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**Adapted**

- June 5, 2019

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Community groups hold protest against Boystown’s Progress Bar

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Affinity Community Services, Chicago Black Gay Men’s Caucus and Lighthouse Church of Chicago members and their allies protested against Boystown’s Progress Bar June 2 in the 7-Eleven parking lot at the corner of Halsted and Roscoe, across the street from the establishment.

There was heavy Chicago Police presence stationed in various pockets of the nearby area, including a dozen officers standing with their bikes on the other side of Halsted.

The protest was called due to a controversial internal email that was made public via social media this past week from Progress Bar’s owner Justin Romme telling DJ’s to stop playing rap music. Since that time, community groups have canceled an event at the bar and tensions have arisen among bar patrons, with many people expressing their dismay on social media.

Ahead of the protest, Progress Bar owner Justin Romme told Windy City Times in a statement apologizing for the email and said rap music would not be banned.

Yohan Stevenson led the protesters in singing “This Little Light of Mine” and “We Shall Overcome.”

Lighthouse Church of Chicago Lead Pastor Jamie Frazier told the approximately 75 people (including a number of prominent community leaders) in attendance that “we have come to expose the blatant racism that flows throughout the streets of Boystown … to say this is a town that represents all of God’s children.”

Frazier spoke about his church being predominately African American and LGBTQ-inclusive.

“This move [last week by owner Justin Romme] was particularly problematic because Progress Bar has a significant African American LGBT patron base,” said Frazier. “[The bar] played music and created an experience that mattered to Black and Brown LGBTQ folk. This rap ban [was] a master-class in white privilege … because Justin executed [it] unilaterally … . The message he sent to [the Black] community is not all lives matter. We have come here today to raise our voices and say Black lives do matter.”

Frazier said this protest is continuing a conversation that has been going on for many years. He explained that it is not about the rap ban because it was reversed, but the larger issue of some voices mattering more than others in Boystown. Frazier invoked local LGBTQ activists from the past including Vernita Gray, Minister Lois Bates and Jackie Anderson, among others who fought against racism in Chicago’s LGBTQ neighborhoods.

Speaking about the reasons for the protest, Frazier said it is also about the other incidents of racism that have happened along Halsted Street in recent years.

Affinity Community Services Board President Anna DeShawn asked the crowd to sing “Ella’s Song” and spoke about the work Pat McCombs did to expose the racist policies of gay and lesbian bars 40 years ago when they required more identification from Black and Brown people while white people only had to show one ID. DeShawn said McCombs “forced them to change their policies.”

DeShawn echoed Frazier’s comments about Boystown still being a racist place despite the presence of LGBTQ people in the neighborhood. She said McCombs, Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera and the person who shared the Progress Bar email with the media demonstrated courage. DeShawn said everyone needs to remember that pride started with a riot and should always be a protest because there is still work to be done to achieve equality and equity, especially for Black and Brown LGBTQ people. DeShawn called on the attendees to “keep resisting,” including sharing news of the protest on social media.

Chicago Black Gay Men’s Caucus Executive Director Erik Glenn read a statement from his group that pointed out Progress Bar has the largest turnout of Black LGBTQ people on the weekends; however, the now-abandoned rap music ban has tarnished that status. The statement reiterated what the other speakers said about Boystown’s long history of anti-Black policies including the re-gentrification efforts of Take Back Boystown where Black people were called “savage monkeys.”

Glenn spoke about the importance of everyone standing against all racist incidents in Boystown. He said one action people can do right now is use the hashtag #amazingforall that is displayed on Halsted Street to share their experiences as LGBTQ people of color in Boystown.

Affinity Community Services Executive Director Imani Rupert-Gordon said the recent events reminded her why her organization is still necessary.

“The reason why [Affinity prioritizes the perspectives of Black LGBTQ women] is because when you center the lives of people that experience oppression at multiple levels, absolutely everyone stands to benefit from that,” said Rupert-Gordon.

She added that the events of this past week reinforced this mindset and everyone who serves the LGBTQ community must be intersectional, further noting that racism that is coded is not heard by everyone but is “piercing” to the people experiencing it. Rupert-Gordon said protests are not punishments, but that they help impacted people heal so they can continue the work toward justice.

Frazier asked everyone to also attend a community meeting to continue this dialogue Wed., June 5, at 7 p.m. at Lighthouse Church of Chicago, 2335 N. Orchard St.

Drag queen Mikki Miraj led a rap-focused dance party to close the gathering.
Boystown dedicates rainbow, trans crosswalks

A few dozen people gathered at the corner of Roscoe and Halsted streets on May 30 to dedicate the rainbow- and transgender-flag crosswalks that have been installed along various Halsted Street intersections.

Seven of the planned 14 crosswalks have been completed, according to officials, making it the largest rainbow sidewalk installation in the world. The rest of the sidewalks are expected to be completed in time for the Pride Fest celebration in June.

Among those in attendance were openly gay aldermen Ray Lopez (15th Ward), Tom Tunney (44th) and James Cappleman (46th). Tunney was named vice mayor for the City of Chicago May 29.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot sent remarks for the dedication, but was unable to attend.

Eric Santiago, director of operations for the Northalsted Business Alliance, also spoke about the work that went into the crosswalks, as did NorthHalsted Executive Director Kevin Richards, Board President Ramesh Ariyanayakam and Board Vice-President Stu Zirin.

Also offering remarks were Sidetrack co-owner Art Johnston and Roscoe’s Jim Ludwig.

Legacy Project Executive Director Victor Salvo and Chicago Metropolitan Housing Development Corporation Executive Director Rafael Leon spoke about the the recent City Council move to make Halsted Street’s rainbow pylons historical landmarks. The full council is expected to move on that soon.

Northalsted Business Association Board President Ramesh Ariyanayakam at the dedication. Windy City Times photo

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Celebration of Baim’s 35 years in LGBTQ press benefits WCT

A celebration of Tracy Baim’s 35 years in LGBTQ press was held May 22 at Sidetrack. She was co-founder of Windy City Times and is now the publisher of the Chicago Reader.

The benefit, hosted by Sharon Mylrea and a team of co-hosts, also raised funds for Windy City Times.

Baim started her work as a journalist in May 1984 at GayLife newspaper, going on to co-found Windy City Times in 1985.

On display were covers of 1980s LGBTQ newspapers, plus more than 900 archival photos.

Donations can still be made to support LGBT journalists at Windy City Times. See www.windy-citymediagroup.com/donate.php.

Photos by Hal Baim

Detroit is an all-inclusive city fueled by community. Every June we host Motor City Pride, a weekend festival in Hart Plaza action-packed with live music, exciting events and a spectacular parade. And right up Woodward Avenue is the city of Ferndale, one of the most LGBTQ-friendly neighborhoods in metro Detroit. So come out and fall in love with the city that welcomes everyone.
Dr. Tom Klein: Helping patients through Man Up Medical, own practice

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Dr. Thomas Klein has an extensive career in family medicine and has added to it with Man Up Medical, a different venture helping to improve men's self-esteem and sex lives.

Klein, a Detroit native, knew he wanted to be a medical doctor from a young age. At 4, he was hospitalized and, during that time, he was inspired to go into medicine.

“I was there for over two weeks and as I was recovering, I followed the doctors and nurses around, asking questions all the time and when I left the hospital, and I was not even quite 5, I told my parents I was going to be a doctor someday,” Klein told Windy City Times. “I was always an incredibly extroverted person and so I knew I wanted to do medicine where I would not only be helping people, but would have direct contact with them. So, I knew it was going to be some sort of primary care medicine that I would do.”

Klein went on to earn his undergraduate degree in psychology from Wayne State University and his MD degree from Michigan State University. In 1978, he moved to Chicago for his family practice residency at St. Joseph Hospital.

Klein worked at Howard Brown Memorial Clinic as a volunteer physician in 1979 and during that time he was one of the few openly gay doctors there.

Klein and Dr. Ross Slotten opened their private practice, Klein and Slotten Medical Association, in 1984. They have stayed in the same office at 711 W. North Ave. since then, but two and a half years ago they gave up the private practice model to become employed physicians, working for AMITA Health Medical Group. Since making the change they additionally began working with Dr. George Roepke.

Throughout his time practicing medicine, Klein has worked with many HIV/AIDS patients in Chicago. He added that Klein and Slotten Medical Association was one of the largest HIV private practices in the Midwest.

“The practice sort of skewed toward that [gay male patients] and, during the time of AIDS, we made the decision to stop seeing children,” said Klein. “We see a lot of LGBTQ [people], especially gay men, with HIV/AIDS who started seeing us—some [from the] suburbs, because the city was where they could get their care without being shamed and have continued to see us.”

Now in his 60s, Klein said he is as busy as ever.

“Thank God that David understood, because he lost so many people in his support group that through the years dealing with people dying all the time, he was there as real great support for me and yet wasn’t doing exactly the same thing, so that you didn’t have sort of competing medical careers,” Klein said of the emotional support Gitomer has provided through the years.

Now in his 60s, Klein said he is as busy as ever. Having a passion for gardening, he can be found tending to his roof-deck garden at his West Edgewater home and is excited about the potential gardening space at his Michigan home. Also, in his list of hobbies are watching movies and TV, and dining at various restaurants.

In the summer of 2018, Klein took on another medical endeavor—Man Up. Man Up is a clinic for men (and a few women) who are interested in sermorelin, a growth-hormone stimulator. Sermorelin, Klein explained, stimulates growth hormone and helps people as they age to look and feel better without giving them growth hormones.

“It’s good, but it’s sort of a new challenge getting a new business going again at this point, but it’s also exciting because I have a real entrepreneurial spirit and so starting something new and having a different focus and shift has been fun and exciting,” said Klein.

Klein, along with co-founders Dean Hervochon and Dr. Peter Georgiou, currently help about 180 continued clients ranging from their late 20s to late 70s. Man Up is run out of Georgiou’s chiropractic office in Lake View.

“Either I had to say no, I couldn’t do this for people anymore, or find a place to do it in, and we knew that there are a lot of these clinics that have popped up around the city. We wanted a place where people could come in, see a doctor and other providers in person, rather than just coming in and quickly getting medication, paying for it and leave,” said Klein, who is Man Up’s medical director.

