ONE YEAR LATER: PULSE VIGIL
Memorial event held at Center on Halsted.
Photo by Matt Simonette

ALEXANDRA BILLINGS
Entertainer/actor talks Chicago roots, Caitlyn Jenner.
PR photo

TRANSLIFE
WCT profiles Chicago House program.
Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

CHICAGO PRIDE FEST
Well-Strung (pictured) is among the weekend of entertainers.
Photo by Scott Henrichsen

SUSAN HENKING
Shimer College president says goodbye.
Photo from Shimer College

RESIST
Chicago Equality Rally shows LGBTQ power
Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)

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SAGE leader speaks about LGBT senior initiatives

BY MATT SIMONETTE

On June 20, officials from Advocacy & Services for LGBT Elders (SAGE) will gather at Center on Halsted to pay tribute to local leaders working on behalf of LGBT seniors.

The relative invisibility of seniors has been shifting further to the forefront of LGBT advocacy recently. A two-day symposium in May gathered comments from community members and leaders to create an action-plan on how to tackle the myriad challenges facing seniors.

State Rep. Greg Harris will be honored at the gathering, said Michael Adams, SAGE’s executive director.

Adams explained that SAGE has pinpointed four organizational priorities guiding their most recent work, the first being “making sure that LGBT elders have the services, supports and programs that they need.” He praised work done by Center on Halsted, which is a SAGE affiliate, in that respect. “They’re doing great work in providing service programs,” he said.

A second priority is what Adams called “living fully”—making sure that quality of life in one’s later years is not determined solely by achieving basic sustenance, but also “having reasons to live and be excited, and have things to look forward to.”

Building ties across generations is a third priority. “We know that many LGBT elders grow old in isolation,” Adams said. “...They feel invisible in the very community that they’ve helped create. Everybody benefits when elders and others in the community spend time together.”

The last priority is encouraging an overall age-friendly LGBT community, he added.

“It really comes down to building connections, building relations and building dialogue,” Adams explained, noting that a recent national initiative called SAGE Table, which took place May 18, put those goals to work.

SAGE Executive Director Michael Adams.
Photo courtesy of SAGE

The bottom line on disclosing our transgender histories

Jennifer Finney Boylan writes about the outing of Zeke Smith on Survivor.

She initially discounts the use of the term stealth, which she describes as a term not much used by trans communities:

“There are many people like Mr. Smith, who live in what used to be called ‘stealth.’ But since that word implies, à la Mr. Varner, that transgender people are deceptive, it’s not as common today.”

Two paragraphs later she uses the term to describe the realities of living with our pasts.

“Living in stealth can be a heavy burden, though; it requires replacing one secret for another, having to constantly invent a story to explain one’s past.”

As a writer seeking to find new and kind words to describe our wonderful transgender and transsexual lives, I find her use of stealth contradictory, but not surprising.

In the comments section over and over people express the stress of feeling like the person they think is one gender isn’t that gender really. Even Boylan writes:

“I can tell you that I have seen the expression in people’s eyes change the moment they learn my history, as if suddenly the person they thought they knew had become a stranger. It makes me want to shout, What is it about me that you think has changed? As I once asked my own wife, after I came out to her many years into our marriage, Am I not me?”

I can certainly relate to these feelings.

I have had a good think on this and offer what for me came has rather like a lightning bolt to my cranial:

“As transgender and transsexual people the current system in which we live—where we arbitrarily assign gender, teach our children only two gender pronouns and characterize gender transitions as decisive breaks with our pasts—we can’t disclose our truths as this system requires us to see our choices as ones that must be kept from others.”

We pass or live in stealth. We use both terms to our detriment.

Are you a liar or a thief?

Passing means we are attempting to convince others we are something we aren’t. We are liars.

If we say we pass, then we agree with society’s notions that our birth bodies are the bedrock of our identity. If we really are a woman-born woman or a man-born-man, what are we passing off and why are we doing it? If we’ve always been the gender we are now, we’re just ourselves, right?

Correction

In last week’s article regarding the Lilly Wachowsk/Tennessee Loveless art exhibitions at Center on Halsted, it should have stated that Wachowsk’s works focus on the murders of all trans individuals and not just transgender women.

Windy City Times regrets the error.

Stealth means furtive or sneaky and possesses the same word origin as steal. We are now thieves.

When we live in stealth are we stealing something from someone or are we being stolen from?

When we live in stealth or we pass, our very identities become something so threatening we must hide it.

Stealth and passing protect others from their own unacknowledged anxieties about gender. They don’t know what we know:

“Gender is one big, tyrannical and often deadly system over which few of us much control.”

Our very being threatens this system.

When we reveal our histories and complex truths of our fantastic, beautiful bodies I know we’re often most at risk for dismissal or dismemberment.

But we aren’t thieves, snatching someone’s beliefs from them nor are we pretending to be something we aren’t.

Does anyone else besides me feel like people act as though we’ve told them Santa Claus doesn’t exist when we share our transgender truths? Having lived on hormones now for more than 20 years my tolerance for coddling childish responses to my gender history has diminished to null.

We aren’t some cabal of secret keepers ripping away a dearly held truth from a bunch of 11-year-olds.

No. We are a people with a confidence to share with people we care about. We get to define what care means, always and forever. No act compels us to share this confidence, not a job, not a date and certainly not sex.

The bottom line is the gender system as it is needs us to think we’re the problem. They can then continue their child-like beliefs about gender and transgender and transsexual people.

We aren’t now, nor were we ever, the source of the problem.

We are living, thriving human beings with sacred scars on our bodies and vast wells of willpower and aplomb in our souls.

We have a confidence to share. We will share it with people in whom we have great confidence. Confidence that they will act kindly and admiringly and thankfully welcome our trust in them.

When you find someone like this, praise every known and unknown spiritual power. They are rarer than red beryl and more vital than air.

Share confidently and proudly, my dear friends.

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Chicagoans remember the Pulse tragedy

By Matt Simonette

Center on Halsted’s Hoover-Leppen Theater was filled to capacity June 12 as LGBTQ community members and allies came together to mark the year that has passed since the shootings at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

An overflow crowd watched on television monitors in the theater’s lobby as the program began with remarks from Joanna Thompson, the Center’s community outreach and engagement coordinator. She explained that the vigil was planned around the motto “Honor them with Action” and encouraged audience members to add that as a hashtag to social media postings about Pulse to honor the 49 individuals who were killed that early morning.

Chicago Commission on Human Relations Commissioner Mona Noriega read a letter sent by Mayor Rahm Emanuel. He called the massacre “an attack on our fundamental values—values that we share as Chicagoans and as Americans. It was an attack on culture and community. It was an attack on love, life and our inherent liberties therein. So in honoring the lives and legacies of those taken, we are challenged to stand against violence and against hate. We know this was not just an attack on one city or on one venue. It was an attack on all of us.

“We know that most of the victims of this massacre were mostly Puerto Rican and Latino. So today we stand in solidarity not just with the LGBT community, but also with the Latino community. Today, and every day, we must stand up with everyone who feels marginalized, and let them know that they are part of our Chicago family,” Emanuel added.

Noriega offered her own reflections on the event, explaining that the shootings were “clearly a hate crime” and that the community had lived through collective traumas before, such as during the AIDS crisis. She praised the many communities that banded together to support one another in the wake of the Pulse incident and remarked on the “powerfulness of knowing that when I am attacked … I don’t stand alone.”

Mike Morales, who attended University of Central Florida, recalled his horror when he had heard about the shootings. He was not able to contact friends and family members on that day since phone lines were so busy.

“The fear, anguish and anger were hard to contain,” he said. “… Forty-nine souls tragically passed away and we’ve mourned their lives ever since.”

The vigil, Morales concluded, reaffirmed “our commitment to love and our absolute rejection of hatred.”

David Gauna, a member of the Association of Latinos/as Motivating Action (ALMA) Youth Advisory Board, spoke further about the episode’s impact on Chicago’s Latinx community. He said that he’d often loved Latin nights at gay clubs “because that’s when I had the best chance of meeting someone like me.”

Gauna said that the days following the shootings were marked by “pain and confusion” but also a tremendous amount of support.

“I will not go back to a life of fear,” he added. “After a performance of Cyndi Lauper’s “True Colors” by the Windy City Gay Chorus and the Windy City Treble Quire, Rev. Joy Strome of Lakeview Presbyterian Church offered remarks. The names and ages of all 49 of the Pulse victims were then read, each punctuated with a bell toll.

Finally, forty-nine candles were lit and passed to many in the audience.

“Our movement is guided by 49 spirits, who are dancing, who are voguing, and who will continue to live through us,” said Gauna.

Left: The names of the Pulse victims are read. Right: Windy City Gay Chorus and Windy City Treble Quire.
30 Under 30 Awards taking place June 21

Windy City Times will again mark Pride Month with its annual 30 Under 30 Awards.

The ceremony will take place Wed, June 21. Like last year, the event will take place at Polo Cafe and Catering, 3322 S. Morgan St.

There will be a 5:30 p.m. reception, with the program being 6-7:30 p.m.

Honorees are 30 years or under as of June 30, and have made some substantial contributions to the Chicagoland LGBT community, whether in the fields of entertainment, politics, health, activism, academics, sports or other areas.

Among those receiving awards this year are RuPaul’s Drag Race’s Shea Coulee and Russian-born violinist Artem Koleso.

Windy City Times Managing Editor Andrew Davis coordinates the awards program for the paper.

Hundreds of people have been honored by the paper in the more than 10 years since the awards were established.

Most honorees have gone on to great success in their careers and educations, including working for the Obama presidential campaign and administration, plus individual successes in music, legal, professional and academic careers and much more.

Foss-Eggemann named to Human Rights Commission

Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner has named Maine Township Republican Committeewoman Charlene Foss-Eggemann, a prominent figure in GOP politics in the northwest suburbs, to the Illinois Human Rights Commission.

The Commission investigates and adjudicates claims of discrimination in the state.

A corporate counsel consultant for LexisNexis, Foss-Eggemann is a resident of Park Ridge. “Her extensive experience as an attorney will be a valuable addition to the commission,” said a May 5 press release from Rauner’s office.

Maine Township encompasses Park Ridge, Des Plaines, and parts of Niles and Mount Prospect. Foss-Eggemann was elected to her committee-woman post there in 2014. Her campaign was supported by the Liberty Principles PAC, which is headed up by radio personality Dan Proft and is aligned with Rauner.

Foss-Eggemann replaces Personal PAC CEO Terry Cosgrove, who is gay. Cosgrove earlier in 2017 released a Personal PAC questionnaire Rauner submitted during his gubernatorial campaign wherein Rauner professed to support reproductive freedom. Rauner’s office recently said that he would not support a bill that would nullify a “trigger law” that would automatically make abortion illegal in Illinois should Roe v. Wade be overturned. The Commission’s sole LGBT member is now AON executive and Howard Brown Health Board Chair Duke Alden.

Borderline Music loses its lease

Borderline Music will be closing its Andersonville location at 5351 N. Clark St. at the end of July, according to its owner.

Scott Jannush said that the longtime dance-music shop, which relocated to its present site from Lake View in 2014, lost its lease and that he is continuing to look for a new location.

Jannush had a three-year lease for the storefront, which his landlord, New Castle LLC, won’t renew. He said New Castle told him a chain store wants the location. A T-Mobile franchise next door to Borderline is in the same predicament.

“I know that I definitely want to stay in Andersonville,” Jannush said. “It’s just that there’s no space that I like here that’s available right now.”

The move from Lake View to Andersonville was a fortuitous decision, coinciding with a resurgence in sales of vinyl records, he added. Jannush’s business has boomed since he came to the neighborhood.

“People go out to eat here and are out for walks,” he said. “We are busy all the time.”

Others have recommended moving somewhere south of Foster Avenue, or further east in Edgewater, but Jannush worries that those spots won’t get the foot-traffic Borderline depends on.

For the moment, he anticipates having to put the store’s contents into storage and continuing with his online business, which he said has been thriving.

“I don’t want to take a space just to take a space,” he said.

Even though we are in a relationship, it’s still important that we get tested. It’s about making HIV testing routine. If you are sexually active, you should be getting tested for HIV.”

— DaShawn and Courtney
NCAVP report: 2016 deadliest year for HIV, LGBT communities

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

While the festivals, parades and appearance of Rainbow flags in cities across the world are traditions designed to celebrate Pride month, since 1997 the National Coalition of Anti Violence Programs (NCAVP) release of its National Report on Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Communities has served as a sober reminder of the need to lift-up and humanize LGBTQ individuals year-round.

On June 12, the NCAVP published its 2016 report. According to data collected nationwide throughout the coalition’s 12 member programs, 2016 was “the deadliest year on record for the LGBTQ Community.”

The report noted a “17 [percent] increase in homicides of LGBTQ people, not including the lives taken during the Pulse nightclub shooting.”

