

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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SHUTDOWN

Police close Pride at Montrose event early.

Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

31



From the Chicago Pride Parade.
Photo by Jerry Nunn

One million celebrate Pride along the sunny parade route

COVERAGE OF THE PARADE AND MORE PRIDE EVENTS BEGINS ON PAGE 16

JANAE BONSU

Activist on BYP100, queer Black identity.

Photo by Sarah-Ji Rhee of Love and Struggle Photos

18

DYKE MARCH

The event marks 20 years.

Photo by Tracy Baim

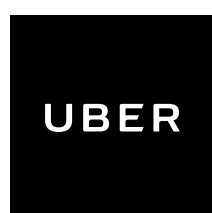
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RIDE FOR AIDS

TPAN's annual fundraiser will take place July 9-10.

Photo of Ride for AIDS 2014 by Ross Forman

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ILLINOIS

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THE SOUND AND THE LURIE
Lurie Gender and Sex Program has received a \$500K matching gift from trans advocate Col. Jennifer Pritzker (left).
PR photo of Pritzker

(ANN) ARBOR DAY



WCT's newest travel feature involves a visit to the Michigan cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti.

Photo of city's visitors bureau

MAEK ME

WCT talks with musicians and LGBT-rights advocates Jason Maek and Zaena.

ALL THAT JAZZ

WCT reviews the book Being Jazz, about trans teen Jazz Jennings.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Lynda Carter, Sean Hayes and Laverne Cox.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

JOCK OF ALL TRADES



Out athletes were all over Chicago this past weekend, thanks to a Cyd Zeigler appearance and the event "Straight Talk from Out Jocks."

Photo of Zeigler by Matt Simonette

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HOLIDAY COUNTDOWN



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'15 Toyota Corolla LE	Automatic, Full Power, Slate, P5215	\$14,995
'09 Honda Accord EX-L	Auto., Sunroof, Leather, 50K, Silver, 14728A	\$12,995
'08 Honda CRV EX AWD	Automatic, Sunroof, 44K, White, 15190A	\$11,995
'09 Acura TSX	Heated Seats, Leather, Moonroof, White, 15209A	\$11,995
'08 Honda Civic EX-L	Auto., Leather Sunroof, 36K, Beige, 15279A	\$9,995
'11 Mitsubishi Outlander Sport SE	Auto., 1-Owner, Blue, 15182A	\$9,995
'07 Toyota Camry Solara SE	Sunroof, V6, Only 51K, Grey, 14903A	\$8,995
'11 Mazda2 Touring	Manual, Only 9,800 Miles, Red, 15055A	\$7,995
'06 Honda Civic LX	Automatic, Full Power, Grey, 15210A	\$7,995
'05 Lexus ES 330	Auto., Leather, Moonroof, Grey, 15142A	\$7,995
'04 Honda CRV LX AWD	Automatic, Full Power, Silver, 14672A	\$5,995
'06 Saab 9-3 2.0T	Auto., Leather, Sunroof, Grey, 15106A	\$4,995
'04 Nissan Maxima 3.5L	Auto., Moonroof, Leather, Silver, 15006A	\$4,995
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Pope says Christians should apologize to gay people

On June 26, Pope Francis stated that Christians should apologize to gay people and others who the Church has offended or exploited—remarks that some have called historic regarding the church's attitude toward homosexuality.

"I repeat what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says: that they must not be discriminated against, that they must be respected and accompanied pastorally," the pontiff said at a press conference on his plane while he traveled to Armenia. He added, "I believe that the church not only should apologize to the person who is gay whom it has offended, but has to apologize to the poor, to exploited women, to children exploited for labor. It has to ask forgiveness for having blessed many weapons."

The pope was responding to a question from journalist Cindy Wooden about a German cardinal who said the Catholic Church should apologize for being "very negative" about gays. Pope Francis was also asked if Christians bear some blame for hatred toward the LGBT community—with the recent Orlando, Florida, mass shooting still resonating in the minds of many people.

"To hear the head of the Roman Catholic Church acknowledge the hurt and pain the church has caused in the lives of countless gay people and women worldwide is a welcoming and encouraging sign towards needed healing and reconciliation," said Call To Action Co-Executive Director Ryan Hoffmann in a statement. (Call To Action is a national organization working for equality and justice within the Catholic Church.)

In a separate press release, New Ways Ministry Executive Director Francis DeBernardo said, in part, "No pope has said more welcoming words to LGBT people than Pope Francis' recommendation today that the Church—indeed, all Christians—should apologize for the harm religious traditions have caused to LGBT people. The pope's statement was simple, yet powerful, and it fell from his lips so easily. The simplicity of his language will provide an immense blessing of healing and reconciliation to LGBT people and Catholics who support them, who have been waiting decades to hear such a simple, honest statement from the Vatican."

"Indeed, some Catholic leaders have already acknowledged the pain that the Church has caused sexual and gender minorities. When the person in charge sets the tone for such apologies, more leaders and people will be moved to follow suit."

"Pope Francis' comments did not come out of



Pope Francis, who The Advocate chose as Person of the Year for 2013.

a vacuum, but out of the decades of work that Catholics have been doing to remind Church leaders that the Church was too often complicit in the social prejudice and physical harm that LGBT people experience. The prayers, witness, work, and ministry of so many dedicated Catholics has finally risen to the top of the hierarchy and is starting to be heard and enacted."

DignityUSA Executive Director Marianne Duddy-Burke also welcomed the Pope's remarks. "This could be a very important step in healing the relationship between the Catholic Church and LGBTQ people," she said. "The frank acknowledgment by the Pope that Church teachings and practices have done immense harm to LGBTQ people over the centuries—leading to such evils as violence, oppression, self-hatred, the division of families, youth homelessness, and suicide—is essential."

Duddy-Burke welcomed the pope's reference to the part of the Catechism of the Catholic Church that says gay people should not be discriminated against. However, she noted that the Catechism also still uses such language as "objectively disordered" and "intrinsically disordered" in reference to homosexuality. DignityUSA and its partner organizations in the Equally Blessed coalition, among others, have repeatedly called for such language to be eliminated.

any Clinton immediately praised the ruling, tweeting, "SCOTUS's decision is a victory for women in Texas and across America. Safe abortion should be a right—not just on paper, but in reality. -H."

National Center for Lesbian Rights Policy Director Julianna S. Gonen said in a statement, "Whether choosing a life partner or determining whether to continue or end a pregnancy, the liberties enshrined in the Fourteenth Amendment are fundamental and cannot be legislated away by politicians. Today's ruling struck down unconstitutional regulations imposed by Texas on abortion clinics. Those clinics can now resume providing essential reproductive health care, as well as care to the LGBT community, which often turns to these providers as vital sources of compassionate and affirming care."

Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito were among those dissenting.

Supreme Court rejects Texas abortion law

In what has called its most significant ruling in years, the U.S. Supreme Court, on June 27, rejected a Texas abortion-access law.

The five-to-three decision is seen as a victory for supporters of abortion rights who argued it would have close all but a few clinics in the state.

Justice Stephen Breyer wrote the majority opinion, and was joined in full by Justice Anthony Kennedy—considered the swing vote on the abortion issue.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg joined Breyer's opinion and wrote a brief concurring opinion, which focused on what she called women in "desperate circumstances."

Democratic presidential candidate Hill-

Open To Thinking

A REVIEW BY NICK PATRICCA



Blessed Body book looks at Nigerian life

REVIEW OF: *Blessed Body: The Secret Lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Nigerians*, edited by Unoma Azuah.

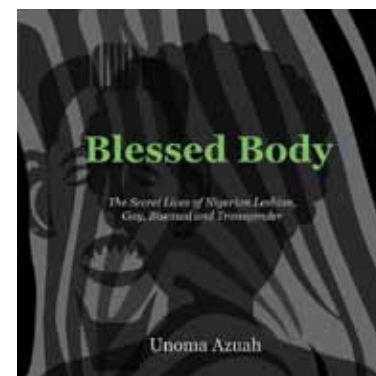
Blessed Body is a unique collection of 38 personal narratives by 36 LGBT Nigerians who describe their struggles to discover and live their identities as sexual beings in their families, in their villages and towns, in their cities and country, in their religions and cultures.

The narratives present the testimonials of 19 gay men, 12 lesbians, four transgender persons, and two bisexuals, who are either living in Nigeria or are now in the Nigerian Diaspora caused by the harsh anti-LGBT laws implemented by local and federal Nigerian authorities.

In her introduction, Zethu Matebeni of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, applauds Unoma Azuah for focusing the narratives on the 'materiality' of the body as the place of power and struggle for the discovery of the meaning of one's sexuality as a human person and as an African. Matebeni describes the anthology as "a slap-in-the-face practice to a common version of Africanness that denies different forms of sexualities."

In the preface, Eric Sias of the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley highlights the importance of religion to all of the Nigerian testimonials. It is a remarkable fact that religion plays such an important role in Nigerian society and cultures. It is also troubling that the various forms of the Christian religion and of Islam practiced in Nigeria are so hostile to LGBT peoples. Most of the people represented in this anthology come from Christian backgrounds which Mr. Sias addresses in detail to dispel misconceptions about several passages in the Christian Scriptures on 'homosexuality.'

The heart of Unoma Azuah's collec-



tion of stories, however, lies in the passions and flesh of her narrators who give expression to the pain and joys, the sufferings and triumphs, of finding out who you are and of exploring the meaning of that identity in the real world of conflicts and friendships, jobs and family, love and hate.

Azuah presents the narratives under eight rubrics: Discovery: Coming of Age; Blurring Lines; Facebook Fantasies; Homo-sexing; Unwanted Marriage; Secret Lives; The Church; Unapologetic.

In many ways, Blessed Body is a coming-out anthology like those Jonathan Ned Katz chronicles for us in the U.S. in his famous OutHistory writings and research. Likewise, Unoma Azuah, in collaboration with Queer Alliance Nigeria, has begun the great adventure of chronicling the out-history of Nigerian LGBT persons—a valuable service for the liberation of Nigerian cultures and society as well as for all of us who seek to discover, understand, and live out the best meanings of our physical, bodily, sexual presence in the world.

Blessed Body (267 pp), published by Cooking Pot Books (ISBN-978-0-9965460-7-2), is available on Amazon in both paperback and Kindle formats and on Barnes and Noble in eBook Nook format.

Nick Patricca is professor emeritus at Loyola University Chicago, president of Chicago Network and playwright emeritus at Victory Gardens Theater.



Monica Raymund (middle) with cast mates from the Chicago Fire and Chicago P.D. TV shows at the start of the Pride Parade. Raymund was grand marshal of the parade this year. More coverage of the parade and other Pride events begins on page 16.

Photo by Tracy Baim

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^aFor additional trial details, see the full Prescribing Information at EGRIFTA.com.

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- Swelling (fluid retention). *EGRIFTA*® can cause swelling in some parts of your body.
- Increase in glucose (blood sugar) intolerance and diabetes.
- Injection site reactions. Change (rotate) your injection site to help lower your risk for injection site reactions. The following symptoms around the area of the injection site can occur: redness, itching, pain, irritation, bleeding, rash, and swelling.

The most common side effects of *EGRIFTA*® include:

joint pain, pain in legs and arms, swelling in your legs, muscle soreness, tingling, numbness and pricking, nausea, vomiting, rash, and itching.

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

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Talk to your doctor to find out if **EGRIFTA®** is right for you.

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- Serious allergic reaction. Some people taking **EGRIFTA®** may have an allergic reaction.

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- hives
- swelling of your face or throat
- shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- fast heartbeat
- feeling of faintness or fainting


- Swelling (fluid retention). **EGRIFTA®** can cause swelling in some parts of your body. Call your healthcare provider if you have an increase in joint pain, or pain or numbness in your hands or wrist (carpal tunnel syndrome).
- Increase in glucose (blood sugar) intolerance and diabetes. Your healthcare provider will measure your blood sugar periodically.
- Injection-site reactions. Change (rotate) your injection site to help lower your risk for injection-site reactions. Call your healthcare provider for medical advice if you have the following symptoms around the area of the injection site:
 - redness
 - itching
 - pain
 - irritation
 - bleeding
 - rash
 - swelling


The most common side effects of **EGRIFTA®** include:

- joint pain
- pain in legs and arms
- swelling in your legs
- muscle soreness
- tingling, numbness and pricking
- nausea
- vomiting
- rash
- itching

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

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

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For more information about **EGRIFTA®**, go to www.EGRIFTA.com or contact  **EGRIFTA ASSIST®** toll-free at 1-844-EGRIFTA (1-844-347-4382).

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Obama designates Stonewall monument

President Obama designated a new national monument at the historic site of the Stonewall uprising in New York City to honor the broad movement for LGBT equality.

The new Stonewall National Monument is where, on June 28, 1969, a community's uprising in response to a police raid sparked the modern LGBT-rights movement in the United States.

The designation created the first official National Park Service unit dedicated to telling the story of LGBT individuals—days before the one-year anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision guaranteeing marriage equality across the United States.

The new Stonewall National Monument will permanently protect Christopher Park, a historic community park directly across from the Stonewall Inn in Manhattan's Greenwich Village.

Throughout his terms, Obama has been involved in several pro-LGBT developments, including hate-crime prevention, repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and banning LGBT discrimination for federal contractors, among other things.

On June 27, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis and White House Senior Advisor to the President Valerie Jarrett joined federal, state and local officials as well as LGBT leaders to participate in a public dedication ceremony to commemorate the designation of Stonewall National Monument in New York City.

In designating the Stonewall monument,

Obama said at his weekly White House address:

"Hi, everybody. The story of America is a story of progress. It's written by ordinary people who put their shoulders to the wheel of history to make sure that the promise of our founding applies not just to some of us—but to all of us."

"Farmers and blacksmiths who chose revolution over tyranny. Immigrants who crossed oceans and the Rio Grande. Women who reached for the ballot, and scientists who shot for the moon. The preachers, and porters, and seamstresses who guided us toward the mountaintop of freedom."

"Sometimes, we can mark that progress in special places—hallowed ground where history was written—places like Independence Hall. Gettysburg. Seneca Falls. Kitty Hawk and Cape Canaveral. The Edmund Pettus Bridge."

"One of these special places is the Stonewall Inn. Back in 1969, as a turbulent decade was winding down, the Stonewall Inn was a popular gathering place for New York City's LGBT community. At the time, being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender was considered obscene, illegal—even a mental illness."

"One night, police raided the bar, and started arresting folks. Raids like these were nothing new—but this time, the patrons had had enough. So they stood up, and spoke out, and over the course of the next several days, they refused to be silenced. The riots became protests; the protests became a movement; the movement ultimately became an integral part of America."

"Over the past seven years, we've seen achieve-



The Stonewall National Monument was dedicated June 27 in Christopher Park. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of the Interior

ments that would have been unimaginable to the folks who, knowingly or not, started the modern LGBT movement at Stonewall. Today, all Americans are protected by a hate crimes law that includes sexual orientation and gender identity. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is history. Insurance companies can no longer turn you away because of who you are. Transgender Americans are more visible than ever, helping to make our nation more inclusive and welcoming for all. And one year ago this weekend, we lit the White House in every color—because in every state in America, you're now free to marry the person you love.

"There's still work to do. As we saw two weeks ago in Orlando, the LGBT community still faces real discrimination, real violence, real hate. So we can't rest. We've got to keep pushing for equality and acceptance and tolerance."

"But the arc of our history is clear—it's an arc of progress. And a lot of that progress can be traced back to Stonewall. So this week, I'm designating the Stonewall National Monument as the newest addition to America's national parks system. Stonewall will be our first national monument to tell the story of the struggle for LGBT rights. I believe our national parks should reflect the full story of our country—the richness and diversity and uniquely American spirit that has always defined us. That we are stronger together. That out of many, we are one. That's what makes us the greatest nation on earth. And it's what we celebrate at Stonewall—for our generation and for all those who come after us. "Thanks everybody, and have a great weekend."



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Trans measure passes City Council vote

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The Chicago City Council, on June 22, approved a measure that removes a provision in the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance requiring individuals to show a government-issued ID upon request when trying to access restrooms and other public accommodations. The provision could potentially be used to bar transgender individuals from accessing those accommodations should the gender marker on their ID not match their gender-presentation.

The measure was introduced on May 18 by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Ald. Ed Burke and the members of the City Council's LGBT Caucus, who include Aids. Raymond Lopez, Deb Mell, Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, Tom Tunney and James Cappleman. It passed the Council's Human Relations Committee, chaired by Ald. Pat Dowell.

Mell and Ramirez-Rosa both spoke on behalf of the measure at the June 22 meeting.

