

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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Billie Jean King talks with Kate Kendall.
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Lesbian lawyer Lori Lightfoot running for Chicago mayor

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Lori Lightfoot.
Photo by Matt Simonette



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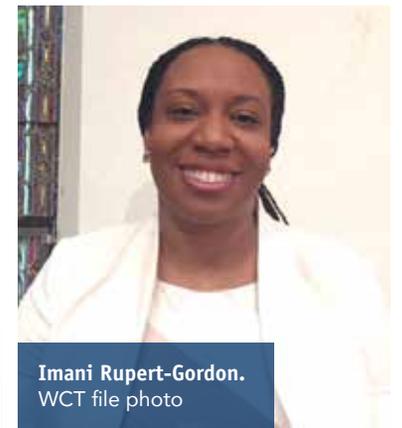
GAP SHEET

Health disparity for Chicago LGBTQs, experts say

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LaSaia Wade.
Photo by Liz Baudler



Imani Rupert-Gordon.
WCT file photo



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Above: WCT reviews ThroatPunch (on page 18).
Photo by Travon Christon Printis

online exclusives at
www.WindyCityTimes.com



ON THE ROAD AGAIN

WCT's summer theater special continues with out-of-state productions.

Photo of Ewing Manor courtesy of the Illinois Shakespeare Festival

VINE AND DANDY



WCT reports on what a winery tour in Michigan revealed.
Photo by Andrew Davis

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Bill Malcolm's latest value travel column looks at the deals in Toronto.

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Find out the latest about Kevin McHale, Karamo Brown and ABBA.

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ELECTIONS 2019: CHICAGO

Mayoral candidate Lightfoot on LGBT issues, police board work

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Lori Lightfoot, an attorney and former federal prosecutor who for three years headed up the Chicago Police Board, announced her candidacy challenging incumbent Mayor Rahm Emanuel on May 10. Should Lightfoot win, she'd be both Chicago's first female Black mayor as well as the city's first openly gay one.

Lightfoot faces many challenges should she run. She said at a May 11 talk for the LGBT community that she expects Emanuel, who first appointed her to the Board in 2015, to be up for a fight. She's also entering a crowded field of candidates also hoping to unseat Emanuel from his post.

After the talk, Lightfoot spoke with Windy City Times about why she entered the race, LGBT issues and her time on the Police Board.

Windy City Times: What work does Chicago's mayor need to do on behalf of the LGBT community, and why do you think you're the right person for the job?

Lori Lightfoot: In my my lifetime, we've made meteoric progress in some ways. When I was going through my own coming out progress in my mid- to late-twenties, I was preparing for worst-case scenarios. I was wondering whether my family would reject me. My family was very religious, in church every Wednesday night for Bible study and every Sunday morning. That's what I grew up with. I was very concerned with how they'd react to my coming out. ... Back then, it was very commonplace for people to make homophobic jokes all the time, and people would laugh. ... The fact that I am an openly gay candidate for mayor, with my wife and my child [at my side], is pretty amazing in a number of regards.

But I'm very mindful of the fact that despite the hard work—and blood, sweat and tears—of many people, our community still has a number of different challenges. There are still kids who are being thrown out of their homes because of who they love, and they wind up out on the street. There are still places that discriminate in housing and in employment opportunities, so we have to make sure that we speak with a very clear voice on those issues, and, frankly make sure that anyone who does business with the city abides by our anti-discrimination and human rights codes—that has to happen.

But I think we also need to expand that, and really use the city as a real catalyst for change. One challenge is for affordable housing—not just for our homeless, not just for our youth, but also on the other end of life. Many of our seniors are looking at their options and want to stay in their communities. That's not just a problem for the LGBTQ community, but many of our communities across the board. So we have to understand what

those communities still are. Healthcare [also] still is a problem. Mental health resources are still a problem. We have to be respectful of the unique circumstances facing the LGBTQ community.

Many of the issues that we see there are issues in the straight world as well, so we need to make sure that we are clearly inviting [LGBT] people to the table and are sensitive to the issues of the community. There's a lot that a mayor can do to improve the quality of life and make sure that city resources are only being used in a way that speaks to our values.

WCT: To focus on one aspect of that, the transgender community is faced by many of these challenges, but to a higher degree. Again, what are the mayor's responsibilities to them?

LL: I'm particularly concerned about the violence against the transgender community. We have to shine a light on that so that we can realize that it is happening, then we have to bring policies there to address it. I have a lot of respect for [Police] Superintendent [Eddie] Johnson. We have a great working relationship, but I've told him that we need to have more than one liaison to the LGBTQ community. If we're focusing on those issues, and working at a grassroots level, a mayor can do a lot to bring about change. We need to hear and see people. That's sounds like a simple thing, but if we're not mindful of those challenges and struggles, we're not going to craft policies that are addressing those needs.

WCT: How would you address criticism that the Police Board's work did not go far enough when you were heading it up? When word of your candidacy was imminent, one commentator on social media said, "She never fired a killer cop" and said that, at public meetings, you "coldly told people to watch their tone," and "punished people for going over their allotted time."

LL: Under my leadership, the police board have probably fired more police officers than any other three-year period of time beforehand. When I came into the Police Board, the level of concurrence with the superintendent was about 35 percent. So frankly the board wasn't firing anybody. The facts really matter. One of the amazing phenomena with my experience on the police board is that we have to take a public vote. We meet in executive session, but we have to take a public vote in every single case that comes before us where we've rendered a judgement. ... All I would say is, look at the record. Look at the actual facts. As the Police Board, we're a court. We're not advocates for one person or another. I had my 'advocacy life,' and think I spoke very specifically and pointedly about the things I care about, [including] making sure that we are respectful of the victims of crime.



Lori Lightfoot (right) with wife Amy Eshleman. Photo by Matt Simonette

WCT: What are your thoughts on Chicago's status as a sanctuary city?

LL: We have to do everything that we can to support families here in Chicago. Not just say that we are a welcoming city, but be a welcoming city. ... As a former prosecutor, I would be meeting with the heads of ICE to say, "Not in our city. You are not going to picking people up when they are dropping their kids off at school, and ripping them from their families." I would

not hesitate to speak out against the immorality of those practices. But I think the other thing that we must do is endure that, just like other citizens, our immigrant community has the opportunity to participate in the best this city has to offer. That's why I say that the message of "a new progressive course" will resonate [with] a lot of different communities. I'm not just going to say it. I'm going to put it into practice.

See <https://lightfootforchicago.com/>.

Lightfoot speaks with local LGBT leaders

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Just one day after officially announcing that she was joining the crowded field of candidates who will be challenging incumbent Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel in the 2019 Chicago mayoral election, attorney and former Chicago Police Board President Lori Lightfoot met with members of the LGBT community at a May 11 presentation at the downtown offices of the Locke Lord.

After an introduction by her campaign's finance chairman, Michael Bauer, Lightfoot explained that she wanted to be a mayor that both fully engaged with Chicagoans and leveraged city resources to effectively confront Chicago's pressing issues, noting that she believes that the city is going in "the wrong direction."

She said that Chicago Loop residents had an average life expectancy of about 85 years, but that, just blocks away in poorer neighborhoods, average life expectancy plummets to 69 years.

"That's a figure we haven't seen since the 1960s," Lightfoot added.

She further spoke about the city's schools, explaining that Chicago Public Schools (CPS) officials do not regard parents, students and teachers as "valued" partners in the educational system. Schools, she said, must be "places of value, because, of course, they are more than just places of learning."

Lightfoot also touched upon police reform, the pension crisis, city contracts, unemployment and homelessness, maintaining that officials need to



Lori Lightfoot.

Photo by Matt Simonette

be more thoughtful and deliberate in how they deploy resources to confront these challenges.

She further noted, "Managing the city better will save money," since the city government would consequently not be beset so frequently with lawsuits and interest payments. Lightfoot also said that the pursuit of commercial growth has to be evident from investment in small businesses and neighborhood resources, and that, "It can't just be [construction] cranes downtown."

She added, "A city [government] can't solve all our problems, but we can certainly take the lead."

Read about Lightfoot's mayoral announcement at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

UIC seeks director of gender/sexuality center

The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) is seeking applicants for the position of director of the Gender and Sexuality Center.

The director is responsible for the administra-

tive leadership and management of the Center, and oversees all operations of the Center. This includes development and administration of programs and activities that provide faculty, staff and students' knowledge of issues relating to the LGBTQIA+ communities.

This position promotes an inclusive environment that facilitates LGBTQIA+ students' advancement, growth and development through advocacy, policy development and institutional

intervention to support diversity on campus.

A minimum of a master's degree in a relevant field is required; Ph.D. candidates should have expertise on issues relating to LGBTQIA+ communities.

For fullest consideration, submit an application at <https://jobs.uic.edu/>, click on the job board and then the job, and upload a resume and cover letter by Wed., Aug. 8.

'P.O.W.E.R. Project' to run in June

The Art Leaders of Color Network (ALCN) and the Comfort Station join forces to present the P.O.W.E.R. Project during June.

In lieu of traditional arts programming, the Logan Square multidisciplinary art space known as Comfort Station (2579 N. Milwaukee Ave.) will be transformed into an "empowerment hub" with a series of lectures, discussions, happenings, self-care exercises and more led by artists and members from the community.

The P.O.W.E.R. Project's programmers include darlen r wendell & Bonita Africana, Jose Luis Benavides, Lakshmi Ramgopal, Mev Luna and Mike Strode. Programs include, but are not limited to, the "Which Ancestors Do We Run Towards?" workshop series; "Empathic Economies: A Black Lives Matter Listening Session;" a screening of Female Gaze, Death & Queerness; "I'ma Read, I'ma Read, I'ma Read": collecting a hip hop archive; an "Underground: Black QT Freedom Spaces" panel and more.

Visit ComfortStationLoganSquare.org/the-power-project/.



Homewood gets creative in reaching out

The Village of Homewood has launched a new marketing campaign that asks Chicago to "Think Homewood" if they are considering a move.

The campaign focuses efforts on commuters and residents on the near south, west and north neighborhoods. Homewood comic book artist and graphic designer Marc Alan Fishman was contracted to create the artwork and Homewood residents served as the models for imagery. A new

website was created where all the comics can be viewed and visitors can learn more about Homewood. The advertisements are in place in April and May with the expectation of an extension. For more information and to view all the artwork visit ThinkHomewood.com.

"It's exciting to have Homewood represented in this creative and dynamic way, which really represents our unique spirit," said Village Presi-

dent Richard Hofeld. "This is the beginning of a campaign to let Chicagoans know about the wonderful amenities of Homewood and to make a sincere pitch to city dwellers to 'Think Homewood' so they can make the right move."

The "Think Homewood" campaign is composed of three comic strips that address different aspects of life in Homewood. The themes include affordability, schools and park district, and community and creativity. The village also said it wants to also show it is LGBTQ-inclusive.

See <https://thinkhomewood.com>.

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Experts: Large health disparities exist between Chicago LGBTQs

BY JESSE ARNHOLZ

During his presidential campaign, Donald Trump made overt attempts to reach out to LGBTQ residents. In June 2016, for example, he tweeted, "I will fight for [LGBTQ people] while Hillary brings in more people that will threaten your freedoms and beliefs."

White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary Raj Shah even promised in a statement: "The policies of the Trump administration are intended to improve the lives of all Americans, including the LGBTQ community, through actions aimed at making health care more affordable, rolling back burdensome regulations, and combating the opioid crisis, the administration is working to ensure a healthier America."

In 2018, has that promise to protect and defend the health of LGBTQ individuals been delivered? Speaking with Chicago LGBTQ healthcare activists and experts, the answer is a resounding "no."

In Cook County alone, 59 percent of healthcare providers felt that LGBTQ people are either "not very equal" or "far from equal" in their treatment in the healthcare system, according to a large internal survey conducted by Equality Illinois, the statewide LGBTQ civil-rights organization.

But what accounts for such a disparity, especially in a county largely acknowledged to be among the nation's most progressive?

Ed Stellan, executive director of Heartland Alliance Health, said that in his 26 years as a healthcare provider, "drivers of disparities" can be boiled down to "a tale of two cities."

The United States already has a notoriously complicated healthcare system, and if an individual is able to pay, usually it means they will receive better healthcare. Being a member of the LGBTQ population adds an extra layer of complexity.

Erik Glenn, the executive director of Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, said he feels there is a very striking fluctuation of interest, knowledge and expertise within Chicago's LGBTQ community—especially within low-income, LGBTQ communities of color.

U.S. healthcare providers have a long history of discriminating and exploiting people of color, especially African-Americans. In many ways, the memory of bigotry remains seared into their collective memory.

At Howard Brown Health—Chicago's largest LGBTQ-focused community health center, which has 17 locations located across the city—the vast majority of transgender patients come into the clinic after having negative experiences in emergency rooms or in other primary care settings. Most transgender patients talk about staff entering their room unnecessarily to catch a glimpse of them, getting misgendered, and having to educate their doctors about their healthcare needs.



LaSaia Wade.

Photo by Liz Baudler

David Ernesto Munar, president and CEO of Howard Brown, said that the key reason Howard Brown exists is to give affirming and affordable care to LGBTQ people.

While the HIV/AIDS epidemic has become more manageable in the last decade, more than 4,000 of Howard Brown's 30,000 patients are living with HIV and Munar estimates that as many or more are at risk for HIV and are receiving testing services, PrEP, PEP, and other preventative services.

LaSaia Wade—executive director of Brave Space Alliance, a Black and trans-led LGBTQ Center located on the South Side that creates and provides affirming and culturally competent services for the LGBTQ community of Chicago—praised the work Howard Brown has done. But, she said, she greatly fears for the wellbeing of LGBTQ people in other parts of Illinois.

Wade said she feels that in the past five years Chicago healthcare institutions have begun to focus more on "trans 101" care, or the fundamentals of trans care, like gender-affirming surgery and hormone replacement therapy.

"But, then we talk about the rest of the state, and the rest of the state has no clue what that looks like," Wade said.

In her travels through Illinois, Wade has been dismayed to learn that many care centers outside of Cook County have little to no protocol when confronted with transgender and gender-nonconforming patients. The idea that Chicago is often perceived as an LGBTQ bastion rings very true to Wade, and it is very disturbing to her.

"We need to train and talk to everyone, not just a sector of people," Wade said.

It is a common misconception that transgender people only reside in urban centers. This is a dangerous misconception because not only do trans-

gender Americans live in all parts of the country, but this notion makes it easier for the general public to turn their backs on the struggles of rural transgender individuals, who face the same issues and dangers as trans city dwellers.

Planned Parenthood facilities are often the only trans-affirming care providers in non-urban areas of the state.

But, just because things are better in Chicago, that does not mean that there isn't room for improvement. Wade said her clients tell her that they still face problems of misgendering and a general lack of knowledge about transgender and gender-nonconforming bodies.

Many members of the city's lesbian and bisexual population also tell a similar story of having to educate providers about their needs.

Imani Rupert-Gordon—executive director of Affinity Community Services, a social justice organization that focuses on health, leadership development, and community building among Black lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and LGBTQ youth—pointed out that women typically have greater health needs than men, particularly in regards to reproductive health.

