



MAKING HERSTORY
 Hillary Clinton is official Democratic presidential candidate.
 Washington Blade photo by Michael Key

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Mindy Verson (right) and Olivia Newton-John.
 Photo courtesy of Verson

GETTING PHYSICAL

Chicago entrepreneur teams with Olivia Newton-John on fundraising walk, run

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

In the title track of her 2006 album *Grace and Gratitude*, musician, cancer survivor and philanthropist Olivia Newton-John sang “All I have and all I feel is all because of you. All I reap is all I sow and love is our living proof.”

It sums up the effect Newton-John has had on Chicago entrepreneur and philanthropist Mindy Verson.

On Sept. 11, 2016, Verson—who describes Newton-John as a childhood hero and a woman who “inspired my dreams”—will make the trip of a lifetime to Melbourne, Australia.

There, Verson will team with six individuals who not only share a passionate love for Newton-John’s work but a motivation to “do something good in this world for others.”

Collectively calling themselves *The Sol Seven*—a tribute to the all-girl group *The Sol Four*, which Newton-John formed as

a teenager in her hometown of Melbourne—Verson and her friends will participate in the 2016 Wellness Walk & Research Run.

Verson’s company Verson Productions is a corporate sponsor of the fundraising event which includes a 5K walk, 5K run and 10K run around the magnificent Bundoora campus of La Trobe University in Melbourne.

It is organized by and in support of the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre (The ONJ Centre) which, according to its website, is “dedicated to providing the very best in medical care and treatment; combined with research programs for new treatments to help stop cancer from destroying the lives of so many people.”

In the ‘70s and ‘80s, Newton-John was a worldwide

Turn to page 16



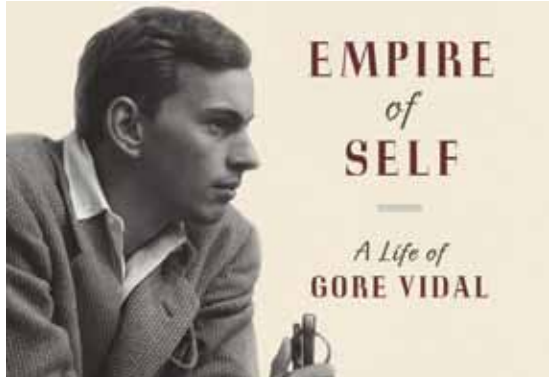
GUAY & KOLDAN
 Lesbian couple are artists, shop owners.
 Photo of Shirley Guay and Rosalie Koldan by Carrie Maxwell

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GOING FOR THE GOLD
 Record number of LGBTs set to compete in Olympics.
 Photo of Megan Rapinoe by David Durochik/Chicago Red Stars

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 Late author is subject of new book.

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MEX-IMUM EXPOSURE
 Windy City Times shows why so many people love going to Puerto Vallarta (left).
 Photo by Jerry Nunn

STORMIN' 'MORMON'



Daxton Bloomquist plays Elder McKinley in Book of Mormon, which is wrapping up its Chicago run soon.
 PR photo

BAR NONE



Equality Illinois honored local law firms with its "Raising the Bar" event.
 Photo of Equality Illinois CEO Brian C. Johnson and Judge Staci M. Yandle by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

FIVE BY FIVE

The upcoming film *Suicide Squad* and *Home Run Inn* are among Five Worth Finding.

LEWIS AND SNARK

Windy City Times reviews the theatrical production *C.S. Lewis Onstage*.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Justin Bieber, *Star Trek* and Troye Sivan.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

Chicago Dancers United presents

dance for life 25

CHICAGO



PHOTOGRAPHY: Sandro | DANCER: Dara Holmes & Tom Mattingly

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7:30pm
 Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University

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Marchers at Jerusalem Pride.
Photo by Ronit Bezalet

Jerusalem hosts its largest Pride march, honors slain teen

BY RONIT BEZALEL

JERUSALEM— With 25,000 in attendance from across Israel, the 15th Annual Jerusalem Pride March, which occurred July 21, 2016, was the city's largest yet. The parade stood in stark contrast to last year's tragedy, when six people were stabbed by Yishai Schlissel, an ultra-Orthodox Jewish assailant. Shira Banki, 16, later died from her wounds.

The march is organized each year by the Jerusalem Open House for Pride and Tolerance (JOH). The organization serves the city's diverse LGBTQ communities. Pride organizers worried that people might stay away because of fear of another attack. In fact, Schlissel was accused of planning a new plot from prison to harm the march. However, undeterred marchers came out in droves, as this year's parade was five times larger than last year's.

"The march was better than we could have ever hoped for," said organizer Noam Eyal. "Jerusalem really needed this. It's a message to any future attacker that if you try something like this, it will backfire."

Eyal should know. He was one of the six people stabbed last year. "I was number two stabbed. Shira Banki was number three. I didn't know her, we just happened to be standing next to each other," Eyal said.

"The events of last year's march caught us off-guard," said Tom Canning, the development director at the Jerusalem Open House. "We thought the violence couldn't happen, but it did." Canning explained that while the LGBT community is accepted in the liberal neighborhoods of Tel Aviv, discrimination and homophobia still exist throughout the Israel.

"What Israeli society realized is that maybe we are not doing as good with LGBTQ rights as we thought we were," said Canning.

The JOH spent the past year trying to heal a traumatized community and to build bridges. "We've been working with rabbis and religious institutions to create dialogue. At the end of the day we have the same mission to bring people together and promote understanding," Canning explained.

The efforts of the JOH paid off as busloads of attendees from across Israel arrived in Jerusalem to march.

Security was high as the police blocked traffic and all marchers had to pass through a security check. More than 40 people were detained for attempting to harm the march, including two who were found with knives.

Participants first assembled in Liberty Bell Park, where the chant of mourners reciting the Kaddish for Shira Banki mingled with the thump of disco from the stage as police helicopters whirred overhead. Pre-march festivities culminated when Jerusalemites Yochai Werman and Yotam Hacohen were married on a small stage. A wall of photojournalists shoved for prime spots as the couple exchanged vows and each husband broke a glass in the traditional Jewish wedding style. The couple kissed to cheers and dancing from the crowd.

The parade began an hour late due to the unexpected throng of attendees. People marched, chanted, celebrated and danced, while flanked on both sides by armed guards. The route paid homage to the spot where Banki was stabbed. The mood grew somber as crowds stopped to place flowers at the site, adorned with a large photo of the fallen teenager.

The parade ended at Independence Day Park where there were a variety of performances and speeches, including a speech from Shira Banki's father. He urged everyone to fight for a tolerant society. "Don't let hatred, ignorance and prejudice sweep you away. Get up and stand for your right to live in a tolerant society."

The parade featured a mixture of young and old, Orthodox and secular, LGBT folks and straight allies. While there were individual Arab marchers, noticeably absent were Arab organizations, including the East Jerusalem-based al-Qaws, a non-profit supporting LGBTQ Palestinians. Earlier this year, Palestinian queer groups and other Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement activists launched a Boycott Tel Aviv Pride campaign which asserted that Israel was using gay rights as a cover for its policies of occupation, referred to as Pinkwashing.

Although there was no official boycott Jerusalem campaign, the lack of participation from Arab organizations was a clear reminder of the divisions that still exist. Yet, in a complicated city full of clashing politics, the LGBTQ community sent a clear message that homophobia and violence will not be tolerated.

GUEST COLUMN

BY MICHAEL A. HORVICH



Evolving as "Gay"

I have grown up. Again. When I was a young man, I would look at a new understanding regarding myself and life and say, "Wow, I was so naive. I will never let that happen again." Ends up, my life, which is now in its 71st year, has been a series of "being naive agains." Maybe that is not so bad as it shows I am continuing to grow and become.

My recent visit to San Francisco, Gay Capital of the USA to attend the Frameline 40 Film Festival where I experienced my documentary *ALZHEIMER'S: A Love Story* screen in front of a warm, accepting audience of 1,300 gay and gay-friendly people—and having had the chance to view over 25 films (shorts and longs) dealing with gay issues, and meeting a wide variety of people from different walks of life—has brought a new sense to my homosexuality.

I have been gay all my life. In looking back, the signs were there since my earliest memories. I "came out" at the age of 18, meaning had my first sexual experience, and began to understand why I was different than most other boys. I had known it for a long time but didn't understand why.

I probably did not fully accept with confidence that I was gay until I was 40 years old when I informed my mother that I no longer was going to lie to family and friends about my sexual preferences or my male lover. Everyone knew anyways but just weren't acknowledging it out loud.

During the first 50 years of my life, the 1950s through the 2000s, society's attitudes toward gay people, men and women, were quite different then they are today. Life for gays was closeted and characterized by the expression, "The love that dare not speak its name." Older role models did not exist. Most gay activities and socialization was underground.

Things today, while not perfect, are amazingly different with same-sex marriage legal at the national level (and parts of the world); wider acceptance of homosexuality by more people; greater visibility of gays in the political, entertainment, and sports worlds; and perhaps more understanding in religious arenas.

This scenario brings me to the discussion of some of the realizations I mentioned in the first paragraph.

Most of my younger life I liked other younger men and found older gay men disgusting. Now I am an older gay man. Age affects how beautiful a person's body might be, it does not affect the beauty of a person's soul and their continued sexual desires. While I look pleasant enough, my physical beauty is gone, my sexual needs not as easily met as when I was in my 20s. I wish I had been a little more "generous" to the older men who approached me when I

was young.

As a young man; Drag Queens, Transsexuals, Transvestites, Leather Men, Butch and Lipstick Lesbians, and probably a few others groups were embarrassing to me. I wanted gay men and women, including myself, to be well-behaved, normal, invisible, etc.

I thought that if only these extremely visible groups would calm down, gays like me in general would be more easily accepted into society or at least go unnoticed. This belief was pretty common, I think, among many gay men of that time. For me this was based on little if any knowledge of who these people were emotionally, physically, or belief system wise. I had few if any friends in these groups and knew little of who they really were so I had no right to judge, but judge I did.

After Stonewall, during what is known as the Gay Liberation Era, there was a huge spit between gay men and gay women, the women fighting to be known as "lesbians" not "gay women." At the time I thought this was foolish. I understand this now and give the lesbian community credit for being among the first groups (including the early suffragettes) to fight for equality for women in general. The battle continues.

Men, especially in those days, were dominant; making most important decisions; holding most important roles in business, government, religion and making decisions about who and what women could be. During gay liberation, the lesbians said, "Hell no! We are in charge of ourselves and will make decisions about ourselves ... men will not be in charge of us and we do not want to be dumped into the group with them known as gay."

My next awareness was that seemingly "outrageous" expressions of self by Drag Queens, Transgender People, Leather Men, and Butch Dykes turn out to be honest outward expressions of how these people see themselves, how they want to live their lives, and part of their fight for equal rights and protection under the law. They live their lives and do no harm. I now understand and accept that.

I now have a wider life range of friends in my social groups. Slowly society is becoming educated about and more accepting of these groups. Just because I am not part of these groups does not and should not mean that they are wrong, or bad ... or embarrassing. I have become more accepting of myself and of others in this area.

Some say we shouldn't label or categorize at all, but I maintain that in order to have some understanding in our life this is what human beings do to make sense out of the huge amount of data available to us. So LGBTQ it is and God Bless us, one and all.

After a 30-year teaching career, Michael Horvath has been retired for 20 years but has been more than active as an educator, writer, poet, photographer, blogger, artist, jeweler, book binder, lecturer, actor, supernumerary, museum curator, and dementia/Alzheimer's caregiver partner for his life partner Gregory Maire (RIP.) Visit www.horvich.com.

About Face director faces apartment fire's aftermath

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

Ali Hoefnagel describes themselves (preferred pronoun) as “really lucky” despite recent setbacks—including a fire that gutted their apartment.

For the past three years, Hoefnagel has been the education and outreach director for Chicago's About Face Theatre while retaining a teaching artist position with Steppenwolf Theatre.



Ali Hoefnagel.

Photo courtesy of Hoefnagel

“We do a lot of different things at About Face,” Hoefnagel told Windy City Times. “We engage in incredible social-justice dialogue and create socially conscious, justice-driven art based on what’s happening in [the participants’] lives. We’re teaching storytelling and movement-building—focusing on how to place our stories at the center of movements that we are a part of. It’s art for social change that takes a lot of different shapes.”

As well as co-directing a full production with the Youth Theatre Ensemble—which this year is the world premiere of Ad Hoc [Home] written and performed by Youth Ensemble members—Hoefnagel takes original queer theater to Chicago Public Schools (CPS), corporations, churches and community organizations.

Hoefnagel is also immersed in after-school programming at About Face similarly centered upon social-justice-based art.

However, as often happens in life, Hoefnagel’s luck recently changed with unexpected speed—and in a monumental way.

On June 22, instead of accepting a well-deserved 30 Under 30 honor from Windy City Times, Hoefnagel was in hospital getting their gall bladder removed.

“I’d been having some really unmanageable pain under my ribs for the better part of a year,” they recalled. “It culminated in a trip to the emergency room. I was told that the gall bladder was in really bad shape.”

On July 18, Hoefnagel was less than a month into their recovery and back at work in final tech rehearsals ahead of Ad Hoc [Home]’s opening four days later.

“I got a phone call from my friend and co-director Kieren Kredell and she said there was a Facebook message that my apartment was on fire,” Hoefnagel said.

The police called shortly afterward.

“The way they were talking about it was really scary,” Hoefnagel added. “They asked if I had any pets in the building. I didn’t know what I was going to come home to. It was pretty bad.”

The fire destroyed Hoefnagel’s entire apartment. The floor was covered with the charred

debris of what used to be the modest furniture, clothing and deeply personal keepsakes Hoefnagel owned. The walls around it were blackened by smoke. What had been a laboriously built first home was completely destroyed.

“I hadn’t even been there a year,” Hoefnagel said. “A long-term relationship had ended just before I moved in and I was looking to get a fresh start in my life. Then I lost everything.”

No one else in Hoefnagel’s building was hurt and there was very little damage to the other units.

Investigators determined the fire to have started in the electrical outlet behind Hoefnagel’s bed. A search for the cause is still ongoing.