Since insurance does not cover these types of services and medications, Man Up is a cash business and currently offers complimentary consultations and blood work to determine if people would benefit from the medications given. The injectable erectile medicine is called Trimix. Klein explained that the injection involves a tiny needle and is not painful. Testosterone replacement therapy for men with deficiencies found in their lab results is also among the services the clinic offers.

“It’s very rewarding when you’re able to provide somebody with ability to, to say it bluntly, have an erection, when they haven’t been able to for quite a while because the oral medications don’t work or they cause bad side effects,” said Klein. “It really is a way for men to be able to feel better about themselves.”

For more information on Man Up Medical, visit manupmedical.com.

ABOUT FACE
STONEWALL, REVOLT AND NEW QUEER ART

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion, which spurred the ongoing movement for LGBTQ rights, Wrightwood 659 presents About Face: Stonewall, Revolt and New Queer Art. The new exhibition features contemporary works by US and international artists, altogether providing a nuanced depiction of the evolving meaning of queerness.

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The Reunion Project 2.0—Chicago will convene June 14-15 at Loyola University-Water Tower campus.

As part of the event, The Reunion Project will be hosting its second Chicago Town Hall “HIV, Aging, Surviving and Thriving: A Family Reunion,” which will provide education and information on issues and strategies of people living and aging with HIV, including a keynote address by Dr. Keith R. Green, associate professor at Loyola and former associate editor of Positively Aware.

The Reunion Project 2.0-Chicago is a free two-day event but attendees must RSVP, as space is limited. Register at bit.ly/Reunion-ProjectChicago.
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House sends cannabis measure to Pritzker

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A bill legalizing recreational use of marijuana in Illinois, having gotten its final passage in the House on May 31, is on its way to Gov. J.B. Pritzker for his signature.

The bill, HB 1438, creates the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act and provides that it will be legal for persons 21 years of age or older “to possess, use and purchase limited amounts of cannabis for personal use.”

HB 1438’s chief House sponsor was lesbian state Rep. Kelly Cassidy. State Sen. Heather Steans, a frequent ally of Cassidy’s, sponsored the legislation in the Illinois Senate; Pritzker is expected to sign the bill. HB 1438 would also bring relief to persons with low-level marijuana-related convictions.

According to the Illinois Department of Revenue, the legislation is projected to bring $1 billion in new state revenue in the first five years of its implementation.

Along with the release of documents, Foxx issued a press release that stated, “In a continuing effort to provide transparency into the operations of this office, Cook County State’s Attorney Kimberly Foxx has authorized the one-time disclosure of certain materials the public is not normally able to obtain in criminal or civil cases. These documents include, among other things, the work product of her senior felony trial staff, settlement communications, and documents which are exempt from Freedom of Information requests.

The material also reveals that the State’s Attorney was advised to “recuse” herself (i.e. remove herself from her Office’s involvement in the case) solely based upon rumors that she was related to Smollett—which she is not. In fact, attorneys within the office advised against using the term ‘recusal’ in this context, given that there was no actual conflict of interest. Those communications were not escalated to the State’s Attorney herself.”

Foxx also stated, “This has been a unique case from the very beginning, where the victim became the suspect during the investigation. Allegations of a vicious homophobic and racially motivated attack shook our city and the nation with understandable anger and fear.

I did not have a conflict of interest in this case; only a sincere desire to serve the community. I spoke with Mr. Smollett’s family and others while he was still considered to be the victim of a hate crime in an effort to streamline the case and alleviate any concerns about the integrity of the investigation.

False rumors circulated that I was related or somehow connected to the Smollett family, so I removed myself from all aspects of the investigation and prosecution and delegated my authority and responsibility to my First Assistant so as to avoid even the perception of a conflict.

I regret that my attempts to this end created confusion outside the office. The public’s trust is paramount to our work. That is why today I am releasing material above and beyond what is required. It is my sincere hope that this transparency and the ongoing investigation of the Cook County Independent Inspector General will provide guidance and lessons on how to serve you better. I am sorry that despite the best intentions, our efforts were less than what was required of the moment.”

Smollett—who’s African-American and openly gay—faced 16 felony counts related to making a false report that he was assaulted by two men early on Jan. 29. Foxx’s office dropped the charges on March 26, and the records were initially ordered sealed.

Cook County State’s Attorney Kim Foxx applauded the bill’s passage.

“As prosecutors who implemented these convictions, we must own our role in the harm they have caused and we should play a role in reversing them,” Foxx said in a statement. “The failed war on drugs has disproportionately impacted communities of color, and my office will continue to explore ways to provide the broadest relief possible, beyond that provided by this legislation.”

With Pritzker’s signature, recreational marijuana will start being sold in Illinois on Jan. 1, 2020.
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On June 2, Buffalo Grove marked LGBTQ Pride Month by holding its first Pride Parade—an event spurred by the actions of 13-year-old Molly Pinta.

Pinta and her family planned the parade that featured more than 90 groups, organizations and politicians. The idea to create the parade led to the creation of a new nonprofit called The Pinta Pride Project.

The teen has been named the youth grand marshal in Chicago’s 50th annual Pride Parade, set for June 30.

Windy City Times profiled Pinta and her efforts in 2018; the article is at http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Buffalo-Grove-girl-plans-for-2019-Pride-Parade/63632.html.

Images by Tim Carroll Photography.

Cate McGuire’s life in Chicago was fulfilling, successful and nearly all she ever dreamed for herself. Big-city journalist from a small, rural community, she felt like an integral part of the world, a contributor to society. Her beautiful life partner was igniting change through the public school system. They were happy. Life was good. Cate learns she does not always get to write the story the way she wants it to go.

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Supreme Court backs trans restroom access, rules on abortion

On May 28, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on cases related to transgender restroom access and abortion.

The court declined to hear the Pennsylvania case Doe v. Boyertown Area School District, allowing school districts to continue to support transgender students by allowing them to use restrooms that match their gender.

The Third Circuit Court of Appeals had rejected the idea that transgender students are a threat to other students and ruled in favor of the school district. In so, it turned back the argument from a group of non-transgender students that the Constitution requires boys and girls who are transgender to be excluded from the facilities that cisgender boys and girls use.

Ria Tabacco Mar, senior staff attorney with the ACLU LGBT & HIV Project, said in a statement, in part, “Thankfully, today’s announcement allows schools to move forward with policies that support transgender students. But our work is far from over. We will continue to defend the transgender community from attacks in the courts, the legislatures and the White House.”

Also, the Supreme Court ruled that a provision of an Indiana law that said the state may prohibit abortions motivated solely by race, sex or disability should remain blocked, CNN.com reported. However, the court added it would allow part of the law that requires clinics to bury or cremate fetal remains to take effect.

Then-Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signed the law in 2016. Last year, the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals blocked it from going into effect.


Trump acknowledges Pride Month—amid much backlash

For the first time during his term of office, President Donald Trump recognized LGBTQ Pride Month—but many criticized the move, for several reasons.

“As we celebrate LGBT Pride Month and recognize the outstanding contributions LGBT people have made to our great Nation, let us also stand in solidarity with the many LGBT people who live in dozens of countries worldwide that punish, imprison, or even execute individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation,” Trump tweeted, according to NBC News.

Trump is the first Republican president to recognize Pride Month, although he only did it in his third year in office. The move happened in the middle of much anti-LGBT activity: He has made 110 attacks the Trump administration has made against the LGBTQ community, in policy and rhetoric. (The list is at https://www.glaad.org/tap/donald-trump.) Ellis added that Trump’s acknowledgement of Pride Month “is gaslighting. We will be holding the media accountable to ensure that they’re telling the truth about his anti-LGBTQ record.” Ellis also said that Trump must honor the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots.

Even celebrities decried Trump. Entertainment personality Ross Mathews, who is openly gay, tweeted, “NO. You don’t get to ban trans troops, allow [healthcare] providers to discriminate based on gender identity & say it’s okay for businesses to deny us service and then tweet this. NO. You don’t get to do that. Your actions prove that you are an enemy to us.”


Trans asylum-seeker dies while under ICE custody

Johana Medina, a transgender asylum-seeker from El Salvador, died while in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody on June 1.

Medina is the second transgender immigrant to die in ICE custody since President Donald Trump was inaugurated. Medina’s death was first reported by Diversidad Sin Fronteras, an activist group focused on helping LGBTQ migrants and refugees.

Pro-LGBT organizations spoke out about Medina’s death. GLAAD stated, “This country shouldn’t be imprisoning trans people, children, and other vulnerable people fleeing violence and persecution in their countries and seeking help. Are the White House and President Trump going to remain silent on this?”

In a separate statement, Human Rights Campaign Director of Government Affairs David Stacy said, “The death of Johana Medina, a transgender woman of color and asylum seeker, just hours after being released from ICE custody, is yet another horrific and deeply disturbing development in the ongoing crisis of anti-LGBTQ actions by immigration authorities.

“This follows the still-unexplained death of Roxsana Hernandez and numerous reports of mistreatment of LGBTQ migrants and asylum seekers while in custody of CBP and ICE. It is critical that every person be treated with safety, dignity, and respect by immigration authorities, and this latest tragedy demands greater transparency and accountability of these agencies.”

Semenya now able to compete

Mid-distance runner Caster Semenya will be able to compete without having to take testosterone-reducing medication after the Swiss Federal Tribunal ordered the International Association of Athletics Federations to suspend implementation of new regulations while Semenya’s appeal is pending, CNN reported.

The athlete reacted by tweeting “Born a winner,” and an image with the quote “Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”

Semenya filed an appeal May 29 against the Court of Arbitration for Sport’s decision to uphold testosterone regulations for some female athletes in track and field, according to ESPN.com. Her lawyers said she lodged an appeal with Switzerland’s supreme court.

In May, in a two-to-one opinion, the international Court of Arbitration for Sport upheld a proposed rule by the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) that compels women with high levels of testosterone to take suppressants in order to compete in some women’s races. National Center for Lesbian Rights Legal Director Shannon Minter called the opinion “cruel, unprincipled, and riddled with internal contradictions.”

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Mayor keynotes Equality Illinois pride brunch

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot was the keynote speaker for the Equality Illinois LGBTQ Pride Month brunch June 2 at Venue West.