"There is a common misconception that LGBTQ women aren't impacted by the need for reproductive rights," she said, "and the voice of LGBTQ women has been largely, and historically left out of the reproductive rights movement."

According to Affinity's research, 48 percent of LGBTQ women are raising children. This means that reproductive rights are actually a huge issue for lesbian, bisexual and transgender women.

Most of the funding and attention to HIV is focused on men who have sex with men, but Black women are 16 times more likely to be diagnosed with HIV than white women, and five times more likely than Hispanic women. And while most LGBTQ women believe they have no risk of exposure to HIV, 20-40 percent of HIV diagnoses in women identify as lesbian or bisexual.

"Many of our healthcare providers aren't sharing the information about PEP and PrEP in our communities, and it is literally killing us," Rupert-Gordon said.

Many disparities within the healthcare system can also be tied back to other social determinants of health, as well.

"People who are under-educated, under-employed, under-housed are the ones that are likely to be engaging in activities that provide them with a greater likelihood of contracting HIV," said Scott Ammarell, the chief executive officer of Chicago House and Social Service Agency, an organization that provides housing and social services for people who are impacted by HIV and AIDS.

In March of 2016, the National LGBTQ Health Education Center reported that LGBTQ people face higher rates of substance abuse, depression, anxiety, smoking and unhealthy weight control, among other issues.

In a similar study, conducted in 2015, the National Center for Transgender Equality found that one-third of transgender Illinoisans will not seek out medical care that they need for fear of being mistreated.

Brian Johnson, the CEO of Equality Illinois, said that these studies show two critical needs that must be addressed: the need for better access to care and for more affirming care, wherein medi-

cal providers acknowledge and understand the patient's identity and experiences.

Howard Brown has an educational department to combat these kinds of disparities and it has devoted thousands of hours of education to nurses, providers and medical assistants regarding basic understanding of the LGBT community. For example, the education department has designed curriculum around the proper language and gender pronouns, what specific health needs of LGBT Americans are, and what kinds of interventions are important.

The curriculum is six hours long and Howard Brown has run classes all over the Midwest.

Unfortunately, in six hours Howard Brown educators are not able to adequately prepare providers to do more complex assessments such as prescribing hormone replacement therapy or handling the sensitivities of prolonged HIV care.

"It is a start," Munar said, "and I think that's been a help."

In addition to lack of education, health delivery in the United States is very fragmented for providers that are oriented toward particular kinds of services or particular kinds of populations. Often, providers are not prepared for the diversity they might encounter.

More specifically, healthcare disparities among LGBTQ individuals can be further boiled down to implicit bias toward white, heterosexual, cisgender and middle-to-upper class men.

This kind of bias often occurs at the sub-conscious level, and when a healthcare provider has an unchecked bias, it can make it difficult for them to ask the right questions and fully meet the needs of patients with different life experiences. In addition, when a patient detects this implicit bias, they can become distrustful of the healthcare provider or institution.

If a person is LGBTQ and also a member of a racial or ethnic minority group of color, they are going to experience many different and often intersecting forms of discrimination.

Johnson explained that if an individual is transgender, a woman, a person of color, and low-income, "when those identities layer on top of each other it increases the challenges of finding and securing adequate and affirming healthcare."

According to patient surveys, the top reason people come into Howard Brown for their care is that they have heard of the clinic from someone they know and trust in their communities.

Cynthia Tucker, the vice president of prevention and community partnerships at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, runs hundreds of focus groups, conferences and trainings per year and is alarmed by just how rampant distrust of the healthcare system is among LGBTQ individuals, especially among transgender women of color.

"I've heard stories where [a transgender woman of color] has gone to the doctor, and [they tell me], 'Staff talk about me, I can hear them laughing, I can hear them joking,'" she said.

Heartland Health Alliance estimates that about 40 percent of people between 18-25 who are experiencing homelessness are LGBTQ, even though LGBTQ people only makes up about 6 percent of the general population. Of those who experience homelessness, a disproportionate number of them are a racial and ethnic minority.

A recent study conducted by the National

Health Care for the Homeless Council suggests that upwards of 50 percent of transgender individuals have experienced housing instability or homelessness at some point in their lives.

In terms of healthcare, Stellan said that these studies reveal that when a person is unstably housed or homeless, they will prioritize basic needs such as food and shelter over day-to-day healthcare decisions. LGBTQ youth, especially, face homelessness and often turn to sex work to meet their basic needs.

Stellan speaks of many experiences where he's counseled LGBTQ youth, who are trading their personal safety and, often their sexual health safety, for the security of a warm place to stay.

Recently, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation released its 11th edition of its annual Healthcare Equality Index (HEI). The index scores healthcare facilities on policies and practices toward LGBTQ patients, visitors and employees. Across the country, 626 healthcare facilities all participated.

In the Chicago area, HRC gave 100-percent scores to Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, Howard Brown Health, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Rush University Medical Center, University of Chicago Medical Center, University of Illinois Hospital & Health Sciences System, VA Edward Hines Jr. Hospital Hines, and Rush Oak Park Hospital.

Tari Hanneman, the director of the HRC Foundation's Health Equality Project and author of the HEI, said that the study shows "a growing commitment across the nation to equitable and

inclusive healthcare," but that there is still a lot of work to be done.

But even though Chicago has excellent LGBTQ healthcare, many queer people of color do not utilize it. There are still enormous gaps in linking them to at-risk populations to the broader healthcare industry.

Many providers agree that is not just the discrimination that people face in front of their healthcare provider, but the bigger issue at play here is that the American healthcare system wasn't built to adequately support the nation's most vulnerable populations especially queer and lesbian women, transgender women, women with low income, undocumented women, women with disabilities, and a host of other women, and people with marginalized genders.

Rupert-Gordon said she sees this at play in many different ways.

"Income is still a barrier to receiving quality, timely, and adequate healthcare," she said.

LGBTQ women are less likely to have insurance, even with the Affordable Care Act in place. Because women make less money than men, they are more likely to have incomes under the poverty line, making access to healthcare, or perception of access to healthcare more difficult.

Rupert-Gordon said that these barriers make the most marginalized women more likely to put off getting care, complicating health issues until they become much more difficult to manage, or become terminal.

"As always, these elements are compounded for women of color, transgender women, and undocumented women," she said.



Equality IL's Brian Johnson

Photo from Equality IL

Black women are 42 percent more likely to die from breast cancer even though they are less likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer. This is because by the time black women were seeing providers, the diagnoses had become terminal.

Rupert-Gordon said that these statistics mean that lawmakers need to consider issues like experiencing housing instability, and access to safe, affordable childcare as impediments to health, both of which disproportionately impacts women, LGBTQ people, folks for color and other marginalized identities.

Glenn said he also feels that youth plays a huge role in healthcare disenfranchisement as well. For example, how a 17-year-old, queer, low-

income youth of color is going to have less experience when it comes to navigating the healthcare system than someone who is twice their age.

He said that even though that 17-year-old might be receiving messages from the public health arena that they should be getting check-ups because they're "more vulnerable" to HIV and other STIs, they might not know where to turn or might live in a part of the city that doesn't have LGBTQ-friendly clinics.

Chicago House runs a program called the Trans Safe Drop-In through their Trans Life Center. Every Monday afternoon, the program offers a space for trans people to come in and speak with service providers to find out how get their needs met.

Through this program, many clients come in with the same story: they are just trying to survive.

Then there are the huge actors the affect healthcare all across the country: the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

"[They] hold the purse strings that hold trillions for dollars for the whole system," Munar said.

Munar noted that the policies that emanate from Medicare and Medicaid affect systems across the country because every healthcare system is structured around them.

HRC President Chad Griffin noted after the HEI was released that with a Trump-Pence administration, "the rights of LGBTQ people are under attack," and that the survey shows that hundreds

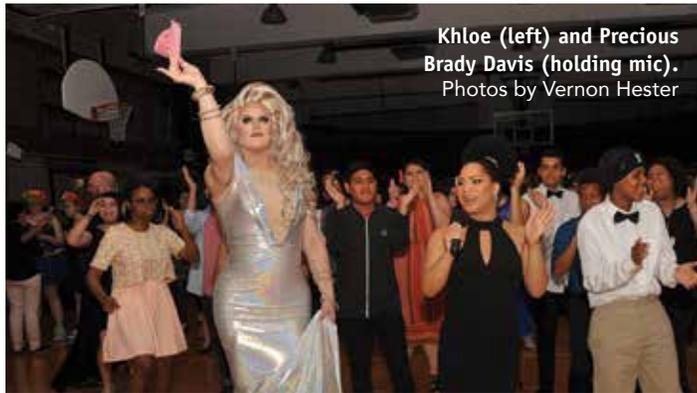
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Khloe (left) and Precious Brady Davis (holding mic).
Photos by Vernon Hester



CPS holds annual 'Queer Prom'

BY VERNON HESTER

On May 11, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) held "Candyland 2018," its seventh annual prom for LGBTQA students, at Lindbloom High School, 6130 S. Wolcott Ave.

This year's event was the first held on the South Side, with many students bused in from other areas (thanks to a grant, according to event co-founder Noa Padowitz). Precious Brady Davis hosted the festivities, with entertainment from female impersonator Khloe, music courtesy of DJ Jennefa, a dinner reception, prom cake, and the traditional crowning of the king and queen of the prom (Schurz High School's Jovanny Hernandez and Carlos Galvan, respectively).

Padowitz, who is also dean of students and community for CPS, said she was amazed at how the event has grown in seven years. "The first prom was held at [Ford] Power House [High School], which doesn't even exist anymore, in 2012.

We thought we were doing it as a one-off, but we got so many emails asking, 'When is the next one?'" She also said, "This event takes a lot of fundraising; every ticket sold is subsidized. Still, we don't want to turn students away."

Among the participating high schools this year were Roberto Clemente High School, Phoenix Military Academy, Sullivan High School, Roosevelt High School, Lake View High School, Lane Technical High School and Northside College Preparatory High School. Organizations who presented in the tabling section of the prom included The Youth Empowerment Performance Project and Planned Parenthood.

When asked about the importance of the event, Padowitz said, "We want the students to meet other students from all over the city, and to get them linked up with supportive organizations. As long as we do this, our goal is to not be needed."

Prom royalty Carlos Galvan and Jovanny Hernandez.



Local dealership settles anti-gay discrimination suit

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A Chicago car dealership will pay \$100,000 to settle a U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) lawsuit, after an employee alleged that they were discriminated against for being gay and having a disability.

The agency announced the settlement in an April 26 statement.

EEOC alleged that an employee at Evergreen Kia, 9205 S. Western Ave., was discriminated

against both for being gay and having Crohn's Disease, with homophobic slurs and jokes about his disability eventually reaching a point such that the employee quit.

The suit was filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois in October 2017, with Evergreen Kia agreeing to a settlement April 26. EEOC maintained that Evergreen Kia had been in violation of both Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1991.

"We thank Evergreen Kia for its commitment to settle this case before the parties incurred significant costs and for its willingness to modify its policies, provide training to its employees, and to have an outside monitor investigate complaints of discrimination," said EEOC Chi-

cago Regional Attorney Gregory M. Gochanour in the April 26 statement.

EEOC Chicago District Office Director Julianne Bowman added, "The EEOC will continue to enforce the federal laws so that all gay and disabled employees have the same opportunities as everyone else to work in environments free from harassment."

Illinois LGBTQ leaders part of internship program

Victory Institute announced the 12 young LGBTQ leaders it selected for the 2018 class of the Victory Congressional Internship program.

Three individuals from Illinois are among the interns. They are:

—Donna Gary, from Chicago (New York University): Gary has been placed with U.S. Congressman Hakeem Jeffries.

—Sydney Mudd, from Gurnee (Georgia Institute of Technology): Mudd has been placed with U.S. Congresswoman Gwen Moore.

—Jose Turrubiardez, from Chicago (University of San Diego): Turrubiardez has been placed with U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez.

Other interns have been placed with Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, U.S. Sen. Doug Jones, U.S. Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney and U.S. Congressman Mark Takano, among others.

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Mytesi is a prescription medicine used to improve symptoms of noninfectious diarrhea (diarrhea not caused by a bacterial, viral, or parasitic infection) in adults living with HIV/AIDS on ART.

Do Not Take Mytesi if you have diarrhea caused by an infection. Before you start Mytesi, your doctor and you should make sure your diarrhea is not caused by an infection (such as bacteria, virus, or parasite).

Possible Side Effects of Mytesi Include:

- Upper respiratory tract infection (sinus, nose, and throat infection)
- Bronchitis (swelling in the tubes that carry air to and from your lungs)
- Cough
- Flatulence (gas)
- Increased bilirubin (a waste product when red blood cells break down)

For a full list of side effects, please talk to your doctor. Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or does not go away.

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A Nursing Mother?

- It is not known whether Mytesi is passed through human breast milk
- If you are nursing, you should tell your doctor before starting Mytesi
- Your doctor will help you to decide whether to stop nursing or to stop taking Mytesi

Under 18 or Over 65 Years of Age?

- Mytesi has not been studied in children under 18 years of age
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If you are taking any prescription or over-the-counter medicine, herbal supplements, or vitamins, tell your doctor before starting Mytesi.

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HEALTH from page 7

of top healthcare facilities across the U.S. are moving towards healthcare equity.

Undoubtedly, these accounts point to the simple answer that President Trump's promise to defend LGBTQ healthcare is not being adequately addressed, and if anything the Trump administration appears to be doing what it can to actively complicate the lives of LGBTQ people.

The Trump administration has made several attacks that affect the overall health of the LGBTQ community.

In December 2017, the White House fired the remaining members of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS. Six members of the council had resigned in June after expressing anger with President Trump's approach to the epidemic.

Then on March 23, Trump signed a memorandum that will ban some transgender people from U.S. military service but rolls back the larger ban he ordered last year that was blocked.

The next day Howard Brown sent out a statement regarding the new decision, calling it a bla-

tant form of discrimination that is setting the cultural tone that it is permissive to stigmatize transgender people.

Even though the memorandum is not as harsh as Trump's previous ban, it is still particularly antagonistic toward transgender health because it targets those who have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria and those who are beginning to transition through medical intervention, hormones or surgery.

Munar said that this mandate is "sending trans care underground," and is telling people not to be open, and to not pursue medical assistance for the transition that they need.

The administration has continued to roll back protections left over from the Obama administration around bathroom access has disproportionately hurt transgender students. When schools do not elect to protect LGBTQ youth, a very strong message is sent: the LGBTQ community is not a priority.

In addition, the administration has made several attempts to erase tracking LGBT people in the census.

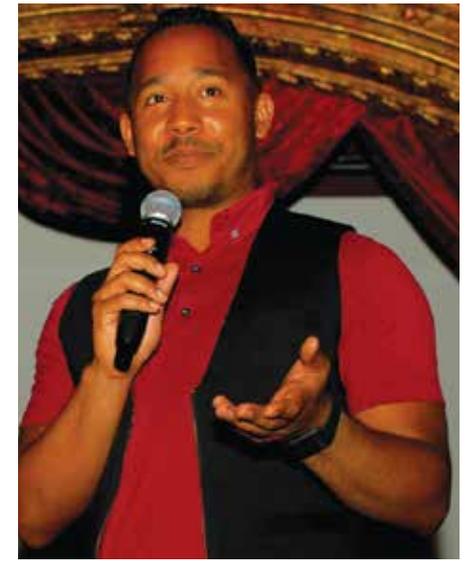
"In this country, policy is determined by data, and funding is determined by policy," Rupert-Gordon said.

