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PAGE 14



WINDY CITY TIMES

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

MAY 28, 2014
VOL 29, NO. 35

www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com



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Marriages start in Illinois June 1

BY MATT SIMONETTE

June 2014 won't just mark an ordinary gay-pride celebration for the LGBT community and their allies in Illinois—it's also the month that SB10, the Religious Freedom and Marriage Equality Act, takes effect throughout the state.

Some LGBT Illinoisans have been able to marry legally in the state for several months—a federal judge ruled in February that the state's ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional. Many parts of the state, among them Cook County, enthusiastically welcomed that development; County Clerk David Orr, who

refused to defend himself and his office against the lawsuit that precipitating the ruling, was issuing marriage licenses within hours of the decision.

As of May, counties that joined Cook in issuing licenses include Cass, Champaign, Clinton, DeKalb, Greene, Grundy, Hardin, Jackson, Macon, McLean, Ogle, Perry, St. Clair, Wabash and Woodford.

Additionally, according to a May 14 statement from Equality Illinois, five other counties said they will be ready to receive marriage license applications from same-sex couples on Friday, May 30: Clay, DeWitt, Johnson, Massac and Morgan.

Representatives from Champaign, Christian, Craw-

ford and Montgomery counties told Equality Illinois their clerk's offices would be open Sunday, June 1. Because of a 24-hour waiting period that is required after getting a marriage license, June 2 will be the first day couples applying on that day can marry. (Cook County's office will not open until June 2.) In areas where the county clerk's office is closed June 1, June 3 will be first day.

Shortly after Judge Sharon Coleman's ruling in February, Orr told Windy City Times Feb. 27 that marriages had been taking place in a slow but steady trickle.

"We haven't had a stampede, which is actually a

Turn to page 8

HOT SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT

Feel the heat of our summer entertainment preview, including About Face Theatre's *Methhtacular!* (left, photo from AFT), Hubbard Street Dance's *Gnawa* (center, photo by Todd Rosenberg), and Susan Sarandon and Melissa McCarthy in the film *Tammy* (right, photo by Michael Tackett).

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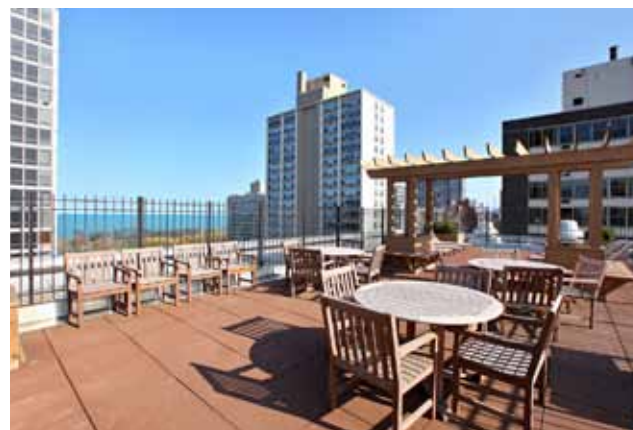
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Images on cover (left, from top): Photo of Maritxa Vidal by Hal Baim; photo of IML 2014 Ramien Pierre by Verdell Shannon; photo of Landon Wilson from Wilson; photo of Nate Braga and Sean Fortunato by Michael Brosilow



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GOASTT STORY

Sean Lennon talks about Elton John, Rufus Wainwright and his own band, GOASTT.



There was plenty of food for thought at the NRA show and the Sweets & Snacks Expo (above).

Photo by Andrew Davis



Travel to South Dakota, where there's actually plenty to see and do.
Photo by Jerry Nunn

SEEING STARS

A special WCT segment tells where you can go for outdoor theater.

'BEAR' ESSENCE

WCT reviews the book Bear, Otter, and the Kid.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Find out the latest about Miley Cyrus, Greg Louganis and Crystal Bowersox.

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Navy promotes, then discharges trans* sailor

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL BLICKENSERFER

On its website, the U.S. Navy advises people considering joining to “Think about it. As long as you have the drive to make a difference in the world—and in your own life—there will be a place for you in America’s Navy. In fact, the Navy experience can shape your future through outstanding financial benefits, unparalleled career potential, and the lifestyle of freedom and personal growth that you’ve been waiting for.”

When he turned 20, Landon Wilson felt like he could make a difference. He wanted to do more for his country than just live a comfortable life in his home town of Warner Robins, Georgia. He felt like the cause of freedom was far bigger than him and he wanted to contribute to it. Wilson enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 2011. He worked tirelessly; received high-level security clearance, specialized training and deployment to Afghanistan; and was the subject of multiple commendations, a promotion and the respect of both his superiors and his shipmates.

Two months ago, Wilson was discharged from the Navy—a life and a career that had become the whole world to him. There was no place for him in America’s Navy because he is a transgender man.

“When I enlisted, it was still a time when ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ (DADT) was in effect,” Wilson recalled. “So I knew I could be kicked out just because of how I appeared.” He said that he had known since the age of four that he was not supposed to be a girl. But—growing up—he didn’t want to adopt the term “trans.” His enlistment paperwork marked him as female. One month after he began boot camp, DADT was repealed following a relentless effort by organizations such as Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), the Human Rights Campaign, the ACLU, the Anti-Defamation League and even the Log Cabin Republicans.

Allyson Robinson is a military policy expert and former service member. “It was a very focused process on one very particular piece of legislation,” Robinson recalled. “These conversations were taking place on the heels of moving to exclude transgender people from the Employment Non Discrimination Act that was before Congress in 2007. All of the advocacy organizations—with which I worked during that time—were conscious of the drive for transgender inclusion, yet there was a clear feeling that talking about gender identity in the context of [DADT] repeal was complicating matters and that it was not worth putting off repeal for a future time in which there might not be a friendly congress to accomplish it.”

Denny Meyer—the media director for the Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA)—is a gay former service member who enlisted in 1968 during the height of Vietnam War protests. “The party line among LGBT activists was ‘don’t mention the transgender issue or you’ll ruin everything,’” he said. “Most organizations remained silent or worse. They didn’t want to muddy the waters and so the issue was pushed aside. It was a tremendous throwing under the bus.”

Meanwhile, Wilson had become a cryptologic technician working with signals analysis and communication. It was a job that required months of specialist training and top secret clearance. “You had to pretty much put your entire life on display for these people to determine if you’re eligible for this clearance,” Wilson said. “So I did that and I went through so much training but obviously it was for nothing.”

“Still Serving in Silence: Transgender Service Members and Veterans in the National Transgender Discrimination Survey” was a 2013

study conducted by the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. It reported that “transgender Americans serve in the military at a high rate. 20 percent of NTDS respondents had served in the armed forces as compared to 10 percent of the U.S. general population.”

Robinson works with hundreds of transgender people who are still actively serving in the military. “In my experience, they joined for the same reasons as other Americans,” she said. “Some have a drive to serve their country that leads them into uniform. Others have a need for a good job, money for college and good healthcare for their families.”

For Wilson, the military gave him a sense of purpose. “It’s one of those few careers where you are recognized immediately by the uniform you wear,” he said. “People recognize what you stand for. It gave me purpose in knowing that people had put their faith in me to defend their country. That was a huge deal for me.”

Wherever he trained—Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina and North Carolina—Wilson was accepted as male. “Everybody thought I was just a regular guy,” he said. “Nobody knew I was trans* and nobody thought that I was ever once female until everything kind of blew up.”

That happened once Wilson was deployed on a highly sensitive mission in Afghanistan. “I was up for a promotion,” Wilson explained. “My unit in Hawaii had contacted my unit in Afghanistan and my Hawaii leadership used a female pronoun for me. That caused confusion and they started investigating as to why a female pronoun was used for someone who clearly was not a female.”

His sergeant major questioned him about the discrepancy in his military record and subsequently informed Wilson that he would be going back to the States. “They pulled me off without any hesitation or any consideration for the big picture,” Wilson said. “Nobody else was trained for that position. They didn’t have anybody to replace me.”

Wilson arrived back in the states Dec. 9, 2013, and spent the next three months in limbo. “Nobody knew what to do with me,” he said. “They promoted me to petty officer third class. They gave me awards for job performance. I was up for Sailor of the Year. They continued to praise me and give me accolades and told me that I was a great service member until they added the word transgender to me. That changed everything.”

Without recourse, Wilson was told to make a decision to either stop his transition or take a discharge. “There was no reason as to why I had to make an either/or decision when I was performing just as well as anybody else,” he said.

There are transgender people in all branches of the United States military but—just as gay, lesbian and bisexual service members were forced to do before Sept. 20, 2011—who remain hidden and silent, barred from serving openly because of disqualifications that include, according to the Department of Defense directive 6130.03 governing medical standards for appointment, enlistment and induction: “a history of major abnormalities or defects of the genitalia such as change of sex, hermaphroditism, pseudohermaphroditism, or pure gonadal dysgenesis” as well as “current or history of psychosexual conditions, including but not limited to transsexualism, exhibitionism, transvestism, voyeurism and other paraphilias.”

It’s a policy that forces most transgender people out of military service. Like Wilson, they face what many may consider a horrendous choice: remain in the military as a closeted individual then transition after they have retired or discharged, or attempt to seek



Landon Wilson in uniform. Photo courtesy of Wilson

transition related services while active in the military. If they choose the latter, they face consequences.

Robinson—a transgender woman who enlisted in the army at 18—says that the consequence for transgender people in the U.S. military who do not remain closeted is usually immediate discharge. “It’s what we’re finding anecdotally from the trans* people that we’re working with,” she said. “But there are cumulative costs associated with the repression of a deeply held identity or value. Many of our service members find that those costs become unbearable prior to the time that they are able to make the most of their investment in the military through retirement.”

Not so in America’s allies around the world—including the United Kingdom, Israel, Australia, Canada and Spain, all of where transgender people can serve openly.

“We’re supposed to be leaders,” Meyer said. “Yet, even if transgender rights had been included in the original bill by Marty Meehan [then a Massachusetts congressman] it would have been stripped down to attempt to appease the far right.”

He added that—despite a progressive attitude shown in now retired military leaders such as Adm. Michael Mullens and Adm. Jay Johnson—transgender rights are still not open for discussion. “Transgender rights have always run into a brick wall in state after state,” he said. “It’s the last frontier the bigots cling to. What’s really needed is a very powerful voice.”

Robinson is working with advocacy organizations such as the National Center for Transgender Equality, the ACLU, the HRC and SPART*A

(an organization “built by, for and with members from all parts of the LGBT military community”) to change policy. “We’ve been able to benefit from the partnership of local and regional organizations,” she said. “There has been recognition—not only among advocacy organizations—but in the Pentagon and elsewhere that the repeal of DADT has gone exceedingly well. It’s been a smooth integration and the horror stories raised by opponents of repeal have proved themselves to be myths. That has made the work around transgender inclusion easier.”

Meyer said that TAVA is actively engaged in fundraising and development while increasing their membership. He said he wants to mobilize people through education. “Somebody could get incensed and call their member of congress,” he said. “That’s how progress happens. It’s a matter of awareness that includes the LGBT community. They think ‘Oh, DADT is repealed so we’re done now.’ But they don’t know that at least a fourth of our population and the most likely to join [the military] are still left out and still in the torture that people went through during and before DADT.”

Wilson is left trying to figure out civilian life. He is helping out with a project called TransMilitary—a reality series that compares and contrasts the lives of US trans* service members to UK trans* service members. He is also a part of SPART*A. Through that group he has met and talked with a number of trans* people, many of whom are currently serving and closeted. They are more than aware that their transition will cost them everything they have worked for if they get caught. “I try to make sure they have a support system,” Wilson said. “I make sure they understand they are not alone in this. It does feel some days like you’re the only person going through it. There’s no one you can open up to because you could lose it all. But to know that there are people out there dealing with this gives you a sense of solidarity.”

But every day that passes makes Wilson yearn that much more to be back in military service. “I could get a job doing exactly what I was doing as a civilian,” he said. “And I would be supported in my transition. But the military was the one place where I felt like I could be myself in some crazy, paradoxical sense. The friendships and the brotherhood that I experienced is something that I know I will never find anywhere else.”

“Those of us who have joined are incredible patriots,” Meyer said. “We weren’t wanted, some of us are still not wanted and yet we felt compelled to join and serve our country.”

Wilson changed all his legal documents and gender markers in February of this year. However—due to the fact that his DD Form 214 Military Service Record still lists his birth name—he will be always be out and considered trans* as far as the military is concerned.

If there is a change in military policy, Wilson said he will be the first one in line to reenlist. “We’re just like everybody else who wants to serve and protect this country,” he said. “I believe that changes will happen when our senior officers say ‘our military is going because of every individual regardless if they’re gay, lesbian or trans. That is what we need to happen.’”

Windy City Times reached out to the Department of Defense (DoD). A statement received from DoD spokesman Lieutenant Commander Nate Christensen said, “At this time there are no plans to change the department’s policy and regulations which do not allow transgender individuals to serve in the U.S. military. Policies on military personnel and health care regarding transgender members are intended to meet the needs of the services, which include the ability to deploy to and serve in austere environments with limited (and perhaps no) access to medical care for prolonged periods on little or no notice.”

For more information about TransMilitary, visit <http://www.transmilitary.tv/>. Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA)’s website is <http://tavausa.org/>. For more information about SPART*A, visit <http://www.spartapride.org/>.

Loyola's marriage ban meets new opposition

BY DERRICK CLIFTON

Some students at Loyola University Chicago are mounting a new challenge to the university's ban on same-sex wedding ceremonies.

Just weeks after state lawmakers approved the equal marriage bill last fall, school administrators responded by quietly adopting an official policy on weddings, which Windy City Times first uncovered in February. Loyola changed its standard practice of hosting "legally recognized" ceremonies on campus, replacing it with a new restriction that only allows Catholic weddings in the university's Madonna della Strada Chapel. The ban not only excludes same-sex weddings, but also civil and religious weddings that aren't Catholic.

The news was met with hurt and shock from various members of the Loyola community, including sophomore Michelle Adzido, who recently launched a new Change.org petition urging a policy reversal.

"It made me feel that the university isn't following in its messages of social justice and advocating for equity of all," said Adzido, who stressed that the ban affects everyone affiliated with Loyola, not just LGBT students. "Not everyone who has a wedding in the state of Illinois is Catholic, and not everyone affiliated with this school is Catholic. [The policy] transmits a hurtful message to exclude people who invest their time, energy and money into this diverse and dynamic atmosphere."

The petition effort, which has collected more

than 1,200 signatures since launching two weeks ago, has roots in a group project from one of Adzido's courses last semester.

A 300-level Loyola psychology class titled "Understanding Prejudice" sparked a group discussion that inspired Adzido to launch the petition this month, although she and many others first learned of the policy two months ago. Adzido, who identifies as bi, said the lessons learned in class empowered group members to develop strategies that would address various forms of injustice.

"We ended the class on a wider note of collective action: confronting prejudice, making sure we can identify ways to alleviate it, and make others aware," she said, adding that it inspired an open letter she wrote and eventually released on Facebook on April 14. The project group decided to use online platforms because it's how they heard about the university's new policy.

In the open letter, Adzido took the administration to task in what she described as a matter of adhering to the school's mission statement and promise.

"In what ways does this ban epitomize the 'diverse learning community that values freedom of inquiry, the pursuit of truth, and care for others?'" she wrote. "In what manner does this promote equality using 'open-handed and generous ways to appropriate a balance between justice and fairness?'"

The policy itself was adopted, according to university officials, in keeping with the univer-



Michelle Adzido. Photo from Kyle Schlegel/Veridical Photography

were not aware of the new petition. She declined further comment.

Adzido's petition is the second campaign launched in opposition to the university's exclusion on same-sex weddings.

Loyola junior Christine Irvine first challenged the university's exclusion of same-sex ceremonies early last fall in a Change.org petition that gathered thousands of signatures. At the time, Loyola's refusal wasn't university policy, but their standard provision for "legally recognized" ceremonies didn't include same-sex civil unions in Illinois. Irvine's wedding ceremony plans were denied by school officials when they learned she would marry a woman.

Irvine, like Adzido, said she believes the policy should be reversed to allow all wedding ceremonies on campus grounds that aren't designated sacred spaces. She's still troubled about how the ban came to be, and that no one was directly notified, even after her petition campaign.

"The fact that [university administrators] made the decision behind closed doors, without consultation from students, upset an even broader group of people," Irvine said, citing tentative organizing efforts from campus groups and student op-eds that chided officials over the policy.

Although Irvine expressed resignation after learning of the university's official policy last February, it was her story and reaction that Adzido said inspired her group to raise awareness and continue pressing the issue.

And, for them, the solution is simple. "Get rid of the policy," Adzido said.

To view the online petition, visit <http://www.change.org/petitions/administration-of-loyola-university-chicago-dissolve-the-policy-excluding-same-sex-marriage-ceremonies-on-campus>.

sity's Jesuit and Catholic tradition as a result of the equal marriage law. Even though weddings are only allowed in the Madonna della Strada Chapel, receptions of all kinds are still allowed at university venues.

Maeve Kiley, Loyola's director of communication, emailed that university administrators

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PROUD MEMBER

HBHC officials meet about LBT women's health needs

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Officials from Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC) met May 19 as part of their town-hall series focusing on the health of specific populations within the LGBT community.

Turnout for the public meeting, which focused on health concerns for lesbian, bisexual and trans women, was very low, with only a few community members attending. HBHC President David Munar said that pointed to a challenge HBHC faced: getting messages out to women within the community.

Chief Medical Officer Magda Houlberg said that female populations must often contend with "a systemic issue of engagement with healthcare."

Houlberg said that many women's health apparatuses were structured around reproductive health, which many LBT women might not necessarily need to access. One participant noted that even HBHC's website page about women's health services was inordinately preoccupied with artificial insemination.

Houlberg said that many women do not begin to regularly engage with a physician regularly until they are well into their 30s and 40s.

Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program Patient Navigator Susie Narak added that mixed messages about women's health—varying recommendations about when and how often to go in for mammograms and pap smears, for example—can often leave women confused about when they should be accessing medical care.

"There are a lot of mixed messages out there," Narak said. "A lot of people don't come in until something's actually wrong. There's some embarrassment sometimes."

Michelle Wetzel, senior vice president of policy, strategy and business development, noted that some women in larger households might also be inclined to put their focus on the health of other family members in front of their own: "Sometimes you end up putting yourself last."

Munar asked what work HBHC needed to do to get out their messaging about women's health and the center's programming.

Wetzel said that historically that task had been daunting—there is no "strip" for LBT women like Halsted Street, where you can find many gay men, she said, adding "It's a lot easier to do outreach for gay men."

Participants suggested a number of community events, among them gatherings such as brunches, or "thrift store crawls" between the Brown Elephant stores, that could address health issues and introduce community members to HBHC and Lesbian Community Care Project programming.

HBHC has a number of town-hall meetings addressing the needs of various parts of the LGBT community planned over the course of the next several weeks. For more information, visit http://www.howardbrown.org/hb_news.asp?id=2836.



From left: Michelle Wetzel, Susie Narak and Magda Houlberg at the Howard Brown town-hall meeting. Photo from the center

Groups present forum on LGBT health care curriculum

BY MARGO ANDERSON

On May 21, the Adler School of Professional Psychology, the Chicago Department of Public Health and University of Illinois at Chicago presented a panel discussion of LGBT issues in the health-care curriculum that streamed live on the Internet.

Bechara Choucair, MD, MS, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health, addressed the need to include LGBT issues in health-care coursework. "When compared to straight students, LGB youth are more likely to try smoking, they are more likely to use hard drugs, they are less likely to use condoms when engaged in sexual intercourse, they are more likely to be obese, and they are more likely to go without food for at least 24 hours in order to lose weight," he said. "The health disparities are very real for many members of the LGBT community."