Without renters’ insurance, all Hoefnagel had left were the clothes on their back and whatever could be salvaged from the devastation, including a record player and records; a small, stuffed penguin; and Hoefnagel’s bikes, which were “a little worse for wear but luckily intact.”

A huge fan of the rock band Sleater-Kinney, Hoefnagel had been collecting memorabilia for years.

“Almost all of that was gone,” Hoefnagel said. “I grew up in a family where we didn’t have very much but we had what we needed. It took me all of my 30 years and a lot of resources to believe I deserved a home and to build one for myself. It’s devastating in a way that I never imagined. People say ‘they are just things’ but when you have spent so much time thinking about what home is and trying to create that on your own, something like this is truly hard to accept. I only went back to the

apartment once. It was incredibly traumatic. I can’t get the image out of my head so I’m trying to fill it with a future.”

To that end, a GoFundMe was set up July 21 with the goal of raising \$25,000 for Hoefnagel to “get back on her feet and cover the expenses of finding and moving into a new apartment.”

The bulk of the money raised will “cover everything else—clothing, books, furniture, food, dishes along with personal items.”

The campaign had already gathered more

than \$9,000 as of July 27.

“With everything that’s going on in the world, money seems so trivial and unimportant,” Hoefnagel said. “But it has been really incredible. People I haven’t talked to in a long time, people I have never met are sending well-wishes. It’s been really heartening. The support that I have felt has made me feel like I can get to the other side of this.”

To donate to Hoefnagel’s Go Fund Me, visit: <https://www.gofundme.com/2fprz5w>.

Federal judge rejects archdiocese’s motion to dismiss Collette suit

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A federal judge, on July 29, rejected a motion from the Chicago Archdiocese to dismiss discrimination charges filed this past March by Colin Collette.

Collette was dismissed from his position at as music director at Holy Family parish in Inverness in 2014, shortly after he announced his engagement to his longtime partner, William Nifong, via social media. The new ruling allows Collette to proceed with the charges.

“We have believed all along that Colin has an actionable claim and we are extremely pleased with the decision of the court today,” said Collette’s attorney, Kerry Lavelle, in a statement. “There remains a long road ahead but this validates our position that the suit merits review by the court.”

Collette’s suit maintains that his dismissal for announcing his engagement violated federal, state and county laws. He asks for reinstatement, back pay, compensatory and punitive damages, as well as damages for the alleged discrimination.

Collette is claiming sex discrimination under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, sex, sexual and marital status discrimination under the Illinois Human Rights Act, and sex, sexual and marital status discrimination under the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance. A key question in the suit may be whether Collette’s role was classified as either staff or clergy at Holy Family; that classification becomes a determinant for which sets of discrimination rules applied to his employment. He had been barred from employment at other Catholic churches as well.

The archdiocese, in November 2015, rejected the possibility of mediation in the case.

Collette has not spoken to media in recent months, but he told Windy City Times shortly after filing the federal suit, “My hope is that we can come to some sort of agreement to get me back in church work. That has been my hope all along.”

Navy to name ship after Harvey Milk

A Congressional notification has indicated that the U.S. Navy will name a ship after the late openly gay San Francisco politician/gay-rights leader Harvey Milk.

The notification, which Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus signed, indicated he intended to name a planned Military Sealift Command fleet oiler the USNS Harvey Milk. The ship would be the second of the John Lewis-class oilers (named after civil-rights leaders) being built by General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego, California.

Other names in the class include former U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, women’s-rights activists Lucy Stone and Sojourner Truth, and former Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

In the 1970s, Milk became the first openly gay person to be elected to public office in California when he won a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

Lesbian senior files discrimination suit against housing facility

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Lambda Legal, on July 27, announced that it is filing a federal lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois against a Chicago-area senior housing facility for discriminating against a resident because of her sex and sexual orientation.

Karen Loewy, senior attorney and seniors program strategist for Lambda Legal, made the announcement at the federal courthouse in downtown Chicago.



Lambda Legal attorney Karen Loewy.

Photo by Matt Simonette

The case was filed on behalf of Marsha Wetzel, 68, a lesbian who moved into the Glen St. Andrew Living Community in Niles in November 2014. Wetzel alleges that since early 2015, she has been subject to repeated harassment by other residents, including physical assaults, for being a lesbian, as well as retaliation after lodging complaints.

According to the complaint, Wetzel was called repeated homophobic slurs by other residents, and injured on two occasions, once when the mobility scooter she uses was knocked over, and the other time when she was hit over the head while retrieving her mail.

The suit asks for punitive and emotional distress damages from the facility and its officials. According to Loewy, the suit is one of the first claiming Title IX-based discrimination on behalf of an LGBT senior.

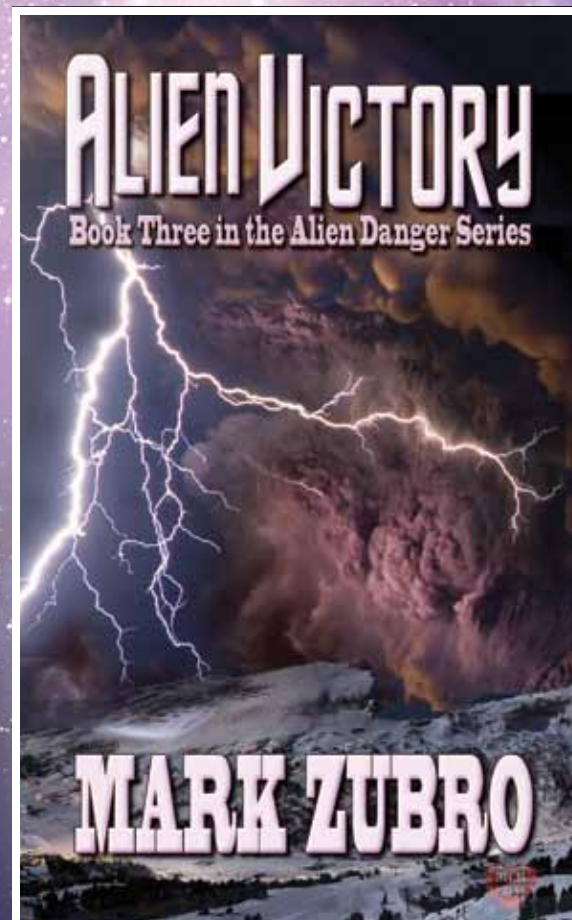
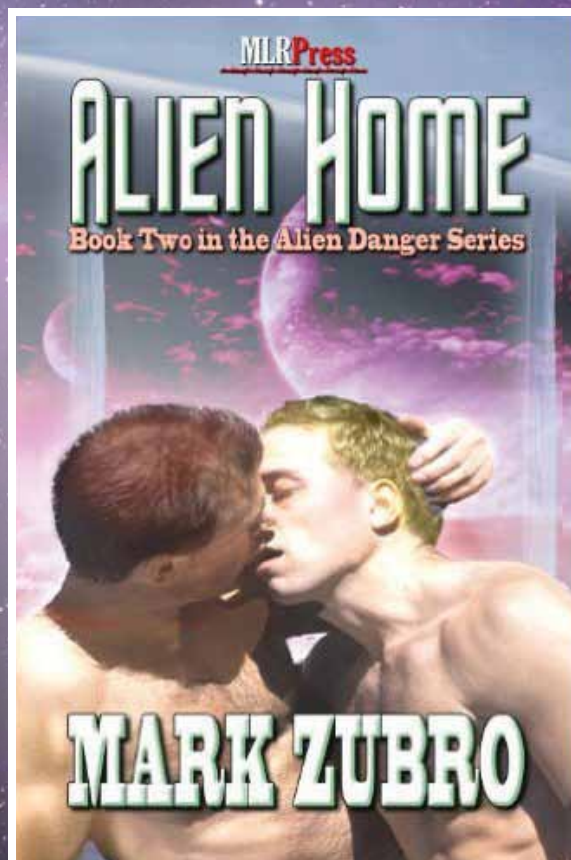
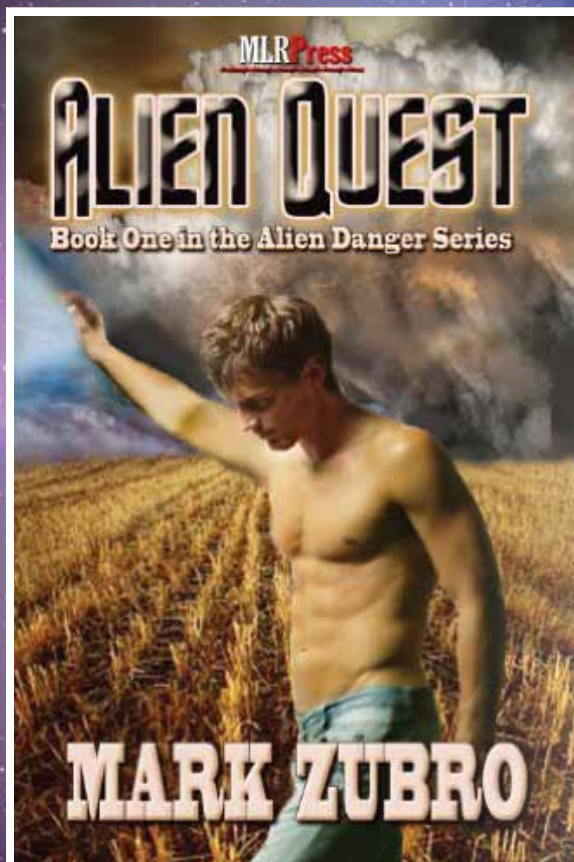
“This case is part of increasing recognition by both courts and agencies across the country that legal prohibitions of sex discrimination apply to LGBT people, alongside explicit protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation,” said Loewy. “This case is [also] among the first opportunities for the courts to address those issues in the context of senior housing.”

“We know that these issues are going to keep arising. The numbers of LGBT seniors accessing senior facilities is only going to increase. Recent estimates suggest that, by 2030, there will be over three million LGBT senior adults in America,” she noted.

Loewy also said that Lambda Legal wants to see the facility end the discrimination, dismantle the atmosphere of harassment and institute staff trainings to address future problems.

“This is a great opportunity for the courts to send a message across the country,” she added.

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- Allen @ Sinfully Gay Romance Reviews

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Lesbian couple find second lives as artists, shop owners

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

In 2006, Chicago couple Shirley Guay and Rosalie "Rosie" Koldan embarked on a new adventure as shop owners in Amboy, Illinois—100 miles west of Chicago. Their shop—Amboy Arts & Antiques—sells a hodge-podge of antiques, collectibles and works of art including Guay and Koldan's pieces.

Ahead of their grand opening on Memorial Day weekend in May 2007, they did a soft opening in Nov. 2006 for the town's Christmas walk to take advantage of holiday sales and give people a taste of their store's wares.

"We'd been coming out here to Woodhaven Lake campsite," said Guay. "Rosie was working for the Cook County Sheriff's department at the time. When Sept. 11th happened, her job became extremely stressful. I was making plans to retire from teaching right around that same time, so we decided to look for a building near the campsite where we could open up a business and live above the store, which is what we did. From 2001 to 2006, we rehabbed the entire building and I shopped for stuff for our new store at estate sales and auctions. We filled up our suburban Chicago basement and in 2006 we moved everything out here."

"When we were looking for a storefront, we would've preferred a larger town because we thought we'd get more business," said Koldan. "We scouted locations in the area, including Mendota, which we thought would get commuters because the town has an Amtrak station; however, the businesses there were fal-

tering. We went to a couple of other towns in the area and found the same thing. When this building opened up, we thought, 'Well, why not Amboy?' and the rest is history."

Guay and Koldan's journey as a couple and business co-owners began 23 years ago at a gathering at Guay's house in Chicago. Koldan was on the Paris Dance Club softball team—the Paris Animals—at the time. Her team was invited to Guay's house for a dinner party by one of Guay's tenants in the apartment building she owned.

"They were a rough group and very hungry from playing softball and ate everything in sight," said Guay. "After it was over, Rosie was the only one from the team that came up to me and thanked me for having them there. Her kindness and politeness stood out to me."

They've been together for 22 years. When Cook County approved domestic partnerships for same-sex couples, they were one of the couples who took advantage of that option.

"We've talked about having a wedding ceremony mostly when we're having cocktails but then the next day we say, well maybe not," said Koldan. "What we're thinking is having a wedding ceremony for our 25th anniversary."

Prior to moving to Amboy, they lived together for 11 years in Chicago and Forest Park, Illinois.

Guay was born in 1943 and grew up on the West Side of Chicago before moving to Lombard, Illinois as a teenager. She moved back to Chicago after her high school graduation and stayed for seven years.



Shirley Guay (left) and Rosalie Koldan.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

"I went to Harold Washington College for a year and a half, taking general-education courses, but I didn't graduate," said Guay. "I left college to travel the country and lived in Maine and Independence, California for three years. I was a beatnik, hippie and got restless so that's why I moved away."

When Guay returned in 1971, she went back to Harold Washington College to take art classes—50 in total.

"My painting teacher, Annalee Hultgren, was my mentor and the reason why I took so many art classes," said Guay. "I was teaching arts and crafts to kids and I felt like a fraud because if I was going to have the word art associated with what I did for a living, I needed to really know something about it. I was determined to learn the techniques behind art and that's why I took those art courses and studied with Annalee."

Other than Hultgren, Guay counts her mom as her biggest influence when it comes to art and more specifically painting, which she's loved for as long as she can remember. In order to learn more about art, Guay took lecture classes when she was 11-years-old at the Art Institute.

Guay taught children's art for over 30 years, spending the majority of those years at North Avenue Day Nursery in Chicago, where she also served as the school's director. She retired in 2006 when they moved to Amboy.

Currently, Guay's art is on display at Art on Armitage in Chicago and she'll have a show at Woodlawn Arts Academy Nov. 2016 to Feb. 2017. Her work has also been exhibited at a variety of other locations since 2001.

Guay has won more than 20 awards since 2007—most recently the Jean Sieben Memorial Award for her painting "Universal Dance" at the Geneseo Art League's 37th annual Maple City Fine Arts Exhibit.