Without tracking the LGBT population, it becomes very difficult to retrieve data on the LGBTQ community, which means the particular needs of the community will be ignored, and therefore left out of policy.

Many providers at Howard Brown have noted that since Trump's election patients have been coming in far more anxious, depressed and fearful. In addition, the clinic has seen an uptick in violence towards transgender women of color. Ultimately, this will drastically affect funding for the LGBTQ community.

Rupert-Gordon said that when there's decreased funding for the LGBTQ community, not only does it slow the progress LGBTQ Americans have made, but it has severe implications for the organizations doing work for the LGBTQ community in the United States.

Ammarell agreed with Rupert-Gordon and added that when the American people are presented policies like the transgender military ban, it in-



Erik Glenn.
Photo by Vern Hester

evitably feeds their implicit prejudices and biases against this community.

In other words, the people who aren't fully inclined to support the needs of the LGBTQ community, but aren't vigorously anti-LGBTQ are now being told that the well-being of the community isn't important.

Johnson said that when the threat of repeal of the Affordable Care Act was underway, there were many LGBTQ healthcare providers and LGBTQ Illinoisans who were calling his office to express fear about losing their health insurance.

But with a dangerous administration chipping away at LGBTQ rights, what can be done today to ensure proper and equitable care?

Many experts feel that when working with historically marginalized populations of any kind, institutions must hire people who are of that population.

Tucker is a big proponent of setting up community health organizations and creating more positions for healthcare navigators, who work for medical institutions or organizations, that are made up of people in the populations they serve. Johnson agreed with Tucker.

"Anybody making decisions that impact the healthcare of LGBTQ people absolutely need to have LGBTQ people at that table, in that conversation," he said.

This means putting LGBTQ people on hospital boards, on state boards and on commissions that intersect with public health issues. It also means making sure that LGBTQ health task forces are set up where LGBTQ people are in charge of making important decisions.

There is also an LGBTQ healthcare drought on Chicago's South Side. There is a great need on the South Side for organizations that are embedded in the community to partner with larger organizations with more resources.

This is something that Chicago House, which is located on the North Side, struggles with. The organization has been brainstorming sensitive ways to enter the South Side without its residents feeling that they are being exploited by an organization located in a historically white neighborhood.

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David Munar and Cynthia Tucker.

Photo by Ed Negron

Ammarell said that they must find a way to “partner and collaborate with existing South Side community organizations.”

Howard Brown’s expansion in recent years to many more areas of the city has also been a huge leap forward for LGBTQ-friendly access.

Experts also recommend reaching out to activists throughout Chicago. Wade has fielded many questions from several doctors all around the city, and has sat on many panels along with doctors and nurses.

Wade said that a good tip for LGBTQ people to remember is that what is common sense to one person, might not be common sense to another. She said that as a Black trans woman, what is obvious to her might not be so obvious to the healthcare providers she educates.

“[My] common sense is not common sense for a lot of people,” she said. “[Doctors] have to ask [patients] what their pronouns are, ask [patients] their name, ask [patients] what consent looks like to them, like do you want to be touched, do you want me to talk to you, do you want me to call you Mr., Ms. or Mx.?”

Rupert-Gordon agrees with Wade and suggests that doctors and nurses providing a service, after they’ve said their part, instead of asking, “Do you have any questions?,” maybe try, “Now that I’ve finished my part, what questions do you have for me?”

“This switch can make a huge difference in how a person relates to the provider, and their agency in their own health,” she said.

Most experts also agree that inclusivity trainings must include the “front line staff,” or the employees that are the first to greet patients. This is important because these are the first interactions that clients have with the healthcare

system, and very much have an impact on the overall experience of the visit.

Another popular best practice idea for healthcare providers is to get provider teams to be invested in doing their homework on LGBTQ populations.

One of the most common things activists hear from clients is that they have to be the ones to educate their providers.

“Institutions need to commit themselves to professional development and internal education,” Glenn said.

But on the opposite side of the coin, it is just as important for LGBTQ patients to do their homework as well.

“Being an informed consumer is really essential,” Munar said. “The more informed and the more active you are in your healthcare, the better outcome you’ll receive.”

Centers like Howard Brown, Chicago House and Heartland Health Alliance have worked hard to lower the financial burden for patients. Each agency is actively constructing new ways to make care more accessible. Howard Brown has opened more clinics in business centers and in highly residential neighborhoods. All clinics have evening and weekend hours as well.

Stellon said that healthcare providers must commit themselves to asking people what they want from their healthcare. He said providers must know, on a personal level, what is important to a patient.

“I’m here to listen and withhold judgment,” he said, “and to try to see the world as close as possible to the way you see the world, understanding that there will always be some degree of implicit bias that I just need to own and recognize.”

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Party promoters talk about lesbian spaces at Center on Halsted panel

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Center on Halsted introduced the women's faces behind the spaces for the program "Courageous Conversations: What the L" on May 11.

While lesbian bars in Chicago have been disappearing over the years, there are still women who create lesbian spaces that encourage women to be themselves and have fun. "Courageous Conversations" featured a panel of these driven women who have and are creating these women-centric spaces.

The event itself was a space for women to mingle, network and learn more about where to go for a party in the city.

"I'm very proud to say that every single panelist is someone I've connected with, talked to, or attended one of their events," said Center on Halsted Art Director Vivian Gonzalez. "I get to see first-hand how hard they work to create space for LBTQ-identified women, and specifically to center lesbian-identified people. I feel like that we're put on the backburner, so it's nice to see us put in the fore front once in a while as a community. These are the people doing that and that's why I

thought they needed a platform today."

Gonzalez said the event was intended to elevate and give a voice to the women who are continuing to give women a space, even if the lesbian bars are disappearing. The events, she went on to say, are usually held as a pop-up event and in a bar that is not necessarily known for being a queer or a lesbian space.

"I think it's a two-way win because we're breaking down barriers, as a lot of panelists said tonight, but also we're journeying into different parts of the communities and different parts of our landscape that maybe wouldn't have a queer space to begin with," said Gonzalez. "So we're bringing visibility to communities that need that."

The panelists included Brooke Webster of Meow Mix and Clandestina; Amie Klujian of Back Lot Bash and Curve Chicago; Bre Berry of Peach; Elena May Sotirin of LezBe; Jenae Williams of LBC and Chicago Dirty Girls; Eva Castro of Stargaze and Castro Entertainment; Pat McCombs of Executive Sweet; Alma Izquierdo of Amigas Latinas and Clandestina; Renauda Riddle of By Women for Women and BrunchReMixed; Kristen Kaza of



The lesbian promoters panelists and organizers, from left: Vivian Gonzalez from Center on Halsted, Elena Sotirin (Lezbe Events, back), Tracy Baim (Windy City Times, moderator), Jenae Williams (Lakeview Broadcasting Company, CDG), Bre Berry (Peach), Brooke Webster (Clandestina), Amie Klujian (Back Lot Bash), Renauda Riddle (BrunchRemixed, CocktailRemixed), Alma Izquierdo (Clandestina), Eva Castro (Castro Ent.), Pat McCombs (Executive Sweet), Tamara Allen (B.BLYSS!), and Kristen Kaza (Slo 'Mo: Slow Jams for Queer Fam).

Photo by Hal Baim

Slo 'Mo; and Tamara Allen of B.BLYSS! Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim moderated the panel.

"The one thing that all these women are selling when you come [to their parties] is that you are authentic," said Gonzalez. "That might be the only time in your busy day, busy week, busy month, that you can be yourself, be authentic and that's a beautiful thing."

Baim asked the promoters questions surrounding their own personal experiences of going to parties and their inspirations that led them to pursue their passions and projects, tips for sustaining their parties financially and staying motivated, and their goals for collaborations across the community as well as the successes and fail-

Turn to page 13



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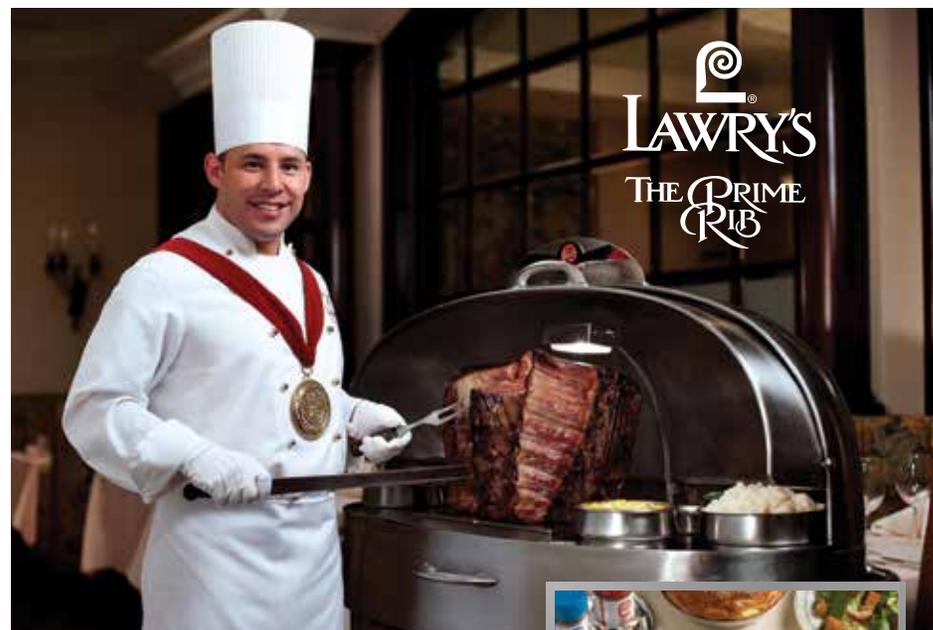
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SPACES from page 12

ures they have already encountered within collaborations.

Baim also mentioned existing women-owned spaces, including The Closet, Big Chicks, Spyners, Forest View Lounge and Joie de Vine.

"I thought it was quite informative and it was good to see the different aspects and to listen to the different voices and how they felt and the different ideals that they had in terms of promoting parties and being a part of the whole LGBTQ community," said McCombs, a retired party promoter, LGBT activist and retired special education teacher.

McCombs, having been a party promoter for more than 30 years, added it was enlightening to see how the party scene is carrying on.

"I'm still involved in terms of being involved with what's happening and I want to continue to support even the young people," said McCombs, joking that she still enjoys going to the parties and is not dead in age or spirit.

About 160 attendees filled the theater and also had the opportunity to ask the panel questions. Panelists shared their experiences of being in the party business and the ways in which they make people feel welcome in a space, diversifying pro-

gramming, promoting connections that make up the party and creating an intergenerational atmosphere within a party.

"I'm just glad to see more women of color starting to do more things," said McCombs. "I just wish there was more women of color that were involved in not just the party scene, but being more involved in the actual community in terms of a lot of other different things within the community."

McCombs further explained that she thinks more women of color need to venture out of their comfort zones, get more involved in activism, intermingling with others.

"What was important to me is that it continues," said McCombs. "It's the continuing of women having the passion to make things happen for the community and that's what I like. If you noticed throughout the whole conversation, it was about community. Being part of community and filling a gap of what's needed in the community; doing a service for the community. That's what stood out to me, regardless of which way we're thinking or what our ideals are, in the end, it's the community. Satisfying a need."

See video of the program at https://youtu.be/ZeuMfCPJ_Lk. To learn more about Center on Halsted, visit CenterOnHalsted.org.

Chuck Renslow street dedication May 19

A portion of Clark Street near some of the many businesses owned by gay activist Chuck Renslow will be given an honorary dedication in his name Saturday, May 19, 4 p.m., 5025 N. Clark.

The City of Chicago and Full Kit Gear invite the public to join Renslow's partner, Ron Ehemann and family, the leather and LGBTQ communities for the unveiling of an honorary street sign marking Clark Street from Ainslie to Winnemac as Chuck Renslow Way.

Renslow was 87 when he died June 29, 2017. Among his businesses located on that block had been The Gold Coast, GayLife newspaper and Man's Country bathhouse, which closed a few months after his death.

For event details, see <https://www.facebook.com/events/589306168100048/>.

Trans military persons file in Trump ban case

Transgender military-ban plaintiffs in *Doe v. Trump*—the first lawsuit to challenge the Trump-Pence ban—filed a cross-motion for summary judgment May 11 in U.S. District

Court for the District of Columbia, with assistance from the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) and GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD).

The plaintiffs' motion asserts that facts show the ban, including the March 23 Mattis implementation plan, violates their Equal Protection and Due Process rights, and that the court should provide permanent declaratory and injunctive relief to prevent the Trump-Pence ban from ever being implemented.

Said plaintiffs also filed a separate motion May 11 opposing the administration's motions to dismiss the case and to dissolve the nationwide preliminary injunction issued Oct. 30, 2017, by District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

Emma Gonzalez part of June 15 march

Emma Gonzalez and other students from Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, are scheduled to take part in St. Sabina Church's annual End of School Rally and Peace March on Friday, June 15, 7-9 p.m.

Chance the Rapper is slated to be the special guest.

The rally will take place at 1210 W. 78th Pl. The first 1,000 people will receive a free T-shirt at 6 p.m.

See <https://saintsabina.org/>.

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Billie Jean King shows pioneering spirit in talk with Kate Kendell

BY SARI STAVER

Billie Jean King's lifelong fight for equality began when she was 12, when the junior tennis player was practicing at the Los Angeles Tennis Club.

King, 75, recently speaking to a sold-out audience at San Francisco's Brava Theater Center, said she remembers noticing that everyone at the club was white. "Where is everyone else?" King asked her mom.

"It was my epiphany," said King at the benefit, which raised more than \$20,000 for the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

The question about the noticeable absence of people of color was "not the kind of question you'd expect from a kid growing up in a conservative home," she said. But from then on, said King, "I just kept fighting for equality and freedom."

"I was lucky," she conceded, "because I had tennis as a platform," she added.

King, who lives in New York City with her partner of 38 years, former South African tennis star Ilana Kloss, was in San Francisco for an hour-long chat with Kate Kendell, the outgoing executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR). The event raised more than \$20,000 for the organization.

(Incidentally, King has connections to Chicago. She was inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame in 1999, and she and Kloss lived in Chicago for many years and still maintain an apartment here.)

Kendell, who is stepping down from NCLR this year after 22 years with the nonprofit, described King as a "badass" and asked her what it was like to be King.

The journey from middle-class kid to world champion tennis player was not always a smooth one, according to King.

"It wasn't until I was 51 years old that I felt comfortable in my own skin," she said.

King's early career had many victories, both on and off the court. Professionally, she became the top-ranked women's tennis player by 1967 and also gained wide respect for her successful fight for equal pay for women in tennis.

King is credited with launching women's professional tennis after she and eight other players broke away from the tennis establishment and accepted \$1 contracts from tennis promoter Gladys Heldman, leading to the formation of the Virginia Slims Tour and Women's Tennis Association.

