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weekly nightlife section in





Left to right: Miss Continental Plus Chy'enne Valentino, Mr. Continental Sir Valentino, Miss Continental Stasha Sanchez, pageant system owner Jim Flint, Miss Continental Elite Lorna Vando. Photos by Jack Neilsen

New Miss Continental chosen

Labor Day weekend concluded with the crowning of Stasha Sanchez as the new Miss Continental, Monday, September 3, at The Vic Theatre. Sanchez rose to the top from a field of 27 candidates to emerge the winner.

Sanchez joins fellow 2018 titleholders Miss Continental Plus 2018 Chy'enne Valentino, Miss Continental Elite 2018 Lorna Vando and Mr. Continental 2019 Sir Valentino, who himself was crowned Saturday, September 1 at the Park West.

Photos by Jack Neilsen



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BILLY Masters

"When I saw **Ariana Grande** on the program, I thought that was something at Taco Bell!" — **Bishop Charles H. Ellis**, who presided over **Aretha Franklin's** funeral, shares his thoughts on Miss Grande after her performance—a comment that was criticized on social media as racist. Ellis was forced to apologize for groping Grande—touching her breast very clearly during his interaction with the star.

ATTENTION ALL MEDIA OUTLETS: Can you please get your shit together? I hate to start off like this, but it's really getting out of control. First, Fox News used a photo of **Patti LaBelle** in its tribute to Aretha Franklin. And then, the BBC used a photo of **Jenifer Lewis**!!! Y'all, Jenifer's like a generation younger than Aretha. Come on—all Black people do not look alike. Next you'll say all gay people look alike—and I swear to you THAT'S not true.

The confusion stemmed from Jenifer's performance at the Aretha tribute concert that took place on the eve of the funeral. Accompanied by the prodigious **Marc Shaiman**, Lewis sang a self-penned composition, "Thank You, Aretha." Standing under the illuminated "Aretha" sign, the Brits simply got confused ... as they are wont to do. But there was no confusing Jen's sentiment, as you'll see on BillyMasters.com.

Prior to Jenifer, people watching the concert at home saw Patti LaBelle sing a teary rendition of "You Are My Friend." Except, she didn't. Sure, she sang it ... at a concert at the Dell Music Center in Philadelphia a week earlier. They simply filmed it and rolled it into the tribute concert, and most of the home viewers were none the wiser. That's what I'm here for.

Then there was the funeral. Thank God I was watching from home. I was able to put it on pause, go out to eat, watch a little more, take a nap, etc. Poor **Bill Clinton** looked like he was gonna pass out. Many people commented on **Rev. Jesse Jackson's** distressed appearance. In case you don't know, late last year he announced that he's been diagnosed with Parkinson's. So, I attribute it to that. Some of the people who didn't come, sent flowers. Folks like **Barbra Streisand**, **Tony Bennett**, **Sir Elton John**, **Mariah Carey** and **Diana Ross** all sent enormous tributes.

Me-oh-my-oh—that was SOME hat on **Miss Cicely Tyson**! For much of the service, I wasn't even sure there was someone under it! But, God love her, the 91-year-old legend launched into a freewheeling adaptation of Paul Laurence Dunbar's "When Malindy Sings," rechristened, "When Aretha Sings." Then there was **Chaka Khan**, who I thought was wearing a choir robe ... or two. In case you were wondering, her fan had dual purpose—it not only kept her cool, but also had the lyrics to "Going Up Yonder" printed on the back! A very tasteful and appropriate **Jennifer Hudson** paid tribute to Aretha with "Amazing Grace," further cementing her position as Franklin's appointed portrayer for the proposed biopic. Fantasia kicked off her shoes and stalked the stage



Billy details what happened at the tribute concert for Aretha Franklin (above).

Photo by Jerry Nunn

with "Bridge Over Troubled Water." **Stevie Wonder** was the penultimate act, with "As," backed by Shirley Murdock, Dottie Peoples, Angie Stone and, wait, once again, Miss Jennifer Lewis wailing "Always." After that, **Jennifer Holliday** ended the ceremony with "Climbing Higher Mountains" as the casket was taken out of the church.