"Tragically, the recent events in Orlando have shown us that ...our struggle is far from over," Mell said. "It wasn't long ago that I stood on the floor of the Illinois General Assembly and

pleaded with my colleagues to recognize that 'love is love' and that, as an American citizen, I should be afforded the same right as anyone else, the right to marry someone I love. We won that battle, and it wasn't just because the LGBT community was organized and fought hard. It was because hearts and minds were changed. It was because Americans realized that they wanted a better life for their friends and family members who struggled to be accepted for so long.

"During our hearing, we heard testimonies from mothers and fathers who came to realize that their child never identified with the gender that was listed on their birth certificate. Parents who struggled to explain why our society had set up barriers for something as simple as going to the restroom ... I ask my colleagues who are on the fence on this issue to think about those parents, think about those children, think about how you would feel if this was your friends or loved ones," she added.

Ramirez-Rosa noted that 23 of those killed in the Orlando shooting were of Puerto Rican descent, and the vast majority were Latino.

"That's why the violence and the hatred has struck me so much," he added. "As a city, the Supreme Court has tied our hands in many ways when it comes to reining in and controlling gun violence. But if we will stop future Orlando, if we will save lives in the future, we must do everything that we can to legislate love and reject hate. Make no mistake about it. The 49 in Orlando were murdered because of internalized homophobia, because of internalized Islamophobia, because of the hatred that is so rampant in our society. When we as legislators legislate hate, we are paving the way for the hatred that drives that violence.

"I ask that my colleagues join me in supporting this ordinance today because we can legislate love. Because we can show that we as a city that we will not discriminate against our trans sisters and brothers and we will allow equality to reign supreme when it comes to access to public accommodations," Ramirez-Rosa said.

The Council did not vote in full. Dowell asked that the measure be passed on the basis of the last vote with a positive outcome, a procedure utilized many times in the meeting. Her motion



Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa during the vote.

Photos by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

was approved. Aids. Patrick Daley Thompson, David Moore, Willie Cochran, Nicholas Sposato and Anthony Napolitano asked to be registered as "no" votes.

"We applaud the City Council's action today. Removing the discriminatory language towards transgender people not only expands access to spaces like bathrooms, but it also helps ensure that people are treated with dignity and respect," said Kim L. Hunt, executive director of the Pride Action Tank (PAT), a project of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, in a statement.

PAT's Chicago Restroom Access Project (CRAP) working group led grassroots efforts to coordinate oral and written testimony submissions to the committee and to encourage the LGBTQ community and allies to call their alderpersons to encourage them to support the amendment. ACLU of Illinois, Equality Illinois and Lambda Legal played critical roles as well. On the government side, Commissioner Mona Noriega of the Commission on Human Relations worked with her staff on changing the provision for more than a year.

The vote came during a tumultuous meeting for the Council, much of which focused on a measure regulating ride-sharing services such as Uber. Many members objected when that

they were just this morning presented with a water-down version of the measure that had passed through a committee vote. At one point, discussion became so heated that Emanuel threatened to adjourn the meeting. The measure eventually passed, however.

The Council opened its session with a tribute and moment of silence for the 49 persons who were killed in Orlando on June 12.

PASSAGES

Marti 'Martha' Rust

Marti "Martha" Rust (born in 1947) of Oregon, Illinois, died peacefully June 21 surrounded by family. Marti was preceded in death by her parents, Darwin Rust and Florence Fifer Bloomer.

She is survived by her wife, Judy Thomas; daughters Rosie Thomas, Sophia (Alex) Papadopoulos, Kimberly (Marshall) Hackbarth and Laura Davis; and grandchildren Giselle, Socrates, Shane, Eric, Kristain and Giacchino.

Marti enjoyed teaching her daughters and grandchildren to fish and swim, drive and maintain the car, and garden. Her infectious laugh warmed the hearts of family and friends.

Her big heart reached out to her family and anyone in need. She seemed unlimited in meeting challenges and motivating those she loved to do the same.

A memorial service will be held at her home.

Chicagoan among nation's top LGBT lawyers

The National LGBT Bar Association released its 2016 "Best Under 40" list, recognizing the country's most accomplished young LGBT legal professionals.

The lone Chicagoan in the group is J. Michael Hearon, a senior associate at Quarles & Brady LLP.

The awards will be presented during the organization's Lavender Law Conference & Career Fair in Washington, D.C., on Friday, Aug. 5.



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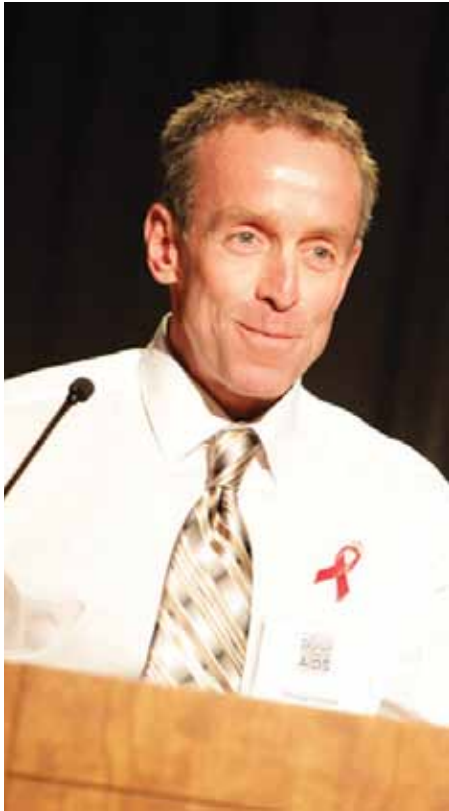


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Chicago's Stan Sloan to head Family Equality Council

Stan J. Sloan has been named the new executive director of Family Equality Council, the national advocacy group that connects, supports, and represents the United States' 3 million LG-BTQ parents and their 6 million children of all ages.

Sloan has been a leader in the homeless, LGBTQ and AIDS service communities for more



Stan Sloan.
Photo from Jamie Kelter-Davis

than two decades. Since 2000, he has served as the CEO of Chicago House, a social service agency that provides housing and employment programs for those disenfranchised by HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ poverty and/or gender nonconformity. In 2013, he pioneered the opening of the TransLife Center, which provides the nation's most comprehensive services for the transgender community.

Family Equality Council Board Chair Nancy Lyons said Sloan's extensive experience makes him uniquely qualified to address the complex tasks ahead in a world where—although we won marriage equality in 2015—the LGBTQ community is still far from realizing full legal and lived equality.

"Stan is a unifier who will encourage our families to help themselves and each other in these challenging times," said Lyons. "Since winning nationwide marriage equality, anti-LGBTQ legislators, organizations and individuals have found new and insidious ways to hurt our families—from bakers refusing to make cakes for same-sex weddings and clerks who refuse to issue marriage licenses to elected officials passing discriminatory 'religious liberty' laws and so-called 'bathroom bills.' And the June 12 Orlando massacre serves as a tragic reminder that fires of hatred and intolerance still burn strong toward our community."

Sloan said he's long-admired Family Equality Council. "I have always appreciated the organization's service and action, and can't wait to start working for our parents and children," said Sloan. "My real passion is bridging the worlds of people who are in need and those who are able to help them. What better way to pursue that goal than by working within our family systems, since families by nature are about nurturing and care?"

Ordained in 1991, Sloan is an Episcopal

priest, which makes him particularly well-suited to help in today's rise of 'religious liberty' bills. Said Sloan, "The idea of using religion to promote hate and exclusion—rather than love and inclusion—is reprehensible. We will continue to stand up against ridiculous bathroom bills and other laws that create further hurdles for the LGBTQ community and our families. And we will combat ideologies that stigmatize us and strive to deny us our places at the table."

Sloan will officially join Family Equality Council on Friday, July 23, at the organization's 21st annual Family Week in Provincetown, Massachusetts.

See http://www.familyequality.org/news_media/2016/06/20/2086/family_equality_council_announces_new_executive_director_stan_j_sloan.

Military's anti-trans ban could end July 1

The Pentagon is slated to announce the repeal of its ban on transgender service members July 1.

It has been speculated that Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work could sign off on details of the plan as early as Wed., June 29. Defense Secretary Ash Carter would have final approval.

The plan would reportedly direct each branch of the armed services, over a period of one year, to implement new policies in areas such as recruiting, housing and uniforms for transgender troops.

"At long last, thousands of brave transgender patriots will be able to serve our nation openly with the respect they deserve," said Human Rights Campaign President Chad Griffin in a statement. "This historic announcement will not only extend long-overdue recognition to thousands of transgender service members, it will strengthen our military and our nation. By turning the page on this disgraceful policy, we will now be able to recruit and retain the very best candidates, rather

than discharging highly-trained, talented transgender service members for no other reason than who they are.

"Our transgender service members and their families are breathing a huge sigh of relief," said American Military Partner Association President Ashley Broadway-Mack. "Soon, anyone who is qualified will finally be able to serve our great nation, regardless of their gender identity. We are eagerly anticipating the details of this historic announcement, and we are incredibly grateful for the leadership Secretary Carter has shown in getting us to this critically important point for our military families."

In a separate statement, Military Freedom Coalition's national transgender military liaisons Kristin Beck (Ret. Navy SEAL) and Shane Ortega (Ret. SSG) said, "We are elated at the news of the pending repeal of the transgender military ban and are thankful to everyone who worked so hard to see this day come to pass. We look forward to working with our military brothers and sisters to see successful implementation. We march forward into an age of greater equality."



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LGBTQ history: Love finds its way

BY MICHAEL HUSSEY

On July 15-16, the National Archives (NARA) will host the National Conversation on Rights and Justice: LGBTQ Human and Civil Rights, at the Center on Halsted and the Chicago History Museum. This program is part of nationwide initiative to facilitate discussion of rights in the 21st century.

The National Conversation series assumes that a knowledge of our history can help us chart a path forward. Below is one example of LGBTQ history in the National Archives' holdings. It involves the case of two men deported in 1916 for being gay.

For more examples of LGBTQ history at NARA, follow Discovering LGBTQ History, a project of the National Archives LGBTQ employee affinity group Stonewall@NARA. To increase awareness of LGBTQ holdings, help us improve the content on Wikipedia.

George and Jim

Jim South, a 24-year-old Canadian real estate agent, moved to Detroit in 1915. Periodically, he returned to Canada to visit family and friends. On one such trip, he met George McBurney, a drapery salesman. A long-distance, romantic relationship developed between the two. They exchanged numerous letters—sometimes two or three a day—and saw each other when they could. George moved to Detroit in late 1915. All seemed to be well, but it wouldn't last.

On April 10, 1916, the U.S. Immigration Bu-

reau issued a warrant for Jim's arrest on the grounds that, while visiting Canada, he and George had committed a crime of "moral turpitude," specifically buggery, "an unnatural, immoral act." George was arrested on the same charge. During Jim's interrogation, he confirmed that he had been sexually intimate with George at the Walker Hotel in Toronto. U.S. officials ruled that this violated American immigration law and ordered their immediate deportation.

But how had Jim and George's personal lives gotten so tangled up in the U.S. immigration bureaucracy? The answer was a nosy landlady. Jim had kept the love letters that George had sent to him. Jim's boarding-house owner had found the letters and reported him to immigration authorities.

The letters, now among the hundreds of thousands of Immigration documents in the holdings of the National Archives, demonstrate George's deep affection for Jim. After one visit, George wrote:

"My Dear Jim, I seem to be going around like I was lost because I kind of felt at the time it would help pass the awful long time that stands between us before I can have my dear lover in my arms again...."

U.S. officials thought George's "love letters" were of a "very effeminate style" that indicated "that both young men have been addicted to indecent, unnatural, and immoral practices." During his interrogation, a clearly nervous Jim was asked, "Is it your opinion that the wording of these letters [from George] is almost effemi-



A crowded Woodward Avenue in 1915 Detroit.

Photo from Michael Hussey

nate? He replied, "Yes, they are a little that way."

Interrogators asked an equally nervous George, "Didn't you write him several letters in a very effeminate style?" George answered, "Yes." The immigration officials then probed further into George and Jim's relationship.

"Did you and he ever display any signs of affection in an effeminate manner—effeminate caresses? [Long pause]"

"Well perhaps both of us did give way and say how glad we were to be with one another."

"Did you ever kiss him?"

"Yes."

Officials also asked Jim if George had ever bought him a ring. He replied yes. George had given it to him during one of Jim's visits to Toronto. "Was it inscribed or engraved with any significant lettering," immigration officials asked? Jim replied that the inscription read: "Love Finds Its Way. From George to Jim."

In Detroit, George and Jim believed that they had worked out a means of meeting in relative privacy that was unavailable in their boarding houses. They rented a separate apartment that they used occasionally so that they could be together away from the eyes and ears of fellow boarders. Immigration officials questioned them on this matter as well.

U.S. officials found that the letters, the ring, and the apartment proved that both men belonged "to that class in describing which the English language does not supply a polite term." They ordered Jim and George's immediate deportation as their "removal from the United States would be highly beneficial to society in general."

Rather than be deported, Jim voluntarily took the ferry back to Canada on June 20, 1916. George similarly left the U.S. for Canada a few days later. This left open the possibility that they might legally return to the United States. Jim did so four days after having left Detroit. No records of his life afterwards have yet been found.

George returned in 1925 and settled in Buffalo, New York, where he applied for citizenship and worked in a retail store. He lived there with 28-year-old Arthur Boyle, a World War I veteran and former lodger with George and his mother. Federal records cannot tell us whether George and Arthur had a romantic relationship. However, they continued to live together at least until 1940. There are no U.S. government documents that indicate whether Jim and George had any further contact. George died in 1943.

For further information on the National Conversations on Rights and Justice: LGBTQ Human and Civil Rights, go the National Archives website at <http://www.archives.gov/amending-america/join/chicago.html>. To register to attend, please go to <https://www.archivesfoundation.org/amendingamerica/conversations/lgbtq>. For the Discovering LGBTQ History Tumblr, go to lgbtqarchives.tumblr.com.

To continue the work of the National Archives' LGBTQ Wikipedia edit-a-thon go to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wiki_Loves_Pride_2016/DC. The event will feature local and national leaders, YEPP, and remarks by Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero and noted poet Richard Blanco.



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FAMILIES OF CHOICE SERIES

Dr. Jesus Ramirez-Valles

Age: 51

Relationship Status: Married

Neighborhood: Printer's Row

Activities: Director of Community Health Sciences University of Illinois, School of Public Health; author of *Queer Aging*, *LGBT Aging Issues Network* (LAIN)

Windy City Times: What does family of choice mean in your personal life?

Dr. Jesus Ramirez-Valles: Friends, family, my closest friends. I have family of choice in Mexico who I've known my whole life, and then my husband's family of choice here in North America. I also have a 16-year-old son who has our family of choice as his extended family. So he has aunts and uncles who are part of his life. Many of my family of choice members are gay or lesbian, but not all.

WCT: Are there ways in which your family of choice differ between Mexico and North America?

JR-V: Not really, they both show up during the difficult times and we know they will be there for us. There's a difference in closeness because in Mexico, if you don't show up to an event, or no one has heard from you, they will come knock on your door to check in. In North America people will text or make a call, because everyone is so busy. It's more difficult to see each other day to day. With family of choice in Mexico, the relationships are more flexible, you don't have to worry about schedules.

WCT: How do you anticipate your families

of choice staying connected in the future?

JR-V: We will all move in together! *[Laughs]*

WCT: *[Laughs]* Is that a plan you have agreed upon, or wishful thinking?

JR-V: Well we have discussed living together, but there are more conversations to have. My husband and I want to move to Mexico in our elder years for a number of reasons. The cost of living is lower, medications are less expensive, and we can find people to wheel us around, and take care of us for much less money. So hopefully we will live amongst our family of choice and support each other as we age. We want everyone to be close so we can be there for each other.

Having a 16-year-old son is a constant reminder that I am aging and changing. I exercise and do yoga and tai chi to care for my physical and spiritual health. But I know we won't have as high a quality of life if we grow older in North America.

WCT: In writing your book, *Queer Aging*, you interviewed many gay men to explore their aging process. Were there any common experiences of family of choice?

JR-V: Yes, absolutely. For LGBTQ people, we have family of choice throughout our lives. For many men, living through the AIDS crisis, they had lost all of their family of choice. I spoke with people who had lost everyone—maybe their 10 closest friends, lovers, and had no one left. In gay male communities, sexual relationships are often the start of lifelong connections.



Dr. Jesus Ramirez-Valles.

Photo from Ramirez-Valles

So maybe you meet and hook up, and then you become buddies or friends or family. During the height of the HIV epidemic, sex was different; people had to be careful. And the loss was profound, so families of choice took a very long time to rebuild.

WCT: Was your experience similar to those of the men you interviewed?