Then, in 1973, King defeated Bobby Riggs in the famous Battle of the Sexes televised tennis match, a story that turned into the Hollywood movie *Battle of the Sexes* in 2017, in which Emma Stone played King and Steve Carell played Bobby Riggs.

But the early '80s brought a "dark chapter" into King's life she said, when her then-secretary and lover Marilyn Barnett outed King, who was then married to sports mogul Larry King (not to be confused with the talk-show host). The story made worldwide headlines and King's agents and



Kate Kendell (left) and Billie Jean King.
Photo by Lyra Lopez Photography

attorneys advised to her to stay mum until the scandal passed.

"I wouldn't hear of it," said King. "I had to tell the truth," she said, acknowledging the 18-month long romance.

"Overnight, I lost all but one of my endorsements," she said. "It was a nightmare and I don't know how I survived" she said.

"I started my life over," she said continuing to focus on her crusade against inequality.

Looking back on the decades long battles for equality in women's tennis, King said she and the other early pioneers "convinced ourselves that we were doing this not to make a lot of money or get a lot of applause" but for "future generations."

"Any girl in the world can compete in tennis,"

said King. "For the first time, women were appreciated for their accomplishments, not just their looks," she said.

King acknowledged the work of Kendell and the NCLR, thanking her for the many victories the organization has achieved for the gay community. "We could not enjoy the life we do without you," said King.

Kendell, who grew up Mormon in Utah, said she remembers well the day that King held her nationally televised press conference, acknowledging her lesbian affair. "I remember feeling nauseous because of the shame, stigma, and internalized homophobia that pervaded our culture" at the time, she said.

King urged the audience to refrain from outing others. "People need to come out on their own terms," she said. "I don't want anyone to have to go through what I did" during the outing on national television, said King.

King said her conservative Methodist parents did not understand homosexuality. "Of course they didn't," she said. "If I didn't even understand it, how could I expect them to?"

Now that she has perspective on the process of coming to grips with being gay, King said she has compassion for her family's lack of understanding. "My mother would've been happy if I'd gotten married, had three kids, and came home" to see her every weekend, said King.

King said she gained further understanding of her mother when, at age 80, her mom talked about her youthful success in athletics. For women of her mother's generation, pursuing their own interests was not encouraged, she said.

"Thankfully, we are living in a different world," she said. The Brava event was produced by publicist Mark Rhoads, who said in an email he has "so much love and respect for both [King and Kendell] and "was sure that getting them on stage would be a powerful experience."

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The Shepards keynote hate-crimes summit

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Judy and Dennis Shepard gave the keynote address at the Matthew Shepard Foundation- and Center on Halsted (the Center)-sponsored hate-crimes summit and community reception May 10 at the Center.

The Shepards addressed approximately 50 law-enforcement officials, first responders and prosecutors on the importance of doing proper hate crimes investigations.

Dennis explained that when he would speak to law enforcement officials in the past he would say, "I am glad you are here because you killed my son." He said that because previously whenever anything happened to the LGBT community, such as vandalism, robberies or murders, many law enforcement officers would say, "Do not worry about it. That was just another fag."

"That encouraged open season on the LGBT community," said Dennis.

Dennis noted that this mindset was what led to Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson murdering his son. He said that, even to this day, McKinney thinks he is a hero for killing Matthew.

"I am overwhelmed by the change that has occurred among law-enforcement officials and prosecutors who are recognizing that LGBT people

are just average, hard-working folks who want a career and family and to retire and die of old age like everyone else," said Dennis. "The problem is that a lot of people still think the LGBT community does not have the right to exist. We had eight years of gaining rights for LGBT people under President Obama and now that we are losers we have to think about how we are going to win again. In order to win again politically law enforcement has to uphold the federal hate crimes law no matter who is in power."

In speaking about his son, Dennis said he was a "pain in the butt" kid who loved theater and politics and got involved with his first campaign when he was seven years old. Dennis explained that Matthew made friends with everyone he met and was not afraid of being an out and proud gay man.

"The changes that have been made because of Matt's death have a lot to do with the officers who were involved in investigating his beating and eventual death," said Dennis. "Dave O'Malley, who investigated the case, was a complete homophobe prior to the investigation and now he is an LGBT ally who marches in Pride parades and travels the country to speak on the issue. This is what I am seeing with many law enforcement officers as I have traveled the country over the years."



Judy and Dennis Shepard.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

"I am angry, worried and scared about the direction this country is going in right now," said Judy.

Judy spoke about bigotry coming from fear and ignorance and how the new political order is upending the progress that has been made on a variety of issues, including LGBTQ equality.

"This country used to be a place where we respected differences and reveled in it instead of discouraging it," said Judy. "So many people feel free to express their bigotry against what is different."

Judy explained that nobody is born with hate, but rather it is learned behavior:

"Being empathetic is innate," said Judy. "But being kind is not."

During the Q&A session, someone asked about who the murderers were. Judy said they were locals and high school drop-outs.

Another person inquired about the how they felt about the death penalty as an option and both Judy and Dennis said they left that decision up to the prosecutors.

In terms of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, Judy noted that it was a necessary law but the parameters need to be expanded including that reporting needs to be mandatory and money has to be allotted for training purposes.

As far as how the University of Wyoming president handled Matthew's death, Judy said he was amazing and Dennis noted that he set up a candlelight vigil for anyone who needed that space to mourn. Dennis explained that some LGBT professors and students who were not yet out of the closet quit the day Matthew's death was announced due to fears about their own safety in the town.

Another person asked how both feel about law enforcement on the whole. Judy said that there needs to be an LGBT liaison to deal with issues that arise between police officers and the public. Dennis said that of late it has mostly been a positive experience.

Read the entire article about the hate-crimes summit at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

IMAGINE HELPING ALL THESE HIV+ BUTTS



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LEE
LYNCH

THE AMAZON TRAIL

The six-foot table solution

Yes, we can solve all our problems with six-foot tables—even world peace.

I'm surprised no one thought of it before. It was my fairy goddaughter (FGD) who opened my eyes to the concept. She, also a writer, was the one who designated me her fairy godmother—in my opinion, a great honor.

She was in the process of moving into her new house and a little bit overwhelmed. Or perhaps scared silly at the gargantuan task ahead. All her possessions were in a jumble. Like most of us landing in a new home, she didn't know where to start.

A while later she texted that she'd come up with a tool that pleased her mightily. It was the six-foot folding utility table.

When my sweetheart and I arrived to help, there it was, right smack in the middle of the house, heaped with, oh my gosh, measuring tapes, pliers, a brand new chartreuse box cutter, kitchen paraphernalia, the mail, more diy tools, cleaning supplies, paint cans—it looked like a hardware-store sidewalk sale.

We quickly learned that the long, easily stowed table was also a dyke's best friend. We never had to look elsewhere for what we needed. FGD had invented a stationary robot that practically handed us the implements we required.

Down the hall, we met her new office: two small rooms knocked into one big one that will eventually fit, aside from desks: shelving units, file cabinets, book cases and—guess what? Six-foot tables. Along with writing, FGD teaches, is a publisher, volunteers for all sorts of groups, and perpetually has multiple six-foot projects under way on those desks and tables.

While my sweetheart and FGD lugged and organized bookcases, book boxes, heavy chairs and tables, I thought, if one person can get so much use out of plain old work tables, to what other uses



Six-foot table.

Photo by Lee Lynch

could they be put?

The vision that came to me involved eight women arrayed around a scuffed-up, paint-stained, overloaded high-density polyethylene table. Each woman would represent a country or a continent, no two from the same ethnic group or class. One would be a physician, one an engineer, one a farmer, one from the arts, another a biologist, a mathematician, a policy maker, a social worker, a teacher, an environmentalist. Soon there would be multiple tables to seat homeless women, a mother, a pilot, old women, a high school senior, an immigrant, another immigrant, lots of lesbians, a meteorologist, an astronaut, a planner, a teacher, a librarian, and at least seventeen poets, including Nikki Giovanni and Mary Oliver, for starters.

Why the table? Silly question. Men have all the workbenches, don't they? And the toolbelts and those fire engine red toolboxes with the shallow drawers from Sears that hold so little compared to a six-foot table. No one needs all those Sears tools anyway.

The table was perfect. Think about where we women were trained to work: the kitchen table, the ironing board, the dining room table, the never big enough kitchen counters. My mother had a vanity table. She loved to eat at picnic tables anywhere there was a babbling brook and trees, trees that would become wooden tables. Oh, for crying out

loud, women were confined to changing tables and coffee tables and bedside tables. We know our way around tables all right.

Now we bring our demands to the table. In fact, we have tables where the public can turn in guns. Tables where we leaflet for stopping wars, for equal rights, for reproductive rights, for gay rights. We "man" those tables all right.

What better place to start than with eight women at each of eighty thousand mismatched tables, melding the nurturing tools of our minds, our love, our senses and sensibilities, the common ground of common and extraordinary women—pitting our inventiveness against obstacles, our creativity against the money-mad, and our combined brilliance against those who would table us forever. We are the home-makers, the housekeepers, we will set the tables on this planet, for it is our home.

And to think, at the start of all this home-making, Fairy Goddaughter, you were the one who adapted the yokes that so burdened us—reshaped them into flat familiar surfaces around which we will plot reconciliation, regrowth, abundance, a world of safe and healthy animals, ourselves included. We'll put all the tables together, end to end, so they belt and balance the globe. We'll spread tablecloths with the patterns of every culture and share our repast while we solve things, woman to woman, once and for all.

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Letters to the editor:

To whom it may concern:

On April 28, Rev. Jose S. Landaverde, of the diocese of Quincy, Illinois—and chaplain of The Latin American Labor Council—in the company of many supporters from Chicago and the surrounding areas devoted to the cause of immigrant rights began an 800-mile journey walking toward Washington, D.C., from Aurora, Illinois.

We are walking to demand justice and dignity for our immigrant communities. We call on our nation's leaders to respect the basic human dignity of immigrants, to give permanent residence for recipients of TPS (temporary protected status) and DACA, to

demilitarize the U.S./Mexico border, and to halt deportations and keep all immigrant families intact.

We have forged through, in spite of frequent stops, with little or vague justification, causing unnecessary delays and hardships like exhaustion, dehydration, malnutrition, blistered feet and Landaverde's precarious health situation. Yet, we remain steadfast in our resolve and cannot be deterred until justice prevails for our communities. We walk proudly, representing our brothers and sisters who can not make this journey because of fear of government repercussions and for the future of all immigrants.

On June 5, we will arrive in Washington, D.C., and will be met by more than 100 pastors, reverends and other clergymembers from throughout the country to demand permanent residence for recipients of TPS

and DACA, to demilitarize the U.S./Mexico border and to halt deportations.

We demand that our elected representatives meet with us and join us in supporting our demands for justice and dignity for our immigrant communities.

In solidarity,
Jose S. Landaverde

P.S. We proudly support and sponsor Faith, Life and Hope Mission and Rev. Landaverde, Mexico Defiende Lo Tuyo, Mexica Tribe de Todo Aztlan, National Day Labor Organization, Chicago Metro LCLAA, The May Day Coalition, Solidarity DuPage, with immigrant rights organizations and businesses in Aurora, the Chicago metropolitan area and surrounding suburbs and communities.

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Palm Restaurant Chicago.



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LGBTQ show at Beverly Arts Center.



'Summer' time

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WCT reviews the Tennessee Williams production *Suddenly Last Summer*.

Photo by Michael Brosilow

SUMMER THEATER SPECIAL

Summer promises: Theater in and around the city

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

One might not believe it from the climate-change weather people are getting now, but summer is on its way and, with it, outdoor warm-weather picnic-welcome entertainment and no-brain indoor spectacles. (Note: Asterisks indicate productions with no admission charge.)

Under suburban stars

Oak Park Festival Theatre, Austin Gardens, 167 Forest Ave., Oak Park: The highlight of the season is Carlyle Brown's historical drama, *The African Company Presents Richard III*, running July 28-Sept. 1; however, first, audiences can enjoy Kaufman and Hart's classic comedy, *You Can't Take It With You*, playing June 16-July 22; visit OakParkFestival.com.

First Folio Theatre, Peabody Estate at Mayslake, 1717 W. 31st St., Oak Brook: David Rice and Lydia Heller's world-premiere musical adaptation of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, running from July 14-Aug. 19, is now titled *Shrew'd* and set in the 1930s, featuring a jazz-inspired score by Christopher Kriz and the co-adapters; see FirstFolio.org.

Coming to parks near you

**Midsommer Flight* at Lincoln, Gross, Touhy and, this year, Chicago Women's Park at 1801 S. Indiana Ave. The touring play for 2018 is *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, starring David Goodloe and Chad Bay as the foolish young swains; *Midsom-*

merFlight.com

**Shakespeare's Motley Crew*, Winnemac Park, 5100 N. Leavitt St. The resident mummers at this family-friendly neighborhood festival, playing weekends from Aug. 4-27, present *Midsummer Mayhem: The Prophecies*, featuring a mash-up of prognosticative scenes from *Julius Caesar*, *Lear*, *Twelfth Night* and the inevitable Scottish you-know-what; SMCplays.org

**Chicago Shakespeare Theater*. The prestigious Navy Pier company brings their trademark *Short Shakespeare* production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to parks on the North and South sides of the city; for complete schedules, contact ChicagoShakes.org.

**Theatre Hikes*. Planned for 2018 is *Arabian Nights* at North Park Village (July 14-15 and Horner Park July 21, but green promenades may be in short supply this year, so be sure to check the website before making plans; Theatre-Hikes.org

Indoors in the city

Djembe!, Apollo Theater, 2540 N. Lincoln Ave. A djembe is an African drum, and one is distributed to each audience member so they can hammer away like Boul Mich bucket-buskers to the music of Bob Marley, Angeliqwe Kidjo and Prince (among others) from June 13-Sept. 2; ApolloChicago.com

The Cher Show, Ford Oriental Theater, 24 W. Randolph St. It takes two vocalists to play the superstar born Cherilyn Sarkasian, but known to

hoards of devoted fans (and several husbands) simply as Cher, in this revue donning its finishing touches from June 12-July 15 before opening on Broadway in December; BroadwayInChicago.com

Wild Women of the Planet Wongo, Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division St. This New York City musical import features spoofery of Sci-Fi B-movies, amazon warriors, purple and green cosplay, no chairs and Wongotini cocktails—all from June 8-July 14; PlanetWongo.com

The Maids, Artistic Home, 1376 W. Grand Ave. Playwright Jean Genet said, himself, that he wanted men in drag to portray the two homicidal domestics in this thriller (based on a true story), so director Michael Conroy fulfills his wish by

casting divas Patience Darling and Hinkypunk in this production running June 22-July 14; TheArtisticHome.org

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, Lookingglass Theatre at the Water Works, 821 N. Michigan Ave. Kareem Bandealy stars as the would-be master of the briny deep in this adaptation by Althos Low and David Kersner of Jules Verne's Victorian science-fiction fable, playing from June 2-Aug. 19; LookingglassTheatre.org

Theater on the Lake continues to promise its re-opening, but no schedule had been announced as of press time. Interested theatergoers are advised to keep watch on its website at TheatreOnTheLake.com.



