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weekly nightlife section in





BILLY Masters

"I was gender-confused. My parents just let me grow out of it. As I look back, I knew they were frustrated. I was that kid that ran around in a T-shirt and a rubber band around his waist with no shoes on his feet because all I had was boy shoes. ... I stole a pair of Mary Janes from a best friend of mine."—**Brent Corrigan's** confession about his colorful childhood

I just went to the opening of *Head Over Heels* on Broadway. This show features the music of The Go-Go's and the story of Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia. Sir Philip was a contemporary of Shakespeare, and Arcadia is a royal romp regarding romantic relations, mistaken identities, gender disguises and sheep. All I kept thinking was, "Why not just use *As You Like It*?" Alas and alack, no one asked me. If you think squishing the darlings of the '80s into a pastoral period piece from the 16th century was easy, forget it. Many songs fit effortlessly. Some required a shoehorn ... and, possibly, a speculum. A bit more finessing of the script could have helped.

As is, it feels like a work in progress. I say amp the carnival atmosphere, be even more outrageous and go full-tilt camp. If we can accept mermaids singing backup on the Island of Lesbos during Vacation, why not have them water-skiing? Use the visual we already associate with the song. Things like that could help to balance the strong message of acceptance, equality, and choice. But even in its imperfect state, the show is still oodles of fun and features fabulous songs.

As for the cast, **Rachel York** delivers classical dialogue with authority and vocal range. Kudos to the delicious **Andrew Durand** as both a leading man and lady. I couldn't help but wonder if ye olde undergarment shoppe sold Lycra boxer briefs. Since he looks so good in them, I'm not complaining. You may remember **Jeremy Kushnier** leading the Broadway cast of *Footloose* 20 years ago. Now he's the bearded father figure—and still mighty dashing. And, of course, **Peppermint** not only made history as the first transgender person in a leading role on Broadway, she also got to intone something I'm sure Sir Philip never wrote: "Thou better workest!"

I had to cut my Go-Go's festivities short in order to dash to the midnight performance of *The Boys in the Band*, which was a benefit for The Actors Fund. Since everyone involved donated time, they raised quite a pretty penny. The capacity crowd was probably the best audience the cast ever had. There's something subversive about seeing *The Boys in the Band* at a midnight show with an audience primarily made up of gay theater folk. There was a feeling of camaraderie, warmth, solidarity—and that was even before the divine **Charles Busch** took the stage to thank us for what we were doing just by buying tickets and showing up. (You're welcome.)

It is entirely possible one will never assemble as evenly talented a cast for this show ever again.



Andrew Rannells is captivating, Billy says.

Photo by Getty Images for GLAAD

There was no weak link. Those of you who follow my column, please take note of the statement I am about to make—it was almost impossible to take one's eyes off of **Andrew Rannells**. I found him positively riveting. Perhaps a tad too aggressive at times, but you know—**BOLD** choices. Throughout the performance, I wondered how it would be if Andrew and **Matt Bomer** switched roles. If you sit on the left side of the balcony (or in the box), you get the best view of Bomer's underwear and shower sequence. And at the end, you get a great view of Rannells and **Tuc Watkins** coupling—which was definitely worth the price of admission. Perhaps a brief bit of Bomer's briefs was captured for posterity, if not posterior. I suppose the only way to know for sure is to check out BillyMasters.com.

Brace yourself for another installment of Faye-watch. You'd think after back-to-back Oscar stints, **Miss Dunaway** would be ... well, done away with. But she's surfaced in a new Gucci campaign that perplexed one of my readers. "Is this an actual ad or an SNL skit?" Here's how Faye describes it: "The character is a busy, successful Hollywood mother who has a special relationship with her daughter, played by the lovely SoKo."

If a "special relationship" means treating her daughter as an employee, then she's right on the money. It kicks off with the two of them sitting in a limo while Faye autographs some photos—a la Mommie Dearest. She is then waited on by a coterie of staff at Gucci, while the girl is ignored. Then the duo walk through a park with the girl making sure Faye doesn't fall. Back home, Faye puts her Gucci Sylvie handbag on the table as the girl looks on enviously. They sit by the pool with Dunaway in an enormous hat. Then while wearing a baseball cap, Faye attempts to hit a tennis ball over the net! Next, the girl is playing the piano as Faye pretends to care. Finally, Faye gives the girl a purse—while wearing a turban! Then the two hug gingerly. I particularly enjoyed watching Faye in a variety of hats and turbans which seem to have the hair attached. The way she shuffles along makes her appear to be a shrunken oldster reminiscent of Grandma Yetta on *The Nanny*. You



can see this masterpiece on BillyMasters.com.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Keith in Chicago. "*Those nudes of Ryan Potter can't be real—can they?*"

Once again, I had to look someone up. Ryan Potter is best known for a variety of kiddie roles and as the voice in several Disney video games—so I am not his demographic. However, in 2012 he was one of the youngest people to come out against Prop 8 in California and support same-sex marriage. More recently, he was cast of *Teen Titans* as Beast Boy. And since you asked, he has quite a beast below the waist, as you'll see on BillyMasters.com.