Kim Hunt, MS, executive director of Affinity Community Services, said, "A lot of times [LGBT] people are doing this by themselves and that creates a whole other set of issues to deal with as a healthcare professional. ... The LGBT community is a lot more diverse than some of the media images would have us believe and that again has a huge impact on health and access to health."

Professor Jesus Ramirez-Valle, Ph.D., MPH, of the University of Illinois at Chicago, teaches an entire course devoted to sexual minority health. He said, "We talk briefly all the way from the genetics ... to the political processes of how people get to be named LGBT." Ramirez-Valle said he aims "to provide [the students] the skills to do research ... [and] identify effective interventions for the particular issues."

But Kevin Osten-Garner, Psy.D, associate vice president of academic affairs at Adler School of Professional Psychology, has an issue with elective LGBT coursework. He stated, "I don't want to preach to the choir. What I want is that every graduate of this institution regardless of your degree program know how to talk and treat LGBTQ people with respect and confidence ... because all of our professional standards in the mental health field require that of them." Adler now has a faculty resource database to help its faculty incorporate LGBT issues into every course.

But there are several challenges to providing LGBT coursework. Said Ramirez-Valle, "I was afraid of teaching this course. ... I want people

to know me for the skills and expertise that I have, not for the person I love." Frank Hicks, Ph.D., RN, an assistant dean at Rush University Medical Center, mentioned the financial and faculty time restraints on curriculum.

Rush University Medical Center professor Tanya Friese, RN, MSN, said these challenges have been met by incorporating current events into the coursework using case studies or application. However, she added that the culture on campus is just as important as the curriculum. Said Hicks, "All of the administrators had to have a diversity performance goal and the faculty did too."

Rush introduces sexuality very early on in the nursing path and offers regular "lunch and learns" as well as Howard Brown's HEAL for continuing education credit. Poj Lysoukovon, MD, director of the General Care Nursery at Comer Children's Hospital, added, "We have a pediatric committee on diversity making sure that our residency class for pediatricians is well balanced." Comer holds book clubs and has guest speakers.

LPAC announces Ricketts as chair, '14 endorsements

BY MATT SIMONETTE

LPAC, the nation's first lesbian-backed Super PAC, announced May 15 that Chicago Cubs co-owner Laura Ricketts would be its new board chair, as well as a first-wave slate of 15 endorsements for 2014.

Ricketts, who is openly lesbian, co-founded LPAC and has been active in the committee since its inception. She replaces Chicagoan Sarah Schmidt.

In a press release, Ricketts said, "I am humbled and excited to take the reins as we continue to give lesbians a seat at the political table, and as we work hard to elect a new slate of LPAC candidates."

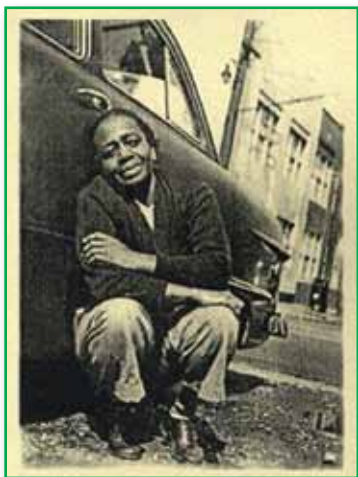
Ricketts told the Washington Post that she hopes LPAC will be able to raise about \$1 million from small-dollar contributors on top of \$1.2 million it has raised since its inception in 2012.

The 15 endorsed candidates represent a number of races across the nation; among them is Illinois governor Pat Quinn, who is facing a strong challenge from venture capitalist Bruce Rauner this year. On its website, LPAC cited Quinn for his signing legislation abolishing the death penalty in Illinois in 2011, as well as his signing legislation legalizing gay marriage in 2013. It also noted his 100 percent rating from NARAL.

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PRIDE MONTH 2014



Opening program features a screening and discussion of the documentary film, *Living With Pride: Ruth C. Ellis @ 100*, with director Yvonne Welbon.

The film spotlights the life of Ruth Ellis, who was thought to be the oldest "out" African American lesbian.

Sunday, June 1 at 2 p.m.
Woodson Regional Library Auditorium
9525 S. Halsted St.

Additional highlights in June include:

Film Screening: The Celluloid Closet
Discussion with Laura Krugoff, Lambda Literary Award nominated author of *My Brother's Name*
Award-winning artist Edie Fake
Performance by the Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles' Brass Quintet and Clarinet Choir
RoyAL with DJ Nick Castle

A complete listing of LGBT Pride Month programs is available at chipublib.org.



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MARRIAGE from cover

good thing," Orr said. "We want to make sure people know the licenses are only good for 60 days, and I know a lot of people will want June weddings."

Another reason some couples chose to wait until SB10 actually takes effect is a component of the law allowing couples that have already entered into a civil union to backdate their marriage license to the date of the civil union, without a new ceremony or new fee. Because of the wording of the judicial order, that tenet does not apply until June 1. Couples with civil unions may have a new ceremony, without the fee, should they choose.

Some Illinois county authorities and public officials had expressed varying levels of wariness over the February ruling. Some county clerks for example were wary of the legal implications of the marriages, for example, and asked whether the early start date might complicate their legality in case of divorce. Attorney General Lisa Madigan later said that her office would support couples that might need to sue authorities seeking the right to marry.

Other gay-marriage opponents throughout the state also expressed unease with the forthcoming law. (Champaign-Urbana) News-Gazette reported May 22 that the Urbana City Council broke into an argument as to whether the city should recognize "Marriage Fairness Act Awareness Month." The resolution passed 11 to nine, but council member Lloyd Carter, a Democrat, said that he had "sworn on the Bible that I wouldn't betray God. I'm not about to do that. I can't do that. That is my feeling."



Rev. Heidi Alfrey. Photo from Alfrey



The Field Museum will be the site of a marriage-equality event. Photo by Andrew Davis

Events to mark the occasion

A number of events are planned in the Chicago area to celebrate the law taking effect.

"Equality at The Field"—a celebration of marriage in Illinois—will take place Thursday, May 29, 6-8 p.m., at The Field Museum, 1400 S. Lake Shore Dr.

Supporters include GLAAD, Halsted Vodka, Egalite wine and Outfielders, the museum's in-house LGBT affinity group.

On May 30, A Church4Me MCC will present a cabaret performance, "At Last ... A Musical Celebration of Marriage Equality in Illinois." The show was created by AChurch4Me's music director, Michael McBride, and features several local cabaret and theater performing artists in Chicago, and will take place 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Atmosphere, 5355 N. Clark St. Proceeds will benefit the programs of AChurch4Me, including its HIV/AIDS prevention ministry, senior support group and ongoing support of the Lakeview Pantry. Additionally, 10 percent of all proceeds will go directly to The Crib, an overnight youth shelter in Lakeview that The Night Ministry runs.

On May 31, winners of the Biggest MINI Wedding Ever contest, sponsored by MINI of Chicago and Center on Halsted, will gather for their all-expense-paid weddings at the Center. Carl Johnson and Tyler Bornheimer as well as Aitor Mendoza and Gary Ward were selected as the winners; each couple got to invite 75 guests for the event.

On June 1 Unity in Chicago will host "Married in Unity," an all-inclusive, non-denominational group wedding ceremony taking place in the Unity garden at located on the church grounds at 1925 W. Thome Ave. in Rogers Park. The garden opens at 4 p.m. and the ceremony begins at 5 p.m.

"One of Unity's guiding principles is Love Honored Here," said Rev. Heidi Alfrey of Unity in a statement. "Unity honors all expressions of love and on June 1 we will celebrate marriage equality with an open ceremony for all who wish to be a part of history. We're inviting

anyone who wants to make a commitment with their partner or who would like witness this event. It's going to be an amazing day."

A marriage-equality blessing ceremony will also take place at Unitarian Church of Evanston, 1330 Ridge Ave., in Evanston, June 1, at 1 p.m.

Also on June 1, the United Latino Pride Organization and Lambda Legal will host a "Big Queer Latina/o Wedding" at Chicago Urban Arts Society, 600 W. Cermak Rd., at 5 p.m. The event additionally commemorates United Latino Pride Week.

"We decided to throw a big wedding open to the community because this victory didn't happen solely thanks to politicians," said Lalo Aguayo, ULP co-chair, in a statement. "It happened because of the countless hours our colleagues at all the major LGBTQIA and Latina/o organizations spent speaking directly to our leaders in Springfield. It happened because our families and friends engaged in conversations with their peers. This is how we won marriage equality. Hearts and minds are changed one conversation at a time. It only makes sense to celebrate this victory the way Latina/os do: as a family."

A marriage equality celebration will take place June 1, 1-5 p.m., at Kathy Osterman Beach (a.k.a. Hollywood Beach), 5800 N. Lake Shore Dr. The event will also feature an interfaith marriage blessing, according to a state-

ment from Ald. Harry Osterman.

"Thousands of people—legislators, community activists, families and citizens—across Illinois and the City of Chicago have been fighting for years for marriage equality. Now is the time to celebrate the victory of marriage for all," said Osterman.

On June 2, Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago and Equality Illinois will host 15 couples, opening MCA's galleries and sculpture garden for complimentary ceremonies and post-ceremony festivities. The couples will be wed in the museum's Kovler Atrium, with a non-denominational officiate officiating the ceremony. A short celebration will follow for each couple.

Luxury wedding event at The James on June 5

"I Do"—a luxury wedding presentation—will take place Thursday, June 5, on the second floor of The James Chicago, 55 E. Ontario St.

People are invited to join Sinisa Srdic, director of special events at The James, and Frank Andonoplas of Frank Event Design.

RSVP to JFeingold@JamesHotels.com.



Marge Summit (left) and Janan Lindley. Photo by Sheri Berliner

Summit, Lindley marry

Longtime Chicago gay activist and bar owner Marge Summit married her partner, Janan Lindley, in May. Summit, owner of the popular His 'n Hers bar, has been active in the Chicago LGBT community for many decades.

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AFC event 'Ignites' group's 30th anniversary

BY MATT SIMONETTE

About 325 supporters of AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) gathered May 16 at Ignite Studios for the organization's "Ignite" party, intended to launch the yearlong celebration of the organization's 30th anniversary.

"Nearly 30 years ago, when AIDS Foundation of Chicago was founded, we were facing a very different age in this epidemic," AFC Executive Director John Peller said. "We've made a tremendous amount of progress in the fight against HIV."

Peller then cited many new developments that illustrate that progress, among them: new HIV cases are being reduced among some populations, going down 90 percent among injection drug users, for example; more people with HIV are learning when they are HIV-positive; and evidence that HIV-positive partners on treatment are unlikely to transmit the infection to partners who are HIV-negative.

Peller added that, "AFC recognized that helping people with HIV is about helping them with their daily struggles, from substance abuse to unstable housing, from homelessness to domestic violence and other challenges that they face in their lives."

Attorney Robert Mink was presented with the Lori Kaufman Volunteer Award by Kaufman herself. She thanked Mink for "hundreds of hours of free legal assistance" to AFC and other organizations.

Accepting the award, Mink said, "The leaders and staff of AFC have just got it right with me.

They have embraced me as a non-traditional volunteer—they weren't afraid to find a role for me where I could help foster AFC's missions and goals. They connected me through the organization in so many ways."

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin then presented attorney Michael Bauer with AFC's Civic Leadership Award. Durbin said that Bauer educated him on many aspects relating to HIV/AIDS over the course of their friendship.

"It's a friendship that goes beyond politics, and it's a friendship that lasts to this day," Durbin said. "Michael had the heart and patience to take the time to educate this senate candidate and United States senator."

Bauer paid tribute to Dr. Ron Sable, who opened the first medical clinic in Chicago that provided services to people with HIV/AIDS, and realized that government assistance was needed to for services and research that had the disease—he was the first openly gay candidate to run for Chicago City Council.

"Many of us, myself included, learned the importance of politics, the importance of getting people elected to office who were sensitive to our needs and would help us legally and financially through their work and help in office" from Sable, Bauer said. "Every openly gay or lesbian person elected to office walks in his footsteps."

Peller said that, exactly one year later—on May 15, 2015—AFC would host a gala commemorating the anniversary.

Ignite Studios presented glass-blowing demonstrations over the course of the party.



Mike Bauer was honored at AIDS Foundation of Chicago's "Ignite" event. Photo by Matt Simonette

AFC warns of looming cuts

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Officials from AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) are calling attention to state budget issues they say could put Illinoisans with HIV/AIDS in peril.

State legislators are this month considering making permanent the 2011 tax hike from 3.75 percent to 5 percent, which would potentially decrease the state's revenue by approximately \$1.5 billion dollars next year, according to an AFC statement. That means massive budget cuts would be necessary; those would include about \$4 million dollars in cuts for HIV/AIDS services.

"Cutting \$4 million from Illinois' HIV/AIDS services budget means that hundreds of people will lose access to the medications that keeps

them alive," said John Peller, interim president and CEO of AFC. "Legislators need to know that without extending the current tax rates, we will most certainly see more people with HIV in the hospital as well as higher rates of new HIV cases in the community."

Medication support, testing services, prevention services, linked care programs and youth outreach initiatives would be among those efforts that would feel the impact from the cuts.

"We need supporters of equal access to health care to reach out to their Illinois state representatives and tell them that cutting services to people living with HIV/AIDS is unjust and unnecessary," said Peller.

If an extension—currently favored by Gov. Pat Quinn—is not passed, the lower tax rate would take effect Jan. 1, 2015. House Speaker Michael Madigan said May 21 that support among House members for keeping the higher rates is at the moment minimal, The Chicago Sun-Times reported.

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Be T2 Proud!

Cross the finish line to help AIDS Foundation of Chicago provide housing, care, and advocacy for the 43,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Illinois. T2's innovative coaching program will support you every step, pedal, or stroke of the way as you train to finish the race of your lifetime — and raise funds to make a difference in Chicago and across the nation.

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PHOTO BY JOHN GRESS

Join us to hear how HIV-positive patients have taken the courageous first step in their treatment journey.



Meet a Couch Coach

A Couch Coach will be providing information and advice. Hear an honest story, be inspired.



Hear from an Expert

A local healthcare professional will be providing information on TIVICAY, a prescription HIV-1 medicine.



Join the Conversation

You will have the chance to ask questions.

We encourage you to talk to your doctor about HIV and your treatment—and to see if TIVICAY may be right for you.

All presenters are paid spokespersons of ViiV Healthcare.

What is TIVICAY?

TIVICAY is a prescription HIV medicine that is used with other antiretroviral medicines to treat Human Immunodeficiency Virus-1 (HIV-1) in adults and children 12 years of age and older and weighing at least 88 pounds. HIV-1 is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). It is not known if TIVICAY is safe and effective in children younger than 12 years or who weigh less than 88 pounds.

TIVICAY does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control the HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Who should not take TIVICAY?

- **Do not take TIVICAY if you take dofetilide because of a life-threatening interaction.**

What are the most serious side effects of TIVICAY?

- **Allergic reactions. Stop taking TIVICAY and get medical help right away if you have:**
 - **A rash with any of these symptoms:** fever; general ill feeling; extreme tiredness; muscle or joint aches; blisters or sores in your mouth; blisters or peeling of your skin; redness or swelling in your eyes; swelling of your mouth, face, lips or tongue; problems breathing.
 - **Any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems:** yellowing of your skin or whites of your eyes; dark or tea-colored urine; pale-colored stools (bowel movements); nausea or vomiting; loss of appetite; pain, aching, or tenderness on your right side below the ribs.
- **Changes in liver tests.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during treatment with TIVICAY. Your healthcare provider

may do tests to check your liver function before and during treatment with TIVICAY.

- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicines, including increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the middle of your body. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these problems are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system** can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.

What are the other possible side effects of TIVICAY?

- The most common side effects of TIVICAY include trouble sleeping and headache.

Tell your healthcare provider about any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of TIVICAY.

Important Safety Information continued on next page.

A speaker program
about HIV treatment

Couch Talk

YOU'RE INVITED TO A SPECIAL HIV EVENT

We're bringing people together
to talk honestly about HIV.

Save the date: Thurs., June 12

The Westin Michigan Avenue

909 North Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL

Registration: 6:00 pm

Program start: 6:30 pm

Parking Available

RSVP by calling **1-855-653-7430**

Walk-ins are welcome but registration is encouraged.

 **Food will be provided**

What should I tell my healthcare provider before I take TIVICAY?

Before taking TIVICAY, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have ever had an allergic reaction to TIVICAY
- have or had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C
- have any other medical condition
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if TIVICAY will harm your unborn baby
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. **Do not breastfeed** if you take TIVICAY. You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby. It is not known if TIVICAY passes into your breast milk. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements you take.

TIVICAY and other medicines may affect each other, causing side effects. TIVICAY may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how TIVICAY works.

Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take:

- other HIV-1 medicines including: efavirenz (SUSTIVA®), etravirine (INTELENCE®), fosamprenavir (LEXIVA®)/ritonavir (NORVIR®), nevirapine (VIRAMUNE®), or tipranavir (APTIVUS®)/ritonavir (NORVIR).

- antacids or laxatives that contain aluminum, magnesium or calcium, sucralfate (CARAFATE®), iron or calcium supplements, or buffered medicines. TIVICAY should be taken at least 2 hours before or 6 hours after you take these medicines.
- anti-seizure medicines: oxcarbazepine (TRILEPTAL®), phenytoin (DILANTIN®, DILANTIN®-125, PHENYTEK®), phenobarbital (LUMINAL®), carbamazepine (CARBATROL®, EQUETRO®, TEGRETOL®, TEGRETOL®-XR, TERIL®, EPITOL®)
- St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)
- a medicine that contains metformin
- rifampin (RIFATER®, RIFAMATE®, RIMACTANE®, RIFADIN®)

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Patient Information for TIVICAY on the next pages and discuss it with your healthcare provider.

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DGV179R0 March 2014

 **Tivicay**
(dolutegravir)
50 mg tablets

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1-877-844-8872

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PATIENT INFORMATION

TIVICAY® (TIV-eh-kay)
(dolutegravir)
Tablets

Read this Patient Information before you start taking TIVICAY and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment.

What is TIVICAY?

TIVICAY is a prescription HIV medicine that is used with other antiretroviral medicines to treat Human Immunodeficiency Virus-1 (HIV-1) infections in adults and children 12 years of age and older and weighing at least 88 pounds.

HIV-1 is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

It is not known if TIVICAY is safe and effective in children under 12 years of age or who weigh less than 88 pounds.

When used with other HIV-1 medicines to treat HIV-1 infection, TIVICAY may help:

- Reduce the amount of HIV-1 in your blood. This is called “viral load.”
- Increase the number of white blood cells called CD4+ (T) cells in your blood, which help fight off other infections.
- Reduce the amount of HIV-1 and increase the CD4+ (T) cells in your blood which may help improve your immune system. This may reduce your risk of death or getting infections that can happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

TIVICAY does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.

Avoid doing things that can spread HIV-1 infection to others.

- Do not share or re-use needles or other injection equipment.
- Do not share personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them, like toothbrushes and razor blades.
- Do not have any kind of sex without protection. Always practice safe sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with any body fluids such as semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about how to prevent passing HIV to other people.

Who should not take TIVICAY?

Do not take TIVICAY if you take dofetilide. Taking TIVICAY and dofetilide can cause side effects that may be life-threatening.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TIVICAY?