June 12 also marked the one year anniversary of the massacre and ceremonies were held across the nation to remember the 49 souls who were ripped from their families and friends in a vicious act of hatred.

The NCAVP reported a total of 77 “hate violence-related homicides of LGBTQ and HIV-affected people in 2016.”

It noted that 79 percent of those individuals were people of color, 68 percent were transgender and gender nonconforming people, 61 percent marked both the numbers of transgender women of color who were murdered that year and people under the age of 35.

The NCAVP also stated that it “received information on 1,036 incidents of hate violence across the country. The majority of survivors identified as gay, were below the age of 39, or were people of color.”

The types of hate violence experienced included verbal harassment, threats or intimidation (all of which ranked as the most prevalent), physical violence, online or mobile harassment, discrimination and bullying.

Most of those people who reported an act of violence against them (58 percent) knew their attacker. The NCAVP went on to note that, of those people who reported an act of violence against them to law enforcement, “of those who interacted with police, 35 [percent] of survivors said that the police were indifferent and 31 [percent] said that the police were hostile.”

In Illinois, the Center on Halsted stated that, in 2016, the organization “interacted with 58 persons calling to report incidences of violence.”

The Center added that the majority of those calls (78 percent) were intimate partner/domestic violence related while 22 percent were hate violence reports.

Lisa Gilmore is the principal and founder of the Illinois Accountability Initiative which is also a member program of the NCAVP. She also sits on the NCAVP’s governance and policy committees.

“We have seen a cultural backlash against the gains made by the LGBTQ community in terms of civil rights,” Gilmore told Windy City Times. “That backlash has occurred in policy in legislation across the United States. Bathroom bills and religious freedom acts are intentionally meant to push back against equality.”

She added that, in the same way legislators have been using policy as a form of attack, “there are other people who use hate violence to show their opposition to LGBTQ equality and liberation. We have historically seen an increase in anti-LGBTQ violence during national campaigns for LGBTQ rights and obviously, during this past election cycle, we saw a lot of explicit rejection of people who are different.”

In 2016, Windy City Times completed an extensive report into the correlation between an increase in anti-LGBTQ violence during national campaigns for LGBTQ rights and obviously, during this past election cycle, we saw a lot of explicit rejection of people who are different.

In 2016, the NCAVP’s report from that year stated that “following the election, there was an increase in hate violence targeting LGBTQ people, Muslim communities, immigrant communities and communities of color. These communities were fearful that the Trump Administration and conservative legislators across the country would actively work to roll back the few protections they had, and that the hateful rhetoric used to support conservative policies would incite further acts of hate violence. Sadly, the actions taken by the federal administration, from discriminatory Executive Orders to the appointment of Jeff Sessions, Betsy Devos, and others, show that these fears were not unfounded.”

“When you look at what is behind people who commit hate crimes, what you see is that the people who are perpetrating these crimes believe that they are trying to send a message about uphold social norms,” Gilmore said. “When there are messages of otherness, rejection or people singled out as the root cause of the problems of others, it becomes much easier to perpetrate violence against these folks.”

In terms of solutions and to mark the tenth anniversary of its work tracking hate violence nationwide, the NCAVP has released a platform designed to “end violence against LGBTQ communities.”

The platform’s calls to action include a recognition of “historical systems of oppression such as white supremacy and anti-Black racism, patriarchy and colonialism as root causes of violence.”

It stresses the need to “support community-based efforts that create pathways for individual and community healing” along with advocacy for “education, healthcare, housing and economic opportunities that affirm the experiences of transgender and gender nonconforming people of color.”

Echoing an exponentially growing nationwide resistance movement, the NCAVP reassessed the need to “call out and resist ‘religious exemption’ and ‘public accommodation’ bills for the hateful legislation that they are” and to “act in solidarity with all movements working towards liberation and self-determination of people impacted by oppression and violence.”

Gilmore added a need for messaging that celebrates the humanity of LGBTQ individuals.

“It’s a lot harder for people to see someone as an object that they can do violence to when they see them as a fully human, worthy of respect who adds to the beauty of communities,” she said. “Being the recipients of hate through culture does not define who we are.”

For the full 2016 NCAVP report, visit avp.org/resources/reports.

Leather Archives’ interim ED named

The board of directors of Leather Archives & Museum (LA&M) has named Christina Court as interim executive director following the departure of Rick Storer.

The board has also established a search committee to fill the position.

Court has served on the board of directors since December 2014 and had been vice president of the organization since January 2016. She has stepped down from her position as vice president but will retain ex officio membership on the board.

See LeatherArchives.org.

Court dismisses B&B’s appeal

In Illinois, an appeals court has dismissed claims by Timber Creek Bed & Breakfast that religious beliefs justified the owner’s discrimination against a gay couple seeking to use the facility for their civil-union ceremony, an ACLU of Illinois press release stated.

The full Illinois Human Rights Commission ruled last year that the owners of Timber Creek Bed and Breakfast had violated state law and discriminated against Mark and Todd Wathen in denying the Wathens’ use of the facility in 2011.
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Youth resident of Chicago House stabbed to death

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

A youth resident of a Sheridan Park housing facility owned by Chicago House was brutally beaten and stabbed to death in the evening hours of June 11 according to multiple news reports.

Unconfirmed reports state that 12-year-old Alexis Stubbs was the victim of a domestic assault. On June 12, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) announced that a Chicago man John Singleton had been charged with first degree murder in Stubbs’ death.

According to the Chicago Tribune, Singleton is an ex-boyfriend of the girl’s mother. Prison records show that Singleton had just served a three-year sentence at Menard Correctional Center for aggravated domestic battery/strangulation.

The attack against Stubbs allegedly occurred following a 911 call made by the mother after the suspect refused to leave the apartment.

Chicago House Chief Executive Officer Scott Ammarell told Windy City Times that staff and residents of the housing facility are “devastated.” “It’s a tight-knit group of people,” he said. “Our first priority is to cooperate with the police as they conduct their investigation,” he added “Our other is to make sure that the other residents in the building have the support and services they need. That goes as well for our staff. We are helping people deal with this situation.”

Ammarell emphasized that Chicago House takes security at all its facilities very seriously. “Obviously, there is nothing that’s fool proof,” he said. “Once the investigation is completed, we will review our security to see if there are changes that need to be made. We are continuing to make sure that the building is as safe as we can make it.”

“This is a tragedy for the entire agency,” he added. “We all work every day on behalf of our clients and this is something that is just unimaginable and we’re all deeply impacted by it.”

Lambda attorney talks legal landscape

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Christopher Clark, Lambda Legal’s Midwest regional director and national pro bono director, spoke about LGBT rights and the current legal landscape at a June 8 talk sponsored by Out & Equal Chicagoland and CNA Insurance.

Clark discussed Lambda Legal’s organizational commitment to impact litigation, court cases that can potentially have a broad impact on society. He gave the court case allowing for same-sex marriage in Iowa as an example, adding that it got people thinking about marriage equality more broadly and was “a game changing moment for our community.”

Lambda Legal is also committed to working within existing legal-protection frameworks, Clark added. The organization, for example, litigated the case of Hively v. Ivy Tech in Indiana on the basis of federal Title VII protections which cover discrimination on the basis of gender. That is especially important important in a state like Indiana, where anti-discrimination protections are virtually nonexistent, he said.

“Work happens bit by bit, across the country,” Clark said. He also reported on work to minimize the application of criminal laws to HIV/AIDS transmission, noting that such laws are invariably “harsh” and long out of date. He said, “We’re trying to inject them with real science.”

Other areas of concern for Lambda Legal include helping to preserve the Affordable Care Act, which has come to be a lifeline for many previously uninsured LGBTs, and weighing in on legal cases involving transgender young persons seeking public-accommodations access at school.

“Our most vulnerable young people are being targeted as political punching bags,” Clark said.
**FDA okays generic Truvada configuration**

**BY MATT SIMONETTE**

The Food and Drug Administration, on June 5, granted approval to a generic version of Truvada, a medication that has been used as a Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) intervention to prevent HIV infection.

The FDA granted Israel-based Teva Pharmaceuticals the right to manufacture the first generic version of Truvada. The patent on the formula for Truvada’s components does not expire until 2021, so HIV/AIDS advocates and service-providers were not expecting a generic configuration of the drug much sooner than that.

Poz reported June 9 that both Teva and Foster City, California-based Gilead Sciences, Inc., which manufactures Truvada, that a release date for the generic version was not planned for the short-term future, however.

“A generic version of Truvada will not be immediately available,” said Gilead’s statement to Poz. “It’s important to note that there are a number of factors involved in commercialization that are not tied directly to FDA approval.”

While taking Truvada, which is also used in treatment for persons with HIV, has been shown to reduce the likelihood of HIV-infection by over 90 percent, its widespread use has been inhibited in part by an extremely high price tag: The drug can cost upwards of $1,600 for a 30-day supply. Many public agencies and service providers have launched initiatives to encourage its use, but there has been limited success in reaching populations especially at risk for infection, among them young MSM (men who have sex with men) of color and transgender women.

Human Rights Campaign released a statement June 9 encouraging fast action from the pharmaceutical firms, further noting that Gilead needed to continue to offer assistance programs for consumers who could not afford the high prices.

“While the timeline is uncertain for when a generic drug will be available to consumers, today’s decision by the FDA is a much-needed breakthrough in our ongoing efforts to expand HIV prevention options, especially for those most vulnerable to HIV and AIDS,” said Mary Beth Maxwell, HRC senior vice-president for programs, research and training. “Despite growing use of PrEP nationally, the drug remains out-of-reach for many in the communities hardest hit by the epidemic, including young gay and bisexual men and transgender women of color. We implore Gilead to continue their critical payment assistance programs and urge other companies to provide similar financial relief.”

Poz’s article is at Poz.com/article/fda-approves-generic-truvada.

**DC Equality March rally attracts thousands**

On June 11, the 2017 Equality March drew thousands of people to Washington, D.C.

The marchers went past the White House and to the National Mall. Among the speakers were actor Asia Kate Dillon, GLAAD CEO/ED Sarah Kate Ellis and former NBA player Jason Collins.

A banner was put in front of the stage as a tribute to the 49 victims who died in the mass shooting at Pulse nightclub in Orlando last year.

Photo courtesy of Gary Chichester

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Along Halsted Street, Lakeview neighborhood

Annual two-day street festival in the Lakeview area celebrates LGBT history and achievements as a community, leading up to Chicago’s world-famous PRIDE Parade.

**PRIDE Parade | June 25 | 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

Along Halsted Street, Lakeview neighborhood
Chicago Equality Rally unites Midsommarfest in defiance

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

While thousands joined the Equality March for Unity and Pride June 11 in Washington, D.C., Chicago was one of dozens of cities nationwide to hold its own rally as part of Pride Month and in honor of the 49 people who were killed at the Pulse Nightclub shootings in Orlando one year ago.

The venue for the Chicago Equality Rally was the Pride Stage at Midsommarfest in the heart of Chicago’s Andersonville neighborhood.

Celebrated actor, writer and producer Fawzia Mirza served as the rally’s emcee. Her powerful, exuberant voice was echoed by a crowd whose raucous enthusiasm was unencumbered by the day’s stifling heat.

“We are more powerful when we were connect-
ed,” Mirza said. “We are in a place in our culture, our country, our world where we all need to not be divided by anything. We all have got to come together because that man who is representing us right now [Trump] does not represent a single person on this street or in this city.”

Mirza remembered the Pulse massacre as a moment that affected multiple communities. “We’ve got to embrace each other and know that, while we are different, the spaces between us are the things that are going to bring us together,” she asserted.

It was a message emphasized by a who’s who of local and national advocates, activists, community leaders and politicians who each stepped up to the microphone to create a tapestry of defiance, unity and insurrection.

The ethereal voice of radiant Chicago musician Jess Godwin, the equally compelling sound of actor and singer Darrian Ford and the dynamic passion of the Lakeside Pride Music Ensemble contributed interludes the artistry of which provoked as many tears as they did a jubilant celebration of the LGBTQ community at its mightiest.

Vives Q creator and community activist Emmanu-
el Garcia memorialized the Puerto Rican, Mexican, Salvadorian and undocumented individuals who lost their lives in Orlando along with the 12 transgender women of color who have been murdered so far in the U.S. in 2017.

“Trans and queer Black and brown people are more likely to be targeted, jailed, imprisoned and murdered by a racist, misogynist immigration and criminal justice system,” Garcia said. “Through rejection we found self-love and self-acceptance; we found community which is what we have today.”

Rabbi Rachel Weiss of Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation in Evanston called for a moment of silence to remember the Pulse victims. It seemed as though that call was answered throughout the Midsommarfest’s entire length along Clark Street.

