

**WINDY CITY TIMES**

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

**VOL 32, NO. 37**    MAY 31, 2017

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# SERIAL OFFENDER

## John Waters on Trumps, 'Serial Mom' and more

BY LAWRENCE FERBER

It's been a prolific springtime for John Waters.

Although it's been about 13 years since the Baltimore-born, openly gay cult-movie icon unleashed a new feature film, Waters' 1994 classic *Serial Mom*—about a suburban housewife, played by Kathleen Turner, who murders

**Turn to page 16**



John Waters.  
PR photo

**SPEAKING OUT**  
Cleopatra Cowley-Pendleton speaking at an LGBTQ gun violence forum in October 2016, sponsored by Pride Action Tank and Chicago Survivors, plus dozens of anti-gun and LGBTQ organizations.  
Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

**10**

**IML WINNER**  
Ralph Bruneau is the new titleholder.  
Photo by Verdell Shannon

**18**

**PATRICK DATI**  
Activist speaks out against domestic abuse.  
Photo from Dati

**8**

**WORLD OUTGAMES**  
Tensions rise as event is cancelled.  
PR photo

**20**

**OUTAGING CONFERENCE**  
LGBT elder issues discussed.  
Photo of Imani Rupert-Gordon (left) and Kim Hunt by Tracy Baim

**6**

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## WINDY CITY TIMES

## NEWS

Crowd supports Yorkville gay couple	4
OUTAging conference	6
Gay trustee; Parade grand marshal named	7
Activist speaks out against domestic abuse	8
Memorial Day events	9
Anti-violence activist Cleo Cowley-Pendleton	10
VIEWPOINTS: Lynch; letter	12

## ENTERTAINMENT/EVENTS

Scottish Play Scott	13
---------------------	----

## INDEX

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Theater reviews 14

Movies: Finding Kim	15
John Waters interview	16
NIGHTSPOTS	18
OutGames cancelled and tensions rise	20
Classifieds	22
Calendar Q	22

Above: WCT reviews Great Expectations.  
Photo by Johnny Knight

online exclusives at  
[www.WindyCityTimes.com](http://www.WindyCityTimes.com)



## TY ONE ON

Bent Nights looks at shows by Ty Segall (left) and Midnight Oil.  
Photo by Vern Hester

## ME, MYSELF AND IRENE



Out comedian (and former Chicagoan) Irene Tu has become a breakout success in the Bay Area.  
Photo by Daniel Schuleman

## 'BEER' AND FAR

Windy City Times reviews the production Johnny 10 Beers' Daughter.

## THAT'S SHOW BIZ

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# Crowd rallies around gay couple at Yorkville school-board meeting

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

During the public comments section of the May 22 Yorkville Community Unit School District 115 (Y115) board meeting at Yorkville High School, Chad Konow-Muri (whose husband, Craig Konow-Muri, did not speak that night) and a number of their supporters addressed an alleged ongoing anti-LGBT situation involving their now seven-year-old daughter.

More than 100 people attended the meeting to support the Konow-Muri family who moved from the suburbs of Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Yorkville in 2014 for a job opportunity with their then four-year-old daughter.

In his remarks to the board, Chad said, "Soon after our move to Yorkville we sought out both a dance studio and martial arts studio to continue her dance and karate lessons. That is when we found BH Martial Arts Studio. After much discussion with BH Martial Arts' manager about our daughter's spirit and previous experience, we decided to take the manager up on her offer to come tour the facility and sign the contract.

"Unfortunately, that tour ended with our daughter being verbally berated and essentially kicked out of the facility when the owner, Master Lee, decided it was appropriate to ask who her parents were. This man, responsible for teaching respect, loyalty, integrity and compassion to children looked into the eyes of our daughter, pointed at her, and stated, 'She is not welcome here, I will not teach her.' Our daughter, an innocent, precocious, joyful four-year-old girl left in tears asking us what she had done."

Speaking with Windy City Times, Craig said that, initially, Master Lee interacted with him and their daughter that day. When she referred to Chad as papa (their daughter calls Craig daddy) when he joined them later, that's when Master Lee immediately asked Craig who her parents were. When Craig said, "we are," referring to Chad and himself, that's when Master Lee made the statement that Chad referred to in his statement.