Before you take TIVICAY, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have ever had an allergic reaction to TIVICAY
- have or had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C infection
- have any other medical condition
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if TIVICAY will harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking TIVICAY.
- **Pregnancy Registry.** There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of the registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk to your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. **Do not breastfeed if you take TIVICAY.**
 - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
 - It is not known if TIVICAY passes into your breast milk.
 - Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, or herbal supplements.

TIVICAY and other medicines may affect each other causing side effects. TIVICAY may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how TIVICAY works.

Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take:

- other HIV-1 medicines including: efavirenz (SUSTIVA®), etravirine (INTELENCE®), fosamprenavir (LEXIVA®)/ritonavir (NORVIR®), nevirapine (VIRAMUNE®), or tipranavir (APTIVUS®)/ritonavir (NORVIR).
- antacids or laxatives that contain aluminum, magnesium or calcium, sucralfate (CARAFATE®), iron or calcium supplements, or buffered medicines. TIVICAY should be taken at least 2 hours before or 6 hours after you take these medicines.
- anti-seizure medicines:
 - oxcarbazepine (TRILEPTAL®)
 - phenytoin (DILANTIN®, DILANTIN®-125, PHENYTEK®)

- phenobarbital (LUMINAL®)
- carbamazepine (CARBATROL®, EQUETRO®, TEGRETOL®, TEGRETOL®-XR, TERIL®, EPITOL®)
- St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)
- a medicine that contains metformin
- rifampin (RIFATER®, RIFAMATE®, RIMACTANE®, RIFADIN®)

Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you are not sure if your medicine is one that is listed above.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I take TIVICAY?

- Take TIVICAY exactly as your healthcare provider tells you.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking TIVICAY without talking with your healthcare provider.
- Stay under the care of a healthcare provider while taking TIVICAY.
- You can take TIVICAY with or without food.
- If you miss a dose of TIVICAY, take it as soon as you remember. If it is within 4 hours of your next dose, skip the missed dose and take the next dose at your regular time. Do not take 2 doses at the same time. If you are not sure about your dosing, call your healthcare provider.
- If you take too much TIVICAY, call your healthcare provider or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.
- Do not run out of TIVICAY. The virus in your blood may become resistant to other HIV-1 medicines if TIVICAY is stopped for even a short time. When your supply starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy.

What are the possible side effects of TIVICAY?

TIVICAY may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Allergic reactions.** Call your healthcare provider right away if you develop a rash with TIVICAY. **Stop taking TIVICAY and get medical help right away if you:**
 - **develop a rash with any of the following signs or symptoms**
 - fever
 - generally ill feeling
 - extreme tiredness
 - muscle or joint aches
 - blisters or sores in mouth
 - blisters or peeling of the skin
 - redness or swelling of the eyes
 - swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue
 - problems breathing
 - **develop any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems:**
 - yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes
 - dark or tea-colored urine
 - pale-colored stools or bowel movements
 - nausea or vomiting
 - loss of appetite
 - pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side below the ribs
- **Changes in liver tests.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during treatment with TIVICAY. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your liver function before and during treatment with TIVICAY.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicines. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), breast, and around the middle of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these problems are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome)** can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.

The most common side effects of TIVICAY include:

- trouble sleeping
- headache

Tell your healthcare provider about any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of TIVICAY. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

(continued)

PATIENT INFORMATION (CONT'D)

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store TIVICAY?

- Store TIVICAY at room temperature between 68°F to 77°F (20°C to 25°C).

Keep TIVICAY and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about TIVICAY

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August 2013

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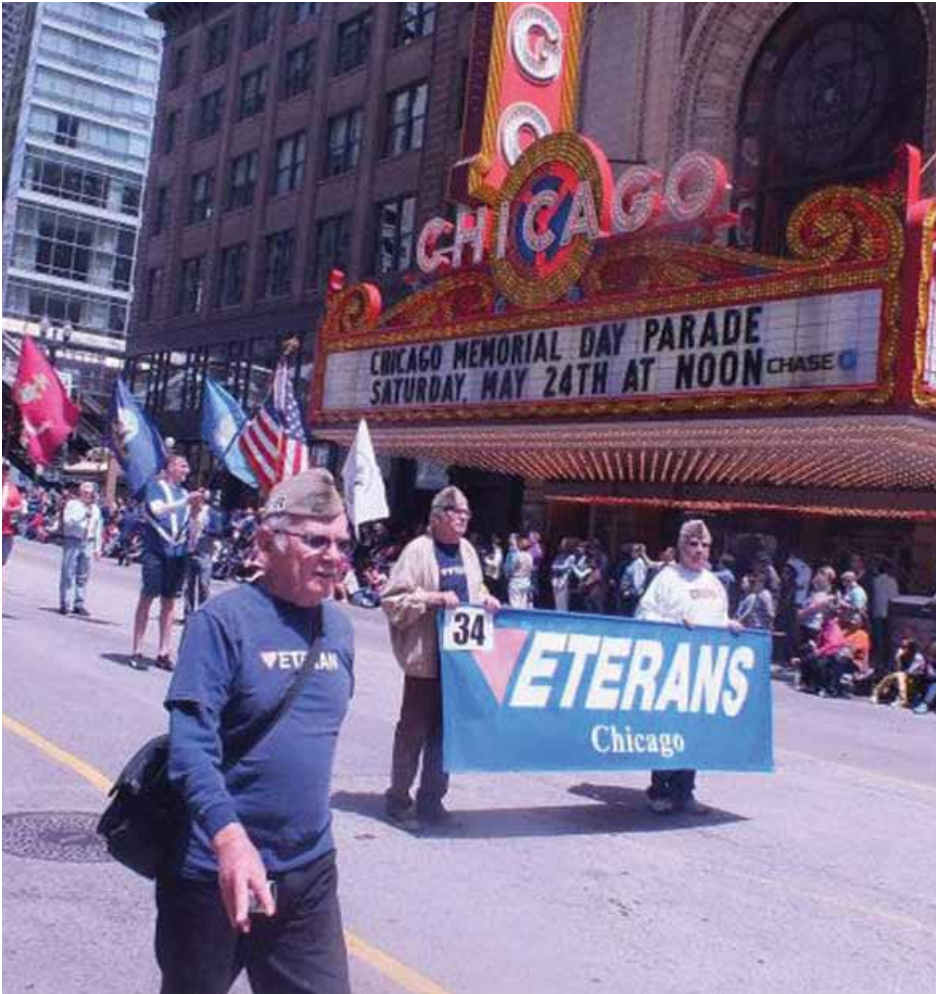
LGBT groups part of Memorial Day parade

LGBT contingents, Lakeside Pride Freedom Marching Band and the Chicago Chapter of the American Veterans for Equal Rights (LGBT veterans), were greeted warmly by the crowd and other military contingents as they participated in the Chicago Memorial Day Parade. (The local ABC affiliate stated that Chicago's parade is the largest in the nation.)

The band entertained with a medley including the anthems of the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard and the Village People's In The Navy.

The arrangement was done by Lakeside's Roy Freeman and Christy Zurcher of Lakeside. Additional photos are at <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/lesbian/news/photospreadthumbs.php?APUB=wct&ADATE=2014-05-24&AGALLERY=MemDayChosen>.

Windy City Times video: LGBT veterans and Lakeside Pride Freedom Marching Band in the 2014 Memorial Day Parade at the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNopqZzz58&feature=youtu.be>.



AVER marching in this year's Memorial Day Parade in Chicago. Photo by Bianca Torres



The Harvey Milk stamp is unveiled during a ceremony at the White House. Photo by Patsy Lynch

Harvey Milk stamp dedicated at White House

A stamp honoring slain gay-rights leader Harvey Milk was dedicated May 22 at the White House. The White House Office of Public Engagement, the U.S. Postal Service and the Harvey Milk Foundation hosted the first-day-of-issue dedication ceremony for the Harvey Milk Forever Stamp.

The event featured remarks by Senator Tammy Baldwin, Representative John Lewis, other politicians, and the cofounders of the Harvey Milk Foundation, Stuart Milk and Anne Kronenberg. Lesbian singer Mary Lambert also performed.

Milk was a visionary leader who became one of the first openly gay elected officials in the U.S. when he won a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977. Milk's achievements gave hope and confidence to LGBTs in the United States and elsewhere at a time when the community was encountering widespread hostility and discrimination. Milk believed that government should represent all citizens, ensuring equality and providing needed services.

His political career was cut short less than a year after he took office in California when he and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone were assassinated Nov. 27, 1978.

In 2009, President Obama posthumously awarded Milk with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. And in 2013, the White House Office of Public Engagement honored 10 openly LGBT elected and appointed officials as "Harvey Milk Champions of Change."

See more information on the Harvey Milk Forever Stamp at about.usps.com/news/national-releases/2014/pr14_026.htm.

Maritxa Vidal: The 'mayor' of Division Street

BY ERIKA L. SANCHEZ

The first thing one notices about Maritxa Vidal, 57, is a warmth and openness that make you feel immediately at ease.

Everyone on Division Street seems to know Vidal. "They call me the mayor or *la princesa del paseo*," Vidal joked. With a black flowy dress, impeccably styled short brown hair and a friendly face, passersby can't help but be drawn to her.

Vidal was recently appointed the director of the health center of Vida/SIDA, a nonprofit that addresses HIV/AIDS in the Latino community. Vidal absolutely loves the organization and is proud of the work they do for the community.

However, things weren't always this perfect for her. As a transgender Latina in Chicago, Vidal had a long and difficult path to get to this point in her life.

Vidal and her family immigrated from Havana, Cuba in 1966. Though her parents were very loving, she said, her childhood was challenging because her parents were so often living paycheck to paycheck. At the age of 15 she began working the second shift at a factory in Skokie with her father. In addition to the poverty she faced, she began to grapple with her gender identity.

"I knew I was different," Vidal said. Her mother, brother, and sister accepted her immediately, but it took about a year for her father to come around. Although her mother loved her, Vidal said she was concerned because "she knew the road that was ahead."

After Vidal transitioned in the 1970s, she was arrested numerous times simply for being who she was. "During that time, if you didn't use at least three articles of male clothing, you could be arrested," she said. "Just for trying to feel comfortable in my own skin."

The mid-'80s became even more challenging for Vidal. During the height of the AIDS epidemic, many of her friends died—some the same year they were diagnosed—and this inevitably took a toll on her mental health. She began abusing drugs to cope. "I couldn't deal with the pain of losing loved ones," she said. "The drugs took over me. I lost my self-esteem. I lost myself. I ended up being homeless." To survive, there were times Vidal resorted to sex work.

Although she was no stranger to discrimination, this was a time in which she frequently experienced hatred, Vidal said. When she attempted to rent a studio, for instance, the landlord told her that he didn't rent to people like her. Because of machismo and Catholicism in the Latino community, she said there continues to be a lot of stigma surrounding sex, homosexuality, transgender people and HIV/AIDS. And while living on the streets of Humboldt Park, she began to understand the suffering of drug addicts, LGBTQ people, and those who were living with HIV/AIDS.

"That's when the Puerto Rican Cultural Center saw that need and opened Vida/SIDA," she said. "To teach, to empower. At that time, nobody knew what was going on." Founded in 1972, the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC)

is a non-profit community-based umbrella institution that serves Chicago's Latino community. They opened Vida/SIDA in 1992 to address the growing HIV/AIDS crisis.

Vidal said that many myths about the disease circulated during this time. Many of the funerals for people who died from AIDS complications were closed-casket. During wakes, people were often on the sidewalks because they were afraid they might contract the disease. Some also believed it was spread through hugs or handshakes.

"They were very sad times for our community. And not just the gay community, but the human community," Vidal said.

In 1992, Vidal decided to seek treatment for her drug addiction. After her recovery, when her head was clear, she said, she became very politically involved and began working and volunteering at various nonprofits. She began volunteering at Vida/SIDA in 1999 and later became an outreach worker and health educator. Part of her job was to give presentations on HIV/AIDS in high schools, colleges, community center. Once she even gave a presentation at a bridal shower. "We always went outside the box," Vidal said.

One of her most memorable outreach experiences, she said, was when she and her colleague attended an event to commemorate a young man's death. His mother wanted to celebrate her son's life on the one-year anniversary



Maritxa Vidal. Photo by Hal Baim

of his death. Because she didn't want another young man or woman to die like her son, she asked Vida/SIDA to give a presentation. Vidal said the crowd there was very mixed—heterosexuals, gays, gang members. "People were listening one hundred percent, and it was a crowd you wouldn't expect. We arrived at 9 p.m. and stayed until 4 a.m. It was beautiful," she said.

"I love the work I do. The Puerto Rican Cultural Center gave me a big chance," she said. "They realize that sometimes people do fall down, and some places might kick you or step over you, but the PRCC sees that you get up and dust yourself off, they will lend you a hand." Vidal said that part of what also makes the cen-

ter great is that it's "from the community, for the community, and by the community."

On May 16, Vidal was one of five women honored with the Henrietta Lacks Righteous Contributor Award at Mercy Hospital Pavilion for her social justice work throughout the years. And though she is proud of all the strides the Latino and LGBTQ communities have made, she said there is still so much work ahead, particularly when it comes to health insurance, poverty, and all the barriers undocumented Latinos continue to face.

"I feel like I've been fighting the stigma of HIV/AIDS for 30 years, but it's taking longer than I thought," she said.

Kelley Quinn chief Emanuel spokesperson

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Kelley Quinn, who is openly lesbian and is currently a communications official in the city's finance department, will take over as a chief spokesperson for Mayor Rahm Emanuel, The Chicago Tribune reported.

Quinn replaces Sarah Hamilton, who told the Tribune she is leaving to "recharge and travel."

Quinn is a former journalist and has served in a similar capacity for many officials, among them Cook County Clerk David Orr, Govs. Rod Blagojevich and Pat Quinn and Cook County Assessor Joseph Berrios.

In her current position, which she has held since August 2013, Quinn mainly addresses budgetary and financial matters on behalf of Emanuel's administration. She has also served as a campaign manager for state Sen. Heather Steans.

"I'm very excited—it's a big challenge," Quinn told the Tribune. "I look forward to working for the mayor."

Quinn is the partner of state Rep. Kelly Cassidy; the couple became engaged in January 2013, shortly after Cassidy was first sworn into office. They live with their family in Rogers Park.

Tajma's Hall's celebration of life May 31 at Center

A celebration of life for Tajma Hall will take place Saturday, May 31, at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., 2-5 p.m.

Hall, a Chicago-based entertainer who shined worldwide, died Saturday morning, April 19, of cardiac arrest at Evanston Hospital. She was 44.

Hall won numerous pageants around the world, including Miss Continental Plus in 2007 and Miss Gay USofA At Large in 2008,

and the Miss All-American about 15 years ago. Hall also hosted the popular Hy-Drug Revue at Hydrate Nightclub in Lakeview. Plus, she had been the official emcee for the annual Continental Pageant Plus & Elite for the past eight years.

Frankie Knuckles tribute June 3 in Millennium Park

A party paying tribute to the late "Godfather of House Music" Frankie Knuckles will take place Tuesday, June 3, 6-9 p.m. at Millennium Park's Chase Central Promenade, 201 E. Randolph St. (The rain location will be the park's Chase North Promenade.)

There will be sets by Elbert Phillips, Craig Loftis, Greg Gray and Mike Winston following opening words from Robert Williams and Alan King.

Knuckles, who was openly gay and honored for his DJ work around the world, died March 31 at age 59.

Visit http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/frankieknuckles.html.

CPL observing Pride Month

The Chicago Public Library continues its "Celebrating Diversity" series in June with the observance of LGBT Pride Month.

Co-sponsored by the library's Pride Month Committee, the opening program features a screening and discussion of the documentary film *Living With Pride*: Ruth C. Ellis @ 100, with director Yvonne Welbon. The film spotlights the life of Ruth Ellis, who was thought to be the oldest "out" African-American lesbian. The program takes place Sunday, June 1, at 2 p.m., in the auditorium at the Woodson Regional Library, 9525 S. Halsted St.

Additional highlights in June include:

—Film Screening: *The Celluloid Closet*

—Discussion with Laura Krugoff, Lambda Literary Award nominated author of *My Brother's Name*

—Award-winning artist Edie Fake
—Performance by the Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles' Brass Quintet and Clarinet Choir
—RoyAL with DJ Nick Castle

A complete listing of LGBT Pride Month programs is available at chicagopubliclibrary.org.

Report: Most LGBTs are closeted on the job

"The Cost of the Closet and the Rewards of Inclusion"—a newly released study from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, the organization's educational arm—identifies that most LGBT employees (53 percent) nationwide are closeted on the job.

The report comes on the heels of a report by the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) that finds the policy on workplace discrimination for federal employees based on sexual orientation has not been interpreted uniformly, despite being the government's policy since 1980.

"The Cost of the Closet" surveyed more than 800 LGBT workers across the country and included an added survey of non-LGBT workers. Among the key findings are that:

—Fifty-three percent of LGBT employees hide who they are at work;

—One in four LGBT employees report hearing negative comments such as "that's so gay" while at work; and

—Twenty-six percent have stayed in a job because the environment was accepting.

The full report is at www.hrc.org/climate.

HBHC annual meeting on May 29

The Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC) will hold its annual meeting Thursday, May 29, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at The Brown Elephant, 3020 N. Lincoln Ave.

This free event will highlight accomplishments and provide a view of the center's future.

RSVP at http://howardbrown.org/hb_services.asp?id=2813.

Correction

In the May 21 issue of Windy City Times, a review of Edmund White's book *Inside a Pearl* should have reflected that the late Marie-Claude de Brunhoff (a major figure in the book) was not the widow of the creator of the Babar children's books. Rather, she was the former wife of the still-living Laurent de Brunhoff, the son of Jean de Brunhoff, who died in 1937. Jean created, wrote and illustrated the classic series in the 1930s.

Windy City Times regrets the error.

GAY in the LIFE

Joseph M. Williams

BY ROSS FORMAN

Age
42

Neighborhood
Rogers Park

Relationship status
Dating

Job title
Associate professor and chair of psychology at Illinois Wesleyan University, specializing in behavioral neuroscience

Favorite TV show
The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd; Murder, She Wrote; Louie; American Horror Story; and Portlandia

Hobbies
Soccer and volleyball. "I also love comedy improv and comedy sketch writing, having taken a number of classes from Comedysportz and Second City," he said. "I'm currently taking improv classes from Improv Toolbox, a great program where you do a two-hour class on Sunday evenings and then go on stage at 9 p.m. in front of a live audience."

Little-known fact
"I'm pretty sure I'm the only person who has a tattoo of a brain structure called the hippocampus on them, but if there are others out there, contact me."

The new year brought the release of Joseph M. Williams' first book, which was about a decade in the making.

The Fringe Dwellers is Williams' self-published novel via BookBaby.

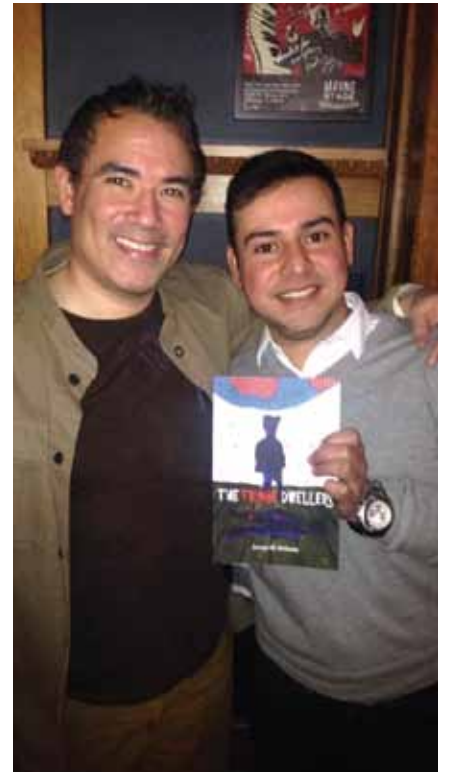
E-book versions are available on Amazon's Kindle, Apple's iBooks, and Barnes and Noble's Nook stores—with the first 60 pages of the book available for free on each site. Print versions are available on Amazon.