I believe the whole "show" (for lack of a better term) was stolen by **Gladys Knight**, who sang rings around everyone with "You'll Never Walk Alone" and "Bridge Over Troubled Water." (You can never hear that enough times.) But she inadvertently caused quite a bit of gossip. On her way into the funeral, she revealed that she met with Aretha about a year earlier. Gladys said, "At that time, we shared the fact that we had the same disease." So, it wasn't a stretch that most people thought Knight revealed she, too, has pancreatic cancer. (She does look quite thin.) In a statement she released later that day, she said, "I'd like to clarify that Aretha and I discussed both of us having cancer, mine was stage 1 breast cancer and hers was pancreatic. Due to early detection, I am cancer-free and grateful for that." She also chastised the media for spending time gossiping about her—especially on a day where we should be "celebrating Aretha's life and massive contributions to our world."

The next day, we had **John McCain's** funeral—more notable for people who were not there (or purposely banned) than for those who were. I will say it did my heart good to see **Laura Bush** hand **Michelle Obama** a piece of candy—talk about reaching across the aisle! However, one gesture left me a bit cold. Is it acceptable in the Episcopal tradition for a reverend to take a selfie? First, do reverends typically carry their cellphones during a service, let alone a funeral? Secondly, isn't it at least a little rude to ask **George W.** for a selfie when **Obama** is standing right next to you? Reminds me of when I ran into **Joanna Cassidy** at the Emmys, but I'll save that for another time.

Apparently, **JC Mounduix** (the gay little person on Big Brother who go-go dances) is involved in yet another scandal. According to eagle-eyed watchers of the 24/7 feed, he was seen rubbing a sleeping **Tyler Crispin's** arms and kissing his armpits. JC claims he was trying to comfort Tyler, who was having nightmares. Many called for his

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removal from the show. The producers, clearly trying to avoid another ice cream scooper incident, were quick to respond: "We spoke with all three of the houseguests separately in detail about the incidents. Tyler and Haleigh explained to the producers that they in no way felt threatened, unsafe or sexually harassed." For the time being, JC (and the entire Moonves family) can keep their jobs!

Lastly, we hear that the Venice Film Festival premiere of **Bradley Cooper's** A Star is Born, starring **Lady Gaga**, was interrupted when a freak lightning storm caused a power outage. Damn, **Barbra's** powerful!

When a star is born while others pass away, it's time to end another column. Even though we're ending another season, the gossip's just heating up at BillyMasters.com—the site that never takes a vacation. We didn't have room for an "Ask Billy" question, but I'm here for you 24/7. Send your queries along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Taco Bell introduces the Ariana Grande Chalupa! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Brunches at Kit Kat Lounge and Lark

BY ANDREW DAVIS

It's safe to say that weekend brunches at **The Kit Kat Lounge & Supper Club** (3700 N. Halsted St.; KitKatChicago.com), are not the same as almost any other spot in the city.

For almost two decades, the Boystown spot has a very lively brunch, complete with a stable of seasoned drag performers who know how to command a crowd's attention—and my recent visit was no exception. Performer Madam X thrilled the crowd by dressing as Miley Cyrus, Cher, Lady Gaga and others, and singing (not lip-synching) their songs—and, at one point, deftly taking all the money several women had, including the dollar bills sitting on the table. (Interestingly, Madam X told Windy City Times after her performance that she doesn't want to be famous, for fear of losing her connections with the audience.)

If you're looking for a drink, this is DEFINITELY the place—as Kit Kat boasts more than 200 different cocktails, including an enviable list of martinis, such as the Peggy Lee (vodka, orange, banana liqueur and cranberry), Hopscotch



Madam X in performance (left) and Rice Krispie French toast at Kit Kat Lounge.
Photos by Angelique Smith



(vodka, butterscotch schnapps and cream) and Sangria (red wine and brandy) martinis.