JR-V: Yes; I never thought about living beyond 40. When I came out, and I was in the bars, it was all about the young people. Older people were called dinosaurs, and now that I'm in my 50s it is very different. Much of gay culture is focused on being young, being fit, and active. I came to studying aging through my passion for HIV research. The profound loss we experienced during that time made family of choice difficult to find. And as an immigrant, I truly had no one when I came to this country,

so it was even harder in many ways.

WCT: The title of the book is *Queer Aging*, but gay men is the only group studied. Can you share why?

JR-V: The book is called *Queer Aging* because not all of the men were comfortable with the term gay. For many gay men of color you will not hear words like "partner" or "boyfriend." You may hear "roommate" or "friend," so even though they were same-gender loving primarily, it wasn't accurate to label them all "gay." The book focuses on the experiences of queer and gay men, approximately half of whom are HIV positive. It would have also been impossible to comprehensively study the experiences of women, and transgender people under this same title, so we are looking at a subset of LGBTQ community in the book.

WCT: What advice would you have for LGBTQ people trying to develop family of choice?

JR-V: At the end of the day, social connection matters the most. Today it is considered "easy" to stay in touch, but I'm not sure how in-depth those connections are. What matters is the social connection, that we stick together. This is going to be difficult because LGBTQ communities are being absorbed into the dominant culture. Things have changed tremendously. I'm not sure how much longer we'll be able to remain a distinct community.

Queer Aging is scheduled for release Friday, July 15. Pre-orders available on Amazon. Stay up to date on the book and 'Gayby Boomers' by subscribing to Dr. Ramirez-Valles blog at <http://gaybyboomers.blogspot.com/>.

Interviews are conducted by guest Jacqueline Boyd, owner of The Care Plan, believed to be the country's first LGBTQ-centered healthcare management company. The Care Plan can be reached at 630-479-0083 or www.the-care-plan.com.



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Congregation Or Chadash holds final Pride Shabbat

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

A bittersweet feeling was echoed by most of the over 70 people who attended what was to not only be the final Pride Shabbat service but the final service held at the North Side's Congregation Or Chadash June 24.

After 41 years of leading the way in demonstrating that the Jewish faith is open to all regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, Or Chadash will now fold into the larger Temple Sholom in Lake View.

With Or Chadash Rabbi Cindy Enger and Cantorial Soloist Judith Golden leading, the beachside barbecue and Shabbat service marked the end of an era in which a unified community became a loving family of, in the words of TransTorah.org's Rabbi Rueben Zellan, "twilight people."

The entire congregation spoke his prayer during the service in peaceful understanding.

"We can never be fully labeled or defined," Zellan wrote. "We are many identities and loves, many genders and none. We are in between roles, at the intersection of histories, or between place and place. We are crisscrossed paths of memory and destination, streaks of light swirled together. We are neither day nor night. We are both, neither, and all."

Some of those in attendance had been with Or Chadash at its very first meeting which, in a fitting irony, took place not in a synagogue but at a home.

One of them was Frank Nussbaum.

"I think there were 10 of us," he told Windy City Times. "I never felt comfortable in a synagogue. So it was good. It worked out, but it's time now to go a different way."

That different way was ample reason for optimism among those gathered in the midst of

remembrance and celebration.

"I don't think there's really a need for a separate group anymore," Nussbaum said. "There are many temples that are [LGBT] friendly now. Temple Sholom has its own group and, in the Windy City Times during High Holidays, other temples say they are welcoming. Times change and attitudes change."

Norman Sandfield—who was on the Or Chadash Board for 24 years—said, "When the gay religious movement started and we used to have interfaith meetings, the feeling was that if we were successful we would put ourselves out of business. Forty years later, we've got our own identity, rabbi, place, history and all these wonderful things. LGBT congregations have gone out of business across the country. Mainstream Jewish congregations have gone out of business or have merged. This is not new."

Sandfield put a lot of that down to younger generations finding a sense of community online.

"But I look at our successes," he added. "We've had four Rabbis. We were a lay-lead congregation until Roy Furman showed up and he became our first mainstream rabbi. In the early days, if everybody didn't come to every meeting and every event we wouldn't have existed but people did and we succeeded. They were good times and we were lucky."

A member of the younger generation, Jay Gelles is a current board member of Or Chadash. Yet he, too, felt a mixture of sadness and hope.

"On the one hand the broader social acceptance is really wonderful," he said. "But this congregation has been a big part of my life, growth and development as a human being. A lot of the people here have a very special place in my heart and we have a great sense of com-



From left: Rabbi Cindy Enger, Rabbi Carla Cenker and Judith Golden.
Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

munity that will be very hard to replicate."

He noted that Temple Sholom have been extremely generous and welcoming as Or Chadash folds into that congregation and becomes the new name of the synagogue's LGBT group.

"I really feel that it's the right decision," Gelles said. "This is the best way to maintain our legacy."

However, not everyone was enthusiastic about the move.

Some members said they intended to shop around before making a decision on where they would go next. Some are already members of a different synagogue.

Erin Sanders is a trans woman who used to be a part of Or Chadash but whose work schedule as a truck driver caused her to switch to Emanuel Congregation.

"I have really mixed feelings about Temple Sholom," she said. "Such a large synagogue never sat well with me. It's just the way I was raised. It's old school Reform there. Part of the beauty of coming to Shul for me is community.

It's wonderful that more of us are accepted in mainstream Shuls but unfortunately it's only in urban areas. Or Chadash welcomed everybody from all the different movements. Although services were technically part of the Reform movement, they reflected parts of the Orthodox and Conservative services."

For this night though and, as the sun began to make way to a clear night sky, Enger began the Shabbat service by remembering that, for the past 41 years, Or Chadash has built a community of love.

Such a legacy was best summed up in the song Olam Chesed Yibaneh (music and lyrics by Rabbi Menachem Creditor) in which the congregation representing multiple generations which Nussbaum remembered as "wonderful people who were part of a huge number of firsts" joined Golden in reverence and joy.

"I will build this world from love.

And you must build this world from love

And if we build this world from love

Then God will build this world from love."



1 million at Chicago Pride, Orlando victims remembered

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The 47th Annual Pride Parade June 26 began with a moment of silence.

The 2016 event opened with a procession of individuals holding up photos of the 49 persons murdered at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando just two weeks earlier.

As the procession marched through Uptown, then Lake View, the exuberant crowd stopped, if only briefly, to silently remember the tragedy that took place in Florida early June 12. Even with a boisterous crowd, Orlando remained at the forefront of the 2016 parade; marching units and floats sponsored by everything from local bars to national corporations marked their solidarity with the shooting victims.

City officials estimated attendance to be at about one million spectators. Security was heightened this year in light of the shootings; Chicago Police said additional officers and 160 private security personnel would be used. Parade officials had previously announced that the number of parade entries would be limited to 160, so the parade could end earlier. As of press time no major disturbances or disruptions along the parade route had been reported, but anti-gay protestors were at the end of the route.

Chicago and Oak Park chapters of Scouts for Equality led the color guard, and carried both the American flag and the official Pride flag for the parade. In July, 2015, the Boy Scouts of America lifted its ban on gay adults and families but left the decision to individual troops

as to whether gay individuals could serve as leaders.

"My wife and I are so proud our son will be helping to lead the Chicago Pride Parade," said Mary Anderson, co-leader of the Oak Park Chapter of Scouts for Equality and Scouts for Equality national board member. "We want to show the Boy Scout troops across Illinois and the country that they need to be inclusive of all families."

Members of Gay Liberation Network carried an enormous banner decrying anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim hate. Thresholds CEO Mark Ishuag, marching with his organization's contingent, wore a "State Funding Now" t-shirt to call attention to the Illinois state government's ongoing budget crisis.

The Night Ministry headed up Chicago Coalition Welcoming Churches' enormous contingent. achurch4me MCC's entry featured a huge inflatable Jesus, complete with a lamb and rainbow sash. Members of Temple Shalom marched alongside members of Congregation Or Chadash; the two synagogues are merging. Members of Beth Hillel Congregation Bnai Emunah in Wilmette also participated, as did Unity in Chicago, Dignity/Chicago and the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago.

Members of Bikes and Mics rode motorcycles dressed as fictional characters, among them James Bond and a "Bond girl" painted gold; Batman and Catwoman; and Sleeping Beauty and Maleficent. Employees of Orbitz rolled two enormous beach balls along the route. Bozo the Clown rode atop WGN's float.

Among the elected and non-elected officials and candidates who took part in the day were Mayor Rahm Emanuel; Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Commissioner Jesus Garcia; U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk; Illinois Treasurer Mike Frerichs; state Reps. Greg Harris, Kelly Cassidy, Ann Williams, Christian Mitchell and Jaime Andrade, Jr.; state Sens. Tom Cullerton and Daniel Biss; U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley; Alds. Deb Mell, Tom Tunney, Ray Lopez, James Capleman, Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, Pat Dowell and Joe Moore; City Clerk Susana Mendoza; Commissioner Mona Noriega of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations; Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos; state senate candidate Omar Aquino; and state house candidate Theresa Mah. Former Gov. Pat Quinn also participated.

U.S. Rep. (and U.S. Senate candidate) Tammy Duckworth reflected on the more somber tone this year. "A year ago we'd had the Supreme Court decision, which was one of great joy, and this year, it's following the massacre, where uncontrolled weapons were used to target people," Duckworth said. "We have so much more work to do on sensible gun legislation. That's why I participated in the sit-in this week. I'm going to keep working on this issue. No one should be targeted. No one who's out having a good time should not make it through the night. While I always have a lot of fun at Pride, today is one where there's also great sadness and a real determination to try to do even more."

Photos by Tracy Baim, Jerry Nunn and Kat Fitzgerald/www.MysticImagesPhotography.com. See many more on page 28 and online.





Activist Janae Bonsu talks BYP100, queer Black identity

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100) National Public Policy Chair Janae Bonsu's journey as an activist began about three years ago. However, the seeds were sown during her childhood in Columbia, South Carolina, where she learned what the Confederate flag was and what it represented—hate and white supremacy.

Bonsu was 9 years old at the time, and attended a march on the South Carolina Statehouse with her mom during the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. weekend in 2000.

"A mass of mostly Black people in Columbia marched on the State House demanding that the Confederate flag be taken down," said Bonsu. "I still remember the chants and the speakers saying, 'We won't start shopping 'til the flag starts dropping.' I knew then that this flag had to be important to galvanize thousands of people together in the way that it did, to resist the white supremacy of where we lived. It was a powerful moment; that's when the flag became a part of my consciousness."

Bonsu explained that she saw the Confederate flag flying above a restaurant every day on the way home from school as well as in front of people's homes and Confederate stickers on the back of cars.

"It's worn or flown as an unspoken badge of wanting what I think about when I hear people like Donald Trump talk about making America 'great again,'" said Bonsu.

Bonsu came to South Carolina by way of Brooklyn, New York, where she was born in

1991 to a Black American mom and Ghanaian immigrant dad. When her parents separated, Bonsu and her mom moved to Columbia to be with her grandparents and the rest of her mom's extended family.

"My dad stayed in Brooklyn, so I traveled alone on a plane every single summer to spend it with him and the rest of my dad's family," said Bonsu.

Bonsu made most of her childhood memories at her Nana and Grandpa's house, from Sunday dinners after church to doing homework at the kitchen table after school. Her mom bent the rules and used her grandparent's address to get her into a better school district.

"Every day I lived the paradox of living in an all-Black neighborhood while going to a predominately white school," said Bonsu. "School was where I excelled. I made straight A's, loved to read, write poems and short stories. Not going to my zoned school may have contributed to my early battles with identity politics. Throughout my elementary years, I wrestled with how my peers conceptualized blackness—frequently teasing me for 'talking white'—and how I didn't fall within that realm for them, but when I looked in the mirror, I loved my blackness and I couldn't understand why they didn't."

In addition to attending her first rally in 2000, Bonsu also traveled to Ghana for the first time with her dad that summer. It was during that trip to Accra, Ghana where Bonsu got her first taste of what privilege means. Bonsu observed unpaved roads and kids selling goods to



Janae Bonsu.

Photo by Sarah-Ji Rhee of Love and Struggle Photos

people in their cars because they couldn't afford the fees to attend school. She also noted that this was the first time she saw so many Black people in one place.

"My visit to Elmina Castle was very transformative," said Bonsu. "I broke down and cried at the Door of No Return, because it hit me that so many people from this land where shipped through those doors, never to return to the life that they'd built and had yet to live. As a young girl standing in the room where hundreds of enslaved people were held captive with no way to bathe and had to relieve themselves in the same room was terrible."

Bonsu explained that Ghanaian culture was a part of her life from birth, including a traditional Ghanaian naming ceremony where she was given the name Abena Mirekua Bonsu. She was also immersed in the Twi language.

When it came time to decide on a college major, Bonsu looked to her mom who is a licensed professional counselor. She shadowed her as a teenager and that's where she learned about clinical interventions, behavioral health issues (which showed up among her family members) and that most people in prisons and jails had those behavioral health issues.

"I wanted to take part in disrupting this norm and I thought that practicing as a clinical forensic psychologist was the way to do that," said Bonsu. "My mom and her professional life heavily influenced my very individualized view of what change looked like."

Bonsu graduated from the University of South Carolina with a psychology degree and a criminal justice minor. She applied to Ph.D. programs at various schools; however, she was not accepted, so she got a job as a research assistant in the Health and Barriers to Employment policy area at MDRC—a poverty-focused New York nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organization. Bonsu explained that working at MDRC helped her better understand the systemic issues driving the existence of criminalization and mass incarceration in her family and Black communities nationwide, which made her realize that clinical psychology wasn't the route she wanted to take professionally.

Instead of staying in New York City, Bonsu came to Chicago in 2013 to pursue her master's degree at the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration (SSA) (She graduated in 2015.) Bonsu said that although the SSA is supposed to be University of Chicago's most diverse graduate school, she didn't see the diversity the university touted.

"In class discussions, I often felt like I was the only one that highlighted the racialized, gendered and/or heterosexist nature of what

we're up against as social workers and that shouldn't be the case," said Bonsu. "Being one of the very few Black women in my program, I very much wanted to have a community. Throughout graduate school I wanted to find a place where I could affect change and eradicate problems through policy work and I didn't find that space until BYP100 came into my life."

Professor Cathy Cohen, principal investigator of research project BYP, invited about 100 young Black people to attend the #BeyondNovemberMovement convening in 2013 to discuss ways to mobilize beyond Election Day. During that same weekend, BYP100 was born in the wake of George Zimmerman's acquittal for killing Trayvon Martin.

Bonsu got involved with BYP100 about six months later after attending a national meeting about civic leadership where she met several BYP100 members.

"BYP100 politicized me even more," said Bonsu. "I fell in love with grassroots organizing and transformative campaign work."

As national public policy chair, Bonsu explained that she takes the lead in developing and implementing the organization's policy agendas at the federal, state and local levels; supports local chapters in developing policy strategy in their campaign work, including grassroots lobbying and building a national network of strategic partnerships.

While Bonsu was working at MDRC and attending graduate school, she returned to Ghana when she was 22 and 24. During those visits, Bonsu noticed how religious and conservative the country is and how unsafe it is to be queer there, as well as the lack of consistent electricity and the effects global capitalism has on Ghana's economy.

"I think my being a Black queer woman pushes me to be vigilant about challenging the notions of what is normal and about centering the most marginalized and overshadowed in the fight for social, racial, economic and gender justice," said Bonsu.

Currently, Bonsu is studying for her Ph.D. in social work at the University of Illinois at Chicago, with the goal of finishing her studies in 2019. Bonsu will be traveling to Washington, D.C., this summer for an internship at the Institute of Policy Studies. She was chosen out of more than 500 candidates who applied to work on the Criminalization of Poverty project with Karen Dolan at the institute. Bonsu will also be working on the Black Worker Initiative with Marc Bayard at the same time.

See <http://byp100.org/> for more information. To follow Bonsu, visit <https://twitter.com/janaebonsu>.

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Bipartisan gun-control legislation proposed in state House

In an effort to further ensure the safety of all residents in the state of Illinois, state Reps. Greg Harris (D-Chicago) and Ed Sullivan (R-Mundelein) have introduced new legislation that would ban people who have conveyed threats of terrorism or been charged with terrorism offenses from obtaining Firearm Owner Identification (FOID) cards.

"It is important to prevent people who have

made terrorist threats, or are a clear and present danger to themselves and others, from being able to purchase firearms," Harris said in a statement. "We are facing new threats and we need to find new ways to prevent tragedies.

House Bill 6588 was introduced June 21 with a bipartisan list of more than two dozen co-sponsors.



From left: Colleen Daley, executive director of the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence; Assistant House Minority Leader Ed Sullivan (R-Mundelein); State Rep. Greg Harris (D-Chicago); and Rep. Ron Sandack (R-Downers Grove) at the press conference announcing a bill to reduce gun access for those on the terrorist watch list.