"The book is a dark comedy that centers on a couple that constantly breaks up and gets back together again, and the oddball friends and family that weave in and out of their lives," Williams said. "After spending 10 years writing the book, it feels great to finally be able to hold it in my hand and know that it is finally finished. Plus, after a decade of people asking when they can read my novel, I finally have an answer for them."

Williams added, "I'm a big fan of the Airplane! and The Naked Gun movies, and wanted to put that into book form. I wanted to write a pure comedy where the humor comes at you at a rapid pace. But, I'm also a fan of comedians such as Richard Pryor who use comedy to reach a deeper place, so I wanted to use comedy to explore both the joys and the difficulties of relationships."

Williams said the novel is geared for adults, with its "soft R-rated vibe, similar to what you would see on HBO or a cable [TV] comedy."

"Though it may sound cliché, which of course is the vibe I'm hoping for as an author, it's just something inside me," Williams said. "I've always loved writing stories, ever since I was in elementary school. I think this holds true for most writers I've met. There's a story percolating in your brain that you just need to let out, whether it gets read by millions of people or just a few close friends who are always there to support you."



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Saturday JUNE 7TH
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MACY GRAY
BIG FREEDIA
MARY LAMBERT
STEVE GRAND

Sunday JUNE 8TH
12PM-MIDNIGHT
LISA LAMPANELLI
SANDRA BERNHARD

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VIEWPOINT

WINDY CITY
TIMES

VOL. 29, No. 35, May 28, 2014

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founded Sept. 1985, and Outlines newspaper,
founded May 1987.*PUBLISHER & EXECUTIVE EDITOR
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 DISTRIBUTION: Ashina, Allan, Dan, John, Renee,
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"Windy City Media Group generated enormous interest among their readers in this year's LGBT Consumer Index Survey. Out of approximately 100 print and online media partners who participated in the survey, Windy City was the best performing regional media in the U.S. Only survey partners with a nationwide footprint were able to generate a greater number of responses." —David Marshall, Research Director, Community Marketing, Inc.

Community Marketing, Inc.

REV.
IRENE
MONROERacial divide could
have derailed
marriage debate
in Mass.

Marriage Equality in Massachusetts hit the 10-year mark May 17.

With this 10th anniversary I'm proud of the indefatigable energy and genius that made it possible.

But I didn't always feel that way.

And my opinions, and those of LGBTQ communities of color nationwide, were expressed weekly in my column The Religion Thang, for the now defunct Boston-based LGBTQ paper In-Newsweekly.

In February 2005, I was reporting that tensions in Massachusetts were growing and, once again, there was a color line. The issue was marriage equality for same-sex couples. With the state legislature about to rev up again to debate the issue, and with very little time for white queer religious and political machines to colorize what had been since its inception a white movement, voices from African-American queer organizations and communities of color were speaking up about our absence from the conversation.

To the surprise of white LGBTQ organizations, both the African-American LGBTQ and straight communities had much to say about the white queer political machine's appropriation of the

language of the Black civil-rights movement. Done without participation by people of color.

How the marriage debate should have been framed had not been given considerable concern. Communicating in a way that spoke truth to various LGBTQ communities of color and classes was not even considered.

The same-sex marriage debate had brought much consternation and polarization between black and white LGBTQ communities. Much of the finger pointing of the genesis of the ill-framed discussion was aimed at GLAD. Viewed by some as a lily-white organization, many people of color felt that GLAD replicated much of the same race and class divisions present in our federal judicial system.

While the marriage debate was strategically framed as an upper- to middle-class LGBTQ family issue, people of color felt that the "strategy won in court, but not in the court of public opinion," Dorchester African-American lesbian activist Jacquie Bishop told me.

In criticizing GLAD for its approach, Boston local African-American lesbian scholar Dr. Marilyn Monteiro wrote to me in an e-mail: "I've told GLAD this as well—asking me for money to assist them in 'their' struggle; expropriating (and therefore exploiting blacks in particular) the civil-rights movement rhetoric; strategies in their interests while still excluding us from leadership positions other than token appointments. Please! It certainly is this way in Beantown, for sure. GLAD asked me to evaluate their web pages. I did. Do you think there have been any changes of the kind I suggested? Hell, no!"

A board member of a statewide gay organization, who did not want to be identified, wrote to me: "The board is interested in looking at its own white privilege as it seeks to work with the African-American religious community. We have realized that most of our communities of faith ... are predominantly white communities. This concerns us. ... We [have] voted to begin

likely to acquire HIV. This is staggering and, quite frankly, unacceptable.

We recognize that these have been long-standing issues for the TGNC community, and that we have been fighting for better care for decades. We also understand that this conversation requires continued input from community members.

Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC) will host the fourth of five community town hall meetings Monday, June 9, 6-7:30 p.m., at the Brown Elephant Resale Store, 3651 N. Halsted St. The focus of this meeting will be the health needs of Chicago's trans* community. We welcome the participation of transgender and gender non-conforming people as well as anyone interested in discussing the concerns and health needs of our communities. People are urged to share their perspectives, experiences and expertise in order to continue to amplify

a process of understanding white privilege and the ways in which we can seem to be anti-racist."

While many of us LGBTQ African-Americans embraced those offers to be inclusive, others felt that the white queer community was coming a day late and a dollar short. And any effort appeared as disingenuous.

I have been asked by several white activists if it were too late in trying to get black LGBTQ people more ensconced in this movement. And I have been told by many African-American LGBTQ people that because of our exclusion in the struggle, they were tired of the fight and now suffering from "marriage fatigue."

But the tables turned in April of that same year when Lee Swislow, executive director of GLAD, came to the annual Bayard Rustin Community Breakfast. When GLAD reached out to communities of color, inviting a dialogue for an inclusive re-framing of the marriage debate, the collective anger and frustration that LGBTQ communities of color collective felt toward the organization began to dissipate.

Because of GLAD's outreach to communities of color more and more LGBTQ people are marrying. Their efforts generated discussions among us and in our communities in the context of our families and lives that matters.

And an idea that was once thought of as an anathema to black queer identity, marriage, in our LGBTQ communities, is being celebrated and on the rise. And many of us are now proudly walking down the aisle to tie the knot.

If we had lost this battle, we would have missed an historic opportunity to effect change, not only here in the Bay State but across the country. Let us also remember that the whole world was watching us.

Finally, united we stood as a prophetic movement, because divided we had fallen as a petty people.

our voices regarding our health care needs.

HBHC is hosting the town-hall meeting series as a part of its community needs assessment, conducted every five years to get a better understanding of the LGBTQ community's unique health needs and concerns. The information gathered from the meetings will be used for planning purposes, and will be shared with the larger community. This discussion will be hosted by HBHC CEO David Ernesto Munar, Manager of Transgender Health Taylor Casey and myself.

Blue is HBHC's HRSA SPNS Transgender Women of Color project manager. His team runs a drop-in program at 4025 N. Sheridan Rd. at 6-9 p.m. the first Friday of the month. During this time TGNC adults can access medical care, get tested, receive prescriptions for hormones and participate in discussions with community members. For more information, call 773-299-7604.



BLUE

Trans* people
and access to
health care

Transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) individuals consistently face barriers to the provision of competent and compassionate medical care and have been hesitant to seek medical care for fear of discrimination, mistreatment and neglect.

A national study of transgender individuals that the Lesbian and Gay Task Force conducted found that 50 percent of participants' providers have a lack of knowledge regarding transgender health—and that 28 percent of participants reported harassment in medical settings. Furthermore, 19 percent of participants reported their providers or clinics simply refused to offer care. Most studies have reported similar findings but fail to highlight that thousands more of the TGNC population do not have the resources or support to even attempt to access basic primary medical care.

Mistrust of medical providers—combined with criminalization, rampant housing bias, and lifelong employment and education discrimination—have led to widespread health care access issues within the TGNC community. Studies show that in general the community is four times more likely to acquire HIV than the general population and, more specifically, transgender women of color are 49 times more

Send letters and
viewpoints to
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Items may be
edited for length or clarity.

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



FANNING OUT

Cirque Shanghai: Warriors is part of the summer theater roundup. See below.

MUSIC

Girls uninterrupted.
Page 33

Press photo of Indigo Girls



DISH

Hots stuff.
Page 34

*Facebook photo of Lengua
Loca Hot at Hoppin' Hots*



THEATER

'Bear' with me.
Page 19

*Photo from Bellboys, Bears and
Baggage by Al Zayed*

SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT:
THEATER

Summer season has it all

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Before the advent of air-conditioning, many theaters would just shut down in the summer months. But now that theater is year-round, don't miss out on these shows that are world premieres or debuting for the first time in the Windy City. Also note the number of shows with LGBTQ characters and themes. All shows are in Chicago unless otherwise noted.

World premeires:

Ask Aunt Susan, Goodman Theatre, now through June 22. A guy poses as a female on-line advice columnist, but the facade eventually causes loads of problems in Seth Bockley's world premiere. www.goodmantheatre.org

Invisible World, Annoyance Theatre, now in an open run. Welcome the Annoyance Theatre to its new Belmont Avenue home with this sketch comedy revue directed by Annoyance co-founder Mick Napier. www.theannoyance.com

Sketchbook 2049, Collaboracion at Flat Iron Arts Building, now to June 15. Out playwright Ike Holter (Hit the Wall, Loom) is this year's guest curator to two repertory shows of world-premiere short plays and sketches. www.collaboracion.org

Cirque Shanghai: Warriors, Navy Pier Skyline Stage, now to Sept. 1. Flexible and daring Chinese acrobats and entertainers are back for a summer season of family-friendly entertainment. www.navypier.com/cirqueshanghai

Piano Diaries, Athenaeum Theatre, now to July 6. Composer and pianist Peter Saltzman blends music with monologues for this new intimate show. www.athenaeumtheatre.org

Love Me, Tinder, The Public House Theatre, May 30 through June 28. Cupid does battle with a new dating app in Byron Hatfield's new

comedy. www.pubhousetheatre.com

Haymaker, Neo-Futurists, now to June 28. See how action movies affected the mind of playwright Trevor Dawkins when his script, Tears of Shanghai (written when he was just 13), is produced onstage. www.neofuturists.org

Tyrant, Sideshow Theatre at Theater Wit, now through June 29. Playwright Kathleen Aklerley imagines a future when formerly homeless people are forced to work in the homes of the wealthy in this dystopian drama. www.sideshowtheatre.org

The Beverly Hillbillies: The Musical, Theatre at the Center in Munster, Ind., July 10 to Aug. 10. The beloved and oft-syndicated TV sitcom comes to life onstage courtesy of adaptors David Rogers and Amanda Rogers with music by composer Gregg Opelka. www.theatreatthecenter.com

Rung, Curious Theatre Branch at Prop Thtr, May 30 through June 29. Matt Test's experimental chamber opera riffs on Frankenstein and Noah's Ark as a creator tries to reanimate lost voices. www.curious theatrebranch.com

Monstrous Regiment, Lifeline Theatre, May 30 through July 20. Chris Hainsworth's world-premiere adaptation of Terry Pratchett's novel is about a woman who infiltrates the military to seek her missing brother. www.lifelinetheatre.com

What to Listen For, The Side Project, June 2 through July 6. Legendary Viennese figures like Freud and Mahler enter the subconscious of a man in Kathleen Tolan's world-premiere drama. www.thesideproject.net

The Last Ship, Bank of America Theatre, June 10 through July 13. Rock star Sting looks back on his childhood in Northern England in a shipbuilding town about to lose its major industry in this Broadway-bound world-premiere musical co-written with out playwrights John



Christopher Sheard and Eleni Pappageorge in Cock. Photo by Michael Brosilow

Logan (Never the Sinner) and Brian Yorkey (Next to Normal). www.broadwayinchicago.com

Burn the Black Dog, Wayward Productions at Luther Memorial Church, June 12 to July 5. Natalie DiCristofano's devised piece involves audience voting to steer the plot set in a girls' boarding school and involving witchcraft. www.waywardproductions.org

Orville and Wilbur Did It!, The New Colony at Signal Ensemble Theatre, June 13 to July 20. There's sex, drugs and children's theater tied together in the world-premiere of David Zellnick's comedy about the artists tied to an American children's theater tour performing a musical about the Wright Brothers. www.thenewcolony.org

The Qualms, Steppenwolf Theatre, July 3 through Aug. 31. Pulitzer Prize-winning play-

wright Bruce Norris (Clybourne Park) and new Steppenwolf Ensemble member offers up a new drama of the problems that arise among a group of suburban partner-swapping swingers. www.steppenwolf.org

Chicago premieres:

Lifeboat, The Filament Theatre Ensemble, now through June 8. This Chicago premiere by playwright Nicola McCartney is based on a true story of two 15-year-old girls who survive on a stranded lifeboat during World War II. www.filamenttheatre.org

Love Tapes, The Inconvenience at Angel Island, now through July 5. This Midwest premiere of Penn Jillette and Steven Banks' play is about an obsessive fan who sends a videotaped declaration of love to her rock star idol. www.theinconvenience.org

Eat Your Heart Out, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, now to June 28. Courtney Baron's comic drama involves six people with body and dating issues. It was a hit at the 2012 Humana Festival. www.rivendelltheatre.org

The Emperor of Atlantis, The Clever One, Chicago Opera Theater at Merle Reskin Theatre, May 31, June 4, 6 and 8. Composer Viktor Ullmann died in a concentration camp during World War II, while composer Carl Orff did the Nazis' bidding. See these two one-act operas together and consider their composers' contrasting fates. www.chicagooperatheater.org

Carrie the Musical, Bailiwick Chicago @ Biograph Theater, May 29-July 12. This musical based upon the Stephen King horror novel is considered to be one of the most notorious flops in Broadway history. See its Chicago premiere in its revised off-Broadway version by composer Michael Gore, lyricist Dean Pitchford and playwright Lawrence D. Cohen. www.bailiwickchicago.com

Hello Failure, The Side Project, June 11 to July 6. It's the Midwest premiere of Kristen Kosmas' play about a group of women whose husbands are away in a submarine crew. www.thesideproject.net

Turn to page 24



Nate Braga and Sean Fortunato in *M. Butterfly*. Photo by Michael Brosilow

THEATER REVIEW

M. Butterfly

Playwright: David Henry Hwang
At: Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis Ave.
Tickets: 1-773-753-4472;
www.CourtTheatre.org; \$45-\$65
Runs through: June 9

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

M. Butterfly isn't a gay play, and director Charles Newell and his artists understand that in this vigorous production. Gallimard (Sean Fortunato), the unfortunate French diplomat who has a multi-year affair with a Chinese man disguised as a woman (remember, the play is based on fact) is unquestionably hetero. As for Song Liling (Nathaniel Braga), he may be gay but it's a secondary point raised only as a way by which Chinese government agents can control him. As an exploration of sexuality, it's about the Divine Androgyne who Song Liling may recognize and exploit, and which Gallimard certainly recognizes and embraces in the play's closing moments.

Much more to author David Henry Hwang's concern (in this and other plays) is cultural imperialism and the stereotype of the Asian

persona: the perceived superiority of Western power over Eastern weakness, and the Western colonial male over the Asian female. It's a Western perception, but Song Liling exploits it to ensnare Gallimard who grows manly and confident in his false perception that he is the powerful and controlling one. In Mary Zimmerman's *The White Snake*, currently at the Goodman Theatre and based on a Chinese legend, a character observes "Believing is seeing," and so it was for the real French diplomat, and so it is for Hwang's Gallimard until Song Liling strips naked before him.

M. Butterfly, which was Hwang's first big commercial success, is smart writing with layers of thought and language and great theatrical flair—after all, the dazzling spectacle of Peking Opera is part of the play's story and technique. Still, the play has left me more impressed than moved. I can't get around its conflation of Madame Butterfly and a China hovering between traditional culture and Maoism. It's a brilliantly useful theatrical tool, to be sure, but it's a square peg in a round hole due to the historic enmity between the Chinese and Japanese, and because Madame Butterfly isn't Japanese at all, deriving from American sources as a short story and play before it became Puccini's Italian opera.

Be that as it may, my intellectual reservations don't carry over to the production, with which Newell and choreographer Jamie H.J. Guan (a Peking opera veteran and master) have done an impressive job. Fortunato, an actor of great versatility, and Braga play Gallimard and Song Liling with conviction and nuance, while Off-Loop veterans Terry Hamilton and Mark L. Montgomery add bluff bonhomie in supporting roles. Karen Woditsch inspires empathy in the underwritten role of Gallimard's wife.

The dark, heavy, cavernous concrete walls of Todd Rosenthal's set—presumably a French prison—are odd but unobtrusive, and allow free movement for Guan's ensemble in Lydia Tanji's colorful Peking Opera-inspired costumes.

THEATER REVIEW

The Passion of Emma Goldman

Playwright: Roslyn Alexander
At: SHPIel Performing Identity
at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.
(June 4-22 at Skokie Theatre,
7924 Lincoln Ave., Skokie)
Tickets: 773-327-5252;
www.stage773.com; \$28
Runs through: June 22

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The long and complicated life of Emma Goldman—dubbed "Red Emma" by fans and foes alike—is not easily summarized in the restricted environment of modern drama. The adventures of the woman celebrated for her championing of Anarchist manifestos spans three continents, two husbands, a veritable gallery of lovers, and at least two jail sentences, followed by a deportation order.

We meet our heroine in "the sleepy fishing village" of St. Tropez, making the date 1931, well before her final years. After dismissing her offstage companion, she expresses surprise at confronting members of the press (that's us, by the way), but graciously consents to grant us an interview, anyway, occasionally referring to a box of cards listing FAQs collected from her many public appearances.

So far, so good—but Goldman's account swiftly assumes a pattern of resolute declarations immediately dissolving into rueful tears

sparked by bad memories, quickly changing to nostalgic smiles at the fond ones. Her roughly chronological memoir quickly gives way to a swirling hodgepodge of anecdotal names, places and events, largely bereft of antecedent information: a dizzying array of lecture tours and trips abroad are noted, some consequential, some not. Characters are introduced for three sentences and are never heard from again. The identities of her many paramours become blurred as Goldman preens for her protector of the moment, only to hastily profess her devotion to another (mostly her imprisoned mentor, Alexander Berkman—or "Sasha," as his disciple calls him). We aren't even told where her host, attorney Harry Weinberger, disappears after inviting us to invade his exiled client's privacy. Did he go for a stroll on the beach?

Roslyn Alexander, in her capacity as a performer, has been a favorite of Chicago audiences for more years than it would be gallant to count, but in choosing to portray her subject as a romantic in the Colette mode, she leaves us with the uncomfortable impression of Emma Goldman as the besotted consort of wealthy men who exploited her charismatic zeal to further their own idealistic causes (albeit stopping short of strapping her into a bomb vest).

Director Dennis Zacek lends his expertise to the piles of extensive research not yet arranged along clear narrative lines, and will likely continue to do so throughout the run. When viewing a biographical play, it's always gratifying to discover that the author has done her homework. What's disappointing is to also discover that she hasn't written the play yet.