More than 300 attendees—including political figures and community VIPs—attended.

Illinois state Rep. Lamont Robinson Jr. and community leader Channyn Lynne Parker were the masters of ceremony.

Victor Salvo, executive director of The Legacy Project, and Robert Fojtik, who currently serves as an advisor to Lightfoot, were recognized with the 2019 Equality Illinois Community Pride awards.

Left: Rob Fojtik and Channyn Lynne Parker. Right: Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot.
Photos by Windy City Times

Above (from left): Anthony Galloway, Rob Fojtik, Lamont Robinson, Channyn Lynne Parker, Mayor Lightfoot, Justin DeJong and Butch Trusty. Below (from left): Butch Trusty, Channyn Lynne Parker, Justin DeJong, Victor Salvo and Lamont Robinson Jr.
Windy City Times photos

black lesbian poet

e nina jay

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Advance tickets strongly recommended

Come Celebrate Pride Month with Us!

“... just like i love what i feel
when my hands go sliding around
in your river ...

my mouth that can’t ever
stay away from yours”
 Subcommittee Chairwoman, Marilyn Koziatek, whose 10 years on the Board of Directors have been marked by her dedication to the community and her commitment to improving the lives of individuals with mental illness.

She is joined on the Board by other dedicated professionals, including: Dr. David A. Bruckental, who brings a wealth of knowledge in the field of mental health and serves as a consultant to the Board; Mary Morten, an accomplished community organizer and activist; and Betty Bonner, who has been a tireless advocate for those in need.

The Chicago History Museum gratefully acknowledges the support of the Chicago Park District on behalf of the people of Chicago.
‘OUT of the Office’ kicks off Pride Month, helps local organizations

BY TIM PEACOCK

On May 30, members of Chicago’s LGBTQ community kicked off a month of pride and the 50th anniversary of Stonewall at the 18th annual “OUT of the Office” networking party on the rooftop lounge of The I/O Godfrey Hotel.

Launched in 2001, the annual event allows LGBTQ people, allies and family to enjoy professional networking while raising funds to help local nonprofits.

Although the event is geared toward fundraising, the early evening event maintained a casual atmosphere allowing attendees to socialize and meet new people. This year OUT of the Office raised funds to benefit Affinity Chicago, Heartland Health and the LGBT Chamber of Commerce.

Previous beneficiaries include Chicago House, Gay Games Chicago, Legacy Chicago, Transworks, The AIDS Walk and Run and Open Hand Food Pantry.

Commenting on the event’s longevity, event creator Andrew Hayes said, “Our first event was held in a restaurant that’s no longer around, but you came out, you were proud, and 18 years later we’re still in downtown Chicago.”

Honorary co-chairs Candace Jordan (Chicago Tribune) and Val Warner (Windy City Live, ABC 7 Chicago) highlighted the event as well as community leaders and activists. Todd Szwajkowski, Sam Powell of Dream Town Realty and Sandi Robinson of The Godfrey Hotel assisted Hayes in event logistics and planning.

In addition to longtime partner Dream Town Realty, several businesses and organizations sponsored the event, including Cirque Du Soleil VOLTA, Pride Real Estate Chicago and The Professionals Moving Specialists. Media sponsors included media sponsors The Chicago Reader, Gossip.com, PaternoGroup and Windy City Times.

From left: Andrew Hayes and Sandi Robinson.
Windy City Times photo

Chicago’s LGBTQ+ community is facing pressing needs at both ends of the lifespan: A crisis in youth homelessness; accelerated aging among people living with HIV; and an acute lack of culturally competent support for seniors.

One Roof Chicago is a new initiative to build an LGBTQ+-centered intergenerational community for older adults and young people most in need of affirming housing, meaningful connection and career development.

Please visit oneroofchicago.org for more information and to complete a critical housing survey for older LGTBQ+ adults.
Chicago’s LGBTQ veterans honor fallen on Memorial Day weekend

The Chicago Chapter of the American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) honored the fallen in Memorial Day weekend observances.

The LGBTQ veteran group, along with the Lakeside Pride marching band, made up the only LG-BTQ contingent in the City of Chicago’s Memorial Day parade on May 25. The contingent has been a part of the parade for 18 years. On May 26, the chapter also held a ceremony at the grave of Allen Schindler, Navy Rating Petty Officer Third Class, a gay sailor from the Chicago area who was murdered by shipmates on Oct. 27, 1992.

On Memorial Day (May 27), the chapter and supporters gathered at the granite monument on Halsted Street and Addison which honors LGBTQ veterans. The monument was commissioned and installed by AVER in 2017. It bears the seals of each military branch and reads: “Starting with the birth of this nation, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people have served honorably and admirably in America’s Armed Forces. In memory of their selfless service and sacrifice, this monument is set and dedicated by the Chicago Chapter of the American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER).”

At the gathering, Mona Noriega, chair of the Commission on Human Relations for the City of Chicago, welcomed the group and said, “Thank you for your service, for being your true and authentic selves and for giving to this nation so much more than can ever be truly appreciated, let alone acknowledged.”

Chapter president Heather Yang, U.S. Army, gave the AVER welcome and member Stanley Jen-czak, U.S. Navy, spoke on the meaning and the history of the monument.

“This monument is for those brave souls who made the ultimate sacrifice for us,” he said, “and to those veterans from this forgotten community...so that our country remembers the service men and women from the LGBTQ community.”

The Chicago Gay Men’s Chorus performed “Courage To Be Who We Are” to accompany a reading by Larry Simpson, Illinois Army National Guard, of the names of AVER members who have passed, and a wreath was laid at the base of monument.

Dean Ogren performed “America, the Beautiful.”

Above: Larry Simpson reads the names of AVER members who have passed, as Chicago Gay Men’s Chorus performs “Courage To Be Who We Are.” Below: Members of AVER honor the grave of murdered sailor Allen Schindler.

Above photo by Hal Baim; below photo courtesy of AVER
viewpoints

Trans deaths are real deaths

In a suburb just outside of Dallas, and to the disbelief of many—straight and LGBTQ—across the country, a transgender mural is painted on the side of a tattoo/piercing shop.

The mural commemorates the 50th anniversary of Stonewall, displaying an image of Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera (our forebears) of the Stonewall Riots. They are the catalysts of our 1969-to-present day LGBTQ movement. Their images are against the backdrop of the colors of the transgender pride flag.

Brian Kenny, the muralist behind the painting, explained his objective.

“This mural represents the trans women of color who were key figures in that riot and also key figures in the start of the queer liberation movement,” Kenny told KXAS-TV. “This mural is to honor them and to give more visibility, love, and attention to the transgender community. I wanted this mural to be a positive reinforcement that we are all a human family. We have a lot more in common than our differences. I’m hoping the mural can be a bridge.”

For this 50th anniversary of Stonewall, I hope images of Johnson and Rivera will be on display. I hope as they will be honored in many LGBTQ communities across the country, as Americans get to learn of the difficult day-to-day struggle it took them to stay alive, too. And, I hope we all will do more to stem the violence acted upon our transgender community, especially our trans Black and Latinx sisters of color.

In one week this May, three transwomen of African descent were murdered: Michelle Washington, 40, Claire Legato, 21, and Mahliasia Booker, 23. As I draw attention to these sisters, several this year in 2019 have been murdered and, sadly, many more will be killed.

Washington (also known as Michelle Simone and Tamela) was found dead with gunshot wounds to her head, body and buttocks.

“It’s time that we say this is happening to transwomen; it’s happening to Black transwomen, it’s happening to transwomen of color.” Deja Lynn Alavez, a candidate for Philadelphia City Council, told Philadelphia Gay News.

Legato was shot in the head after an argument erupted between her mother and the shooter. Legato’s Cleveland community took to social media to express their grief and outrage.

“Love you, cousin,” wrote a friend on Facebook. “I’m hurt, sad, angry all in one. Fly high.”

Booker was found shot dead on a quiet street in Dallas. In April, Booker was beaten by a crowd that shouted “That’s what your faggot ass gets.” “Get that faggot out of our hood” and “Shoot that punk ass.” The mob scene was caught on cellphone footage that went viral on social media.

Texas’ Black trans female community has been subject to a steady stream of assaults since gentrification evicted them out of city’s once LGBTQ neighborhood. Like Booker, they congregate on a strip on the outskirts of town, and many engage in transactional sex to survive.

The state’s hate-crime laws include sexual orientation but not gender identity—which makes Kenny’s mural a protest statement, and an act of healing.

“I’ll always remember Rita Hester’s vigil because the words of Hester’s mother haunt me.

Rita Hester, 34, an African-American transwoman from Allston, Massachusetts, was mysteriously found dead inside her first-floor apartment with multiple stab wounds to her chest in 1998. Her death launched the “Remembering Our Dead” web project and is the catalyst for what’s now our annual International Day of Remembrance.

When Hester’s mother came up to the microphone during the speak-out portion of the vigil at the Model Cafe where Rita was known, she repeatedly said in a heartbroken voice that brought most of us to tears (including myself): “I would have gladly died for you, Rita. I would have taken the stabs and told you to run. I loved you!” As the vigil processed from the Model Cafe to 21 Park Vale Avenue—where Rita lived and died—and her mother again brought me to tears as she and her surviving children knelted in front of the doorway of Rita’s apartment building and recited The Lord’s Prayer. Many of us joined.

For decades, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) has reported the violence and murders of our transgender community. In a reported titled “Violence Against the Transgender Community in 2018,” on HRC’s website, it states: “While the details of these cases differ, it is clear that fatal violence disproportionately affects transgender women of color, and that the intersections of racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia conspire to deprive them of employment, housing, healthcare and other necessities, barriers that make them vulnerable.”

During the “Trans Catholic Voices” breakout season at the DignityUSA conference in Boston in 2017, I heard the vulnerability of an African-American transwoman who pointed out that Pope Francis statements about transpeople deny them of basic human dignity and perpetuates violence against them.

In her closing remarks, she “asked for help from advocates and allies in the room that brought me to tears.

“Trans lives are real lives. Trans deaths are real deaths. God works through other people. Maybe you can be those other people.”