As for the food at the “Divalicious Brunch”—well, what can I say? It was pretty much hit-and-miss. The beignets were solid and my friend really enjoyed her Rice Krispie French toast—but the steak in my skillet dish was tougher than a calculus assignment, and I basically ate around it. Service was also noticeably slow (and with a two-hour limit at each table, patrons might be at the mercy of the servers), although the telegenic server was very nice. (Other offerings range from coconut shrimp salad to Avocado Two Ways to, of course, the Kit Kat Burger.

So I would recommend Kit Kat Lounge & Supper Club—as far as the entertainment and drinks go. As for the cuisine, overall, it's not quite diva-worthy.

Lark—under new management

Meanwhile, there's a different kind of fun at nearby restaurant Lark (3441 N. Halsted St.; <http://larkchicago.com/>), which, intriguingly, has been under new management since February (supplanting LKH)—Kit Kat co-owners Edward Gisiger and Ramesh Ariyanayakam, and Managing Partner Ralph Fasano.

Disco music greets you upon entering, daring you not to at least tap your feet even while waiting for a seat. However, there are also all sorts of games, including Jenga. (The people at the table next to us in the impressive patio area played Mystery Date.) Even if the large-screen television outside switches to sports, tunes by Donna Summer, Chaka Khan and others continue playing—providing a surreal, yet sill enjoyable, feel.

As for the food, it's interesting that Kit Kat's management is involved at Lark as well, because the food was definitely tastier (not exotic, but well done) than at the other spot.

My friend absolutely loved the BELT (bacon, egg, lettuce and tomato sandwich), while the turkey club put a smile on my face (in part, thanks to some supremely wonderful ... tater tots). The avocado toast was quite delicious as well—but the crowning glory was the Margherita pizza, complete with a wood-fired Neapolitan crust. However, if that's not your thing, several burgers are available, including the Lark Smash (a tantalizing item with two quarter-pound beef patties, applewood smoked bacon, ham, white cheddar, crispy onion rings, lettuce, tomato, and onions on a buttery brioche bun). And if you have the willpower/stomach room to try a S'mores pizza for dessert, then more power to you.



Lark's Margherita pizza.
Photo by Andrew Davis



HYDRATE

Happy 16th anniversary!
Joseph Stevens Photography





Cat Power.
Photo by
Austin
Conroy

Riot Fest featuring full-album sets

Riot Fest—a celebration of punk, rock 'n' roll, hip-hop, metal, indie rock and roots music—will take place in Chicago's Douglas Park on Sept. 14-16.

This year's highlight will be that several acts will perform their seminal albums front to back—often in celebration of an LP's landmark anniversary. Those acts include Bad Religion, Cypress Hill, Dignable Planets, Fear, Lagwagon, Spitalfield and Suicidal Tendencies.

A few of the other slated acts include Pussy Riot, Cat Power, Sum 41, Andrew W.K., Liz Phair, The Jesus Lizard and Flogging Molly.

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

Second City, HBH team for Women's Health Fair

The ladies of The Second City and Chicago's premiere women's health organizations are collaborating on the first-ever Second City Women's

Health Fair, with She the People & Women's Health Services at Howard Brown Health (HBH) as hosts.

The event will take place Thursday, Sept. 6, at UP Comedy Club, 230 W. North Ave. The fair will begin at 6:30 p.m., while the show She the People: Girlfriends' Guide to Sisters Doing It for Themselves will start at 8 p.m.

Representatives from groups including Planned Parenthood of IL, Chicago Women's Health Center, Early to Bed, Empowered Therapy and Howard Brown Health will be on hand before they take in a performance of Second City's The Second City's She the People: Girlfriends' Guide to Sisters Doing It for Themselves—a sketch show created, designed and performed entirely by the women of Second City.

See SecondCity.com/womenshealthfair.

Classic-car show Sept. 8-9 in Rosemont

The Chicago Classic Auto Show welcomes Grand Marshal Larry Klairmont to share more than 80 years of automobile expertise and an abundance of meticulously preserved cars from Klairmont Collections.

The Chicago Classic Auto Show will bring the entire classic-car community together for a celebration of automotive history, exhibiting more than 600 automobiles on Sept. 8-9 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 N. River Rd., Rosemont.

Tickets are \$20-\$150 each; visit <https://www.showclix.com/event/chicago-classic-auto-show>.

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