THEATER REVIEW

One Hit Wonders

Playwright: Rueben D. Echoles
in collaboration with Dawn Bless
At: Black Ensemble Theater,
4450 N. Clark St.
Tickets: 773-769-4451;
www.blackensemble.org; \$55-\$65
Runs through: June 29

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Don't scoff at one-hit wonders—recording artists whose reputations rest on a single high-profile success. Some composers, having said what they wanted to say, preferred to pursue their muse away from the distractions of the spotlight. The American pop repertoire abounds with OHWs identifying whole generations: warble "G-L-O-R-I-A" in an all-ages room and note the response.

The scenario for Rueben Echoles and Dawn Bless' new revue for Black Ensemble proposes a quartet calling itself—whattaya know?—the One Hit Wonders, currently rehearsing its show featuring a score of you-know-whats. Its progress is beset by the usual intrigue found in backstage fiction: Lisa struggles to free herself from her husband's bullying; Jason must decide whether to risk everything for a chance at going pro; and Michelle has her eye on fame and on director Michael, whose divorced music-biz parents find themselves joining the act, while his girlfriend Trina and the company stage manager strive to keep everything in order. Oh—and Nolan, their choreographer, gets mugged by gay-bashers.

Back up and read that last sentence again. You don't need to wear flip-flops to count the number of non-het males typically encountered in entertainments targeting non-white audiences. Black Ensemble's long record of addressing issues often ignored within its demographic is hardly the evening's focus but, even so, consider the significance of opening-night audiences clapping on the very first backbeat of "I Will Survive" and welcoming the return of the intrepid hooper (played by a scrappy Yando Lopez) with rousing cheers.

We don't come to Black Ensemble for the



One Hit Wonders. Photo by Daniel Nicholas

sermon or the spectacle (although the scenic collage of iPods, cassettes and MP3s is undeniably clever), but to hear a squadron of powerhouse vocalists lay down such benchmark chart-toppers as Brenda Russell's come-home-soldier-boy anthem "Get Here," Eddie Holman's wistful plea "Lonely Girl" and the giddy Weather Girls classic "It's Raining Men."

Donald Craig Manuel contributes an operatic "One in a Million You," Allie Jones does a seductive "Ring My Bell" and Mallory Maedke performs an appropriately Wagnerian "Total Eclipse of the Heart." BET veteran Lyle Miller brandishes an ice-cutting falsetto on "Cause I Love You" before switching effortlessly to a balladeer's croon for the mournful "Me and Mrs. Jones." Whether the refrain that lights up your nostalgia meter is "Follow Me" or "This is Why I'm Hot," you'll find it in this celebration of stars who dazzled us, if only momentarily, with their brightness.

BOOK BY JOSEPH STEIN
 MUSIC AND LYRICS BY MARC BLITZSTEIN
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Bellboys, Bears and Baggage. Photo by Al Zayed

THEATER REVIEW

Bellboys, Bears and Baggage

Conceived by: Jim Lasko and Blake Montgomery

At: Redmoon Central, 2120 S. Jefferson St.

Tickets: 312-850-8440 or

www.redmoon.org; \$25-\$30

Runs through June 8

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

For centuries, scholars have debated the odd stage direction of “Exit, pursued by a bear” in William Shakespeare’s problem play *The Winter’s Tale*. Was it an actual bear, was it someone in a bear costume or just imaginary?

The artists of Redmoon have proposed their answer to that question with *Bellboys, Bears and Baggage*, the company’s latest performance-art installation inspired by *The Winter’s Tale*, and performed in an 18,000-square-foot Pilsen warehouse studio.

Audiences are admitted to *Bellboys...* in small groups and then left to wander throughout the studio filled with rooms overstuffed with antiques and emblazoned Shakespearean quotes. The cast is composed of sometimes indifferent bellboys, performers as duplicate masked men and women and actors in bear costumes. You may even bump into the Bard himself, who appears here as a puppeteer who also encourages you to experience the show in the moment rather than via smartphone.

Now if you’re looking for a solid narrative,

SPOTLIGHT



Will any sketches or short plays in this year’s round-up of Collaboration’s Sketchbook become the next hit show like *The New Colony’s 5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche*? Find out now in **Sketchbook: 2049**, which has been put together by guest curator Ike Holter (*Hit the Wall*, *Exit Strategy*). There are Program A (“Reflection”) and Program B (“Echo”).

Sketchbook: 2049 continues through Sunday, June 15, at Collaboration’s space in Room 300 of the Flat Iron Arts Building, 1579 N. Milwaukee Ave. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 7 and 9 p.m. Saturday and 7 p.m. Sunday. Single tickets to each program are \$30 (\$15 for students). An all-access festival pass to both programs are \$50 (\$25 for students). For an exact lineup and for tickets, call 312-226-9633 or visit collaboraction.org. Photo by Michael Brosilow

something that Redmoon has frequently neglected in the past in favor of ingeniously elaborate scenic contraptions and spectacle, then perhaps *Bellboys...* might not be your cup of tea.

But everything else is so playful and ingeniously designed by Frank Maugeri that you can take it all in for novelty’s sake without a previous knowledge of the plot of *The Winter’s Tale*. Co-conceived by Jim Lasko and Blake Montgomery (who appears in the show as Shakespeare), *Bellboys...* offers constant surprises around each and every corner. And if you miss one particular vignette or stumble upon one in the middle, wait a while since it will probably be reprised since the performers go about their business in a series of repeating loops.

If you are familiar with *The Winter’s Tale*, it would be safe to guess that the duplicate masked men and women could be representative of the distrustful King Leontes and the

Queen Hermione who has wrongly been accused of being unfaithful. You’ll also be able to spot the moment when the baby Perdita is spirited away by boat to the landlocked Bohemia and, of course, when that servant is pursued by a bear.

But then you also get an odd mash-up of classical and pop music underscoring the event, including a company-wide dance to “I Heard it Through the Grapevine” (perhaps to hint at how rumor and insinuation drive an emotional wedge through the cast).

Although the plot isn’t explicitly spelled out for you, *Bellboys...* overflows with symbolism and snatches of emotional scenes that makes you want to interact with the cast again and again. And since so much of *Bellboys...* is so free-flowing in structure and design, don’t be surprised to discover when you leave that hours have passed since you first arrived.

M. BUTTERFLY

By David Henry Hwang | Directed by Charles Newell

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Photo of Sean Fortunato and Nathaniel Braga by joe mazza/brave lux inc.



THEATER from page 17

thesideproject.net

The Half-Life of Memory, Cold Basement Dramatics at Storefront Theater, June 4 to 29. Chicago premiere of Jason Linder's drama is about a declining nuclear physicist facing up to his past involvement in the Manhattan Project. www.coldbasement.org

Men Should Weep, Griffin Theatre at Raven Theatre, July 5 through Aug. 10. This 1940s Scottish play dealing with poverty in Glasgow receives its Chicago premiere following an acclaimed recent production by the National Theatre of Scotland. www.griffintheatre.com

Grounded, American Blues Theater at Greenhouse Theater Center, June 6-July 13. Chicago premiere of George Brant's drama is about a female pilot who finds her life torn between family life and her career as a drone operator at war. www.americanbluestheater.com

Annapurna, Profiles Theatre Alley Stage, June 6 through July 20. Midwest premiere of Sharr White's drama is about an estranged wife who returns to find her cowboy-poet husband living in squalor and in ill health in a trailer in Colorado. www.profilestheatre.org

Partners, LiveWire Chicago Theatre at Den Theatre, June 21 through July 20. It's a Chicago premiere of Dorothy Fortenberry's comic exploration of modern relationships. www.livewirechicago.com

Of LGBTQA interest

Cock, Profiles Theatre, The Main Stage, extended through June 29. A woman sexually lures away a man who was previously part of a troubled gay couple, causing the jilted partner to retaliate in Mike Bartlett's hit London and off-Broadway comedy. www.profilestheatre.org

5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche, Chicago Com-

mercial Collective and The New Colony at Chopin Theatre, now through June 8. Evan Linder and Andrew Hobgood's Eisenhower Era-set comedy returns after a critically acclaimed off-Broadway run. See what happens when five women who comprise the leadership of the Susan B. Anthony Society for the Sisters of Gertrude Stein cope with a nuclear holocaust in the midst of their annual summer quiche breakfast. www.chicagocommercialcollective.com or www.thenewcolony.org

Days Like Today, Writers Theatre in Glencoe, now through July 13. Songwriter Alan Schmuckler and playwright Laura Eason look at the year in the life of a jilted bride and her unconventional parents. www.writerstheatre.org

Caged Dames: A Shocking Musical!, Hell in a Handbag Productions @ Theater Wit, now through July 13. Fans of the Netflix series Orange is the New Black won't want to miss this revival of David Cerdá's campy spoof of classic women's prison films. www.handbagproductions.org

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus The past few years of new Broadway musicals (like Kinky Boots and The Book of Mormon) and significant revivals (like Pippin) are the source materials for the concert Bouncing Off the Walls: Broadway Our Way. Performances are at two locations: Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St., at 8 p.m. Saturday, May 31; and North Central College's Wentz Concert Hall, 171 E. Chicago Ave., Naperville, at 8 p.m. Sunday, June 1. www.cgmc.org

Artemis Singers Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus celebrates the eve of the statewide availability of same-sex marriage licenses in Illinois with A Feminist Mosaic Concert & Dance at 7 p.m. Saturday, May 31, at Broadway United Methodist Church, 3338 N. Broadway. www.artemissingers.org

Tony Tunes! Pride Films and Plays' fundrais-



5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche. Photo by Dixie Sheridan

ing concert features non-Equity Jeff nominees and winners performing songs from Tony Award-winning musicals at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 3, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St. Tickets are \$20; visit www.pridefilmsandplays.com for more information.

Generation Sex, Teatro Luna at Instituto Cervantes, June 1 to 14. It's a Latina look at how technology has affected the way we hook up and fall in love. www.teatroluna.org

Last Sunday in June, About Face Theatre's Pride Performance Series at Greenhouse Theater Center, 7:30 p.m. June 2. Michael Urie (Ugly Betty, Buyer & Cellar) stars in a special reading of Jonathan Tolins' notorious anti-gay play that spoofs the many conventions of the genre. www.aboutface theatre.com

Lesbians & Literature, About Face Theatre's Pride Performance Series at Uncommon Ground

is part of PivotArts Festival. 7 p.m. June 10. As one might guess, it's a discussion of lesbians and their impact on famous literature. www.aboutface theatre.com

Abraham Lincoln was a F*gg*t, About Face Theatre's Pride Performance Series at Chicago Dramatists, 7:30 p.m. June 13-14. A reading of Bixby Elliot's comedy is about a 17-year-old who goes on a mission to prove that Abraham Lincoln was gay. www.aboutface theatre.com

Methtacular!, About Face Theatre's Pride Performance Series at American Theater Company, 7:30 p.m. June 17. Steven Strafford stars in his own one-man show about his hilarious and harrowing three years as a crystal-meth addict in Chicago. www.aboutface theatre.com

River See, Links Hall, June 19 to 29. Sharon Bridgforth's world-premiere performance art piece is about blues women, queers and other so-called "deviants" taking part in the Great Migration. www.linkshall.org

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, Drury Lane Theatre in Oakbrook Terrace, June 19-Aug. 17. The Tony Award-winning 2005 musical comedy by playwright Rachel Sheinkin and out composer William Finn returns complete with its quirky and smart kids freaking out at a spelling bee. www.drurylane-akbrook.com

Windy City Gay Chorus and Aria The combined ensembles of Windy City Performing Arts perform the concert "Just Love", featuring songs inspired by lesbian students who went to court for the right to escort each other to senior prom, and an excerpt from a larger work based upon the life of the late college student Tyler Clementi. Performances are at 5 and 8 p.m. Saturday, June 21, at Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 1650 W. Foster Ave. www.windycity-sings.org

Some Men, Pride Films and Plays at Rivedell Theatre, Aug. 14-Sept. 14. The Chicago premiere of Terrence McNally's drama that looks at how gay rights have changed over the past few decades. www.pridefilmsandplays.com

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The Dance COLlective. Photo by William Frederking

SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT: DANCE

Dance will match summer's heat

BY LAUREN WARNECKE

When it comes down to it, summertime are all about festivals. Lollapalooza, Taste of Chicago, Jazz Fest, Rib Fest, Midsommer Fest, Pride (!)—dance is not immune to Chicagoans' need for summertime congregation, and with performances going on all across the city, indoors and out, there is a dance festival for you.

—In its eighth season, the **Chicago Dancing Festival** is the mother of all dance festivals and seems to get stronger every year. Thirteen companies will be featured Aug. 20-23 (no Thursday performance) downtown at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and a grand finale at the outdoor Pritzker Pavilion. The best part? It's all free. (chicagodancingfestival.com)

—To the far north, summer is buzzing with Loyola University's **Pivot Arts Festival** (May 28-June 14) and the **38th International American Spanish Dance & Music Festival** (June 11-22).

Pivot is a massive "art meets science" festival in its second year, with a massive list of artists featured at venues in the Edgewater and Rogers Park neighborhoods. Notable dance groups participating include Ayako Kato/Art Union Humanscape, The Dance COLlective, Kristina Isabelle Dance, and The Seldoms (pivotarts.org/festival). Much of the action in the Spanish Dance & Music festival is the result of Ensemble Espanol Spanish Dance Theater, who are long time residents of Northeastern Illinois University (where many of the events, workshops, and performances take place).

The festival culminates in a special performance by Ensemble Espanol featuring the world-premiere of Ron de Jesus' "Mil Clavos." De Jesus began his career with Ensemble Espanol, and is returning 30 years later for the first time as a choreographer. "Mil Clavos" channels memories from his early training, infusing traditional flamenco dance with contemporary stylings. The performance runs June 20-22 at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts (NSCPA), under the title "Flamenco Passion."

Also at NSCPA is a one-night double bill July 19 featuring Aerial Dance Chicago and Elements Contemporary Ballet. The program, titled "Silks and Steel," is the culmination of a year long interesting "cross-training" collaboration in which Elements' ballet dancers have trained with the aerialists, and vice versa (northshore-center.org).

—The Space/Movement Project, Benjamin Law & Jessica Marasa, Ashley Deran and Erica Ricketts are only half the line-up for the fourth annual **PRODUCE**, a dance and music mish-mash Signal Ensemble Theater is producing Aug. 8-9 in the North Center neighborhood (artintercepts.org).*

—The Ruth Page Center for the Performing Arts has hosted nearly all of the annual **New Dances** series Thodos Dance Chicago (TDC) has produced. In its 14th year, New Dances is a

jewel in TDC's season that allows its dancers to stretch their choreographic wings under the mentorship of an impressive group of panelists. This year also features work from guest choreographer Kristina Isabelle on July 18-20 (thodosdancechicago.org).

—**Dance for Life** will have its first season without Keith Elliott at the helm Aug. 16. This year's gala performance includes three world premieres; appearances by Giordano Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Joffrey Ballet, River North Dance Chicago, Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater and Visceral Dance Chicago; and one of the most important HIV-AIDS fundraising initiatives of the year (danceforlifechicago.org).

—Festivals aside, there are a few additional performances worth noting. Chicago Dance Crash dancer and freelance choreographer Kaitlin Webster offers her first evening-length independent concert, titled **Hydra**, June 6-7 in a loft space above The Wormhole coffee shop (hydra.brownpapertickets.com).

Lawrence University's Rebecca Salzer presents **Bird Lady** May 30-June 1 at Links Hall in a cross-country collaboration with seven other artists. In the group are Chicago-based Kristina Fluty and Liz Burritt, in a concert examining the life and art of Vivian Maier (linkshall.org).

Last, but not least, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago (HSDC) closes its season with the **Summer Series** June 5-8 at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance. Nacho Duato's "Gnawa" is on the bill, in addition to a world-premiere from resident choreographer Alejandro Cerrudo titled "The Impossible." For the first time, HSDC will simulcast its June 6 performance to the lawn at the Pritzker Pavilion, for which tickets are not necessary (hubbardstreetdance.com).

***Disclosure:** The author is affiliated with PRODUCE as a co-producer, curator and host of the event.



Bird Lady. Photo by Anna Johnson Ryndova

SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT:
THEATER

Summer staycations

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

To some, “summer theater” calls to mind idyllic evenings lounging on the grass with rabbits scampering through Arden forest or the Illyrian coast as crickets chirp “Hey nonny-nonny.” For those who prefer to spend the warm months in pollen-free, temperature-controlled environments equipped with indoor plumbing and dry floors, however, Chicago’s playhouses offer plenty of alternatives to the citronella circuit—and it’s not all the traditionally lightweight fluff, either.

You can’t get much more classic than Chekhov’s **Seagull**—coincidentally set at a summer home in the Crimea when that region was a vacation resort for affluent aristocrats. This prototype for Downton Abbey-styled family sagas receives three seasonal reimaginings: Linchpin Theatre’s **Nina Variations** proposes the two unhappy lovers confessing their true feelings for one another instead of wasting their lives in thwarted ambitions (June 6-22; www.linchpintheatre.com).

Bridgeport’s new theater company—appropriately christened The Bridge—debuts with Kestutis Makas’ **The Golf Ball** (June 13-July 6; 312-307-5197), transposing the story from Czarist Russia to modern-day Chicago. Deep into the Dog Days, we finish with Sideshow’s Midwest premiere of Aaron Posner’s **Stupid Fucking Bird** (Aug. 16-Sept. 21; 773-871-3000). Oh, and lest we forget where these contemplations began, Piven Theater presents **Ivanov** (May 29-June 29; 847-866-8049),

Shakespeare leads the pack, though, and while you can see Chicago Shakespeare’s action-comics **Henry V** at Navy Pier through June 15 (312-525-5600), adventuresome playgoers will want to check out the Othello at Gift Theatre, starring Kareem Bandea as the Moor and Michael Patrick Thornton as Iago (July 14-Aug. 24; 773-283-7071). Fans of make-believe marital violence can also find plenty of it in Prologue Theatre’s staging of Claire Luckham’s **Trafford Tanzi** at Fizz Bar & Grill (June 6-28; www.prologuetheatreco.org).

If this heavy drama sounds like too much excitement in sultry weather, you can relax with Black Ensemble’s **One Hit Wonders** through June 29 and **The Story of the Marvelettes** July 20-Sept. 14 (773-769-4451) or the American Blues remount of **Hank Williams: Lost Highway** (July 25-Aug. 31; 773-404-7336). For maximum nostalgia, you can’t beat **Brigadoon**, freshly staged at the Goodman by uberdirector Rachel Rockwell (June 27-Aug. 3; 312-388-3800) or the **Tribute to the Andrews Sisters** revue at Theo Ubique (June 5-July 27; 800-595-4849), where you can enjoy a period-menu dinner on-site. Speaking of dinner, hard-core foodies can revel in chow and romance at the repeat engagement of Lookingglass’ **Casabel**, starring legendary chef Rick Bayless, and served up in the Goodman’s Owen studio (July 30-Aug. 24; 312-337-0665).

Summer’s also a time for catching up—precisely the mission of Theater on the Lake (TOTL), which brings back the hits of the 2013-2014 season for one-week runs. While



The Doll’s House Project. Photo by Emily Schwartz

Chekhov’s flagship play, replete with sex, violence and motifs utilized to greater success in his later works.

Ibsen appears right next to Chekhov on the syllabus, but Calamity West’s **The Doll’s House Project**—subtitled “Ibsen is Dead”—isn’t your classroom version so much as it’s an exploration of domestic politics in 1989 America, with Interrobang Theatre Project’s production continuing through June 8 (773-935-6875). Strindberg ranks just behind, with **Dance of Death**, in a new translation by Conor McPherson and starring Larry Yando and Kate Fry as the estranged spouses, extending at Writers Theater through Aug. 3 (847-242-6000). World Theater is represented by Max Frisch’s **The Arsonists**, translated and adapted by Alastair Beaton, at Strawdog (Aug. 15-Sept. 27; 773-528-9696), Albert Camus’ **Regarding the Just** at Trap Door (June 5-July 5; 773-384-0494) and Ariel Dorfman’s **Death and the Maiden** at Victory Gardens (June 20-July 13; 773-871-3000).