Both Chad and Craig told Windy City Times that until this incident with their daughter they had never encountered any type of overt, blatant and deliberate discrimination based on their sexual orientation.

Soon after the alleged incident with Master Lee, the couple learned that BH Martial Arts also had a business relationship with Y115 where they would come to the schools to teach martial arts classes during after-school hours including the school their daughter attended.

"Our family fought for, and succeeded in providing the school district sufficient evidence to lead to the suspension of their ability to utilize tax-funded, school district facilities in order to obtain direct contact with the students within

the Y115 district," said Chad at the board meeting. "Now, less than one year later, the suspension has been lifted. Our family has been offered no sincere apology from BH Martial Arts, who now claim that the question of our family structure never came up. In an effort to meet district guidelines regarding discrimination, BH added a single line to their contract and their mission statement. It is important to note that the disclaimer was added only weeks before our recent meeting with the district, while the incident happened nearly three years ago. If BH Martial Arts denies the incident occurred, why the need to change their contract?"

"We ask that you send a clear message to local businesses that in order to be permitted to enter our children's schools, they are required to see each child equally, without the filters of color, gender, sexual orientation, economic status or any other difference that the posters in the Yorkville schools instruct our children to embrace and stand up for."

This change to BH Martial Arts' contract and mission statement is nowhere to be found online. The couple was given a paper copy of this change during a meeting with the superintendent and COO May 3.

BH Martial Arts website contains a single line, "BH Martial Arts and its students and families are an open unbiased community." There is no mention to non-discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other factor on any of their website pages.

In an email statement to Windy City Times, BH Martial Arts Manager Geri Benning said, "BH Martial Arts is deeply saddened by this entire situation, we stand firm on the fact that we do not discriminate. During this encounter, BH Martial Arts owner Master Lee was completely unaware of the couple's same-sex relationship as he simply thought the family in front of him was a little girl, her father, and her grandfather.

"The misunderstanding occurred when Master Lee questioned why they wanted to remove their child from karate, which her father's explained she was already talented in, and place her into taekwondo. Immediately there were threats and claims of discrimination as I tried to explain that they had misunderstood Master Lee, but they still stormed out. On more than one occasion we have attempted to resolve the situation with the family, but are always met with hostility. District 115 simply placed BH Martial Arts on suspension pending an inquiry into the matter. Once this



Chad Konow-Muri (left) and husband Craig Konow-Muri.  
Photo by Carrie Maxwell

inquiry was conducted, we were cleared of all wrongdoing and the suspension was lifted."

Y115 Director of Communication Kristine Lip-trot told Windy City Times. "As noted in the statement on our website the business was suspended at the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year. Due to an internal issue with the facility rental software we were made aware that the business had in fact been allowed to use our schools a few times during the year. The computer situation and internal communications breakdown has been addressed and rectified. However, at this point in time, the suspension on that business has been lifted because they agreed to adhere to specific stipulations that the district demanded."

After doing some research, the Konow-Muris discovered that BH Martial Arts suspension was never enforced. They also dispute what the district said about the number of times BH Martial Arts was able to utilize Y115 school facilities during this past school year. Their research shows BH Martial Arts presence at Y115 schools on seven different dates (eight events) from mid-November 2016 to mid-April 2017.

In an email statement to Windy City Times Y115 COO/CSBO Dr. Dean Romano explained that the computer software has a feature that blocks user's ability to submit rental requests and the district suspended BH Martial Arts rental privileges using this feature.

"A text box was added that would alert BH Martial Arts that they could not rent and had to contact me with any questions," said Romano. "We learned recently that the software was not working properly, and was allowing BH Martial Arts to submit rental requests without being blocked. As such, BH Martial Arts was unaware that a suspension existed and as a result they held events this school year at Yorkville Intermediate School and

Yorkville Middle School a combined total of five times."

Romano also noted in his email statement that the district has implemented additional procedures to notify every district school and outside groups directly about any restrictions on rental privileges. He said BH Martial Arts, in a signed document, has agreed to a partial suspension from any Y115 schools that Chad and Craig's daughter attends as well written proof to the district within 30 days of successful completion of sensitivity training classes of all employees. The signed document also directs BH Martial Arts to adhere to the provisions of the Illinois Human Rights Act 775 ILCS 5/1-101. Romano noted that all of these provisions must be adhered to before BH Martial Arts is allowed access to Y115 facilities going forward.