"It was a real pleasure to get the award because it turned out the table they sat us at included the three other awardees and the people who sponsored my award, including state Senator Todd Sieben," said Guay. "We had no idea they sat all of us together. It was a lot of fun and I enjoyed talking to them about my artwork."

Although art has been a through-line in Guay's life, Koldan's journey as a self-taught artist has been circuitous. Koldan was born in Chicago in 1959 and lived in the Wicker Park/Bucktown neighborhood until she finished high school.

"I moved to Pittsburgh to attend college but I ended up coming back to Chicago," said Koldan. "I missed my family and friends here."

Koldan took a job at Ace Hardware when she moved back to Chicago and stayed there for 12 years. She was in management and liked running the various departments there. Koldan got laid off due to downsizing and was looking for work when her nephew—who was 18 at the

time—told her about a job at the Cook County Sheriff's Office.

"My nephew called me and told me that he had an application for a sheriff's job but found out he had to be 21, so he asked me if I wanted the application," said Koldan. "That's how I ended up as a sheriff. I stayed there 11 years but all the while I knew it wasn't for me. I took it because I was out of work and wanted something more stable than the hardware store."

Koldan started doing her own 3-D assemblage art while working as a sheriff.

"I make boxes along the lines of the late Joseph Cornell," said Koldan. "I make art out of found objects. Sometimes they take on someone's personality or an environmental, political or social issue, or someone I admire. I'll be launching my own website soon and my work will be featured at the Freeport Art Museum in 2017."

Koldan's art has also been displayed at a variety of locations since 1997. She received an honorable mention at the Geneseo Art League's 37th annual Maple City Fine Arts Exhibit for her mixed media work honoring John James Audubon.

"I had the elements at hand and got energy from that material," said Koldan. "That's how the Audubon box came to fruition. Unlike in the city, we've received a number of awards since moving out here. We're pretty well received and it's nice to know that people are recognizing us and appreciating our efforts."

Since 2008, Koldan has received six other awards for her artwork.

In terms of how they see today's world, the thing they marvel at the most is how open the younger generations are in terms of expressing themselves publicly.

"I still don't overtly show my affection toward Rosie in public," said Guay. "I had an operation recently that requires me to carry a cane and it's great because I'm able to have Rosie on my other arm. People look at us and think the old lady needs help. They don't see a lesbian couple."

"Shirley probably doesn't even need the cane but she uses it anyway," said Koldan. "Although we have a 17 year age difference; both Shirley and I have experienced ageism, racism and homophobia at various times throughout our relationship."

As for what they do for fun, Guay played the guitar and loves listening to music while Koldan loves cooking and eating.

"I used to dance with a gentleman named Kim On Wong," said Guay.

"I live vicariously through Shirley's rich life," said Koldan. "Even when we vacation we're shopping for antiques for the store."

See <http://www.shirleyguay.com/> and <http://koldan-guay.blogspot.com/> for more information.

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Out model/designer Mel Platzke dies

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Melvin "Mel" Platzke III, 48, died July 29 and, at the time of this publication, the cause of death is unknown.

Windy City Times was made aware of his death via a Facebook posting.

Platzke, who most recently split his time between Chicago and Miami, was a part of a class-action lawsuit filed against some of the top modeling agencies in the United States this past June. Their claim states that these agencies fleeced their clients by deducting bogus expenses as well as classifying them as independent contractors to circumvent labor laws.

Platzke was born March 10, 1968, in Oak Harbor, Ohio, and spent his childhood there before moving to Chicago to attend the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), where he received a bachelor's degree in residential planning and design. While at SAIC, Platzke also studied performing arts and theater production.

One of the motivating factors that drove Platzke to residential planning and design as his major was his early years spent learning construction and home repair from his dad. He began reimagining problem spaces in homes with an eye for affordability and making a big impact.

He spent 17 years working as a fashion model for well-known designers and photographers in Europe, Africa and the Americas. In addition to his modeling career, Platzke also designed



Mel Platzke.
Facebook photo

and created coffee tables, side tables and other furniture as well as original artwork which was featured on the TV shows Million Dollar Listing and Flip This House. Platzke's work is also displayed at Wood restaurant in Chicago. His commercial work has been installed in Chicago; Miami; Raleigh, North Carolina; and New York City, and his outdoor lounge furniture is also in residential dwellings in Chicago and Miami.

Platzke is survived by his dog, Pepper; his mother; two sisters; and his loving nieces and

nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father.

"Mel and I appreciated our differences and enjoyed our similarities," said longtime friend Kip Helverson. "If he was Ferris Bueller, I guess that makes me Cameron ugh!"

"For the very first Halloween parade in Boystown in 1997, Mel and I decided we wanted to walk the route before we had to bartend together at Roscoe's," said longtime friend Matthew Harvat, aka Circuit Mom. "Mel decided we needed to be in drag, so we bought matching leather French maid costumes and strutted our stuff. It was very liberating and from that moment on, I knew this handsome man would be an amazing friend for life. Countless adven-

tures over 20 plus years in Chicago, Miami, New York, Montreal and more—all of them filled with joy. His heart of gold, unmistakable humor, incomparable talents in furniture making and fine art will forever live on. So many memories filled with awe and gratitude for the times we shared."

"Mel always did so much for everyone and never wanted anything in return except for people to be happy," said another longtime friend, Emily Santos. "He made me laugh harder, dance more and love life just by being my friend and occasional partner in crime."

Memorial services will take place in Chicago, Miami and New York City. Further information about these services TBA.

Court: Title VII does not cover orientation bias

A three-judge federal appeals court panel has upheld the dismissal of lesbian Kimberly Hively's lawsuit against Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana because federal law does not protect people who claim workplace discrimination because of sexual orientation.

Even though the panel criticized Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for not including sexual orientation under workplace protections, the judges of the 7th U.S. Court of Appeals upheld a lower court's dismissal of a complaint filed by Hively, a former part-time Ivy Tech instructor who said the college did not hire her full-time because she's a lesbian.

"We are deeply disappointed in the 7th Circuit Court's decision failing to join the growing consensus that existing civil rights law must reasonably be interpreted to include non-discrimination protections based on sexual orientation," said HRC Legal Director Sarah Warbelow in a statement. "While the court made its decision based on what

it viewed as precedent, it did make clear however that there is no coherent basis for excluding sexual orientation from other types of sex discrimination claims.

In a separate press release, National Center for Lesbian Rights Legal Director Shannon Minter said, "The Seventh Circuit's decision yesterday is baffling, since the court recognizes there is no principled way to carve out sexual orientation claims from other types of sex discrimination claims—and that doing so leads to unfair and irrational results.

"It makes no sense to recognize that prior precedents are wrong and yet to refuse to reconsider them. Such a ruling damages the credibility of courts and diminishes respect for the law."

Ivy Tech Community College has 32 degree-granting locations and serves more than 170,000 students a year. It has grown to become the largest public postsecondary institution in Indiana—and the largest singly accredited statewide community-college system in the entire country.

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Gay politicians talk LGBT representation

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The 2016 elections will be “unprecedented” in the number of openly LGBT candidates running for office, especially in Congressional elections, according to Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund.

Victory Fund President/CEO Aisha Moodie-Mills, on July 26, moderated a discussion with openly gay U.S. Reps. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-New York) and Mark Takano (D-California), as



Victory Fund President/CEO Aisha Moodie-Mills.

Photo by Matt Simonette

well as former Houston Mayor Annise Parker.

There are currently more than 470 openly LGBT elected officials serving nationwide, Moodie-Mills said, adding, “LGBT people are currently under-represented in serving office, but we are making progress, and we have a record number of LGBT people running for office. Victory [Fund] has endorsed 152 candidates across the nation, many of them running for statewide or other high-level positions. There’s also a record number of openly LGBT people running for Congress, a total of 17.”

The three politicians spoke to the importance of having an LGBT presence in various elected bodies. Parker noted that it’s difficult for legislators and other politicians to proactively put forward anti-LGBT laws when they know that a colleague who is part of that community is sitting in the same room with them.

“When we’re in the room, we can speak up and speak out,” she said. “We’re part of the conversation.”

Takano added, “Representative democracy is about people from different walks of life coming together, and it’s very important to have LGBT members be part of that conversation.”

New research from the Victory Fund bears that idea out: A new report from the organization says that 70 percent of elected officials polled said that their votes on LGBT issues were influenced by LGBT colleagues.

Maloney spoke briefly on the progress of the Equality Act, legislation that would enlarge protections extended to racial minorities to LGBT Americans. He said supporters of the legislation were confident they had the votes to pass but were continually hamstrung by the inability to get a vote to take place.

“Now we have the votes, so now we need to have the vote [take place],” he said. “...If we can just clear away the weak elements in the process, we’ll win.”

Takano added, “There are a number of Republicans who are looking for an exit-strategy from intolerance.”

Parker noted that much work remained to be done on mobilizing on behalf of the trans community. While many Americans now know an openly gay, lesbian or bisexual person, many don’t know a trans individual. Consequently, many people have a more difficult time perceiving the stakes in trans-related issues.

“We understand what we need to do, which is let our transgender brothers and sisters speak for themselves. Let them become visible and claim their space, and we have to keep shooting down the myths,” Parker said.

Rauner signs marijuana-related criminal-justice bills

On July 29, Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner signed criminal-justice reform measures SB 2228 and HB 4360.

SB 2228—which state Sen. Heather Steans initially filed and had state Rep. Kelly Cassidy as the chief House sponsor—amends the Cannabis Control Act by providing a statewide standard for cannabis possession, with a maximum \$200 fine for possession of 10 grams or less and automatic expungement upon fine payment. The bill also implements scientifically proven standards for driving under the influ-

ence of cannabis (marijuana) and strengthens penalties for the dangerous production process of butane extracts.

HB 4360 amends the School Code—which Cassidy filed with the clerk and has state Sen. Patricia Van Pelt as the Senate’s chief sponsor—and eliminates the lifetime bar on employment and reduces time frames of prohibited hiring for various non-violent offenses for those seeking work in schools.

Madigan, others sign brief on trans rights

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, on July 28, joined with the attorneys general of 12 other states, to issue a brief in support of Obama administration policies that protect transgender individuals, among them transgender students.

California, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Vermont, Washington and Washington, DC attorney general also signed the amicus brief, which was filed in U.S. District Court in the Northern District of Texas.

The brief was a response to legal challenges from two groups of states on the Obama administration’s application of federal anti-discrimination guidelines to transgender people.

“While Plaintiffs’ claimed harms are hypothetical, the discrimination suffered by transgender individuals is all too real,” the brief stated. “Such discrimination harms transgender individuals at work, at school, and in public, causing tangible economic, emotional, and health consequences. To prevent such harms, many States protect transgender people from discrimination.

“The States that file this brief ... do so because our shared experience demonstrates that protecting transgender individuals from discrimination benefits all members of the public. And contrary to Plaintiffs’ claims, our shared experience demonstrates that protecting the civil rights of our transgender friends, relatives, classmates, and colleagues creates no public safety threat and imposes no meaningful financial burden.”

“Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan is standing firm for the equal rights of transgender Illinoisans, especially students. In signing this bold brief in support of the Obama Administration’s trans-inclusive policies, Attorney General Madigan’s position is rooted in the best traditions of the Land of Lincoln,” said Brian C. Johnson, CEO of Equality Illinois, in a statement.

“These leaders are showing the nation what it means to stand up for all students, ensuring that our transgender youth are affirmed and respected in one of the places they should feel most safe—their schools,” said Sarah Warbelow, Human Rights Campaign legal director, in a statement. “No student should have to live in fear of being who they are, and we thank the tireless advocates working to guarantee a future full of opportunity for all young people.”

Land of Lincoln ACA insurance plans to end

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The Land of Lincoln insurance co-op will no longer be offering plans through the Federal Health Insurance Marketplace.

Coverage ends for policyholders Oct. 1 but they will have special enrollment periods available to them in order to ensure at least a minimal gap in coverage. Enrolled individuals who switch plans between Aug. 2-Sept. 30 should see no gap, according to the company.

The organization, one of many such co-ops to form in the wake of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), was placed into rehabilitation pursuant to Article XIII of the Illinois Insurance Code in July.

“We have already had a few people call us or talk to their providers, concerned about this,” said Eric Roldan, communications manager at Howard Brown Health.

Land of Lincoln policyholders who make the switch by Sept. 30 will see new coverage begin Oct. 1. Those who switch between Oct. 1-Nov. 29 will have new coverage beginning on the first day of the following month. Policyholders waiting until after Nov. 29 will likely have to wait until Jan. 1, 2017, for coverage to begin. The official ACA enrollment period will by that time be in effect, but the new coverage won’t start until the new calendar year.

Land of Lincoln, in late July, sued the federal government, saying that it was owed payments for “risk-corridor” patients, individuals who were considered uninsurable before the ACA. The company lost over \$90 million in 2015, according to Chicago Tribune. Of 23 insurance co-ops launched under the ACA, only 11 are still operating.

Land of Lincoln policyholders must shoulder an additional burden besides changing their insurance: Having a new plan means that deductibles are reset; money they’ve paid towards Land of Lincoln deductibles in 2016 won’t be credited to their new policies, according to the company.

Information is at <http://bit.ly/2aUqGgy>.



Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton speaks at the Democratic National Convention on July 28. Washington Blade photo by Michael Key

DEMOCRATIC NAT'L CONVENTION

Clinton seeks broad coalition in acceptance speech

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, WASHINGTON BLADE

PHILADELPHIA - On the final night of the Democratic National Convention, Hillary Clinton in her acceptance speech for Democratic presidential nomination late Thursday sought a broad coalition to take on Donald Trump.

"We have to heal the divides in our country," Clinton said. "Not just on guns, but on race, immigration and more. That starts with listening to each other, hearing each other, trying, as best we can, to walk in each other's shoes."

The speech marked the first time a woman took the stage at a major U.S. party convention to accept a presidential nomination, which Clinton recognized during her remarks as a "milestone."

"Standing here as my mother's daughter, and my daughter's mother, I'm so happy this day has come," Clinton said. "Happy for grandmothers and little girls and everyone in between. Happy for boys and men, too — because when any barrier falls in America, for anyone, it clears the way for everyone. When there are no ceilings, the sky's the limit."