David Goodloe and Chad Bay in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

Photo by Zack Whittington

THEATER REVIEW

The Days Are Shorter

Playwright: Corinne J. Kawecki
At: Pride Films and Plays at the
 Pride Arts Buena, 4147 N. Broadway
Tickets: \$25;
PrideFilmsAndPlays.com; 773-857-0222
Runs through: June 3

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Contrary to popular stereotype, women's midlife crises are not always easily remedied with hormone supplements and jewelry. Sometimes it takes a full-blown visitation by a spectral succubus or two to dispel the unsettling prospects of encroaching bioturbulence making the cosmological confusion of puberty pale in comparison.

Our reluctant voyager is 53-year-old Julia, a once-hopeful photojournalist who now lies about her age when on assignment for the lesbian "walker" service providing her income. Ex-spouse Pax (age 58) is an attorney considering a

change of career. Paramour Treat (age 28) aspires to fame as a Las Vegas sleight-of-hand magician. Socialite Ada (age 76) is comfortable with her solitary life, despite occasionally hiring an escort for couples-only events.

Sharp-witted playgoers will quickly detect in these last three personae the Artemis-Aphrodite-Athena archetypes of Greek myth. This familiar trio has been summoned by playwright Corinne J. Kawecki to serve as a diagram of the attractions/responsibilities/rewards offered females of varying degrees of maturity, and by doing so, persuade our ambivalent Everywoman to set aside her paralyzing terror of growing older. By the time Julia achieves her epiphany in a scenario involving a treehouse and an epilogue referencing a few more classic literary night-journeys, the allegorical underpinnings of Kawecki's fable will be manifest.

Patience is required, however, since the technical limitations of the Buena's storefront stage—e.g., bedcovers split down the middle of a single mattress to indicate two beds in two bedrooms, or an isolated wooden bench vainly hinting at an ornate home's front stoop—too often blur the boundaries between conceptual dreamscape and



Joan McGrath
and Pat Parks
in *The Days
Are Shorter*.
Photo by
Paul Goyette

scenic economy. The resulting ambiguity makes for difficulty locating ourselves within our dramatic environment, delaying our comprehension of the narrative's philosophical dimensions.

What redeems Kawecki's unabashedly romantic tale, ultimately, is the uniformly unbiased compassion and credibility she bestows upon her characters, even unseen personnel commonly vilified as villains by less tolerant authors. Director

Iris Sowlat and an ensemble featuring Pat Parks, Gay Glenn, Joan McGrath and Kendra Verhage (whose mercurial Treat delivers some impressive cardplay under the instruction of pro illusionist Neil Tobin) likewise convey warmth and humor sufficient to disarm any worrisome thoughts regarding the passing years disturbing our own sleep.

THEATER REVIEW

ThroatPunch

Playwright: Sharon Krome
At: Chicago Mosaic Krome,
 1101 W. Granville Ave.
Tickets: NothingWithoutACompany.org;
 \$10-\$20; free on select days
Runs through: June 3

BY KERRY REID

It's morning in America, but the kids aren't all right. In fact, they're mad as hell. They're also restless, yearning, questioning—and sometimes falling-down drunk. In Sharon Krome's *Throat-*

Punch, three young punks find solidarity and heartbreak in the darker corners of ReaganLand, where nuclear Armageddon doesn't seem like the stuff of dystopic fiction and police regularly harass people who don't fit in.

Krome's play, directed by Anna Rose-Li Epstein, is a shaggy affair, unfolding in a series of loopy vignettes that eventually do lead someplace. At times, it's like watching images from Nan Goldin's *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* come to life, though the characters in Krome's 1983-era Chicago punk scene aren't as jaded as Goldin's collection of New York bohemians.

When we first meet teenager Nat (Alicia Jade), the nice Jewish girl from Skokie who is just getting into the scene, she's got a tampon shoved up

one nostril to stanch the bleeding after taking an elbow to the face in the mosh pit. The graffiti-smear, bottle-infested studio apartment where her new friends Zig (Adam Huizenga) and Cyn (Tarina Bradshaw) crash becomes a sanctuary and clubhouse. And her ability to actually play drums makes her an anomaly in a scene that prides passion over professional skills.

What comes out—eventually, and with a few narrative hiccups along the way—is that all three of the kids are seeking a new identity in punk to escape their family histories. Cyn, whose mother is white, yearns to spend more time with her Black academic father in Georgetown and get back to the DC punk scene (the one that spawned the pioneering black hardcore band *Bad Brains*).

Zig's satyr-like posturing and overblown British accent hide his own struggle with identity. And in her growing romantic desires for Cyn, Nat realizes that she's less about Black Flag and more about Lydia Lunch.

The hyper-realistic and elbow-to-elbow intimacy of the playing area (Krome is credited with production design) help make up for some of the discursive elements in the 90-minute play. What stands out the most by the end is Krome's understanding that even scenes set in defiant opposition to conformity have their own rigid demand for authenticity that can also be alienating. (Misogyny also knows no musical boundaries.) The line between defiance and desperation also gets blurry in Krome's world. "You're not worldly," Nat tells Cyn at one point. "You're homeless."

For people old enough to remember 1980s punk, *ThroatPunch* lands in the sweet spot of nostalgia for misspent youth. But by the end, Krome's play shows that every subculture needs its own revolution within to move into the future.

The facilitator is "Dr. Sugar," a nickname rendering of his Polish name, Cukrowicz (an affable Wardell Julius Clark), a neurosurgeon pioneering then-new lobotomies. Violet promises major financial support if he neutralizes Catherine, but Dr. Sugar remains impartial.

Nigohosian, Heyl and Clark play their roles with authority and humanity, never letting the language stiffen or trick them into poetic recitation. Nigohosian is particularly adept at avoiding vocal patterns or overplaying peremptory Violet Venable. It's the high level of acting we expect in the best off-Loop productions.

Joanna Iwanicka's mist-shrouded exotic garden scenic design and Claire Chrzan's muted but colorful lighting are most effective, and I really loved Brittany Dee Bodley's costumes.

I'm not among those who think *Suddenly Last Summer* expresses Williams' gay self-loathing. Gay characters don't fare well in most Williams plays and queerness is addressed only indirectly, but few of his hetero characters do much better! Williams never chooses between gay and straight, but between strong and weak. His gay characters mostly are weak and hidden—but such were times until late in his life.

able views as God's savage face—*Suddenly Last Summer* is all about the acting. Capable director Jason Gerace tampers slightly with the script and action, but nonetheless delivers nuanced and assured performances throughout (even understudy Song Marshall as the housemaid).

It's set in the 1930s Garden District mansion of patrician Mrs. Venable (Mary K. Nigohosian), who holds all the cards—money, connections, dominance over poor relations—while her traumatized niece, Catherine Holly (Grayson Heyl), holds none ... except perhaps the horrific truth, for which Mrs. Venable is willing to lobotomize Catherine.

Their disagreement concerns Mrs. Venable's too-adored son, Sebastian, a 40-ish dilettante poet who died in Spain while traveling with Catherine. A heart attack? Or was Sebastian attacked and mutilated by adolescent boys, some of whom he'd paid for sex? Mrs. Venable contends Sebastian was ever-chaste and celibate, so she intends to suppress Catherine's account that the boys "devoured" him.

The play features two extended near-monologues in which Violet and Catherine deliver contrasting portraits of who-and-what Sebastian was.

THEATER REVIEW

Suddenly Last Summer

Playwright: Tennessee Williams
At: Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark St.
Tickets: 773-338-2177;
RavenTheatre.com; \$46
Runs through: June 17

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

New Orleans is a drinking town, but in *Suddenly Last Summer* old Violet Venable has one lone daiquiri while everyone else stays dry. This play demonstrates that terrible things happen when you don't drink in the Big Easy. Or not.

This taut psychological thriller runs just 90 minutes but nonetheless it's as perversely poetic as any of Williams' longer works. With its repeated rhythms, words and phrases, its fraught situation and rich language—redolent with images of voracious plants, birds and people feeding upon each other in what Sebastian Ven-

CRITICS' PICKS

Buddy, American Blues Theater at Stage 773, through May 26. Far more concert than story, the short, mostly sweet life of Buddy Holly features 16 rocking vocal and instrumental stars. Don't miss! JA

Macbeth, Chicago Shakespeare Theater at Navy Pier, through June 24. Chicago Shakespeare's new Yard space still needs work, but the duo that brought us the magic *Tempest* in 2015 serves up spooky spectacle in abundance. MSB

Memphis, Porchlight Music Theatre at the Ruth Page, through June 16. Rock-and-Roll has many ancestors and Porchlight introduces another one in a powerhouse production at this cozy Near North auditorium. MSB

—By Abarbanel and Barnidge



Jayla Craig and
Jeff Meyer in
Flies! The
Musical!
Photo by
Paul Goyette

THEATER REVIEW

Flies! The Musical!

Playwright: Cindy O'Connor (music),
Larry Todd Cousineau (book and lyrics)
At: Pride Films and Plays at The
Broadway, Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway
Tickets: \$20-25;
PrideFilmsAndPlays.com; 773-857-0222
Runs through: June 10

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

Theater kids never change. No matter the era, they'll always be a ragtag bunch radiating earnestness while humming the latest Broadway hit.

In *Flies! The Musical!*, the song remains the same: The kids of Lovely Valley Magnet High School are on a retreat while rehearsing for an unauthorized version of *Lord of the Flies* written by their drama teacher/volleyball coach. One's a hardcore vegan. Two are jocks used to pulling rank. At least half are in and out of the closet. The goth girl doesn't even talk, and the bespectacled, nerdy student in the *Dear Evan Hansen* hoodie is determined to pull them all together. Effortlessly blending slapstick and dark comedy, with some truly catchy songs, this world premiere is catnip for the misunderstood theater kid in us all.

Even those who hated *Glee* can at least somewhat relate: The drama clique will never be the cool clique. The same is true here, as the cast of *Lord of the F-* (for legal reasons they're not allowed to say the full title) arrives at an abandoned forest preserve for a "research retreat." Trouble starts almost immediately when cheer-

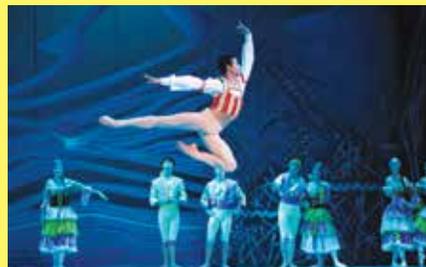
leader Rhonda's (Jayla Williams-Craig) hairstylist mom has a client emergency and abandons them with nothing but a bag full of curling irons instead of snacks. When scenes from the William Golding classic start coming true, Pigtales (Missy Wise) encourages everyone to band together, but she's the only one who's read the book. Will the strong survive? How long before human nature takes over? And is the musical-loving park ranger (Christea Parent) actually a bear in disguise?

Cindy O'Connor and Larry Todd Cousineau's score and book hilariously mimic musical theater styles of new and old, and the teenage dynamics are so realistic it's almost painful. Director Michael Driscoll boasts an impressive resume, helming several Jeff-nominated and Jeff-recommended productions. In *Flies!*, Driscoll lets his theater kid freak flag fly, milking every comedic moment for all it's worth. As the teens descend from semi-focused rehearsing into pure insanity, Driscoll keeps the action moving and the laughs coming. Sawyer Smith's choreography pays homage to every awkward grapevine and hand clasp most of the audience was forced to do in high school show choir, and Paul Kim's costumes bring to life scarily accurate teenage stereotypes.

Standouts in this fantastic cast include Wise's sweet-natured and idealistic Pigtales, Parent's tap-dancing park ranger and the riotous "Young'Uns" duo, Ryan Armstrong and Joey Fontanetta. *Flies!* is an apt choice for Pride Films and Plays, a company with a reputation for polished productions that range from the thought-provoking to the truly absurd. This tribute to teen angst, musical theater and bloodlust is zany fun with enough darkness to make Golding proud.

SPOTLIGHT

Think *Don Quixote*, and most invariably think one of a ziggitygillion crooners going for the money notes in "The Impossible Dream." If you have a memory for Lit 101, you may also picture a guy with a vaguely Ren Fairish aesthetic galloping after windmills. This is not that *Don Quixote*. It is instead the Ballet de Nacional Philharmonic, dancing to the Chicago Philharmonic Orchestra's rendition of Ludwig Minkus' fireball score. Choreographed by Marius Petipa (*The Nutcracker*), the tale of an unlikely hero takes on fresh luminosity, sometimes literally



(see Aldonza's blazing crimson frock). The show runs May 18-20 at the Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Congress Pkwy.; visit AuditoriumTheatre.org/shows/cuba-don-quixote.

Caption: Photo by Nancy Reyes

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Rivendell extends 'The Cake' to June 2

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble (RTE)—Chicago's only Equity theatre dedicated to producing new work with women at the core—will add four performances to the run *The Cake*.

Eight performances have been added to the run, which must close June 2 at RTE, 5779 N. Ridge Ave.

The plot is as follows: Jen lives in New York but has always dreamed of getting married in her small North Carolina hometown, so she heads down south with her partner to ask Della, her late mother's best friend, to do the honors of making the wedding cake at her bakery. Della's cakes are legendary, even earning her a spot as a contestant on the "Great American Baking Show." She is overjoyed at Jen's request until she realizes there's not just one bride, but two, forcing her to re-examine some of her deeply held beliefs, as well as her own marriage in this timely play.

Admission is \$28-\$38 each; call 773-334-7728 or visit RivendellTheatre.org.

Second City to host Pride sketch show

The Second City has announced a June run for "The Second City's Let's Make It Perfectly Queer: A Salute to Pride," a sketch show performed entirely by an all-LGBTQIA cast.

Under the direction of Mick Napier and with Nick Gage's musical direction, "Let's Make It Perfectly Queer" is Second City's first foray into celebrating all things Pride with a rainbow of classic and original sketches featuring an inclusive cast: Corey Caldwell, George David Elrod, Lanny Fox, Maya Haughton, Claudia Martinez and Riley Mondragon.

Proceeds from merchandise sales and audience donations will benefit local LG-BTQ-focused non-profit organizations.

The show will run Fridays at 9 p.m. and Sundays at 7 p.m. on June 1-24. Tickets are \$15 (students)-\$20 (general admission); visit <https://www.secondcity.com/shows/chicago/lets-make-it-perfectly-queer-a-salute-to-pride/>.

Taste of Chicago headliners announced

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) have announced the full music lineup for the 38th Annual Taste of Chicago, being held July 11-15 in Grant Park.

The festival will present a diverse mix of national and international acts at the Petrillo Music Shell, including Brandi Carlile, Juanes, yasiin bey & Talib Kweli are Black Star, The Flaming Lips and George Clinton/Parliament/Funkadelic.

Tickets for the seating area at the Petrillo Music Shell are available at TasteOfChicago.us. For all Petrillo concerts, general seating tickets are \$18 and premium seating tickets are \$50. Admission to Taste of Chicago and lawn seating is free.