Photo by Tracy Baim

'Legacy Live' looks at LGBT history

A new series of LGBTQ programming from The Legacy Project, the Northalsted Business Alliance and the Center on Halsted aims to entertain as much as educate.

The Legacy LIVE series uses art, film, music, discussion and more to explore LGBTQ history with a series of programs.

The series debuted to a sold out crowd on May 31 with "A Tribute to Billy Strayhorn."

A full slate of summer programs honors a range of LGBTQ pioneers. Events include:

—Wed., June 29, 6-8 p.m.: "Judgments in June," at Center on Halsted, will feature Lambda Legal's Camilla Taylor, renowned LGBTQ historian John D'Emilio, Windy City Times Tracy Baim and The Legacy Project's Victor Salvo, with Kim Hunt from The Pride Action Tank moderating. A reception at Sidetrack follows the panel discussion.

—Monday, July 11: Co-presented by the Queer Film Society, this is a screening of the award-winning documentary Vito—about iconic LGBTQ activist Vito Russo, a co-founder of both Act-UP and GLAAD whose bronze memorial will join the Legacy Walk this fall. The screening (at Center on Halsted) will be followed by a reception at Kit Kat Lounge and Supper Club.

—Thursday, July 29: The life of George Washington Carver will be celebrated at Elixir Lounge, 3452 N. Halsted St.

—Wed., Aug. 24: "Remembering Bayard Rustin" will feature a community gathering at the Bayard Rustin bronze memorial on the Legacy Walk in Boystown to commemorate the 29th anniversary of his passing. This celebration of the gay African American Civil Rights icon will be followed by the film Brother Outsider at the Center on Halsted.

—Thursday, Aug. 25: There will be a screening of West Side Story in Gill Park to celebrate the 98th birthday of maestro Leonard Bernstein.

Further details are available at Northalsted.com.

Polis push to end blood-donation policy

U.S. Reps. Mike Quigley (IL-05), Vice-Chair of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus, Barbara Lee (CA-13), Jared Polis (CO-02), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-23), Diana DeGette (CO-01) and Alcee Hastings (FL-20) led a bipartisan letter signed by more than 100 House colleagues calling on Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Robert M. Califf to end the blood-donation deferral policy for men who have sex with men (MSM) once and for all.

U.S. Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) led a similar bipartisan letter in the Senate with 22 of their colleagues.

The current policy for MSM requires a 12-month deferral, or celibacy, period before being able to donate blood.

"In light of the tragic mass shooting at Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, we write to highlight the urgent need to draw continued attention to the unsound FDA blood donation deferral policy for men who have sex with men (MSM)," the letter says, in part. "Given the target, nature and timing of this particular attack, the LGBT community is especially eager to contribute to the response effort. Yet, due to the MSM deferral policy, many healthy gay and bisexual men are prohibited from donating desperately needed blood.

A copy of the letter is at <https://quigley.house.gov/sites/quigley.house.gov/files/SIL05DC-MU216062002570.pdf>.

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letters



Remembering Edward Sotomayor

[Note: The following was a eulogy presented at Orlando shooting victim Edward Sotomayor's funeral on June 25.]

I would first like to express my deepest condolences to the family. He is your son, your brother, your cousin, your partner. To those that have come here today from around the country, he is our friend ... and he is our family, too.

We have been brought here together to not only pay our respects to the senseless passing of Edward Sotomayor, who was known to everyone as "Top Hat Eddie," but to remember and celebrate, as he would want us to, his life, his love and his compassion of others. As you can see here today, and as you have read in the stories from around the world, whether it be from London to Australia, from Canada to Brazil, Eddie touch so many more lives than anyone could ever imagine with his charismatic and captivating smile, hypotonic green eyes and affection of others.

Over the past several weeks, the LGBT community, their family, their friends and their allies—in fact, it's humanity as a whole, without any labels—have been gathering around the world sharing in your pain and mourning in your loss. Do we have to continue to use labels such as gay or straight, lesbian or transgender? After all, the first three words of our Constitution—the very first three words that our founding fathers came up with, who were immigrants themselves—are the most powerful words ever written: "We The People." They at least had the foresight to create one of the most influential documents on the face of our planet without the use of labels.

Through the love of music, it's music that connects us all. Pulse Nightclub, as many others like it, are prime examples of when we work together, we can create miracles of selflessness hope for others. Our greatest strength lies in the gentleness and tenderness of our heart, after all that is what our community has always been about. Tearing down walls and barriers, not building them. Extending our hands, building bridges and bringing communities together. This is not the time for us to create division or point fingers at each other, but this is the time for us to join hands and unite. So I ask that you reach out to the person next to you, hold their hand, let them know you love them, let Eddie know that we love him. Let us all say together out loud "Eddie, we love you."

When hate attacks love, the voices of love will always become louder, stronger and more unified to over power hate. Whether you are young or old, Black or white, straight or gay, we—as civilized humans—will always unify to be come better, taller and more resilient. After all, we are all God's children. Bette Midler recently tweeted, "If you love God, you cannot love some of his children." I have faith—we all should have faith—that tomorrow is going to be a better day.

The past two weeks have been the most painful and difficult time for all of us. But our communities, our nation, has received an unbelievable amount of love and support from around the world, as complete strangers have gathered together in vigils and remembrances to those whom we lost.

I would like to thank Mayor Willie Shaw, who is here with us today. It's members of our community like you that will truly change our great nation. I would also like to acknowledge the first responders from the Orlando police, fire

and paramedic departments, along with the Orlando Regional Medical Center for responding and helping those that were in harms way.

In closing, I would like to read from the New American bible, Psalm 37 Hymns 9-11: "For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land. Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there. But the humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity."

I now say to you all, take the spirit of Eddie, take the spirit of all those that we have lost, take the spirit of love in this room, take it with you, let it nourish and let it sustain your soul and your spirit. Hold the ones you love a little stronger and remember to tell and show them how much you love them. As Eddie would say, "Do all the good you can, to as many people as you can, as often as you can." I have been so blessed to call you my friend, Eddie, and I will see you again! May God bless you, Eddie, as you fly in peace with the birds, high in the sky above. May God bless this great nation. May God bless America.

Respectfully,
Jason Mendes-McAllister

[Note: Jason added, "This is dedicated to Eddie and his entire family."]

A call for inclusion

Dear Editor:

United Methodist Congregations, WE DISSENT!

As United Methodist congregations at the forefront of LGBTQ inclusion within the greater Chicago area, we ABHOR and DISSENT from the continuing stance of exclusion as represented in the recent meeting of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church as held in Portland, Oregon.

As a part of the Reconciling Ministries Network, 750 congregations and communities and more than 32,000 individual United Methodists across the country who are working to end the discriminatory policies and practices of The United Methodist Church, we continue to believe and affirm that LGBTQ persons are beloved of God, blessed in the fullness of humankind and remain full members of our United Methodist Church.

As we lament the continued discriminatory policies of our global denomination, we also recommit to a position of active and prophetic resistance. As congregations rooted in the ageless protestant movement, we vow to continue the work of reforming the church. Our ministries and mission will not be defined nor confined by our denominational affiliation.

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Faith UMC - Genoa
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First UMC - Chicago Temple
First UMC - Downers Grove

First UMC - Elmhurst
First UMC - Evanston
First UMC - La Grange
First UMC - Park Ridge
First UMC - Western Springs
Glenview UMC - Glenview
Grace UMC - Chicago (Logan Square)
Grace UMC - Lake Bluff
Hazel Crest Community UMC - Hazel Crest
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Wesley UMC - Cicero
Wesley UMC - Naperville
Winfield UMC - Winfield
Winthrop Harbor UMC
GETS Sacred Worth
UMSO at North Central College
Community UMC - Naperville

A call for unity

The tragedy on the early morning of June 12 at Pulse Nightclub's "Latin Night" in Orlando, Florida—where 49 LGBTQ people were killed and more than 50 wounded, with the majority being Puerto Rican, Mexican, Salvadorean, undocumented—has left us with heavy hearts.

We started Vives Q in La Villita (Little Village) four years ago because we saw a need for Latinx LGBTQ youth and adults to come together in an all-ages venue that was in the heart of a Latinx community.

We created a space where our history could come alive by inviting movement trailblazers to tell their personal stories of politicization, resilience, and love and set a stage where we could celebrate our Latinidad through spoken word, music, drag, and art. It was groundbreaking. It still is.


We offer you this space to celebrate our queer Latinidad by honoring the voices of two trans leaders and the lives lost in Orlando, Florida, through words, dance, music and performance.

Now more than ever, we believe Vives Q could be a community catalyst for healing. We invite you to join us for an evening of Latinx LGBTQ storytelling and performance.

If you would like to read (a poem) or perform (drag, music, sing), contact at the email below.

If you are a part of a community group, program, and or organization and would like to be listed as Community Partner email us: VivesQ.Chicago@gmail.com

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Christopher Avalos
Viv Delgadillo
Antonio Elizondo (co-founder)
Emmanuel Garcia (co-founder)
Jessica
Katia
Daniel David Mendez
Ilene Palacios
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Gavin Lee is Squidward Tentacles in The SpongeBob Musical.

Photo by Joan Marcus

SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Singing the praises of GALA

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

All eyes and ears of the worldwide LGBTQ choral movement will be focused on Denver for the 2016 GALA Festival starting Saturday, July 2.

More than 125 choruses and 45 ensembles from around the world converge in the Mile High City, and GALA organizers are hoping that the third time will be another charm because the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, the nation's second-largest performing arts complex after Lincoln Center in New York, previously hosted the quadrennial choral festival to great success in 1992 and 2012.

Of course, Chicago LGBTQ ensembles are prominently in the mix. The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus is sending 102 singers and 10 support staff, while Windy City Performing Arts, the umbrella organizations for the Windy City Gay Chorus and Windy City Treble Quire, are, respectively, sending 40 and 19 members who will be performing separately and together in a combined set. Artemis Singers, Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus, is sending three delegates to promote partnerships with the Sister Singers Network. (Artemis Singers previously hosted Sister Singers Network conference in Chicago in 2010.)

Considering how much GALA promotes togetherness for the LGBTQ community, it's slightly ironic that the festival was an unintentional but ultimately major factor in the schism that brought about the breakaway creation of the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus (CGMC) from the Windy City Gay Chorus (WCGC) in the 1980s.

According to former longtime CGMC member Danny Kopelson, there was a contingent of Windy City Gay Chorus members who wanted to sing at the very first GALA festival to be held at Lincoln Center in 1983 (it was originally called "COAST," an acronym standing for Come Out And Sing). They were in opposition to WCGC leadership at the time who didn't want

to invest the time and money for another trip to New York, especially since the organization had just performed at Lincoln Center the previous year in a joint concert with the New York City Gay Men's Chorus.

"We're never not going to have conflict, unfortunately," said Kopelson, who has attended every GALA Festival since 1983 except for one in Miami in 2008. Kopelson now resides in Palm Springs, California, and he noted that the Palm Springs Gay Men's Chorus has seen its own share of breakaway contingents in the past few years.

Happily, Kopelson notes that a lot of the early bickering and hostility between the two Chicago choruses has largely dissipated through time. Kopelson says the fact that both ensembles are still around and thriving is something to celebrate, especially since the LGBTQ cho-

ral movement has meant so much to so many people through the years.

"I could not have made it through the AIDS crisis without the chorus. Knowing we provide comfort allowed us to sing for many AIDS benefits and funerals," said Kopelson, who was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2000 in part due to his work co-founding the annual Dance for Life fundraising concert to assist those living with HIV/AIDS.

"We sing at rallies and human rights protests and benefits. A perfect example of this is the recent killings in Orlando. It seems choruses from every community were there to sing and spread love. Many singers may not believe that they are activists, but I believe they are. Activism comes in many forms," Kopelson said. "This is not to even mention the personal relationships formed by members supporting members. Are we needed today? Yes. The recent killings demonstrate this."

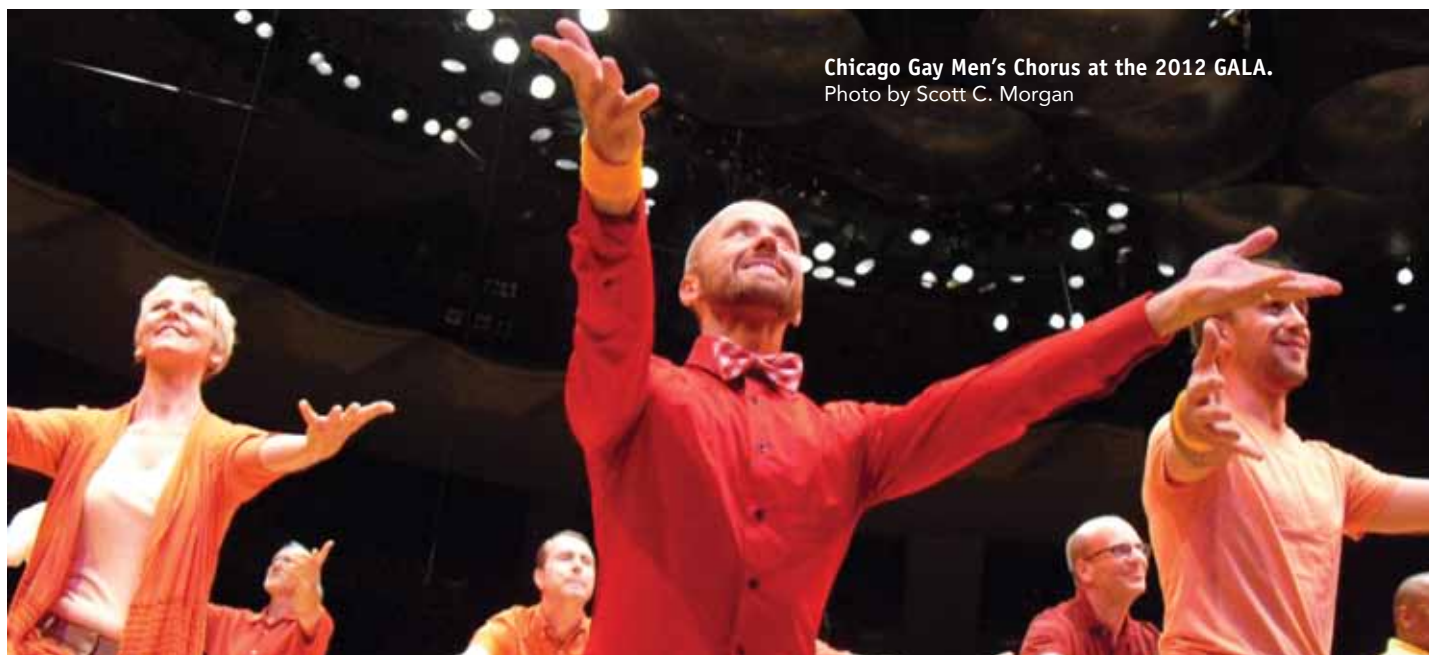
Due to the recent tragic events in Florida, GALA did issue a security statement to participating choruses. GALA also warned organizations that the Western Conservative Summit is being held simultaneously in Denver for the first two days of the festival, while Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump will be also be speaking at the Colorado Convention Center on July 1.

For the 2016 GALA Festival, some notable events include the first appearance by the Beijing Queer Chorus, plus the second performance by an all HIV-positive chorus drawn from ensembles around the country. There is also a special 20th-anniversary performance of the song cycle *NakedMan*, often cited as a landmark among the many choral pieces specifically created by and for the LGBTQ choral movement.

And for those who can't make it to Denver for GALA, this year marks the first time that festival performances will be simulcast not only for overflow crowds at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, but online for worldwide audiences to see. Specifically, the Coffee Concerts and Blockbuster Concerts will be livestreamed online at galachoruses.org/live.

The GALA Festival 2016 runs from Saturday, July 2, through Wednesday, July 6, at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, 1101 13th St., Denver. Individual performance tickets are \$25, although festival passes may also be available. For more information, visit GalaChoruses.org or DenverCenter.org.

Note: The author of this piece previously performed with Windy City Gay Chorus and currently sings with the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus.



Chicago Gay Men's Chorus at the 2012 GALA.
Photo by Scott C. Morgan

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BroadwayInChicago.com; \$33-\$100

Runs through: July 10

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It's telling that The SpongeBob Musical doesn't deploy the theme song from SpongeBob SquarePants, the Nickelodeon animated TV-series that inspired it, until the curtain call. That's a great sign that this Broadway-aimed world premiere musical, clearly born out of corporate synergy to tap into the TV series' wide generational fan base, is proud to stand up on its own as a creatively fun stage entity.