Calling for a unified America, Clinton delivered a speech characterized by outreach to just about every segment of society.

"In this campaign, I've met so many people who motivate me to keep fighting for change," Clinton said. "And, with your help, I will carry all of your voices and stories with me to the White House. I will be a president for Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, for the struggling, the striving and the successful, for those who vote for me and those who don't."

For supporters of Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Clinton said "our economy isn't working the way it should because our democracy isn't working the way it should," and called for

overturning the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Citizens United. For national security hawks, Clinton laid out her strategy for defeating the Islamic State, declaring, "Make no mistake — we will prevail." For disaffected Americans allured by Trump, Clinton acknowledged "an awful lot of people feel there is less and less respect for the work they do, and less respect for them, period."

"So I want to tell you tonight how we will empower Americans to live better lives," Clinton said. "My primary mission as president will be to create more opportunity and more good jobs with rising wages right here in the United States, from my first day in office to my last, especially in places that for too long have been left out and left behind."

At one point during her speech in which she listed various groups she would protect, Clinton also briefly enumerated her support for the LGBT community.

"We will defend all our rights — civil rights, human rights and voting rights, women's rights and workers' rights, LGBT rights and the rights of people with disabilities," Clinton said. "And we will stand up against mean and divisive rhetoric wherever it comes from."

Anthony Woods, a gay Bowie, Md.-area delegate pledged to Clinton and former service member discharged under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," said the candidate's speech was "really, really inspiring."

"I'm just incredibly excited about an overly qualified person who can do this and really excited about the fact that we've got a woman who can inspire women around the world in this country to dream incredible things," Woods said.

In terms of policy, Clinton proposed building a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, raising the minimum wage, reach-

ing a consensus to pass gun safety legislation, expanding the Affordable Care Act and Social Security and alleviating student debt.

"In America, if you can dream it, you should be able to build it," Clinton said. "We're going to help you balance family and work. And you know what, if fighting for affordable child care and paid family leave is playing the 'woman card,' then deal me in."

Clinton also laid into Trump directly for seeking to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border as well as derogatory comments he expressed against Latinos, immigrants, Muslims and just about every minority group.

"It was just too hard to fathom — that someone who wants to lead our nation could say those things, could be like that," Clinton said. "But here's the sad truth: There is no other Donald Trump. This is it. And in the end, it comes down to what Donald Trump doesn't get, that America is great because America is good."

Clinton landed a well-received hit on Trump when she said, "Imagine him in the Oval Office facing a real crisis. A man you can bait with a tweet is not a man we can trust with nuclear weapons."

Sarah McBride, a transgender advocate and spokesperson for the Human Rights Campaign, hailed Clinton for the speech, which took place hours after McBride's own address before the Democratic National Convention, and similarly criticized Trump.

"I think it was a comprehensive, inclusive vision for this country," McBride said. "I think it stood in contrast to Donald Trump's messages of negativity, division and discrimination. As she said, she offered plans for move our country forward while Donald Trump just talked about all the problems he sees and offered absolutely no path forward for our country."

McBride predicted during the general election in November voters will choose "an optimistic, forward-thinking vision, not a message of hate and fear."

Those attending Clinton's speech within the Wells Fargo Arena carried tall, narrow signs inscribed with "Hillary" and several waived large American flags to express support for the candidate. On the other hand, numerous times during the address protesters in the arena sought to interrupt her, but they were drowned out by overwhelming chants of "Hil-lar-y! Hil-lar-y!"

Kimberly Saylor, a lesbian delegate from Indiana pledged to Sanders who turned 40 years old on the day of speech, said Clinton hit the right notes.

"I appreciated the fact that she and President Obama acknowledged all the hard work we have done, and I appreciated the fact that she said that our issues are now her issues," Saylor said.

Despite her support for Sanders in the primary, Saylor said she plans to vote for Clinton in the general election and "would never, ever vote for Trump."

Introducing Clinton on stage was her daughter, Chelsea Clinton who talked about raising her two children Mark and Aiden and the candidate as a mother and grandmother.

"My earliest memory is my mom picking me up after I had fallen down, giving me a big hug, and reading me 'Goodnight Moon,'" Chelsea Clinton said. "From that moment to this one — every single memory I have of my mom is that regardless of what was happening in her life, she was always there for me."

Elizabeth Birch, a lesbian Clinton supporter in attendance for the speech and former head of the Human Rights Campaign, said Clinton's speech was "deep and detailed" in contrast to Trump's proposals.

"She covered every part of her vision from local and community action, and what we have to do door-to-door-to-door up to the state level, federal and global," Birch said. "And I think the primary point she made is that she will sweat the details and always has. Diplomacy is not about sarcasm, or about empty words, or rash words. She thinks hard and is enormously intelligent, and I think she brought that to the speech."

Rallying attendees toward the end of her speech, Clinton invoked the hit musical "Hamilton," which has a song that includes the line "we may not live to see the glory, let us gladly join the fight," as well as the memory of the Founders in 1776 signing the Declaration of Independence just miles from the convention site.

"They were drawn together by love of country, and the selfless passion to build something better for all who follow," Clinton said. "That is the story of America. And we begin a new chapter tonight. Yes, the world is watching what we do. Yes, America's destiny is ours to choose. So let's be stronger together."

More DNC coverage online at www.windycitytimes.com.

2016 Democratic National Convention

Washington Blade photos by Michael Key



President Barack Obama.



Senators Elizabeth Warren (left) and Tammy Baldwin, the senate's first open lesbian.



Sarah McBride made history as the first open transgender speaker for a major party political convention. She's pictured here with gay Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney.



Ghazala and Khizr Khan, parents of a U.S. soldier killed in Iraq in 2004, Army Captain Humayun Khan, speaking at the DNC July 28. Their emotional convention speech about being Muslim immigrants who lost a child in military service resonated with millions of people, and was attacked by Donald Trump. Screenshot from CSPAN



HRC president Chad Griffin.



Senator Tim Kaine.



The Illinois delegation included state Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie.

DEMOCRATIC NAT'L CONVENTION

Transgender DNC delegates hold first-ever caucus meeting

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS, WASHINGTON BLADE

PHILADELPHIA — The first-ever formal meeting of transgender delegates to the Democratic National Convention took place on July 28 in Philadelphia.

Many of the 28 openly trans delegates to the convention attended the Transgender Caucus meeting that Mara Keisling, a long-time trans activist who sits on the Democratic National Committee's platform committee, convened at the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

"I am so blown away by this delegation," said Keisling.

Pennsylvania Physician General Rachel Levine and Misty Snow, who is running against U.S. Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) in November, both attended the meeting. Gay U.S. Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.) spoke to the delegates before the Democratic National Committee LGBT Caucus meeting began.

"I'm almost speechless ... at the turnout," said Barbra Casbar Siperstein, a trans activist from New Jersey who is a member of the Democratic National Committee's Executive Committee. "It's such a sea change."

The delegates who attended the Transgender Caucus meeting are among the 515 openly

LGBT delegates or alternates to this year's Democratic National Convention. They met hours before Human Rights Campaign National Press Secretary Sarah McBride became the first openly trans person to speak at a major party convention.

Rev. Merrick Moise of Baltimore, who is a pledged Hillary Clinton delegate, told the Blade after the meeting that he is "honored" and "blessed" to attend the Democratic National Convention.

"This is a very profound moment in our history, in our community in general," he said.

"I'm talking to people about our challenges and our successes in Baltimore," added Moise. "I'm here on a mission for our community."

Anita Green, a Bernie Sanders supporter from Missoula, Mont., is one of 21 pledged delegates from Montana.

She told the Blade after the Transgender Caucus meeting that she is "so honored to be here on behalf of Montana" because it shows that her state is "incredibly progressive." Green also described the Democratic Party's platform as "great."

Caitlyn Jenner on July 20 criticized North Carolina's House Bill 2 and other anti-trans laws as she spoke at an event the American



Trans caucus delegates. Photo by Robyn Tyler

Unity Fund held in Cleveland during the Republican National Convention. The Olympian who came out as trans in April 2015 has also spoken in support of Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.

"He seems very much behind the LGBT community because of what happened in North Carolina with the bathroom issue," Jenner recently told STAT, a medical publication in Colorado.

Both Levine and Green described Trump as a "demagogue."

"He is the three-card Monty guy from 42nd and Eighth Avenue," Moise told the Blade, noting he grew up in New York. "He can't be trusted."



Rachel Levine. Washington Blade photo by Michael K. Lavers

PHYSICAL from cover

phenomenon. She landed a starring role as Sandy in the 1978 film *Grease* only five years after winning a Grammy Award for her debut album *Let Me Be There*. The massive success of *Grease* was followed by a double-platinum album *Physical*.

"Her records sold millions," author Tim Ewbank writes in a biography *Olivia*, "her concerts were sell-outs and, at her peak, she was receiving 2,000 fan letters a week."

But, in 1992, Newton-John's fortunes changed so dramatically that they threatened to both collapse her world and end her life. In August of that year, Newton-John wrote "Why Me?" which would be eventually featured on her album *Gaia: One Woman's Journey*.

She had been diagnosed with breast cancer within days of her father Brinley succumbing to the disease, which ravaged his liver.

Newton-John had to mourn him while engaged in her own mental and physical struggle as she endured chemotherapy, a partial mastectomy and breast reconstruction.

The night after her surgery, Newton-John penned the lyrics to "Why Me?"

"Life does the strangest things. You never know what each moment can bring. You turn around, your life has changed. You've got to fight each round. Yes take it on the chin. No don't you ever give in."

Such a resolve to survive, the lessons Newton-John learned through a personally created healing regimen and her determination to, as she put it, "help others going through the same journey" ultimately led to the founding of the ONJ Centre.

"I believe that, through our research, we will ultimately find cures for all types of cancer," Newton-John wrote. "My dream is that one day the ONJ Centre will be only about Wellness, and we will no longer need cancer [centers] because cancer will be a thing of the past."

At a young age, Verson's dreams were wholly inspired by Newton-John's work.

"I was a latchkey child," Verson told *Windy City Times*, "and latchkey kids look up to our favorite musicians or actors. [Newton-John] was that for me from the age of 10. She became a moral compass and I emulated her behavior. She didn't do drugs so I didn't do them. I kept to myself and never got in trouble."

At age 5, Newton-John moved from her birthplace of Cambridge, England to Australia. At the same age, Verson was nurturing a love of Australia that began with multiple viewings of the 1967 television series *Skippy the Bush Kangaroo*.

"It was my favorite show," Verson said. "I still win money from Aussies in bars who don't believe I can sing the theme song."

Verson will also never forget the first time she saw Newton-John in concert.

She was playing during a rodeo at the now-demolished International Amphitheatre in Chicago's Canaryville neighborhood.

Verson was 13. Staying out of trouble be damned—simply remaining an audience member was just not enough.

"My best buddy and I snuck backstage," Verson said with a laugh. "When we met [Newton-John] we said 'hello' and just stood there shaking. I was utterly speechless and, if you'd known me back then, you would know that was a pretty rare thing. She was polite and she was pleasant and maybe said two sentences but it was magical. It was a moment in time that was pivotal. It changed my life."

Years later, Verson was able to tell Newton-John why.

"If she had been mean to me, my life might have taken a different path," Verson explained. "Famous people meet [their fans] all the time so they can forget who they are. But the person who meets them remembers it for a lifetime."

Verson has been to countless Newton-John concerts since and has managed to make her

way backstage almost every time.

Ewbank recalled the early concerts when Newton-John was "so wracked with nerves she felt physically ill."

"Today in concert," he added, "she sings without fear the songs she loves, the songs she wants to sing and for the sheer joy of the musical gift she has been given."

As a teen, Verson hoped it was a gift they had in common.

"I was terrible," she admitted with a laugh. "At some point in life, you are either good enough as a musician or you're not. I realized I wasn't. So I had to figure out a way to still be in the business I loved, but not be a musician. After high school I got jobs at record stores. I started managing them and then I started managing and booking bands in Chicago. I called Foote Kirkpatrick who I had once worked with at an audio studio called Universal and asked her for a job. She said, 'Verson, you're hired.' She was quite a mentor and we stayed friends until the day she died."

Verson would eventually leverage her knowledge of the recording industry to found two businesses. Verson Productions offers artist and social media branding. *Stir Post* provides audio post-production for commercial, film and web content. It has garnered multiple awards.

"The more successful I became, the more I thought of paying it back," Verson said. "I don't have children. So in 2003, I adopted [The ONJ Centre] as a surrogate baby. I wanted to give back to someone who had given so much to me in ways that she knew and didn't know about."

Verson asserted that one of the things the ONJ Centre did not know about was the extent of the organization's global reach. Those, like her, who wanted to donate from the United States hit a road-block on the website.

"You could not donate from outside of Australia," Verson recalled. "I helped them by being a guinea-pig as to how to do that. This past January, [Newton-John] asked me to hold an

eBay auction where I sold some autographed merchandise for her. We made about \$8,000 doing that."

Verson is the only person from the United States on The Sol Seven team, some of whom she met on social media, some at Newton-John's concerts.

It will be Verson's first trip to Australia but her excitement at being able to take a walk around the Boondura campus with her childhood hero or even seeing the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park near Sydney where *Skippy the Bush Kangaroo* was filmed pales compared to something far more significant.

To support Mindy Verson and The Sol Seven in The ONJ Centre Wellness Walk & Research Run, visit wvrr16.everydayhero.com/au/mindy.

Chelsea Manning faces new charges

Imprisoned transgender whistleblower Chelsea Manning received a document from Army officials informing her that she is being investigated for serious new charges related to her July 5 attempt to take her own life, according to a press release.

If convicted of these "administrative offenses," she could be placed in indefinite solitary confinement for the remainder of her sentence.

These new charges, which Army employees verbally informed Manning were related to the July 5 incident, include "resisting the force cell move team," "prohibited property" and "conduct which threatens." If convicted, Manning could face punishment including indefinite solitary confinement, reclassification into maximum security and an additional nine years in medium custody. They may also negate any chances of parole.

