

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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RESIST

Chicago Equality Rally shows LGBTQ power

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ONE YEAR LATER: PULSE VIGIL

Memorial event held at Center on Halsted.

Photo by Matt Simonette

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Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)



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STROKE OF GENIUS

Bent Nights looks at shows by Perfume Genius (left) and Serpentwithfeet.
Photo by Vern Hester

'REAL' LIFE



Filmmaker Shaleece Haas (above) discusses her trans-focused documentary, Real Boy.
Photo by Sarah Deragon

ONE AND 'DUNNE'

Robert Hofler examines the life of a legendary writer in Money, Murder, and Dominick Dunne.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Cher, 'The Babadook' and Wanda Sykes.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

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SAGE Executive Director Michael Adams.
Photo courtesy of SAGE

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.

"It was getting people who normally wouldn't spend time together to sit down at a table and have a meal together—LGBT folks and allies of different ages sit around in small groups and large groups, around a table, to talk about what it means to build an intergenerational LGBT community," he added. "It's a first step, but in addition to opening up the discussion, all that can come include new connections between people of different ages."

There were 232 Sage Table events, with about 3,500 people participating, Adams said, noting that the initiative combatted one of the biggest challenges LGBT seniors face: isolation.

"Many of them don't have kids or grandkids," he said. "All of that leads to isolation and thin support networks. We also know that LGBT folks are more likely to get old in poverty and serious health conditions."

Service providers are often not willing to provide their services in ways that are knowing or respectful of LGBT seniors, he added. "And now we have a federal government that is essentially hostile to the needs of LGBT Americans, including the seniors."

The federal government removed questions pertaining to LGBTs from questionnaires assessing the needs for senior services, he said. "SAGE is involved in a big battle with the Trump administration to force them to reverse course. Prior to Trump's election, the federal government was more of a partner, and now they're becoming more and more of an adversary."

Correction

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

Windy City Times regrets the error.

GUEST COLUMN

BY JAY SENNETT



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 cranium:

"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 doing it? If we've always been the gender we are now, we're just ourselves, right?

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 will-power and aplomb in our souls.

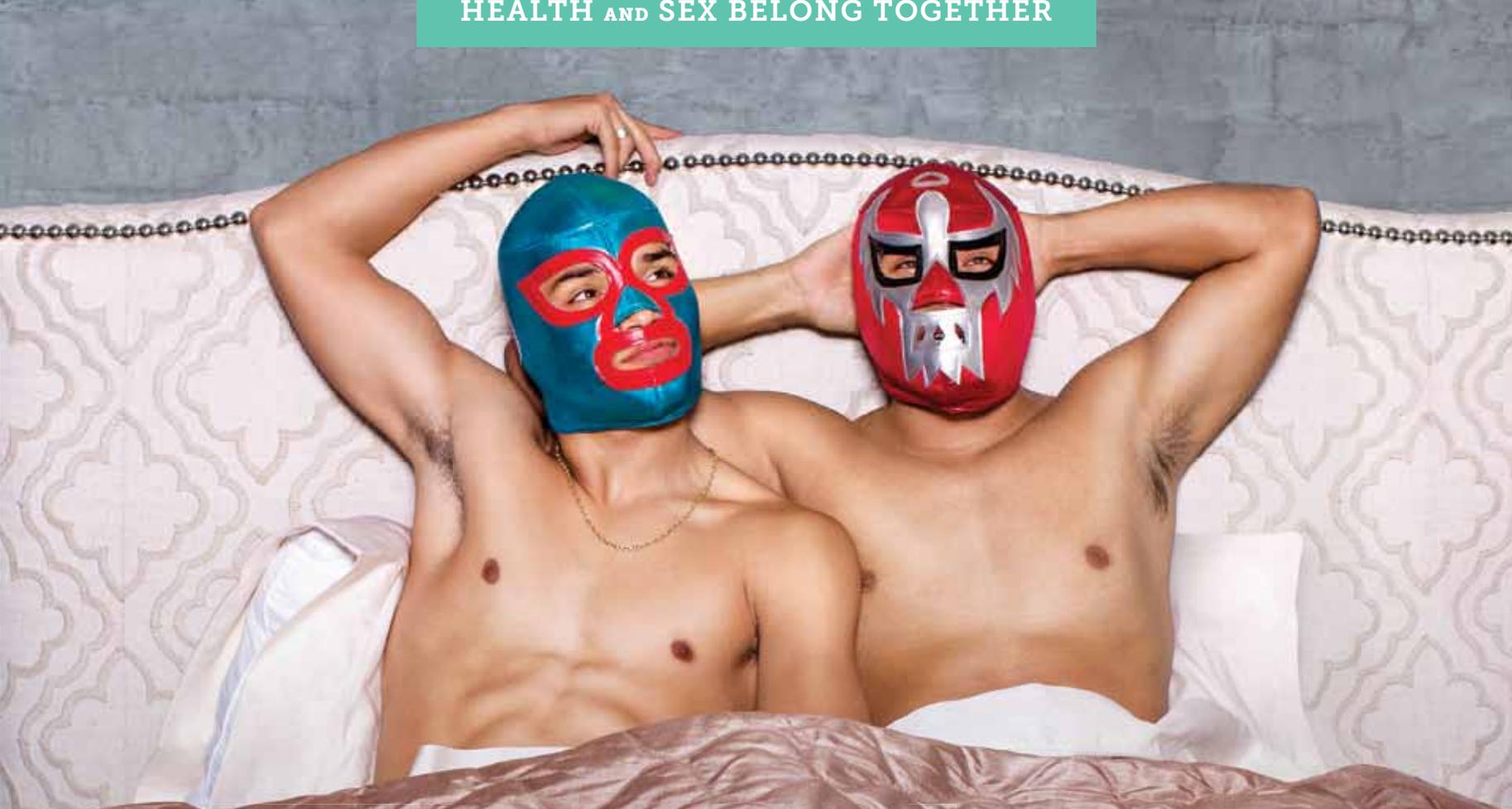
We have a confidence to share. We will share it with people in whom we have great confidence. Confidence that they will act kindly and admirably and thankfully welcome our trust in them.

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.

Jay Sennett lives in Ypsilanti, Michigan. He writes transsexual and transgender fiction and nonfiction. Learn more at www.jaysennett.com.

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Chicagoans remember the Pulse tragedy

Participants hold candles in honor of the Pulse victims. Photos by Matt Simonette



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

Mike Morales.



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 the 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."

Joanna Thompson.



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

BY MATT SIMONETTE

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 committeewoman 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

BY MATT SIMONETTE

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."