"To amplify our message during the board meeting, a family friend from Milwaukee, Dr. Linda Timm (who was unable to attend in person) came up with the idea for our supporters to hold white carnations during the board meeting," said Craig. "She and two other friends of ours also supplied us with the flowers which symbolize 'pure love' and 'good luck.' We gave each person a slip of paper explaining what the flower means and instructions to leave it behind as a reminder to the Y115 school board that discrimination in our schools is not acceptable."

Among the speakers at the board meeting were Democratic Women of Kendall County President Julie Gondar, taekwondo instructor from West of the Moon ATA Nick Zorn, Action for a Better Tomorrow Far West Suburbs leader Robyn Vickers, citizen advocate Allison Klein, Fox Valley Pride Co-founder Eric Roberts and friend of the family Frank Vandy. Friend of the family Carrie Foley completed Chad's statement due to time constraints. No one from the opposition put their names down on the sign-up sheet to speak in favor of BH Martial Arts.

The entire article is at [WindyCityMedia-Group.com](http://WindyCityMedia-Group.com).



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# OUTAging summit closes with MAP report and call for visibility

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

The OUTAging summit hosted by Pride Action Tank (PAT) and sponsored by Lambda Legal, AARP Chicago and Affinity Community Services among others, closed in dramatic fashion for its capacity attendance at the AARP's downtown Chicago offices on May 25.

It was there that Movement Advancement Project (MAP) Senior Policy Analyst Heron Greenesmith, Esq. announced the findings of a report released that day and authored by both MAP and SAGE entitled Understanding Issues Facing LGBT Older Adults.

According to MAP, the report aimed to "increase awareness of the diverse needs of [LGBT] elders across the country" by presenting "a comprehensive look into the experiences of LGBT elders, highlighting the challenges they face across a wide range of topics from health care to financial security and community support, and their resilience in the face of these challenges."

"Today's report is meant to be an introduction to LGBT older adults," Greenesmith said. "Rather than capturing all of their unique and valuable

stories, it seeks to summarize data about what we know about LGBT older adults in a format that can be used for advocacy, for engaging and building bridges with new audiences."

Greenesmith noted that the three cornerstones to successful aging—good health and competent healthcare, economic stability and security and strong social and family support—were "unfortunately the exact areas in which LGBT older adults face disparities when compared with non-LGBT peers."

"A lifetime of discrimination, especially housing and employment, and a long-term lack of legal and social recognition combine to create deep economic insecurity for LGBT elders," Greenesmith explained. "Nearly a third of LGBT older adults aged 65 and older live at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level."

"Bisexual older adults have shocking poverty rates," Greenesmith added. "Forty-seven percent of Bi older men and 48 percent live at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Trans older adults have similar rates."

Greenesmith noted that a lack of legal recognition and a lack of funding for LGBT-aging re-



Attendees the first day of the OUTAging summit, including speakers and those of lived experience. More OUTAging coverage, including videos, is available online, and in next week's WCT.

Photo by Tracy Bain

sources "means that LGBT elders are susceptible to isolation. Studies show that LGBT elders are much more likely to live alone and are also less likely to access necessary services for the general aging population like visiting nurses or meal programs."

"Long-term discrimination combined with a lack of competent and inclusive healthcare lead to specific mental and physical health disparities," Greenesmith stated. "LGBT elders face barriers to accessing competent care. Older people living with HIV have particular health challenges as do older transgender people. In all, LGBT people struggle to receive competent, inclusive healthcare that meets their needs and addresses their lifetime of experiences as LGBT people."

"LGBT older adults have been on the forefront of the fight for equality and fairness and they have a right to empowerment and support," Greenesmith concluded. "This report is an illustration of disparity and a roadmap for change."

For former Obama Faith-Based and Neighborhood Advisory Council appointee and National LGBTQ Taskforce Assistant Faith Work Director Barbara Satin, a significant part of that change involves visibility.

It served as a recurring theme throughout a candid and inspiring keynote speech which began with an unapologetic rendition of a song from The Who's rock opera Tommy.

"Can you hear me? Can you see me?"