Loads of credit goes to unlikely director Tina Landau, a Steppenwolf Theatre ensemble member who has built a reputation on more esoterically artistically probing productions. Landau and her amazingly creative production team ensure that to enjoy this eye-popping and family-targeted stage spectacle, you don't necessarily need to have seen episodes about the ever-optimistic and absorbent title character (portrayed onstage with flexible enthusiasm by Ethan Slater).

Landau smartly avoids the trap of so many touring productions inspired by kids TV shows. Those often feature performers pantomiming in face-covering plush costumes to pre-recorded audio tracks.

Instead, Landau puts her diverse human performers engagingly up front and center, and they all maintain an infectious sense of child-



Danny Skinner, Ethan Slater and Lilli Cooper in The SpongeBob Musical.
Photo by Joan Marcus

hood playtime and delight throughout. Slater is supported by his very entertaining co-stars, like Lilli Cooper, as the super-smart squirrel Sandy Cheeks, and Danny Skinner, as the lug-headed starfish Patrick.

Particularly wowing is Gavin Lee, as Squidward Tentacles, who practically steals the show with his four-legged tap-dance production number "I'm Not a Loser." Other members of the ensemble also get their own chance to shine, like Nick Blaemire as the devious Sheldon Plankton arguing with Stephanie Hsu as his contrary computer Karen.

The entire multi-talented ensemble shines

amid the fantastically colorful sea-inspired sets and within the wacky costumes of Tony Award-winning designer David Zinn. The color-saturated tropical lighting of Kevin Adams and the sophisticated animated projections of Peter Nigrini are also continual delights.

Playwright Kyle Jarrow manages to inject some grown-up issues of societal scapegoating and political fearmongering into his script. All the characters of the Bikini Bottom community are tested when an undersea volcano threatens to erupt the very next day.

Where The SpongeBob Musical isn't quite so absorbing is in its score, which has a variable

quality due to so many rock and pop stars listed as contributors. That the score works as well as it does is a credit to music supervisor and orchestrator Tom Kitt, although The SpongeBob Musical can't quite conceal the feeling that too many cooks do not allow for a unifying musical through-line.

Nonetheless, audiences are guaranteed to exit The SpongeBob Musical humming the performances and the visuals. And for super fans like the meta-character of Patchy the Pirate (a very funny Jason Michael Snow), The SpongeBob Musical will be pure underwater heaven.

THEATER REVIEW

This

Playwright: Melissa James Gibson

At: Windy City Playhouse,

3014 W. Irving Park Rd.

Tickets: 773-891-8985 or

WindyCityPlayhouse.com; \$15-\$55

Runs through: Aug. 28

BY SEAN MARGARET WAGNER

Prepare yourself for unmatched witticisms at the hands of a trio of post-collegiate wordsmiths and the doctors/carpenters who love them (and are no slouches, themselves). Melissa James Gibson's This makes a cool, calculated splash on the Windy City Playhouse stage, and what it may lack in emotional depth, it more than makes up for with perfect entries for every blank space on your crossword puzzle.

After the birth of their infant son, Marrell and Tom invite old friends Jane and Alan to dinner with some ulterior motives in mind, namely, introducing recent widow Jane to handsome Doctor Without Borders Jean-Pierre. However, an innocent game lights an emotional powder keg under Tom and Jane, who are nursing wounds from marriages that have gone sour (or have just gone away, for Jane). Their infidelity is brief, but each of them takes pains to hide the ripples in the water that follow in its wake.

This may all sound incredibly heavy, but remember this examination of modern middle age is also a biting comedy. Tom and Marrell are the sort of parents who advise well-meaning visitors not to smoke because their baby's trying to kick his nicotine habit. Alan exploits his ability to perfectly recall events for small time television fame and his friends' amusement, but longs to do something more mean-

ingful (even if that something is say, handsome French doctor Jean Pierre).

Director Carl Menninger has assembled a cast that works wonderfully with Melissa James Gibson's heady language. Brian Grey (Jean-Pierre) circles with easy charm, waiting for Merrell, Jane or Alan to succumb to his wiles. Stephen O'Connell (Tom) and Tania Richard (Marrell) are pitch perfect as a couple who used to argue passionately and now argue bitterly; roping in friends and spectators along the way. The real standouts however, are Amy Rubenstein (Jane) and Joe Zarrow (Alan). Their complexities are so strong and unique, we can't help but latch on. We share their malaise, their annoyances, their regrets.

Where this production needs a little shoring up is in emotional resonance. Melissa James Gibson has a mastery of puns, sarcastic rejoinders and descriptive language to scatter over

this group of thirtysomethings' many monologues. However, the big emotional moments of This seem to careen at us from out of nowhere. When each of your characters is unfailingly eloquent and never at a loss for words, you can feel the distinct lack of any stuttering, trailing off or vocal befuddlement, and it can be distancing.

That said, I recommend having a gander at this visually and verbally stunning production from Windy City Playhouse. The company has crafted a gorgeous show that finds opulence in ordinary things and is guaranteed to strengthen your vocabulary.

CRITICS' PICKS



THEATER REVIEW

Company

Music and lyrics by: Stephen Sondheim

At: Writer's Theatre,

325 Tudor Ct., Glencoe

Tickets: 847-242-6000;

WritersTheatre.org; \$70-80

Runs through: July. 31

BY ERIC KARAS

Company is the famous musical (music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim) about a man named Bobby having crises on love and commitment reviewing the marriages and lives of his married friends. This is a very fine production in Writer's Theatre's gorgeous new space.

Thom Miller (Bobby) is perfect casting for this role. He's charming and attractive but you can see his friends are not even scratching the surface of his inner turmoil. His first act closer, "Marry Me A Little," is very moving. On the night I was there he also was the perfect "host," cleaning up after his fellow cast members spilled drinks or threw an errant



Thom Miller in Company.
Photo by Michael Brosilow

tie on the floor. Other notable performances are Allison Hendrix, as Amy, who sings one of the hardest songs written for musical theater ("Getting Married Today") and makes it her own. Her Amy isn't as ditzy as other portrayals but very real. Christina Mild knocks "Another Hundred People" out of the park! Alexis J. Rogers, as Sarah, is very funny and it's nice to see, after all this time, that Robert has gotten some more diverse friends.

Lia Mortensen portrays one of the most famous roles in this show: Robert's friend Joanne, the acerbic "older" woman Joanne. There are times she gets lost in the choral numbers and you lose a joke. No one heard

"Tall? She's tall enough to be your mother, Goliath" so it didn't even get a chuckle. This Joanne is more of the MILF variety—all blonde hair and leather pants. She reminds you less of Stritch and more of Stifler's mom. When her big scene comes, she certainly gets the pathos, sadness and desperation of Joanne. Her "Ladies Who Lunch" cry for help really resonates. Patrick Sarb, as Larry, in this scene matches her emotion but one wishes he would project more acting and singing.

The choral singing of the cast together is wonderful. The guys singing "Sorry Grateful" are moving and the girls singing "Poor Baby" sound perfect. The whole cast's production number "Side by Side" was very exciting/disturbing.

The set is stunning to look at, a tilted window looking down a skyscraper like you are about to fall. As I watched the show, I wondered if it was really fitting. Robert is having a crisis on relationships but he's not suicidal. Overall, it's a great production of Company in a grand new theater that retains the intimacy of the old while highlighting the new (much like this production).

Caught, Sideshow Theatre at Victory Gardens Theater, through July 3. Christopher Chen's elaborate intellectual joke pokes fun at visual and performance art, journalistic ethics and changing interpretations of truth and art. JA

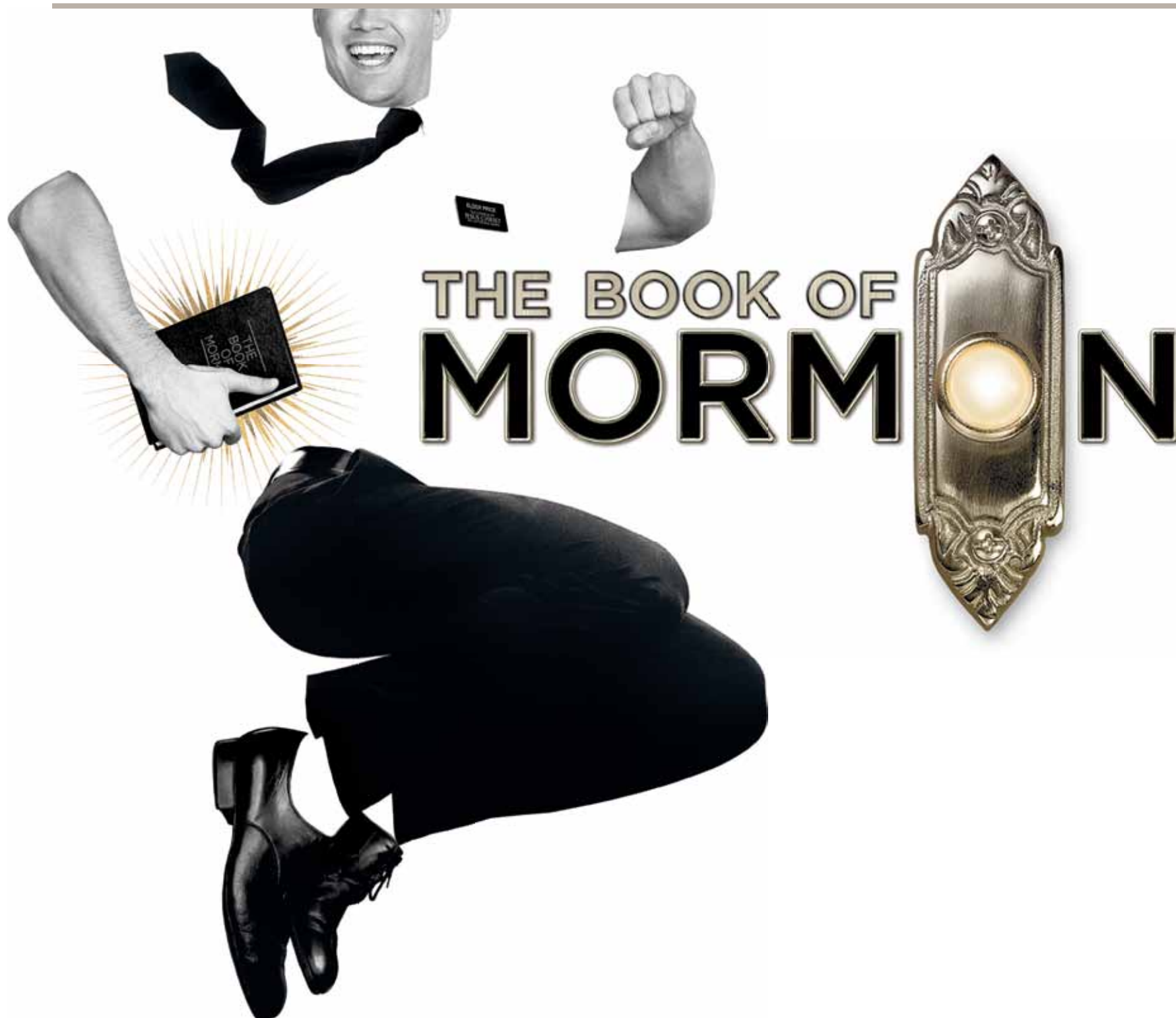
Little Shop of Horrors, American Blues Theater at Greenhouse Theater Center, extended through July 31. Howard Ashman and Alan Menken's classic campy off-Broadway musical about a killer plant returns in a wonderfully sung and intimate production. SCM

Prowess, Jackalope Theatre at Broadway Armory, extended through July 2. Watch for the unexpected gay twist in Ike Holter's visceral comic tragedy about South Sider Chicagoans who take up self-defense fighting before taking on violent gangs in their neighborhood. SCM

Spinning, Irish Theatre of Chicago at The Den Theatre, through July 3. Irish plays traditionally feature strong women and weak men. Spinning follows suit to a degree, but this contemporary work really concerns emotional meltdown and its effect on random acquaintances. There's superb acting by Jodi Kingsley and Dan Waller. JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

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Jerre Dye (left) and Namir Smallwood in *The Grapes of Wrath*.
Photo by Claire Demos

THEATER REVIEW

The Grapes of Wrath

Playwright: Frank Galati after the novel by John Steinbeck
At: The Gift Theatre, 4802 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Tickets: 773-283-7071 or TheGiftTheatre.org; \$25-\$35
Runs through: Aug. 4

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Plenty of eyebrows were raised when The Gift Theatre announced it was producing *The Grapes of Wrath*. How in the world could Frank Galati's Tony Award-winning stage adaptation of John Steinbeck's sprawling novel conceivably fit into The Gift Theatre's bowling alley-sized space?

Actually, this epic of impoverished Great Depression "Okies" fleeing the Dust Bowl satis-

fyingly plays out with heart-breaking intimacy and immediacy at The Gift Theatre. And that's thanks to director Erica Weiss, her large ensemble and her clever design team who ingeniously fit in all the drama with flat-pack precision.

With a Thomas Hart Benton-inspired back wall painting to suggest the vast expanse of America, set designer Courtney O'Neill also uses the cramped space to her advantage as the multi-talented actor/musicians squeeze into the two-level playing space. That sense of claustrophobia and the desire to break free toward the horizon works its way into the ensemble's many powerful performances.

The Gift's *Grapes of Wrath* also feels startlingly contemporary for a number of reasons. In light of headlines about Syrian and African refugees risking everything, Steinbeck's personalized exploration of the exploited and tragic Joad family takes on an extra gut-punching significance—especially since a similar situation happened before in our own country.

—"Independence Day" will take place at The Promontory, 5311 S. Lake Park Ave., on Monday, July 4, 3-8 p.m. The entry fee is \$5.

The official hotel will be the Inn of Chicago Magnificent Mile, 162 E. Ohio St. Call 312-787-3100 and use the code "Black Pride."

See WindyCityBlackPride.info and ChicagoBlackPride.net, or email jhinton25@yahoo.com.

'The Boys Upstairs' through July 2

Pride Films and Plays (PFP) will present the Chicago premiere of Jason Mitchell's comedy *The Boys Upstairs*, which centers on gay men in New York City's Hell's Kitchen. Previews are May 19-20, with the regular run being through July 2.

Tickets are \$25 for Monday through Thursday performances and \$30 for Friday through Sun-

Producing *The Grapes of Wrath* now also taps into this election cycle's anger on both ends of the political spectrum. As onlookers demonize the Joads' ramshackle migrant appearance, many members of the family become politicized when they realize just what a raw deal they're getting from their wealthy employers.

Weiss also ratchets up these feelings by utilizing color-blind casting to make the Joads into an interracial family. So when Namir Smallwood as Tom Joad powerfully lays into system-wide injustices against the poor and oppressed, *The Grapes of Wrath* becomes less of a period piece and more of contemporary commentary.

Equally matching Smallwood's noble and strong turn as Tom Joad is Jerre Dye, as the former preacher-turned small-time philosopher

Jim Casey. These two morally anchor the production and offer strong support for their fellow actors.

I do have some quibbles. One is Weiss' decision to make the "tomcatting" brother Al Joad (Lane Flores) into a closet gay. The text supports this intriguing interpretation early on, but not as convincingly by the end. Also, some might wish Kona N. Burks' take on the matriarch Ma Joad was not so emotionally bottled up (although others will argue that Burks' halting interpretation is in the text).

But overall, there's no denying what a tremendous dramatic achievement *The Grapes of Wrath* is for the ever-plucky Gift Theatre. Please forgive this crude analogy of size not mattering, because the artists at The Gift truly know how to work best with what they've got.



SPOTLIGHT

Learn about the long-time culture of gay life on Fire Island in song via Pride Films and Plays' developmental concert reading of the musical **A History of Summer**. Composer Jonathan Monro (Dream Vacation) and librettist Adam Mathias (See Rock City & Other Destinations) are behind this show that covers a period of time starting in 1869 stretching to today. Pride Films and Plays' concert reading of *A History of Summer* continues for one more performance only at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. There is a \$10 suggested donation; call 800-737-0984 or visit PrideFilmsAndPlays.com.

Caption: Composer Jonathan Monro and librettist Adam Mathias are the team behind the developing musical *A History of Summer*. Photo courtesy of Pride Films and Plays



Chicago/Windy City Black Pride July 1-4

Chicago/Windy City Black Pride will take place July 1-4, with a variety of events to mark the occasion.

Some of the events include:

—"Love & Basketball," a charity basketball game and fashion show featuring Teairra Mari of the reality-TV show *Love & Hip Hop Hollywood*. (Proceeds will go to the AIDS Healthcare Foundation.) It will take place Friday, July 1, at 5 p.m., at Seven Nightclub, 3206 N. Halsted St. See Eventbrite.com to purchase tickets.