“We are those other people.

letters

CLASP reaches out

Dear lover of humanity:

Chicago LGBT Asylum Support Partners (CLASP) continues to assist asylum-seekers resettling in Chicago with housing and legal referrals, social supports, and public transit funds. Thanks to the whole community for your investment in this work.

We are thrilled to report that two dozen folks have participated and “graduated” with work for self-sufficiency! These new Chicagoans have come from Nigeria, Pakistan, the Bahamas, Uganda, Jamaica, Macedonia, India and more. Many other LGBT members of our city have received advice and referrals from our program.

Currently, nine CLASP family members use the $40 monthly public transit program (Ventra card) that is so vital to these newcomers, as one member shares here:

“Also thank you so much for the things… the organisation has done for me… I can’t thank you enough with words, the card that you have been loading helped me out to get to my lawyers in downtown and towards my work many times.”—Boris M., 2018

We continue to enjoy the strong record keeping of Broadway United Methodist continuing their stewardship of CLASP funds, and you can support us on broadwaychurchochicago.com by noting “CLASP” in the special contributions box.

We leave you with these words from a “graduate” of the program, showing what your support has made possible:

“I woke up this day, feeling grateful. Hence this mail.

“Today, June 15th makes it three years since I have been living in Chicago. I assume you know my story on how I got here and why. And you have been a part of my journey. An intricate part, that is. You have favored me, blessed me, nurtured me and advised me. I am saying Thank you.

“Continue to do the work. We shall overcome. Shalom,”—Ekeng B.

We invite you to renew your support and expand the opportunities for Chicago’s LGBT asylum seekers.

Most sincerely and with gratitude,
Chicago LGBT Asylum Support Partners (CLASP)
THEATER REVIEW
Ms. Blakk for President
Playwrights: Tina Landau and Tarell Alvin McCraney
At: Steppenwolf Theatre Company
1650 N. Halsted St.
Tickets: Steppenwolf.org
Runs through: July 14

BY JEAN ALBRIGHT

Whether the effort was performative or real, Chicago witnessed history in the early 1990s when Joan Jett Blakk, an African American drag queen who was the creation of activist Terence Smith, ran not just for Chicago Mayor, but in 1992 ran for president of the United States. If a failed businessman with a bad TV show can win, why not Blakk?

The campaign was an in-your-face denunciation of the status quo, a Queer Nation visibility effort that made it all the way to the floor of the Democratic National Convention in New York City.

Now, in all its glory, some of it a little modified from the actual history, is a stage production that is joyous, emotional (remembering those peak years of the AIDS crisis), musical and wonderfully executed. Steppenwolf presents Ms. Blakk for President, and this show is highly recommended.

Written by Tarell Alvin McCraney and Tina Landau, the show was created by Landau after she read the book Out and Proud in Chicago, edited and cowritten by Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim. Landau, also the show’s director, was immediately inspired by the Blakk campaign.

“I didn’t want to start the piece at all until I had contacted Terence (Joan Jett Blakk) and had his blessing and support,” she said in an advance press statement. “We connected, and he told me his story, in his words, over hours and hours, and that formed the basis for our starting the work. It’s a Chicago story, it’s a true story, it’s an untold story. It’s a queer story. It’s a political story. As someone who was alive at the height of the AIDS epidemic, I wanted to do this piece both to honor Terence and the ‘army of lovers’ at ACT UP and Queer Nation, as well as in memory of dear friends lost at the time. It’s for them.”

On the opening night it was so great to see both the original Blakk in the audience (Smith came in from California), and the city’s new mayor, Lori Lightfoot. What an incredible arc of history sitting in that room—someone who ran for mayor and president when people laughed at the concept, and someone who won in 2019, less than three decades later, as an openly lesbian, African American woman.

This is a Chicago story, and it’s great to see LGBTQ history told that isn’t just about the coasts. Especially as the country celebrates the 50th anniversary of Stonewall, it’s important to remember that cities all over experienced their own versions of Stonewall, both before and after 1969.

McCraney also plays Blakk, and what a role it is. He simply shines as Blakk, channelling her courage, dignity and personal challenges.

All of the actors have very physically demanding parts to play, most of them in high heels. In addition to McCraney in the lead role, the terrific additional cast are Patrick Andrews, Molly Brennan, Daniel Kyri, Jon Hudson Odom and Sawyer Smith. It is sad that more of the lesbian power of Queer Nation, and in support of Blakk’s campaign, was left out.

The staging is perfect, it’s as if we’re in a bar, and many of the seats are right around a runway in the middle of Steppenwolf’s Upstairs Theatre. Scenic design is by David Zinn, costume design (including Tamara Fraser’s original Joan Jett Blakk campaign t-shirt) is by Toni-Leslie James, lighting by Heather Gilbert, sound and original music by Lindsay Jones, and projection design by Rasean Davonte Johnson.

Both the lobby and the theater are decorated with posters and fliers from the early 1990s Chicago scene, especially Queer Nation and protest stickers, but also, powerfully, the names of people lost to HIV/AIDS. The lobby also has a timeline of LGBTQ rights and the fight against AIDS. The entire experience, from lobby to pre- and post-show dancing, recreates some of the power, passion and life-and-death reality of 1992 Chicago. Click your heels together and get on down to Steppenwolf’s Upstairs Theatre.
THEATER REVIEW
Four Places
Playwright: Joel Drake Johnson
At: Den Productions at the Den, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Tickets: TheDenTheatre.com 773-697-3830; $45
Runs through: June 30

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

We start out anticipating a comedy: our setting in the first scene, after all, is a car—that most quintessential of middle-class suburban transport—occupied by cantankerous elderly matron Peggy, her sullen grown son Warren and her sad-faced grown daughter Ellen.

Their destination is a weekly luncheon, designed to give Mom some time away from caring for the family’s disabled dad. The atmosphere is heavy with tension—suppressed anger finding expression in occasional bursts of hostile accusation—but we are certain that by the play’s conclusion, under the soaringly comic restaurant server Barb, the issues underlying their contention will be resolved and filial loyalty affirmed.

Don’t count on it! Before any hope of reconciliation can be entertained, we must first determine whether Peggy’s attempt to murder her hard-drinking husband was a response to the abusive taunting of a spiteful spouse seeking to reassign blame for his suicide, and her failure to complete the task, the result of her own irresolution (physical, or psychological). We must also ascertain the source of Warren’s impaired speech and hearing and the reasons for his absence from his teaching duties. Ellen’s dogged serenity under pressure also rouses our suspicions, and could Barb, who coddles Peggy like a doting nanny, possibly be kin to her “favorite customer” in real life? Remember—these are people long-acclimated to telling lies in order to justify socially inappropriate behavior.

The most challenging question posed by Joel Drake Johnson, though, is where we are to invest our emotions when we don’t know who to believe? Unlike babies—by definition, capable of moral growth and thus exempt from accountability—aged parents, however diminished their capacities, are not so easily exonerated from responsibility for the trouble they leave behind.

Director Lia Mortenson has assembled an all-star cast led by Meg Thalken, whom theatergoers may recall from the play’s 2008 premiere at Victory Gardens in the role of Ellen, but who now portrays the acerbic Peggy (with the aid of a few subtly applied mannerisms necessary to achieve the requisite geriatric aspect). Bruch Reed, Amy Montgomery and Rebekah Ward likewise deliver performances invoking our sympathies for the children whose suffering is not so much the legacy of their propensity for deception than their remorseless endorsement of its practice. (Consider that as a topic for post-show discussions.)

In the nearly 10 years since its inauguration, the Den has expanded from a single-stage loft theater to a multiplex arts emporium—an accomplishment leaving its founders little time to pursue their own projects. A home-team production like this one is a rarity, in other words. You don’t want to spend another decade regretting your hesitation, do you?

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THEATER REVIEW
For Services Rendered
By: W. Somerset Maugham
At: Griffin Theatre Company at The Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Tickets: 773-697-3830 or GriffinTheatre.com; $32-$37
Runs through: July 6

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Bisexual novelist and playwright W. Somerset Maugham kicked up a scandal with For Services Rendered. It’s a harshly critical 1932 drama about post-World War I Britain.

Now receiving a rare revival courtesy of Griffin Theatre Company, For Services Rendered can still can rile contemporary audiences. Yet it can be more for its outdated views and uncomfortable treatment of women in our #MeToo age than its intended targets of blind patriotism and military cutbacks.

For Services Rendered unfolds in the well-appointed drawing room of the well-off Ardsley family. The father, Leonard (Eddie Dzialo), is a failing business. Meanwhile the family matriarch, Charlotte (Lyn-da Shadrake), is reluctant to follow the advice of her brother, Dr. Prentice (Tim Newell), to be examined for her ongoing physical pain.

But the bulk of the drama centers on the grown trio of Ardsley sisters. They each are dealing with their own personal fallout from the war. Ethel (Ella Pennington) married beneath her class to Howard Bartlett (Matt Fletcher), a drunk-ard tenant farmer who pines for his long-gone military days. Eva (Marika Mashburn) lost her intended to the war and now has her sights on the decommissioned naval officer, Collie Stratton (Robert Quintanilla). But he’s struggling with a failing business.

Then there’s the main beauty of the family, Lois (Krystal Ortiz), who worries about her lost youth—at the age of 26 (!). Lois catches the eye of an older married admirer, Wilfred Cedar (Matt Rockwood), despite the efforts of his wife, the flighty and flinty Gwen (Cindy Marker), to keep them apart.

Director Robin Witt oversees a handsomely decorated production that is a dream for lovers of period British dramas. It’s full of lovely costumes by designer Aly Renee Amidei and boasts a realistic set by designer Sotirios Lavaditis.

The performances from the cast are all well tuned to the shocking soap-opera dynamics of Maugham’s script—especially Mashburn who gets to let loose as Eva with a flashy Act III rant that becomes a breakdown.

Now if only there was more consistency to the

variable and sometimes dodgy British accents (though Jennifer Huddleston sounds fine as the Irish maid Gertrude).

Although it doesn’t touch upon soldiers dealing with “shell shock,” For Services Rendered does fascinate by allowing audiences to draw parallels to today. There have always been problems of returning soldiers trying to reintegrate into society, plus there are hidden scars borne by those on the home front.

