding a piece of candy from one of Gonzalez-Torres's works in a drawer years later, and how discarded wrappers would lay on gallery floors as if to further reinforce the carnage. Gonzalez-Torres's trope was the endless piece, whether it be stacks of paper or piles of candies, which further invokes a theme of regeneration, at weirdly joyful odds with the bleakness at hand. The artist left it up to the piece's curators about whether to replenish his work, leading to meditations on existence and authenticity. While this is absolutely the work's character, it's heady dialogue for Deitcher to begin with, and at times it feels discomfiting without more grounding in why he's choosing to address his subject.

There may have been some logistical reasons why *Stone's Throw* wasn't a more gripping read for me. For starters, my review copy was a PDF—not the best format for a book that is equal parts art and narrative. The layout, with footnotes on the left side of the page, seemed appropriate for the sheer amount of footnotes but interrupted the natural flow of reading. In addition, the artworks and articles Deitcher references were front-loaded, and one had to mentally recall the piece, or perhaps flip (in my case, scroll) back to it. When writing about art, it seems logical to keep the images close at hand. Adding works by artists other than

Gonzalez-Torres also confused me: they are treated as a counterpoint to the book's subject but not embraced fully. Nothing wrong with that, but upon encountering image of works without any textual context, one might reasonably expect them to have more stage time rather than mere inclusion as antitheses.

Deitcher is easier to follow when he writes experientially rather than analytically. If *Stone's Throw* has a narrative, it is focused on Deitcher watching Gonzalez-Torres and Olander succumbing to AIDS. It's hard to pinpoint Deitcher's exact role at the time: He appears to be intimate friends with both Torres and Olander, present as both of them began wasting away. In 1987, he visited the AIDS quilt with a sick Olander, and ends *Stone's Throw* with the image of his friend's name on the quilt, taken on a return journey in 1996. Including these recollections earlier might have provided more justification for Deitcher viewing the artwork the way: As such, it's an uneasy marriage between two halves of related subject matter.

In its own way, the book is quietly moving, a testament to the bonds art can form and the power of the simple and subtle creation. However, it feels less accessible than it could be. Deitcher's thoughts are valuable, but this is a book for the collector, not the curious.



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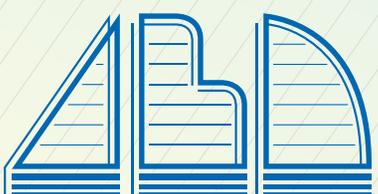
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Wed., June 1

Out of the Office Kick off Pride month. Enjoy sponsored cocktails, cash bar and light fare. \$10 donation online ensure admittance to this popular party. 5:30pm - 8:00pm The Godfrey Rooftop, 127 W. Huron at La Salle, Chicago <http://lgbtcc.com/pride-kick-off-june-1>

Drinks and Desserts Honoring Dyke March To honor Dyke March's rich history in Andersonville, folks are invited for drinks and desserts at Early2Bed, who has been a great partner in the past. Accessible for those on wheels. Any print materials will also be available in large print and in accessible electronic format on Dyke March and i2i website. Brief Remarks at 6:30 p.m. Contact Person: Liz Thomson. 6:00pm - 6:30pm Early to Bed 5044 N Clark St Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/groups/dykemarchchicago/>

AIDS Foundation of Chicago Summer Kickoff 20 percent of the bar proceeds to the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. Raffle prizes from businesses including Replay, Lady Gregory, Chicago International Film Festival, Taverna 750, and many more. 6:00pm - 9:00pm DS Tequila Company 3352 N Halsted St.

Information Session for Affinity Community Services Board of Directors Consider sitting on the Board of Directors. 6:30pm - 8:30pm Affinity Community Services 1424 E. 53rd St. Suite 306 Chicago

Thursday, June 2

United Latinx Pride Week 2016 7th annual. Free events across Chicago to

**'OFFICE' MIX
Wed., June 1**

"Out of the Office" will take place at The Godfrey, 127 W. Huron St.