“The voice of the LGBTQ religious world, it needs to be amplified,” Weiss declared. “It cannot continue to be ceded to the homophobic, transphobic and conservative political landscape that has manipulated our traditions for their agenda.”

“Like most of you, I expected a different outcome on election night,” Pride Action Tank Executive Director Kim Hunt said. “The time for processing is over. Our minds and bodies have been on the battleground for a long time. As scary as this time is, we are not powerless.”

Chicago House TransLife Care Manager Channyn Lynne Parker enhanced the poetry of Bob Dylan with her own, signature eloquence.

“Take notice of this moment,” she said. “Make this moment sacred. These times are a gift reminding us not to be lulled to sleep under the false promise of liberty and justice for all. Let us be reminded that our strength lies in our unity . . . We have all been woken up to how fragile freedom really is.”
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Ellie, Age 57
Her partner, Karen
Florida

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www.PrettyBoyBlue.com
Susan Henking on being the last president of Shimer College

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

On May 20, Windy City Times received an announcement from Shimer alumna and Board of Trustees member Robert Keohane that concluded the Chicago college’s 164-year legacy with a cur- sory statement.

“Shimer, as an independent college, will cease to exist. “The Board of Trustees of North Central College formally voted to implement the Asset Purchase Agreement of last August which provides for Shimer College to become Shimer Great Books School of North Central College as of June 1, 2017,” Keohane wrote. “This decision represents the culmination of a 20-month effort to find a way for the Shimer program to continue in a sustainable fashion.”

Keohane noted that 34 students would transfer to the Great Books School on North Central College’s campus in Naperville, Illinois.

While crediting Shimer’s 14th president—Dr. Susan E. Henking, Ph.D., who was hired in 2012—as playing a “crucial role in our success,” Keohane stated that she would be “ending her affiliation with the College as of May 31.”

Henking spoke with Windy City Times by phone from a condo that had been rented by the college.

Henking had known this day—this end of her actions at Shimer—was coming for some time. Yet it was a course Henking chose for the good of Shimer after what she described as “many, many years of financial difficulty.”

“It was so bad that, for decades, students worried that they would be the last class of Shimer College,” said Henking, who lives with her partner, Betty Bayer. “Becoming part of North Central allowed the smaller class sizes and a lot of things to stay that were central to the educational mission in a much more financially stable environment. The faculty all kept their jobs and students got comparable or better financial aid.”

Since packing up and moving has been a part of Shimer’s institutional history, Henking, at first, looked upon it with a degree of pragmatism. “[Shimer] moved from Mount Carroll to Waukegan to Bronzeville and, now, Naperville,” she stated. “So, on the one hand, the people of the institution are used to change. In this one [Shimer] gave up its autonomy. For everyone involved there’s a sense of loss and gain. Every generation of students has its own version of the college. They’re running a committee this summer to figure out how to be a part of a new institution but still recognizable Shimer.”

Henking’s voice trailed off as if there was something she wanted to add but that she censored perhaps for the sake of formality. The interview was only ten minutes old.

“Over the course of a lifetime, I have come to understand that I cannot pursue ideas alone,” she told Perry Garfinkel and the New York Times in 2013. “Nor can I strive to change the world unless I engage others, whether those who spit on me or those with whom I share my life. I still wrestle with the tensions of difference and uncertainty. As Shimerians say, we steer between reality and utopia.”

Henking’s reality began in 1955 in the small Pennsylvania town of Paoli long before it was annexed as a Philadelphia suburb.

“My parents met in World War II,” she recalled. “My mother was an Irish Protestant. My father was an Irish Catholic. So, it was to the great dismay of some family members. But it was a reasonably happy family. My father was a printer and manual laborer his whole life. My mom was a secretary. We lived in a less wealthy area but I went to good public schools.”

Serving in World War II had left Henking’s father disenfranchised with Catholicism. So, she and her elder sister were raised under what she called the “social justice” Protestantism of her mother. It had polar effects on the siblings. While her sister became one of the earliest female Episco- palian Priests, it was as an undergraduate student at Duke University that Henking discovered “I actually and actively hated religion.”

“My sister and I used to joke that she took God and I took everything else,” Henking said.

Yet, she decided to major in religious studies. “I was trying to understand why people are religious,” she asserted. “I had emerged from a religious setting to be pretty hostile and fasci- nated by it. I got very interested in theoretical explanations for why people would believe what I thought was patently untrue. For some, religion is the source of dramatic happiness and social change. For others, it’s horrifyingly oppressive and can really hurt people.”

Despite relishing the academic challenges her chosen course of study provided, Henking re- called having “an emotionally difficult time in college. My parents raised me to think I could do anything I wanted to which turned out not to be true. My father thought I was perfect. Most of the rest of the world does not think that about me or about anyone else.”

She was in the midst of both the seventies and a “hotbed of lesbian feminism”—also known as the Research Triangle of Duke, North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

The journal Feminary emerged from Chapel Hill. “We want to encourage feminist and les- bian organizing in a region whose women suf- fer greatly in their lack of political power,” its publishers wrote. “We want to provide an audi- ence for Southern lesbians who may not think of themselves as writers but who have important stories to tell—stories that will help to fill the silences that have obscured the truth about our lives and kept us isolated from each other. We want to know who we are. We want to change women’s lives.”

“I can intellectualize anything,” Henking said. “I met people who were politically active but, at the time, I didn’t know anything about Stone- wall. I was having these feelings so I went to the library. The first book I read was Del Martin and Phyllis Lang’s Lesbian/Woman. I also went to parties and festivals. A bunch of people went to Newport News [Virginia] where Anita Bryant was doing one of her rants. The place was filled with police but they were there to protect us. What changed my life and what I reflect on a lot was this crowd who looked like the people I had grown up with who were spitting and throwing things at us. It was a transformative moment but coming out was difficult in many respects.”

A politically charged Henking arrived in Chi- cago in 1977 on a scholarship for post-graduate studies at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

“I was briefly the head of the Gay Liberation Front, and I was really active with a group of mostly lesbian people,” she recalled. “There were gay and lesbian people in the Divinity School but nobody was actually working on gay and lesbian subjects. It was all on the side or as part of a social scene. So, I kept two different parts of my life.”

“Oh, God. I’m the worst human being ever,” Henking said during one point of the conversa- tion.

She was talking about the day she came out to her family. “My father died very suddenly,” she recalled. “My mother went to work one day and, when she came back, he was dead. I really was flattened. I wasn’t expecting it. I went home and I just didn’t cope well. At a certain moment before the funeral, I said to my mother ‘look my partner is coming and, just in case you don’t get it, we’re lesbians and you’ve got to make sure the rest of the family’s okay.”

“It was horrible timing,” Henking acknowled- edged. “My mother was fine with my being a lesbian but she was upset that I thought it was more important than the fact that my father had died. I didn’t. I just didn’t want it to be awkward. I was so engaged in my own grief that I wasn’t paying attention. I don’t know...it’s now almost 40 year later and...I don’t know, if my partner died and someone couldn’t see how traumatized I was...”

Her voice faltered.

Henking has since begun to look back upon the disastrous timing of her coming out with a sense of humor. “Not everything can be intellectualized.”

Henking’s mother remained supportive until her death in 1985.

“I think 20 lesbians showed up at her funeral,” she said. “It was oddly complicated for my cous- ins, aunts and uncles but perfectly wonderful for me and a great way of honoring my mom who... she was just terrific.”

“My social and political world was mostly wom- en,” Henking added. “But I remember exactly where I was sitting when I first read a Los An- geles newspaper report about unusual pneumonia and cancers. My memory was everybody panicking and just being terrified that it was going to be the end of the world. I lived on the South Side in a primarily women’s community and I wasn’t as engaged in HIV as lots of other people I know from that period. I was more focused on housing and economic rights.”

That changed when she met biochemist David Craig during a workshop in 1989 shortly after she began teaching at Hobart and William Smith Col- leges in Geneva, New York.

“He was sat at my table and said that he want- ed to do a course on AIDS,” Henking said. “So, I started teaching this class with David and it was the probably most transformative teaching expe- rience of my life. We were supposed to have 30 people and we got 100. It was difficult to teach but it forced me to learn how to teach not just subject matter but people. You struggle to find the best form of education. I was trying to teach people how to think about militancy and mourn- ing together and trying to figure out a way to say ‘of course militancy is completely appropriate in some circumstances and this is one of them.’”

Another of Henking’s colleagues at Hobart and William Smith was professor of women’s studies Betty Bayer. They have been partners for nearly 25 years.

In 1997, Henking co-edited Que(e)rying Reli- gion: A Critical Anthology with Gary David Com- stock, a fellow professor and author of works such as Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men.

The groundbreaking examination of religion and sexuality coupled the history, traditions, theology, practice, culture and scriptures of an array of beliefs including Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Native American spirituality with authors across a spectrum lesbian, gay and queer studies.

“The contemporary world is dramatically con- cerned and conflicted about sexuality and reli- gion,” Henking and Comstock wrote in the book’s introduction. “In this time of AIDS and of in- creasing fundamentalism across the globe, the questions raised by religious studies and lesbian/
gay/queer studies are questions of survival.” That warning and the book which contains it have increased relevance, even after two decades.

“A pattern in my life is that I eventually get to the topics that are bothering me,” Henking said. “It was a giant bibliographical search. We knew there was a lot of work out there that had to do with religion and sexual orientation but it was really scattered. I fell in love with trying to find this stuff. I had no idea how difficult it was going to be to find anything on contemporary Islam for example. It was a good way of pushing me to take seriously people who were incomprehensible to me. I was trying to learn about all these other people who were like me on some axes and profoundly not like me on others.”

“I’m surprised to say this but I think I learned to be less global about my evaluation of religion,” she added. “I tended to think of religious people as generally hostile and it helped me not to do that.”

The book led to Henking running a class on the subject. Teaching it was an endless series of equally profound discoveries for students and their professor.

In 2012, Keohane and Shimer’s selection committee ended a nationwide hunt for the college’s 14th president in Henking’s classroom.

Her memories of each of the subsequent years she spent at Shimer flowed in almost uninterrupted thought.

“There’s a student who said to me one day ‘everybody at Shimer has a backstory,’” she recalled. “They are just the most amazing people I have ever met who made me think differently about the word ‘interesting.’ They live with their heads in books but they live full lives. They were really active in the Occupy Movement. When the Ferguson decision came out, a huge number of Shimer students were at the Chicago march. They would walk into my office all the time to borrow books or put something in the comments section of the Windy City Times. Henking acknowledged. “I would have preferred that the student came in and told me than put it in the comments section of the Windy City Times but I was glad they spoke out.”

She added that the idea ranking institutions of higher education is “the stupidest ever.”

“Do they tell you anything about the quality of education? No,” she declared. “They basically tell you how many dollars-per-student there are. The formula is weighted in different ways. Shimer ended up as the worst college in America for graduating people of color and poor people. But this was comparing a sample of eight people to places with 8,000. You can’t evaluate the kind of education you get based on ranking systems or a lot of the data that is collected.”

It may have been an educational utopia, but the reality that Shimer could no longer sustain itself financially had sunk in long before The Washington Monthly offered salt for its wounds.

It was Henking who spearheaded the effort that would eventually lead to the agreement with North Central College.

“I basically worked myself out of a job,” Henking said. “From the very beginning, a year and a half ago, North Central were clear that they were not looking to hire a second president. It’s painful because… I really loved the place.

“The students and the faculty renewed my belief in a higher education. They renewed my belief that you can have a better life if you’re willing to learn some things and do it together and do it despite the fact that you disagree with each other. They reminded me of the point of what I’d spent a career doing.”

Reflection was inevitable.

“It couldn’t raise enough money,” Henking said. “It was in too bad a shape when I arrived. Sometimes you just follow your ideals. Shimer was not just a job for me. It was a vocation. It was really meaningful to me to be able to spend five years at this tiny place that is incredibly intense, rewarding and heartbreaking. It’s been very hard for me. Part of running away from religion was running away from the requirement of self-sacrifice but that doesn’t mean you don’t choose it sometimes.”

It is still too early for Henking to make concrete plans concerning her future beyond returning to Geneva and Bayer’s waiting arms.

Meanwhile, conservative commentators continue to add academics to their growing list of enemies of an increasingly divided country.

“It’s the first time I haven’t had a job since I was 16,” she said. “I’m trying hard to think of it as liberating but it haven’t got there quite yet. It think in the United States, there’s a confusion between academics and intellectuals.

We need critical, intelligent reflection together across agreements and disagreements about what it is we’re doing and what we aspire to do. It brings history and questioning to the table. Higher education is under threat in the United States. Getting a job and paying your bills can’t be it’s only point. Teaching, research and scholarship is part of a contribution to the public good.”