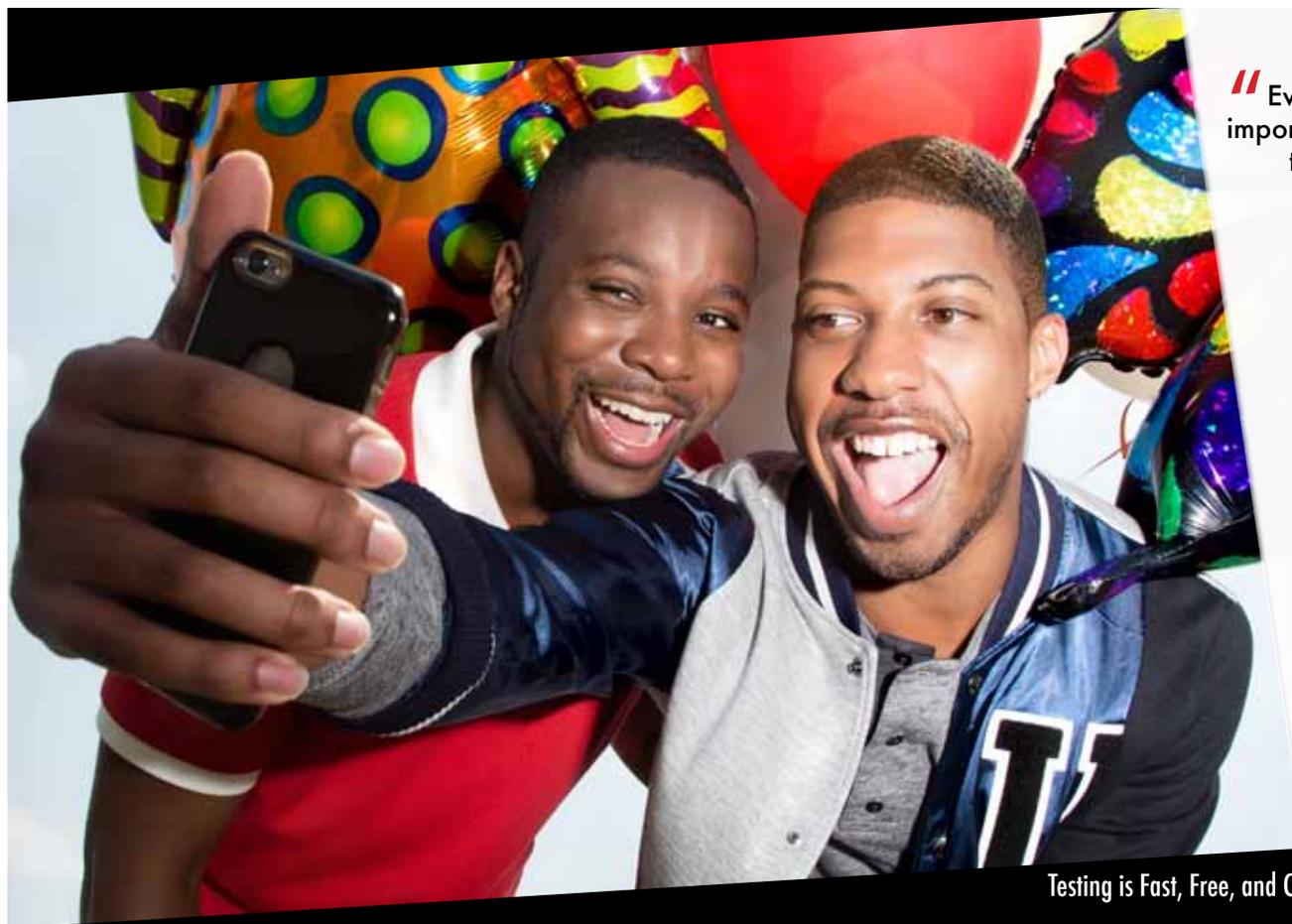
The move from Lake View to Andersonville was a fortuitous decision, coinciding with a resurgence in sales of vinyl records, he added. Jannush's business has boomed since he came to the neighborhood.

"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

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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 "interfaced 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



Lisa Gilmore.

Photo by Hal Baim

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-transgender propaganda and the violence against transgender and gender nonconforming individuals. Gilmore agrees that there is a link between hate crimes and anti-LGBTQ discourse in politics and the media.

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 upholding 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 reasserted 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.

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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 Christopher Clark 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 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 transmis-



Christopher Clark.

Photo by Matt Simonette

sion, 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.

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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.

The march aimed to bring together members of various LGBTQ communities and their allies to highlight discrimination and call for the expansion of rights to put LGBTQs on par with heterosexuals.

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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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-



Left to right: Brother Michael C. Oboza; Kim Hunt; Ava Santos-Volpe.

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 Emmanuel 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 to not 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."



Clockwise from above left: Emcee Fawzia Mirza with Rep. Kelly Cassidy; Rep. Greg Harris; performer Jess Godwin; Emmanuel Garcia.

All photos by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)



She also took the opportunity to address Melania Trump who, along with her husband, had expressed outrage over a piece of art created by comedian Kathy Griffin.

"If the false image of a beheaded Donald Trump struck terror into your 11-year-old son, then just imagine the terror that goes through the heart of a transgender child living under your husband's administration," Parker noted.

Bisexual Queer Alliance Chicago founder and community advocate Brother Michael C. Oboza emphasized the pivotal role that bisexual individuals have played since the earliest days of the LGBT civil rights movement. "Bisexual and queer people are as individual and profound as our legacy," he said. "If you're going use the 'b' in LGBT, please don't use us as a token or as a quota."

Activist and Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame member Rick Garcia provided the voice of the undocumented now under siege by the Trump administration.

"He is committed to ripping our families apart, tearing children from their parents and sending young adults back to a country they have never lived in," Garcia said. "Now, more than ever, we must stand up."

As part of his action steps, Garcia called for a mass voter-registration drive throughout Midsommarfest and in the months ahead.

Emphasizing Garcia's words was a line-up of political leaders who have committed themselves to the betterment of not only LGBTQ individuals but marginalized communities across the city and state.

They included state Rep. Greg Harris, state Rep. Kelly Cassidy, senator and 2018 Gubernatorial candidate Daniel Biss, 40th Ward Ald. Patrick O'Connor, 48th Ward Ald. Harry Osterman, 46th Ward Ald. James Cappleman and Chicago City Clerk Anna Valencia.

Center on Halsted Chief Operating Officer Kim Fountain, Equality Illinois CEO Brian C. Johnson, national activist and author Candace Gingrich and the inspired young founder of Ava's Change4Youth, 12-year-old Ava Santos-Volpe, rounded out the list of speakers.

Santos-Volpe described her program, a project of Pride Action Tank, which personalizes parking meters across the city with the help of celebrated local artists. They will be used as donation

Turn to page 14



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RALLY from page 12

stations with the proceeds going fight youth homelessness. She received a prolonged and well-deserved ovation.

As a living testament to its future, Santos-Volpe was the denouement to a single day which may have emerged from tragedy and peril both political and social but declared that the power of the LGBTQ movement keeps growing in voice and numbers and has begun to surge against the gates of intolerance and hatred. Activists hope that it will only be a matter of time before those gates are demolished once and for all.

The Equality Rally was sponsored by Women and Children First, Windy City Times, Ald. Patrick O'Connor, Hamburger Mary's, Vincent Chicago, the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce, the Rogers Park Montessori School, LGBTQ Impact and the Andersonville Farmer's Market, in addition to more than 20 community partners.



All photos by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)



Left to right:
Brian Johnson,
Kim Fountain,
Ald. James
Cappleman,
Channyn
Lynne Parker,
Rick Garcia
and Rabbi
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Left to right: Ald. Patrick O'Connor, Ald. Harry Osterman, City Clerk Anna Valencia, Ashley Wright, Sen. Daniel Biss, Darrian Ford, and Candace Gingrich.

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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 alumnus and Board of Trustees member Robert Keohane that concluded the Chicago college's 164-year legacy with a cursory 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 recognizably 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 to 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 differences 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 disenchanted 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 Episcopalian 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 fascinated 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 recalled 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 lesbian organizing in a region whose women suffering greatly in their lack of political power," its publishers wrote. "We want to provide an audience for Southern lesbians who may not think



Dr. Susan E. Henking.