Photo from 2015 by Ed Negrón

celebrate Queer Latinx Community. Through Wed. Jun 8 11pm 10:00am <http://www.unitedlatinpride.org/participate...>

Chefs and the City Savor the flavor of a great cause: Heartland Alliance and Heartland Health Outreach, Inc. (HHO). 6:30pm - 9:30pm Montgomery Club, 500 W. Superior St., Chicago Tickets: <https://secure3.convio.net/ha/site/Ticketing?view=Tickets&id=106444>

American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) LGBT military veterans meet on the second floor first Thursday of each month. 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago 773-472-6469

<http://www.averchicago.org>

Friday, June 3

Saugatuck's Women's Weekend Becomes Go Girl Saugatuck Mimi Gonzalez is comedian and native Michigander recreating the Dunes Resort's traditional women's weekend. DJs All the Way Kay from Chicago and Detroit's DJ Lena will serve up house and fresh dance music to a packed dance floor, plus comedy and music on Saturday to promote women's voices in song and laughter. Through June 5. 3:00pm The Dunes Resort 333 Blue Star Hwy Douglas, MI 49406 <http://GoGirlSaugatuck.com>

Harbor 57: Free Food and Support for Homeless Youth Youth ages 13-25, including children of young parents. All identities are welcome. 4:30pm - 7:30pm St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 5700 Midway Park, Chicago (Austin) 773-378-8111

Saturday, June 4

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

Chicago Rhythm Fest The culminating performance of Chicago Human Rhythm Project's two-month, citywide festival STOMPING GROUNDS, a showcase of events, mini-concerts, lecture-demonstrations, and master classes celebrating the diversity of the percussive arts, highlighting some of the city's premier dance groups. 7:30pm Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University 50 E Congress Pkwy Chicago 312-341-2300

By Women For Women: Pride Kickoff Island Style A new meetup. Pride cocktail contest to raise funds for Center

on Halsted and other local charities, along with Aloha Dancers, a limbo contest, and dancing. \$25 before May 30, \$40 after. 6:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/events/1147266181971061/> Tickets: <http://community.centeronhalsted.org/bwfw>

Sunday, June 5

aChurch4Me Sunday Worship Service A place to find peace, comfort and always needed prayer. 11:00am AChurch4Me MCC, 7366 N Clark St, Chicago <http://www.achurch4me.org>

Dignity/Chicago Discussion of Amoris Laetitia - The Joy of Love Titled "Pope Francis on Love and the Family: Good News, or Same Old, Same Old?", the discussion will delve into the letter and explore how its message can be interpreted for the LGBTQI community. 2:00pm Broadway United Methodist Church, 3338 N Broadway; 312-458-9438 <http://dignity-chicago.org/>

Monday, June 6

35 Years on the Frontlines: Local, National and Global HIV/AIDS Prevention On the 35th anniversary of the first HIV/AIDS diagnosis, join the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, and Human Rights Watch for a discussion on present and future of prevention efforts from both a local and global perspective. Panelists include ERIK GLENN, executive director of the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, MEGAN MCLEMORE, senior researcher in Health and Human Rights for Human Rights Watch; JIM PICKETT, director of prevention advocacy, AIDS Foundation Chicago. Presented in partnership with Pride Action Tank. While there is no charge for this brown bag lunch program, all guests must RSVP to

Jackie Thaney at jthaney@aidschicago.org. Guests should bring ID and allow time for security entrance procedures. 12:00pm AIDS Foundation of Chicago 200 W Jackson Blvd Suite 2200 Chicago <http://aidschicago.org>

Queer Kings and Queens - Queen Christina Bisexual screen legend Greta Garbo is at the height of her iconic beauty in this 1933 MGM classic as the queen of Sweden who wants to remain a "bachelor girl" but who finds herself drawn into an illicit romance. 6:00pm Chicago Public Library, Bezazian Branch, 1226 W. Ainslie St., Chicago <http://www.queerfilmsociety.org/pages/events.html>

Tuesday, June 7

Intersex Chicago Peer-led, casual conversation group for those who identify as intersex or think they might be. Also open to significant others, family, friends, allies, and anyone with questions. 6:30pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St.; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/intersexchicago/>

