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weekly nightlife section in





BILLY Masters

"You know what? You have no sense of humor. That's your problem."—**Joy Behar** to **Megan McCain** on *The View* after the conservative spawn criticized a joke about Melania Trump spouted by Shecky Behar. The next day, McCain was curiously absent from the table. I'm counting the minutes until the next split-screen!

"Can I bum a fag?" I've had my share of propositions, but this seemed more forward than most. Turns out, the gent simply wanted a cigarette. Well, excuse me for hearing the words "bum" and "fag" and conjuring up a sexual image. That got me thinking—in these days of rampant political correctness, should I be offended that the Brits call cigarettes "fags?" Typically, hearing the word "fag" might elicit at least a raised eyebrow. However, since the word in this context had nothing to do with gay people, I wouldn't blink if he screamed it in Leicester Square.

Most people aren't as laissez-faire as moi. Broadway was buzzing with news that Actors' Equity would be renaming the legendary "gypsy robe" in "response to the cultural implications of the term"—i.e., so as not to offend the Romany people. Have I missed a huge outcry about this relatively private Broadway tradition? A Broadway "gypsy" is someone in the chorus who goes from show to show, city to city. The tradition of the "gypsy robe" dates back to the Broadway production of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* in 1950. A male chorister put on a robe and let everyone touch it. He then sent the robe to Call Me Madam, where the choristers did a similar thing, except they attached a feather from Ethel Merman's costume. They passed it on to *Guys and Dolls*, etc. The current tradition dictates that the robe goes to a Broadway show on opening night. The chorister with the most Broadway credits wears it. That chorister circles the stage three times while cast members touch it for good luck. The robe wearer blesses each dressing room. Finally, a memento from the show is affixed to the robe. When a robe is filled with mementos, it is retired and exhibited in the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the Smithsonian, or at Actors' Equity. That's the history.

Somehow, this use of the term "gypsy" has been mixed up with the derogatory term for the Romany people—as if the chorister in the robe is shaking a tambourine and reading palms! The "gypsy robe" has as much to do with the Romany people as the "wandering Jew" has to do with Israel! But, you know—some people want to sanitize anything that could offend two people. Petra Gelbart, a curator at RomArchive, said, "The fact that the term 'gypsy' is so often used to denote free-spirited or traveling lifestyles has real-life repercussions for actual Romany people." Yes, I'm sure people often look down on free-spirited travelers! I wondered where this would end. Days later, Tom Viola from Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS announced that they would not change the name of "Gypsy of the Year," an



Taron Egerton (above) is going to fill **Elton John's shoes, Billy says.**

Photo from Egerton's official Twitter account

annual fundraiser where choristers and dancers raise millions of dollars to help those in need: "Words have different meanings depending on the context in which they are used. In our theatrical community, 'the gypsy' is beloved." Bravo! Personally, I refuse to get behind any "gypsy" ban that hasn't been officially sanctioned by Miss Mitzi Gaynor!

As I mentioned, I'm in London to see some plays, visit the baby, get ready for the wedding ... you know, the usual. You know who else is planning a trip to London? Donald Trump. Although he'll be meeting with the prime minister and, perhaps, some members of the royal family, it is not an official state visit. So ... no banquet, no carriage procession and probably no hookers.

One of Mr. Trump's previous overseas jaunts was confirmed by a member of our community. In his capacity as host of the Miss Universe Pageant, **Thomas Roberts** met Trump in Moscow on Nov. 8, 2013, and interviewed him the next day. "During the after-party for the Miss Universe event, Mr. Trump offered to fly me and my husband back to New York. He said he would be leaving directly from the party. We were unable to accept the invitation. That was the early morning hours of Nov. 10." Now, I don't have my sundial handy, but it sounds like Mr. Trump spent at least two nights in Moscow—despite saying that he "didn't stay overnight in Russia for that."

The long-gestating **Elton John biopic** has inched closer to fruition. It was just announced that *Rocketman* will star **Taron Egerton**. In case you can't place him, he starred opposite **Hugh Jackman** in *Eddie the Eagle*. Would I call him Elton's doppelganger? Well, he's a hot Welsh lad with a full head of hair—you decide! What's interesting is that Elton's iconic recordings will not be featured in the flick. Taron is actually re-recording the songs. David Furnish says his hubby heard three of the songs and was "blown away." Of course, Egerton already had experience singing Elton John songs—in the animated feature *Sing*,



we are treated to his rendition of "I'm Still Standing." The Paramount biopic is being directed by Dexter Fletcher, who replaced Bryan Singer on the Freddie Mercury film *Bohemian Rhapsody*, which comes out on Nov. 2.

Let me put on my psychic hat and predict what a future "Ask Billy" question might be "Billy, do you have any nude photos of Taron Egerton?" Better than photos: videos. He was on the UK series *The Smoke* and, well, let's just say his shower scene left little to the imagination, as you'll see on BillyMasters.com.