TOTL’s home is being repaired and renovated, this year’s roster—including Urban Theatre’s **First Class**, Stage Left’s **A Day in the Death of Joe Egg** and Strawdog’s runaway hit **Great Expectations**—will be performed at various locations on Chicago’s North and South sides. (For a complete schedule, log onto www.chicagoparkdistrict.com or phone 312-742-7994.)

Oh, but what if you fritter away the whole summer, only to discover Labor day looming and you haven’t seen the inside of a playhouse lobby since Kinky Boots closed? No sweat! The weekend before you retire your white shoes offers Timeline’s adaptation of Chaim Potok’s adolescent-artist-in-crisis **My Name is Asher Lev** (Aug. 23-Oct. 18; 773-327-5252), for theatergoers prepared to plunge into autumnal brain-exercises, and Stage Left’s midwest premiere of Nick Jones’ dueling-pistols comedy **The Coward** (Aug. 30-Oct. 5; 773-975-8150,) for those wanting to hang on to carefree sunshine a little longer.

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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT JR.

X-Men: Days of Future Past; Black Box

It makes perfect sense to me now after seeing **X-Men: Days of Future Past**, the latest installment in the superhero series, why I found Captain America: The Winter Soldier so bland: The X-Men mutants are so unabashedly ... gay! And fantasize as much as we might, those straight, testosterone-heavy superheroes from the other end of the Marvel universe found in Captain America, The Avengers, Iron Man, The Green Blow Torch, Hulking Bird Brain or whatever those movies are called—are most definitely not.

We have come to learn over the course of the seven (and counting) X-Men films that not only is the term “mutant” a metaphor for anyone identifying themselves as anything other than straight, but that mutants can also be good in one movie, evil in the next, gigantically pissed-off one second and deliriously happy shortly thereafter. No doubt, mutants are a little bit country and a little bit rock ‘n’ roll, too. They’re all emotional shape-shifters, which doesn’t exactly make them terribly stable but certainly makes for interesting characters and involving plot developments.

Then, of course, there’s the unique gift each mutant possesses—that super-special thing so unusual and extraordinary that the mutant has learned instinctively to hide it from their human counterparts, keeping it safely locked in their own mutant-sized closets, revealing their gifts only when their “mutant” radar (one surmises) safely announces they’re among their own kind.

Ironically, this mutant variation on gaydar

forms a key part of the plot of the new film. It’s way, way in the future, when mutants are losing their prolonged battle against the human-created Sentinels (robot-like machines infused with mutant DNA to make them invincible). By traveling into the past (utilizing the talents of Kitty Pryde/Shadowcat, played by the recently out and very proud Ellen Page), the mutants intend to keep the war from ever happening and restoring harmony with the humans in the process.

So as the surviving mutants of the future (which include Halle Berry as Storm) do their best to keep their location secret from the Sentinels and stall for time, Kitty puts Logan/Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) into a trance and mentally sends him back to 1973. Logan’s mission is to convince much-younger editions of Professor Charles Xavier (James McAvoy) and his frenemy Magneto (Michael Fassbender) that they must stop the shape-shifting Mystique (Jennifer Lawrence) from assassinating Trask (Peter Dinklage), the brilliant but mad scientist who is, at that moment, creating the Sentinels. In addition to the nasty robot thingies, Trask has come up with a handheld device, his own mutant Gaydar/Grindr that starts to squawk anytime a Gifted One is in range—the first step in removing the threat of mutants once and for all.

As usual, hothead Logan has little patience and doesn’t suffer fools gladly (nor does he take much notice of the kitschy 1970s-era culture around him, although director Bryan Singer delightfully makes sure we do, and of Jackman’s shapely ass). There’s a fair amount of chop-socky action as Logan and younger editions of the mutants go about trying to stop Trask from realizing his plan for world domination and Mystique from killing him, inadvertently setting this chain of events of motion. But there’s also plenty of tongue-in-cheek humor. (President Nixon vs. Magento, anyone?) And, as with all the X-Men pictures, there’s a fair amount of reflection on the plight of the mutants as they try to assimilate into society, which serves to deepen the material just enough to keep it from floating away.

Not to be overlooked (and who would want to?) is the helluva gorgeous cast just waiting for you to objectify them. I mean come on—Hugh Jackman, Nicholas Hoult, James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender, Jennifer Lawrence, Halle Berry, Anna Paquin, Ellen Page!?! As usual in a Singer movie, the male extras are also pretty easy on the eyes. (Upcoming Australian actor Josh Helman as the young Stryker is a standout in a small role.)

The picture has the energy of a classic cliff-hanger serial like Flash Gordon and really zips along, skipping from one plot point to the next. Also, Singer’s return to the series after a 10-year absence is a boon for the franchise (or vice versa—maybe a tad of both). The pacing that was sorely missed in the two Wolverine pictures (both also-rans) is squarely back in place, and even though the older versions of the mutants—played by Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellen et al—aren’t given much to do (the movie’s biggest drawback), their inclusion allows everything to come full circle in a really satisfying way. “We are family,” X-Men: Days of Future Past proclaims, “I got all my mutants with me,” and it feels good knowing that audiences are going to be reminded that even in the alternate universe the X-Men, women and everything in between inhabit, inclusion is a really, really, big deal and needs to happen for the benefit of all.

Of related interest: Charles and Magneto—aka Sir Patrick Stewart and Sir Ian McKellen, real-life besties (Stewart officiated at McKellen’s wedding to his husband)—co-starred last year in a production of Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* at London’s renowned Royal Haymarket Theatre in London’s West End. This historic pairing is captured in **Theatreland**, an eight-part, behind-the-scenes miniseries that looks at the production along with a first-ever staging (the disastrous musical version aside) of Truman Capote’s *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*. For theater queens (which most definitely includes moi),



Hugh Jackman in X-Men: Days of Future Past. Photo by Alan Markfield

this two-disc effort from Athena is a fascinating and entertaining look at these two legends hard at work.

Talented out writer-director Stephen Cone follows his critically acclaimed 2011 feature debut *The Wise Kids* with **Black Box**, which I described (when the film debuted last fall at the Reeling Film Fest) as a “fascinating treatise on the seductive, intimate power inherent in the play rehearsal process that unfolds within the “black box” of the undressed stage.” And the undressing goes on offstage, too, believe me.

When graduate student Holly Pollard (Josephine Decker) opts to adapt a trashy, gothic-style *Flowers in the Attic* novel entitled *The Reaper’s Children*, the idea doesn’t exactly thrill her adviser. But tough, uncompromising Holly plows ahead anyway and puts together an ensemble of fresh-faced young undergraduates eager to follow her lead. These include the conservative Catholic Madeline, newly out

Adam, brooding bisexual Brandon, 28-year-old and married Eddie, and British misfit Terra.

The arrival of the author, a seemingly meek and awkward man (gorgeously portrayed by Austin Pendleton), is at first a godsend to Holly, but the relationship quickly unravels. At about the same time, the actors find themselves increasingly pushed into darker and darker emotional territory onstage, fueling their heated interactions backstage (the most effective of which will be the hot but twisted affair between Adam and Brandon). Cone’s emotionally dense film really captures the intensity of the rehearsal process at the college level and, as in *The Wise Kids*, he elicits wonderful performances from his cast of young actors. *Black Box* opens this Friday, May 30 at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St. Cone, as well as various members of the cast and crew, will be present throughout the run for a post-screening audience discussion. <http://www.siskelfilmcenter.org/black-box>

Black Alphabet Film Festival July 2-3

The 2nd Annual Black Alphabet Film Festival will take place Wed.-Thursday, July 2-3, at the DuSable Museum of African American History and Center on Halsted.

Established in 2013 and named precisely because of the mouthful naming LGBTQ/SGI inclusivity can be, Black Alphabet (BA) is a non-profit Chicago-based collective of Black sexual and gender minorities committed to art, culture and entrepreneurship in the “Black alphabet” community.

This year, BA plans to create an even bigger and better celebration of storytelling, art and community. To achieve this goal, BA is asking people to contribute to the crowd-funding campaign on the website, Indiegogo.com.

Tickets will be available for purchase beginning in June.

Siskel Film Center to honor Morgan Freeman June 7

The Gene Siskel Film Center (GSFC) of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) will continue in its legacy of saluting important leaders in cinematic achievement by honoring Academy Award winner Morgan Freeman, Saturday, June 7, at The Ritz-Carlton Chicago, 160 E. Pearson St.

The evening will culminate with the presentation of the Gene Siskel Film Center Renaissance Award to Freeman by SAIC President Dr. Walter E. Massey. Past honorees include Gwyneth Paltrow, Reese Witherspoon, Jamie Foxx and George Lucas, among others.

Single tickets range in price from \$500 to \$1,000 (VIP); call 312-846-2072 for tickets, tables and more information.


‘Human Library’ coming to Printers Row Lit Fest

The Human Library will hold its first-ever event in Chicago at the 2014 Printers Row Lit Fest on June 7-8.

The library, which originated in Denmark in 2000, is designed to break the barriers that separate people by enabling dialogue. Individuals from typically marginalized groups act as human books. Participants in the event can “read” these books through speaking with them one on one about their life experiences.

The Chicago event has secured several Human Book volunteers, including a person with substance abuse disorder, a person who is biracial, a vegan and a person who is HIV-positive. However, the event organizer, Marlena Johnson, has expressed her desire to recruit more books for the event.

See www.humanlibrarychicago.org. Johnson can be reached at marlena@humanlibrarychicago.org.



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'X-Men': Everything old is new again—and gayer, too

BY LAWRENCE FERBER

The new X-Men film, X-Men: Days of Future Past, goes to some pretty dark places, with some iconic comic book/movie heroes meeting gruesome ends within the first bombastic 10 minutes alone. How does one prepare for these sorts of scenes and tone?

"Well, James McAvoy the other day claimed he heard Hugh Jackman warming up in his trailer singing Les Miz," Patrick Stewart shared, amused. "I believe it, too. If I had a voice like Hugh Jackman, I would warm up ... but definitely not Les Miz. I would find other things to sing. My musical education ended with Buddy Holly."

I spent quality time with returning cast members Ellen Page and Patrick Stewart in Manhattan's Ritz-Carlton, prior to a press conference about the film and its making.

The actress, who came out publicly this past February and was subject of *The Hollywood Reporter's* revealing May 16 cover story, plays Kitty Pryde, whose mutant power allows her to move through walls. Stewart plays Professor Charles Xavier, aka Professor X, world's most powerful psychic and founder of the X-Men. Ian McKellen, who plays Magneto, controller of all things metal and Xavier's longtime frenemy—and one of Stewart's real-life BFFs—wasn't here on this day, however. He was the subject of our conversation at the moment, though.

McKellen and Stewart famously posed and tweeted playfully queer photos together all over NYC, with the hashtag #gogodiddidnyc, while appearing in Broadway's *Waiting For Godot* this past winter. With a laugh, Page admitted that when she saw an image of the men

holding hands, romantically strolling down Coney Island's promenade, "I retweeted it saying, 'Date already!'"

"We've known one another so long," Stewart, who married wife Sunny Ozell last year, elaborated, "and have been so intimate onstage as actors. I think we're entirely qualified to hold hands. We took what I think are some beautiful pictures down by Stonewall Inn and with the [Christopher Street] gay-pride statues. Actually, my congratulations to Ellen when she came out immediately produced a response from The Guardian newspaper outing me! They retracted it about 25 minutes later, but in those 25 minutes I got some of the nicest emails and texts I've ever had in my life."

Director Bryan Singer's return to the X-Men movie franchise he started teams up the original trilogy's cast members with their younger incarnations from director Matthew Vaughn's 2011's prequel, *First Class*: James McAvoy (Xavier), Michael Fassbender (Magneto), Nicholas Hoult (Beast), and Jennifer Lawrence (the shape-shifting Mystique).

X-Men: Days of Future Past begins with a dystopian future, in which mutants and their human sympathizers have been hunted to the brink of extinction by Sentinel robots, created by Dr. Bolivar Trask (Peter Dinklage). In a last-ditch effort for survival, Xavier sends Wolverine's consciousness back to the 1970s, where he might prevent the Sentinels from ever being. Once there, he has trouble enlisting a bitter young Charles, duplicitous Magneto and a Mystique dead set on a vengeful agenda.

"In the first X-Men, Charles was a mentor for Wolverine, and the opposite happens in this movie," Jackman noted during the conference.



Patrick Stewart on the "X-Men" set. Photo by Alan Markfield

"And Wolverine, going back to the '70s, it's perfect. I don't think he wanted to leave the '70s! The hair, the muttonchops, the clothes! I think the moment that Tears For Fears, Flock of Seagulls and Wham! came around, Wolverine was like, 'I'm out!'"

Boasting grand set pieces, fight scenes, dark twists and hysterical bits of humor—particularly during a delicious caper sequence in which arrogant young mutant Quicksilver (Evan Peters), who can travel at light speed, helps break Magneto out from beneath the Pentagon—this X-Men ups the game considerably.

Like the previous films and comic book series from which the X-Men sprung, there's an analogy to be found between mutants and LGBTs. In X2, there was a memorable scene in which Iceman, played by Shawn Ashmore, came out as mutant to his family. His mother asked, "Have you tried not being a mutant?"

"It's been present since the very first film," Stewart acknowledged, "and that content has

given a lot of substance. The questions of prejudice and discrimination, because some creatures on our planet are different. However in this story, mutantkind and humankind in the present day are connected, because they're facing a threat far greater than any before. A Sentinel cannot be reasoned with. You can't rationalize what the Sentinels want. You can't sit down and have a cup of coffee to talk it over. But those parallels have always been there and we've always talked about and been aware of them."

Of course, one can also draw a parallel between mutants who “come out” and LGBTs who do the same, putting a face to what some people fear and hate. Page’s life has changed profoundly since she came out as lesbian at the Human Rights Campaign’s “Time To Thrive” LGBT youth conference in Las Vegas on Valentine’s Day. Julianne Moore has signed on to play her girlfriend in the upcoming *Freeheld*, a dramatization of the Oscar-winning 2007 documentary about a dying New Jersey policewoman who desperately fought to assign her partner survivor benefits.

However, Page said she isn't aware of a closeted Hollywood sisterhood, per se.

"I don't know any," she said. "I don't know any other person in my life I had something like that going on, a secret little club or something. I [came out] because I was ready to do it in my life."

Bryan Singer has already said that another X-Men film is in the works, this time starring villain Apocalypse, so it looks like this team will reunite yet again.

"We have become a company," Stewart said. "Even though there are gaps between movies, we are an ensemble and it's been a collaboration all the way along the line. When the camera stops rolling and director says cut we always have plenty to say to one another. The conversations on set are entertaining and lively. There are some jobs you get to do where it feels like the very best dinner party."

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Summer begins with a Memorial Day weekend to remember

Chicago was the center of the gay universe this past weekend, playing host to International Mr. Leather 36, Bear Pride 20, and many other reasons to celebrate. Windy City Times was there. Look for many more photos from all these events online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com and in this week's issue of Nightspots.



International Mr. Leather claims his sash

Ramien Pierre (far right, Mr. DC Eagle 2014) was chosen as the new International Mr. Leather Sunday, May 25, at Harris Theater. First runner-up Steve Dupont (Mr. New England Leather 2014) and second runner-up Cody Troy (Mr. Midwest Leather 2013) shared the spotlight at the contest, now in its 36th year. Entertainment was provided by all-male string quartet Well-Strung.

Photos by Verdell Shannon

To the victors go the spoils



Images from the official International Mr. Leather 2014 Victory Party, Sunday, May 25 at House of Blues. Right photo, left to right: International Mr. Bootblack 2014 Scout, International Mr. Leather 2014 Ramien Pierre; first runner-up Steve Dupont; second runner-up Cody Troy.

Photos by Anthony Meade

'Furball' first



For the first time the "Furball" phenomenon from New York traveled to Chicago during IML weekend. Replacing the popular Blow-out party, Furball brought in the bears to overrun the Metro once again Sat., May 24. Spinners of the evening included Ron Geronimo and DJ Paul Goodyear.

Photos by Jerry Nunn

'Market'-ing 101: Leather Basics



Vendors hawked their wares (and underwears) at the IML Leather Market on levels 5 and 7 of the Marriott Downtown Michigan Avenue.

Photos by Jerry Nunn



'Looking Back' with the Bears



Bear Pride 20: Looking Back, Looking Forward hit the town last weekend as well. This GROWLr-sponsored "Bear-BQ" at The Sofo Tap, Sunday, May 25, was just one of many bearish get-togethers.

Photos by Kirk Williamson



Summer LGBT movie preview

BY RICHARD KNIGHT JR.

Hollywood has for many years now subscribed to the idea that young, heterosexual men with an excess of testosterone are the prime audience for its summer offerings—and perhaps the billions of dollars that the studios have raked in from the blockbusters that feed this particular audience segment has something to do with that.

But increasingly, studios have also once again begun to notice that there are other avid moviegoers who don't just fit that particular demographic but are about as far from it as you can get. LGBT audiences, unlike Neely O'Hara (a Valley of the Dolls reference), are still settling for crumbs when it comes to summer blockbusters (although the new X-Men picture is once again gay as a goose in all but name). Nevertheless, there are still pleasures to be had at the cineplex as the summer heat draws nigh (and sometimes, yes, those pleasures do include those big, empty-headed blockbusters).

What follows is a random sampling of what lies ahead. Unless otherwise noted, the opening date listed refers to at least a one-week theatrical run or VOD.

June

Burning Blue—It's a slick melodrama with a gorgeous cast of TV and theater veterans starring in this gay variation on Top Gun in which two Navy pilots inexplicably fall in love during the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" period. June 6

How to Train Your Dragon 2—Ready to "Let It Go" with the Frozen Blu-ray already? If so, try this sequel to the much-loved animated

original that once again features Hiccup, Toothless and, if rumors are to be believed, a gay character. And it's a kid's movie—gasp! June 13

The Case Against 8—HBO debuts this behind-the-scenes look at the divisive, anti-gay California marriage-equality amendment that has since boomeranged (20 some states and counting) late in the month but, before that, the Music Box is giving Chicago audiences their first look at the film. June 13

Jersey Boys—Clint Eastwood helms the movie version of this mega-popular Broadway jukebox musical that traces the rise of the Four Seasons singing group in the early '60s. Not a gay one in the bunch but, gosh, are those guys cute (and those harmonies are sublime)! Christopher Walken co-stars. June 20

July

Tammy—Melissa McCarthy is a woman scorned who is hitting the road with her profane, hard-drinking grandma played by Susan Sarandon. Dan Akroyd and indie darling Mark Duplass co-star (and the plot includes a lesbian character, too). July 4

Hercules—Former pro wrestler Dwayne Johnson takes the leading role in this big-budget version of the sword-and-sandal classic. July 25

Jupiter Ascending—Director siblings Lana and Andy Wachowski appear to be back on firmer ground after the mixed reaction to Cloud Atlas (which I really dug). This sci-fi epic—which is about a young woman targeted for assassination by the Queen of the Universe—sounds like a sci-fi Snow White but the trailer



Jersey Boys. Photo by Keith Bernstein

sure is dazzling to behold. Channing Tatum and Mila Kunis co-star. July 25

August

Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy—Oh boy, another superhero, super-budget, 3-D, headache-inducing sci-fi spectacular about peacekeepers throughout the universe! Okay, okay, uncle—it actually looks like it might be halfway involving. The cast includes Chris Pratt, Vin Diesel, Bradley Cooper and Zoe Saldana. Aug. 1

The Hundred Foot Journey—Helen Mirren stars. Um, did you need to know anything else? Okay, okay, it's the story of an Indian family who open a restaurant in France—across the street from a fancy gourmet boite run by Mirren. The summer's Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, this is the one to see with mom. Aug. 8

The Giver—This is based on yet another best-seller and yet another entrant in the sci-fi teen film franchise (think Divergent, Ender's Game, Hunger Games, etc.). This one focuses on a young heartthrob who learns that the peaceful paradise he thinks is all around him may not be exactly what it seems. Meryl Streep (with long hair and bangs) and Jeff Bridges add acting gravitas to the trailer and certainly increase the curiosity factor. Aug. 15

The Loft—There's nothing like a little horror picture to scare up some box office in the face of all these action flicks. Five friends (including out actor Wentworth Miller and James Marsden) who share a loft to conduct Fifty Shades of Grey-type interludes fall out when a dead body is discovered and no one will fess up. Aug. 29

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The Fight for Marriage Equality in the Land of Lincoln
by Kate Sosin and Tracy Baim

Windy City Times reporter Kate Sosin and publisher Tracy Baim take an in-depth look at the push for marriage rights in Illinois. The complicated route to equality required money, political clout and a lot of activism to push it over the finish line. Sosin, now a reporter in Boston, will not be at the signing.