Photo courtesy of Shimer College

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 Stonewall. 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 were the 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 Chicago 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 conversation.

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 acknowledged. "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 cousins, 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 women," Henking added. "But I remember exactly where I was sitting when I first read a Los Angeles 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 Colleges in Geneva, New York.

"He was sat at my table and said that he wanted to do a course on AIDS," Henking said. "So, I started teaching this class with David and it was the probably most transformative teaching experience 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 mourning 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 Religion: A Critical Anthology* with Gary David Comstock, 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 concerned and conflicted about sexuality and religion," Henking and Comstock wrote in the book's introduction. "In this time of AIDS and of increasing 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 talk to me.”

“As a woman coming up in higher education, watching all your male colleagues get called ‘Professor’ while you get called ‘Mrs. Henking’ or ‘Susan’ was irritating,” she added. “But, at Shimer, everybody called everybody by their first name except for the African-American students who called me ‘Ms. Susan’ or ‘Dr. Henking.’ It was an attempt to call everybody to a form of participatory, mature adulthood. Great Books can be very white and very male. Because of a colleague, James Bowers, we really diversified in race and ethnicity. It was a very genderfluid environment in some respects and the people...they work and they push back in a good way.”

She included a student who commented on a 2015 Windy City Times article authored by Ross Forman shortly after The Washington Monthly decided to crunch a few numbers on an Excel spreadsheet and name Shimer “the worst college in America.”

In addition to the overall pride she maintained for her students, Henking told Forman about the “very visible” LGBT presence the college maintained including “a community of gender transitioning people [that] is quite active.”

The student who took umbrage with that statement claimed to have been misgendered by professors. She added that none of them were LGBT and noted “the institution refuses to print my

correct name on my diploma, not because of any legal precedent but because ‘that’s how it’s been done.’”

“Did I deserve to be called out? Probably,” Henking acknowledged. “I would have preferred that the student came in and told me than putting 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.

“I 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 I haven’t got there quite yet. I 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 its 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.



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The lifeblood of the Chicago House TransLife Care program

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-nonconforming 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 Maria 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.

"Actual funding for programs was going to be at least two years down the road," she said. "So,



L to R Channyn Lynne Parker, Josie Lynne Paul, Reyna Ortiz, Jasmine Alexander and Kevin Pleasant (in front).

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

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 for 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.

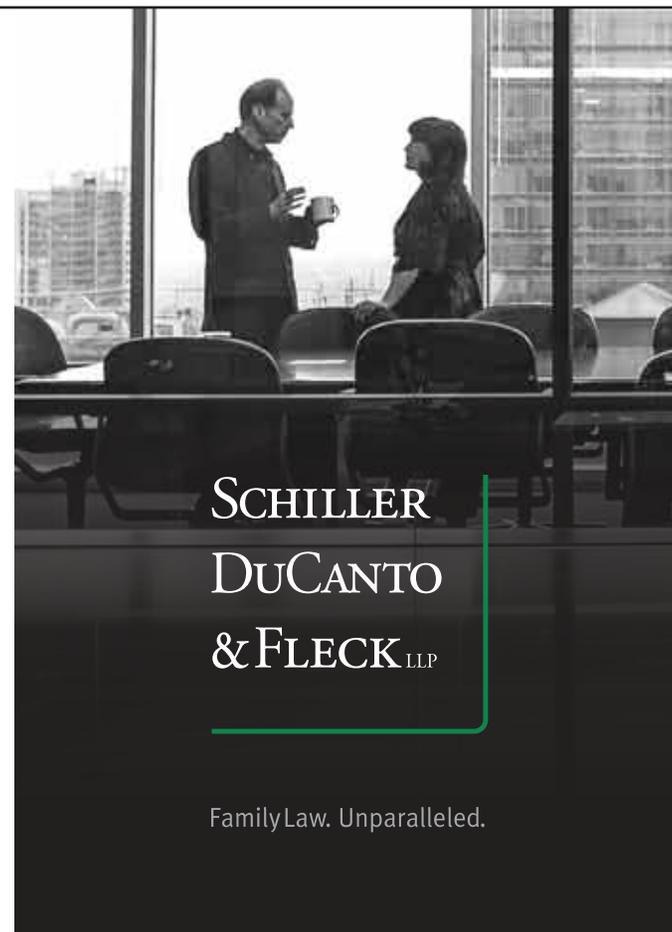
"I wanted to make the process as simplistic as possible for a trans person," she said. "So, they wouldn't have to go through all the craziness. I have multiple ways to get a trans person connected to whatever resource they need."

Whether it's a court date, a visit to the Secre-

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tary of State's office for a new driver's license or a doctor's appointment, Ortiz also makes sure she goes with them.

"Those systems are really intimidating for our community because there's a lot of blatant disrespect and discrimination," she said. "My schedule allows me to be more hands-on because one little thing can derail a trans person for months. So, I make sure they're ready, go there and get it done without any complications."

If anyone, be they doctor or Secretary of State clerk, gives a transgender individual a hard time, Ortiz makes it clear, either silently or verbally, she won't stand for it. She is formidable opponent and an example to the client who is with her.

"It gives them the confidence to do that in other areas now that they have seen it's possible," Paul said.

"It's holding these workers accountable without resorting to violence or lashing out," Ortiz added. "I wait for the moment for someone to try it with my girls because I know the paperwork is good and they need to do their jobs."

Her work with the undocumented transgender community has been similarly groundbreaking.

Parker's breadth of knowledge of the transgender experience in Chicago's judicial system and on the streets which serve as conduits to it has made her a go-to resource even for those outside of TransCare program seeking a shrewd and uncompromising education. Her calm demeanor conceals a passion for change that rages underneath it. She's seen too much to ever permit the status quo to stand.

"Survival is something that we're all, more or less, doing regardless of what stage in life we're at," Parker said. "We've all had our struggles. We all know what it's like. When you walk into our space, you are not going to be judged. We understand that the journey from point A to point B is not always seamless. But we're going to be there with you every step of the way. That's what resonates with community in a way that is so truthful."

Parker still makes regular visits to counsel transgender inmates at the Cook County Jail. It was during one of those visits that she met Alexander.

Alexander lived life on the streets and in the judicial system for years before she took on her role with TransCare. Now, through a partnership with the shelter for at-risk women Sarah's Circle, Alexander makes sure homeless trans women get a roof over their heads.

"I've been there," she said. "I've been a prostitute, dope dealer, convict. I was kidnapped, raped and left for dead in an alley. You've got to do what you've got to do to survive. I was in jail and met Channyn and, when I got out, she offered to help me. Step-by-step, I've built myself up from that life. I find a lot of girls at men's shelters because they can't go in as themselves and I take them from there. I work with them to get them a bed and then IDs, mental health; whatever they need me to do, Mother Goose is there."

For the women battling through life on the South Side, Alexander is rare indeed: she is some-

one they can trust.

"I know these babies," Alexander said. "I took them in for years. Most of them slept on my floor. I fed them. I'll go out on the strip and kick their butts, get them to school, to the doctors. They look at me and they know who I used to be. They see that, if I can change, it opens-up possibilities for anybody. It's a still a journey but I love it."

Similarly, Pleasant sees his role as supportive, even if that means some tough love.