Wed., June 8

Trans Ice Cream Social For those who identify under the umbrella of gender diversity, the Center's first-ever Trans Community Ice Cream Social, to be held on the Richard M. Daly Roof Terrace. Meet one another, learn more about Center on Halsted's programming, and meet Vanessa Sheridan, Director of Transgender Relations and Community Engagement. All ages and gender identities welcome. Free event. 6:00pm - 8:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=12167> Tickets: <https://community.centeronhalsted.org/TCICS>

Windy City Times publishes LGBT visitor's guide to Chicago and Illinois

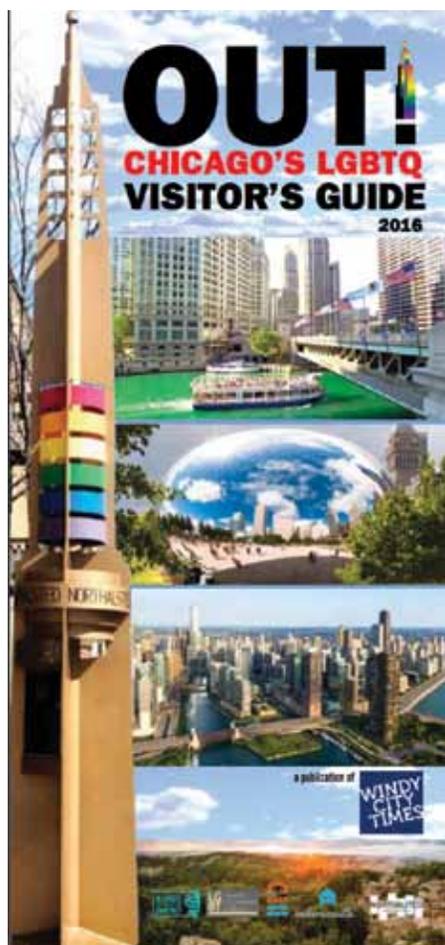
Visitors to Chicago have a new guide to help navigate LGBTQ and mainstream events and places to see: The OUT! Guide: Chicago's LGBTQ Visitor's Guide is now available.

The 124-page guide, published by Windy City Times, includes a section on things to do outside of the city, from the Shawnee National Forest to Starved Rock State Park and Springfield. The rest of the guide focuses on Chicago and its suburbs, with hundreds of attractions, museums, art galleries, architectural locations, theaters, dance companies, restaurants, music venues, LGBT clubs and parties, sports leagues, bookstores, events and more listed. There's also a quick reference to travel and accommodations, and a guide to the city's many neighborhoods.

While a lot of the LGBTQ community is concentrated on the city's North Side, especially in Boystown, Lakeview and Andersonville, the guide is careful to provide things to do across the city and suburbs, from Pullman, Little Village, Bridgeport and Hyde Park to Humboldt Park, Oak Park and Evanston. And the traditional downtown tourist attractions are also included, such as Millennium Park, the Art Institute and Navy Pier.

The guide will be distributed throughout Illinois and in neighboring states, and will be available as a free download on the Windy City Times website at the link: http://www.windy-citymediagroup.com/pdf/outchicagolgbtqvisitorsguide_low.pdf.

U.S. visitors can also request a free copy to be mailed to them, on a limited basis, by emailing editor@windycitymediagroup.com with the full name and mailing address for the copy to be mailed.



Fawzia Mirza at the White House.

Photo by Nabeela Rasheed

White House honors local lesbian actress

The White House recently honored local Pakistani actress Fawzia Mirza, an out lesbian, as a "Champion of Change."

According to the Daily Pakistan, "the award is conferred to artists who are able to bring about a change in their respective communities through their work and bridge gaps while highlighting issues of shared interest for different societies."

Mirza lives in Chicago but her parents are from Karachi, Pakistan. She's an actor, writer and producer and has written and produced theater, web series, short films, documentaries and more.

Recently, Mirza co-wrote and starred in the film Signature Move, which was featured at Tribeca's TFI Networ April 19-20. Signature Move is a romantic comedy and a coming-of-age feature film about a Pakistani-Muslim woman named Zaynab who falls in love with Alma, a Mexican woman with whom Zaynab connects through culture, food and wrestling. The movie's organizers recently met their \$30,000 goal on Indiegogo.

The Daily Pakistan item is at <http://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/pakistan/pakistani-canadian-fawzia-mirza-wins-champion-of-change-award/>.



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