A longer version of this article is on the Windy City Times website.
BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

When the Chicago House TransLife Center (TLC) opened in July 2013, it was so much more than a modest, multi-story home in the quiet North Side Chicago neighborhood of Edgewater. For the nine transgender and gender nonconforming individuals who lived there at any one time, it was a singular lifeline out of an endless cycle of societal and judicial abuse and homelessness.

It’s community of residents and staff served as a guidepost offering a new direction from a life of survival centered around getting through the next 24 hours under the omnipresent shadow of prison, violence and death to a once unimaginable future that would take work but was at least attainable rather than hidden behind the firmly locked door of public rejection.

In January 2016, the TransLife Center became the TransLife Care Program. It is now so much more than the nine-bedroom home—which has since been sold.

It is an exponentially growing network of services. TransHousing has 15 apartments across the city, from Rogers Park to Chicago’s South Shore, offering participants independent living.

TransWorks is a comprehensive employment program that includes workshops, career-coaching, mentorship and job development. On June 7, TransWorks was awarded a $100,000 grant by Impact 100 Chicago Women Empowering Change. The award was the successful conclusion of an extremely competitive process and, according to a Chicago House press release “will allow the program to expand to serve more trans individuals with high-quality employment services, as well as train more employers on inclusive workplace policies, procedures and everyday interactions.”

TransLegal offers pro bono help in everything from navigating through Cook County’s complex maze of bureaucracies when making a name and gender marker change (through an invaluable partnership with the Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois) to misdemeanor defense and civil aid for those who experience discrimination.

TransHealth dissolves barriers to healthcare faced by the transgender and gender non-conforming population with drop-in access to affirming medical providers and services. There is long-term care available that ranges from check-ups to HIV prevention and treatment.

As of July 1, the TransSafe drop-in will move from the Center on Halsted to the fifth floor of the Heartland Health Outreach clinic at 4750 N. Sheridan in Uptown.

It is the epicenter of each of TransLife Care’s programs.

Those who show up every Monday at 2-5 p.m. will not only find a safe escape from isolation but connection to employment, shelter, housing, legal and health all served up with refreshments.

The TransLife Care Program has transitioned from bricks and mortar to a living entity that is continuously expanding in both reach and the numbers of people it serves.

According to Chicago House, there were 314 people who visited TransSafe in 2015. Last year those numbers tripled to 1,305.

TransHealth services saw the same significant growth from 35 visits to the program’s services in 2015 to 175 in 2016. Meanwhile, more than 200 people participated in TransWorks last year. Ninety-six percent of them found employment.

The beating heart of the TransLife Care Program is powered by its staff members and volunteers.

When Windy City Times met five TransLife staff members at Chicago House’s North Side headquarters, their love for their clients, work and each other was immediately apparent.

Much as they do with their clients, TransLife Care Program Director Josie Lynne Paul, TransLife Project Manager Channyn Lynne Parker, TransSafe Coordinator Reyna Ortiz, TransShelter Coordinator Jasmine Alexander and TransHousing Manager Kevin Pleasant encourage each other never to sell themselves short. If any one of them showed even a hint of modesty about their work, one of their colleagues would speak up on their behalf.

When former TLC client Alexander described herself as “the problem child” of the group, Parker wouldn’t have it.

“When I met Jasmine, she said ‘help me to help my community,’” Parker said. “She has made good on that a hundred-fold. She worked with individuals on the South Side way before she was getting paid for it. There isn’t enough I can say about Jasmine’s work. It speaks for itself.”

While TransLegal Director and Staff Attorney Marla Pahl, TransWorks Coordinator Kate Harrington-Rosen and other team members could not be present, their work was mentioned with similar esteem.

What you see is organic advocacy,” Parker said. “We all worked with our community in ways that are real and authentic way before we had a formal platform.”

Today, their contributions are as invaluable and unique as the program and the myriad of clients it serves.

“We are still the first and, as far as I know, the only program that provides this breadth of services in a one-stop-shop setting in this country,” Paul said.

She noted that the decision to sell the Edgewater home was partly due to a challenge in finding the appropriate funds for it to reach its fullest potential.

“Apart funding for programs was going to be at least two years down the road,” she said. “So, we had this huge gap where there wasn’t any HUD [Housing and Urban Development] money or any other foundation that could provide for it.”

Misfortune turned out to be providence as Paul, Parker and Pleasant see the new scattered-site housing program as a leaps and bounds improvement.

“It made more sense to actually make it independent living,” Parker said. “We’ve seen a lot better results for our client base. Historically, our clients have come from multiple systems—DCFS [Department of Children and Family Services], incarceration and so on. Going from a space where they had to share living space to the same shared situation was a problem.”

“We’re talking about folks who have experienced a great deal of trauma in life,” Paul explained. “Putting them in a setting where they were all together was a ‘like it or not’ situation. Group living can provide a high level of trauma triggers. It should really be a transitional model rather than permanent housing. Who wants to spend the rest of their days living with eight other people?”

“People need a starting point,” Pleasant added. “They need a place to come out of living in survival mode and to learn a different set of skills such as paying bills, going grocery shopping and living in a community that is diverse in regards to economics, identity, race, ethnicity. People get a say in where they live. They aren’t just stuck somewhere.”

“We’ve gone from nine units in the house to 15 scattered site units,” Paul said. “We’ve not only provided the kind of housing that the community was looking for but more of those units.”

“At the end of the day, what we’re really invested in is our clients and community’s autonomy; getting them back to a sense of self responsibility and advocacy,” Parker asserted. “We are seeing progress.”

A significant part of the progress is observable at the TransSafe drop-in—a program which, in September 2016, was one of only two in the country to receive a grant from the Centers from Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the purpose of evaluating home-grown intervention for transgender individuals at risk from HIV.

“TransSafe connects the trans community to what they need and want in that moment, what’s going to be most helpful to them” Paul said. “We get to evaluate the positive impacts on their lives through that model. It’s the central component. The beauty of the new site at Heartland Health Outreach, is that we can walk folks to a lab, mental health services. There are more rapid connections to medical providers.”

She noted that the decision to move TransSafe from the Center on Halsted was based on the requirements of the grant.

As the program’s coordinator, Ortiz has a tremendous responsibility but it is one she shoulders with the experience of a woman who has made outreach and advocacy a life passion. The results she has achieved, particularly with women on the West Side through organizations like TaskForce, and the example she offers of holding one’s ground whenever society tries to pull it from underneath you have raised the profile of TransSafe and the trust participants have in it to a whole new level.

“I was able to connect youth on the West Side to attorneys, housing and all the resources that TransSafe offers,” she said. “If a girl comes up to me and says ‘I got arrested and I need an attorney,’ I can refer them right away and connect them to Maria.”

Ortiz set about garnering a thorough education about each of the city’s bureaucracies and systems by putting herself through them.

“I wanted to make the process as simplistic as possible for a trans person,” she said. “So, they wouldn’t have to go through all the craziness. I have multiple ways to get a trans person connected to whatever resource they need.”

Whether it’s a court date, a visit to the Secre-
Families are changing, especially in the LGBTQ community. Now with legal marriage comes unique legal concerns, related to adoption, surrogacy, divorce, custody, property division, pre- and post-nuptial agreements. At Schiller DuCanto & Fleck LLP, we have been practicing—as well as shaping—family law for over 35 years. We offer you the full depth and breadth of our resources in managing the often complex legal issues surrounding your families. Rely on the firm where you will find expertise in family law joined with a special understanding of LGBTQ couples.
Don't be a victim: Safety first

In popularity. According to a recent Boston Globe article, “Don’t call me Caitlyn: Baby names plunge in popularity,” the name Caitlyn plummeted the most and rapidly than any other baby name—both male and female. And, all four variations of the spelling have nosedived: Caitlin, Caitlyn, Kateylyn and Kaitlynn.

Laura Wattenberg, founder of BabyNameWizard.com, explained the recent disinterest in the name, stating, “Caitlyn was already falling in popularity. Now it is suddenly controversial.” However, I find the decline in the name rooted in transphobia and the sexist notion that nags, stymies and stigmatizes all women, even today, that our “biology is destiny.”

When Jenner launched her docuseries I Am Cait on the E! network the same year she came out, viewers got to see, for the first time, trans visibility. My hope for the show was that Jenner would weave her personal narrative into the larger and more varied canons of stories and struggling realities of trans people. However, the show’s target was a cisgender audience where Jenner showcased, perhaps unwittingly, that her real community was wealthy white Republicans while worrying how the trans community received her.

Jenner’s recent tell-all memoir The Secrets of My Life has pissed off several folks, where former wife Kris was at the front of the line. Jenner’s tome never made it onto the New York Times best-seller list and, today, people can purchase the print hardcover version half price and the Kindle version for $4.99. I know because I downloaded it.

To the surprise of many, in the memoir Jenner blames Ellen DeGeneres for “alienating her from the LGBTQ community” by supposedly distorting her comments on same-sex marriage when she appeared on Ellen in 2015.

“I got burnt by Ellen on marriage equality,” Jenner told Andy Cohen during her SiriusXM Town Hall. “I explained my progression. I probably didn’t do it as well as I could have if I’d really thought about it more. All of a sudden, Ellen comes back and says it sounds like you’re really not for it. I said, no I just said I was for it but it was a progression. She went on Howard Stern and upped the ante and Howard goes, ‘I can’t believe Caitlyn’s not for marriage equality.’”

Also, Jenner blames her former spouse for persuading Ellen stating they both colluded against her because they’re good friends.

However, Jenner has done a good job alone distancing herself from the LGBTQ community, due to her stance on several LGBTQ issues and her conservative politics.

For example, her praise and overzealous support for then-Republican presidential hopeful Ted Cruz, a notoriously anti-LGBTQ politician, was baffling.

“I like Ted Cruz. But I also think, ‘He’s an evangelical Christian, and probably one of the worst ones when it comes to trans issues,’” Jenner told The Advocate in 2016.

“The Democrats are better when it comes to these types of social issues. So why support Republicans? Number 1, if we don’t have a country, we don’t have trans issues. We need jobs. I want every trans person to have a job.”

When asked by The Advocate if she would be Cruz’s trans ambassador, Jenner emphatically stated, “You trans ambassador to the president of the United States, so we can say, ‘Ted, love what you’re doing but here’s what’s going on.’”

To date, Jenner is the most recognizable transwoman with a global platform who can give visibility and advocacy to transgender civil rights.

And, in 2017, Jenner sees herself as stepping closer to being a transgender-rights advocate.

This past February, Jenner spoke out against Trump’s trans bathroom bill that prohibits trans students from using public school restrooms that coincides with their gender identity.

And, in a recent April episode of 20/20, Jenner did a follow-up interview with Diane Sawyer, reflecting on coming out since her talk with Sawyer in April 2015.

When Sawyer asked Jenner how did she feel about her political party with Trump in office, she empathetically replied, “You mess with my community, you don’t give us equality and a fair shot, I’m comin’ after you.”

In just two years, Jenner has come a long way in understanding more fully the road ahead for her and the trans community.

Letters to the editor:

Safety first

DON’T BE A VICTIM:

—Stay off your cellphone
—Keep valuables hidden
—Be aware of your surroundings

BAR SAFETY TIPS
—Do not leave your drink unattended
—Sex offenders prey on customers who are easy targets
—“Stranger danger”—be careful who you take home

—Do not overdrink; intoxicated customers become easy victims
—Lastly, don’t drink and drive!
—Call 911 for anything suspicious.

Chicago Police
Department and Chicago
Alternative Policing
Strategy (CAPS)

Send columns or letters to Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com. Letters may be edited for brevity or clarity.
At the age of 23, gay Canadian playwright Jordan Tanahill wrote his play Late Company from a place of great anger. Back in 2012, following a spate of LGBTQ teenage suicides in North America, the conservative party in Canada released an “It Gets Better” video encouraging LGBTQ youth to seek out help.

“It felt like such a cynical ploy in my mind—especially considering their voting record at the time. They were defunding programs that would have directly benefited LGBTQ youth like helplines, community centers and special education programs,” said Tanahill during a phone conversation from London where he writing a new work for the National Theatre of Great Britain. “It felt like pure hypocrisy.”

So Tanahill penned Late Company to examine the damaging effects of both overt and micro acts of aggression and discrimination toward queer youth by adults in middle-class and seemingly liberal communities. Set at a very uncomfortable dinner party, Late Company looks at two sets of parents and a student trying to find common ground a year after a highly publicized suicide of a gay teenager.

Tanahill admitted that it’s an unlikely dramatic situation, though he says it lies into some extreme therapy trends he had read about concerning healing and restorative justice. Though he wrote Late Company from a place of rage, nowadays Tanahill says he feels much more empathy for his grown-up characters.

“How much should you intercede into your teen’s life?” Tanahill said. “How do you confront a teen about depression, anti-social behavior or about their queerness? There are no easy answers and so five years out I have warmed more to the characters.”