—The party "Blackout" will take place Friday, July 1, 12-4 a.m., at Fantasy Nightclub, 3641 N. Halsted St.

—"Black Pride: The Kensington Rooftop Day Party & Brunch" will take place Saturday, July 2, 2-7 p.m. at The Kensington, 324 W. Chicago Ave.



From left: Nelson Rodriguez, Gary Henderson and Chau Baer in *The Boys Upstairs*.
Photo by Paul Goyette

day shows. (There are discounts for students and seniors.) Also, PFP also offers a four-play pass for \$80. See www.pridefilmsandplays.com or call 800-737-0984.

'Byhalia' returns July 22-Aug. 21

The New Colony and Definition Theatre Company's *Byhalia*, Mississippi—winner of three 2016 non-Equity Joseph Jefferson Awards, including Best New Work—returns with the full original cast on July 22-Aug. 21 as part of Steppenwolf's Visiting Company Initiative at its new 1700 Theatre, 1700 N. Halsted St.

The original cast includes Jeffery Owen Freelon Jr., Kiki Layne, Evan Linder, Liz Sharpe and Cecelia Wingate.

For tickets, visit Steppenwolf.org or call 312-335-1650.

Chicago Filmmakers offering scholarships

Chicago Filmmakers has launched The LGBTQ+ Youth Media Project, a new filmmaking workshop for LGBTQ+ identified, gender non-conforming and allied teens.

Three summer sessions will teach participants to use professional filmmaking equipment and editing software to create identity-focused work.

The LGBTQ+ Youth Media Project will instruct students ages 13-17 in the immersive art of digital filmmaking, as well challenging them to look critically at the media they consume every day.

Session two is July 25-Aug. 5, 3:30-6 p.m.; the deadline is Friday, July 15. Season three is Aug. 6-Sept. 24, 3:30-6:30 p.m.; the deadline is Monday, July 25.

Applications to the program are open and available at ChicagoFilmmakers.org.

Illinois woman charged with attacking McGillis

Henderson County authorities say actress Kelly McGillis (*Top Gun*; *Witness*; *The Accused*), 58, was the victim of stalking and assault in her western North Carolina home—and the alleged perpetrator is a woman from Illinois.

Laurence Marie Dorn, 38, has been charged with second-degree burglary, misdemeanor larceny, misdemeanor stalking, assault and battery, and interfering with emergency communication.

McGillis posted on social media that she was left scratched and bruised, but is otherwise OK. She added that she got a concealed-carry gun permit to protect herself after the incident. According to USA Today, the National Rifle Association cheered McGillis on its Facebook page.

McGillis came out as a lesbian in 2009.



Kelly McGillis in *The Innkeepers*.
Photo by Paul Goyette



"Excavating Experience" photo.

Photo from the Leather Archives & Museum

LA&M to exhibit 'Excavating Experience' in July

"Excavating Experience: The Presence of LG-BTQ People of Color in Cook County, IL" is a multimedia exhibit that will open Saturday, July 2, at the Leather Archives & Museum (LA&M), 6418 N. Greenview Ave.

An opening reception will be held in the museum's gallery at 5-7:30 p.m. on July 2.

"Excavating Experience" draws upon materials from the museum's archival holdings, as well as images, artifacts, ephemera and oral histories donated by people of color within Cook County's BDSM/leather/fetish/kink communities specifically for this exhibit. Focusing mainly on participation by people of color in clubs, events and organizations, the LA&M exhibit's goal is to both inspire and to encourage

participation.

The exhibit will run through Sunday, Jan. 8, 2017.

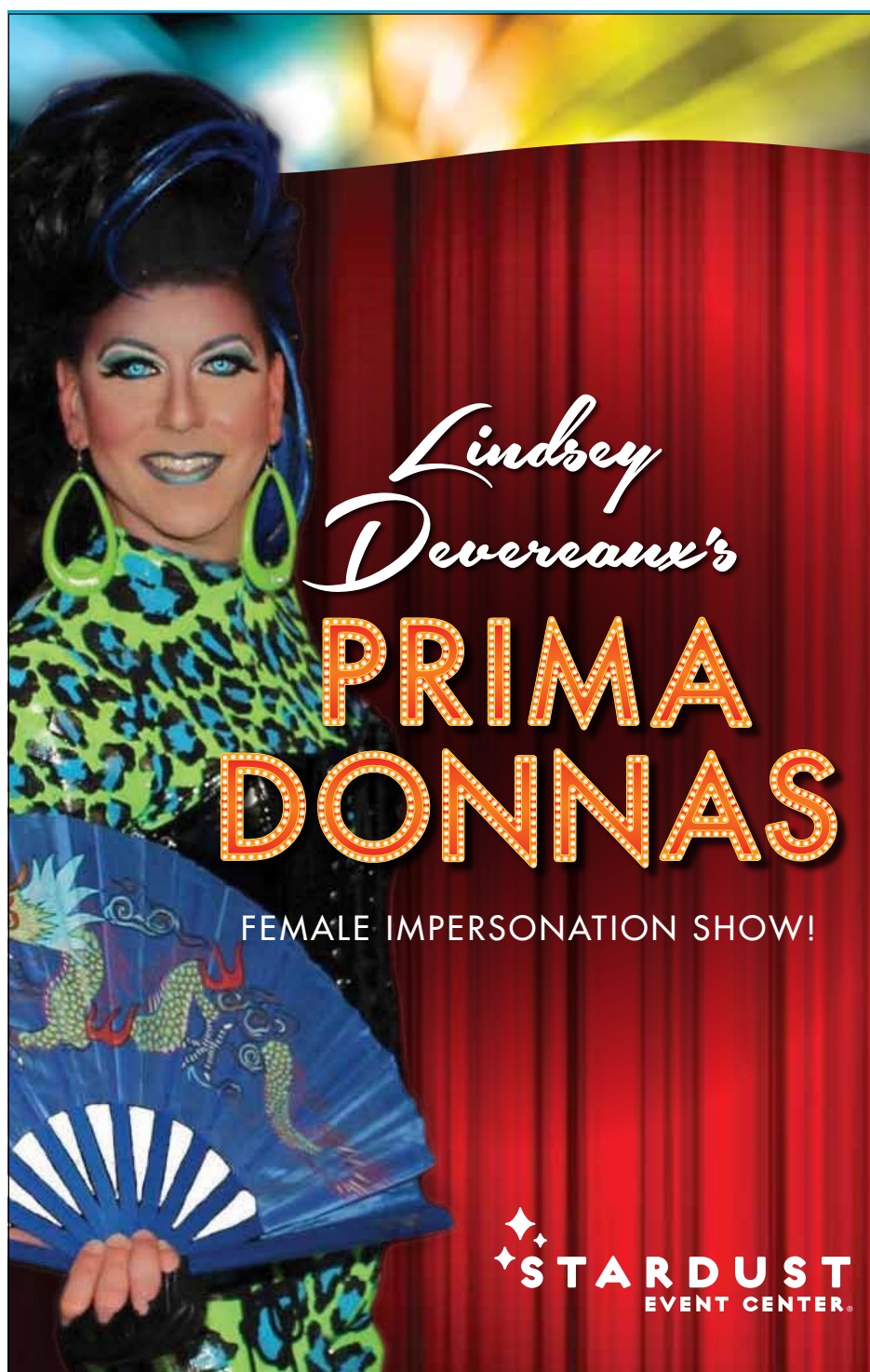
LA&M is celebrating its 25th anniversary this fall.

Sam Kirk exhibit July 21 at IPaintMyMind

"Double-Dutch: An Exhibition by Sam Kirk" will open Thursday, July 21, 7-10 p.m., at IPaintMyMind Gallery, 2545 W. Diversey Pkwy.

In the exhibition, Kirk shares her experience bouncing between Chicago and Brooklyn for the past two years. The showing will last through Tuesday, Aug. 30.

For more, see "Double-Dutch: An Exhibition by Sam Kirk" on Facebook.



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Ride for AIDS Chicago: Fighting HIV/AIDS mile after mile

Ride for AIDS 2014.
Photo by Ross Forman

BY ROSS FORMAN

The annual Ride For AIDS Chicago will have about 275 participants this year, including about 200 riders—and about half of the cyclists are first-time participants in the Test Positive Aware Network's largest fundraiser, which raises vital unrestricted funds for TPAN and its community partners.

The two-day, 200-mile bicycle ride on July 9-10, which starts and ends in suburban Evan-

ston, is shooting to raise \$750,000—though about a month before the opening ceremony, that tally stood at about \$250,000.

"Money raised through the Ride provides TPAN with the unrestricted funds we need to fill the gaps in funding for our programs and operational costs so that we can continue seamlessly providing excellent, and free, services for our clients," said TPAN CEO Patti Capouch. "Unrestricted funding is money that TPAN can use for any purpose, such as operating costs

not covered by grants [rent, utilities], staff not covered by grants [finance staff, development staff] and programs not fully funded by grants, such as TPAN's Art Therapy program.

"As with many non-profits, several of TPAN's core programs operate with funding deficits, [such as] Client Advocacy [42 percent underfunded]; Prevention Services [19 percent underfunded]; Mental Health services [11 percent underfunded]; and Substance Abuse Programs [10 percent underfunded].

Capouch added, "Our goals for this year are to engage with the Ride's Community Partners and encourage more people to ride, crew, or volunteer to support those living with or at risk for HIV in Chicagoland. TPAN is committed to ending the stigma associated with HIV, and we believe that the Ride is one of the strongest ways to build community and unite agencies and individuals towards that goal. The Ride is an easy way to provide fundraising assistance and community engagement for TPAN and its six Community Partners, including the newly added Howard Brown Health, without adding expenses or staffing. In turn, the Community Partners extend TPAN's reach, allowing Ride donors and participants to enact greater change for Chicagoland's HIV community."

TPAN this year has added a one-day, 100-mile option to further encourage participation, Capouch said.

Ald. Ariel Reboyras (30th Ward) is the current, longest-returning rider, having ridden for the last 11 years. Carl Branch is one of the top fundraisers, having raised more than \$6,000 [as of early June]. Other top fundraisers are Yvette Pryor, Shannon Cunningham and Mark Sumpter.

Capouch said this year's riders are, once again, a diverse bunch, "which supports TPAN's work to provide free programs for those affected by HIV regardless of economic status, race, ethnicity, or sexual identity," she said.

About 75 percent of the riders are male, 25 percent are under age 30; and 52 percent are older than 50. The majority are from Illinois, although there also are participants from Colorado, Texas, Michigan, Maryland, and Missouri. Capouch said, "This event appeals to people from a varying employment and socio-economic backgrounds, including CEOs [Chicago House's new CEO, Scott Ammarell, also a former TPAN board member]; doctors [Rob Garofalo, captain of the Fred Says team]; attorneys, financial executives, part-time servers, therapists [two of TPAN's staff therapists are riding: Kimberly Rogers and Christina Joly], HIV testing counselors, a small cadre of nannies, and others.

Some Ride participants are openly HIV-positive, and they once again can elect to wear an orange bandana during that weekend's event to

symbolize their status.

"The orange bandanas are a central component of the Ride's mission to fight the stigma associated with HIV," Capouch said. "The Ride is a safe environment for those who are HIV-positive—participants are among friends, fellow HIV-positive people, and our HIV-negative allies. Choosing to wear an orange bandana is a way to link hands with our community and represent the spirit of freedom, living openly as yourself, and caring for those with HIV, which the Ride champions."

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky will speak at the opening ceremony.

As for the closing ceremony, "we're focusing on participant experience and encouraging friends and family members to join us to celebrate each rider's journey of 100 or 200 miles," Capouch said.

The Finale Festival will be held in Leahy Park, 1100 W. Lincoln St., in Evanston at 2-4 p.m.

And yes, there will be the traditional Riderless bike procession will be back this year, which has grown into the most moving, emotional moment of the entire weekend.

A group of HIV-positive riders and crew will lead the bike in at the opening ceremony, and return the bike at the Finale Festival. "The bike commemorates those lost to HIV/AIDS and reminds us that those who aren't able to join us for the two-day event are with us in spirit," Capouch said.

Capouch, 53, provides strategic direction for the event, and she works hand in hand with Gary Nelson, the events and communication manager. She also serves on the crew for several pre-Ride training sessions.

When asked if she will ever ride, Capouch said she likely won't—but she definitely cherishes her role within the Ride, particularly as part of the crew.

"I think I was made to be more of a behind-the-scenes crew member when it comes to athletic events," she said. "I grew up in the country where I learned to ride a bike; that is the only place I've ever ridden. I really admire all of the folks who are doing the Ride, though. They work so hard—physically and emotionally—for several months to train and fundraise. I am so happy to support them on their journey, from big picture planning of the event to pouring ice into riders' thermos' at a pit stop."

The day before the Ride, Capouch will spend hours helping to load pit crew vans and ironing out last-minute details. The morning of the Ride, she'll bring coffee and the donuts to the opening ceremony. "I welcome the riders and wish them a safe journey and then head out on the road," she said. "I drive to every pit stop so

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GOODMAN THEATRE

More from the Chicago Pride Parade

Photos by Tracy Baim, Jerry Nunn, Ross Forman and Kat Fitzgerald/www.MysticImagesPhotography.com.
See many more on page 36 and online.



Early reports: Fewer incidents during Pride Parade and aftermath

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Despite a million-person turnout to watch the 47th Annual Pride Parade, Chicago police are currently reporting only seven arrests during the course of the event.

Those included arrests for possession of cannabis, unlawful possession of a taser and battery, according to Chicago Police Department (CPD) spokesman Jose Estrada.

The Crime in Wrigleyville + Boystown blog first reported two fights after the parade at the Belmont station, one at 6:55 p.m. Sunday and another at about 11:30 p.m. that night. It had reports of about 19 arrests over the course of the night.

Crime numbers surrounding the parade can fluctuate as more information becomes available from police and city officials. Lake View and Uptown residents have in years past offered anecdotal accounts that contrasted sharply with official city and police numbers, since many incidents don't ultimately lead to arrests or criminal charges.

But initially, at least, the 2016 numbers are significantly lower than those in previous years. In 2015, there were 52 arrests during and after the parade, and 46 arrests in 2014.

CPD officials nevertheless face criticism this year for prematurely closing the Pride at Montrose event.

Crime in Wrigleyville + Boystown's report on the parade is at <http://www.cwbchicago.com/2016/06/19-arrests-as-tight-security-smaller.html>.





Thousands attend 20th annual Dyke March

Photos by Gretchen Rachel Hammond and Kat Fitzgerald/www.MysticImagesPhotography.com



BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

They numbered in the thousands.

So many people showed up to the 20th Annual Dyke March June 25 that they spanned most of the Humboldt Park route from Western and Division to the park entrance.

Composed of the entire spectrum of race, gender and gender identity, they marched with defiance. They marched with love.

Much like the first Dyke March in 1996, Chicago Police Department (CPD) presence was minimal and necessary only to stop the flow of traffic along the marcher's route.

In a stark contrast to the expected massive CPD participation in the June 26 Pride Parade, Dyke March organizers focused on the community looking after itself.

Dyke March Safety Marshalls were on hand offering security or a bottle of water to anyone who requested it as temperatures along the route and at the rally topped 90 degrees.

As the marchers began to gather, the overwhelming feeling was one of acceptance and unashamed joy. There were plenty of hugs as old friends and Dyke March participants from the 1990s era were reunited with the words "Happy Dyke March."

Once the marchers set off, headed by a small contingent of Dykes on Bykes and representatives from the Broadway Youth Center (BYC), they chanted "We are Dyke March," "CPD means we've got to fight back, Orlando means we've got to fight back, gentrification means we've got to fight back," and "We're here, we're queer, we're fabulous, don't fuck with us," among others.

Yet there was no belligerence in their tone; rather these were the impassioned cries for social change and community around which the Dyke March is centered.

"The Dyke March really emphasizes the importance of being in communities that are marginalized and left behind in terms of education around who the LGFBT community is," Dyke March participant and LGBT Hall of Fame member Emmanuel Garcia said. "After what happened in Orlando it's really important that we center the voices of the communities that were affected. Given that the majority of the people that were victims of this crime were Puerto Rican, I think it is especially important that the March is in Humboldt Park and that we're continuing to create solidarity with these communities."

Dykes on Bikes began collaborating with the Dyke March in 2011.

"It's the empowerment the March gives the LGBT community in general," Dykes on Bikes Chicago Chapter President Debby Rijos said. "I feel like the whole purpose of the Pride Parade has been lost with greed and money. The Dyke March still has its niche of showing the struggles and love of our community. No matter how many letters we add every year to the acronym, we still embrace everybody equally."