"They're trying to rebuild their lives," he said. "Supporting them is not always warm and fuzzy. If you continue to live like you're in survival mode, you're probably going to wind up back in survival mode. You've got to change behaviors. It doesn't mean you change them all at once because you didn't learn them all at once. We've got to figure out what it takes for you to keep a roof over your head and what type of support you need to assist you in understanding that you don't have to worry about having a place to lay your head at night."

Pleasant stressed that transgender individuals do not have to be HIV-positive to receive services. But it was as a gay man who grew up during the height of the HIV epidemic which led to his role at TransCare.

"The support we had was from our trans sisters who housed us, sat at our hospital beds," he said. "They were there when no one else was. This is what I do to give back. We've had women who've sabotaged themselves because they get scared. They're not afraid of failure because they know

that so well. They're afraid of their own success."

Pleasant views success as reaching whatever one aspires to even if it is day-by-day.

"Success is today my girl didn't get high," he said. "Success is she still has a roof over her head. Success is today she did not have to turn a date for some food because she was able to go shopping. Success is 'I'm thinking about going to a G.E.D. program.' Success is one of our clients getting ready to graduate from Harold Washington College. Success is one of my girls who got arrested and was going to court every month for over a year who is now a model citizen in the building where she lives.

She was a hellraiser but she's doing great. Success is people respect you and you start respecting yourself. For a trans woman of color to be able to walk into a place and have somebody refer to you in your preferred pronouns is success. My goal is to support that success."

Pleasant wasn't simply speaking about his own job description but the entire mission of the TransLife Care program—one that marches on no matter what the political climate or funding challenges it may face.

"We don't give up," Paul said. "I sometimes refer to myself as the Queen of Many Chances. I don't believe in limiting them. We never stop. We're not done until it's just not possible to do any more."

For more information about the TransLife Care Program, visit ChicagoHouse.org/causes/translife-center.

viewpoints


**Rev. Irene
MONROE**

Caitlyn Jenner's growing pains

When June approaches, I always like to reflect on the pantheon in our LGBTQ community.

However, when it comes to Caitlyn Jenner, it is difficult to fathom how she went from icon to out-cast.

Is it transphobia?

Is it because she was once part of the overexposed Kardashian clan on their forever-running TV reality series *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*.

Or, is it her conservative politics on issues that's antithetical of LGBTQ advocacy?

In 2015, Jenner captured the world's attention—and this time not as America's beloved 1976 Olympic gold-medal decathlete. Jenner captured the world's eye, applause and admiration for her bravery to come out as a trans woman, debuting on the July cover of *Vanity Fair* magazine.

And she looked AMAZING!!

People from around the world applauded her courage. President Obama gave his thumbs up, stating, "It takes courage to share your story."

Laverne Cox—the transgender activist/actress known for her role on the Netflix series *Orange Is the New Black*—wrote on her Tumblr then, "Yes, Caitlyn looks amazing and is beautiful but what I think is most beautiful about her is her heart and soul, the ways she has allowed the world into her vulnerabilities."

And MSNBC commentator and trans author Janet Mock gleefully tweeted, "Introducing Ms. Caitlyn Jenner on the cover of @VanityFair: #CallMeCaitlyn #girls like us."

Many social scientists and LGBTQ activists are trying to sort out is it as Cox stated "girls like us" that has contributed to the name Caitlyn falling in popularity. According to a recent Boston Globe

article, "Don't call me Caitlyn: Baby names plunges 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, Katelynn 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 canon 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 mar-

riage 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, "Yes, 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 empathically 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

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- Take transportation if possible

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

BAR SAFETY TIPS

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- 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!
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'Will' done

WCT reviews the Shakespear-based Her Majesty's Will.

Photo of Heather Chrisler and Javier Ferreira by Cole Simon

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SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Bullying blame

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

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 benefitted LGBTQ youth like helplines, community centers and special education programs," said Tanahill during a phone conversation from London where he was 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 ties 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 Izmore, Aunty 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



Denzel Tsopnang and Katherine Thomas in Ragtime.

Photo by Michael Brosilow

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 (beau-

tiful 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 remixing, 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 Kaulzlaric, 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-droptout 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 nemeses and unexpected allies, accompanied by plenty of swashbuckling action involving trapdoors, runaway carriages, barroom brawls, rapiers, daggers, punches, grapples and exits with bears in pursuit. Rob Kaulzlaric'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 narra-

tive 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 Ferreira's William you-know-who, were swapping personae 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 English-lit fantasy at the Pier) or planks-and-passion. Don't wait until the sunshine fades to see this one.

THEATER REVIEW

Pilgrims

Playwright: Claire Kiechel
At: The Gift Theatre, 4802 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Tickets: 773-283-7071 or
TheGiftTheatre.org; \$30-\$40
Runs through: July 30

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Claire Kiechel's world-premiere play Pilgrims is billed as a sci-fi drama. But its core is a gripping mystery between two strangers hinging on shifting male-female power dynamics.

The two principal characters are "The Soldier" (a hulking and often menacing Ed Flynn), who is forced to share the same spaceship cabin with "The Girl" (an overly enthusiastic Janelle Villas). She's keen to reinvent herself on a far-off planet, and even to find a spouse right away to help repopulate the human race.

The laconic Soldier, who has previously battled aliens, has other ideas. He angrily makes

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 foreshadowed 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 glories of 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 futuristic 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