Just as Tanahill’s attitudes have changed, so has Late Company. The play has kept its original Canadian place setting of Ottawa for prior productions in Toronto (2013), Vancouver (2014) and Los Angeles (2017), but Tanahill is allowing Late Company to be localized for its Chicago debut courtesy of Cor Theatre at the Pride Arts Center.

“My preference really is to keep it current and adaptable,” Tanahill said. “So it can be done regionally and not just be tied to Ottawa.”

“We’re super-excited that Jordan was so flexible and gung-ho about allowing us to really localize it,” said director Jessica Fisch, who is adding another layer to the play by refashioning one of the couples as mixed-race to better represent Chicago.

“The really interesting, informative things for the cast and for myself is doing the research into how politics reflects itself in this greater Chicago area, which we think of as being really liberal, is not as simple as blue and red,” Fisch said. “We looked at the voting records of the past couple of elections for representatives and zeroed in on areas where conservative politicians have been elected as state politicians, while the area as a whole has voted democratic in national elections.”

Fisch wouldn’t reveal which exact Chicago suburb she decided to reset Late Company in, though she said, “We like to say it’s probably a ‘W’ town somewhere on the North Shore.”

Cor Theatre’s Chicago premiere of Late Company plays from Saturday, June 17, through Sunday, July 16, at The Buena stage of the Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway St. Tickets are $18-$30. Call 866-811-4111 or visit CorTheatre.org.

Pride pop-ups
In honor of Pride Month, many smaller theater troupes are putting on special LGBTQ-theme productions with limited runs. Here are a few to check out:

Unity in Dance features original dance pieces with LGBTQ themes choreographed and performed by members of Giordano Dance Chicago at 7 p.m. Sunday, June 18, at The Broadway stage of the Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway St. Tickets are $30 and $50. Call 800-737-0984 or visit PrideFilmsAndPlays.com.

Real people tell real stories about their lives in a special edition of You’re Being Ridiculous: PRIDE that plays at 8 p.m. Wednesdays through June 21 at Steppenwolf Theatre’s 1700 Theatre, 1700 N. Halsted St. Tickets are $20. Call 312-475-1650 or visit Steppenwolf.org.

Musical acts, comedy sketches and more are a part of Loud & Proud, an LGBTQ variety show co-hosted by Alex Garday and Cat McDonnell at 8 p.m. Thursday, June 15, and 10 p.m. Thursday, June 22, at MCL Chicago, 3110 N. Sheffield Ave. Tickets are $12. Call 773-610-5930 or visit MCLChicago.com.

Make America Gay Again—An LGBTQ+ Sketch-travaganza plays 9 p.m. Thursdays through June 29, at Under the Gun Theater, 956 W. Newport Ave. Tickets are $12. Call 773-270-3440 or visit UnderTheGunTheater.com.

Drag Party Party is a variety show filled with improvised comedy and lip-syncing and features a mix of drag queens and drag kings like Celeste Iimore, Auntie Chen, Anita Cannoli, Justin Side and Pam Who? It all goes down at 9:30 p.m. Wednesdays through June 28 at the Annoyance Theatre, 851 W. Belmont Ave. Tickets are $10. Call 773-697-9693 or visit TheAnnoyance.com.

The Infinite Wrench: 30 Queer Plays in 60 Straight Minutes plays at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 22, 11:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, June 23 and 24, and 7 p.m. Sunday, June 25, at the Neo-Futurarium, 5153 N. Ashland Ave. It’s a benefit for YEPP (Youth Empowerment Performance Project), and tickets are $25. Call 773-878-4557 or visit NeoFuturists.org.

GayCo Productions, Chicago’s oldest LGBTQ sketch comedy troupe, presents GAYWATCH at 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, June 23 and 24, at The Playground Theatre, 3209 N. Halsted St. Tickets to this heavily improvised comedy revue are $15. Call 773-871-3793 or visit GayCo.com.
THEATER REVIEW

Ragtime

Playwright: Terrence McNally; music, Stephen Flaherty; lyrics, Lynn Ahrens
At: Griffin Theatre at The Den, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Tickets: 866-811-4111; GriffinTheatre.com; $39
Runs through: July 16

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Ragtime is among the most musically powerful and deeply felt Broadway shows ever written. It’s also huge ... or has been until now.

This production unveils a “smaller” Ragtime, performed by a 20-person ensemble (still large) and a three-person orchestra (playing multiple instruments) driven by twin pianos. To say that Ragtime loses none of its musical or emotional power is the honest truth; to say that director Scott Weinstein and musical directors Jermaine Hill and Ellen Morris have knocked it out of the park is nothing less than this production deserves.

Based on the deceptively simple novel by E. L. Doctorow, Ragtime is historical fiction set mostly in New York before World War I in which the crisscrossing paths of white Yankees, Harlem Negroes and Eastern European Jewish immigrants lead to tragedy and triumph. Historic figures Henry Ford, Pierpont Morgan, Houdini, Emma Goldman, Admiral Perry, Booker T. Washington and others now forgotten also make cameo appearances.

The book and musical reflect the prejudices, opportunities and tumultuous social forces that forged 20th-century America. In my years in theater, I’ve encountered no other show in which the score so knowingly embodies the story and so potently enhances the emotions. Act I of Ragtime—with its glorious peak in “New Music”—is musical-theater perfection, and Act II isn’t far behind.

Griffin’s production is stirringly played, ardently sung, tellingly acted and richly designed (beautiful period costumes by Rachael Sypniewski), while the intimate in-the-round staging brings the show into one’s lap. There’s plenty of musical movement although not a lot of dance), but that’s a minor caveat. More seriously, the sound design is spotty and needs further adjustment and/or remaking, and that’s the worst thing I can say about this production!

I loved the little orchestra, which supplements the pianos with violin, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, accordion, mandolin and bass drum from song to song in sensitive and imaginative new orchestrations by Matt Deitchman. The score includes marches, waltzes, novelty tunes, anthems and, of course, the music of the title.

The passionate performers portray one set of lives blossoming and another set fading.

Ragtime and Parade (continuing at Writers Theatre) offer Chicagoans an unusual opportunity to see two astonishing musicals about early 20th-century America. See them both; they are superb companion pieces.

THEATER REVIEW

Her Majesty’s Will

Playwright: Adapted by Robert Kauzlaric, from the novel by David Blixt
At: Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave.
Tickets: $40
Runs through: July 16

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Some say it all began in 1973 with the novel The Princess Bride, some in 1998 with Shakespeare in Love, and yet others attribute the revival of the sword-and-cloak literary genre to theatrical combat designers weary of applying their skills to the same few plays. Whatever the source, consumers of historical fiction in 2017 can find Elizabethan superstars William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe starring in whodunits, bodice-rippers, glam-camp farces, graphic novels and even cookbooks.

The speculations of fight designer-turned-author David Blixt focus on what literary scholars call “Shakespeare’s lost years,” when the Stratford schoolmaster fled his provincial home and family to emerge less than a decade later in metropolitan London as the favorite playwright of Her Royal Highness Elizabeth I. Young Will’s progress—all purely hypothetical, remember—steers him into the company of bad-boy Oxford-dropout and part-time secret agent “Kit” Marlowe. Other current topics addressed in the text include religious wars, artistic theory, the—um, pliant boundaries of “bromance” and the identity of the mysterious “dark lady” referenced in the sonnets.

Mostly, though, we are catapulted through royal intrigues, thrilling adventures, narrow escapes, intrepid nemesis and unexpected alliances, accompanied by plenty of swashbuckling action involving trapdoors, runaway carriages, barroom brawls, rapiers, daggers, punches, grapples and exits with bears in pursuit. Rob Kauzlaric’s adaptation features dialogue incorporating speeches lifted from the Bard’s Greatest Hits, with brief digressions for discussions on the future of the English theater, the fine points of continental fencing techniques and the morphological connection between “Fall-staff” and “Shake-spear.”

This is a dizzying array of moving parts to keep in motion over two and a half hours and, on opening night, director Chris Hainsworth’s narrative pace required a few minutes to achieve optimum velocity (Bryan Bosque should also tone down Kit’s fey mannerisms sooner) but, before long, the nine-actor ensemble portraying 22-plus characters, led by Javier Ferrera’s William you-know-who, were swapping personne with protean dexterity, assisted by Jeffrey Levin’s sound design painting an aural picture of an environment well beyond the confines of Eleanor Kahn’s skeletal scaffold-and-wagon scenery.

Summer is the season for Shakespearean romps, whether big-budget (like that other what-if Summer is the season for Shakespearean romps, weather big-budget (like that other what-if...), or has been until now.

Griffin’s production is stirringly played, ardently sung, tellingly acted and richly designed (beautiful period costumes by Rachael Sypniewski), while the intimate in-the-round staging brings the show into one’s lap. There’s plenty of musical movement although not a lot of dance), but that’s a minor caveat. More seriously, the sound design is spotty and needs further adjustment and/or remaking, and that’s the worst thing I can say about this production!

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The laconic Soldier, who has previously battred, is all it takes to conjure up his displeasure about the loss of privacy known to the personal robotic stewardess called “Jasmine” (a hilariously perky Brittany Burch). Yet events conspire to keep the three trapped in their tiny cabin for weeks on end.

One of the main strengths of Pilgrims is how Kiechel keeps the audience guessing about the ulterior motives of both the Soldier and the Girl. Clearly the Soldier is damaged in some way by his military service. But the Girl has her own past problems, too.

Kiechel and co-directors Michael Patrick Thornton and Jessica Thebus also build tension (and audiences guessing) by illustrating upsetting scenarios between scenes (or as scenes themselves). These could be foreshadowing events that will tragically play out, or possibly disturbing dreams of the Soldier or the Girl.

Now the ultimate revelation of the two characters’ past traumas might not live up to all the imaginative speculation that swirls throughout the play. Kiechel’s device of game-playing for the Girl to ferret out information from the Soldier can also feel a tad too precious (though the early battle for the bathroom does harken back to the one between Blanche and Stanley in A Streetcar Named Desire).

Kiechel’s Pilgrims provides a sturdy dramatic framework for much imagination to take flight for both audiences and the production’s actors and design team. The cast and crew at The Gift grab onto these glorious Pilgrims and create plenty of dramatic and design magic.

With Arnel Sancianco’s elevated hotel-room set design, lighting designer Heather Gilbert and sound designer Chris Kriz all expertly collaborate to create a futurist and claustrophobic environment (though audiences in the first row may have to crane their necks a tad too long). The very attractive cast also skillfully works to keep audiences constantly guessing.

It’s often said that sci-fi is more a reflection of the times it was created in rather than a true prediction of future events. So with Pilgrims, the paranoia over whom to trust and what is real or alternative reality certainly rings true for this very uncomfortable time full of people venting pent-up anger and sharing misinformation.

Critics’ Picks

Aladdin, Cadillac Palace Theatre, through Sept. 10. This national tour is a corporate Disney product, no doubt. But most audiences nostalgic for the blockbuster 1992 animated feature probably won’t care since Aladdin delivers as a wowing, big-budget stage spectacular. SCM

King Liz, Windy City Playhouse, through July 16. Even self-made monarchs can succumb to hubris and ambition. Chuck Smith directed this cautionary fable of an African-American woman from the projects who grew up to be the hottest pro-athlete agent in Manhattan. MSB

The Night Season, Strawdog Theatre Company at Factory Theater, through June 24. A little poetry by William Butler Yeats (and a movie actor in town playing him) is all it takes to conjure up romance of the happy-ever-after kind for an Irish family with three daughters. MSB

Paradise Blue, TimeLine Theatre, through July 23. Jazz man Blue is squeezed between personal demons and urban renewal in 1949 Detroit, and makes all the wrong choices. This atmospheric play has strong characters and dialog but weak structure. Powerful acting carries it, along with Obert Davis’ original jazz score. JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan
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Alexandra Billings talks ‘Transparent,’ tunes and Caitlyn

BY JERRY NUNN

Alexandra Billings grew up performing in Chicago and recently returned to make an appearance at the Steppenwolf gala. Theater credits in Illinois include The Bailiwick Theater, Light Opera Works and Court Theatre. She has won a Joseph Jefferson Award and five After Dark Awards, and was an artistic associate for About Face Theatre.

Now living in Hollywood, she has achieved even more success with a variety of television shows. Billings has played transgender characters on series such as ER, How to Get Away with Murder and Grey’s Anatomy. This streak continues with the role of Davina on the current hit Amazon series Transparent.

Windy City Times: I first met you when you were in the live show Xena.

Alexandra Billings: Oh, lord. That was back in 1923!

WCT: You really gave it your all at the recent Steppenwolf gala. How was being in Chicago again?

AB: I was in town for 48 hours. I got in a plane, went to the hotel, ate, slept, did the gig and went home. I got to see Honey West, which was spectacular. She came to my hotel and we hung out for two hours. She is my best friend and has been for 20 years. She got nominated for a Jeff Award for Priscilla. She is the first trans person in the history of the Jeff Awards to receive a nomination. It is huge and no one is talking about it.