"I have a feeling that I am becoming invisible," Satin said. "We are in a time when the federal government and the administration has decided that it is going to take older LGBT people out of the Older Americans Act annual survey, the Center for Independent Living survey and put of the census. If they don't include us, it means that we're invisible; that they don't have to hear our stories, our needs, our conversations. They don't need to know us. If they don't know us, they can ignore us and that's their intent."

"The progress that's been made in recent years on LGBT issues, equality and rights seem to be fading fast," Satin added. "The rules and executive orders that offered protection are being dismantled as we speak. Many members of the older LGBT cohort are living in a world that presents stark reminders of their past lived experiences."

Workshops included Queering Gerontology mod-

erated by Chicago Department of Public Health LGBTQ Community Liaison Antonio King, Older Adults as Decision Makers moderated by AIDS Foundation of Chicago Associate Director of Program Development Rebecca Inledon and Staying Connected moderated by Affinity Community Services Executive Director Imani Rupert-Gordon.

The Care Plan founder Jacqueline Boyd hosted a training session centered upon How to Be an Ally to Older Adults.

For more information on the MAP/SAGE report, visit [lgbtmap.org/understanding-issues-facing-LGBT-Older-Adults](http://lgbtmap.org/understanding-issues-facing-LGBT-Older-Adults).

Related: OUTAging summit pinpoints challenges faced by LGBT seniors, at <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/OUTAging-summit-pinpoints-challenges-faced-by-LGBT-seniors/59284.html>



Above: Barbara Satin. Below: Jacqueline Boyd. Photos by Gretchen Rachel Hammond



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# Gay man becomes trustee in Berwyn

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Joey Johnston—a gay man who, in February, lost a bid for a post on the Berwyn Township Trustees board—has been appointed to the board after one of the winners in that race decided not to take her oath of office.

Johnston was one of several candidates in the 2017 contests—many of them LGBT—affiliated with the Berwyn United organization, which has frequently challenged policies and viewpoints of Mayor Robert Lovero and his allies.

One of the eventual winners, Elizabeth Jimenez, was told that her taking an oath for the trustees might conflict with a seat that she already held on the Berwyn South School District 100 board,

so the trustees voted to replace her. Johnston won a three-to-two vote against Brenda Patterson, another candidate who had previously lost her bid. City Clerk Marge Paul, a Berwyn United ally, cast the deciding vote.

“That means another gay person will hold elected office in Berwyn until 2019,” said local activist Ted Korbos.

Indeed, Johnston now becomes the eighth openly LGBT member in Berwyn government. In October, he told Windy City Times that he wanted to join the board because, “I’ve always wanted to become involved in my community ... There’s a movement now for Berwyn for change, and here’s the perfect opportunity to do.”

## Wachowski/Loveless art opening June 2

A special LGBTQ artists gallery opening of exhibits by artists Lilly Wachowski and Tennessee Loveless—“Say Our Names” and “Drag Landscapes,” respectively—will take place Friday, June 2, 6-8 p.m., at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

“Say Our Names,” by Wachowski, is in the sec-

ond-floor gallery. This exhibit features 27 portraits of all the trans women murdered in 2016 in the United States.

“Drag Landscapes,” by Loveless, is in the third-floor gallery. This exhibit features portraiture of global drag culture, pop-art paintings.

The exhibit will run through Tuesday, July 11.

Admission is \$10 for the June 2 event; see <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=14279>.

## Lea DeLaria to be grand marshal of Pride Parade

Lea DeLaria is scheduled to be grand marshal of this year’s Chicago 48th Annual Pride Parade on Sunday, June 25.

She is currently best known for her SAG Award-winning role as Carrie “Big Boo” Black in the Netflix hit series *Orange Is the New Black*. Some of her television credits include *Californication*, *The Oblongs*, *One Life to Live*, *Law and Order: SVU*, *Will & Grace*, *Friends* and *Matlock*, and her film credits include *First Wives Club*, *Dear Dumb Diary* and *Edge of Seventeen*.

DeLaria has received Obie and Theater World



Lea DeLaria.

PR photo by Sophy Holland

Awards and a Drama Desk nomination for her portrayal of Hildy in the Public Theatre’s revival of *On the Town*, an Ovation nomination for *The Boys From Syracuse*, and has played both Eddie and Dr. Scott in the Broadway musical *The Rocky Horror Show*.