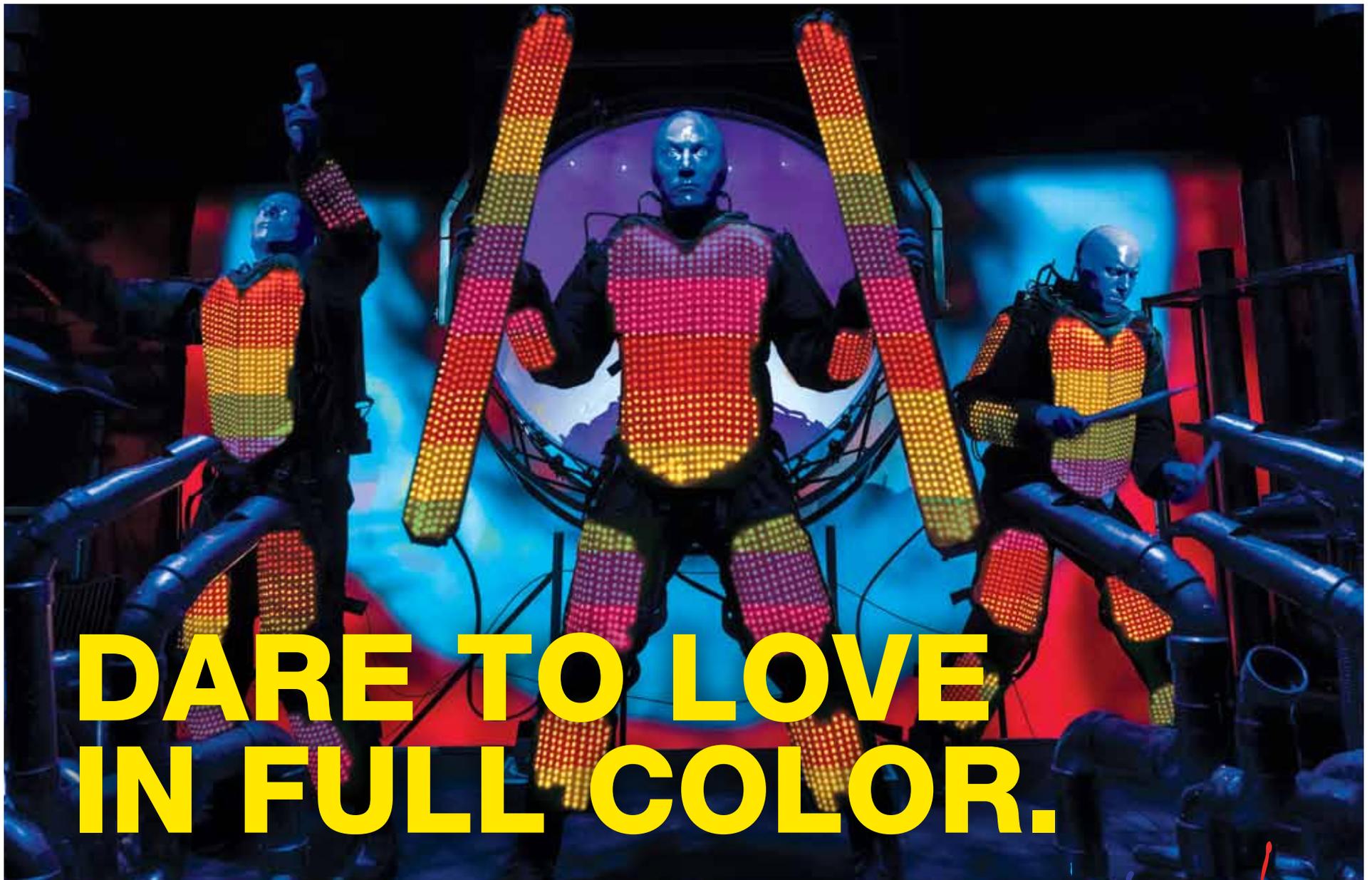
Aladdin, Cadillac Palace Theatre, through Sept. 10. This national tour is a corporate Disney product, no doubt. But most audiences nostalgic for the blockbuster 1992 animated feature probably won't care since Aladdin delivers as a wowing, big-budget stage spectacle. SCM

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 Orbert Davis' original jazz score. JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan



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NUNN ON ONE

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 a 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.

It makes me angry to see how things are minimized, even in the LGBT community. She has made theatrical history.

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

AB: That is exactly right. There is a lot of stuff going on here that needs to be talked about.

WCT: Is the new season of Transparent in the can?

AB: Yes, it is shot. It is more of the same, but more... [Laughs]! It is bigger.

WCT: Will your onscreen friendship with Maura Pfefferman be explored more?

AB: They were looking at trans actors' contributions more closely on the show for season three. Season four has a lot more of Maura and I in it. There is more on Shea also. There have been suggestions that the trans actors be more visible.

Jill Soloway, who is a genius, took that to heart, and so did the rest of the writers.

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 four 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 Emmy Awards 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.

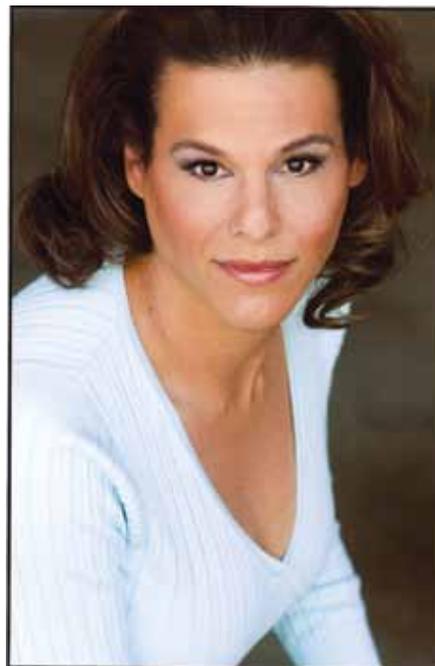
I wrote it and it is directed by Joanne Gordon. There is found music where we put in a bunch of Broadway show tunes. Within the text there is a lot of singing.

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?



Alexandra Billings.
PR photo

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

'Evan Hansen' prevails at Tonys

Without 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,

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 good at that unless something tragic happens. We can't wait for that to happen. There is a man in the White House right 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 congeal and be a tribe. We can't 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, if 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.

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 pre-order online via Amazon, iTunes, ArkivMusic and The Symphony Store.

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



Danny Bradley, Will Fleming and Joshua Peterson in *Naked Boys Singing!*
Photo by Katherine Siegel

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 ditty—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.

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SPOTLIGHT

Standup comedians of color and/or who self-identify within the LGBTQI acronym make up the performers featured in **SHADE: An ACTUALLY Diverse Comedy Show**. SHADE: An ACTUALLY Diverse Comedy Show plays at 8 p.m. Thursday, June 15, at Steppenwolf Theatre's 1700 Theatre, 1700 N. Halsted St. Tickets are \$15; call 312-335-1650 or visit Steppenwolf.org.

Caption: Comedian Peter Kim is featured in SHADE: An ACTUALLY Diverse Comedy



Show at Steppenwolf Theatre's 1700 Theatre in Chicago. Photo by Todd Rosenberg

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Gay artist's works at MOCA Cleveland

Gay artist Keith Mayerson is holding his first solo museum exhibition, "Keith Mayerson: My American Dream," at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Cleveland until Sunday, Sept. 17.

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@cinetflix.com or call 855-OLD-RUST.

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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 Bezaian 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.

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MOVIES

Matt Wolf aims to tell Bayard Rustin's story

BY JAKE EKDAHL

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 cen-

tral 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](https://www.youtube.com/superdeluxe).

Read the entire interview online at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.



Walter Naegle and Bayard Rustin.
Photo by Bert Andrews, from the estate of Bayard Rustin

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MOVIES

Oscar winner Rachel Weisz: On new role, LGBT films



Rachel Weisz in *My Cousin Rachel*.
Photo from Fox Searchlight

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's 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 love story about two women, and then turns out [there are] three women.

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 director and found the financing and we made it at the beginning of this year in London. It stars Rachel McAdams and Alessandro Nivola. It's set in the Orthodox Jewish community of North London.

My Cousin Rachel currently is running at Landmark Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark St., among other theaters in Chicago.

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PARADE INFORMATION

courtesy of PRIDEChicago
48th Annual Chicago Pride Parade

Sun., June 25

For changes or updates: www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org • PrideChgo@aol.com • 773-348-8243

DATE: Sunday, June 25
TIME: 12 Noon
STARTS at: Broadway & Montrose.

LINE UP: Broadway (both the east and the west curb lanes, from Montrose to Wilson); Montrose (both the north and south curb lanes from Broadway to Clark); Sunnyside Ave. from Broadway to N. Sheridan Road and North Sheridan Road, between Montrose and Wilson.

ROUTE: Step off from the Broadway/Montrose corner, proceeding south on Broadway; then south on Halsted; then east on Belmont; then south on Broadway; then east on Diversey to Cannon Drive.

CONTENT & DESCRIPTION: The parade will feature 150 registered entries, including floats, decorated vehicles, performance groups, a marching band and walking contingents.