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Lambda Legal event focuses on book about marriage equality

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

In the hours prior to Secretary Hillary Clinton making history when she accepted her party's nomination for president of the United States on July 28, the cozy Andersonville bar Joie de Vine was filled with jubilant women at a Lambda Legal fundraiser and celebration of the organization's book detailing another of this country's pivotal moments.

Edited by Lambda Legal Director of Education and Public Affairs Leslie J. Gabel-Brett and the organization's former executive director, Kevin M. Cathcart, Love Unites Us relates Lambda Legal's fight for marriage equality, the lives that were touched during those years and the tireless work of the organization to support them.

According to Lambda Legal's website, the book is replete with "the history of activists' passion and persistence in the struggle for marriage rights for same-sex couples in the United States, told in the words of those who waged the battle."

Among those warriors were Pat Ewert and Vernita Gray—the first same-sex couple to be married in the state of Illinois.

Ewert, who shared her and Gray's story in Love Unites Us, now sits on Lambda Legal's Women's Diversity Council. She was at the event, making sure everyone at Joie de Vine bought a raffle ticket.

"It is important that more women understand what Lambda Legal does and how vital they are in our community," Ewert told Windy City

Times. "Lambda has a reputation as being more of a men's organization. Our hope with the Women's Diversity Council and evenings like this is to let more women know who Lambda is and how important it is to their lives."

Ewert acknowledged that adding her narrative to Love Unites Us was hard, as it called upon her to relive days when victory was followed by devastating loss.

"There were so many amazing parts, but the end of the story wasn't that great because I lost my wife in March [2014]," she said. "The reality of the story is that we were there when the governor signed equal marriage into law in the beginning of November and it wasn't supposed to take effect until June 1. Vernita never would have been alive. She had fought for equal marriage for 30 years in our community and to not get the opportunity to take advantage of it before she died would have been heartbreaking. But Lambda stepped up and that was wonderful to write about."

Leslie Henry is a fellow member of the Women's Diversity Council. Like Ewert, she hopes that all women, no matter their race, income level or their place along the gender spectrum will realize they have a staunch ally in Lambda Legal.

"Tell us about your story so we can tell you how Lambda Legal can help you," she said.

The historic nature of events occurring in Philadelphia at the Democratic National Convention were just as important to Henry who also recognized the significance of the Novem-



Attendees at Lambda Legal Love Unites Us event. Photos by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

ber general elections and the dire consequences they could reap if people are not motivated to get to the polling stations.

"It's absolutely my greatest fear," she said. "If you look at the demographics of people who don't tend to vote, it is people of color, LGBT and other disenfranchised groups. I am black, gay and a woman. If we don't get out and vote, we are in trouble. A person could [become President] who attacks all of that. All the LGBT laws that are in place could be taken

all the way backwards." Ewert agreed.

"It concerns me a lot," she said. "Equal marriage and a woman's right to choose could be rolled back. It scares me."

Although she pledged to work hard to make sure people do go to the polling stations, Ewert acknowledged that such fear may be their greatest motivator.

"We just have to get our people as afraid as theirs," she said.



Leslie Henry (left) and Pat Ewert.

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viewpoints



Endorsing Hillary Clinton

Below is the full text of Michelle Obama's speech to the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, July 25, 2016.

MRS. OBAMA: Thank you all. (Applause.) Thank you so much. You know, it's hard to believe that it has been eight years since I first came to this convention to talk with you about why I thought my husband should be President. (Applause.) Remember how I told you about his character and conviction, his decency and his grace—the traits that we've seen every day that he's served our country in the White House.

I also told you about our daughters—how they are the heart of our hearts, the center of our world. And during our time in the White House, we've had the joy of watching them grow from bubbly little girls into poised young women—a journey that started soon after we arrived in Washington, when they set off for their first day at their new school.

I will never forget that winter morning as I watched our girls, just 7 and 10 years old, pile into those black SUVs with all those big men with guns. (Laughter.) And I saw their little faces pressed up against the window, and the only thing I could think was, "What have we done?" (Laughter.) See, because at that moment, I realized that our time in the White House would form the foundation for who they would become, and how well we managed this experience could truly make or break them.

That is what Barack and I think about every day as we try to guide and protect our girls through the challenges of this unusual life in the spotlight—how we urge them to ignore those who question their father's citizenship or faith. (Applause.) How we insist that the hateful language they hear from public figures on TV does not represent the true spirit of this country. (Applause.) How we explain that when someone is cruel, or acts like a bully, you don't stoop to their level—no, our motto is, when they go low, we go high. (Applause.)

With every word we utter, with every action we take, we know our kids are watching us. We as parents are their most important role models. And let me tell you, Barack and I take that same approach to our jobs as President and First Lady, because we know that our words and actions matter not just to our girls, but to children across this country—kids who tell us, "I saw you on TV, I wrote a report on you for school." Kids like the little black boy who looked up at my husband, his eyes wide with hope, and he wondered, "Is my hair like yours?" (Applause.)

And make no mistake about it, this November, when we go to the polls, that is what we're deciding—not Democrat or Republican,

not left or right. No, this election, and every election, is about who will have the power to shape our children for the next four or eight years of their lives. (Applause.) And I am here tonight because in this election, there is only one person who I trust with that responsibility, only one person who I believe is truly qualified to be President of the United States, and that is our friend, Hillary Clinton. (Applause.)

See, I trust Hillary to lead this country because I've seen her lifelong devotion to our nation's children—not just her own daughter, who she has raised to perfection—(applause)—but every child who needs a champion: Kids who take the long way to school to avoid the gangs. Kids who wonder how they'll ever afford college. Kids whose parents don't speak a word of English but dream of a better life. Kids who look to us to determine who and what they can be.

You see, Hillary has spent decades doing the relentless, thankless work to actually make a difference in their lives—(applause)—advocating for kids with disabilities as a young lawyer. Fighting for children's health care as First Lady and for quality child care in the Senate. And when she didn't win the nomination eight years ago, she didn't get angry or disillusioned. (Applause.) Hillary did not pack up and go home. Because as a true public servant, Hillary knows that this is so much bigger than her own desires and disappointments. (Applause.) So she proudly stepped up to serve our country once again as Secretary of State, traveling the globe to keep our kids safe.

And look, there were plenty of moments when Hillary could have decided that this work was too hard, that the price of public service was too high, that she was tired of being picked apart for how she looks or how she talks or even how she laughs. But here's the thing—what I admire most about Hillary is that she never buckles under pressure. (Applause.) She never takes the easy way out. And Hillary Clinton has never quit on anything in her life. (Applause.)

And when I think about the kind of President that I want for my girls and all our children, that's what I want. I want someone with the proven strength to persevere. Someone who knows this job and takes it seriously. Someone who understands that the issues a President faces are not Black and white and cannot be boiled down to 140 characters. (Applause.) Because when you have the nuclear codes at your fingertips and the military in your command, you can't make snap decisions. You can't have a thin skin or a tendency to lash out. You need to be steady, and measured, and well-informed. (Applause.)

I want a president with a record of public service, someone whose life's work shows our children that we don't chase fame and fortune for ourselves, we fight to give everyone a chance to succeed—(applause)—and we give back, even when we're struggling ourselves, because we know that there is always someone worse off, and there but for the grace of God go I. (Applause.)

I want a president who will teach our children that everyone in this country matters—a president who truly believes in the vision that our founders put forth all those years ago: That

we are all created equal, each a beloved part of the great American story. (Applause.) And when crisis hits, we don't turn against each other—no, we listen to each other. We lean on each other. Because we are always stronger together. (Applause.)

And I am here tonight because I know that that is the kind of president that Hillary Clinton will be. And that's why, in this election, I'm with her. (Applause.)

You see, Hillary understands that the President is about one thing and one thing only—it's about leaving something better for our kids. That's how we've always moved this country forward—by all of us coming together on behalf of our children—folks who volunteer to coach that team, to teach that Sunday school class because they know it takes a village. Heroes of every color and creed who wear the uniform and risk their lives to keep passing down those blessings of liberty.

Police officers and protestors in Dallas who all desperately want to keep our children safe. (Applause.) People who lined up in Orlando to donate blood because it could have been their son, their daughter in that club. (Applause.) Leaders like Tim Kaine—(applause)—who show our kids what decency and devotion look like. Leaders like Hillary Clinton, who has the guts and the grace to keep coming back and putting those cracks in that highest and hardest glass ceiling until she finally breaks through, lifting all of us along with her. (Applause.)

That is the story of this country, the story that has brought me to this stage tonight, the story of generations of people who felt the lash of bondage, the shame of servitude, the sting of segregation, but who kept on striving and hoping and doing what needed to be done so that today, I wake up every morning in a house that was built by slaves—(applause)—and I watch my daughters—two beautiful, intelligent, Black young women—playing with their dogs on the White House lawn. (Applause.) And because of Hillary Clinton, my daughters—and all our sons and daughters—now take for granted that a woman can be President of the United States. (Applause.)

So don't let anyone ever tell you that this country isn't great, that somehow we need to make it great again. Because this, right now, is the greatest country on earth. (Applause.) And as my daughters prepare to set out into the world, I want a leader who is worthy of that truth, a leader who is worthy of my girls' promise and all our kids' promise, a leader who will be guided every day by the love and hope and impossibly big dreams that we all have for our children.

So in this election, we cannot sit back and hope that everything works out for the best. We cannot afford to be tired, or frustrated, or cynical. No, hear me—between now and November, we need to do what we did eight years ago and four years ago: We need to knock on every door. We need to get out every vote. We need to pour every last ounce of our passion and our strength and our love for this country into electing Hillary Clinton as President of the United States of America.

Let's get to work. Thank you all, and God bless.

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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Lark.



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CGHA's fundraiser at Crew.



Right said Fred(erick)

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Frederick Douglass' oratory skills are featured in *Douglass*.

Photo by Evan Barr

SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

New things to sing

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The history of musical theater teems with boy-meets-girl stories. So you can't blame LGBTQ fans of the genre who grumble about the paucity of new musicals that reflect the diversity of their lives on stage.

Three of the 14 new musicals debuting at Underscore Theatre Company's 3rd annual Chicago Musical Theatre Festival (CMTF) seem poised to do some redressing by featuring leading LGBTQ characters. And stylistically, these three shows couldn't be more different.

The first of the three out of the gate is the contemporary song revue *Planted*, co-conceived by director Christopher Pazdernik and songwriter Jeff Bouthiette. (Rebekah Walendzak is also a lyric contributor.)

"There's a lot of heteronormative song cycles from the 1980s and '90s like *Closer Than Ever* or even *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*," Bouthiette said. "We wanted to do something that focused more on gay men and explore that in a more contemporary way."

Bouthiette said *Planted* aims to look at family dynamics, relationships and what it means to be single. The six men of the ensemble don't play named characters, though Bouthiette says they do have a dramatic through-line via the "seasons of a gay relationship."

"There is a general arc from the moment of meeting someone," Bouthiette said. "And then all the twists and turns and different possible variations on that."

The musical *Pen* is more narratively structured in a linear fashion, though the subject matter of a dating pen-pal relationship between a gay prisoner and a lovelorn guy on the outside is far from conventional. *Pen* previously received a scripts-in-hand reading via *Pride Films and Plays*, but its appearance as part of the CMTF will be more fully fleshed out.

"[*Pen*] actually came from a newspaper article about a website where gay prisoners can connect with gay men on the outside," said Schwartz, whose past noble credits include the gay musicals *Under a Rainbow Flag* and *The Book of Merman*. "David Zak of *Pride Films and Plays* actually sent the article around to several of us in a writers network and suggested there was a show in this, so I sent it to [book writer and lyricist] DC Cathro."

Pen focuses on the recently dumped Paul, who starts a correspondence with the prisoner, Rod.

"It's a relationship that Paul feels he can control because the guy is not going anywhere," Schwartz said. "Things get heated between the

two of them and they really find that they're interested in each other and where does the relationship go from there—especially when real life comes along and starts making demands?"

Real-life history is what inspired *The Transcivility of Albert Cashier*, the third LGBTQ show featured in the CMTF. It's about a Civil War veteran with an enormous secret, which was revealed several years after the title character lived the majority of his life in a small town as a man.

Attorney and playwright Jay Paul Deratany fell in love with the true-life story of Albert Cashier, and he found a very willing collaborator to dramatize his life with director Keaton Wooden. Where the musical aspect came along is when the two reached out to composer/singer Joe Stevens, a trans man.

"We wanted to keep true to the time period," said Deratany "And very much, hopefully, this

musical keeps true to the story of Albert."

Deratany had nothing but praise for Stevens, who drew from songs of the 1860s and 1910s to create the bluegrass score of *The Transcivility of Albert Cashier*. Stevens also served as a consultant to Deratany and Wooten on transgender issues.

"In some sense, was Albert a trans man? Not in the current definition, I suppose, because this individual didn't have access to modern medicine that we have now. But was this person in his heart a male? I think so," mused Deratany. "Was this a woman who just wanted to dress up as a man? Maybe. Was this a woman who didn't want to answer to a man and after the war get paid less for work per hour than a male wage? Maybe... We don't know the complete story, but for whatever reason, this individual wanted to live his life in a male circumstance and our show is about his freedom to do so."

Like the other 11 shows featured in the CMTF, each of these three LGBTQ shows will receive four performances only in rotating repertory. The sheer number of musicals calls for minimal scenery and other production values, but each of these writers are relishing the chance to get

their shows before live audiences.

"All of these shows are in some sort of developmental stage and we absolutely have to go through this process," Schwartz said. "I do have some producers and directors from other parts of the country to see the show in hopes of doing future full-on productions."

Underscore Theatre Company's 3rd annual Chicago Musical Theatre Festival runs from Tuesday, Aug. 9, through Sunday, Aug. 28, at the Victory Gardens Richard Christiansen Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.

Pen plays 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 13, 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 16, and 6 p.m. Wednesday and Friday, Aug. 17 and 26. Rogue Elephant Productions' staging of *Planted* plays 9 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 13, 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 17 and 25, and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 20. Perovio Productions and Keaton Wooden's production of *The Transcivility of Albert Cashier* plays at noon Sunday, Aug. 14, 6 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 16, 8:30 p.m. Thursday and Wednesday, Aug. 18 and 24.