'Ethical Sluthood' May 24 at the Center

"Ethical Sluthood"—the second in the COUP/3 GOALS series—will take place Thursday, May 24, 7-9:30 p.m., at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

During this session, COUP/3 GOALS collaborates with Janet W. Hardy, author of *The Ethical Slut*, to discuss foundations of non-traditional lifestyles.

COUP/3 GOALS celebrates individuals who are single, monogamous, non-monogamous, polyamorous, queer, non-binary, or who care about a label.

Admission is free, although there is a \$10 suggested donation; RSVP at <https://www.couplegoals.club/>. More info is at <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=15386>.

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SUMMER THEATER SPECIAL

Hot recommendations

BY JERRY NUNN

Summer theater productions are rising in temperature with some hot upcoming performances heading to Chicago.

If you don't want to leave the air conditioned house, watch the 72nd Annual Tony Awards on Sunday, June 10, on CBS at 7 p.m. CT to see if *Mean Girls* is more "fetch" than *SpongeBob Squarepants*, both leading with 12 nominations.

For those that love to go outside and visit theaters there is a rainbow of options to see during Pride month and beyond. Here are some of the highlights in the upcoming months:

—*A New Attitude: In Tribute to Patti LaBelle*: Look "Over the Rainbow" for a story about a shy girl from Philly who eventually becomes the energetic and outspoken singer Patti LaBelle. Serve us a slice of her sweet potato pie! Running May 13-June 17 at the Black Ensemble Theater. Info/tickets: BlackEnsembleTheater.org; 773-769-4451

—*Bull in a China Shop*: This Midwest premiere of Bryna Turner's play is based on the lovers Mary Woolley and Jeanette Marks, featuring an all-female cast including AFT's artistic associate Kelli Simpkins. Running May 24-June 1 at Theater Wit. Info/tickets: AboutFaceTheatre.com; 773-975-8150

—*The Laramie Project*: AstonRep Theatre Company concludes its season with a community's response to the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming. Now is the time more than ever to revisit this small town's hate crime that continues to move audiences. Running June 7-July 8 at The Raven Theatre Complex. Info/tickets: AstonRep.com; 773-828-9129.

—*The Cher Show*: Cher shares her story of a six decade career in a 35 song musical about the gay icon's life. Three different women turn back time as Cher while wearing out and proud designer Bob Mackie's creations. Running June 12-July 15 at

Oriental Theatre. Info/tickets: BroadwayInChicago.com

—*The Color Purple*: Miss Celie and the family return again to Chicago with a mix of musical genres. More of the lesbian storyline is intact in the script than the movie version, plus there are outwardly sexual songs like "Push Da Button" packing a punch. This Tony Award winner will ring more true to the Pulitzer Prize winning book by Alice Walker than Spielberg allowed. Running July 17-29 at the Auditorium Theatre. Info/tickets: BroadwayInChicago.com

—*The Maids*: This is the story of two housemaids, played by drag queens, who create elaborate sadomasochistic rituals. Running June 22-July 14 at 1376 W. Grand Ave. Info/tickets: TheArtisticHome.org; 866-811-4111

—*Let's Make It Perfectly Queer: A Salute to Pride*: LGBT cast members create inclusive sketches at Second City's Blackout Cabaret. Running June 1-24. Info/tickets: SecondCity.com 312-337-3992

—*The View Upstairs*: A Chicago premiere presenting the story of Wes, a young fashion designer who buys a building that magically transforms into a '70s gay bar. Running June 22-July 22 at 4139 N. Broadway. Info/tickets: CircleTheatreChicago.com.

—*The Roommate*: Steppenwolf's Downstairs Theatre hosts the Chicago premiere of *The Roommate* in a two person play directed by Phylicia Rashad with one of the characters being a member of the LGBT community. Running June 21-Aug. 5. Info/tickets: Steppenwolf.org; 312-335-1650

—*Support Group for Men*: The Goodman gang dissect gender roles and masculinity when some longtime pals meet in Wrigleyville. Running June 23-July 29 in the Albert Theatre. Info/tickets: GoodmanTheatre.org; 312-443-3800

—*Bull in a China Shop*: The Midwest premiere of Bryna Turner's play based on the lovers Mary



David Cerda, Adrian Hadlock, AJ Wright and Ed Jones in *Golden Girls: The Lost Episodes*. Photo by Rick Aguilar Studios

Woolley and Jeanette Marks featuring an all-female cast including AFT's artistic associate Kelli Simpkins. Running May 24-June 30 at Theater Wit. Info/tickets: AboutFaceTheatre.com; 773-975-8150

—*The Golden Girls: The Lost Episodes, Vol. 2*: The classic TV sitcom drag show is not ready for retirement yet with brand new campy stories. Running June 19-Sept. 7 at Mary's Attic. Info/tickets: HandbagProductions.org; 800-838-3006.

If that's not enough PrideFilmsandPlays.com provides plenty of gay entertainment at 4139 N. Broadway:

—*Out and Proud: A Rainbow Celebration*: Featuring the talented Melissa Young and her amazing friends singing cabaret style while mixing in stories of the LGBTQ movement over the years on June 3.

—*Pink Orchids*: A person's status and the

HIV stigma that can surround them is described through monologues. It will run June 6-July 7.

—*Fabulous Divas of Hollywood*: Created by Alan Palmer who impersonates Joan Crawford, Judy Garland, and Liza Minnelli. If you can't afford tickets to the Oriental you might find Cher there, on June 8 or 9!

—*The Green Bay Tree*: A young man must choose between his fiancée and his male mentor on June 11-July 8.

—*WeFest*: Celebrate queer female, non-binary, and trans artists one night only on June 13.

—*Fucking Men*: A bold title with a story that involves 10 men from different walks of life who try to connect. It will run July 1-Aug 25.

—*Holding the Man*: Who doesn't love an Australian accent or a true story? This one is about a real-life gay couple, based on Timothy Conigrave's memoir, will run Aug. 5-26.

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SUMMER DANCE SPECIAL

Unusual offerings heat up summer

BY JOANNA FURNANS

Dance this summer starts with a bang and ends with a slow, satisfying burn. Front load your dance card in June, take a beach break in July and return for some glitz, glamour and guts in August. Here are the top picks for Chicago dance this season:

—**The Pivot Arts Festival** on Chicago's North Side returns for its sixth season with a stellar lineup of local and visiting dancer/performers. First, catch **Corey Smith's** "The New Prairie School at the Colvin House" (Saturday, June 2, 7 p.m.; Sun. June 3, 4 p.m.) as he and fellow performers Ethan T. Parecll and Claire Saxe dance, sing and narrate their way through this historic Chicago mansion. "The New Prairie School" debuted last January at Links Hall as a dense, dynamic and highly entertaining love letter to the Midwest.

The festival continues with a shared evening (Thursday, June 7, 7 p.m., at The Mundelein Center at Loyola University, 1020 W. Sheridan Rd.) from queer Chicago dancemaker **Anna Martine Whitehead** and New Orleans-based choreographer **Shannon Stewart** in collaboration with musician **Aurora Nealand**. Whitehead will present a work-in-progress entitled "Notes on Territory," which is being called a "transdisciplinary movement piece framed in the guise of a PowerPoint presentation."

Stewart and Nealand also keep "the body" central to their work. Stewart has spent years researching and exploring gender, race and sexuality in performance and strives to destabilize expectations of traditional gender imagery. Together, in their work "Hysteria and the Body Electric," Stewart and Nealand "explore how popular media (television, news, social media) portray and affect our ideas of intimacy, vulnerability

and identities."

The festival ends (Sun. June 10, 7:30 p.m., Parish House, 1244 W. Thorndale Ave.) with "The Rossini Project," an adaptation of Rossini's opera *The Barber of Seville* by the Chicago Fringe Opera with the acclaimed street-dance/hip-hop duo **BraveSoul Movement** (Daniel "Bravemonk" Haywood and Kelsa "K-Soul" Robinson). Together, Bravemonk and K-Soul are powerhouses on stage; one can only imagine what their vibrant style will bring to this re-worked opera.

Sharing that bill is a work-in-progress from the **Ginger Krebs Performance Project** entitled "Escapes and Reversals. Escapes and Reversals." Krebs has long been fascinated by the triumphs and mishaps of diligent human effort especially when compared to the flawless efficiency of our digital world. This new work for five dancers promises to portray exertion, futility and humanity in its most urgent physical forms. For tickets and festival details, visit PivotArts.org/Festival.

—Speaking of effort, Chicago dancemaker **Victoria Bradford** has been planning a massive tour de force performance project called "Relay of Voices." This multiyear endeavor culminates

in a 100-day relay run from the headwaters to the mouth of the Mississippi River—a 2,300 mile expedition on foot. On the way, Bradford and her team of artist/athletes will connect with local communities and make dances related to the stories they hear and the people they meet along the way.

Although the full adventure won't start until next year, people (for free) can see a mini-version of this piece, "Relay," performed in response to visual artist Brent Fogt's solo exhibition "Do Something Else" at the Chicago Artists Coalition (Friday, June 1, 6-9 p.m., 217 N. Carpenter St.). Responding to the shape and form of Fogt's sculptures, Bradford and dancers will perform a three-hour durational relay throughout the gallery and around the city block. This iteration explores "how bodies come together, grab hold ... reach for, place, wedge into, and find themselves holding once again."

—No strangers to durational performance, local dance company, **Khecari** will present "The Retreat: One Week" (June 18-24, times vary). Not to be outdone, this performance lasts for—you guessed it—one week. For 168 consecutive

Finland, French Canada, India and Germany. See IVPChicago.org for more information.

Global play readings through May 31

International Voices Project (IVP)—marking the ninth season of play readings by playwrights from around the world—will take place at Instituto Cervantes, 31 W. Ohio, through May 31, with performances at 7 p.m.

The series is presented in collaboration with consulates and other cultural institutions throughout Chicago and this year's engagement features plays from Spain, Serbia, Poland, Syria,

Shannon Stewart
and Aurora
Nealand (right).
Photo by
Adrienne
Battistella

hours, co-artistic directors Julia Rae Antonick and Jonathan Meyer (along with fellow dancers and musicians) will create an ongoing sensory installation of dance, sound, light and environment.

The experience is meant to be a retreat for the audience encouraging "deep engagement and a state of beneficial boredom, positioning this often-suppressed form of attention as radical engagement with time and self," according to a press release. Khecari has so carefully designed the entire event that we have to apply to become audience members—they will decide when it is best for us to attend. To find out more about where this radical, one-of-a-kind performance will take place and to apply for admission visit Khecari.Org/The-Retreat.

—For something a little more laid back, **Catalyst Movmnt** presents "Black Coffee & Raw Sugar" (1474 N Milwaukee Ave., Sun., Jun 24, 7:30 p.m. & Sun., Aug. 26, 7:30 p.m. \$8 tickets at the door) a bimonthly performance showcase featuring work by movement artists of color. (This company is distinguished from another company called "Catalyst Movement.") Held in the informal setting of Outerspace Studios in Wicker Park, the series promotes visibility, risk-taking, truth-telling, good vibes and great work. Check it out the last Sunday of every other month.

—Things quiet down for a bit in July and August but come back with a bang with **Dance for Life Chicago** on Saturday, Aug. 18 (Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Congress Pkwy.). Dance for Life Chicago brings together a slew of renowned Chicago dance companies to celebrate the vibrancy of our communities and raise money for Chicago Dancers United's Dancer's Fund, an invaluable resource for dancers struggling with health and medical needs. This year, there will be performances by Dance For Life partner companies Giordano Dance Chicago, the Joffrey Ballet and Hubbard Street Dance along with work by Hanna Bricston and Dancers, Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre, Chicago Dance Crash and Nomi Dance company. Tickets go on sale May 18; visit ChicagoDancersUnited.org/Dance-For-Life.

—Lastly, the summer simmers out with the annual return of **The Fly Honey Show**. Everyone's favorite gender-bending, body-positive cabaret (led by choreographer Erin Kilmurray) returns for a rumored five weekends of performances at the end of this summer. The juicy details of this year's location and lineup are still under wraps but much will be revealed in the weeks to come. Keep an eye on the hive at TheFlyHoneyShow.com.

Holocaust museum's architectural honor

The Illinois Council of The American Institute of Architects (AIA Illinois) has named Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center as one of Illinois' 200 Great Places, in honor of the state's bicentennial in 2018.

The announcement was made as part of Na-

tional Architecture Week, on April 12.

Nominations came from architects from all parts of the state and were selected by AIA regional chapters. Nominations were weighed against criteria including the AIA's "10 Principles of Livable Communities."

The museum holds architecture tours every second Sunday and last Saturday of each month, from 11 a.m.-12 p.m. The tours are free with museum admission and do not require reservations. See IllinoisHolocaustMuseum.org.

SUMMER THEATER SPECIAL

Ten wonderful shows to see

Having Our Say
playwright Emily
Mann.
Publicity photo



BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

Whether you love big flashy musicals or intimate black box dramas, Chicago theaters have something special in store. Here are 10 fantastic shows to heat up your summer.

Having Our Say—Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St., through June 10. Bessie and Sadie Delany lived to be 104 and 110 years old, respectively. Their stories of living as proud Black

women in a prejudiced United States spawned a best-selling memoir and a Broadway play. Director Chuck Smith excels at highlighting the African-American experience; his interpretation of this compelling story is not to be missed. Tickets/Info: \$25-\$75, GoodmanTheatre.org; 312-443-3800

The Light Fantastic—Jackalope Theatre Company at the Broadway Armory Park, 5917 N. Broadway, through June 16. Playwright Ike Holt-

er's career has been on a hot streak for several years. His Lottery Day will premiere at the Goodman next March, but you can whet your appetite with Jackalope's world premiere. The Light Fantastic promises old-school shivers and spookiness and a classic battle of good versus evil. Tickets/Info: \$20-\$30. Jackalopetheatre.org [no phone number available]

Macbeth—Chicago Shakespeare Theater, 800 E. Grand Ave. (Navy Pier), through June 24. Collaborators Aaron Posner and Teller take on the Bard's most deadly duo: a rising politician and his ambitious wife. Weird sisters, ghosts of and iconic dialogue. "By the pricking of my thumbs/something wicked this way comes..." Tickets/Info: \$35-\$88, ChicagoShakes.com; 312-595-5600

Bull in a China Shop—About Face Theatre at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave., May 24-July 1. Fast-moving, feminist and funny, Bull in a China Shop is based on the real-life couple Mary Woolley and Jeannette Marks, two suffragettes who revolutionized education for women in the early 20th century. Tickets/Info: \$20-\$38. AboutFaceTheatre.com; 773-784-8565

Mies Julie—Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave., May 25-June 24. Yael Farber[i] sets August Strindberg's classic in post-apartheid South Africa, where upper-class white Julie (Heather Chrisler) falls for her father's Black laborer, John (Jalen Gilbert). Tickets/Info: \$20-\$40; Victorygardens.org; 773-871-3000.

The Cher Show—Broadway in Chicago at the Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph, June 12-July 15. In this pre-Broadway run, three women (in-

cluding Great White Way regular Stephanie J. Block) portray Cher from fresh-faced kid to pop icon. Why in the name of Bob Mackie haven't you gotten tickets yet? Tickets/Info: \$33 and up. BroadwayinChicago.com; 800-775-2000

The Roomate—Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St., June 21-Aug. 6. A polite Midwestern lady moves in with a ballsy Bronx chick: Hilarity and heartbreak ensue in Jen Silverman's world premiere, directed by Phylicia Rashad. Tickets/Info \$46-\$76. Steppenwolf.org; 312-443-1650.