The entries represent community organizations, businesses, governmental officials and individual community members. Crowd estimates each year are in the hundreds of thousands. So the plans are to line the parade route with barricades on both sides of the street from beginning to the end of the parade route. Spectators will be required to remain behind the barricades. (Only parade registrants traveling down the middle of the street, police officers, other city officials, security staff, parade marshals and credentialed media reps will be allowed in the street). In recent years, the City of Chicago has required that several large city parades, including the Pride Parade, line their parade routes with barricades at our own expense. Police officers and parade marshals will be stationed at various points on the street in front of the barricades along the parade route. Police officers will also be in the area surrounding the parade. In addition, PRIDEChicago (parade coordinators) are providing a security team to supplement the police presence along and surrounding the parade route.

\$1000 FINE FOR PUBLIC ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION: The parade will have more security and a tighter rein on public alcohol consumption. In addition to the large number of police officers who staff the event, PRIDEChicago (parade coordinators) are providing a security team to supplement the police presence. Penalties include, but are not limited to, \$1000+ tickets being issued and/or the immediate disposal of open containers of alcohol into trash receptacles.

Public urination is also grounds to receive a ticket.

PARADE DAY HEALTH/SAFETY: Bring plenty of bottled water, sunscreen and a hat or other head covering, and dress lightly because parade day is usually hot and sunny.

STREET CLOSURES: (on parade day, Sunday, June 25) include:

—**ASSEMBLY AREA:** Tentative time: 10:30 a.m.

—**PARADE ROUTE:** Rolling closing times. Cross streets will close as the parade travels south down the route. The parade starts at 12 Noon at the Broadway/Montrose corner proceeding south on Broadway; then south on Halsted; then east on Belmont; then south on Broadway; then east on Diversey to Cannon Drive.

NO PARKING: Both the Assembly Area and Parade Route (listed above) will be posted with temporary signs indicating "NO PARKING ON SUNDAY JUNE 25, 2017, FROM 5:00 AM TO 8:00 PM. - Both sides of the street."

For updates and corrections; <http://www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org>

—Montrose Ave. - Greenview Ave. to Hazel St.
 —Broadway St. - Leland Ave. to Grace St.
 —Sunnyside Ave. - Broadway to North Sheridan Rd.
 —Halsted St. - Grace St. to Belmont Ave.
 —Belmont Ave. - Sheffield Ave. to Broadway
 —Broadway - Belmont Ave. to Diversey Pkwy.
 —Diversey Pkwy. - Broadway to Cannon Dr. (Sheridan)
 —Cannon Dr. - Diversey Pkwy. to Fullerton Pkwy.
 —Addison St. - 736 W. Addison St. to Sheffield Ave.
 —Waveland Ave. - Halsted St. to Broadway
 —Grace St. - Halsted St. to Fremont St.
 —Clifton from Montrose Ave. to Sunnyside Ave.
 —Wellington Ave. from Clark St. to Racine Ave.
 —Sheridan Rd. from Montrose Ave. to Agatite St.
 —East Side of Racine St. from Belmont Ave to Wellington Ave

ADDITIONAL PARKING RESTRICTIONS: There will be additional parking restrictions on Sunnyside Ave between Broadway and North Sheridan Rd. also North Sheridan Rd. from Montrose to Agatite St.

TOWING: Begins at 5:00 a.m. Due to the volume of vehicles involved, the issuing of parking violation citations and towing will start at 5 a.m. - Promptly.

CROSS STREETS: Rolling closing times. Cross streets will close as the parade travels south down the route. After stepping off at 12 Noon, the parade will take approximately two and one-half hours to finish crossing the Broadway and Montrose corner. After this time, the floats will still be winding their way to the end of the parade route at Diversey and Sheridan. This year there will NOT be a Buffer Zone on Halsted St. after the parade ends. Police will work to re-open the streets to vehicular traffic as soon as cleaning crews are finished and the streets will not remain open to foot traffic.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: From the Red Line: Wilson, Sheridan, Addison or Belmont all provide access via a short walk to the parade route.

PLEASE NOTE: The Belmont station (and the surrounding area) tends to become the most crowded, so you are encouraged to consider watching the parade from the other parts of the route, including areas toward the start of the route—such as Broadway, south of Montrose—which are served by both the nearby Wilson and Sheridan stations on the Red Line. In addition, a number of lakefront bus routes including the 146 and 151 provide convenient access from the north, the Gold Coast/North Michigan Avenue and downtown to areas east of the parade route.

Extra service will be provided on the "L" on parade day to accommodate the large numbers of people who attend the parade. Due to the increase of local traffic and a number of bus reroutes, potential parade spectators are advised to make use of the L or the various bus routes.

BUS REROUTES: For updates and corrections: <http://www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org>
 8 Halsted, 22 Clark, 36 Broadway, 76 Diversey, 77 Belmont, 78 Montrose, 151 Sheridan, 152 Addison.

Also see CTA web site or call them for updated information concerning the train and bus routes.

CTA: 1-312-836-7000 www.transitchicago.com

Other information on public transportation: 1-312-322-6900 www.metrarail.com

From 8 a.m. until approximately 8 p.m., the following nine bus routes will be detoured as a result of several street closures: #8 Halsted, #22 Clark, #36 Broadway, #76 Diversey, #77 Belmont, #78 Montrose, #80 Irving Park, #151 Sheridan and #152 Addison.

PEDESTRIAN CROSS-OVER STREETS: For updates and corrections <http://www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org>

There will be at least nine cross-over streets:

—Montrose Ave. at Broadway
 —Irving Park Rd. at Broadway
 —Grace St. at Halsted St.
 —Addison St. at Halsted St.
 —Roscoe St. at Halsted St.
 —Wellington Ave. at Broadway
 —Aldine Street at Halsted St.
 —Cornelia Ave at Halsted St.
 —Barry Ave. at Broadway

At each corner of the streets listed above there will be police officers assigned to assist pedestrians to cross the parade route.

NEEDS AND SPECIAL NEEDS:

1. Portable Restrooms - are stationed along both the parade line-up street and the parade route. Included at several locations are restrooms for the physically challenged.

2. Physically Challenged Area/Wheel chair Accessible Area/Seniors - for people who need or want more space: the sidewalks of West Diversey Parkway (near 600 W. Diversey). Traditionally this area of the parade route has fewer spectators than other sections of the parade route. Spectators in these areas generally arrive there early on parade morning to secure their viewing spots. Included there are restrooms for the physically challenged.

3. Seniors (outdoor) - The area mentioned above in #2 (600 W. Diversey sidewalks) is a designated OUTDOOR area for seniors. Spectators in this area generally arrive there early on parade morning to secure their viewing spots. Included there are restrooms for the physically challenged.

4. Cooling Busses - For updates and corrections <http://www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org>
 Diversey, west of Clark; Halsted, south of Belmont; Addison, west of Halsted; Belmont, east of Broadway; Wilton, north of Belmont; Buena, north of Belmont; Roscoe, east of Halsted

5. Chicago Fire Department First Aid Stations:

901 W. Addison St.; 765 W. Roscoe St.; 3165 N. Halsted St.; 561 W. Surf St.; 802 W. Roscoe St.; 803 W. Roscoe Street

Force ending with run in playoffs

BY ROSS FORMAN

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.

"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."

"My emotions this season have been the same as every other—at full volume and strictly football. I'm a screamer on the sidelines, so I express all of my emotions in the moment and immediate aftermath of the game. I have not felt or expressed much emotion in regard to this being the final year of the organization. I keep wondering if it's going to hit me all at once after the final game."

The Force final regular-season game was a 44-20 win over St. Louis.