Garcia echoed the feeling that, without the regimented security that will be in place for the Pride Parade, the Dyke March retains an atmosphere which is unique, and in many ways, more suited to inclusion.

"We know that more policing and more surveillance only affects communities of color and the LGBT community of color," he said. "I think that we need to create more models like the Dyke March to bring the Pride Parade to the roots of Stonewall which was a direct response to policing. I think that's why Dyke March stands out and has always been rooted in



5th annual Hollywood Beach Pride
Photo by Slade Travis



DJ Gemini Jones.
Photos by Nina Matti



BY TARINA HARGRAYS

People came out to ring in Pride weekend June 24 at the Center on Halsted’s annual “TKO: Pride Celebration,” held on the Richard M. Daley Roof Terrace overlooking North Halsted Street. Admission included two free drinks, unlimited snacks, and the tunes of DJ Billy Brown and DJ Gemini Jones.

The Pride bash brought out a mixture of demographics. Guests were able to enter raffles, mingle, and dance. However, the fun didn’t stop there.

Well-known drag queen Lady Bunny made an appearance and put on a drag show that had the entire house laughing. She made sure to touch on a range of topics in her skits, such as presidential candidate, Donald Trump and North Carolina’s ongoing bathroom debate, and even managed to poke fun at the antics of celebrity heavyweights such as Justin Bieber and Kim Kardashian.

After her performance, Lady Bunny decided to join the celebration as well, dancing the night away with several partygoers.

As the event came to a close, attendees managed to celebrate the lives of those lost in the Orlando Pulse shooting. Thousands of signatures and notes filled a cloth dedicated to the Orlando victims. The center also celebrated the victims’ lives by having their pictures projected on TV screens across the room.



The National AIDS Quilt.
Photos by Matt Simonette

Navy Pride event features AIDS quilt, mass wedding

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Transgender activist and entrepreneur Angelica Ross led an informal “mass wedding” June 25 as part of several Gay Pride-related activities that day at Chicago’s Navy Pier.

All on the pier were invited to join in the ceremony, so couples could commit to their love for one another, or individuals could commit to their love of themselves. Ross was flanked in the ceremony by members of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

Ross, a former Chicagoan who now lives in Los Angeles, just become an ordained minister—this was her first wedding ceremony—and said she “might make a career out of marrying folks.”

“I’ve known many in our community to be very spiritually-based,” said Ross. “But a lot of LGBTQ people were not ushered into spaces of divinity. ...I’m at that stage where I’m ready to commit to, every Sunday, protesting for peace at the outsider churches, to bring them to their knees, literally. Either they have to get on board, with recognizing the divinity in all people, or they are not fit to lead them.”

Among the other activities that day were a parade on the pier led by members of the Lakeside Pride Freedom Band and a performance by Milly’s Orchid Show.

Additionally, 15 panels from the National AIDS Quilt were displayed, among them panels dedicated to Chicago organizations and various Chicagoans, including activist Danny Sotomayor and Chicago House.



Angelica Ross.



Pride at Montrose event abruptly cancelled by the CPD

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

As the 47th annual Pride Parade was winding down in Lakeview June 26, Pride at Montrose was just getting started.

Hundreds were walking towards Uptown's Cricket Hill for what is advertised as "Chicago's most vibrant Pride event."

There, they found relief from the sun underneath lines of trees and basked in the aroma from an array of family barbecues set up in the shadow of a massive stage while waiting for performances by DJ Gemini Jones, Audio Jack, DJ Tess, GUCCIROXX, Derrick Carter, Ruff N Stuff, Kaycee Ortiz, Darling Sheer, Kiara Lanier, Otis Mack and Terry D'Mor.

Alongside a message of unity, the Health Village manned by organizations including The Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center, the Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago House, AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) and their #PrEP4Love campaign and Affinity Community Services among others demonstrated that personal wellness was just as essential.

Then, shortly after 1 p.m., the Chicago Police Department (CPD) showed up.

According to Chicago Gay Black Men's Caucus Executive Director Erik Glenn, they told organizers to turn off the music—essentially closing down what has historically been the event's principal draw.

"The music was turned off," Glenn told Windy City Times. "Then, after 3 [p.m.], they returned."

A prominent Black actor, writer and creative activist who has been given the anonymous name "John" described what happened next.

"There was a high-ranking CPD officer who was engaging staff members from the AIDS Foundation of Chicago," he told Windy City Times. "The permit for the event was only until 6 p.m. So they pushed it until the eleventh hour and then it was 'no.'"

He added that they essentially ran out the event's clock and so shut it down to the devastation of event organizers and the disappointment of those in attendance who wanted nothing but to enjoy the final Pride event of the day.

"These were people who pulled together de-

spite all that we're going through even with the [state] budget impasse," he said.

The "high-ranking CPD" representative was soon joined by a large number of other police officers.

In a Facebook video posted by Glenn, the police can be seen taking shelter under one of the tents and using the port-a-potties as the Health Village and Cricket Hill were cleared of people.

"Tomorrow is National HIV testing day so we are missing a pretty good opportunity," Glenn said in the video. "But, speaking of things we are paying for, extra time for our police officers to hang out."

"I really wanted to scream and holler," John added, "But it was one of those moments when you have to hold up people. When did racism end? When did lynching end? There is always someone being groomed to hate you. If we don't teach them to survive and show what the fuck is up, they're going to fall into the abyss and we with them as we age."

His response was measured in comparison to some of the justifiable frustration on Facebook as an event that has been consistently targeted by the CPD including when it was known as Montrose Rocks was shut down with no plausible explanation provided.

For some, the closure was nothing more and nothing less than a direct attack on the Black LGBT community.

"I have a source that said that the police in the city already pre-planned this—to cancel the event about three days ago," Marquise Wiley posted in a video. "Why would you wait until the last minute to cancel this event? There were folks that put their heart and soul, they had invested in this. They had sponsors. They had HIV awareness. This is so crazy. Why are you attacking the Black gay community? You all are racist individuals. You let these white folks have their parade. Now that Black folks want to have their own event, you had pre-planned this shit? Folks it was about racism."

He said that there were no reports of violence at the event,

The reasons why the CPD cancelled it are murky at best, with organizers telling Windy City Times that it was due to the insufficient



A CPD officer shuts down the Pride at Montrose event. Photo from the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus

height of the security fences.

This was confirmed by a statement released June 27 by the AFC.

"The AIDS Foundation of Chicago is extremely disappointed that Pride at Montrose was required by the Chicago Police Department to end entertainment early on Sunday, June 26," it read. "This historic Black LGBTQ event was an opportunity to celebrate pride and provide healthcare resources in honor of National HIV Testing Day. Though we acknowledge the event did not have the six-foot fence as described in the security plan, throughout the day, we made changes in an attempt to address the concern."

"These changes, unfortunately, were viewed as an unacceptable alternative by the Chicago Police Department," the statement continued. "We wish they would have provided more flexibility so that we could have worked together to find a plausible and immediate solution."

The metal barricades used were exactly the same height as those at the Pride Parade.

Glenn could not understand the purpose of the six-foot fence requirement.

"A lot of us are still hard-pressed to find a rationale for this request," he said. "I'm a six-foot-tall man and to think there would be a fence as tall as me in a modestly sized area; if there were any safety concerns, how would people be able to get away? I could imagine people getting trampled."

There is historical precedent for Glenn's concerns.

In an infamous incident in the United Kingdom in 1989, 96 people died and 700 were injured due to overcrowding at the Hillsborough soccer stadium in Sheffield. They were crushed against the tall fences in use by the stadium, while others were trampled to death.

The request of a high fence at the Pride at

Montrose event remains a mystery.

46th Ward Ald. James Cappleman issued the following statement:

"Per the Commanding Officer overseeing this event the agreed upon plan for the fencing was not followed, and he assessed that proceeding with the music portion of this event could affect the safety of the attendees. Nevertheless, I'm extremely disappointed that the issues could not have been worked out, especially given how important it is to provide HIV testing to those who may not ever seek testing on their own with a medical provider."

"Pride at Montrose is also especially important because it brings together many members of the African-American community to celebrate together what it means to be a member of the LGBTQ community, especially given the many barriers they often face I want to make sure we get to the bottom of this communication breakdown so that we can move forward and have many more Pride at Montrose events for years to come. Uptown is a very open and welcoming community and it's especially important that attendees of Pride at Montrose feel welcomed to Uptown."

Response from the CPD was limited to the statement "There were permit issues with the event at Montrose Beach and CPD asked organizers to discontinue the live music portion of the event. CPD did not shut down events at Montrose Beach."

"That's really a semantic word play," Glenn said. "We know and we would expect that the CPD, which has had a relationship with this event for years would know, that if you were to remove the music it effectively guts the heart of the event rendering it essentially impossible to facilitate the crowd going through the health services that were there."



Pride at Montrose. Photos by Gretchen Rachel Hammond





Pride North festival rocks Rogers Park

BY KIRK WILLIAMSON

As the clouds broke and gave way to blazing sunshine, the fifth annual Pride North festival kicked off and welcomed hundreds of post-parade-goers, locals of all stripes and two stages of popular local DJs.

The festival took place along Glenwood Ave., on one block from Morse to Lunt. Stages were set up at either end, each featuring a slate of DJs, who spun from noon until 10.

The Miller Lite stage was co-sponsored by Clandestina Chicago and featured all female DJs, including Sandra Suave, Cqqchifruit, Samone, Katie Kirby, All the Way Kay and BK Web. Before the DJs took to the decks, the crowd was treated to singing and poetry from Lee Spears and John Shcelli, the top two from this year's Pride Idol competition, as well as the series' host, Marvin Ausby.

The Stoli stage boasted a variety of Chicago's favorite club DJs, including Andrew Aragon, Jerry Featherston, DJ Psycho Bitch, DJ Teri Bristol, Ron Geronimo, Laura B and Foxfonix.

The festival is run by Colm Treacy, owner of The Glenwood and Pub 626, both of which were open and packed throughout the festival, providing a welcomed respite from the sun.



Photos by Kirk Williamson



Back Lot Bash

Photos by Kat Fitzgerald/
www.MysticImagesPhotography





Proud to Run marks 35 years with U.S. Rep. Quigley

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Proud to Run celebrated 35 years with its annual 5K run/walk and 10K run June 25 at The Grove just north of Montrose Harbor. The event featured more than 1,800 participants—an event record—and was one of many activities that took place during Chicago's LGBTQ Pride Week.

"This event has been an integral part of Chicago Pride since 1982," said Proud to Run co-director Justin Koziatek. "The outpouring of community love is humbling. I'm truly grateful for this day and most importantly, the beneficiaries we've supported over the years."

Ryan Hagerty, Proud to Run co-director, noted the 150 plus race-day volunteers and all volunteer board of directors who made this event possible.

Proud to Run has raised more than \$450,000 for a variety of local LGBTQ organization since its founding. This year's beneficiaries were About Face Theater, the Center on Halsted (the Center) and TransTech Social Enterprises.

Fitness Formula Club Halsted led participants

in warm-up exercises before the race.

Proud to Run board members Dino Giannoulis and Hadeis Safi read the names of the victims of the Orlando Pulse nightclub massacre ahead of the race.

Urban Pooch conducted a dog-agility demonstration and the Chicago Spirit Brigade performed following the race. DJ FahrenHITE Entertainment Group provided music.

Tom Chiola—retired Circuit Court judge and 1980s Proud to Run co-director—spoke about the history of the race. Chiola said in its early years, Proud to Run was a place where the LGBTQ community could be out and proud at a time when there were no legal protections; that by participating one was making a political statement.

About Face Theater's Development Director Ben Sprunger, the Center's CEO Tico Valle and Trans Tech Social Enterprises' founder and CEO Angelica Ross were on hand to speak about the work their organizations do for the LGBTQ community.

Awards were given out to the top finishers of the 5K and 10K races.

First-place winners in the 5K race were Heather Conger (women), Ian LaBelle (men) and Ronen Kohn (non-binary) while the 10K race winners were Joanne Almond (women), Ryan Gordyan (men) and Brendan Smith (non-binary).

The 5K women's team winner was Morning Bird Chicago and the 5K men's team winner was Killer Margaritas while the 10K mixed team winner was Rynasty and the 10K men's team winners were The Spidermen.

Following the awards ceremony, U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley, vice chair of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus, spoke to the crowd about the Equality Act—federal legislation that would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the recent sit-in by House Democrats to demand votes on gun-control legislation.

"If I look a little tired right now it's because I learned something this week," said Quigley. "The House of Representatives is an extraordinary and historic place but the chamber isn't a good place to sleep overnight. Doing a sit-in with Rep. John Lewis is pretty spectacular. When Dr. King said the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice, he



Top finishers (left to right) Heather Conger, Ronen Kohn, Ryan Gordyan and Ian LaBelle (not pictured Joanne Almond and Brendan Smith).

Photos by Carrie Maxwell. See more photos online.

was right. We passed hate-crimes legislation, repealed 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' and marriage equality is the law of the land, but we're not there yet. A couple of weeks ago we learned that the hard way because when your community is targeted with a weapon designed for a theater of war and you can't give blood to save their lives, that's a problem. We're going to get rid of that [gay] blood ban."



Dino Giannoulis (left) and Hadeis Safi reading the names of the Orlando victims.



WCT's 30 Under 30 honors event held

Front row: Alfredo Flores, Keisa Reynolds, Aisha Davis, Joe Olszewski, Nelson Rodriguez, Nathan Stevens, Parks Dunlap, Andrew Fortman, Forrest Linsell, Maria Pahl. Second row: Mika Munoz, Yanina Guevara, Liz Weck, Brittany Ellenberg, Meredith Montgomery. Third row: WCT Managing Editor Andrew Davis, WCT Art Director (and event co-host) Kirk Williamson, Arriana Salgado, Elijah McKinnon, Eric Amaya, Maxx Boykin, Jessica Paul (accepting on behalf of Luther Hughes), Christopher Pazdernik, Benjamin Di'Costa, Kara Ingelhart, WCT entertainment reporter (and event co-host) Jerry Nunn, Liz Franco. Not pictured: Kim Chi, Greg Cox, Kate Harrington-Rosen, Ali Hoefnagel, Tess Raser and Joey Wasserman.

Photo by Hal Baim. Individual photos and more available online.

The 17th annual Windy City Times 30 Under 30 Awards were held June 22 at Polo Cafe in the Bridgeport area of Chicago. This was the first time the event was held on the South Side.

The event, held less than two weeks after the murder of 49 mostly Latinx and mostly LGBTQ people in Orlando, had both a somber and determined tone. Many honorees paid tribute to those lost in the Pulse nightclub mass shooting, honoring the

lives of young black and brown people.

Hosts were Windy City Times Art Director Kirk Williamson and writer Jerry Nunn, and the awards were coordinated by Andrew Davis, managing editor of Windy City Times.

In addition to Polo Cafe, co-sponsors of the event were AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Chicago House, Center on Halsted and Howard Brown Health.

See the full listing of 2016 winners at <http://www.windy-citymediagroup.com/lgbt/17th-Annual-30-Under-30-to-honor-youth-June-22/55635.html>.

Also, there's a PDF of the Pride issue with the 30 Under 30 inside: <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/images/publications/wct/2016-06-22/current.pdf>.

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Sable

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Often, people say that their dining experiences are culinary journeys of some sort—but **Sable** (505 N. State St.; SableChicago.com) has made that as literal as possible, thanks to its transit-related groups of cocktails.

Sable's website trumpets the restaurant's attention to cocktails—and it showed at a recent media event I attended. The drinks started with a refreshing prosecco cocktails that accompanied oysters from both coasts—and involved an adventure that featured some rather intriguing libations.

A lot of the cocktails are grouped in categories called the Metropolitan, Brew, Local and Greater American lines. One that is likely to pique your attention is the Playa Azul, a hue-changing concoction that contains Cana brava rum, coconut, lime, pineapple, tiki bitters, b'lure. However, several of my colleagues recently gravitated toward the Sun Blind Terrace, a Greater American drink

that has Kappa Chilean pisco, lustau east India sherry, smoked pineapple, lemon and cherry bark vanilla bitters. If your idea of an exotic drink is having two limes with your Corona instead of your usual one, these cocktails will take a leap of faith—but they're definitely worth it.

I found myself also liking the Radler Square, which has Aviation gin, grapefruit, tarragon syrup, absinthe and Beck's. However, there are also several others that I'd like to try when I return, such as the E.W. Park and Field, an olio of

Evan Williams, fig shrub, strawberry, cinnamon, lemon penrose raspberry dubbel and chocolate bitters. (There are also extensive lists of wines and beers.)

However, please don't think that Sable has skimped on the eats. In a lot of cases, they are just as interesting as the cocktails—and the Sizzling Sisig (with soy-infused blackstrap rum glaze) is just one example. Consisting of grilled pork cheek, Napa cabbage and duck egg, it sizzles thanks to the server lighting the dish with a

flame right at the table.