She was the featured vocalist at the 50th anniversary Newport Jazz Festival, and she has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Chicago’s Symphony Center, the Hollywood Bowl, Royal Albert Hall and the Sydney Opera House.

DeLaria has five records on the Warner Jazz and Classics label, and her book *Lea’s Book of Rules for the World* is in its third printing at Bantam Doubleday and Dell. Her sixth record, *House of David; delaria+bowie=jazz*, was released in summer 2015 to critical acclaim.

Lea DeLaria will be performing an evening of comedy of music at Ravinia’s Martin Theatre on June 25 as well. Tickets and show information are available at [Ravinia.org](http://Ravinia.org).

## Burgess re-elected to exec committee

Philip P. Burgess, MBA, DPh, RPh—a member of the Illinois State Board of Pharmacy—was re-elected to a three-year member term with the executive committee of the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP).

Burgess has served on the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws, the Committee on Law Enforcement/Legislation, and on the Task Force on Drug Return and Reuse Programs. In addition, he works as a regulatory consultant in Chicago.



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# Patrick Dati raises voice against domestic abuse

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

After coming out, Patrick Dati fell for a man who seemed great at first, but later began physically abusing him.

The abuse went on for a long time, reaching its peak one night when Dati said his partner threw him down a flight of stairs, sending him to the hospital with a broken arm.

Dati said by this point everyone was already aware of the abuse. His friends had encouraged him to get out of the relationship and many had abandoned him because they couldn't stand to watch him stay with his abuser.

That night was his turning point, but Dati said it wasn't easy and for most men and LGBT victims of intimate partner violence, getting out can be especially challenging and dangerous.

"When I speak at the Center on Halsted now and I speak to the youth, most are young, they meet older men or women who are successful and they move in with them. They've been deserted from their families and if they leave they have nowhere to go.

"That is the problem in regard to the LGBT community with domestic violence. It typically is the younger youth who draw to someone that they think can help them and they fall in love with them and that person is supportive financially and then that person becomes abusive and then they don't know how to get out and escape. It sounds really easy, they can walk out the door, but where will you go if you don't have the financial ability?"

Dati said in his situation he was able to move in with his parents for a while to escape his abuser and later sought help at Center on Halsted.

"I was living with him at that point and I needed to leave that situation," he said. "I waited until he left and we removed all my items from his house and I moved back to my parents' house and he began stalking me. He came to my parent's house. I had a restraining order against him and my friends all knew it. He haunted me for several months. It was very difficult."

The situation wasn't Dati's first experience with violence. As a nine year old, he became the victim of serial killer and rapist John Wayne Gacy, who he said raped him in a public restroom.

That traumatic event had sent his life into a tailspin.

"After I was raped, I changed as an individual," he said.

He said he fell into a deep depression, flunked the third grade and began distancing himself from others.

"I kind of became this sheltered kid," he said.

Dati said the assault also led to more abusive situations, including the one with his first male partner.

"People who have been abused are drawn to abusive people, but in my situation I was drawn to people that were good to me in the beginning and then it turned abusive," he said. "I felt I needed to help them and that I could help them, to stop them from abusing others."

Today, Dati is determined to use his experiences to help others. He said male victims are often forgotten about and he hopes to change that.

In 2014, he wrote his memoir, *I Am Me*, detailing the abuse he endured and its impacts and he began doing public speaking engagements to talk about his experiences.

Dati, who lives in Chicago, regularly speaks to youth at the Center on Halsted and has previously led discussions with the Chicago Police Department on intimate partner violence and how it uniquely impacts men and LGBT victims.

"It's public knowledge 80 to 85 percent of men don't come forward about their abuse out of fear and shame," Dati said. "It's no different in the LGBT community."

Recently, Dati was asked to join the Elite Speakers Bureau as its first gay male survivor of domestic abuse. He will speak to audiences nationwide about intimate partner violence affecting gay and straight men and the LGBTQ community.

Denise Brown, eldest sister of the late Nicole Brown Simpson, formed The Elite Speakers Bureau in 2010 to bring awareness and provide education on domestic violence, school safety, child abuse, teen violence, elder abuse, stalking, net crimes, workplace violence, victims of crime, sexual assault, mental health & wellness and more.

"I am so grateful to Denise Brown for giving me this platform to amplify the often invisible issue of domestic abuse impacting gay men, straight men and members of the LGBTQ community," Dati said.