WCT: Honey was the first trans person to do what role.

AB: I transitioned in 1980 when it was not only unheard of, but illegal. I got put in jail because of version therapy and asking for pictures. I have no shame. Do you get starstruck?

WCT: You have a new show at the LGBT Center in LA coming out?

AB: Yes, it is called S/He & Me: A Theatrical Cabaret. It is a musical play about my marriage and my relationship with my wife, who I met in 1976. It parallels my parents’ relationship when they were teenagers. It is about wha happens to these four characters. There is a little boy named Scott who is the catalyst to all of these relationships.

WCT: How did you get on Transparent in the first place?

AB: Jill and her sister Kate, who is also an executive producer and writer on the show, and I all knew each other from Chicago. The Annoyance Theatre did a production called Co-Ed Prison Sluts, which was a huge hit. It ran for years. The Soloway sisters wrote the music and lyrics to it. I was doing a show called Cannibal Cheerleaders on Crack for the Torso Theatre, which is no longer there.

The shows were running at the same time. This was when late night theater shows were hopping.

One time I was asked to fill in at the Annoyance show then jump into a cab to make it to my show later. I was young and did it for a week. That is how we got to know each other.

About 4 years ago Kate contacted me through Facebook and told me about their idea for a show. Nobody wanted to buy it because it was about a parent who was transitioning.

Amazon was interested but I thought that is the place that sells books!

I didn’t think anyone would see the show, but knew if they made it then it would be brilliant. I went down to read with Jeffrey Tambor and we hit it off immediately. I knew it was a good idea when I walked into the room. It just happened before reading anything. We just looked at each other and knew it would go swell. I got the role, we did the pilot, and my life changed.

WCT: I have seen you at the awards shows. Do you get starstruck?

AB: Oh, my god—are you kidding? That is all I do. I bring my phone and take pictures of people. I’m the idiot running up to people at the Emmys and asking for pictures. I have no shame. I am 55 years old. I have been living with AIDS for three decades. Every day is a gift. When I am living a Cinderella moment in a fairy tale, I don’t take one single moment for granted.

WCT: You have a new show at the LGBT Center in LA coming out?

AB: Yes, it is called S/He & Me: A Theatrical Cabaret. It is a musical play about my marriage and my relationship with my wife, who I met in 1976. It parallels my parents’ relationship when they were teenagers. It is about what happens to these four characters. There is a little boy named Scott who is the catalyst to all of these relationships.

I wrote it and it is directed by Joanne Gordon. There is found music where we put in a bunch of Broadway show tunes. Within the text there is a lot of singing.

WCT: Would you ever write a book about your life?

AB: It is hard. Jerry. It is difficult for me to write something and not be very truthful. I don’t know if I could be honest and not hurt a lot of feelings or at least bruise some people. I don’t particularly want to do that in order to write a book. I have to think about it.

I am going to write a book, it just might not be an autobiography.

WCT: Do you have any music coming out?

AB: I am going to write a book, it just might not be an autobiography.

Andrew Billings, PR photo

Alexandra Billings.

Priscilla, The Musical.

AB: I suck in the studio. I feel I should leave that to Madonna. It is really a gift and a whole other thing that I don’t understand. I don’t have a pleasing voice where someone will just sit there and listen to it. I am loud. It takes up a lot of space, and is not always in tune.

I feel like I am a live performer. We tried to do a live album, but it felt stilted. I don’t know if I will go back in the studio anytime soon.

WCT: Any thoughts on the current state of trans rights?

AB: I transitioned in 1980 when it was not only unheard of, but illegal. I got put in jail because I was wearing women’s clothes in the streets of Chicago.

We live in a very different time now, but conversion therapy is very real. We are designated a mental illness in almost a dozen states. There are several jobs where I could still be fired. I was a victim of a hate crime in my own university in California. There is progress to be made.

I think things are better and can be better. We have to concern ourselves with the younger generation. The trans younger community is killing themselves at astronomical rates. This is not just the bullying that is going on but the marginalization in the LGBT community. We have a lot of education and communication problems in our community.

I believe in order to clean up politically we need to clean up our own house first. We are not going to get that unless something tragic happens. We can’t wait for that to happen. There is a man in the White House now who couldn’t care less about us. If push came to shove then we would be the first to go.

We’ve got to conceal and be a tribe. We can’t just do that until we learn our own LGBT history. That goes back to my point about Honey West!

WCT: What do you think of Caitlyn Jenner?

AB: I feel she is in the best place she can be for what she knows. The best thing she can do for herself is take a vacation. She needs to stop for a minute. Anyone that goes through any transition, whether marriage to being single, having a job to unemployment, or whatever, it is done on a large stage it turns into theatrics. It is not spiritual or truthful. It is not founded in any kind of reality. That is true of anyone, not just Caitlyn Jenner.

She is going through a massive change in her life on a global scale. I don’t know how we expect her to act except for exactly how she is acting. She is not doing this in a spiritual way but instead a public way. I think she is a wonderful human being with her heart in the right place. She just needs to stop. She’s got the money and the time. Get the hell out of Dodge and relax for a few minutes!

Visit AlexandraBillings.com for more information on Billings’ projects. Transparent’s fourth season is scheduled to be released sometime this fall.

‘Evan Hansen’ prevails at Tonys

With no juggernaut like Hamilton sweeping the Tonys this year, the awards were dispersed among more productions during this year’s ceremony, held June 11 at Radio City Music Hall.

Dear Evan Hansen was the night’s biggest winner, with six awards. Among them were Best Musical, Best Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical for Ben Platt, and Best Actress in a Featured Role in a Musical for Rachel Bay Jones.

Some of the night’s other winners included out actress Cynthia Nixon (for The Little Foxes), Michael Aronov (for Oslo), August Wilson’s Jitney and Laurie Metcalf (for A Doll’s House, Part 2).

However, it was Bette Midler (who won for best actress in a musical) who might have stolen the ceremony. Although she did not perform, her acceptance speech amused many; at one point during the four-minute-plus speech, Midler told the orchestra “Shut that crap off!” when the music started to swell.

Kevin Spacey hosted the show. Poking holes at the rumors about his sexuality, he made a few coming-out jokes—but did not officially do so.

New CSO album out June 16

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) is releasing its eighth recording with Music Director Riccardo Muti on its own CSO Resound label—Bruckner: Symphony No. 9 in D Minor ($19.99)—worldwide via retail and online outlets on June 16.

The recording is also available now for preorder online via Amazon, iTune, ArkivMusic and The Symphony Store.

The CSO’s commercial recording history began more than 100 years ago, on May 1, 1916.
THEATER REVIEW

Naked Boys Singing!
Playwright: conceived by Robert Shrock, with music & lyrics by various artists,
At: Eclectic Full Contact Theater Company
at Theater Wit, 1229 N. Belmont Ave.
Tickets: $25-$30
Runs through: July 1

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The six males referenced in the title of this musical revue sing—quite capably, too. It’s likewise true that the ensemble of physically diverse players—lissome or cuddlesome, bear-hairy or baby-bottom bald, tattooed and tabula rasa—appear totally unclothed for all but perhaps 14 out of the 85 minutes required for the duration of the performance. To be sure, that same description could be applied to a rush-week fraternity party or a post-game locker-room revel, but this 1998 vaudeville promising “No crudity/Just gratuitous nudity” delivers much, much more.

In addition to the novelty of its wardrobe design, the score composed by a baker’s dozen of tunesmiths explores the vagaries of self-revelation as practiced in our society—the Jewish celebration of Bris, for example, or the pubescent humiliation of involuntary erections. Cleaning services whose employees perform their domestic chores wearing only the safety gear mandated by their industry—aprons, gloves etc.—are name-checked (“Call me! You look dirty!” our “Naked Maid” teases a spectator), as is nostalgia for rough-diamond masculine icons like Robert Mitchum, now supplanted by exercise-fanatics seeking anatomical perfection. The evening would not be complete without a double-entendre dirtiness—in this case, extolling the therapeutic benefits of culinary activities like tenderizing steaks (all right, “beating your meat”), or an a cappella baroque-harmony toccata based in synonyms for “penis.”

It’s not all naughty-bits giggles, however (het bachelorette parties, be warned). “Kris (See What You Missed)” is an AIDS-survivor’s apostrophe to his deceased lover, while “Window to Window” recounts the romantic fancies of two apartment-dwelling singles viewing one another from adjacent high-rises. Portraits of the sex-trade industry range from a “perky little porn star from Skokie, Illinois,” to a clutch of weary sequin-burned strippers, to aspiring calendar models tracing their art back to Marilyn Monroe and Burt Reynolds.

The Eclectic Theatre Company, though not precisely a gay-focused troupe, demonstrated its embrace of the short-arms-inspection aesthetic in its 2014 production of Richard Greenberg’s Take Me Out. Under the direction of David Belew, with continuity assistance provided by Jessica Lauren Fisher’s compact choreography and Ty Miles’ agile piano bridges, the ensemble currently occupying the front studio at Theater Wit (next door to About Face’s Bright Half Life, coincidentally) display warmth and congeniality in quantities sufficiently abundant to put us at our ease immediately and keep us there.

According to MOCA’s website, “Mayerson offers a distinctive view of the American Dream at a critical moment in our sociopolitical landscape. Presenting more than 100 paintings from a twenty-year body of work, My American Dream weaves together famous figures, iconic events, inspiring landscapes, and personal experiences into a vibrant cosmology.”

As part of the exhibit, Mayerson shows themes of queerness and marriage equality. There are also new paintings made in relation to Cleveland, such as one featuring NBA player LeBron James.

The museum is also holding “Queer Threads: Crafting Identity and Community” on June 17. At this event, “John Chaich features an international, intergenerational mix of 30 contemporary artists who explore queer identity by remixing fiber craft traditions as well as the tensions between of art and craft, masculine and feminine, gay and straight,” according to the museum’s website.

See MOCACleveland.org.

‘Pickers’ in Illinois throughout June

The show American Pickers—a documentary series that explores the world of antique “picking”—will be filming throughout Illinois in June.

The History Channel show follows Mike and Frank, two skilled pickers, as they hunt for the country’s most valuable antiques. They find sizeable, unique collections and learn the interesting stories behind them.

Those with large private collections of antiques that the pickers can spend the better part of the day looking through should send their names, phone numbers, locations and descriptions of the collection with photos to americanpickers@cineflix.com or call 855-OLD-RUST.

Queer Film Society series in June

The Queer Film Society, in association with The Chicago Public Library, is presenting “Celebrate Queer Pride Worldwide,” a free film series examining the lives of LGBTQ people globally (in honor of Gay Pride month).

The series has free screenings taking place at 6 p.m. (doors at 5:30 pm) at various branches of the Chicago Public Library: Monday, June 19 at the Bezazian branch (1226 W. Ainslie Ave.), Tuesday, June 20, at the West Town branch (1625 W. Chicago Ave.), and Wed., June 21, at the Rogers Park branch (6907 N. Clark St.).

The films are:

—Tchindas (2015): The June 19 movie shows a tiny island community preparing for their annual Carnival celebration under the direction of a beloved trans performer and her cohorts.

—Stories of Our Lives (2015): This movie, being shown June 20-21, is composed of five short films dramatizing true stories of LGBTQ lives in Kenya.

This series contains films with mature subject matter. Viewer discretion is advised. See ChiPubLib.org and QueerFilmSociety.org.
Matt Wolf is an award-winning filmmaker based out of New York. His most recent work, Bayard & Me, details the story of the late civil-rights activist Bayard Rustin and Rustin’s partner, Walter Naegle. Wolf’s films have earned recognition at festivals and focus on untold but remarkable stories. His previous projects include, Wild Combination, Teenage, I Am Rebel, The Face of AIDS and I Remember.

Windy City Times: Where did the idea for this documentary come from? How long did it take?

Matt Wolf: StoryCorps—an oral history and radio project in New York—was doing a queer initiative, and they approached me about contributing stories and recommending people to be interviewed. I had heard about the phenomenon of intergenerational gay adoption, and I said, “Let’s try and talk to somebody who did that.”

WCT: You have a pretty impressive resume, with more than a few film projects under your belt. Did any of your previous works influence the way you approached the filming and overall development of Bayard & Me?

MW: Yeah, I’ve done several biographical documentaries about queer history. So, in a way, this is my wheelhouse; this is what I’m used to doing. You know, the topic of the civil-rights movement or intergenerational adoption, that was new to me. But I’m used to telling a story by interviewing someone intimately talking about a partner or a relationship that is no more. And typically, that is a narrative that relates to the AIDS epidemic, but this was due to age.

WCT: What made you choose that opening shot of a modern city versus the 1970s? Your documentary has a lot of shots that cut back and forth between then and now.