Linda—Steeple Theatre Company, 1115 W. Berwyn Ave. July 12-Aug. 18. The title character is many things: a wife, a mother and an intelligent, successful beauty company executive. But in a world that prizes youth (or at least, the appearance of youth) over all, can Linda stay relevant? Tickets/Info \$27-\$38; SteepTheatre.com; 773-649-3186

Broadway in Chicago Summer Concert—Jay Pritzker Pavilion, 201 E. Randolph St., Aug. 13. Highlights from Dear Evan Hanson, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and Miss Saigon take center stage in the annual, free musical-theater extravaganza. For musical-theater lovers, it's an absolutely do-not-miss. Tickets Info: Broadway-inchicago.com.

Radio Golf—Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis. Aug. 30-Sept. 30. Court says goodbye to summer with the final play in playwright August Wilson's American Century Cycle. Ron OJ Parson directs his seventh Wilson production for the Court, helming stellar cast featuring James Vincent Meredith and Allen Gilmore. Tickets/Info; CourtTheatre.org; 773-753-4472

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Beverly Arts Center to host its first LGBTQ show

BY BRONSON PETTITT

Sunday, May 20, will mark at least two firsts for the Chicago community of Beverly: the first time the Beverly Arts Center will host an LGBTQ art show, and the first time this South Side neighborhood to have a queer art event.

That's according to Steve English, an artist and floral designer who helped organize "abOUT ART: The Collective Works of LGBTQ Artists and Friends."

The show's opening reception will be 1-3 p.m. on Sunday, May 20, capped off by a circus-themed performance courtesy of the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus. "abOUT ART" will be held in the center's atrium, and run through Pride weekend.

"This is historic because there's never been an art show like this," which will be held in in a "very conservative Irish-Catholic neighborhood," English said.

"I'm sure there's going to be people who don't like it, but I'm tough-skinned."

Yet English said the show has drawn overwhelming support and interest around Beverly, which is also home to quite a few LGBTQ couples

and families.

"I'm really hoping this will be a stepping stone for giving a place where all kids, especially LGBTQ kids, can go feel comfortable and safe," English said. "Especially since Trump is in office, more kids are getting bullied, and for transgender women of color, the murder rate is going up."

For many LGBTQ artists, "one of the ways they probably survived their childhood was through art," he said.

Thirty to 40 pieces—including paintings, drawings and knitwork—will be displayed by about two dozen artists of all ages, from seniors to children as young as 11. Chicago photographer Rick Aguilar and internationally recognized artist and performer Vanessa German are among the more well-known individuals taking part.

The show will also include a quilt made in honor of Pulse nightclub massacre victims, which claimed 49 lives in Orlando in 2016.

"There's a real cross section of art," English said, adding that several teachers have expressed interest in setting up a mentoring program.

English said he hopes to make the aboutART show a yearly event; in fact, this is the third year



An abOUT ART piece by Travis H. Putman.

Photo courtesy of Steve English

the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus will perform at the Beverly Arts Center, an effort English said "took about six years of convincing."

"The hope is that [the art show] will be a success and later they'll have a showing in one of their galleries," English said.

He added that some museums and galleries have even reached out to him about taking the

show's pieces to different locations after the aboutART show concludes.

Since moving to Beverly with his husband nine years ago, English has seen a neighborhood that's been increasingly supportive of LGBTQ folks.

"When we told our gay and lesbian friends up north that we were moving to Beverly, they said, 'are you insane? They will eat you up. But by and large the community is very welcoming,'" English said.

In fact, just last month, a United Methodist Church, which "was non-supportive of the LGBTQ community for the longest time," hosted a breakfast for the community, English said. "For a church that conservative now to have a group within that church—that's great."

English and his husband moved to Beverly after they bought a floral design store. Over the years, they hosted social entrepreneurship events, workshops on sex trafficking and bullying and fair trade open houses at their Blossom Boys store, until it closed for business in 2016.

"We wanted to be more than just a flower shop," English said. Now, the couple continues to design floral arrangements from their home.

"Everyone said you can't do a show—that takes like a year," English said. "I said, 'oh no, we can do it in two and a half months. We can do it.'"

"abOUT ART: The Collective Works of LGBTQ Artists and Friends" will be at the Beverly Arts Center, 2407 W. 111th St. Tickets are \$28 for the chorus' performance at 3 p.m.; visit <https://www.cgmc.org/get-tickets/>.

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Heath Saunders.
Publicity photo



NUNN ON ONE: THEATER

Heath Saunders takes the lead in 'Jesus Christ Superstar'

BY JERRY NUNN

The 1970 groundbreaking musical Jesus Christ Superstar—which Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice created—continues to rise in popularity to this day, thanks to a recent live version on TV and a new production at the Lyric Opera.

Set in 30 A.D., Jesus Christ Superstar opens with Judas Iscariot criticizing Jesus; the plot unfolds in song from there. There is little spoken dialogue in this story and, instead, has dynamic music that has thrilled audiences for generations while garnering five Tony nominations.

Heath Saunders leads the talented cast as Jesus Christ and brings experience from past shows like Spamalot, Les Miserables and Hairspray: In Concert.

For NBC Live, Saunders was in the ensemble and played guitar. He studied musical theater at the University in Miami and has worked with a variety of musical instruments over the years.

Windy City Times: Start off with where you are from.

Heath Sanders: I grew up outside of Seattle in Kirkland, Washington. I moved to New York about four years ago now.

WCT: Was your family always supportive of you being queer?

HS: I have two moms now, so yes. My mom and dad were divorced when I was 6. My mom married my stepmom and I was raised by two women. My dad lived three blocks away.

WCT: So you could be whatever you wanted to be.

HS: Yes, and I am very interested in labels, which is why I care about “queer” as a term. For me, queer is about pushing back on labels and queering the narrative. My mantra as an artist is saying things don’t have to be a certain way. We can twist those things.

Same thing with race, as I am neither Black nor white. There’s a spectrum of race, gender and sexual identity.

WCT: Did you always want to be in musicals growing up?

HS: Sort of. I started as a musician. I played cello, oboe, piano and saxophone through school. My middle-school band teacher said that if I wanted to make a living as an instrumentalist that I should play in pits of musicals. We watched musicals in class like My Fair Lady and Fiddler on the Roof.

When we watched West Side Story, a very white community theater was looking for Sharks. Me and my brothers, three of whom live in New York with me and are performers currently, all auditioned for West Side Story. The theater did about three musicals a year so by the time I graduated I had done 24 musicals. Some of them were original musicals and then I went to school to study composition. I accidentally fell back into performing.

WCT: Talk about being cast in Jesus Christ Superstar.

HS: I just finished doing Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert. I found out I got both parts the same day but if I did them I would have no day off.

The audition process for the Lyric one was hilarious because I went in as a swing cover for Jesus and Judas. I had to prepare everything in the show!

After many auditions with this show, I was called in for the Live show as the Judas understudy. They noticed I knew the show really well, but that was because I had been auditioning for it for weeks. I got the call offering me both jobs the next Monday.

WCT: Do you have a favorite song in the show?

HS: “Judas’ Death” has the greatest music reprise of anything ever written. It has a beautiful moment. Musically, “Damned for All Time” is my favorite, though.

“Gethsemane” has a special place in my heart, also. The terror of having to sing that song is a moment!

WCT: What did you think of Alice Cooper being in the Live show?

HS: He is so charming and the nicest guy. I was terrified of him as a child. Little Heath had a very different impression of him.

Jesus Christ Superstar rocks now through Sunday, May 20, at the Lyric Opera, 20 N. Upper Wacker Dr., with tickets at JCSuperstar.org.

Read the full interview with Saunders at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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Photos by
Jerry Nunn

Wonka Ball keeps it light with 'SNL' theme

BY JERRY NUNN

About Face Theatre held its annual gala at the Museum of Broadcast Communications on May 11. Even though it was a Friday, you would have sworn it was a Saturday night. Wonka Ball at Saturday Night Live: The Experience! proved to be the perfect theme for the LGBTQ-focused theater company.

Guests were encouraged to dress as their favorite comedy characters, picking from a variety of SNL skits, and to explore the exhibits in the museum. It was an opportunity for Chicagoans to go "backstage" of the New York-filmed TV show, where attendees could get an up-close view of costumes, dressing rooms and the control booth. They could play guitar on the Wayne's World couch or sit in the makeup chair like a celebrity. Along the way, there were food stops in the maze of nostalgia, thanks to vendors like Taylor's Tacos and Vincent.

On the fourth floor of the building, more bites were offered from Fat Cat, Polo Cafe and STK Chicago, in addition to snacks and desserts courtesy of Do-Rite Donuts, Garrett Popcorn and Insomnia Cookies—plus an Ambiguously Gay Duo cake cut at the end of the night. Blue Plate Catering, MillerColors and CH Distillery provided cocktails and other beverages.

DJ Matthew Harvat played a mix of current and retro tunes while people danced and mingled. Guests were able to explore an outdoor VIP area, coffee talk with Linda Richman and bid on the silent auction items along the exterior wall. Raffle prizes included tickets to Saturday Night Live in New York City, Late Night with Seth Meyers, Hamilton Chicago and Sesame Street.

Jim Bennett and Heather Vickery hosted the awards ceremony, during which the About Face Youth Theatre MVP Award was given to Liv Haman for outstanding work as an ensemble member.

Recipients of the Leppen Leadership Award were talented trans actor Delia Kropp and the Chicago Inclusion Project, which is dedicated to inclusive hiring practices in the theater community.

Throughout the ceremony, SNL characters popped out for brief and hilarious performances.

AFT is dedicated to advancing the LGBTQ community in the world of theater in the Chicago area. Visit www.AboutFaceTheatre.com for details on upcoming shows, including Bull in a China Shop by Bryna Turner.



From top: Hosts Heather Vickery (left) and Jim Bennett; Liv Haman; Chicago Inclusion Project; Delia Kropp.

Photos by Jerry Nunn. See more photos on page 30.



BILLY Masters

Things are really ramping up for the royal wedding. The big news last week was that while **William** will be **Harry's** best man, **Kate** will not be the maid (or, I suppose, matron) of honor. A royal snub? Hardly. Apparently it is considered unseemly for a future queen to be an attendant to anyone—even on their wedding day! It's also been whispered that **Meghan** doesn't want anyone to upstage her—like Pippa did at Kate's wedding! So, who will attend to Meghan? Nobody, that's who. The official word is that she has too many friends to choose from, but our sources inside the palace tell us that Meghan actually wants her friends to have a good time and not have to work and fuss with her dress. Have no fear—she won't be all by her lonesome. The bridal party will have all those little kids as attendants and pages, including Will's children, George and Charlotte.

The big scuttlebutt in London has to do with another royal couple: **Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson**. Even though they divorced in 1996, Andy and Fergie get along better than ever and continue to live together. However, it's not like they're sharing a one-room flat—since their divorce, they've been cohabitating in a 12-bedroom estate! But the birth of Prince Louis has apparently had a domino effect on the royal family. The law states that the sovereign must approve the marriage of the first six people in line for the throne—so it's the heir, the spare and four others in case of something like bubonic plague. Up until Louis' birth, the line of succession was Charles, William, George, Charlotte, Harry, and Andrew.

Now with Louis ensconced between Charlotte and Harry, Andrew is number seven and technically doesn't require mummy's approval to wed. Royal watchers speculate that Andrew and Sarah would like to remarry, but the queen would likely not allow it; one does not quickly forget the toe-sucking incident. Still, I find it unlikely that he'd go against his mum's wishes—he ain't no Princess Margaret! Plus, that old woman can't live forever. Here's the catch—if he waits till Lizzie dies, Charles becomes king, Andy moves back into sixth position and the whole problem starts all over again—until Harry and Meghan have a kid.

A queer marriage in the States is officially kaput. As I told you last week, **Colton Haynes** and hubby **Jeff Leatham** appeared to be estranged since they stopped following each other on Instagram. Days later, Colton released a song called "Man It Sucks," which led to rumors that Jeff had cheated on him. Haynes said, "Jeff would never cheat. He's an amazing man. Please stop being mean to him." Days later, Colton filed for divorce. He cites that old chestnut, "irreconcilable differences." This got me thinking—if not Jeff, then maybe someone else cheated. Hmm.

Since I had a few days to kill before the "event,"



Colton Haynes (right) and Jeff Leatham's marriage is kaput after six months, Billy says.

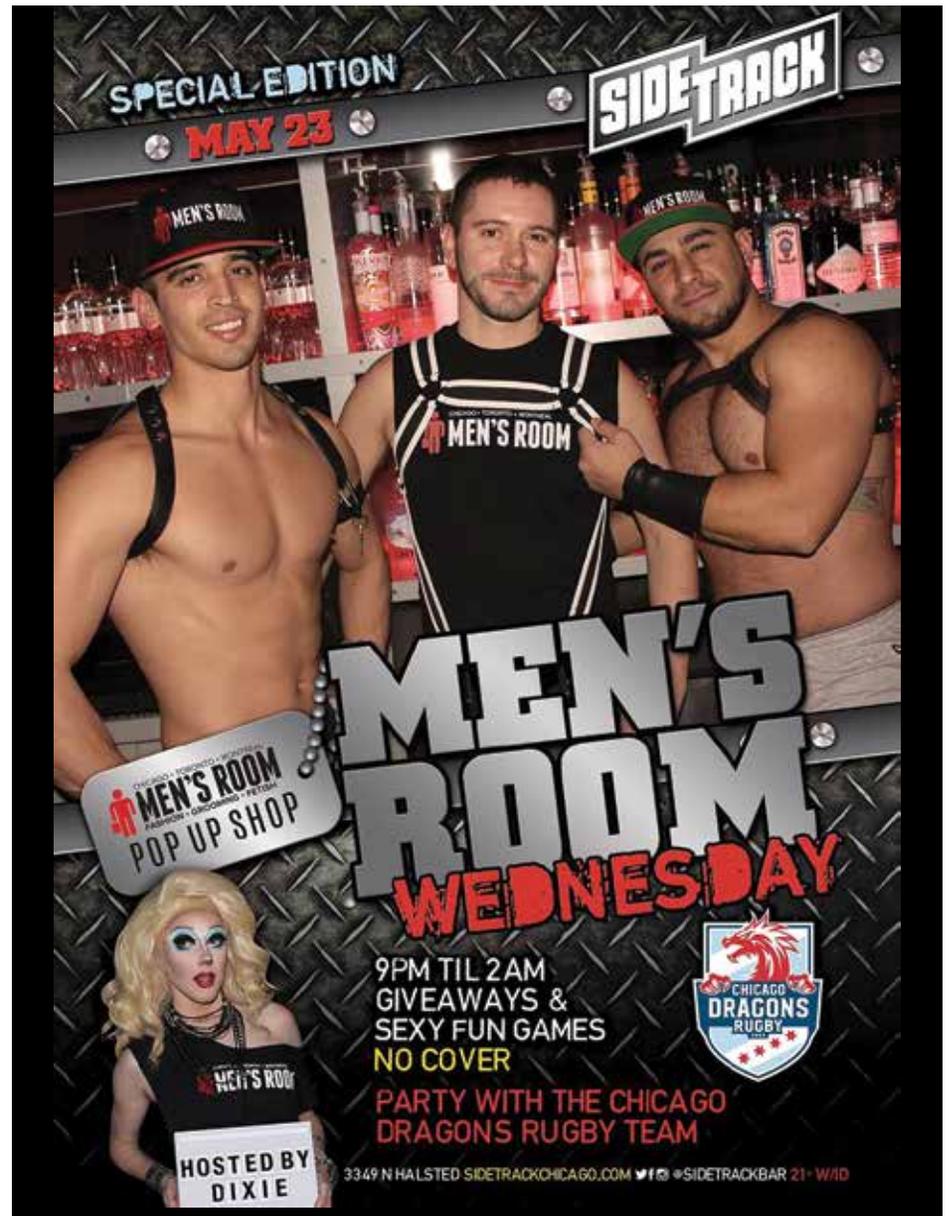
Photo of the couple from Haynes' Instagram account

I decided to go to Russia. And why wouldn't I, a gay American, fly to Russia from England at this particularly time in history? What could possibly go wrong? So far, I must say that Saint Petersburg is a gorgeous city with lots to see and do. I randomly picked a hotel in the center of town. When I went to arrange for an Uber to head out, it specified that I meet the driver at a nearby address. The place, which was only a few doors away, turned out to be one of the gay clubs in town! And, even though it was 10 a.m., some people were still inside partying. I later discovered that the same block also has another gay bar and a drag bar. So, I dunno about all this anti-gay sentiment—it seems to be alive and well on the block where I'm staying!