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CRITICS’ PICKS
First Love Is the Revolution, Steep Theatre, through June 8—Star-crossed species are a metaphor for many things as a boy and (real) fox fall in love, with disastrous consequences. Devon de Mayo directs this convincingly acted, non-realistic drama. JA

No Se Vende (Not for Sale), Teatro Aguijon, through June 9—The Spanish language premiere of Carmen del Guadalis’ cautionary tale about Humboldt Park gentrification is staged in another Latinx “hood threatened by cultural transformation. MSB

The Children, Steppenwolf Theatre, through June 9—When natural disaster threatens nuclear calamity, three retired nuclear engineers must deal with it, along with old personal business. Comedy and a charming cast soften Lucy Kirkwood’s somber message. JA

Bloomsday, Remy Bumpoo at Theater Wit, through June 16—The adage “too soon old and too late smart” was never more romantic than in Steven Dietz’s bittersweet look backward at missed chances and ships passing in the you-know-what. MSB

—By Mary Shen Barnidge and Jonathan Abarbanel

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THEATER REVIEW

Queen of the Mist

Playwright: Michael John LaChiusa
(words & music)

At: Firebrand Theatre @ The Den, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Tickets: Firebrandtheatre.org; $55
Runs through: July 6

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

When I visited Niagara Falls as a boy, I bought firecrackers legally in Canada (reselling jumbos to schoolmates for $1) and learned about Annie Edson Taylor (1838-1921), first human to shoot the Falls in a barrel and live, Oct. 24, 1901. Taylor was an unlikely daredevil, a failed schoolteacher past 60 who sought fame and fortune and found neither as an unscrupulous manager stole her money and barrel. Taylor died a blind pauper, buried in an unmarked grave.

In this passionate, flawed 2011 work—more contemporary opera than musical—Michael John LaChiusa portrays Taylor, warts and all. Well-educated and from a prosperous family, she lives beyond her means and clashes with those who care most for her. She’s a flirtatious, witty, tippling megalomaniac who declares “My intelligence is large, my patience is small” and “I am a revolutionist and an Episcopalian….a lonely combination.”

LaChiusa scored Queen of the Mist for four men and three women, but authorized Firebrand Theatre to perform it with six women and one man, honoring Firebrand’s commitment to empower and employ women. Esteemed veteran performer Barbara E. Robertson plays Annie, and her oddly-beautiful face never has been more expressive, especially of pain and astonishment, and her alto voice remains powerful.

LaChiusa’s serious and eclectic music benefits from Michael Starobin’s gorgeous orchestrations which delicately combine reeds, cello, violin and piano under Charlotte Rivard-Hoster’s musical direction. The six supporting players are colorful actors and strong singers who blend well (additional vocal arrangements by Andra Velis Simon), with special credit to Max J. Cervantes as Taylor’s manager and unlikely friend (a mash-up of several actual people).

Still, Annie Taylor is hard to like. Despite her occasional charm and need to be forceful in a man’s world, Taylor is her own worst enemy. LaChiusa attempts to redeem this lonely figure—and Taylor must have been terribly lonely—with a Christian epiphany at her death, but it doesn’t feel earned and takes too long. The opening sequence (“There is greatness in me”) also is long, using 25 minutes to establish Taylor’s quirky, troubled character which we understand in half the time. Tough editing requires cutting out good material if it’s repetitive and dissipates dramatic tension. Composer LaChiusa always writes his own book and lyrics and, therefore, lacks a tough editor.

Scenic designer Lauren Nichols supplies a spare shadowbox setting with curved sides (a barrel interior), softened only by amber wood tones and Cat Wilson’s lighting, and without any representational scenic devices: no Falls, barrel or early-1900s reference points (except Brenda Winstead’s expressive period costumes). Additionally, director Elizabeth Margolius’ graceful, fluid staging utilizes few props. The abstracted, ethereal net effect can be emotionally distancing, and I wonder if this is entirely intended.

Barbara E. Robertson and Neala Barron in Queen of the Mist.
Photo by Michael Brosilow
‘Tales’ producer discusses return to 28 Barbary Lane

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Producer Alan Poul, who is gay and is among the returning crew and cast for Netflix’s Tales of the City revival, said that he’s “thrilled” to return to Armistead Maupin’s cast of characters at 28 Barbary Lane.

“What’s happening—to be able to come back 25 years later, to complete something you started 25 years before—where we can get that kind of closure, is impossible in this industry to even dream about,” said Poul, who is currently filming another unrelated Netflix series in Paris.

The new Tales of the City, which debuts on Netflix on June 7, follows Mary Ann Singleton (Laura Linney), Anna Madrigal (Olympia Dukakis) and other returning Tales characters, as well as myriad younger Bay Area residents, decades after Mary Ann made her monumental 1976 trip from Cleveland to San Francisco.

New cast members include openly trans actor Jen Richards, openly lesbian actor Ellen Page and Zosia Mamet.

The first three Tales books had been adapted in 1993, 1998 and 2001. Maupin had written several other Tales books, however, so the new production personnel faced numerous narrative logistics, Poul said.

“We had to figure out what stories we wanted to tell,” Poul recalled. “Did we want to go back in time? Did we want to cover the other books that Armistead wrote, or did we want to move forward? Once we decided to move forward, we decided it was best to bring an entire younger generation of people to explore gender and sexual issues that younger people are exploring today.”

All of the new Tales’ staff writers are queer, Poul noted. Much of the material was drawn from Maupin’s later books, and done with his participation, but Poul said, “We really created a new show.”

The circumstances of the new series’ production were substantially different from that of the original 1993 series. The original was produced by Channel 4 in the U.K. and was then acquired by PBS for U.S. broadcasts. That drew the ire of right-wing elements who at the time objected to the program’s depiction of LGBT themes, nudity and drug use.

Poul called the original series “a love letter to San Francisco and a love letter to humanity,” adding, “We only had kindness in our hearts, so to be met with such a vicious backlash took us by surprise.”

Now, Poul joked, that first program could run on broadcast TV.

“Television has grown up since then,” he said. “All layers of television, but especially premium cable and streaming, have become much more used to inclusive storytelling and grown-up storytelling. Additionally—and I hate to use the word ‘cinematic’—television is now shot in a way that isn’t fundamentally different from how movies are shot. Everybody has widescreen TVs, so you’re able to shoot with the same sweep, scope and attention to detail that you would if you are making a movie.”

But the biggest difference between this new series and its predecessors is not inherent in how it was produced but in how it will be watched, he added.

“We’re used to a show that would roll out once a week, or three nights in a row,” Poul said. “With Netflix, all episodes will be available worldwide on June 7. So if people want to bingewatch them at once, they can. If they want to take a few months, they can do that too.”

Cast and crew were very aware that “it’s a new era in representation,” he added. “We tried to be incredibly authentic in our representation of the LGBT community, and to be as inclusive of all kinds of diversity that we can. Armistead was very aware when he started writing the books that he was writing to a largely white gay world. That was still brave in 1976. But as the world changed, fortunately, being a white gay man isn’t so ‘daring’ anymore.”

Poul has had a long career in television and film, and is perhaps best known for his work on Six Feet Under; he stayed on that HBO series for its entire five-season run and called it his “most satisfying job.” Other credits include The Newsroom and Westworld.

His newest project, The Eddy, on which he’s collaborating with La La Land director Damien Chazelle, is a Netflix series set in a Parisian jazz club, and will likely air in 2020.

“It’s very different from Tales of the City,” Poul said. “...I’ve been developing the show for as long as Tales of the City—they both were five years in the making, and they just happened to go right at the same time, back to back,” Poul said.
May’s concerts: An intriguing mix reflects the weather

BY VERNON HESTER

Despite the promise of hot fun in the summertime, the month of May largely delivered an infuriating mix of dark skies and torrents of rain. On local stages, the concert offerings seemed to mirror the weather in tone if not in temperament.

First up was a double bill at The Sleeping Village on May 6 that started with Lollygagger showcasing its latest EP, Life on Terminus (available on band camp). Vocalist/guitarist Matt Amalgamate may still be the most handsome queer rocker in the universe but he’s also the nuttiest. Despite him whipping out caffeinated song intros (“this is a disco song about queer love...”) and cracking non-stop sausage jokes, his bandmates—Michael Sunnycide on drums and Kinsey Ring on bass—almost one-upped him with pure fire power.

Granted, Sunnycide is still one of the finest bashers within the city limits and it’s always fun to watch him work (his sartorial accoutrements this time included a vintage Jaws T-shirt and some oral S/M gear), but the real player here was Ring, whose bass work was some of the hardest and most articulate that this listener has ever heard.

Headliner Avantist, a four-piece led by vocalist/keyboard player Fernando Arias (and including his brothers Erick, David and Luis), debunked their image as nerdy intellectuals by pounding through a set loud in volume and hard on abrasion. With a lighting scheme that kept the stage bathed in a murky burgundy the look and sound of their set was close to a sensory assault. I still don’t know what to think of this version of the band (love their brainy ideas, loathe the concrete shredding attack), which is reason enough for me to go and check them out again and get a third opinion.

The Empty Bottle has been investigating presenting shows in intriguing environments (like hosting Bauhaus at The Rockefeller Chapel) and, on May 17, it hosted post-punks Facs at the Garfield Conservatory. Granted, the performance was interesting and almost abstract, given the stage area. (There’s something pleasantly eerie about being surrounded by a jungle in an enclosed space while a thunderstorm rages outside.)

Vocalist/guitarist Brian Case yowled into the dark while slivers of sound crashed and sliced through the air. Headliner Drab Majesty, by contrast, ran with all that atmosphere and played to it for all it was worth. With vocalist/guitarist Deb Demure (Andrew Clinco) and Mona D (Alex Nicolaou) on keyboards they easily mixed the nuance of the space with gender bending, techno, and rock and roll into a haunting blend. The mix of the two bands in that space made for an ethereal and disarming evening.