"My thoughts going into the playoffs vacillate wildly between expecting success and fearing failure," she admitted. "I really can't tell what's going to happen with this team, [even though] we earned a first-round bye due to our number-



Linda Bache.
Photo from
the Chicago Force

two ranking [nationally. Pittsburgh is] a really talented team and we'll have to execute and play a complete game to beat them. If we do, we'd likely then head to Boston for the conference championship on July 8. Boston is a huge rival, and our games [against Boston] are very physical and often feature dramatic endings.

"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."

"I'm feeling the excitement that comes with the high stakes of playoff games. ... Nothing matters but the game at hand, so the most prepared and focused team generally advances."

Chicago's greatest glory came in 2013, when the team won the national championship, its lone title among three championship game tries.

"I had no doubt the entire season [in 2013] that it was our year," Bache said. "In fact, the Windy City Times quoted me during the pre-season that year when I guaranteed we'd win the championship. I remember the players dousing head coach John Konecki from the sideline water cooler in the closing moments, then seeing quarterback Sami Grisafe charging off the field with her hands in the air as time expired. The postgame locker room celebration was insane."

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.

"Our organization has strived to make the game available to everyone," Bache said. "[Due to] the [high] costs associated with equipment, travel and fields, there is a player fee, as is typical in semi-pro football and standard for all the women's teams. Our fee is low compared to the top teams and what we provide, but it can still be an obstacle to someone who wants to play, but is struggling financially. In those situations we've been able to provide loaner equipment at no charge and assist the player with sponsorship funds."

Bache said she has "no idea" what she'll be doing next spring during the traditional women's football season. But she's excited about the pos-

sibilities.

"What I will miss most is the camaraderie with the staff and players. The absolute best part of all of this has been the people I've met and the friendships made. And I'll miss watching players as they grow, both on and off the field."

She won't miss the administration of the team, the running of a business. It's all-consuming, she said, "and continually puts you in a position of holding others accountable."

"There is a social component to the team and I'm friends with a number of the players and staff. Most people don't like being held accountable and I don't enjoy being the person who always has to do that, especially with friends," she added.

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.

"Someone recently asked me what I thought I'd put into the Force financially as an owner, as in, what it cost me in dollars to sustain this for the past 12 years," she said. "I've certainly put in significant funds, and more importantly, and a lot of time and energy. But the truth is, as much as I've put into the Force [financially], I've gotten back so much more in return."

Bache and Yvette Holt became a couple during her initial season with the Force. Holt is now the team's DJ and produces team videos. And she now carries the "wife" label for Bache.

"She's supported me and the team for its entire existence, so this will be a big change for her as well. I could not have done it for all these years without her assistance," Bache said.

Head coach John Konecki has had an 85-percent winning percentage in his 10 seasons, with eight division titles, three conference titles and a national championship.

"John and I are very similar in our approach to the game, our pursuit of excellence and our unrelenting desire for success. I'm acutely aware that he is a primary reason that the organization has had such tremendous and sustained success. He's been a partner in all this and I'm really going to miss doing this with him," Bache said.

Bache wants just three more wins.

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 Stranger*, 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.humpfilmfest.com/chicago.



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Chicago Pride Fest 2017: Full entertainment schedule

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



Taylor Dayne performs Sat., June 17, at the North Stage. PR photo

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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.



Well-Strung.

Photo by Scott Henrichsen

South Stage

1 p.m.: Pet Parade
1:30p.m.: 2 the 9s
3:30 p.m.: Rod Tuffcurls & The Bench Press
6 p.m.: ABBA Salute
7:30 p.m.: 16 Candles



From Chicago Pride Fest 2016.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

Midsommarfest sizzles in June

On June 9-11, the 52nd annual Andersonville Mid-sommarfest 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



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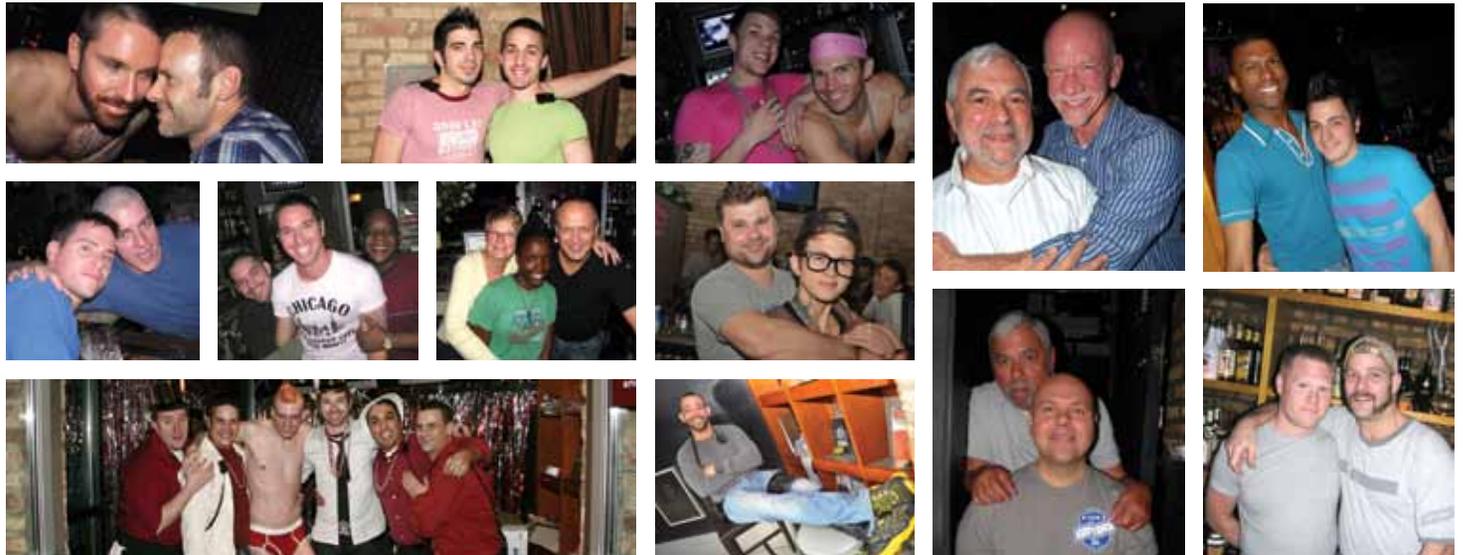
HAPPY 35TH ANNIVERSARY, SIDETRACK!

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



Sports page from the Sept. 7, 1983, issue of Gay Life, announcing Sidetrack as winner of that year's Gay World Series.



Sidetrack's softball team, circa late 1980s.



Chuck Hyde, Art Johnston and Pepe Pena at Sidetrack's 14th anniversary party, 1996.





BILLY Masters

"I'm coming out...no, wait...I'm going into makeup."—Kevin Spacey sings from Sunset Boulevard during his Tony Awards opening number. There were quite a few "coming out" jokes. P.S. He didn't.

As cities around the country are poised to celebrate Gay Pride, Los Angeles eschewed the traditional parade to join in the nationwide Resist March. While I can appreciate the sentiment, why did this march have to start at 8 a.m.? Couldn't I resist just as easily at noon? Perhaps it was a traffic issue, in which case might I suggest something more reasonable—like 5 a.m., when I'm just about to doze off. Given that this was inspired by the Women's March, I suspect the early starting time was the work of some industrious lesbians. I'm a proud gay man, but I must draw the line somewhere, and resisted getting up at such an ungodly hour. But I did manage to join the throng as it petered out. I even sponged down a few of the hotter resisters.