When people are smoking in the shower, it's time for me to end yet another column. We've gone from gypsies to Brits pretty effortlessly. So while I deal with jet lag, you can check out BillyMasters.com—the site that never sleeps. Even overseas, I'm here for all your queries. Feel free to send them to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before I put on yet another hat (which will be during this trip in about two weeks). So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.



the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Brunches at Chez Moi, Bounce

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Chicago takes its brunches pretty seriously, no matter when they happen (and, yes, there are places that have weekday brunches).

To that end, restaurants throughout the city and suburbs have stepped up what they offer for this most social of meals, whether it's having innovative dishes and/or top-notch chefs.

For example, there's **Chez Moi** (2100 N. Halsted St.; <http://www.chezmoichicago.com/>), which even says it's a "unique French bistro" on its website. Chef Dominique Tougne has crafted dishes that are thoroughly delicious.

It's obvious that the restaurant staff knows



Gateau Breton at Chez Moi.
PR photo

what it's doing—doing to establishing that French vibe through beautiful decor and European music (although Sam Cooke and few other U.S. artists were also piped in every now and again). Dishes include a very well-done quiche Lorraine. The Crepes Grand Mere au Gratin are unlike other crepes most have probably had; the tasty dish features baked chicken, mushroom, onion and bacon creme with bechemel.

And don't forget desserts. The mousse is sublime, while the gateau Breton is buttery shortbread (although it seemed a little too hard for my fork at times).

BTW: Chez Moi is offering lunch on Wednesdays through Fridays starting May 2. Brunch is served Saturdays and Sundays 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Bounce on over

As opposed to the relatively sophisticated items at Chez Moi, **Bounce Sporting Club** (324 W. Chicago Ave.; <https://www.bouncesportingclub.com/>) offers flat-out fun with its brunch items.

Adding to the, well, bouncy feel of the place is music from the '80s and '90s (like New Edition's "Cool It Now")—and it didn't hurt that



Chicken nachos at Bounce Sporting Club.
PR photo

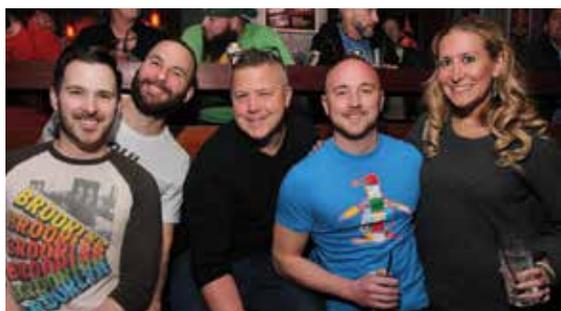
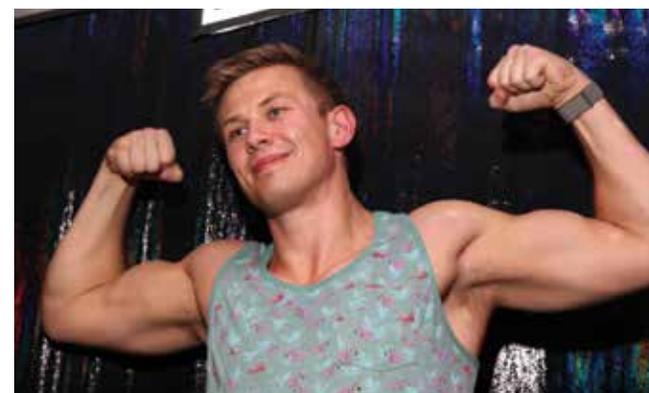
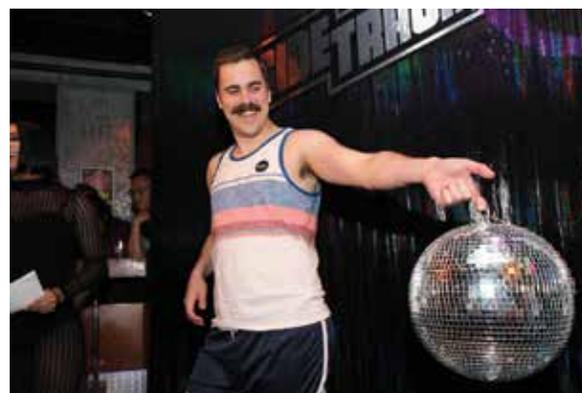
photogenic bartender Luke was bouncing around to the tunes. Also, there are large TV screens everywhere, which means that sports-minded guests won't miss a single minute of anything.

As for the food, it's indulgent in the best possible way. My friend tried fried mozzarella curds that were positively addictive, as well as a smoked brisket Benedict that featured a potato "waffle," poached eggs and pickled mustard hollandaise.

A huge plate of smoked pulled chicken nachos (with cheddar and jack) would be enough for most small groups. Also, for those craving something sweet instead of savory, there are Banana Jameson-soaked French toast sticks—although they may have been too soaked, as my friend and I were both slightly put off by the slightly bitter aftertaste. But then there was the donut sundae, a sinful olio of the aforementioned donut, ice cream, whipped cream, chocolate sauce—and Fruity Pebbles treats for good measure.