By the Memorial Day Weekend, the sun actually came out for the second day of The Chicago House Music Festival, which featured a blowout all over Millennium Park with DJ stages scattered throughout the area and performances by house pioneers Gene Hunt, DJ Humphry, Gant-Man, Moodymann, Mr. A.L.I. and Boogie McClarin. Between the amplified disco beat wafting in from the park, impromptu dance crews busting moves in every direction, and a steady parade of out-of-town leathermen investigating Michigan Avenue, downtown Chicago felt queerer than ever.
Ndegeocello, Bennett to perform at Taste of Chicago

Out neo-soul musician Meshell Ndegeocello and LGBT hip-hop artist Taylor Bennett (brother of Chance the Rapper) are among the acts slated to perform at this year’s Taste of Chicago on July 10-14, at the Petrillo Music Shell, 235 S. Columbus Dr.

Ndegeocello will perform Sunday, July 14, at 4:30 p.m. Her latest album, Ventriloquism, is a collection of 11 covers that include reimagined versions of “Waterfalls,” “Smooth Operator” and a sultry rendition of “Private Dancer.” R&B musician India.Arie will perform that same day.

Bennett will perform Friday, July 12, at 5:30 p.m. He has had tremendous success with the 2015 album Broad Shoulders, the 2017 album The Fader and the recent EP Be Yourself. The co-headliners that day will be revolutionary hip-hop act De La Soul (known for the song “Me, Myself and I”).

Some of the other artists slated to take the Petrillo stage include Courtney Barnett, Bomba Estereo, Cultura Proetica, De La Soul and Bilal.

There will also be a Goose Island Stage that will offer five days of performances by local up-and-coming and established artists. Just a few of those acts include The Ivy Ford Band, DJ Mike P, Afinca'o, Tatiana Hazel and Solow Redline.

Limited tickets are available for $50. New for 2019, Taste of Chicago food and beverage tickets can also be purchased in advance, at TasteOfChicago.us. The food and beverage tickets are sold in strips of 14 tickets for $10 and can be picked up on site. Admission to the Taste of Chicago and lawn seating is free.
Artemis Singers, Chicago’s lesbian feminist chorus, will present its Pride concert and dance, “We Sing What Sparkles,” on Saturday, June 15, at First Unitarian Church, 5650 S. Woodlawn Ave., at 7 p.m.

The nonprofit chorus specializes in performing music written or arranged by women—and, among other things, will present the world premiere of “Lesbian Feminist Boogie,” by chorus member Allison Downing. Some of the other songs will include “Rise Up,” “Seven Day Kiss,” “The Earth is Singing My Name,” “Con El Viento” and “Sweet Sorcery.”

“The dance after the concert provides the opportunity for women to socialize,” said Artemis Singers Artistic Director Joy Culver in a statement. DJ “OCD” (Wanda Rodriguez) returns this year for that part of the event.

The featured guest artist is e nina jay, who recently released the new book Bricks, Blood & Water. jay uses poetry as a tool of survival and to break silences around all forms of violence against gurls & womyn—with particular focus on the intersections of race, sexuality and poverty.

There is a suggested donation for tickets of $20 in advance, and $25 at the door. Tickets for children 12 and younger, students (with ID) and seniors age 65 and older cost $15. The ticket price includes admission to both events.

Call 773-764-4465 or see ArtemisSingers.org.

Artemis Singers’ Pride concert June 15

Artemis Singers. Photo by Danyel Duncan

ComedySportz hosting LGBTQ performances during June

ComedySportz Chicago (CSZ) will commence Pride Month with the company’s very first ComedySportz Chicago Pride Month featuring a series of performances and a Pride Weekend celebration with CSZ’s LGBTQIA+ cast members from June 7-22 at ComedySportz Theater Chicago, 929 W. Belmont Ave.

A special one-night only 18+ Rainbow A-Go-Go Variety Show will take place Saturday, June 22, at 10 p.m. In addition to the regular performance schedule, the company will hold family-friendly performances. These all-ages performances will be June 7, 14 and 22 at 6 and 8 p.m.

The venue will also sell a signature cocktail, The Pride Tai, with 100 percent of the profits going to the Pride Month partner Howard Brown Health.

Tickets are $25 per person for 6 and 8 p.m. shows, and $10 a person for the 10 p.m. performances. Visit CSZChicago.com or call 773-549-8080.
There’s a new group on the music scene that’s lighting up the world. Shaed [pronounced “shade”] is the brainchild of twin brother band members Max and Spencer Ernst, who grew up in Silver Spring, Maryland. While in high school they met singer Chelsea Lee, who Spencer later married. (Incidentally, Max is gay.)

After coming up with the name Shaed, they released a debut EP and toured with solo singer Bishop Briggs. Their second EP Melt was released in May of 2018 and the single “Trampoline” was featured to big success thanks to a MacBook Air commercial.

The trio sat down backstage at a sold-out Subterranean headline tour in Chicago to discuss their life.

Windy City Times: Is everyone from Washington?
Max Ernst: Yes, we are from the suburbs right outside of D.C.

WCT: Describe how the group came together.
ME: Spence and I are twin brothers. We all went to high school in the same area. Chelsea had worked with a producer as a solo artist. He had told her to come out to one of our shows in D.C. at the 9:30 Club when she was 15 and we were 17. We became best friends and hung out all the time. We would drive Chelsea around since she didn’t have her license. We were her personal chauffeurs for a long time.

WCT: Did the group already have a name?
ME: Yes, but this was just some pop project a long time ago. We were friends for a long time before we started making music together.

WCT: Where did the name “Shaed” come from?
ME: We all read this book called The Name of the Wind. It’s a fantasy novel. We live together so we pass around books and read the same stuff. In the book it’s a cloak which is made out of shadows. We liked the book and thought it was a cool sounding word.

WCT: Who was recently married?
SE: Chelsea and I were married in October.

WCT: This is the closest-knit group that can be!
CL: All three of us were married in a way.

WCT: You can take care of each other out on the road...
SE: Chelsea takes care of us at home. She cooks all the meals.

WCT: Like Top Chef?
CL: Certainly not that crazy. I like making homemade pasta.

WCT: Have you been to Chicago before?
SE: We have been here three times. We played with Bishop Briggs here. This is our first headlining show here.

WCT: I met Bishop and her sister at Lollapalooza. Have you done Lola yet?
SE: No.

WCT: Talk about the “Trampoline” video.
SE: That was a great experience. The Apple commercial happened and we were rushing to make a video. We relied on our Washington, D.C., resources for our director named Max Haben and a company called Design Army. They put together a treatment and we worked with them on it. We came up with a concept and shot the video in half a day.

Max and I practiced our front flips on a full size trampoline that we bought.

WCT: It looks so artsy.
SE: It was done really fast. We actually co-edit ed it, too. We were super hands on. It turned out really great.

Chelsea was a trooper. For the statue scene she had her arms tied behind her back. She was on her knees for two hours singing this over and over.

CL: It was brutal.

WCT: The song is getting radio play in Chicago.
SE: It is our first song to go to radio. We are thankful for the support that Chicago is giving us.

WCT: Are you influenced by any other bands?
CL: I love ’80s alternative music and New Wave. I listened to a lot of that as a kid. We all loved Radiohead and they were a big influence. Right now we listen to a lot of R&B. We get into moods.

SE: When Chelsea is cooking, we listen to Frank Sinatra.

Turn to page 29
Midsommarfest in A’ville June 7-9

The Andersonville Midsommarfest will take place Friday-Sunday, June 7-9.

The event will take place from Summerdale Avenue to Catalpa Avenue along Clark Street featuring two stages: North Stage (Catalpa and Clark) and Balmoral Pride Stage (West Balmoral Street). Guests can even check out our VIP SECTION at the North Stage for an elevated viewing experience.

The fest will be Friday, June 7, 5-10 p.m.; and Saturday-Sunday, June 8-9, 12-10 p.m. There will be music, dancing, kids’ entertainment, various items for sale and food.

The entertainment will be as follows:

—North Stage:
Friday, June 7
5 p.m.: DJ Dan Luna
6 p.m.: J Livi and the Party
8 p.m.: Rod Tuff Curls and The Bench Press

Saturday, June 8
12:30 p.m.: Peirce Elementary School Dancers
1 p.m.: Gus Giordano Dance School
2 p.m.: Second City Outlaws
3:30 p.m.: Chicago Spirit Brigade
4 p.m.: Jonas Friddle and The Majority
6 p.m.: Libido Funk Circus
8 p.m.: Catfight

Sunday, June 9
Noon: Dr Zylo and the Brainiacs
1:30 p.m.: Second City Outlaws
2 p.m.: Kung Lao and the Scorpions
3:30 p.m.: Chicago Spirit Brigade
4 p.m.: Jonas Friddle and The Majority
6 p.m.: Libido Funk Circus
8 p.m.: 16 Candles

—Center Stage:
Saturday, June 8
Noon: Windy City Gay Chorus & Treble Quire
1 p.m.: Chicago Spirit Brigade
1:30 p.m.: LOUDA y Los Bad Hombres
3 p.m.: Second City Outlaws
3:30 p.m.: Hey Cowboy
5:30 p.m.: The Hairband Night
8 p.m.: The Boy Band Night

Sunday, June 9
Noon: Gospel Brunch with the Deliverance Singers
1:30 p.m.: Chicago Spirit Brigade
2 p.m.: Al Rose
3:30 p.m.: Second City Outlaws
4 p.m.: Jess Godwin
6 p.m.: Sushi Roll
8 p.m.: 7th Heaven

There is a $10 suggested admission; see http://andersonville.org/midsommarfest/.

SHAED from page 28

ME: Nat King Cole.
WCT: Is the band supportive of the LGBT community?
ME: I’m gay, so I’m very supportive. Let’s say a hundred percent supportive! This definitely adds another layer to our whole band dynamic.
WCT: When did you come out?
ME: I was 19 years old when I came out, so a while ago.
WCT: We have to get the band playing at some Pride festivals.
ME: I’ve been trying. I have talked to the folks at DC Pride. We are playing a radio station festival there. We might not be able to do both.
CL: We would love to play Pride here.

SE: That would be awesome. We are playing a ton of festivals the entire summer. We are working on new music with some features with cool new artists.
ME: We have been writing in Toronto and London with some talented songwriters and producers.
WCT: What do you want to tell people about the band that don’t know you?
CL: We are a family band now.
SE: We live together and work on music. That is our passion.