Dati was also elected earlier this year to the board of directors for the Break the Silence Foundation, a domestic violence non-profit. He is serving as chairman of the planning committee.

Dati is also working on a second book, which he said is focused on the impacts of intimate partner violence and domestic violence on mental health.

"A lot of times folks think that goes away with therapy or medication," he said. "People believe you are cured and you are not. I learned that firsthand when my first book came out and I was on a book tour, doing radio, TV, etcetera. I thought 'I'm making a difference and doing something great for the world,' but then it slipped away and part of the reason is I stopped seeing my psychiatrist and taking my meds, and that happens to a lot of individuals."

Dati said his message to others is pretty simple, "You need to get out of that situation because it



**Patrick Dati.**  
Photo courtesy of Dati

isn't going to change."

He added, "For me, it was a cycle of abuse. I didn't want to live that way anymore and I wanted to be a happy person and I wanted to be secure. There is hope and you don't need to live with abuse. Sometimes it is difficult to walk away, but at the same time by walking away you get back your sense of security."

He also encourages individuals experiencing

abuse or who have left abusive situations to get professional help in dealing with the trauma.

"Most importantly is psychological therapy," he said. "Without that it's not going to change."

Dati and Brown will speak at Break the Silence Foundation's annual gala on Friday, Oct. 27, at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 Rosemont Rd., in Rosemont, Illinois.

## Hastert faces new accuser

A new accuser has sued former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert, The Chicago Tribune reported.

The development occurred fewer than three months before Hastert is slated to be released from prison. Federal prosecutors claimed the former U.S. House speaker touched at least five male students inappropriately when he was a Yorkville High School coach from 1965 to 1981.

This most recent accuser, referred to in the suit as "Richard Doe," is seeking \$50,000 in damages from Hastert and Yorkville Community Unit School District 115; among the charges are battery as well as negligent and intentional infliction of emotional distress. He is claiming an incident with Hastert happened in the early 1970s.

Recently, Illinois' General Assembly Retirement System's board of trustees voted to discontinue pension payments to Hastert. He still receives approximately \$73,000 annually for his years in the U.S. House.

The Chicago Tribune article is at [Chicago-Tribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-dennis-hastert-lawsuit-met-20170527-story.html](http://Chicago-Tribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-dennis-hastert-lawsuit-met-20170527-story.html).

## Aldermen urge action regarding hate-crime increase

Chicago Ald. Pat Dowell, chair of the Committee on Human Relations, and colleagues introduced a resolution on May 24 to urge Gov. Bruce Rauner to restore the Illinois State Hate Crimes Commission and for lawmakers to pass House Bill 3711.

HB 3711 strengthens the Illinois Hate Crimes Act by "expanding protections, provides civil enforcement authority to Attorney General, ensures hate crime victims are afforded a civil remedy, and allows for a civil penalty of up to \$25,000 for each case to be imposed."

The resolution was recommended at the hate-crime hearing, which Dowell convened on April 26.

The resolution will be heard before the Committee on Human Relations on Monday, June 19, at 10 a.m. in City Hall—Council Chamber. The committee will invite the governor's office and state lawmakers to testify before the City Council and disclose their steps toward seeking protections and remedies for hate-crime victims.



# LGBT veterans' monument unveiled in Lake View

BY MATT SIMONETTE

American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) hosted the dedication of a new granite monument honoring the service of LGBT veterans May 29.

The first LGBT veterans monument in the city, and among the first in the U.S., was unveiled on Memorial Day at the corner of Halsted and Addison streets, in front of the new Town Hall senior LGBTQ friendly apartments—and where the old

Town Hall police station was located.

The date coincided with the anniversary of the founding of Chicago's AVER chapter 25 years ago. President James Darby, co-founder of the group, spoke about the initial conversations that led to the formation of the chapter, and commended former President Barack Obama for his work toward the lifting of the discriminatory Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy that kept LGBT servicemembers from serving openly.



Above and left: Members and supporters of AVER with speakers from the dedication.

Photo by Hal Baim

## LGBT groups take part in Memorial Day parade

The Chicago chapter of American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) and the Lakeside Pride Freedom Marching Band formed a contingent in the 2017 Memorial Day parade in downtown Chicago on May 27. AVER has participated in the parade for the past 16 years and the band has joined them for many of those years.