Individual show tickets are \$20. For tickets and an exact schedule of all the productions, call 773-871-3000 or visit cmtf.org.



From left: Max DeTogne, Corey White, Cisco Lopez, Jerome Riley and Conor McGarry.

Photo by Emily Schwartz

THEATER REVIEW

Direct from Death Row: The Scottsboro Boys

Playwright: Mark Stein, music and lyrics by Harley White Jr.
At: Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark St.
Tickets: \$42
Runs through: Aug. 27

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The title references a real-life chapter in our nation's history, but this is not another cut-and-dried, preserved-under-glass docudrama. Likewise, its subtitle promises "An Evening of Vaudeville and Sorrow," but don't worry—the sorrow doesn't come until after the "vaudeville" has supplied so much merriment, you'd almost think this was the Kander and Ebb musical of similar name.

The story related by the nine African-American teenagers who serve as narrators/performers of the play-within-the-play tells how, on one spring day in 1931, they all happened to be hitchhiking on the same freight train—albeit in different cars—traveling the Tennessee border from Chattanooga to Memphis. Following an altercation with some of their fellow stowaways, the lads were arrested in Paint Rock, Alabama, after two other illegal passengers on board were discovered to be (white) women, both of whom declared that the (African-American) men had raped them. Despite overwhelming evidence of the latter's innocence, courts adhering to regional custom



From left: Charli Williams, Anna Dauzvardis and Katrina D. Richard in *Direct from Death Row: The Scottsboro Boys*.
Photo by Dean La Prairie

continued to find them guilty, drawing national attention for the six years that the Death Row inmates waited for the verdict that would decide their futures.

Authors Mark Stein and Harley White Jr. illustrate these events with popular variety acts of the day: straw-hat-and-cane hoofing, multiethnic songs (sentimental Stephen Foster ballads, dirge-tempo slave spirituals, even a "Danny Boy"), cross-talk comic patter, sleight-of-hand illusions and loose-limbed acrobatic clowning. David Knezz' expressive masks caricaturing the visages of the white participants—droop-

ing bloodhound features for Attorney-General Thomas Knight, for example, or a dainty curlew's beak for Defense Attorney Samuel Leibowitz—eases any guilt engendered in urban audiences identifying along colorist lines. (Far left-wingers may face problems with International Labor Defense's Joseph Brodsky depicted as a nimble-fingered huckster.)

The danger in this irreverent approach is the propensity for actors to become carried away by their own daring, indulging in just one more shoulder-roll or extending a deep-south vowel just a second or two longer than necessary.

This remount of last season's multiple award-winning production reunites director Michael Menendian's original cast, however, every one of whom exhibits chops honed to split-second perfection. Two-and-a-half hours may seem a lengthy history lesson, but never for an instant does our attention wander, whether chortling at the two top lawyers kicking up their heels in a jubilant tap-dance or stifling our horror at the abuse inflicted on the youngest convicts in the prisons. If you missed this show its first time, don't make that mistake again.

THEATER REVIEW

Douglass

Playwright: Thomas Klingenstein
At: The American Vicarious at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.
Tickets: 773-975-8150;
TheaterWit.org; \$25
Runs through: Aug. 14

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

A theatrical tribute to Frederick Douglass is appropriate as his bicentennial nears (probably born 1818). This remarkable American, born a slave, became an internationally revered advocate for freedom and justice and a charismatic writer and speaker. He counseled Abraham Lincoln and several other presidents and died in 1895, so his post-Civil War career—championing universal suffrage, education, racial equal-

ity—was longer than his pre-War abolitionist work.

Regrettably, you'll learn little about Douglass' vivid life in this world premiere, in which the focus is narrow and expository information is scant. However, the play does suggest the passion and quality of his thought and speech, as a good portion of the dialog sounds as if drawn from his writings. The language of oratory and publication does not necessarily make good theatrical speech, but it works well enough here. Still, you'll have to Google Douglass to remind yourself of the full extent of his life and career.

Presented on a handsome platform stage bordered above by 19th-century-style Italianate crown molding (William Boles, scenic design), Douglass opens with the man himself (De'Lon Grant) narrating his uncertain birth information and escape from slavery. He doesn't tell us when he escaped or how his wife-to-be, a

free woman of color, helped him or how he overcame illiteracy. Settling in Massachusetts, Douglass was mentored by William Lloyd Garrison (Mark Ulrich), arguably the best-known and most important abolitionist of the day.

The play focuses on Douglass and Garrison and their bitter split over the United States Constitution, which Garrison saw as a pro-slavery document and Douglass, eventually, as open to anti-slavery interpretation. It makes the case, too, that Garrison was jealous of Douglass's rising fame and influence, which probably was true. The split became personal and was not mended until the late 1870s, but it was a fact by 1855 and that's as far as the play goes, although without specific date references.

The play is sketchy about Douglass's private life and personal development, but makes abundantly clear his consistent rejection of Black separatism and back-to-Africa coloniza-

tion schemes. Douglass was vigorously American and a proponent of integration and equal justice, points which are especially pertinent during an election season shaded by Blacks Lives Matter.

There are handsome projections (by Liviu Pasare) of written/printed texts which the audience cannot always relate to the onstage actions. Mieka van de Ploeg's costumes pleasingly suggest mid-19th Century with elegant touches. Christopher McElroen's staging is clean and efficient, making use of virtually no furniture or props, so actors enter, stand and deliver in mostly two-person scenes, then exit. The play ends abruptly without completing Douglass' story. Folks will understand some of his ideas, but not why he is so important in U.S. history.

THEATER REVIEW

Now. Here. This.

Music & lyrics: by Jeff Bowen
Book by: Hunter Bell & Susan Blackwell
At: Rivendell Theater, 5779 N. Ridge Ave.
Tickets: BrownPaperBox.org; \$25
Runs through: Aug. 21

BY ERIC KARAS

Brown Paper Cox Company presents *Now. Here. This.*, by composer Jeff Bowen, who wrote the popular [title of show] musical. Reviews like this usually have some sort of story hook to tie everything together. In this one, the story hinges on a museum geek (Nick Shoda) who wants to share his love of this planetarium/natural history museum with his friends. As they see the different exhibits, they sing songs about love, growing up, and their relationships with other people and the world.

The negative part about the book by Hunter Bell and Susan Blackwell is that they create really annoying friends for him. One girl (Neala Barron) is always on the phone doing business, The other guy (Matt Frye) is busy



Now. Here. This.
Photo from Rivendell Theater

looking for the cafeteria and the other girl (Anna Schutz) is playing on her smart phone. If they were my friends I'd go to the museum without them or leave them there.

The songs in this show are universally relatable but it's definitely written by someone in his or her late 40s/early 50s; I'm not sure the millennials will get references to Ed Grimley, the TV show *Paper Dolls* or *Lola Falana*. I especially liked the song "Members Only," about how, as a youth, you will buy clothes to fit in and how when you get older you shudder at the fashion choices (Gloria Vanderbilt Jeans, Members Only jackets, acid washed jeans etc.). "That'll never be me," about self doubts, is quite moving. The emotional "Golden Palace" regarding creativity really resonates. "That makes me hot" is an entertaining look at embarrassing moments that happen to

everyone. "Dazzle Camouflage" shows a gay kid avoiding bullying by being funny. Overall, it's kind of like an adult *Schoolhouse Rock*, about emotions. Like that comparison, some songs are better than others.

The cast is terrific. Neala Barron wrings emotion out of her character which otherwise is written as annoying. Matt Frye (my favorite here) is very funny in all the songs and, when he has a chance to be emotional, he flips on a dime from funny to tears. He's really good. Anna Schutz is our belter in the group and I really enjoyed her performance. No one wants someone singing loudly in his or her face in a small theater, but she found great balance. Nick Shoda has the geeky charm to sell his character and the bad premise. Overall, go see the talented cast but the musical revue is really uneven.

CRITICS' PICKS



Byhalia, Mississippi, Definition Theater & The New Colony at Steppenwolf 1700, through Aug. 21. Don't call them "white trash"—these are the people who could elect our next president, and their efforts deserve our respect. MSB

Between Riverside and Crazy, Steppenwolf Theatre, through Aug. 21. Cop shootings, economic insecurity and the troubles of marginalized citizens aren't funny in 2016, but at Steppenwolf, playgoers can expect to be entertained as well as enlightened. MSB

Chops, Dashnight Productions @ Theater Wit, through Aug. 14. This neat four-hander is an authentic Chicago "guy" play in the Mamet tradition, only slicker. Profound? Naw. Great play for actors? Yeah! And that's why you'll enjoy this 90-minute who's-conning-who riff that also pays tribute to classic jazz. JA

Company, Writers Theatre, Glencoe, extended through Aug. 7. Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's groundbreaking 1970 Broadway musical about a New York bachelor weighing the pros and cons of marriage receives a superlative production under the assured direction of William Brown. SCM

—By Barnidge and Morgan

“AN INTRIGUINGLY JUICY AND GLAMOROUS NEW MUSICAL.”

-Chicago Tribune

“STARRING A DELICIOUSLY PAIRED PATTI LUPONE AND CHRISTINE EBERSOLE. BOTH ARE KNOCKOUTS.”

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GOODMAN THEATRE

Battle for gold in Rio meets other Olympics issues

Record number of out LGBTQ athletes set to compete in Summer Games

BY ROSS FORMAN

The Summer Olympics that Chicago bid to host will, instead, open Friday, Aug. 5, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The Games of the XXXI Olympiad, known as Rio 2016, run through Sun., Aug. 21, with a record number of countries participating in more sports than ever. More than 10,000 athletes from 206 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) will participate in 28 sports—including golf, which is making its Olympic debut—and battle for bragging rights in the form of gold, silver and bronze medals.

Rio was announced as the host city for the 2016 Games in October 2009, stunning the United States, particularly the Windy City, as Chicago was the first of the four finalists to be eliminated. Rio ultimately edged Madrid and Tokyo.

So, the eyes of the sporting world now shift to the Southern Hemisphere, but with many non-sporting subplots seemingly stealing the spotlight from the athletic stars.

Safety is, for sure, an issue and has garnered worldwide press. Then there have been major questions about Rio's infrastructure and media reports have repeatedly questioned the athlete's village, particularly how operational and functional it is, or will be. And perhaps most prominent is the outbreak of the mosquito-borne Zika virus, which has spread fear worldwide about its potential impact on athletes and visitors.

The gay card also has been in the spotlight, but for good reasons. Rio 2016 will have a record number of LGBTQ athletes.

Outsports and Olympic/LGBT historian Tony Scupham-Bilton have identified at least 42 out athletes who will compete, as well as three coaches. There are a record 10 out male athletes, though none from the U.S. There is also one married couple: Helen Richardson-Walsh and Kate Richardson-Walsh, British field hockey players.

In comparison, the 2012 Summer Games in London featured 23 out LGBTQ athletes. Others have come out publicly since they competed in London.

Soccer sensation Megan Rapinoe, who played for the Chicago Red Stars in 2009-2010, and WNBA star Brittney Griner of the Phoenix Mercury are among the out Olympians competing in Rio. Also set to represent the red white and blue are Seimone Augustus (women's basketball), Kelly Griffin (rugby), Angel McCoughtry (basketball), Ashley Nee (kayak whitewater slalom) and Jillion Potter (rugby). Jill Ellis is the head coach of the U.S. Women's Soccer Team and Pia Sundhage, who previously coached the Americans, is now the head coach of Sweden's women's soccer team.

Gold medal Olympic diver Greg Louganis will travel with the United States diving team as an official athlete mentor, the same role he held in 2012, according to Outsports.

"Having 42 LGBT Olympic athletes is pretty cool," said Sheryl Jans, a lifelong Chicago-area resident. "This can be two-fold: stereotypical that a lot of athletes are of those persuasions, but also shows that they are people first and who they love is secondary. It shows that there is a definite ability to just be who they are and not worry about being judged."

"[Caitlyn] Jenner could have never done that during the time that she was an Olympic athlete."

Jans, who said she "absolutely" is an Olympic fan, said her favorite Olympian of all time is Flo Hyman, a volleyball player in 1984. "Before the Olympics began, I saw USA versus Japan, decked out in my Olympic volleyball attire," she said. "Flo Hyman was larger than life."

"Back then, [a nearby] 7-11 [store] had posters of the volleyball team [hanging] up. I asked them to give them to me, [but] they wouldn't. When the Olympics [ended], they set them outside for me so I [could] get them and I put them up in my bedroom. At that time, all women's sports were on in the middle of the night because women's sports weren't that important."

"I had just gotten my grandma's old black-and-white TV and stayed up all night in '84 to watch the Olympics. I couldn't function the following days during that time because I was up all night. When Flo Hyman passed away from Marfan's Syndrome, I sobbed. She was cut away in her prime, and who knows what she would have accomplished."

Jans' favorite current Olympian is Chicago-area native Candace Parker, a basketball sensa-

Megan Rapinoe (right) during her Chicago Red Stars days. Photo by David Durochik/Chicago Red Stars



tion. And women's basketball is Jans' favorite Olympic sport. Jans also cherishes Olympic memories of watching Mary Decker run, "and being so excited to watch her," she said. "Zola Budd, from South Africa, was running behind her and clipped her, taking Mary Decker out. I was screaming at the TV and freaking out. Zola Budd, though, impressed me because she ran barefoot and I was amazed at how strong she really was."

Julie Colwell, of Chicago, is a lifelong fan of the Olympic Games—and now has a personal tie to the Rio Games that will keep her hooked to TV coverage and additional online exposure.

A former Evanston Township High School student-athlete is competing in track & field in Rio, representing Nigeria—and Colwell is a former ETHS teacher, having retired from the suburban school earlier this year.

"That's super exciting," Colwell said.

Margaret Bamgbose is a 2012 ETHS graduate, becoming the school's third girls track graduate to compete in the Olympics. Bamgbose is a dual citizen of the U.S. and Nigeria, who at-

tended the University of Notre Dame, where she was an eight-time USTFCCA (U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association) All-American, among other accolades.

Bamgbose lives in South Bend, Ind., and will start her job at Whirlpool in Michigan after returning from Rio.