MW: That was a theme for me, to kind of move between the past and the present. ... In a lot of my films, I’m interested in kind of blurring the lines between the past and the present, and jumping back and forth. That’s why I chose to shoot the present-day stuff in 16-millimeter film—because it blends pretty seamlessly with the archival footage.

WCT: What was it like hunting down footage for this story? Is that a challenge you look forward to finding solutions for?

MW: All of my films involve a lot of archival footage, so that’s something that is a big part of my creative process. For this particular film, I worked closely with the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco, who has a very unique archival film collection.

WCT: What was it like seeing old footage of Bayard during the civil-rights movement? How do you think his time in India helped shaped his world view?

MW: Yeah, definitely. There’s a wonderful film called Brother Outsider that came out in the early 2000s that’s a kind of definitive biography of Bayard. And that film had all this footage. So, when I was doing research on this project, I saw that film and I thought, “Wow, there’s all this amazing material.” Something I didn’t include was footage of Bayard debating Malcolm X.

WCT: It was surprising to see that Bayard and Walter’s mother had such a strong connection.

MW: I thought it was touching, and it was sweet. But in a way, it’s not surprising because they were from the same generation, so it kind of made sense, you know?

WCT: Do you think Bayard’s Quaker upbringing influenced his approach to activism?

MW: Absolutely. I know that was kind of central to his methodology. I remember Walter saying that love was a foundation of the quaker faith and that was a guiding principle in a lot of [Bayard’s] activism and philosophies on social organizing.

WCT: There was a line in the documentary that really struck me: “He was willing to step back from the forefront, for the greater good.” It gives the impression that Bayard took a less visible role in civil rights because of his sexuality. Do you think that’s true? Do you think that, in reality, he could have been as influential as someone like John Lewis?

MW: Yeah, I mean I think that’s totally true and that, in a way, he was marginalized for being gay. And he was, you know, shifted to the background of the movement even though he was a really formative leader and influential within that moment.

Bayard & Me is on on Super Deluxe’s social channels. See YouTube.com/superdeluxe. Read the entire interview online at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Matt Wolf aims to tell Bayard Rustin’s story

BY JAKE EKDAHL

Windy City Times: Where did the idea for this documentary come from? How long did it take?

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Oscar winner
Rachel Weisz: On new role, LGBT films

BY JERRY NUNN

Actress Rachel Weisz has come a long way since her first minor role in 1994’s Death Machine. She began staking her claim to big-budget Hollywood with Chain Reaction, a few Mummy movies, About a Boy and The Runaway Jury. She later won an Oscar for her role in The Constant Gardener.

In live theater, she revived Design for Living and A Streetcar Named Desire. The Londoner starred with her husband, Daniel Craig, on Broadway with Betrayal, which racked up ticket sales.

Art-house films are her specialty, with 2015’s The Lobster, Youth and, now, My Cousin Rachel. This is another film adaptation of Daphne du Maurier’s work and the first one since 1952. It is a tightly wound mystery involving a young Englishman named Philip, played by Sam Claflin, who plots revenge against his cousin because he believes that she murdered his guardian. Things grow complicated as he develops romantic feelings for her.

Windy City Times talked with the accomplished actress during a recent press conference.

Question: Hi, Rachel. Would you start off with talking about researching the role in My Cousin Rachel and making it different from the past?

Rachel Weisz: I didn’t watch the original 1950s classic because I didn’t want to have Olivia de Havilland’s performance in my mind.

I did read the novel because obviously I could interpret that in my own way, and not be haunted by another actress’ reading. I read the script and I like to ride side saddle. That was about it in terms of active research. The rest is just imagining.

Q: Did you work closely with the director on your interpretation of her guilt or innocence?

RW: I made a decision, and when I first read the script, I didn’t know. It was open to interpretation and ambiguous as to kind of did she or didn’t she but I made a decision before I actually played her as to whether she was guilty or innocent. The director asked that I keep that a secret from him, and it’s a secret still. He still doesn’t know.

Q: Did you make a decision about it?

RW: I definitely made the decision as to her guilt or innocence. I didn’t know when I first read the script whether she was guilty, but I made a decision in order to play her. I played her with that in mind, with my decision in mind.

Q: Now that the film is out, can you say how you feel about the character?

RW: I’m afraid not—I can’t. I’ll take it to the grave. I’m so sorry.

Q: With Du Maurier, gender lines are broken and sexual orientation is played with. How does the cast deal with this?

RW: Well, it’s a great question. I mean, it’s there in the story and in the novel, obviously it’s a woman writing about a man in love with a woman. Apparently she was actually writing about Daphne’s obsession with her publisher’s wife. I don’t know much more about the story than that but it was her, she was actually in love with this Rachel figure, the writer. So that’s there in the history of the writing of the novel, which I think is an interesting biographical detail.

But, yes, I mean she is playing with feminism and a woman living, feeling not guilty about having sexual pleasure, and not feeling like she needs to be married in order to have sexual pleasure or that being married would mean that she would be owned or possessed. She wants to be independent and free and carve out her own sense of self and her own sense of sexuality—which is, I guess, for the 1850s, very radical and, unfortunately, may be still radical in some places.

Q: How did you maneuver in those big costumes?

RW: Well, wearing a corset, you can’t put it on yourself—someone has to lace you in. It takes time and, once you’re in it, you’re very restrained and it immediately makes you more formal, more poised. You feel less modern. I guess it’s kind of like a cage of femininity strapped on to you.

It’s quite intense, wearing a corset. You can’t breathe. I understand why women used to say, you can only shallow breathe. It’s a whole other feeling, than if I was in jeans and T-shirt. There’s a certain oppression of the time that is expressed through the clothes, I guess. Also beauty—there’s great beauty in them as well.

Q: What was the most difficult scene to shoot?

RW: They were all difficult and all easy. There wasn’t one thing that was particularly, that stands out. I think all performances are challenging. They’re all a crapshoot; you don’t know if you’re going to pull it off. It doesn’t matter how many performances you’ve managed to do, sometimes I think the more experience you get, the more nervous you get.

You just don’t know if you’re going to pull it off. It’s a scary endeavor. You have to jump off into the deep end.

Q: You were in the movie Bent in the past. Any plans for more LGBT movies?

RW: Well, I just produced and starred in a film called Disobedience, which is an adaptation of a Naomi Alderman novel. It is a love story between two women. I just finished a film, 1708, which is also a crapshoot; you don’t know if you’re going to pull it off. It doesn’t matter how many performances you’ve managed to do, sometimes I think the more experience you get, the more nervous you get.

Q: When does Disobedience come out?

RW: Disobedience is just in post-production right now. It’s a novel that I optioned and sought out the writer, apparently she was actually writing about Daphne’s obsession with her publisher’s wife. I don’t know much more about the story than that but it was her, she was actually in love with this Rachel figure, the writer. So that’s there in the history of the writing of the novel, which I think is an interesting biographical detail.

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For updates and corrections: http://www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org

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The regular season just flew by,” Bache said. “The pre-season drags because you’re limited while practicing indoors and you’re desperate to get outside and play on a full field. Then you get outside and you’re anxious for the games to start—you want to play against someone other than your teammates. Once the games start, the season goes at warp speed. I can’t believe it’s already the post-season.

“After 15 seasons, the Chicago Force football team is coming to an end, as team owner Linda Bache does not intend to sell the team.

She announced before the 2017 season that it would be the team’s last under her leadership. The team rolled out a 7-1 regular-season record and now has a second-round Women’s Football Alliance (WFA) game on Saturday, June 17, at Evanston Township High School. The Force play host to the Pittsburgh Passion, with kickoff set for 6 p.m.

The Force could play twice more if they defeat Pittsburgh.

Bache joined the Force as a player in its inaugural 2003 season and was a defensive star for the first six years (2003-08). She became an owner at the end of her third season, in fall 2005. “It’s been an interesting season thus far,” said Bache, whose 2017 Force defeated the defending champion DC Divas in the final minutes on the road in April. Chicago also this season lost a high-scoring, heartbreaking game to Boston in the final minutes.

A winning tradition

Chicago is—based on its record—one of the best, most talented, most respected teams in women’s football history. Quarterback Sami Grisafe is a true superstar who’s led a host of talented players along for the ride, such as Jeannette Gray, Darcy Leslie, Dawn Pederson, Kim Marks, Jamie Menzyk and many others.

The Force cross into so many communities, certainly the LGBT line.

“The Force has certainly bonded friends. Bache, for instance, said the friends built on the field will be “lifetime” friends off.

In addition, the Force have certainly had a financial impact on Bache.

“Effort is the key. We have tons of potential, but what we really need is sustained effort. I’ll take effort over talent any day and I believe if we get full effort from the team in this playoff run, we will reach the championship.”

Bache wants just three more wins.

For tickets, visit www.humpfilm-fest.com/chicago.

Dan Savage in Chicago June 15

Dan Savage returns to the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave., for a live taping of the Savage Lovecast on Thursday, June 15, at 8 p.m.

There will be special guests, such as comedian Kristen Toomey.

Savage is an author, a sex-advice columnist, a podcaster, a pundit, and a public speaker. “Savage Love,” Dan’s sex-advice column, first appeared in the Seattle, Seattle’s alternative weekly, in 1991. The column is now syndicated to more than 50 papers across the United States and Canada. Savage has published six books.

Tickets are $35 each; visit www.humpfilm-fest.com/chicago.
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http://codeplatoon.org/how-it-works/tuition-funding/

If you are transgender or GNC and not a veteran, please email training4trans@gmail.com to be put on a list for potential upcoming coding courses.
Chicago Pride Fest returns to Boystown Saturday, June 17 and Sunday, June 18, for another weekend filled with sun, fun and world-class entertainment.

This year’s headliners are ‘80s pop diva Taylor Dayne and dance pioneer Kristine W.

The festival takes place on North Halsted St. from Addison St. to Grace St. There will be a $10 suggested donation.

Pride Fest is produced by Northalsted Business Alliance. For more info, see https://www.northalsted.com/chicago-pride-fest/.

Here is a full schedule of entertainment:

**Saturday, June 17**

**North Stage**
12:30 p.m.: Drag Show
2:30 p.m.: Thelma Houston
3:30 p.m.: Drag Show
5:30 p.m.: Vassy
6 p.m.: Drag Show
7:30 p.m.: David Hernandez
8:30 p.m.: Taylor Dayne

**South Stage**
1 p.m.: Gay Men’s Chorus
2 p.m.: Catfight
4 p.m.: One Night Band
6 p.m.: Girl Power Band
8 p.m.: Boy Band Review

**Sunday, June 18**

**North Stage**
Noon: Pet Parade
12:30 p.m.: Drag Show
2:30 p.m.: Carlito Olivero
3:30 p.m.: Drag Show
5:30 p.m.: Well-Strung
6:30 p.m.: Pride Talent Show
8 p.m.: Symon
8:30 p.m.: Kristine W.

**South Stage**
1 p.m.: Pet Parade
1:30 p.m.: 2 The 9s
3:30 p.m.: Rod Tuffcurls & The Bench Press
6 p.m.: ABBA Salute
7:30 p.m.: 16 Candles
Midsommarfest sizzles in June

On June 9-11, the 52nd annual Andersonville Midsommarfest was held in weather that had a heat index that climbed toward 90 degrees. The well-attended festival—which traditionally spans five blocks on North Clark Street—featured craft vendors, live rock bands, DJs, drag acts, a glee crew, a jazz band and a wide array of food selections from local restaurants. One of the standout events was the Chicago Equality Rally (more info in this week's issue on page 12).

Highlights of the festival included several acrobatic and glee performances from The Chicago Spirit Brigade, a well-received set by Heart cover band Little Queen, a quieter set from members of the Lakeside Pride Jazz Band, and a rowdy set from rock bands The Waco Brothers and The Right Now. The festival benefited the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce.

Photos and text by Vern Hester
Windy City Times congratulates Sidetrack on 35 amazing years. Please enjoy this photo spread, which includes a few classic black-and-whites from Windy City Media Group archives, as well as a selection of photos of Sidetrack staff from the Nightspots archive going back to 2005. Check out Windy City Times’ Facebook page this week for more staff photos.

Photos by Kirk Williamson, Anthony Meade, Jerry Nunn, Dave Ouano, Kat Fitzgerald and more


Sidetrack’s softball team, circa late 1980s.

Chuck Hyde, Art Johnston and Pepe Pena at Sidetrack’s 14th anniversary party, 1996.
Zac Efron (right, with Dwayne Johnson) put on an amazing physical display recently, Billy says.

Photo from Instagram

intrigued, too. When presented with an actual pole, Zac good-naturedly acquiesced and exhibited a display of upper body strength rarely seen on TV—or on BillyMasters.com.