Visit ShaedBand.com for the act’s return to Chicago for Lollapalooza and tickets to see it Saturday, June 15, at WKQX’s Piqniq at Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, 19100 Ridgeland Ave. Tinley Park. Check out 101WKQX.com.
BY JERRY NUNN

City Winery is about to have a gay ol’ time with two performers on Pride Month. Out singers Levi Kreis and Anne Steele began their careers at Opryland, a country-music theme park that has long since been torn down, in Nashville. Now, they are performing together with their own toe-tapping music and original stories for one night only in Chicago.

Tony Award winner Kreis began his career with the national tour of Rent, then landed the unforgettable role of Jerry Lee Lewis in the jukebox musical Million Dollar Quartet. He’s released many albums over the years including his most recent titled Liberated last year.

Steele just released her new EP, Made Out of Stars, in January of this year. Her single “Love Can Take Us There” benefits victims of the Pulse nightclub shooting and was chosen as the official Provincetown Carnival anthem in 2016.

Windy City Times: How are you both?
LK: Yes, like my entire straight band. Let’s start there! Both Anne and I have band members that are from Chicago. They are also well known in the theater community.

WCT: Are you singing George Michael’s “Freedom,” like I saw on YouTube, Anne?
AS: I don’t know if that will be on the playlist. This set has a strong foundation of original music. I plan on doing my new EP Made Out of Stars that I recorded in LA. I will do my last EP and some covers with gay anthems.

WCT: There’s a cover of [Tears for Fears’] “Everybody Wants to Rule the World” on the latest record, Anne.
AS: Yes. I wanted something familiar that people know on the album. I picked it because a song written so long ago still resounds so well in our political environment today. When I listened to the words, it just made so much sense to me right now.

WCT: The lyric “turn your back on Mother Nature” struck me as something that now could apply to climate change.
AS: It was written in the early ‘80s, but still very relevant today. When you hear a song covered in a different way sometimes you hear the lyrics differently. I wanted to get the message across with those lyrics.

WCT: Levi, you dropped to albums last year, so are you performing Christmas songs at City Winery?
LK: It’s Christmas in June! No, we do a holiday show every year with it. I will be singing songs from Liberated. There will also be songs I have written for Del Shores’ Southern Baptist Sissies and Sons of Anarchy.

I will just represent the high points of my entire catalogue. I might venture into new material just to get some of it under my belt. I know fans will discover some unreleased material that evening.

WCT: Do you have a favorite musical?
AS: I am obsessed with Jagged Little Pill, which is about to come to Broadway. The tickets are just going on sale for New York, but I saw it in Boston. It is going to explode. It’s the music of Alanis Morissette, but not her story.

Jagged Little Pill was one of those albums that changed me as a singer and a person.

LK: The very first musical I saw at a young age was Sweeney Todd. I have an affinity for a dark story. I can’t get Dear Evan Hansen out of my brain. It is like velcro. It will never leave!

AS: I just had a Hamilton cast member named Euan Morton on my podcast, #Lovemywifepodcast. We have been doing it for almost a year and a half now. Our producers asked us to do the podcast. They felt there needed to be more lesbian voices out there in the world. We are parents and my wife owns a travel company for LGBT families.

I’m a singer and songwriter. We have an interesting family life. We have talented friends on the podcast every week.

WCT: What else do you have coming up?
LK: I have a new single coming out in September leading up to a new album release next year. At this stage when I am laying the ground work it drives me crazy. I know what’s coming but I can’t share it yet. I can’t be quiet much longer!

AS: I am still on my Made Out of Stars Tour and touring it this whole year. I am doing several LGBT charters such as RSVP Vacations, R Family Vacations and an Atlantis cruise. So that is my summer!

Roll out a barrel of wine for Steele and Kreis at City Winery, 1200 W. Randolph St., on Tuesday, June 18, at 8 p.m., with tickets at CityWinery.com.

Van Ness, Gadsby at Chicago Theatre in June

LGBT celebrities Jonathan Van Ness and co-median Hannah Gadsby will be performing in separate shows at The Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State St., during Pride Month (June).

Van Ness—a television personality (Queer Eye), Emmy nominee and celebrity hairstylist—will stop at The Chicago Theatre on Saturday, June 8, at 7 and 10 p.m. He will perform stand-up comedy while on his “Road to Beijing” national tour.

With “Hannah Gadsby: Douglas” (named after her dog), the Australian lesbian comedian discusses, among other things, her autism diagnosis, according to The New York Times. Last year, the release of a film version of Gadsby’s Netflix stand-up show “Nanette” brought her to the attention of international audiences. Gadsby’s show will be Sunday, June 16, at 7:30 p.m. See TheChicagoTheatre.com.

Dynamic duo: Levi Kreis, Anne Steele on upcoming show
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MOVIES

Siskel showing LGBTQ+ movies

The Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., is showing several LGBTQ+ features throughout Pride Month.

Films include:

—**Sauvage Wild** (June 7-13): A 22-year-old gay hustler cycles through a series of mostly sexual encounters that range from the achingly tender to the harrowingly brutal.

—**The Suicide** (June 8): The tension arising between the demands of activism and Gregg Bordowitz’s desire to explore aspects of his own life resulted in the appropriation of Nicolai Erdman’s avant-garde play *The Suicide*.

—**The Proposal** (June 14-19): A conceptual artist and an art historian battle over the archive of Mexican architect Luis Barragan in this documentary.

—**Diamantino** (June 14-20): Beefcake soccer star Diamantino finds himself at the center of a wild government cloning plot in this hallucinatory Cannes prize-winning comedy.

—**Loving Vincent** (June 14-15, 18): The film is a dramatization of Vincent Van Gogh’s life. It will be followed by *Loving Vincent*: The Impossible Dream, the story of how Vincent was made.

—**Worlds of Ursula K. Le Guin** (June 15, 19): Filmmaker Arwen Curry engages the feisty but camera-shy science-fiction author in a series of revealing interviews that explore her artistic and political evolution.

—**Pasolini** (June 21-27): It’s the Chicago premiere of director Abel Ferrara’s film that re-creates the final 24 hours in the life of Italian filmmaker and political activist Pier Paolo Pasolini (played by Willem Dafoe).

—**Salo, Or The 120 Days of Sodom** (June 21-22, 26): Four of Italy’s fascist elite select innocent young men and women to become their sex slaves in Pier Paolo Pasolini’s controversial final film. Note: This film contains potentially disturbing subject matter and explicit sex and violence.

—**A Bigger Splash** (June 29; July 1, 3): Blending documentary and fiction, director Jack Hazan features artist David Hockney as himself, an in-demand, gay artist struggling with a creative block after a breakup.

Also, artist/activist/professor Gregg Bordowitz is also the subject of the Art Institute of Chicago exhibition “Gregg Bordowitz: I Wanna Be Well,” with runs through July 14.

Tickets to each screening—unless stated otherwise—are $12/general admission; $7/students; $6/Film Center members; and $5/Art Institute of Chicago staff and School of the Art Institute of Chicago faculty, staff and students. See SiskelFilmCenter.org.

Designer Oyejide to lecture June 5

Wale Oyejide—a writer, musician, lawyer, designer, and creative director and founder of the fashion house Ikire Jones—will present a lecture Wed., June 5, at the Richard H. Driehaus Museum, 40 E. Erie St.

The cocktail reception will be at 6 p.m., with the lecture at 7 p.m. The Signature Lecture for the museum’s current exhibition, “A Tale of Today: Yinka Shonibare CBE,” will explore how the Nigerian-born designer uses fashion, art and storytelling to challenge perceptions and illustrate the identities of modern global citizens.

According to a press release, Oyejide’s work merges African aesthetics, European Renaissance art and haute couture to create wearable art that sparks conversation about cultural inclusivity. His apparel design can be seen in the Marvel Studios film Black Panther.

Tickets are $25-$45 each; visit DriehausMuseum.org.
LGBT CRUISES & TOUR EVENTS

**Mediterranean**

**June 29, 2019**

7-day Mediterranean cruise from Barcelona on MSC Seaview

**GAY PRIDE - Rhine River Cruise**

**July 27, 2019**

7-Night Rhine Cruise CELEBRATE GAY PRIDE POST CRUISE IN AMSTERDAM

**Canada - New England**

**October 8, 2019**

10-Night Canada Cruise on MSC Meraviglia

**Halloween Western Caribbean Cruise**

**October 27th - November 3, 2019**

18th Annual Halloween Western Caribbean on Norwegian Breakaway

**African Safari**

**November 30, 2019**

10-Night African Safari with A&K

(800) 592-9058 - AquafestCruises.com
Jack Thompson, Leatherman of Color from Baltimore, Maryland (third from left), was chosen out of a field of 68 contestants to be named International Mr. Leather (IML) 2019, May 26 at the Auditorium Theater. Thompson’s win made history as he is the first out trans PoC to hold the title in the contest’s 41 years. Thompson is joined in the top three by first runner-up Jawn Marques (Mr. San Francisco Leather 2019) and second runner-up Fionn Scott (Mr. Leather Ireland 2019). The newly-chosen International Mr. Bootblack is Krizly De Hond (third from right).

Joseph Stevens Photography
“My Administration has launched a global campaign to decriminalize homosexuality and invite all nations to join us in this effort!”—The tail end of Donald Trump’s Pride Month proclamation. It’s not so much a proclamation as a tweet.

The difference between a flirt and a tease is that a tease won’t follow through. I, Billy Masters, am more of a flirt. In fact, I’m what you’d call a sure thing. Alas, I feel as if I’ve been teasing you with these weekly reports about Aaron Schock. So let’s say right off the bat—I’m delivering. To catch you up, the hunky former Congressman has been everywhere since the video of him seemingly fishing around in the pants of a male dance partner at Coachella went viral. Apparently he’s been busy in public and in private. For months, people have whispered of clandestine same-sex hookups with guys he’s encountered on various apps. Nothing came of those whispers … until now.

A veritable treasure trove of unidentified nude photos just fell into our hot little hands—and, naturally, you can see them on BillyMasters.com. Aside from the obvious resemblance to our Down- ton Abbey loving subject, what I find intriguing is that most of them focus on the guy in question’s ass. The person in these photos vehemently says he’s a top—although more than one of his prospective partners has said that the person in the pics “prefers topping,” but says he will bottom. It’s kinda like a vegan who occasionally has a pot roast!