Vernita Gray: From Woodstock to the White House
by Tracy Baim and Owen Keehnen

Vernita Gray lived through some of the country's most riveting civil-rights dramas, as an African American girl from the South Side of Chicago. She came out as a lesbian soon after attending the 1969 Woodstock concert, where she heard about the uprising at the Stonewall gay bar in New York City. Her fight for lesbian equality, and the rights of the entire LGBTQ community, would be her passion for the remaining decades of her life. She was also a poet and a writer, a key player in Chicago's gay liberation movement, and a lesbian separatist during the 1970s. She lost her long battle with cancer just months after becoming one-half of the first same-sex couple to legally marry in Illinois. Hear a bit about her life from the authors of this new book.

VERNITA GRAY
From Woodstock to the White House
by Tracy Baim and Owen Keehnen

Featuring poetry by Vernita Gray, C.C. Carter, Shantell Steve and Yvonne Zipter

The Best of Knight at the Movies
by Richard Knight, Jr.

Windy City Times is marking the 10th anniversary of Richard Knight, Jr. as film critic for the paper with the publication of The Best of Knight at the Movies, a collection of Knight's movie reviews from 2004-2014. Written from Knight's queer perspective, the book includes more than 150 film reviews and essays. Gay icon Bruce Vilanch has said about the collection, "If Fred Phelps were alive, he'd picket this book!" The book will be released in mid-June, just over a decade after Knight joined the paper, and Knight will be at the store to read from and sign copies of his book.

THE BEST OF Knight at the Movies
2004-2014
Film Criticisms from a Queer Perspective
Richard Knight, Jr.

VERNITA GRAY

From Woodstock to the White House

by Tracy Baim and Owen Keehnen

Featuring poetry by Vernita Gray, C.C. Carter, Shantell Steve and Yvonne Zipter

Available May 2014
at Women & Children First Bookstore, Chicago
Also on Amazon (B&W & Color Editions), and Kindle

Mother, daughter part of Artemis Singers

BY LIZ BAUDLER

The group Artemis Singers is known as Chicago's celebrated lesbian feminist chorus.

Among many career highlights, the group has been inducted into the Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame, and performed at the marriage-equality bill-signing in 2013. Currently thirty-seven women meet weekly to prepare for concerts such as the chorus' May 31 show at Broadway United Methodist Church. The choir, in existence since 1980, has been home to countless friendships and relationships. But a recent addition to the choir stands out.

Hilary Marsh and Roxy Sawczynec, who have been in Artemis for about a year, are mother and daughter. Both fell in love with music at an early age, and when Sawczynec, who'd been in elementary school choruses, mentioned she felt like singing again, Marsh told Sawczynec about this choir she was joining. This step hearkened back to the family's days in New York, when Marsh joined a lesbian and gay chorus after coming out. "Choruses are good for getting people together to have fun and make something beautiful," Marsh said. "It's not the bar scene, and usually, you make great friends."

When she moved to Chicago in 1997, Marsh looked for another chorus. She first heard about Artemis at a concert a few years ago. "Everyone looked like they were having a really fun time. They were singing girl group songs from the '50s and '60s," she said. "I thought about joining, but the location was just not convenient until I started working from home."

While Artemis had a traditional music director in its early days, that dissipated into a more feminist practice. "A huge thing to me

that sets Artemis apart is that the members of the chorus act as directors," Marsh said. "One of the reasons I've left choruses before is that the director's vision wasn't my vision, the songs they were picking wasn't music that I liked to sing. Here, you have the opportunity to help choose the music. It's different than having an employee—do they work for you or do you work for them?"

"I asked once, 'What does the chorus do with the money from ticket sales?' And part of what they do is subsidize women to travel to the Sister Singers choral music festival. They don't assume that everyone can afford to go. That's also different than any other chorus I've been in."

Artemis helped host the festival in 2010 at Loyola University, a huge honor.

"It's all music about women, about feminism," Sawczynec added. "You're not just singing songs that are pretty, but you're singing songs that are meaningful to the people singing them." Sawczynec hadn't heard of Artemis before Marsh's involvement. She said this is possibly because of the age group the chorus attracts. "I'm the youngest member, by a lot," she says.

Marsh was struck by Artemis' sense of community. She's been to holiday parties and camping trips—even having her partner, who's not a member, join her and be welcomed. She mentioned the members' email list.

"People share everything, from 'I have paint to give away' to 'Does anyone know a good lawyer' to 'Here's a cool concert,'" Marsh said. "And people are amazingly generous with their time and each other. Just like you could call a cousin, you could call anyone in the chorus. Once you're in, you're in for life."



Hilary Marsh (left) and Roxy Sawczynec. Photo by Liz Baudler

While Sawczynec enjoys the music and particularly appreciates that the choir lets her learn by ear and at her own pace, she said she would love for younger members to join. "I think it would change the dynamic of the songs they pick," she said. "And just for meeting people. My mom has made a bunch of friends and I'm having a good time, but it would be really cool to have a chorus for 30 and younger." Sawczynec added that there's no audition and that members have varied skill levels—"very much the feminist ethos."

"I think everyone's learning a lot from having you here," Marsh said. The mother and daughter's relationship has always been close; they live close by, have dinner every Sunday and are learning to knit together, but the chorus ensures that they will have things to talk about and get to see each other. Both feel Artemis has welcomed them with open arms, asking them to sing solos in the upcoming concert.

A sense of history pervades Artemis, they said. Each member is given a document explaining the organization's changes throughout the years. And of course, there's the special magic singing brings. Sawczynec recalled the

tradition at the end of rehearsal where chorus members request "Happy Birthdays." Out of the blue, someone's friend will be dialed and the entire chorus sings to them, whether for birthdays or hospital visits.

Marsh has a treasured memory of the chorus' giving nature. At the concert she attended years ago, she won a raffle for a free "Happy Birthday" singing telegram. The following July, she took her partner out for a birthday dinner. As they were heading into the restaurant, her partner noticed a bunch of familiar-looking women across the street. The chorus soon headed into the restaurant and proceeded to serenade her with "Happy Birthday" in full harmony. "She was blown away," Marsh said. Now, she and Sawczynec can sing along, and sing together.

"A Feminist Mosaic," Artemis Singer's Pride concert and dance at Broadway United Methodist Church, 3338 N. Broadway, begins at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 31. Tickets are \$10-\$20; visit <http://artemisfeministmosaic.brownpapertickets.com> or at Women & Children First bookstore, 5233 N. Clark St.

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**NUNN ON ONE:
SUMMER MUSIC**

Indigo Girls' Emily Saliers talks longevity, social media

BY JERRY NUNN

The music of the Indigo Girls can be difficult to describe. Sometimes it may sound like folk, rock, or pop or something all mixed together. Possibly this is because the members of the duo (Amy Ray and Emily Saliers) are so drastically different.

They began performing together as high school students in Decatur, Georgia. This continued into college, where the name Indigo Girls was adopted, and they hit it big with the single "Closer To Fine."

During their time away from the group, Ray released six solo albums and started a record company Daemon Records while Saliers chose the restaurant biz and wrote a book.

Over the years the two have played Chicago many times. This time, WCT called up Saliers in preparation for the Girls' return to House of Blues.

Windy City Times: Hi, Emily. First time I saw you perform live was opening for R.E.M. in Nashville. Did you ever imagine performing for this long?

Emily Saliers: We never talked about the future. We grew up going to the same elementary school and high school, where we became pals. As soon as we started playing together it was the most fun I had in my entire life. All we ever did was want to get the next really good gig. In high school we never planned on making a career out of this or winning a Grammy.

It was more like, "This club is the best alternative club in Atlanta and let's get a gig there because they don't have that many acoustic musicians." It was that. To answer your question, we really didn't set out on a plan. We just wanted to do the next exciting thing. That is the way it's always been and continues to be.

I have to say that when I look back on it I'm blown away that two people could still get along who are so different from each other. It's the ideal yin-yang thing in full force really working for us.

WCT: I just watched a clip from a long time ago when David Letterman kept mentioning your name as "Indigo" during his early interview with you two.

ES: That was great press for us. That was back in the day. The first time on Letterman my legs were shaking so hard! I'm glad there wasn't a close up. Those were crazy times. Now we are just settled in to our wonderful core group of fans that allow us to continue to tour and make a living at music so we can keep doing it.

WCT: With releasing albums independently, has social media been a challenge?

ES: With social media, I think everyone wants to make the most use of it they can. Obviously, the landscape is completely different than when we came up when Epic Records signed us up for numerous records and nurturing our career up until the point our relationship ended. It was a different time. We got some radio play and it did help our careers.

I have mixed feelings about social media. I know it's important and some people live for it. It keeps things interesting for fans and attention spans are shortening. I know that people want to be more involved in an interactive experience. There is the old school in me that wants to write the music, play the shows, do the activism, and have it be that. There is another part of me that writes a Tumblr blog and it's very organic. It is from our own experience to present it to fans so we are using social media for something that feels good.

There is a lot to sort through with social me-

dia. I don't have a personal Facebook page because just the thought of being in touch with that many people and keeping it up just makes me tired. It is getting bad! So I have mixed feelings about it but there are parts of it that I enjoy.

WCT: It was interesting to be around Amy Ray at Lincoln Hall for a solo show and see how the fans were around her. They were nervous but she is so laid back and cool.

ES: Yes, she totally is. She's a real person.

WCT: Have you had many crazy fan experiences?

ES: We both have had some crazy fan experiences. I don't even know where to begin. We have had an occasional fan onstage or they think we have had a long life together when



Indigo Girls Emily Saliers (top) and Amy Ray.

we haven't.

Most of the fans are incredibly wonderful, so supportive, and they really care. When we show up at a concert in Chicago like at the House of Blues we are so happy that people come out to see us. I want to say thank you and my gratitude runs deep.

WCT: I was at the Christmas show you did at House of Blues. It was really special.

ES: We like to do different things like that. It keeps it fun and interesting for us as well as the people at the shows. We don't want to just come through town and do the same thing every time.

WCT: Who is opening for you this time out?

ES: Hannah Thomas, who is an incredible young bluesy rocker.

WCT: I just interviewed her for Windy City Times. She's really talented.

ES: She is and a powerhouse, plus a very nice person. She's a good songwriter. She can go as far as she wants to go.

WCT: "Making Promises" is your latest video. It reminded me of The Monkees—very light.

ES: Yeah, it is totally pop, Amy's pop. It is by

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WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN WINDY CITY TIMES



Hoppin' Hots

BY MEGHAN STREET

When Andersonville's Great Lake closed, my heart broke a little bit. Not only did the restaurant serve some of the most authentic and fantastic pizza outside of Italy, but that cramped little hole in the wall was the scene of my first date with the woman who is now my wife.

I was begrudgingly curious when I noticed one blustery winter afternoon that the Balmoral storefront had been transformed into **Hoppin' Hots**, a bright and cheerful hot-dog joint that, like its predecessor, churns out food so incredible that it's surprising the stuff originates from such a tiny kitchen.

I'll always feel sort of sad that my wife and

I can't go to Great Lake on our anniversary to reminisce about our first date, but if anything could ease my pain, it is the salted caramel milkshake and poutine at Hoppin' Hots. The shake is thick enough that you might want to dig in with a spoon at first, and the flavor is spot-on—salted caramel in cool and creamy liquid form. And as for the poutine, it is hands down the best I've had in Chicago. The French fries are thin and saturated with the correct amount of grease. The gravy is rich and savory and thick enough that it sits on top of the fries, but doesn't make them soggy. Most importantly, the cheese curds are the real deal—we're talking state-fair quality. You don't need more than a few heaping, gooey bites of this decadent concoction, so one order is more than enough to share. Now that I've paired several hot dogs with poutine, the notion of a dog with regular old (naked) fries seems tragic.

Now, about those dogs—the extraordinary poutine and milkshakes hardly upstage them. Far from your average wiener, these dogs are updated and elevated with gourmet toppings. Think lavender fennel aioli, duck confit, cho-

rizo and pineapple relish. All of the dogs, or "hots" as they're called here, can be prepared with a beef, duck or veggie link.

The Modern Chicago Hot is a clever upscale version of the original we all know and love—with one major deviation: there's ketchup of sorts on this guy. However, hot dog purists may find the offense forgivable because the "ketchup" is actually a tangy tomato jam. In place of regular yellow stuff, there's jalapeno mustard that provides a hint of heat but doesn't overpower with its spiciness. And where a typical Chicago dog has a plain pickle on top, Hoppin' Hots upgrades with a crisp spear that is lightly battered and fried.

The Frazzled Hot combines sweet maple mustard and a fried egg, making it the closest thing to a breakfast hot dog that I've ever encountered—and probably an excellent hang-over cure. Another outstanding option is the Carbonara Hot. If ever a hot dog could be described as succulent, this is it. The high-quality beef dogs are juicy enough in their own right, but when you top them with a slice of fried pork belly, you enter into a new stratosphere of

delicious. Garlic aioli is drizzled on top, uniting the flavors of the hot dog and the pork, and the masterpiece is finished with ciccoli, intensely flavorful bits of dried pork that has the consistency of crumbled potato chips.

If you're thinking Hoppin' Hots is reminiscent of Chicago legend, Hot Doug's, you are right on the money. In fact, Hot Doug's devotees may find some solace from their mourning at Hoppin' Hots when the former closes its doors in October. You won't find any andouille or thuringer at Hoppin' Hots (yet), but just like at Hot Doug's, you will get a creatively upgraded hot-dog experience made with high quality ingredients and served in a casually upbeat atmosphere. And with all due respect to Chicago's reigning king of encased meats, the Hoppin Hots poutine beats the pants off of Doug's duck-fat fries. So, maybe there is hope for hot-dog fanatics after all.

Hoppin' Hots is located at 1477 W. Balmoral Ave.; call 773-989-4687 or visit www.hoppinhots.com.

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Wed., May 28

Piano Diaries In Piano Diaries, a one-man show blending monologue and music, composer/singer-songwriter and solo pianist Peter Saltzman shares his journey toward creating a new form of music that fuses elements of jazz, classical and pop. He delivers imaginary dialogues with composers who have influenced his writing, such as Bach, Antonio Carlos Jobim and Sting. His narration is interspersed with performances of old jazz standards, a Bach Fugue, his original pop songs, complex original piano compositions, and a great deal of improvisation. 8:00pm - 9:15pm The Athenaeum Theatre 2936 N Southport Ave <http://www.athenaeumtheatre.org> Tickets: <http://www.athenaeumtheatre.org>

Fabitat: Summertime Realness A mix of drag and design like no other. Lucy Stooles and the girl of Saffire House. Local artists and designers selling their work include Tarnish, Bitter Betty Bath, Lake Yacht Club, GNAT, QIAM Fashions and more. DJs Adam El and Lady Problems. 8:00pm - 2:00am Double Door 1572 N Milwaukee

Thursday, May 29

Toast marriage equality at The Field Museum Celebrate marriage equality throughout the State of Illinois. This marriage equality cocktail party is invitation only and does require an RSVP using the link below. 6:00pm - 8:00pm Field Museum 1400 S Lake Shore Dr <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/equality-at-the-field-celebration-tickets-11416243291>

Howard Brown Health Center annual meeting Free event will highlight accomplishments and provide a view of the center's future. RSVP online by May 26. 6:30pm - 8:30pm The Brown Elephant, 3020 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago http://howardbrown.org/hb_services.asp?id=2813

Vieux Carre Playwright: Tennessee Williams. A nameless, newly-transplanted, innocent aspiring writer struggling with his literary career, poverty, and homosexuality who survives alongside other starving and ailing tenants of a rooming house in 1930's New Orleans. Auto-biographical tragicomedy filled to the brim with sexuality, desperation and loneliness as well as Williams' unique brand of poetry. \$36. Runs through June 28 7:30pm, 773-338-2177 <http://www.raventheatre.com/>

Andrews Sisters Musical Tribute During

the war, Patty, Maxene and LaVerne Andrews charmed soldiers through their USO tours, winning a following that continued after the war as the sisters entertained the returned veterans through concerts, recordings, TV and movies. Through July 27 7:30pm Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre at No Exit Café, 6970 N. Glenwood Ave., Chicago 800-595-4849 <http://www.theo-u.com>

Friday, May 30

One Million Degrees' 7th Annual Food+Wine Tasting World-class chefs and guests mix, mingle and support the success of low-income community college students. Small plate culinary feast by top chefs. 6:00pm - 11:00pm Bridgeport Art Center, 1200 W 35th St., Chicago <http://www.onemilliondegrees.org/annual-events/#food-wine-tasting> Tickets: https://onemilliondegrees.secure.force.com/events/CnP_PaaS_EVT__ExternalRegistrationPage?event_id=a10d0000001ckLd

At Last: Marriage Equality Fundraiser AChurch4Me MCC is proud to present this show, created by music director Michael McBride and featuring some of the best cabaret and theater performing artists in Chicago. Tickets are \$15 pre-sale and \$20 at the door and can be purchased online at www.achurch4me.org. Proceeds will benefit the programs of AChurch4Me including their HIV/AIDS Prevention Ministry, Senior Support Group, and their ongoing support of the Lakeview Pantry. Ten percent of all proceeds will go directly to "The Crib" an overnight youth shelter in Lakeview run by The Night Ministry. 6:30pm - 9:30pm Atmosphere Bar 5355 N Clark St

Artist Paul Riley and Sam Kirk opening reception Center on Halsted's LGBTQ Artists Gallery will showcase the works of Paul Riley in the 2nd floor gallery and Sam Kirk in the 3rd floor gallery. The show will run from May 30 - Jul 8. Please join the artists, community members, and staff for an opening reception with cash bar. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

Days Like Today Lovely, hopeful Tessa has vowed that she is through with love-despite the best efforts and conflicting advice of her parents (and their respective lovers). After all, it's never easy to move on before you've had time to heal.