The Tonys may be history, but another awards show is coming back from the dead. The long-dormant GayVNs are back! These awards were given out as part of the popular Adult Video News Awards. Eventually, the GayVNs got their own show, and what a show it was. They were the premier gay-porn awards, sporting not only the top (and bottom) names in gay porn, but also people like Kathy Griffin, Bruce Vilanch, Margaret Cho and even moi. The last show took place eight years ago, but AVN is saying it will return next January in Las Vegas.

Speaking of gay porn, a legendary star is off the market. According to Instagram (which is the gay-porn equivalent of the Associated Press), Brent Corrigan is engaged. Once again, I feel like I've reported this story before. And yet, the person he's engaged to is a name I know I've never typed—JJ Knight. One gay-porn website called them “two of the biggest gay porn stars in the industry”—so there! JJ posted a photo of them together saying, “It's true we don’t have it as easy as ordinary couples. But I can promise you that this is no ordinary love!! (He is the man of my dreams and I am proud to call him my fiancé!)” You can tell it’s the real thing. At the HustlaBall in Las Vegas earlier this year, JJ had sex with Brent in public. Awww, it’s almost like Pretty Woman—but without the thigh-high boots! Of course, you can watch the video on our website. Of course, we wish them the best.

Our “Ask Billy” question required a bit of research. George in Fort Lauderdale writes, “Do you remember Jon Fleming? He appeared on an episode of Will & Grace as a really hot shirtless guy in Jack’s acting class. There is a gay-porn video circulating and people say it’s him. Is it?”

Many of my readers will remember Fleming from Dante’s Cove, where he replaced original cast member Stephen Amell. He also turned up on CSI: NY, Medium and other shows—usually as corpse number two! The porn video was allegedly filmed March 5. The guy calls himself “Luke” and claims to be 27 years old—those were 27

hard years! Fleming, on the other hand, is 36—and for that age, he looks OK. “Luke” says he’s six feet tall, as is Fleming. With the stats out of the way, I did more research. Turns out, I wrote about him in 2011 when he played a male stripper on Femme Fatales. It’s not a huge leap from full-frontal on Cinemax to gay porn. Except this time, his full-frontal has been fully fluffed—and there’s a whole lot more of him to see now on BillyMasters.com.

When CSI could stand for “Cock Scene Investigation,” it’s definitely time to end yet another column. Here’s a Tony Award question—was I the only one rooting for Patti LuPone to win? Sure, she didn’t have a chance opposite Bette Midler, but how delicious it would have been to see Patti accept an award from Glenn Close! Moving along, be sure to check out BillyMasters.com—the site where no bulge goes unturned. If you have a question for me, send it to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Bette finishes her acceptance speech! Until next time, remember: One man’s filth is another man’s bible.
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The DISH
Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDBY CITY TIMES

SAVOR
Athena
BY ANDREW DAVIS

Well, it’s about as close to Greece that one can get without a passport. Athena (212 S. Halsted St.; AthenaRestaurantChicago.com) promises an authentic Greek—and has still managed to provide it for two decades. (Interestingly, there’s nothing planned to mark the spot’s 20th anniversary—a milestone that might have more than nothing planned to mark the spot’s 20th anniversary—a milestone that might have more than one restaurant offering all types of specials.)

One of the items that helps contribute to the air of authenticity is an outdoor area with a retractable roof (making Athena a “convertible Greek restaurant,” according to manager Jimmy); coupled with tables topped with blue-and-white umbrellas and even a waterfall, I felt like I was relaxing on a Greek isle.

Of course, the cuisine helped contribute to the Greek experience as well. (By the way, the next time you’re there, take a look at the forks; al-

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**Wednesday, June 14**

City of Chicago Salute to LGBT Veterans

Each year the City of Chicago, LGBT veterans and friends participate in a ceremony and wreath-laying to honor the military service of LGBT veterans. The speaker is Emily Steffen, a 10 year U.S. Navy veteran of two wars in the Middle East, where she was a CIVC/documentary filmmaker working with Explosives Ordinance teams in Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain, Yemen and Dubai. Questions to Jamesdarky@aol.com 12:00pm Daley Plaza, Chicago http://avechicago.org/

**Beds double bill includes Jerker and Two Boys in Bed on a Cold Winter's Night**

Jerker follows the relationship that develops between a veteran and a business man in the beginning years of the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980s. Two Boys in Bed on a Cold Winter’s Night is about two gay men who have just finished their sexual tryst after meeting earlier that night in a Manhattan bar. Through June 16. $30 VIP, $25 general 7:30pm The Buena at Pride Arts Center, 6147 N. Broadway 800-737-0984 http://www.prideartscenter.com Tickets: http://tinyurl.com/y9i8vs19

You’re Being Ridiculous Pride Series

Real people tell true stories about their lives. Tickets $20. 8:00pm Steppenwolf 1650 N Halsted Chicago Tickets: http://www.steppenwolf.org/tickets-events/seasons/2016-17/youre-being-ridiculous-pride/

**Drag Party**

Sketch, drag, improv variety show featuring up and coming drag queens, kings and bio queens lip-synching and acting their little baby hearts out. It’s truly a party with Celeste Izmore, Aunty Chan, Anita Cannoli, Justin Side and Pam Who? Wednesdays through June 28. $10 9:30pm Annoyance Theatre 851 W Belmont Chicago 773.697.9693 http://www.theannoyance.com

**Thursday, June 15**

Sidetrack Anniversary Party - 35 Years of Pride Camp Sidetrack Jamboree with low-priced drinks, lite bites and a chance to win cool prizes with Dixie Lynn Cartwright. Supporting the Heartland Alliance: Please bring a new personal grooming or cleaning product or make a donation at the door. 6:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago http://www.sidetrackchicago.com/she100 Quarterly Presentation Meeting/Social LGBTQ Women’s Giving Circle invites members to nominate for donations causes and organizations they are passionate about and present to the group. 5:30pm - 7:30pm TBA http://she100.org/

Urban Queer Women of Color: Short Film Series CATFISHIN - A Film by Coquie Hughes. A 30-minute dark comedy about a trans-man who is only interested in dating straight women but runs into issues because he's not considered a real man due to his genetic “female” body parts. PRICE $20 6:30pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?id=14380 Tickets: http://community.centeronhalsted.org/UrbanQueerWomen

The Legendary Children Unique and pow-erful queer, featuring up and coming queers: Elle Walker, Hannah Viti, Walter Santiago, LezBe, Slihele & Riley Konor. Shows by Yung Assata, Melissa, Bambi Banks, and Aunty Chat! DJs Miss Twink USA & Maddeline. RSVP online for reduced cover. 10:00pm Berlin Nightclub 954 W Belmont Ave Chicago http://do312.com/events/2017/6/15/the-legendary-children

**Friday, June 16**

Tennis icon Billie Jean King will speak at Northwestern University’s commencement. PR photo

Pride & Joy Reception at the Center on Halsted Friends of the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame will host the 24th Annual Pride & Joy. $20 ticket price includes hors d’oeuvres, 2 drink tickets, and featured entertainment. 6:00pm - 8:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago Tickets: http://tinyurl.com/p3njda

Naked Boys Singing A little song, a little dance, a little time without your pants. Eclectic Full Contact Theatre. Through July 2. Sunday matinees. 8:00pm Thea-ter Wit 1226 W. Ainslie 71229 W Belmont Ave. Chicago http://www.eclectic-theatre.com

Billie Jean King Advocate/sports icon Billie Jean King will deliver this year’s commencement address at Northwestern University 9:30pm Ryan Field on the Evanston campus

Black Lot Bash 2017 Whitney Mixter hosts GIFS Night Out. Tickets $15 at the door. 10:00pm Lark Lounge, 3441 N Halsted, Chicago http://www.backlotbashchicago.com

**Saturday, June 17**

Chicago Pride Fest Two-day street festi-val by Northalsted Business Alliance. Drag shows, Gay Men’s Chorus and iconic pet parade. Pageant judge, Taylor Dayne, Vassy, David Hernandez, Thelma Houston, $10 suggested donation. Concludes June 18, 11:00am - 10:00pm Halsted from 3200 N. Halsted to Grace http://www.northalsted.com/events/chicago-pride-fest/

Pride in the Sky Enjoy the view and step inside for a buffet brunch with bottomless Mimosas and Bloody Marys. Hosted by the Heartland Alliance Associate Board to benefit HIV services and low-income people living with HIV/AIDS. 11:00am - 2:00pm Estate Ultra Bar, Yacht Club's outdoor space on the river Chicago Redstars Pride Game Chicago vs Washington. Performance by Lakeside Pride Marching Band. 3:00pm Toyota Park 7000 S Harlem Ave Bridgeview, IL 60455 http://chicagOREDStars.com/

The Force’s final home game Playoffs, round two vs Pittsburgh Passion. The Force, women’s tackle football, rooted in the LGBT community. 6:00pm Evanston High School, 2285 Church St., Evanston http://chicagforcefootball.com/


Artemis Singers Family of Friends concert Chicago’s lesbian feminist chorus, will celebrate Pride month with a special concert and dance. Concert and dance are both accessible. Free street parking. $15 advance; $20 at door. 7:00pm First Unitarian Church of Chicago 5650 S. Woodlawn Ave. Chicago http://family-of-friends.brownpapertickets.com/

You’re Being Ridiculous: Pride LGBTQIA Storytelling Show Doors open at 7 p.m. Show starts at 7:30 p.m. The event is BYOB with a $10 suggested cash donation. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago http://yourebeingridiculous.com

2017 Spring Queer Bites Film Festival Hosted by Pride Films and Plays, a fun night of socializing and queer representation in film! From comedies to documentaries, we will be screening 11 amazing short films all centered around LGBTQ+ issues and characters. Buy tickets in advance at the link, 7:30pm Pride Arts Center, 4139 N Broadway, Chicago, http://pridefilmsandplays.com/tickets/

Windy City Gay Chorus and Windy City Treble Quire present Pulse Variety of musical styles including classical, pop, contemporary, Broadway, and world music featuring composers from Brahms to Gershwin. Portion of proceeds to assist those affected by the Pulse nightclub tragedy. First performance 5 pm, General admission $20 online. Reserved seating $35 online. 8:00pm Chicago Temple Building 77 W. Washington St. Chicago http://WindyCitySings.org Tickets: http://wcapulse.bpt.me

**Sunday, June 18**

PFLAG DuPage Guest speaker Katie Stilovsky of the Chicago Children’s Mu-seum. PFLAG DuPage meets the second Sunday of each month 2:00 pm St. Paul Lutheran Church, 515 S. Wheaton Ave., Wheaton http://www.pflagdu-page.org

**Monday, June 19**

TPAN Ribbon-cutting and open house for newly opened location. 5:00pm - 7:30pm Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) 5537 N Broadway, Chicago http://www.tpantp.org Queer Film Society: Celebrate Queer Pride Worldwide Tchinda (2015): A loving portrait of a tiny island community preparing for their annual Carnival celebration under the direction of a beloved trans performer and her cohorts. Part of free film series on LGBTQ people globally. Four free screenings at various branches of the Chicago Public Library.

**Tuesday, June 20**

Field Museum Pride event on science of sex The Field Museum’s LGBTQ affinity group Outfielders will host its second annual Out in the Field: Slushies and Science with Field Museum scientists doing show-and-tells about some of nature’s most unusual sexual behaviors, including fish that switch from male to female, mushroom sex, and more. 6:00pm - 8:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago http://fieldmuseum.org

**Wednesday, June 21**

30 Under 30 Awards Each year Windy City Times honors 30 outstanding LGBT individuals (and allies) for substantial contributions to the Chicagoland LGBTQ community in the fields of entertainment, politics, health, activism, academics, sports or other areas. 7:00pm Polo Cafe, 3322 South Morgan St., Chicago

2nd Annual Transgender Community Ice Cream Social Center on Halsted & Jeni’s Splendid Ice Creams are Proud Co-Sponsors. Socialize on Center on Halsted’s biggest roof deck. Take in a wonderful view of the city, celebrate Pride Month, meet new friends, and enjoy complimentary Jeni’s Splendid Ice Cream. Free event. 5:30pm - 8:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St., Chicago http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?id=14280

**Activism Series:**

Project Fierce Project Fierce Chicago is a grassroots collective of radical social workers, youth advocates and other community members who are working together to establish community-driven, identity-affirming housing in Chicago. Project Fierce’s mission is to reduce LGBTQ youth homelessness in Chicago by providing transitional housing and support services to LGBTQ-identified young adults. 7:00pm - 8:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/activism-series-project-fierce

You’re Being Ridiculous Pride Series

Real people tell true stories about their lives. Tickets $20. 8:00pm Steppenwolf 1650 N Halsted Chicago Tickets: http://www.steppenwolf.org/tickets-events/seasons/2016-17/youre-being-ridiculous-pride/
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