When Ryan's gonna need Titan condoms, it's definitely time to end yet another column. As always, be sure to check out BillyMasters.com—the site that knows where to find the boys and the booze. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Faye is cast in a reboot of *The Nanny*! So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Ballast Point Chicago; Epic's milkshake

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Looking for a nice selection of beers with some very nice culinary options? Then look no farther than **Ballast Point Chicago** (212 N. Green St.; <https://www.ballastpoint.com/location/chicago/>).

Located in the Fulton Market district, Ballast Point (part of a chain that originated in San Diego) is a nautical-themed spot that offers a 4,000-square-foot rooftop with bar and lounge seating in addition to the 250 seats for guests in the 12,000 square-foot main tap house. And there are spots with names such as Captain's Quarters and Crow's Nest.

But before you confuse this spot with a Long John Silver's, consider the elevated atmosphere—and on-site brewery. More than 40 beers are offered, in categories such as “crisp and bright” and “barrel-aged.” I opted for a rather tasty flight



Pork belly nachos at Ballast Point Chicago.
Photo by Andrew Davis

of beers—and I consumed more than I thought I would, despite me not being the biggest fan of the drink.

And as for the cuisine, Chef John Diaz (who hails from Virginia) has some tantalizing options (and he is coolly gregarious, even as my dining companion was mooning over Diaz himself). Some of the dishes are quite unexpectedly wonderful, such as the pork-belly nachos—which sound

normal, but come with goat-cheese curds and cherries. (Trust me when I say that combination works.) And the chopped kale salad features pickled onion, hominy, avocado, feta, savory granola and chipotle lime vinaigrette. Other offerings includes fried-chicken Monte Cristo and BP wings (with one variation involving sorghum BBQ).

And, as for dessert, the new frybread (with, yes, cherries) is absolutely wonderful. (By the way, these are all items from the rooftop menu—not that there's too much room to maneuver in this bustling spot.

For a more seamless guest experience, the brewpub's rooftop will allow guests to close or add to a tab previously opened on the main floor.

Be sure to top the experience with a tour—and if you can get the colorful server Dani to lead the way, your visit will end on an intriguing note, I guarantee.

By the way, Ballast Point Chicago is marking Sours of the Wench Day on Sunday, Aug. 12, so you may want to check out the scene.

An 'Epic' milkshake

Many people already crowd **Epic Burger** (various locations; <https://epicburger.com/>), but now there's an additional reason to go.

Epic is debuting five new gourmet milkshakes (\$6.99 each) with the launch of its new milkshake counters. Flavors include Strawberry Shortcake (the delicious one I tried, complete with large strawberry and pound-cake chunks on the bottom), Lemon Coconut, Nutella, Gimme S'mores and Coffee & Cream.

These drinks are the essence of indulgence.

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

Sidetrack's OUTspoken! Series: August's featured storytellers



Bill Demaree



Shandee Ewert



Larry Dean Harris



Alexia Jasmene



Brian Michalski



Douglas O'Keeffe



Timothy Rey

The August edition of OUTspoken! LGBTQ storyteller series takes place Tuesday, August 7, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St. Doors open at 6 pm, stories begin at 7.

See www.outspokenchicago.com for more info.

—**Bill Demaree** has taught writing and literature at the college level for over thirty years. He is looking forward to teaching a course in LGBTQ Lit in spring 2019. When not teaching at Elgin Community College in the western burbs, he reads everything and anything and works hard to perfect his skills as a fledgling memoirist.

—**Shandee Ewert** is a Minnesota native, a fast walker and a nacho aficionado. She has tendency to sign herself up for things late at night when her decision-making skills are tired. It's this habit that has resulted in her going skydiving, taking a burlesque class, going to grad school and telling a story at Outspoken.

—**Larry Dean Harris** is a playwright and a storyteller. His play Stage Moms was at the 2016 Tennessee Williams Theatre Festival in Provincetown and his off-Broadway musical Play it Cool earned a New York Outer Critics Circle nomination.

—**Alexia Jasmene** is a Chicago based trans actor/poet/musician/comedian who does what she can as a storyteller to change hearts and minds. She has performed at various theaters across Chicago including Picnic at American Theater Company and KinFolk The New Colony.

—**Brian Michalski** left his secure job as a kindergarten teacher to spend 22 months solo backpacking his way through 20 countries including Australia, India, Myanmar and Cuba. Since his return, he has had the pleasure to educate and inspire budding global nomads of all ages at various local organizations throughout the Chicago-land area.

—**Douglas O'Keeffe** is the co-producer and host of Inside Leather History; A Fireside Chat, an international interview series capturing for posterity the rich and valuable stories of Leather/Fetish/Kink community notables. Douglas is a long time Chicago community volunteer and writer. Douglas travels world-wide as an airline purser.

—**Timothy Rey** is a writer/ performer, arts administrator and teaching artist. He is the co-founder of the LGBTQ solo performance series SOLO HOMO, which ran from 2002-2011 in Chicago. His book of poetry and performance, LITTLE VICTORIES, was published in 2012.



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