And now, a Billy Masters exclusive! As you know, I like to keep you abreast of fun things to do in Provincetown. Well, you should be there on August 21. Why? Because hunky **Rick Murray** tells me that the Crown and Anchor will be hosting a very special evening with two-time Oscar winner—drum roll, please—**Sally Field!** None of this has been officially announced, but keep checking OnlyAtTheCrown.com and grab your tickets FAST! And while you're there, check out the rest of their summer line-up.

Picture it—Provincetown, 1986. While your beloved Billy is still in a Boston-area high school, a soon-to-be-legendary diva is making a splash at Pilgrim House in Ptown. That person was **Jimmy James**—renowned for his eerie Marilyn Monroe. It's been a while, but he's coming back ... and to the same venue. The Pilgrim House is now called Sage, but it takes more than a coat of paint to fool me! We're told Jimmy will be performing all season (July 4th through Labor Day). I'm sure there will soon be more information on SageInPtown.com.

This column went out in the middle of the Tony Awards. The sight of **Andrew Rannells'** HD-enhanced basket reminded me how much my readers enjoy the theater—and all the charming people in it. With the success of Kinky Boots, **Cyndi Lauper** is ready to tackle her next show. And she's certainly picked a doozy. **Working Girl** told the story of a young girl with big dreams and big hair trying to make it out of the secretarial pool and into corporate America. Since the movie came out in 1988—Cyndi's heyday—it sounds like a match made in heaven.

Last week, **Zac Efron** was in the UK and appeared on **The Graham Norton Show** alongside **Tom Cruise**. (Side note: since when is Tom taking **Brendan Fraser's** rejects?) After Zac orgasmically gushed over being in the presence of Mr. Cruise, Norton asked him about a certain photo where Efron appears shirtless (quelle surprise) and uses a parking meter as a stripper pole. Tom looked



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

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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
WINDY 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 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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Loukaniko at Athena.

Photo by Ed Negron

though they have four tines each, they're shaped like Greek tridents.)

With seafood served in abundance in the actual Greece, it shouldn't be surprising that it's a staple of Athena's menu as well. The octopus appetizer (marinated in olive oil and vinegar with chopped carrot and celery) was pretty tasty, while the seafood kabob (salmon, swordfish and shrimp broiled on a skewer with tomatoes, onions and green peppers) was cooked pretty solidly, although my dining companion had wished the salmon had looked a little more done.

However, Athena offers more—much more. The char-broiled Greek pork sausage, or loukaniko, was one of my favorite dishes—but it was topped by the Athenian chicken, one of the restaurant's most popular dishes. The chicken, also char-broiled, comes with lemon and oregano; it really is a heavenly dish. Of course, no Greek meal is complete without saganaki, the goat-cheese dish that's breaded in flour and usually served flaming in brandy. (We got the tasty cheese, but no flame is allowed outside, as there was apparently an incident some years ago.)

So even if you can't afford to go to Greece (in terms of finances or time), visit Athena. The spot is a vacation in itself.

Note: Restaurant/bar profiles are based on invitations arranged from restaurants and/or firms.

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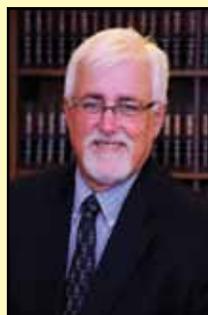
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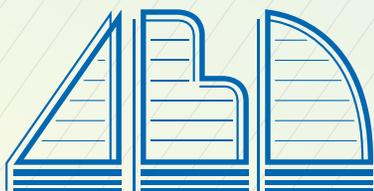
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., 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 Siefken, a 10 year U.S. Navy veteran of two wars in the Middle East, where she was a CCTV/documentary filmmaker working with Explosives Ordinance teams in Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain, Yemen and Dubai. Questions to Jamesdarby@aol.com 12:00pm Daley Plaza, Chicago <http://averchicago.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 businessman 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, 4147 N. Broadway 800-737-0984 <http://www.prideartscenter.com> Tickets: <http://tinyurl.com/y9l8vsl9>

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 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://>

**KING FOR A DAY
Friday, June 16**

Tennis icon Billie Jean King will speak at Northwestern University's commencement.

PR photo

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 powerfully queer, featuring up and coming queers: Elle Walker, Hannah Viti, Walter Santiago, LezBe, Siichele & Riley Konor. Shows by Yung Assata, Melissa, Bambi Banks, and Aunty Chan! DJs Miss Twink USA & Madeline. 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

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/p3njlda>

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 Theater Wit 1229 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

Back Lot Bash 2017 Whitney Mixer hosts Girls' Night Out. Tickets \$15 at the door. 10:00pm Lark Lounge, 3441 N. Halsted, Chicago <http://www.backlot-bashchicago.com>

Saturday, June 17

Chicago Pride Fest Two-day street festival by Northalsted Business Alliance. Drag shows, Gay Men's Chorus and iconic pet parade. Pride pageant. 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/was_0617/

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://chicagoforcefootball.com/>

Howard Brown Back2Basics Ballroom Competition Legends, statement and stars. Zoliy Miyake-Mugler presents. Over \$4000 in cash prizes. See categories online. 3:30pm 2110 S. Wabash Ave., http://howardbrown.org/wp/event/back-2-basics-ball-edition-hollywood/?utm_source=General+News&utm_campaign=dec662798c-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_05_26&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_caabf9aaaf-dec662798c-150495961

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 Bits 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://wcpapulse.bpt.me>

Sunday, June 18

PFLAG DuPage Guest speaker Katie Slivovsky of the Chicago Children's Museum. PFLAG DuPage meets the third Sunday of each month 2:00pm St. Paul Lutheran Church, 515 S. Wheaton Ave., Wheaton <http://www.pflagdupage.org>

**JOYFUL NOISE
Friday, June 16**

Friends of Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame host the 24th annual Pride & Joy reception at Center on Halsted.

Photo of Moose the DJ from 2013 Pride & Joy by Tracy Baim

Angels in America: Part One, Millennium Approaches Join ACLU for an evening of celebrating theater and political voice. 6:00pm Victory Gardens Theater 2433 N Lincoln Ave Chicago Tickets: <http://www.aclu-il.org/?p=25941>

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.tpan.com>

Queer Film Society: Celebrate Queer Pride Worldwide

Tchindas (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.

Doors 5pm 6:00pm Bezazian Public Library, 1226 W. Ainslie <http://www.tchindas.com/>

Roxane Gay discusses her new book Hunger Writer on food and body, using her own emotional and psychological struggles as a means of exploring our shared anxieties over pleasure, consumption, appearance, and health. Part of Chicago Humanities Festival. \$15 7:00pm - 8:00pm Francis W. Parker School, 2233 N Clark St., Chicago Tickets: <http://tickets.chicagohumanities.org/shows/roxane%20gay-%20hunger/info>

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 behavior, including fishes that switch from male to female, mushroom sex, and more. 6:00pm - 8:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago <http://fieldmuseum.org>

Wed., June 21

30 Under 30 Awards Each year Windy City Times honors 30 outstanding LGBT individuals (and allies) for substantial contributions to the Chicagoland LGBT 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 beautiful rooftop 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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