Colwell said the U.S. Women's Gymnastics team, which is filled with Chicago area products, "will be phenomenal," and added that she's most excited to watch track & field events, which "are true [competitions] in the sense of the Olympics," she said.

"I sort of piggy-back the Gay Games to the [real] Olympics. The Gay Games is just a little piece; I can only imagine what the real Olympics experience must be like."

Colwell said that "it's great" that so many out athletes will be competing in Rio.

"It's like in anything in life, the more people who are out, the more people will see that gay people are just the same as typical straight people and can do anything," she said.

Todrick Hall event Aug. 7 in Chicago

AwesomenessTV announced the commencement of production on a behind-the-scenes film following personality Todrick Hall's North American tour, "Straight Outta Oz."

The tour follows out performer Hall as he stages a full-length, Wizard of Oz-inspired musical with an original score by him. Directed by Katherine Wright (Call Me Kuchu), the film will go behind the scenes as Hall mounts the musical, which tells the story of his life growing up in small-town Texas, his struggle to come to Hollywood and his eventual success.

The tour will stop in Chicago on Sunday, Aug. 7, at 7 p.m. at Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport St.

Straight Outta Oz tickets (\$35-\$300 each) can be purchased at TodrickHall.com. Hall's video is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01YFYOTUxcg>.

FGG announces 2016 Legacy Awards

Following a three-month nomination and selection process, the Federation of Gay Games (FGG) board has approved seven Legacy Awards to be presented at the Annual General Assembly (AGA) this October in Sydney, Australia.

This year's award recipients include George

Melichar (New Orleans) as Outstanding Male Volunteer; Alex Davis (London) as Outstanding Female Volunteer; Flying Bats Women's Soccer Club (Sydney) as Outstanding Local Women's Organization; Sydney Stingers Waterpolo for Outstanding Local Organization; Caroline Symons, Ph.D. (Melbourne) for Social Justice; and Danielle Warby and Matthew Mitcham, both of Sydney, as Local Heroes.

Founded in 2007, the Legacy Awards are presented annually to acknowledge the work of LGBT+ sports and culture organizations, individuals and allies in the local area where the AGA is being held, as well as those who have made significant contributions to the global LGBT+ community.

Complete 2016 AGA information is at <https://gaygames.org>.

Streisand in Chicago Aug. 9

Barbra Streisand—who last year became the only recording artist or group to achieve number-one albums in each of six decades—will bring her live performances to nine cities in August.

Chicago is among the stops, with Streisand performing at the United Center Aug. 9.

Live Nation Global Touring and S2BN Entertainment are presenting the tour.

Also, Columbia Records has announced Barbra Streisand's "ENCORE: Movie Partners Sing Broadway" album will debut Friday, Aug. 26.

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- Chicago Sun-Times

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Fall 2016

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BOOKS

Jay Parini discusses book about Gore Vidal

BY FRANK PIZZOLI

Jay Parini was born in 1948—the same year Gore Vidal published *The City and the Pillar*, his seminal book on U.S. homosexuality that blacklisted him with reviewers.

As varied and prolific as his subject, Parini has written five books of poetry, seven fictional novels and 12 nonfiction titles, including biographies of John Steinbeck (1994), Robert Frost (2000) and William Faulkner (2004). He is Vidal's official biographer. Each year, he edits volumes of criticism for Scribners in their series *American Writers* and *British Writers*. In 2009, his novel *The Last Station* was turned into an Academy Award-nominated film. Film adaptations of *Benjamin's Crossing* and *The Passages of H.M.* are currently underway.

"My selves are many," wrote Pablo Neruda of himself. Many, too, are the Gore Vidals of Jay Parini's *Empire of Self: A Life of Gore Vidal*.

Windy City Times: What is the correct lineage of Vidal's biographers?

Jay Parini: Vidal had selected Walter Clemens, who, unfortunately, suffered from diabetes and frequent writer's block and had died before any chance of completing the project. Gore begged me to take it on: "Please, please be my official biographer."

My wife warned me against doing so fearing we would never be friends again. Gore was very thin-skinned and could not tolerate even the slightest criticism. I declined but began writing notes for a book that could only be published after Vidal's death. Then I ran into Fred Kaplan at a writer's conference and I asked him to do me a favor and take on Gore's biography, which I may have suggested to him earlier but cannot remember for sure. He agreed (*Gore Vidal: A Biography*, 1999) but the problem is that Gore hated the book and in my presence through it across the room. Kaplan focused on Gore's youth and a lot on his money issues early in his adult life. Reviewers were also rough, arguing the 800 pages had no 'through line' or central argument. After that, I came into the picture as Gore's official biographer.

WCT: When writing about a famous author who acknowledges how easily it is to misremember one's life, how did you guard against misremembering Vidal's life?

JP: I was constantly making notes. And biography is 80 percent agreed-upon fact and 20 percent interpretation. As his official biographer, I had full access to his archives, letters, notes and interviews with many who knew him. I also have about 25 years worth notes, clippings and notebooks on him.

His literary estate helped with setting up interviews, provided access to his diary entries. I had access to anything I thought I needed.

WCT: At the end of each chapter, you include your own experiences with Vidal. They were intimate moments...

JP: Yes, they were very close moments for us. Visiting Rock Creek, where he lived when his mother married Hugh Auchincloss, or peeking into the windows of Edgewater, the first home he purchased in upstate New York. It was a last minute thought to food the stories I must have at least 100 or more of them. I thought it would be a good way to declare my interest in the subject.

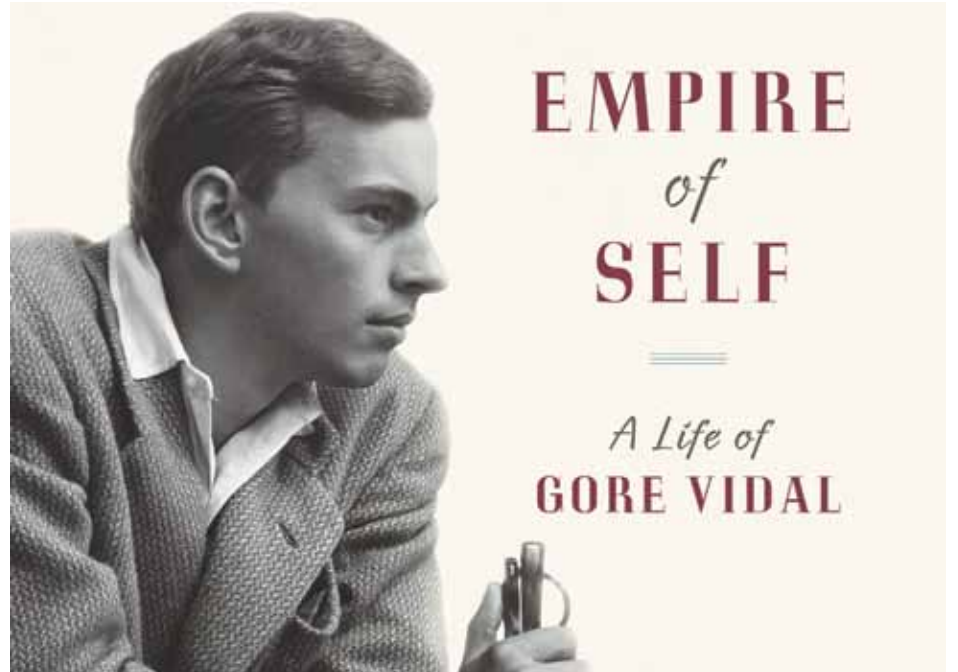
WCT: Jimmy Trimble—a real or imagined affair?

Imagined but something he certainly got a lot of mileage out of over the years. He was an adolescent who knows about adolescent crushes. A school chum, Barrett Prettyman, swore the relationship never happen. I think it was all Gore's perception and that Trimble would have been shocked to know how Gore felt about him, real or imagined.

WCT: As a schoolboy, was Vidal a classic underachiever?

JP: He was deeply stunted emotionally over the problems he had with his mother, especially her rampant alcoholism. It had always been a very rough relationship between them. That's what led to his being shuffled off to his grandparents, one of whom was, of course, Sen. Gore. That's where, at about age 10, he began reading the congressional record to his grandfather who suffered from poor vision and was legally blind. Years later when visiting Gore at home I could see that he was obsessive about

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the DISH
Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

**SAVOR
Lark**

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Boystown restaurant **Lark** (3441 N. Halsted St.; LarkChicago.com) basically has something for everyone.

As for the name, owner Mark Liberson—who seemingly owns half of the Boystown strip—told *Windy City Times*, “Lark was inspired by the idea of bringing people together, like ‘birds of a feather flocking together,’ and having a lark, engaging in mischievous, light-hearted fun together. In this case, Lark is the neighborhood’s go-to place to meet, relax and create new memories over cocktails, dining and retro board games every night of the week.”

Yes, board games are part of the aim to make Lark a place to revisit—and I’m always down for a good Connect Four match. In addition, Lark (which is where Halsted’s Bar + Grill used to be) retains its predecessor’s large, picturesque outdoor patio, providing yet another reason to attract patrons.



Bacon mushroom arancini (left) and raspberry basil lemonade at Lark.
Photos by Andrew Davis

However, stays will be short if the food and libations aren’t great. Fortunately, Lark has a lot of appealing options on the menu—and I do mean of lot: There are sizeable bar snacks, salads, sandwiches, standard sandwiches, burgers, pasta dishes and pizzas.

Overall, the menu items warrant returning (for dinner or brunch). The tempura-fried green beans (served with ranch dressing) were tasty, and Lark’s smoked bacon-and-mushroom arancini offers a solid twist on the traditional Italian risotto appetizer. (Honestly, I’d pass on the somewhat watered-down grilled calamari, but that was the only dud that I had.)

The pizzas all look pretty enticing, with choices such as seaside (shrimp, lobster, calamari and crab meat), Peruvian potato and bacon and Bernardo’s Favorite (chorizo, basted egg, roasted tomatoes

and serrano peppers), but this carnivorous bunch went for the sausage combo item; the fennel sausage, wild mushrooms and caramelized onions made for a mesmerizing treat. Our meal concluded with the scrumptious churro ice-cream sandwiches, combining hot, soft churro “buns” with three different types of ice cream.

As for drinks, I absolutely loved the pineapple daquiri (actually called the Improved Pineapple Daquiri). Among a couple of the other options are Lark (with Aylesbury Duck vodka, vermouth, passionfruit, Rhine Hall pear brandy, soda and fruit) and Fresh Squeezed Bees Knees (Ford’s gin, honey, Deschutes fresh squeezed IPA and lemon).

Lark officially opened June 16. I predict that the birds of a feather Liberson mentioned will be flocking here soon.

ChiGayGo: The August Show



**Thu., Aug. 4, 10 pm
Laugh Factory Chicago,
3175 N. Broadway**

Beat the heat with Chicago’s funniest LGBTQ comics and their allies. This month’s cast of fabulously funny folks Adam Bindert, Bill Bullock, Adam Guerino, Reena Calm, Rachel McCartney and Rebecca O’Neal, with hostess with the mostest Scott Duff.

**Monica Beverly Hillz’s
#TSDIARIES Doc Benefit**



**Sat., Aug. 6, 11 pm
Jackhammer
6406 N. Clark St.**

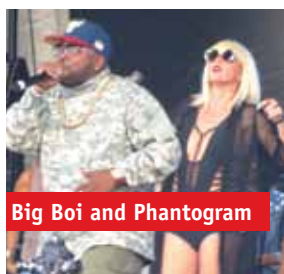
Support Monica’s dream to film the documentary of her life’s journey at this fundraiser show with performances from Teri Yaki, Serena Fierce, Skyla D, Chanel, Angel LeBare, Diamond Devereaux and more.

**Tea in A-ville’s
Summer of Love**



**Sun., Aug. 7, 4-8 pm
Mary’s Attic,
5400 N. Clark St.**

Four-hour celebration of all the music that heals our heart. Hosted by Vince Rango. Moose the DJ brings you a higher love. \$5 Planter’s Punch. Disco, ‘80s HINRG/synth and ‘90s/’00s floor-fillers.



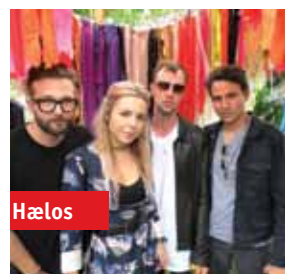
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LOLLAPALOOZA 25

The sights and sound(maker)s of this quarter-century celebration of Chicago’s biggest music festival.
Photos by Jerry Nunn



"When I was dating a guy I was hiding everything that I did because everything personal felt like it was immediately trivialized, so I didn't like it. ... But then it changed when I started dating a girl. I was, like, 'Actually, to hide this provides the implication that I'm not down with it or I'm ashamed of it', so I had to alter how I approached being in public. It opened my life up and I'm so much happier."—Kristen Stewart talks about her relationship with **Alicia Cargile**.

I pride myself on knowing a little about a lot of things. But I don't know everything about everything. For instance, did you know that if you get electrocuted, you can sing your clothes? That's just one of the lessons I learned in the emergency room. That, and when working with electrical wires, flip the circuit breaker first! Add in a ladder and a loose overhead wooden board, and it was a recipe for disaster. You won't be surprised to learn that I drove myself to the hospital with one hand...while holding the remains of my face with the other.

Theater devotees are flocking to Chicago for the chance to see **Patti LuPone** and **Christine Ebersole** star together in the new musical *War Paint*. You don't think I'd let a little hospital stay keep me away from seeing two double Tony Award winners sparring, do you? So off I went—facial bandaging be damned. As luck would have it, the musicalized story of cosmetic mavens Helena Rubinstein and Elizabeth Arden included a passing moment of electroshock therapy, but that's neither hither nor yon.

It's a curious thing to form a show around two women who never actually met despite having so much in common (including swapping the men in their lives). Most of the show is done in parallel scenes on opposite sides of the stage, with the ladies only meeting face-to-face in a fictitious late-life encounter. Despite both women's success, they are victims of their own ambition, of the times, and of their inability to change. Arden is not allowed to join an exclusive club (which she helped design) because "for a woman to have money is one thing. But to earn it? Surely you understand that changes things." Likewise, Rubinstein is discriminated against when trying to buy a penthouse because of her ethnicity. Recounting this episode, LuPone's Rubinstein is sanguine: "So, what did I do? Did I cry like a child? Do I walk away? No—I buy the building, instead!" Shades of *Evita*.