I occasionally say that it seems that half the world has brunch at 11 a.m. Well, I can certainly say that's not true of Bounce—at least, not yet—as guests started to roll in at 1 p.m. Maybe they had too much fun the previous night, and had to wait to indulge in more.

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



SIDETRACK

Chicago Dragons' bachelor auction, Sat., April 28.
Photos by Jed Dulanais

WINDY CITY TIMES

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., May 2

Book Launch Party: Death Rides the Ferry After a forty-year absence, the Viola da Gamba Music Festival has returned to the picturesque isle on the tip of Wisconsin's Door County peninsula. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>



TIE ONE ON Sunday, May 6

Chicago House's annual spring brunch/fashion show will take place in the Loop.

Photo from 2017 by Ed Negron

Thursday, May 3

American Veterans for Equal Rights Chicago Chapter of American Veterans for Equal Rights, the national organization of LGBT veterans formerly known as Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA). 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.averchicago.org/>

Meaty (the re-issue) The Chicago launch celebration for the reissue of Irby's first essay collection, Meaty. Ticketed event. 7:00pm Wilson Abbey, 935 W. Wilson, Chicago. <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Friday, May 4

Gay is Good exhibit Details the homophile movement 1920s through Stonewall.

See days and hours on site. 12:00pm - 4:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago 773-381-8030 <http://www.gerberhart.org/>
LGBTQ Town Hall Meeting Affinity Community Services, Senator Mattie Hunter, Kim Hunt of Pride Action Tank, and Kelly Saulsberry of Chicago Commission on Human Relations discuss hate crimes,

reporting them, an ordinance supporting LGBTQ people in the workforce, the Attorney General's consent decree and more. Doors 5:30pm 6:00pm Affinity Community Services 2850 S. Wabash Ave. #108 Chicago

Saturday, May 5

FrontRunners/FrontWalkers Chicago's LGBT running and walking club. Meet at the totem pole. 9:00am Addison and Lakeshore Dr. <http://www.frwchicago.org>

Neil Tobin, Necromancer: Near Death Experience Interactive, magical theater about life and death in a once-in-a-lifetime setting. Tobin's award-winning exploration of mortality and mystery will make you laugh, ponder and wonder. No kids. This is grown-up, dead-serious fun. Presented at May Chapel, a rarely open-to-the-public architectural gem. 3:00pm May Chapel at Rosehill Cemetery, 5800 N. Ravenswood Ave., <http://neardeathx.com>

Legal Council for Health Justice's 4th Annual May Ball Commemorating the council's 30th anniversary providing free, expert legal care for those with illnesses or disabilities, Nabeela and Fawzia open their grand turn-of-the-century residence for celebration, champagne, cocktails, delectable fare, and dancing. Derby theme, Derby hats encouraged. \$15 - \$1,030 8:00pm - 12:00pm Location provided with ticket information <https://www.eventbrite.com>

Sunday, May 6

REVIVE! Rally on the Runway, Chicago House's Spring Brunch & Fashion Show Brunch, entertainment, fashion show headlined by local Chicago boutiques and design studios and nationally recognized designers. Three-course gourmet brunch by Inspired Catering, champagne, signature cocktails, live auction. \$200 12:00pm - 2:30pm Harold Washington Public Library 400 S State Chicago 773.248.5200 (ext. 209) <http://www.chicagohouse.org>

LGBTQ Pride Event, International Family Equality Day Chicago Children's Museum at Navy Pier actively welcomes the lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer/questioning community. Two months of special programs that showcase our ongoing commitment to making the museum a joyful place for all families. 3:00pm - 4:30pm Chicago Children's Museum at Navy Pier <http://www.chicagochildrensmuseum.org>

Tuesday, May 8

On the Table The Chicago Community Trust's annual region-wide civic engagement initiative where tens of thousands of Chicagoans engage in conversation, develop new relationships and inspire action to make differences in communities. Anyone can host. 6:00pm Various locations 866-737-6951 <http://OnTheTable.com>

Thursday, May 10

Crimes training by Matthew Shepard Foundation and Center on Halsted Instruction on state and federal hate crime laws with a real-world scenario to work through with instructors to properly identify a hate crime, how to ensure a comprehensive and thorough investigation and how to prepare the case for trial. 9:00am - 5:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=15392>

The Blue Jean Ball An old-fashioned barn dance and BBQ. Benefits Rivendell Theatre Ensemble. Tickets are \$100 in advance (\$125 at the door) or \$145 to include the VIP hour reception at 6pm. 7:00pm - 10:00pm The Flower Firm, 451 N Wood, Chicago <http://rivendell-theatre.org/blue-jean-ball-2018/>

Friday, May 11

About Face Theatre's Wonka Ball at Saturday Night Live: The Experience Dress as your favorite comedy character and relive 40 years of television history. Support from WONKA BALL enables About Face to thrive as Chicago's celebrated center for LGBTQIA theatre. VIP reception 7pm. 8:00pm Museum of Broadcast Communications 360 N. State St Chicago 773-784-8565 <http://www.aboutface theatre.com>

KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST

by Greg Fox