But when a handsome young stranger arrives, Tessa must decide whether the idea of love might still be one worth fighting for. Through July 13. 8:00pm Writers Theatre, 325 Tudor Ct., Chicago Tickets: <http://www.writerstheatre.org/calendar-tickets#5/2014>

Saturday, May 31

Chicago Celebration of Life service for Lady Tajma Hall Chicago-based entertainer died Saturday morning, April 19, of cardiac arrest at Evanston Hospital. She was 44. 2:00pm - 5:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Lady-Tajma-Hall-dies-/47119.html>

Artemis Singers presents A Feminist Mosaic Pride concert and dance with live DJ immediately follows the concert. Both concert and dance are accessible. Tickets email info@artemissingers.org, by phone or website. 7:30pm Broadway United Methodist Church 3338 N Broadway 773-764-4465, Tickets: <http://artemisfeministmosaic.brownpapertickets.com>

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, Bouncing Off The Walls: Broadway Our Way Celebrating the most recent Broadway hits, CGMC reimagines selections from The Book of Mormon, Newsies, Kinky Boots, and more. 8:00pm Harris Theater for Music and Dance 205 E Randolph Dr <http://www.cgmc.org/event/2014/bouncing-walls-broadway-our-way>

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Weekly Saturday meetings. A peer-led support and education group for people with mood disorders and family and friends. Ask receptionist for room number. 11:00am - 12:30am Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted 872-216-3272 <http://www.dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com>

Cock In this tense comedy about sexual identity, Cock explores one man's choices about which path of love to pursue. When John takes a break from his longtime boyfriend, he must make a choice as he navigates his sexuality, selfhood, and the intersection of the two. Through June 29 8:00pm The Main Stage of Profiles Theatre 4139 N. Broadway 773-549-1815 <http://www.profilestheatre.org>

WUF: A Party For Bearded Men and Their Admirers DJ Moose, hosts Collin Wood and Team Cur. Inked Kenny Photo. Last Saturday of every month. 10:00pm - 2:00am Mary's Attic 5400 N Clark <http://www.hamburgermarys.com/chicago>

Affinity Trailblazers (Formerly known as the Senior Group) Community and information for and among seniors to identify challenges of being in the 60+ age group; to advocate for individuals in this age group; and to provide support for those whose partners have health issues. Last Saturday of the month. Please bring a dish and/or beverage to share. Info: Phyllis Johnson at seniorgroup@affinity95.



SOUND AND THE URIE

Monday, June 2

Michael Urie will take part in The Last Sunday in June at Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.

Photo by Dick Mitchell

org. 11:00pm - 1:00pm Affinity Community Services 1424 E. 53rd St. Suite 306 <http://www.affinity95.org>

Sunday, June 1

Big Queer Latin Wedding ULP kick-off celebration wedding for queer couples with music, food, drink and all the trimmings. Free tickets online. 1:00pm - 5:00pm Chicago Urban Arts Society, 600 W. Cermak, Pilsen <http://chicagourbanartsociety.com> Tickets: <http://www.unitedlatinpride.org>

48th Ward Marriage Equality Celebration Join Harry Osterman, Alderman, 48th Ward to kick off Pride Month and enjoy a mini-reception at Nacho Mama's Beach Bar featuring performances from The Harmonious Hunks and Pride Films and Plays, followed by a T-Dance and drink specials all day long. 1:00pm - 5:00pm Kathy Osterman Beach (5800 N. Lake Shore)

Windy City Gay Idol "Wild Card" Round: Contestants from previous prelims who did not make it through are invited back for one last chance to get through to the semi-finals, Sat., June 14. A few spots left open for new singers. Audience votes decide winner, so bring your friends! \$5 cover gets you voting ballot and raffle ticket for many exciting prizes. Top vote-getter gets \$100 cash. Sign-up at 9 (\$10 for new singers), show at 10. \$5 Ketel One cocktails. ProgressBar, 3359 N. Halsted St.

Married in Unity Unity in Chicago will be hosting an all-inclusive, non-denominational group wedding ceremony in the beautiful Unity garden located on the

church grounds. Register online. 4:00pm Unity in Chicago (Unity Church) 1925 W Thome <http://UnityChicago.org> Tickets: www.unitychicago.org/married-in-unity/

Monday, June 2

Asian & Pacific Islander Coming Out Support Group Share your journey in a safe space. Open to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and queer APIs. Adoptees, and multiracial folks welcome. First Monday of every month. Room 722 6:00pm - 7:30pm Asian Human Services 4753 N. Broadway, 7th Floor <http://www.chicagoi2i.org>

41st Annual Non-Equity Jeff Awards Ceremony The Jeff Awards has been honoring outstanding theater artists annually since it was established in 1968. Doors, cash bar 6 pm, light buffet at 6:30 pm, presentation ceremony 7:30 pm. Tickets \$40 in advance, \$45 at door. Group rate \$35. 6:00pm Park West Chicago 322 W Armitage Ave Tickets: <http://www.jeffawards.org>

Gay Actor Michael Urie stars in The Last Sunday in June About Face Theatre reading of play by out playwright Jonathan Tolins. Ugly Betty alum Michael Urie and partner Ryan Spahn star as Tom and Michael. \$20 7:30pm Greenhouse Theater Center 2257 N. Lincoln Ave. <http://www.aboutfacetheatre.com>

Tuesday, June 3

Pride Films and Plays' 2014 benefit Tony Tunes Featuring shows that have won Tony Awards in the past, along with songs from the upcoming Tony Award nominees (like Hedwig and the Angry Inch, Violet and Les Miserables). Performers for the evening will include nominees and winners from Chicago's Jeff-nominated shows, representing many of the theaters and cabarets around the city. Doors 6 pm, with a program from 7 to 8:30. Tickets \$20 include one drink coupon. 2:00pm Side-track 3349 N Halsted St 800-838-3006 <http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com> Tickets: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com>

Frankie Knuckles Tribute Dance party and tribute to Chicago DJ and record producer Frankie Knuckles (1955-2014), "The Godfather of House Music." 6:00pm - 9:00pm Millennium Park, Chase Central Promenade (Rain Location: Chase North Promenade) 201 E. Randolph St., Chicago http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/frankieknuckles.html

Wed., June 4

RuPaul's Drag Race Season Six Tour The stars of Season Six hit Chicago. Expected to perform: Adore Delano, Courtney Act, Milk, and winner Bianca Del Rio. Hosted by Frida Lay with special guest Shangela. Doors open at 10, show at 11. \$25 cover, Roscoe's Tavern 3356 N Halsted St <http://www.roscoes.com>

INDIGO from page 33

her friend who is a video maker. It was something we could do that is homegrown. We inserted all the graphics that make it fun. It has a sunny vibe although the content of the lyrics add a serious element to it. That is classic Indigo Girls, you think it's sweet but then look at the lyrics and see how depressing it is!

WCT: It must be nice to have some downtime. I know you both go and go.

ES: Well, we both have kids now. Amy has a little daughter and so do I. There's no break anymore! [Laughs]

WCT: How is your daughter?

ES: She's awesome. She is 17 months and she's fabulous. She is not a great sleeper so she is up a lot. Her other mom and me are perpetually tired but she is definitely worth it. It makes every bit of life officially busy, busy as hell! I take naps when I can and I get to sleep when I go on the road.

WCT: That's your break? Going on the road!

ES: That is the break but on the other hand I miss them so much. Little kids change so quickly. If you are gone ten days then you miss a developmental thing happening. I can't complain; I get to play music for a living and have the most wonderful family I can imagine. It's awesome!

WCT: You and Tristin are married?

ES: Yes, we are married. We got married in New York last August.

WCT: Congrats on that.

ES: Thanks. It has been a long process of getting residency. She's Canadian. All of that stuff is working itself out. We are one of the fortunate ones. It is a lot harder for people going through immigration who don't have the same privilege that we do. I am thankful for our ability to work through the system. The Supreme Court decision changed our lives in a day.

WCT: I was surprised that Indigo Girls are not doing [the upcoming] WorldPride in Toronto.

ES: She is going up there for WorldPride. She is totally psyched. Amy and I just have other concert dates so we couldn't work out the scheduling. It is an incredible series of events. I wish we could be there. We have played in Toronto Pride before and it was awesome.

WCT: I had a blast at their Pride last year. Do you have a great Pink story?

ES: She's incredible. When she invited us to sing on "Dear Mr. President"—both Amy and I were blown away. We didn't know where it came from, but then learned that she loved our music and grew up singing some of our stuff. We are both Pink fans. When you find out that an artist that you admire likes your stuff then

it's a really good feeling. I can't speak for Amy because I'm a little more excitable but my head almost popped off!

She is so cool and Amy invited her to sing on her song when she was in L.A. She has such a powerful voice that she had to stand five feet off the mic. Her pitch was perfect. We didn't have to fix anything and she learned the song really quickly. We sat outside and talked politics for hours. She is a great talent and her voice is one of my favorites in all of music today. She's super-cool!

WCT: Do you want to make a solo album?

ES: Yep. I am working on it now, believe it or not. I am writing songs for it while I am writing songs for a new Indigo record. Amy and I are going back in the studio in September and October. I am also writing solo songs and I am going to co-produce it with Lyris Hung. She has toured with us and will be with us in Chicago, actually. She's our violinist. She is also great production ideas. We are very simpatico, musically and as friends, so we are starting to put that plan together.

WCT: What kind of vibe are you going for with this solo album?

ES: It is going to be more rhythmic, more groove oriented. I am huge fan of R&B. I like a lot of beats. I like groups like Zero 7 and the singer Sia. I am not going to make a Daft

Punk album because they are geniuses but I like that kind of thing. I like a deep groove. I imagine it will be my same old serious lyrics but with some strong beat elements. I love instruments from all over the world. I am way into Indian music and would like to have some Indian drumming. Middle Eastern pipes and drums I love too. Asian strings would be nice. I imagine it will be a mishmash of groove, world flavor, and lyrics. That's the plan!

WCT: I heard you like wine. Do you have a favorite?

ES: You know it's funny I don't drink wine anymore. I was a huge wine collector but I gave all of that up almost three years ago. When I was into it, because I own a restaurant and still do called Watershed, we had access to amazing wine. Back in the day I tended to be into huge reds and there were a lot of boutique reds and Rome varietals. I liked the spiciness and pepperiness of those but I never had one favorite. I was quite the connoisseur but I liked them all. It is better for my health and life to have no more vices. We are just on the straight and narrow path.

That path leads to a live show on June 4 at House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn St. Visit www.indigogirls.com for more on the band.

BILLY MASTERS

"Anything but Johnny Weir. Leave me alone with that faggot. Anything but Johnny Weir and his divorce!"—Harvey Fierstein is asked if any topics are off-limits. Apparently he has no love for ice skating—or for being politically correct.

We live in an age of political correctness. As luck would have it, the world got more politically correct just around the time I started this column. But who determines what is acceptable and what isn't? This past week, it was announced that the hugely popular San Francisco party "Trannyshack" (started in 1996 by Heklina) would change its moniker to the more innocuous "T-Shack." Also in the news, RuPaul was pressured to stop using the term "tranny" and drop a "Drag Race" segment called "Female or She-Male." And yet, most notable drag queens polled had no problem with either term. So why the change? Because some people out there were uncomfortable.

It's not politically correct to criticize Larry Kramer or The Normal Heart, but HBO's adaptation proves several things. First, this is a powerful story that needs to be told. Sections of the play that are shown rather than described illustrate what this film could have been. I kept thinking that maybe it should have been even longer. Maybe it should have been a mini-series, like Angels in America.

But that brings us to the biggest problem—The Normal Heart ain't no Angels in America, and Larry Kramer ain't no Tony Kushner. Kramer is a historian. He's a chronicler of events. But I'm not convinced he's a great storyteller. Perhaps because there is so much material to cover, you never become totally invested in many important characters. And my hunch is, the ones you do become invested in says more about the actors than the material. Playing perhaps the most fully realized character, Matt Bomer all but steals the show. A close second would be Jim Parsons, who was as touching and nuanced as I remember him from the Broadway production. And Joe Mantello is a miracle and probably knows this material better than anyone else. They were lucky to have him. I believe this was a labor of love for everyone involved. And, truthfully, I'm glad it was made. Ultimately, an imperfect film is better than no film at all.

Rather than bask in the glory of this accomplishment, Kramer still wants to talk about Barbra Streisand. The most recent *bon mot* he shared with The New York Times is as follows: "I said [to Barbra], 'I really think it's important that after eons of watching men and women make love in the movies, it's time to see two men do so.' I bought her a book of very beautiful art pictures of two men making love, and she found it very distasteful." Let me translate—he gave Babs gay porn and she was turned off. How shocking! What Larry often neglects to say is that Streisand brought him the same exact deal Ryan Murphy signed with HBO. Kramer turned it down, holding out for either a theatrical release or wanting to be paid \$1 million to write the script. He does admit to that last part, along with praise that Murphy put up the money himself. Sigh—it always comes down to that.

I've been fascinated watching Ricky Martin this past week. It started with Barbara Walters' farewell special, where she showed the clip from a 2000 interview where she asked Ricky if he wanted to confirm or deny that he was gay. He pointedly avoided the question, but with so much grace that it was almost elegant. Babs, on the other hand, wouldn't let it go and tried every angle. Ricky was so calm, he almost seemed amused. And that spoke volumes about Martin—he's unflappable. This feeling was reinforced when he turned up on Andy Cohen's sofa last week. Andy tried (with, I should



Johnny Weir is not Harvey Fierstein's (above) favorite subject, Billy says.

add, significantly less skill than Walters) to get Ricky to talk about his private life—specifically, if he's single. Ricky just smiled and said virtually nothing.

However, that doesn't mean others around him aren't talking. For instance, it's been rumored that Uruguayan actor and model Federico Diaz may have been complicit in the breakup of Ricky and Carlos Gonzalez Abella. But how silly would that be? Federico isn't even gay. Oh, wait, breaking news. ... Federico just came out on Twitter. There's lots of "Only God know when and how, blah blah blah, I came to this Earth to be happy, blah, blah, blah ... I love you all very much." Nothing about Ricky. But another player has entered the game. Perhaps Andy should get Diaz on the couch.

Michael Jackson is back in the news with a new hit single—because, like Tupac, he'll be putting out new records for decades. He wrote "Love Never Felt So Good" with Paul Anka, and Jackson recorded a demo in 1983. It's been remixed and enhanced for this current release with the assistance of Justin Timberlake. Surely, this is a collaboration MJ would have endorsed. Did you know that Michael Jackson had a HUGE crush on Justin Timberlake? Their paths crossed a few brief times, and MJ finally summoned the courage to invite Timby to visit him. At the appointed day, the buzzer at the gate rang, and Justin asked for entry ... with his then-girlfriend Britney Spears. Jackson privately sobbed, "Why did he have to bring HER?" He had hoped to have Justin all to himself. Michael had the pair wait outside an endless amount of time while he composed himself and tried to look happy to see Britney. Like she hasn't been through that before.

We have time for a very brief "Ask Billy" question. Philip in Toronto writes: "Have you seen Tom Daley's reality travel show? He showed off his bouncing bunge last week. I thought you would enjoy it since he just turned 20."

And indeed I did. You may all enjoy it on BillyMasters.com.

When I'm telling you to follow the bouncing balls, it's definitely time to end yet another column. This is one of those transitional columns—we're getting into the summer season, but it's still kinda chilly out. Thank God you can get your fill of hot guys in Speedos (and less) over at www.BillyMasters.com, the site where it's always steamy. If you have a question you'd like answered, dash off an e-mail to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Julia Roberts appears in a gender-bending remake of Ironside. Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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Left: AIDS Foundation of Chicago's Anthony Galloway. Right: The crowd at The Normal Heart screening. Photos by Dan Merlo

HBO hosts 'Normal Heart' screening in Chicago

About 200 people attended an advance screening of HBO's The Normal Heart in Chicago May 22 at the Venue Six10 room at Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership.

Representatives from HBO were on hand for the screening, along with representatives from AIDS and LGBT groups. On display were Chicago panels from the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt.

Jack Segal of Comcast, which was also host of the screening, spoke about the need to stay engaged and active on AIDS and LGBT issues.

Anthony Galloway from AIDS Foundation of Chicago spoke about the "Step Up. Get Tested" campaign in June. Details are at <http://stepupgettested.com>.

The Normal Heart premiered on HBO Sunday, May 25. See <http://www.hbo.com/movies/the-normal-heart#/>.

See the Windy City Times review here: <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/A-closer-look-at-The-Normal-Heart/47490.html>.

Sky first to celebrate WNBA Pride June 22

Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) tipped off WNBA Pride presented by COVERGIRL, a new national platform celebrating inclusion and equality, while combating anti-LGBT bias.

The Chicago Sky will become the first to celebrate LGBT Pride on national television when they host the Tulsa Shock on Sunday, June 22, at 1 p.m. ET on ESPN2.

The Chicago Sky will participate in events throughout the month of June as part of the team's annual celebration of Pride. Sky players and staff will walk in the Chicago PRIDE Parade and take part in post-game meet-and-greets with fans at Hamburger Mary's in Andersonville and Mini Bar in Lakeview.

Following the game on June 22, the Sky will host a networking event and panel discussion featuring AthleteAlly founder and CEO Hudson Taylor and Stanford guard Toni Kokenis.

Tickets for the Sky PRIDE game start as low as \$17. A portion of all PRIDE ticket packages will be donated to Equality Illinois. Call 866-SKY-WNBA or visit ChicagoSky.net.

Lesbian named to president's council

Lesbian Caitlin Cahow has been appointed to President Obama's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition, according to a press release.

Cahow was a member of the United States women's national ice-hockey team from 2005 to 2013. In addition, she was captain of the Boston Blades in the Canadian Women's Hockey League (CWLH), and has served on the CWLH board of directors since her retirement in 2013. Cahow received a A.B. from Harvard University and a J.D. from Boston College Law School.

New tennis facility in Washington Park

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago's XS Tennis have announced a new \$9.8-million, 112,000-square-foot tennis facility in the Washington Park neighborhood.

The state-of-the-art facility will house eight indoor and 19 outdoor courts, a fitness center, running track, training space and classrooms.

Chicago's XS Tennis is the largest, most successful minority-owned tennis organization in the nation, serving more than 2,000 Chicago Public School (CPS) students through its free in-school Tennis XSpres program, and more than 2,300 Chicago youth and residents annually.

XS Tennis expects to break ground in September. The \$9.8-million investment will be made with \$2.9 million in TIF (tax-increment financing) support.

Lake View Divvy station moved

The City of Chicago has moved the Lake View Divvy bike-sharing station that launched a lawsuit from residents who feared it would bring in too many strangers, according to DNAInfo.com.

Last year's lawsuit claimed that residents of a three-unit condominium in the 3500 block of North Pine Grove Avenue were not aware the Divvy station would be installed near their building until workers were seen preparing for the station a day earlier.

On May 8, city crews moved the station a block north, near Waveland and Pine Grove avenues, reportedly so they could expand it from a 15-bike to a 23-bike rack.

Youth athletes, Olympic ice team in Chicago May 31

Youth from the Chicago Park District's synchronized skating team, Chicago Skates, will participate in American Ice Theatre's spring concert "Let's Dance!" Saturday, May 31 at 7 p.m. at the McFetridge Sports Center, 3843 N. California Ave.

American Ice Theatre (AIT) is a new contemporary ice dance company in Chicago. The Chicago Park District ice skaters will perform as part of a program that includes the AIT ensemble and guest stars such as 2014 Olympic Team Bronze medalist Jason Brown and 2011 U.S. Men's Champion Ryan Bradley.

General admission tickets are \$30, and VIP seating is \$60; visit americanicetheatre.org.



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Ray is a legal authority on all of his practice areas, which include probate, trusts, guardianship, estate planning, and elder law, including the litigation of those areas. He is a longtime advocate for and member of the LGBT community, and is involved in several charitable groups, community associations, and professional organizations. Ray is a member of Clark Hill PLC, a full-service law firm consisting of a diverse team of attorneys and professionals committed to our clients and our communities.

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