Both LuPone and Ebersole are at the top of their game. Both are actresses of extraordinary caliber whose vocal abilities are two sides of the same coin: Ebersole has a cooler, purer soprano, while LuPone is more idiosyncratic, guttural and harsh. These vocal attributes fit the characters ideally—not surprising since the roles were written for them. And, yet, there are times when the singers swap harmonies with striking dramatic results. It made me wonder how each would play the other's role. It's a challenge that perhaps they'll tackle one day. For now, the show has been extended at Chicago's Goodman until Aug. 21 (if you can get a ticket). I don't think it's too early to anticipate a very healthy Broadway run shortly thereafter—after a bit of tweaking and judicious pruning. While only a few scant seconds of video of the musical have been released, you won't be surprised to hear that quite a bit more has made its way into my rather well-worn lap. A certain someone has supplied us with fan-



Billy says that fitness model Alex Bowen is making a big impression.
Instagram photo

tastic footage of the full final face-off. And the only place you'll see these fabulous 15 minutes is on BillyMasters.com.

After seeing *War Paint*, a musical centered around two very different women, I found myself thinking about *Wicked*. Composer **Steven Schwartz** was at Comic-Con recently and said that the film version will have at least three new songs composed especially for the movie and one song that was cut prior to Broadway.

With the Olympics looming large, we were thinking about hunky gymnast **Danell Leyva**. You may remember the Cuban-American from four years ago, when we ran a series of nearly nude photos that came from his cell phone, to say nothing of a nude workout pictorial (all of which can be found on BillyMasters.com). Believe it or not, Danell (who was the only U.S. gymnast to win a medal at the 2012 London Olympics—he won the bronze medal for all-around gymnast) was an alternate on this year's Olympic team. But he's been moved up due to a teammate's knee injury. It's ironic that an injury worked to Leyva's advantage, since an injury is what kept him off the team in the first place. Days before a key qualifying meet, Danell was left with several gaping wounds on his legs and hands after trying to separate two of his pit bulls! And this isn't a first—four years ago, he had to get 80 stitches near his ear after being bitten by the same dogs days before the American Cup! I don't even think Betty White would object to both dogs being put down after this latest attack.

Many of you have written in the same "Ask Billy" question. But the e-mail from Kurt in Dallas was the first I received: "Who is **Alex Bowen**, and is that photo of his penis real? It can't really be that big!"

Alex Bowen is a fitness model who appeared on *Love Island*, a UK dating show. At the time, he listed his occupation as "scaffolder," but I doubt he's done much scaffolding lately. A photo of him flaunting his phenomenal physique and sporting a borderline double-digit dick mysteriously popped up in public and virtually broke the internet—to say nothing of countless other orifices. In fact, the hoopla made its way across the seas, leading many of you to write in wanting to see all. Ask and you shall receive—on BillyMasters.com.

When a penis can double as a scaffold, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Before we wrap up, we're gonna slip in one last dick. Basketball player Draymond Green claimed that a penis pic that appeared on his Snapchat feed was due to his phone being hacked. He quickly changed his story, saying it was meant to be private but he hit the wrong button. His erect penis will hit all the right buttons on www.BillyMasters.com—the site that's always on the ball. If you have something you'd like us to look into, write to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before I get cast in a touring production of "Phantom." So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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Psychic Ms. Cleo dies at age 53

Youree Harris, aka famed psychic Ms. Cleo, has died at age 53 from cancer.

Harris, who was born and raised in Los Angeles, died in Palm Beach County, Florida. A rep for Harris did not state what kind of cancer she suffered from, but did say that she was a "pillar of strength" during her illness. The Advocate, in 2006, reported that Harris—who also did voiceover work for Grand Theft Auto: Vice City—was lesbian.

Windy City Media Group's Amy Matheny, who interviewed Harris many times on the now-inactive podcast Windy City Queercast, posted a lengthy Facebook quote about Harris. In part, Matheny stated, "Cleo was FULL of life, a seeker of clarity, a civil rights activist, and a deeply loyal friend. Her full throated laugh, mouth wide and head flung back was joy personified. She was a frequent guest on my podcast for a decade, but very quickly, she became more than a guest. She became my friend.

"[Harris] was passionate about spirituality. ... She was passionate about south Florida, her community and family, and talked of all three every call. She was passionate about Spain and dreamed of owning a home there to retire. But

she was a tireless worker, storyteller, truth-seeker.

"I don't think she ever would have retired. We only met in person once ... in Chicago when I invited her to see our town and judge Windy City Gay Idol. (She fell in LOVE with Chicago and the Chicago LGBT community.) And yet, I feel I knew her heart and soul more than most friends in my life."

Casting call out for new Mirza film

Out Chicago actress/producer Fawzia Mirza is seeking extras for her new film, Signature Move.

All ages, races and genders are welcome; no acting experience is necessary. Extras are not paid, but there will be lunch, snacks throughout the shoot and credit in the film. Filming will take place throughout August.

Fill out the form at <http://FullSpectrumFeatures.com/sigmoveextras> or email Ray Goldberg (Ray@FullSpectrumFeatures.com). Find out more about the move at ChicagoFilmProject.com/SignatureMove/.

Disco legend Clifford in concert Aug. 26

Disco legend Linda Clifford will be in concert at Unity in Chicago, 1925 W. Thome Ave., on Friday, Aug. 26.

There will be a meet-and-greet with Clifford at 7 p.m., followed by a concert at 8 p.m.

Clifford is known for such hits as "Runaway Love," "If My Friends Could See Me Now" and "Bridge Over Troubled Water."

Admission is \$35 (concert only) and \$50 (concert and meet-and-greet); visit BrownPaperTickets.com. For more about the event, visit UnityChicago.org.

LA&M exhibiting 'Excavating Experience'

"Excavating Experience: The Presence of LG-BTQ People of Color in Cook County, IL" is a

multimedia exhibit is at the Leather Archives & Museum (LA&M), 6418 N. Greenview Ave.

"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

VIDAL from page 25

his research for his historical novels. Even as we sat there talking with one another he had stacks of history books that he would pour through for details.

WCT: The movie Best of Enemies, about 1968 and Vidal's cantankerous relationship with William F. Buckley Jr, shows them bearing teeth but did they actually need one another? At one point, Vidal whispers into Buckley's ear, "I guess we gave them their money's worth tonight?"

JP: They were both actors. They knew what they were doing. I had dinner with Gore and Norman Mailer, another of his newsworthy relationships. All three of them were true to their beliefs and actions.

WCT: Speaking of famous relationships, Vidal always peddled that he was an "intimate" of the Kennedys. You disagree.

He was more of an "onlooker" than an insider. They were not in each other's company that many times. Now, remember, he and Jackie shared a stepfather when each of their respective mothers married Hugh Auchincloss. But that was before she was a Kennedy.

WCT: Vidal's half-sister, Nina Straight, and her son Burr Steers, while talking to Tim Teeman, author of In Bed with Gore Vidal, brought up the "pedophile" issue regarding Vidal. William Buckley also intimated for years that he too thought Vidal was involved with underage males. Thoughts?

JP: That's just nuts, insane. He was not a pedophile. He really didn't like children although he was always polite to those children in his orbit. Did he have sex with younger men, 20 to 25 or even older when he was himself much older? Of course. He never hid that fact at least not among his inner circle.

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.

WCT: Why bring it up?

JP: I think Nina thought she was going to get millions more than she got. Burr had been promised Gore's LA house and, somehow, that was reneged on in his will.

WCT: Vidal's lifelong partner Howard was always the mysterious one to those outside of the inner circle. What role did he play in his life?

JP: I loved Howard. He was funny, a mensch. They truly loved one another but there were some rough times. In the '70s, Howard seriously thought about leaving Gore who had begun acting rude toward him.

WCT: Howard could tell Vidal to shut up?

JP: Yes, especially when Gore was full of himself, drunk, or both. Howard would say, "Okay, that's enough Gore" or "Time to shut up!" They were like any longtime married couple.

WCT: He had all kinds of moments?

JP: He did. I've been at dinner parties where Gore was the delight of the evening, holding everyone in the palm of his hand, charming, funny as one could be. Other dinner parties he was plain drunk, slurry. As a friend, you'd be embarrassed for him. He was thin-skinned and could be dismissive of others. With me, and I know others too, he was also kind, and solicitous. He always asked about my wife and children. We talked on the phone constantly. Once I arrived at his home and asked how he was doing. He said, "Better now that you're here." Like all of us, he had a range of emotions.

WCT: He's part of you?

JP: Gore was an important part of my life. This has been cathartic for me. Writing the book helped me to understand our friendship. We also write to get rid of stuff. Then, move on.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Thursday, Aug. 4

Lezincolor has a new name: Womyn's Retreat An intentional land space for women who love women gathering to celebrate diversity and culture in regard to race, age, physical ability and sexual orientation. Thursday - Sunday tenting on beautiful flat & forest land. Limited indoor lodging available. Workshops, firePit, drumming, White Dance Party, entertainment, music, games, food. Area attractions, tours, canoeing and hiking, accessible. Cement and grounds accommodate wheel chairs, with toilets & showers. Through Aug. 7. 12:00pm Hilltop Retreat Center, Spring Green WI. Tickets: <http://www.lezincolor.com/>

South Loop Farmers Market Sustainable-foods marketplace featuring a partnership with McCormick Place. Thursday through Sept. 29. 4:00pm - 8:00pm On the grounds of the National Historic Landmark Second Presbyterian Church, 1936 S. Michigan Ave. <http://www.southloopfarmersmarket.com>

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>

New Town Writers' Workshop Participants are asked to bring copies of their work so other writers and listeners may follow along. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago

Book Launch Party: HEARTBREAKER by Maryse Meijer In conversation with Lindsay Hunter. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago (773) 769-9299 <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/>

**LANG DISTANCE Sunday, Aug. 7**

k.d. lang (above) will perform with Neko Case and Laura Veirs at The Chicago Theatre.
PR photo

www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/book-launch-party-heartbreaker-maryse-meijer-conversation-wth-lindsay-hunter

Friday, Aug. 5

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

Saturday, Aug. 6

The 1,000 Mile March: The Journey to Justice Continues Re-creating a portion of King's historic 1966 march into

Marquette Park, celebrating the legacy of the Chicago Freedom Movement, acknowledging the ongoing efforts of organizers far and wide to strive towards a more just and equitable city. Nine blocks. \$10 registration fee is requested to cover march expenses. Sign up online. 9:00am 63rd and Kedzie Ave., Chicago <http://www.mlkmemorialchicago.org/the-project/the-1000-mile-march/>

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 Chicago <http://dbsa-glbtc-chicago.com>

Textual Empowerment: Lesbian Publishing in the 1970s and 1980s The 1970s and 1980s was a period of initial development and growth of lesbian publishing with networks and collectives that taught running printing presses and publishing practices, helping women take full control of the printing and distribution processes. Exhibit running through September 2016. Thursdays 6 to 9 pm, Fridays 1 to 7 pm, Saturdays Noon to 6 pm. 12:00pm - 6:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org>

Sunday, Aug. 7

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>

Dolly Parton \$115 to \$150. Lawn \$38 to \$43. 7:30pm Ravinia Festival 418 Sheridan Road Highland Park, IL 60035 Tickets: <http://ravinia.org>

k.d. lang Out singer and songwriter with Neko Case and Laura Veirs 7:30pm The Chicago Theatre (Chicago) 175 N State St Chicago Tickets: <http://www.box-officetickets.com/Events/Country-and-Folk-Tickets/Neko-Case/2041939?&gclid=CPW698jghc4CFQEEaQodaW0Ijw>

Monday, Aug. 8

Center on Halsted Ballroom Nights Each Monday evening on the third floor. Free classes first Monday of each month goes into one particular style and subsequent weeks go into execution. No registration required. Students with no experience may join at any time but best early in month. 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

Toni Shelton dance celebration event Queen of House Music hosts event featuring an all-female DJ lineup including Lora Branch and Celeste Alexander. 8:00pm Daley Center Plaza 50 W Washington St Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/RealToniShelton>

Tuesday, Aug. 9

Sappho's Salon A monthly performance salon featuring expressions of queerness, gender and feminism. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago (773) 769-9299 <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/>

Wed., Aug. 10

Gwen Stefani: "This Is What the Truth Feels Like" Tour Live Nation is proud to announce Gwen Stefani with special guest EVE. \$29.95 to \$149.95 7:00pm Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, 19100 Ridgeland Ave., Tinley Park Tickets: <http://www.eventticketscenter.com/Event.aspx?EventID=108744&ppcsrc=AMP&gclid=CI7GyIrmMwCFZY1aQodfc8M>

Author Reading: Leigh Stein, LAND OF

ENCHANTMENT Leigh Stein in conversation with Alison Bowen. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago (773) 769-9299 <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/author-reading-leigh-stein-land-enchantment>

TransMale Indulgence TransMale Chicago and Jackhammer team up to bring you TransMale Indulgence: A night for Gay Transmen and Men interested in them second Wednesday of each month. DJ, free pizza at 10pm. Transmale porn. The Hole will be open at 11pm for transmale cruising. 8:00pm - 12:00pm Jackhammer 6406 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.transmalechicago.com>

Friday, Aug. 12

Off Center, Live Music at Center on Halsted New live monthly music series at Center on Halsted. Live sets from LGBTQ community musicians in a laid-back setting. Inaugural night welcomes Scott Free (Homolatte), Joe Stevens, and R.D.A. as Osiris. Advanced registration is recommended to secure a space Cash Bar Available \$10 suggested donation benefitting our Homeless Youth Initiative 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <https://community.centeronhalsted.org/OffCenter>

Queer Genre Fiction Book Group Lord John and the Brotherhood of the Blade by Diana Gabaldon. Set during the Seven Years War, Lord John Grey pursues a deadly family secret and a clandestine love affair against an eighteenth-century background of politics, treason, and battle. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <https://www.facebook.com/events/1742410936048246/>

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