Some of the other dishes we tried included duck-confit tacos (superb), spring rolls (solid) and the enticing churros (with a miso-caramel sauce) that were paired with mini-rumchata milkshakes.

So I would highly recommend that you give Sable a whirl—you'll leave more adventurous (and satisfied) than you were before entering the place.



The Garden Grove, Sizzling Sisig and Sun Blind Terrace from Sable.
Photos by Andrew Davis



CLANDESTINA

Showing Pride at the Punch House takeover, Thursday, June 23.
Photos by Kat Fitzgerald/www.MysticImagesPhotography



more from PRIDE NORTH

Photos by Kirk Williamson



"I love my fans but sometimes think it's funny when they still speak to me when running into me. Try learning a little ASL (American Sign Language) if you want to make my day." —**Nyle DiMarco** lets people know that perhaps yelling at him from across the room isn't going to get his attention.

This week, everyone is talking about Britain leaving the EU. After the vote, the fine folk of England were in an uproar—more than 3 million people signed a petition demanding a second vote. Hey, England, you don't get a do-over just because you don't like the result. But only I, Billy Masters, will reveal to you why Britain voted to leave the EU—because the Brits love their balloons! Didya know that the EU has banned children under eight from blowing up balloons without adult supervision? The regulation is intended to prevent a child from swallowing and choking on a balloon. So, because of a handful of stupid kids, everyone else has to suffer. And you people think we have trouble with the NRA! I'll give you my balloons when you pry them from my cold, dead hands.

The annual "Broadway Bares" benefit took place in NYC last week, and it sounds like it was a sizzling time. The two performances, which were subtitled "On Demand," raised close to \$1.5 million for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. The largest donation from a single source came from "Stripathon," the online segment of the fundraiser with teams and various performers raising over \$600K. It's not too late to join in the fun. Check out BroadwayBares.com for more information.

Incidentally, this year's "Broadway Bares" was dedicated to the victims, families and friends of the Orlando tragedy. Towards that end, Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS donated \$150K to Equality Florida, the GLBT Community Center of Central Florida and the OneOrlando Fund.

Broadway's most notable response to the Orlando tragedy was the recording of "What the World Needs Now Is Love"—spearheaded by the indomitable **Seth Rudetsky** and his husband, producer **James Wesley**. The morning after the shooting, James happened to hear the song and thought it would be a great vehicle. He called Seth, and they made a dream list and immediately got on the phone. Being not only well-connected but also well-liked, the duo got virtually every star on Broadway on board (with some notable exceptions that need not be mentioned). What hasn't gotten much press are the people who stepped up behind the scenes to make this happen—including **Kathie Lee Gifford** and attorney to the stars **Mark Sendroff**. Everyone was in the studio 48 hours later and, within a week of the tragedy, the song sung by Broadway for Orlando was released and hit number one on the iTunes Top Songs chart. Proceeds from the track will benefit the GLBT Community Center of Central Florida.

We keep getting conflicting reports regarding the Orlando shooter's connection to the gay community. A few people swear they corresponded with him on various gay hook-up apps. (Grindr and Jack'd are the ones most frequently mentioned.) One guy has come forward claiming to have been the shooter's gay lover. In an interview he gave to Univision, the lover (in a heavy prosthetic disguise) described the killer as "cuddly"—of course, he said it in Spanish. However, the FBI has shot down claims that he had any gay apps on his phone. In fact, they say that the phone had no evidence of a secret gay life. In fact, none of the gay rumors have been confirmed. All I know is I never slept with him.



Greg Louganis is baring it all, Billy says.
Photo by Carrie Maxwell

In far more positive news, NYC's Stonewall Inn has just been declared a national monument—which I suspect means drink prices will skyrocket! Have you ever tried to get a gin and tonic at the Lincoln Monument? They really stick it to you! Back to our story—the Stonewall Inn and the area around it (including the surrounding streets and Christopher Park) have been designated as the new Stonewall National Monument and will be overseen by the National Parks System. In making the announcement, President Obama said, "I believe our national parks should reflect the full story of our country—the richness and diversity and uniquely American spirit that has always defined us, that we are stronger together. That out of many, we are one."

On the heels of Pride Month, we've learned that **Greg Louganis** has posed nude for the annual "Body" issue of ESPN Magazine. Now that's a monument I can get behind—so to speak. Having seen the results, let me say that the 56-year-old Louganis has lost nothing of his former perfection—although I do think his right foot is slightly too flexed. A minor quibble—he really sticks the landing, as you can see on BillyMasters.com.

In some exciting news, **Kristin Chenoweth** has been cast as Velma Von Tussle in the made-for-TV remake of Hairspray. But I'm confused. Is Chenoweth now playing brittle, middle-aged matriarchs? I know she's in her early 70s (give or take), but I thought she was gonna play perky ingénues forever. Time inevitably marches on...

I guess that means she'll be too old for the film version of Wicked, which they swear is actually happening. They've got a release date and everything. Universal just announced that Wicked will open Dec. 20, 2019. Wait, 2019? By then Kristin will be ... well, maybe they can dedicate the film to her memory.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Rich in Dallas, who writes, "Did you see that photo of **Tyson Beckford** in his underwear? I mean, you could see the outline of the penis and that he was circumcised. Why not just show it?"

Oh, you mean you haven't seen it? Where have you been? Surely not to BillyMasters.com, where Tyson has been au naturale for years! I don't recall the specifics, but I think he was skinny-dipping at a cocktail party in Australia.

When we're bringing you Beckford's bush, it's time to end yet another column. As we're on the brink of Independence Day, I'm furiously packing for Provincetown. But no matter where I am, I'm always updating BillyMasters.com, the site that always delivers when it comes to anything down under. If you have a question for me, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Chenoweth celebrates her centennial! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.



DYKE MARCH from page 29

community."

For others, the Dyke March is a place to meet new people. The extinction of lesbian bars not just in Chicago but across the country has turned the event into an invaluable social resource.

Rico was participating in the Dyke March for the fourth time.

"I like ladies," they (preferred pronouns) said with a laugh. "There's no places for lesbians to go. When you get a group of women-identified people together, it's a beautiful thing."

Rico is a part of a bimonthly kink and sex-positive meet-up called Femunch which currently boasts around 350 queer, women-identified members.

"We don't have a safe space anymore," Rico said. "The way that people are treating lesbians, and trans women is just ridiculous."

Rico added that they are also unenthused by the Pride Parade.

"It's just become so corporate," they said. "The Dyke March seems like it's more our crowd instead of being directed towards gay men. I'm all for unity but we do need a place that is just for us."

Despite the tremendous surge in numbers this year, the Dyke March displayed none of the tumultuous incidents that marred previous Pride parades and prompted discussions about moving the event from Lake View.

For Rico, the reason all boiled down to mutual respect.

"It's so oppressive at Pride with all the drunk kids and older men," they said. "Here, we don't want to be disrespectful."

That level of respect was equally as prominent at the Dyke March rally on the grounds of Humboldt Park.

There, participants enjoyed free food cooked on a wide bar-b-que and browsed tables from organizations that included Affinity, Lambda Legal, Chicago Welcoming Churches, The Chicago Public Library, the Windy City Performing Arts/Windy City Gay Chorus, New Lease on Life Chicago, Rape Victim Advocates and the Midwest

Access Coalition among others.

Abby Minton was offering magnets created by IO Handmade Crafts. The work of the organization is as altruistic as it is beautifully detailed.

"Today, sales are going to help LGBTQIA homeless youth at The Crib," Minton said. "Forty percent of homeless youth make up the LGBTQIA population which is highly disproportionate so we wanted to make a difference."

"A lot of younger kids are being rejected from their homes," Minton added. "But when we talk to them, they are very courageous. They would rather be out and homeless than inside and miserable."

Minton hoped to make \$500 from the day, the proceeds of which will go to the homeless shelter which is a project of the Chicago-based Night Ministry.

Entertainment at the rally ran the gamut of spoken word, music, dance and even some body-affirming burlesque.

Performers included Kaycee Ortiz, Tiff Beatty, Miz Jellie Mae Jones, The History Makers, Tweak, Milani Ninja, Tasha, Holliswood Monroe and Bella Bahhs. The emcees for the show were Niki Gee and Miss Eboni.

Just as in 1996, Dyke March core organizers were floored by the unprecedented turnout for the event.

It was Sadie's first year as a member of the Dyke March Collective and the fourth as a Dyke March participant.

"It's fantastic!" Sadie said. "I think that a lot of people are feeling that it's a very important time to be at an event like this. We love and care about each other. We protect each other. We're really invested in that and we're intentional about building structures that create safety and support."

Although there will be a long break before discussions even begin about Dyke March 2017, Garcia and a number of others mentioned that, if they had their wish, they would like to see the event move to a neighborhood like Little Village.

"The fact that the Dyke March is still very much taking it to the streets gives me hope," Garcia said.



More from the Chicago Pride Parade

Photos by Tracy Baim, Jerry Nunn and
Kat Fitzgerald/www.MysticImagesPhotography.com.
See many more online.



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COMMUNITY
CALENDAR

Wed., June 29

At First Sight: Center on Halsted Chats with David Sanchez & Philip Vasquez Monthly series that interviews local LGBTQ and Ally leaders as they discuss their lives and some of today's most pressing topics. 6:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=12208>

Judgments in June Exploration of the six most significant LGBTQ Supreme Court Rulings in History. Join Camilla Taylor, from Lambda Legal; renowned LGBT Historian, John D'Emilio; Tracy Baim, from Windy City Media Group; and Victor Salvo, from the Legacy Project in a thoughtful discussion about how these key cases have directly shaped the quality of life for LGBTQ people today. Legacy Wall open for viewing at 6pm. 7:00pm - 8:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago

Friday, July 1

Harbor 57: Free Food and Support for Homeless Youth Youth ages 13-25, including children of young parents. All identities are welcome. 4:30pm - 7:30pm St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 5700 Midway Park, Chicago (Austin) 773-378-8111

7th annual House Music All White Party. Toni Shelton, known as the Queen of House Music, will be hosting this annual event that focuses on celebrating house music and bringing together those who are the movers and shakers in the industry. 7:00pm - 2:00am Jaks Tap, 901 W. Jackson, Chicago <http://https://www.facebook.com/RealToniShelton>



TAYLOR-MADE
Wed., June 29

Lambda Legal's Camilla Taylor will be among the panelists at "Judgments in June" at Center on Halsted.
Photo by Kate Sosin

facebook.com/RealToniShelton

Bye Bye Liver: The Chicago Drinking Play New cast has all-new sketch comedy and games. In between audience members can play Game of Neighborhoods. \$15 table seats cost \$20. 21+ 8:00pm The Public House Theatre 3914 N. Clark St. Chicago <http://thepubtheatre.com/show/bye-bye-liver-2/2015-12-04/>

Saturday, July 2

Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance (LGBTQ) Support meeting to talk about illnesses, symptoms, treatment, doctors, and personal issues such as dating, relationships and work. Every Saturday.

11:00am - 12:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St., <http://dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com>

Mamby on the Beach Silent Disco stage with 16 DJs spinning a variety of dance music styles, from classic house and indie dance to hip-hop, nu disco, and beyond. 18+ 1:00pm Oakwood Beach, Chicago <http://www.mambybeach.com>

Sunday, July 3

aChurch4Me Sunday Worship Service A place to find peace, comfort and always needed prayer. 11:00am AChurch4Me MCC, 7366 N Clark St, Chicago <http://www.achurch4me.org>

Asians & Friends Dim Sum Each first Sunday of the month 12:30pm Furama 4936 N. Broadway Chicago <http://www.afchicago.org>

Tuesday, July 5

Vives Q: First Tuesdays This summer, with a fierce line-up of Special Guests and musical performers, mobilize to take action on critical issues the community is facing. Free RSVP one to ten people. 6:00pm - 9:00pm National Museum of Mexican Art 1852 W. 19th St. Chicago Tickets: <http://www.eventbrite.com/o/vives-q-8110514952>

Intersex Chicago Peer-led, casual conversation group for those who identify as intersex or think they might be. Also open to significant others, family, friends, allies, and anyone with questions. 6:30pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=11239>

Thursday, July 7

American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) LGBT military veterans meet on the second floor first Thursday of each month. 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago 773-472-6469

<http://www.averchicago.org>

BITE: A Pucking Queer Cabaret Through July 20. Pride Films and Plays will complete its fun summer with the world premiere of BITE: A Pucking Queer Cabaret, PFP Artistic Associate Derek Van Barham's immersive, pop-rock ode to Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. BITE directly follows PFP comedy The Boys Upstairs by Jason Mitchell as the main entertainment in Mary's Attic for the summer. 7:00pm Mary's Attic 5400 N Clark Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/events/1000730013313616/>

the kates Comedy Bowl Birthday Bash the kates, Chicago's all female comedy showcase, is turning nine years old on July 7th. In celebration of this big birthday, the kates are hosting a stand-up show/birthday party. \$10 suggested donation. 8:00pm Diversey River Bowl 2211 W Diversey Pkwy Chicago <http://www.thekates.org/>

Chigaygo at Laugh Factory Chicago Orlando benefit Queer comedy showcase presents special one-night only event to raise money for The Center Orlando, the LGBT center providing victim relief in the wake of the tragedy at Pulse Nightclub. Doors 7pm. 8:00pm The Laugh Factory Chicago 3175 N Broadway Chicago 773-327-3175. <http://www.LaughFactory.com>

KT Tunstall Touring in connection with her four song EP, Golden State, and her new full length album coming early September. \$35. 21+. Doors 8pm 9:00pm The Beat Kitchen 2100 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago Tickets: <https://www.ticketfly.com>

Friday, July 8

Square Roots Festival Presented by the Old Town School of Folk Music and the Lincoln Square Ravenswood Chamber of Commerce, the three-day fun-filled

festival features a wide variety of local craft beer options as well as a full line up of musical acts ranging from indie rock stars to '90s alternative band Cracker. Through July 10. Suggested donation \$10 adults, \$5 seniors/kids, \$20 families 5:00pm - 10:00pm Lincoln Avenue, between Montrose & Wilson Ave., Chicago 773-728-6000 <http://www.squareroots.org>

The Kates Chicago comedians Deanna Ortiz and Stefania Rudd host the all female comedy showcase with semi-monthly line-up of funniest comedians and emerging female comic performers. PG-13 show. \$10 7:00pm The Book Cellar, 4736-38 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago <http://www.thekates.org/>

Queer Genre Fiction Discussion Group The Ghost Network by Catie Disabato. Has the world's hottest pop star been kidnapped, brainwashed, or simply gone into hiding? The answer lies in the abandoned subway stations of Chicago . . . Bring yourself, a friend, and make few new ones at the book discussion group. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/events/270091273345850/>

Sunday, July 10

Femme-friendly walking tour of the Boystown Information-packed walking tour of Boystown neighborhood with Andie McKenzie Meadows, a queer femme activist, Boystown historian and photographer. After-party at The Closet. 6:00pm - 8:00pm Beginning at the Belmont Red/Brown Line stop Tickets: <http://bit.ly/boystowntour>

Adele United Center 1901 W. Madison Ave., Chicago. Tickets: <http://live.adele.com/north-america/>

RIDE FOR AIDS from page 26

I can greet the riders as they come in and help the crew teams in any way I can.

"My favorite part is greeting the riders as they make their way into camp and then visiting with them, listening to their stories of their day. On day two, the riders need extra cheering. Again, I'll hit all of the pit stops before making my way back to the closing ceremonies."

Capouch hands out medals to finishing riders.

"It's such an emotional and exhilarating experience," she said. "Last year, the [Ride] was one of the highlights of my year at TPAN."

"Even if someone has not lost someone personally to HIV/AIDS, this event is a reminder that we are all affected by the epidemic in some way as humans who strive for meaningful connection with others. When hundreds of Riders, crew and volunteers are banded together in solidarity during the weekend—riding through all kinds of weather, plus physical and emotional challenges, being visible in the streets to passersby, cheering squads sparking in sequins peppering the route of rural Wisconsin—they are creating significant change."

"Whether riding 200 miles or being a crew member cutting up bananas, all participants of RFAC are promoting crucial dialog about HIV/AIDS."

In 2009, TPAN launched the Community Partner Program to broaden the Ride's impact. Local community-based organizations have the opportunity to participate in the Ride and raise money for their own programming. As result, dozens of HIV/AIDS programs throughout Chicago have been sustained. In 2016, the Ride is partnering with: About Face Theatre, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Center on Halsted, Chicago House Social Service Agency, Fred Says, and Howard Brown Health Center.

See RideForAIDS.org.

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