Back to these butt photos—let’s just say they show angles that typically only turn up in psychological examinations. In addition to the nude pix at various angles showing a body and face that bear a striking resemblance to the proudly straight Schock, we also received a jerk-off video. Again, lots of focus on the ass, but we do see him fully aroused … in addition to his face. What will he do for an encore? After all, it is Pride Month.

Whoever is in those photos might wanna take a page out of the Kathy Griffin playbook. Griffin was one of the first targets of Trump—or perhaps she was one of the first to turn him into a target. She also turned lemons into lemonade by launching her first international tour. The feisty redhead filmed the concert, added some backstage footage, and is about to release A Hell of a Story. The flick will play in more than 650 movie theaters around the country for ONE DAY—July 31. Hmm—almost sounds like the recipe for an Oscar nomination. For specific locations and other info, check out KathyGriffin.com or text KATHY to 345345.

Scandal is not limited to politics. It’s been a few weeks since we’ve had a Jussie Smollett update. During this hiatus, the courts decided that details of his dubious Chicago escapades would be unsealed and made public. More tragic for him was hearing about the Broadway revival of the play Take Me Out, starring Jesse Williams. You may recall, Jussie had been considered to helm this production before … well, the “incident.”

Not that Jesse is scandal-free, but who is? The revival will open at the Helen Hayes Theatre on April 23, 2020.

David Letterman just released the second season of his Netflix show My Next Guest Needs No Introduction. One of his guests is Ellen DeGeneres. In addition to some breezy banter, DeGeneres revealed that she has been a victim of sexual assault. The incident happened when she was about 15 years old. Her stepfather allegedly fondled her breasts, claiming he was doing it to check for lumps. Ellen waited a few years before telling her mother, Betty, who didn’t believe her. In fact, Betty stayed married to the man for 18 more years. Betty has said: “I know now that one of the hardest things to do is speak up after being sexually abused. I love my daughter and wish I had the capacity to listen to her when she told me what happened. I live with that regret and I wouldn’t want that for any other parent.”

In lighter lesbian news, Lea DeLaria is single and happy about it. She recently spoke with Wendy Williams about her scuttled wedding plans. She revealed she was the one who was dumped—although it ended amicably. Eh, lesbians! “She did everything right—Chelsea Fairless is a class act,” DeLaria said.

Speaking of acts, DeLaria is taking her act to Provincetown. She bought the venue formerly known as The Pied, and rechristened it The Club. It’s in one of the best locations in town, and will now be a jazz club with all the usual accoutrements—food, drink and entertainment. She said it will be different than most P-town venues: “There’ll be no cover charge. People can come in and hear live entertainment from world-class jazz musicians, have a drink and small noshes until we close.” I suspect she’ll be charging a cover when she brings in headliners. Like for July 4th weekend, she’s snagged Rosie O’Donnell! Ro will perform July 5-7, and Lea DeLaria will be her opening act. This begs the question—will this be the first time Lea’s opened for Rosie? Perhaps we’ll find out at the show.

By the by, since there are no new ideas in Hollywood, MGM has announced that they will produce a feature film about the life of Boy George. I have one word for them: Taboo.

Could it be that a certain star of stage and screen (both large and small) is having his private life made public by a perturbed ex-paramour? So say people who have seen the photos circulating and recognize the fastidious fella by, of all things, his feet! And you know what they say about large feet. Find out for yourself on BillyMasters.com.

When we can deliver a couple of notorious nudes, it’s time to end another column. All in a day’s work atBillyMasters.com—the site that always goes the extra mile. We didn’t have room for a question this week, but write me at Billy@Bil- lyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before we get any more schocking stories! Until next time, remember: One man’s fit is another man’s bible.
SAVOR

Lunch at The Albert, Walton Street Kitchen

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Maybe it’s the scientist in me (having majored in biology as an undergrad), but I found The Albert (228 E. Ontario St.; https://thealbertchicago.com/) really appealing.

Named, of course, after Albert Einstein, and fittingly located within Hotel EMC2, The Albert features tomes in bookcases, flasks and other nods to science. There’s also a semi-private area next to the open kitchen, marble tables and comfortable seating.

During a recent lunch at the spot, my friend and I discovered that there was hardly anyone—which was a head-scratcher no scientist could solve, as The Albert’s in one of the busiest areas of Chicago. Maybe it’s too hidden, or intimidating?

The lunch menu was inviting, although which was a head-scratcher no scientist could solve, as The Albert’s in one of the busiest areas of Chicago. Maybe it’s too hidden, or intimidating?

The lunch menu was inviting, although seemingly a bit limited, with three appetizers, three tartines (open-faced sandwiches) and a few other sandwiches available. The gem-lettuce panzanella salad with preserved tomato, with garlic dressing, was good. However, the star is undoubtedly the Slagel Farms burger with "special sauce," cheddar and pickles—one of the better burgers I’ve had in this city. (Other choices include duck-confit dijonnaise, roast-chicken pimento and grilled brie mushroom conserva sandwiches.) However, in a place as different as The Albert, some innovative entrees would be great to offer as well.

Desserts are also winners. Try the chocolate ganache (with goat’s-milk sorbet), but there are also items like pineapple sherbet, buttermilk mousse and even cucumber parfait.

Walton Street Kitchen

One of the more impressive places I’ve visited recently for dinner has been Walton Street Kitchen (912 N. State St.; http://www.waltonstreetchicago.com/).

With a high bar to reach, Walton Street manages to reach it, for the most part, with its lunch menu.

The lunch menu has items such as the wonderful roasted carrots (with tahini yogurt, dates, mint and pecans) as well as raw veggies and even crispy falafel.

The “Big Salads” are aptly named, with selections such as adobo chicken taco and traditional Cobb, while “On Bread” (sandwiches served with hand-cut fries) include sweet pea toast, albacore tuna toast, the corned-beef sandwich and the incredible griddle burger, which comes with grilled onion, tomato jam, aged Colby, lettuce, bacon and aioli. (I like the trend of restaurants serving better and better burgers, obviously.)

The Albert.

PR photo

There are also some tantalizing-sounding main dishes. The chicken paillard (meaning the meat is usually pounded thin, and grilled) makes promising, and I’ll try that when I return. However, my dining companion and I went for the king-crab omelet—but we both thought this was the least impressive dish we tried; it just seemed to lack in flavor, especially compared to the previous dishes.

And although I didn’t see them on the website, there are desserts as well. If nothing else, take a slice of cheesecake to go.

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

The Albert.

Chicken paillard at Walton Street Kitchen.

Photo by Kira Anderson

Dining Guide in

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June 5, 2019
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMMUNITY YARD SALE Huge community yard sale! Sunday June 9th, 9am-3pm. 4250 N. Marine Drive, south tower driveway. 20+ vendors. Great bargains. Household, furniture, art, antiques, fitness, clothing, books, jewelry and much more! (6/5/19-2)

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SPIRITUALITY

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**Windy City Times**

**COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

**Wednesday, June 5**
Celebrate Halsted Street; Celebrate Pride, A Tour of Halsted Street
See sites and shops including Legacy Project History Panels, Gay Veterans Memorial, Out of the Closet Thrift Store by Chicago Prime Timers. Free. 3:00 pm, http://www.ChicagoPrimeTimers

**Thursday, June 6**
Remembering Stonewall: An Evening with Tree Sequoia
First-hand account of the night that started the modern LGBTQ Revolution. Tree Sequoia was bar-tending the night of the Riots and 50 years later is still sling drinks at the historic Stonewall Inn. By Side-track and The Legacy Project 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm Side-track 3349 N Halsted St Chicago http://www.facebook.com/events/2313300892246533/

**Friday, June 7**
Out of the Closets and into the Streets: Power, Pride & Resistance in Chicago’s Gay Liberation Movement
Exhibit continues through Sept. 19, free. Check site for hours. 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago http://www.gerberhart.org

**Sunday, June 9**
Aurora Pride Parade
2nd annual parade coordinated by Indivisible Aurora. Grand Marshal. Nancy Mullen of Youth Outlook. facebook.com/aurorapridefestival/12:00 pm Benton Street and River Street, Aurora http://www.aurorapride.org

**Sunday, June 9**
Bolingbrook Pride Community Picnic
2nd annual. Picnic includes puppy rescue/animal adoption, LGBTQ resource tent, LGBTQ story telling, art activities, library bus, Mom/Dad/Clingy Hug tent. Family friendly activities. Food & alcohol available for purchase. 12:00 pm - 6:00 pm James S. Boan Woods

**Sunday, June 16**
RODI, SET, GO!
Sunday, June 16
Robert Rodi (above) celebrates Sir Noel Coward at Pride Arts Center. Photo courtesy of Rodi

**Monday, June 10**
Getting to Zero Through the Arts
Reading of The CA Lyons Project which tells the story of a young African American choreographer and his fledgling dance company during the early onslaught of the GRID/AIDS epidemic in Chicago. Free. 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm, Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://community.centeronhalsted.org/CALyons?eventId=9953039&trid=3414edf0-a7d2-47d9-m7f1-502e86d-7e657022d1ba

**Saturday, June 15**
Earth, Air, Water, and Fire Day
Cook County Commissioner Kevin B. Morrison hosting Father’s Day weekend. Free event to include featuring a fishing derby with prizes, casting lessons, guided hikes, food, and other family fun activities. Email District15@CookCountyIL.gov 9:00 pm - 12:00 pm Busse Woods 1 E. Higgins Rd., Elk Grove Village, IL 60005 847-519-7674 http://commissionerkevinb.morrison.org

**Sunday, June 16**
A Robert Rodi Cabaret: A Celebration of Sir Noel Coward
Theatrical legend. Jazz Age pioneer. Gay icon. For the 50th anniversary of Noel Coward’s knighthood, Robert Rodi looks back on Coward’s career, trailblazing style, enduring influence and his songs. 6:30 pm Pride Arts Center, Broadway Theatre at 4139 N. Broadway http://allevents.in/chicago/mad-about-the-boy-with-robert-rodi/200016899080228

**Tuesday, June 11**
Stonewall Sports Summer Schedule Begins
An LGBTQ & Ally community-based, non-profit sports organization that raises funds for local non-profit organizations through organized sports. Our league values each player for who they are and what they bring 10:00am
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