Tom Daley was also back in the USSR. He competed in the FINA Diving World Series in Kazan, Russia. In the mixed three-meter synchronized dive, he came in second alongside his partner, Grace Reid. He posted a photo to Instagram showing that he accepted his silver medal while wearing a rainbow pin. "From Russia with love... Thank you so much!" No, thank you!

As we were going to press, we heard that Quantico was cancelled. That means some really hot gay guys are suddenly unemployed. That leads to our "Ask Billy" question, from Karl in Atlanta. "I remember you mentioning a movie with **Russell Tovey** playing a gay soccer player. Did it ever come out? The photos you ran were hot."

You know, I completely forgot about *The Pass*. It was made a couple of years ago, but then I never heard anything more. It turns out it opened at the BFI Flare London LGBT Film Festival in March 2016. Then it played a bunch of film festivals before winding up with a UK DVD release in April 2017. Last week, it turned up on Amazon Prime in the United States, so you can see it for yourself. Here's what I'll tell you—Russell's really hot. Like REALLY hot. Like, he's never



looked hotter. And his "teammate," Arinze Kene, is even hotter! Together they are like gay-porn hot. I didn't know anything about the movie, but it comes across as a play—most scenes include only two or three people in a single locale. Turns out, it started life as a play—starring Tovey! It's interesting and sexy with a dark and somber turn towards the end. Despite the claustrophobic atmosphere, there are some striking visuals—in particular, one I'd call "sleeping double in a single bed." Because I'm such a giver, you can see the entire film on BillyMasters.com.

When Tovey is making a flagrant pass (or a pass in flagrante delicto), it's time for me to end yet another column. And even here in Russia, they read BillyMasters.com—the site of many tongues. If you have a question for me, send it to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before someone sucks my toe at that wedding reception. So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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WINDY CITY TIMES

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., May 16

Elizabeth Rosenthal, author American Sickness Shocking investigation into our dysfunctional healthcare system 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/paperback-tour-american-sickness-elizabeth-rosenthal>

Thursday, May 17

Booze and Bingo David Dodd & The Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus present the 2nd Annual Booze & Bingo Fundraiser. \$25 gets 2 drink tickets. Register online. 6:30pm - 9:30pm D.S. Tequila Company, 3352 N Halsted St, Chicago <http://bit.ly/2JTK0Wf>

Author Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence The University of Chicago's Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality (CSGS) LGBTQ speaker series concludes with University of Maryland Associate Professor of American Studies Christina Hanhardt. 11:00pm 5733 S. University Ave. <http://gendersexuality.uchicago.edu>



HONORING AN ICON

Saturday, May 19

There will be a street dedication for Chuck Renslow in Andersonville.

Friday, May 18

Lesbian Speed Dating Snacks and soft drinks provided. Hosted by L House. BYOB. 5:00pm - 10:00pm Text 312-446-0256 for address and access

BTQ Book Group 3rd Fridays 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org/>

Jesus Christ Superstar North American premiere with Heath Saunders as Jesus, Ryan Shaw as Judas, and Jo Lampert as Mary Magdalene. Through May 20. \$35. 7:00pm Lyric Opera Civic Opera House 20 N. Wacker Dr. Chicago Tickets: <http://jcsuperstar.org>

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus presents Under the Big Top Spring show will feature animals, acrobats, aerialists, music, 150 chorus members, six dance numbers, over 30 dancers, five circus performers. Three dates, three locations 8:00pm The Athenaeum Theatre 2936 N Southport Ave Chicago <http://www.cgmc.org/spring>

Saturday, May 19

21st Annual National Ovarian Cancer Coalition run/walk Break the silence on ovarian cancer 9:00am Arlington International Racecourse <http://runwalk.ovarian.org/illinois>

Chuck Renslow street dedication Clark Street from Ainslie to Winnemac, near some of the businesses owned by gay activist Chuck Renslow, will be given the honorary name of Chuck Renslow Way. 4:00pm Clark Street at Winnemac Ave., 5025 N. Clark St., <http://www.facebook.com/events/589306168100048/>.

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus presents Under the Big Top Spring show will feature animals, acrobats, aerialists, music, 150 chorus members, six dance numbers, over 30 dancers, five circus performers. Three dates, three locations 8:00pm

North Shore Center for the Performing Arts 9501 Skokie Blvd. Skokie, IL 60077 <http://www.cgmc.org/spring>

Springfield Pridefest: No H8. No Labels The Pride Parade will kick off Springfield Pridefest at 11:30 am leading to a ribbon-cutting event at 4th and Capitol. Musicians Fun DMC, Thornhill and The Shenanigans and drag performers. 11:00 am Capital Avenue, between 4th and 6th Streets, Springfield <http://SpringfieldPride.org>

Sunday, May 20

Andersonville Wine Walk Wine tasting at Andersonville businesses. Benefiting the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce. Three routes, Cork, Cellar & Bottle. 3:00pm - 5:00pm Various locations <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3404686>

The Tea on Queer Topics with Special Guests Drag Queens (Local and visiting) lead panels, Trannika Rex and Lucky Stiff invite guests to break down the topics the queer community is talking about. Ppen to all. \$10 - Online registration will close on Friday, May 18th at 4pm. Event tickets may be available at the door. 3:00pm - 5:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://https://community.centeronhalsted.org/pages/tea>

Monday, May 21

Pride Films and Plays Nominee Night Concert Performances by Non-Equity Jeff Award-nominated musical theater performers. Produced and music directed by Robert Ollis. \$30 VIP (includes drink ticket), \$20 general admission, \$17 seniors, students, military 7:30pm The Broadway, Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway, Chicago 773-857-0222 <http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com>

Wed., May 23

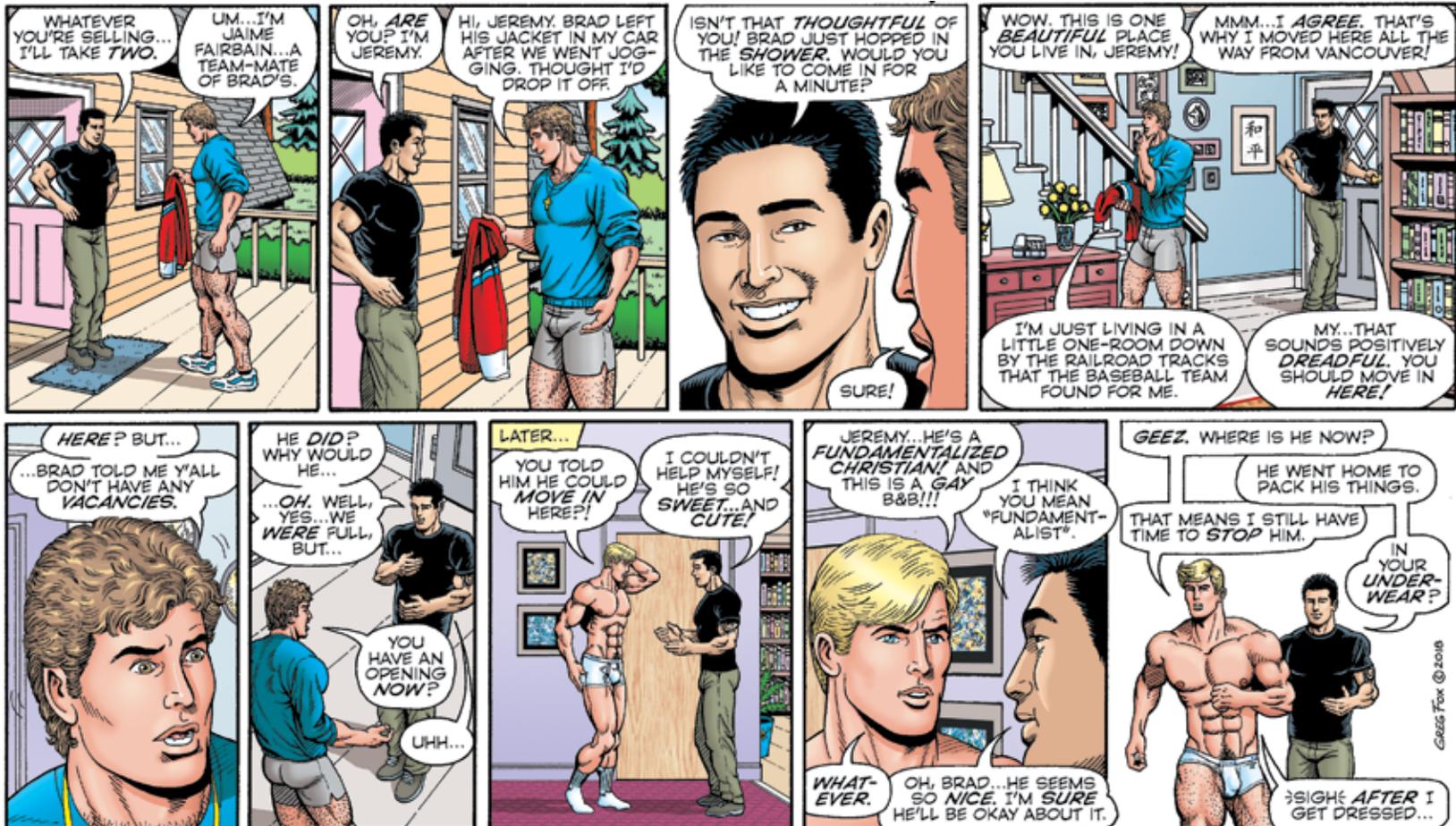
LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois Young Professional Mixer Networking event and workshop on productivity 5:30pm - 7:30pm Chicago Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce 3179 N Clark Chicago; <http://lgbtcc.com/>

Thursday, May 24

IML Opening Ceremonies Ticket Packages available Ticket Sales Desk at Congress Plaza Hotel, 1st floor. Event includes the introduction of judges, contestants and number selection. Doors open at 7:30 p.m., show begins at 8 p.m. 8:00pm - 10:30pm Congress Plaza Hotel, 520 S. Michigan Ave. <http://www.imrl.com>

KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST

by Greg Fox





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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Palm Restaurant; WingFest

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Few dining spots have as storied a history as the **Palm Restaurant** (now in the Swissotel at 323 E. Upper Wacker Dr.; <https://www.thepalm.com/restaurants/chicago/>).

And after three decades in the city, this particular branch recently underwent an all-encompassing restaurant remodeling. There are new additions to the design (resulting in a space that's much more open, reminding me of the Atwood Cafe remodeling from a few years ago), infamous caricature artwork (of local and national luminaries, including Jennifer Hudson) and a (somewhat) altered menu.

New art installations showcase colorful walls and illustrations hand-painted by the restaurant group's resident artist, Zack Bird. To capture the history of Chicago, Bird created a custom, expansive wall-to-wall mural depicting the city's most well-known landmarks.

What hasn't changed is the quality of the food (although it seems the actual menu listing hasn't changed that much—which isn't a bad thing). A recent lunch items such as Nova Scotia lobster roll, crispy calamari fritti, a very tasty bison burger (which is new, for sure), the justifiably popular chicken parmigiana and a crab cake that is definitely better than most I've tried in Chicago.

And don't forget to ask about the 837 Club, which offers exclusive benefits to Palm regulars. A one-time registration of \$25 earns you membership—and a \$25 gift card toward your next visit. Accumulated points lead to benefits as varied as Tiffany & Co. gift cards, a Napa Valley wine tour and a private party.



Palm Restaurant's
Lakeshore Room.
PR photo

By the way, the Palm isn't done with the changes: Later this summer (around Sept. 1), the restaurant will reveal an all-season, temperature-controlled enclosed patio that will offer views of the skyline, the Chicago River and Navy Pier. Why fight with the crowds watching fireworks when you can watch and dine in style?

WingFest a winner yet again

Reportedly, 1 billion chicken wings are consumed during Super Bowl Sunday each year. It seemed like there were that many at **WingFest**, which took place May 6 at the UIC Pavilion, 525 S. Racine Ave.

Dozens of vendors offered items such as habanero, ghost pepper and goat cheese-and-chive wings for hundreds of hungry attendees. More than 3,000 people sampled wings at the event, which featured Emmy-winning co-hosts Elliott Bambrough (WGN's Chicago's Best) and Samantha Thomas (SmallTALK with Samantha).

Restaurant winners were declared in various categories (such as mild, exotic, hot and BBQ, with the winners being Wild Wings & Slots, Bounce Sporting Club, Howells & Hood and Rack House Kitchen & Tavern, respectively), and there were also competitive-eating contests for men and women. Windy City Times was fortunate enough to be included as a judge in the "mild" category.

In addition, the 2018 Best of Fest Winner was Bounce Sporting Club.

More photos from

About Face Theatre's Wonka Ball

Photos by Jerry Nunn



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HELP WANTED

THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO is seeking applicants for the position of Director of the Gender and Sexuality Center. View position details and apply online at <https://jobs.uic.edu/>. For fullest consideration, please upload a resume and cover letter by August 8, 2018 (8/8/18-13)

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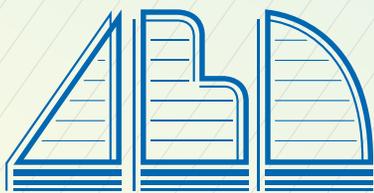


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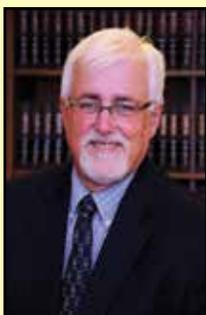
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