On May 29, the chapter dedicated a new granite monument to the military service of LGBTQs on the corner of Halsted and Addison followed by

the celebration of the chapter's 25th anniversary on the third floor of the Center on Halsted. See photos at [WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

Also on the holiday weekend, AVER opened International Mr. Leather with a color guard; conducted a remembrance ceremony for murdered gay sailor Allen Schindler at the gravesite in Steger, Illinois; and revisited the Abraham Lincoln National VA Cemetery monument to LGBT veterans installed in 2015.

AVER is a national non-profit, chapter-based association of active, reserve and veteran members of the armed services dedicated to full and equal rights and treatment for all present and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Photos and text by Jean Albright



The Chicago chapter of AVER at the Memorial Day parade.

Photo by Jean Albright

Chapter Vice President and Treasurer Timothy Zylstra added, "You see what our voices together can accomplish."

Chicago Commission on Human Relations Commissioner Mona Noriega read remarks sent by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who wrote that the monument would stand as "a tribute to the sacrifice of our soldiers."

Other speakers and presenters included AVER chapter Vice President and Secretary Jean Albright; AVER member Stanley Jencyk, who headed up the monument project; Legacy Project Executive Director Victor Salvo; Chicago Police Department 19th District Commander Marc Buslik, who noted that the Town Hall police station had a problematic history with the LGBT community, so that it was appropriate the monument be where it is; and U.S. Reps. Mike Quigley (D-5th) and Jan Schakowsky (D-9th).

"Every veteran should be remembered and honored for their service," said Schakowsky.

State Rep. Kelly Cassidy (D-Chicago) and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Debra Shore also sent letters of congratulations. Shore's was read by her administrative assistant, Alfred Saucedo. Invocations were given by Father Christopher Meyers, Reverend Wayne Bradley and Rabbi D'ror Chankin-Gould. Center on Halsted Executive Director Modesto Tico Valle was also praised for his assistance in the project.

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, Windy City Gay Chorus and Travis all performed musical selections at the dedication, which was followed by a reception inside the Center on Halsted, where Darby and his husband Patrick Bova were recognized for their work on behalf of AVER.

```

1  /*
2  a full scholarship for
3  codeplatoon
4  */
5
6  if
7  {
8  transgender
9  veteran
10 want a career in
11 software development
12 }
13
14 /*
15 hurry up! applications
16 are due july 2017
17 */
18
19 if (interested)
20 {
21 goto codeplatoon.org
22 hit 'apply'
23 }

```

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# Anti-gun violence activist speaks about daughter, Wear Orange Day

BY GRETCHEN RACHEL HAMMOND

On June 2, a 20-year-old girl and her family celebrates her birthday with her friends. Outgoing, selfless and gentle-hearted, she has so very many and they crowd into every corner of the family home. It's never been a quiet place but today especially the music and myriad of conversations seem to match each other in enthusiastic volume.

The kitchen is a blaze of activity. Mom has a few helping hands but they are all full trying to cater to what amounts to a combined neighborhood block party, high school reunion and college field trip.

Even so, she keeps one ear on her daughter. Despite mom's "I can handle it—go be with your friends" objections, the girl insists on helping while, with her trademark smile, she talks triumphantly about her volleyball team, grumbles about that one Harvard professor whose lectures could put both of her adopted feral cats into a bored stupor and shrugs off questions about her plans after graduation. She instead grabs a Twizzler and chews on it; much more interested in its present joy and her friend's futures which she talks about with the pride of a parent.

The conversation and the party echo into silence.

That's all there is beyond the tormented dream of Cleopatra Cowley-Pendleton whose daughter Hadiya and the better world she made for everyone who knew her was shattered after a gunman cut her down in a Chicago park when she was just 15.

There was no reason for it. She was just trying to stay out of the rain.

Cowley-Pendleton is a survivor. It's not a word she ever imagined she would have to apply to herself. Instead, Hadiya's 20th birthday was sup-

posed to actually be happening. It's warm, blanching dream and the cold reality of the hardened ground above Hadiya's grave will torture her mother and leave her in agony for the rest of her life—as the memories of what should have been will for the families and friends of each of the 238 people murdered in Chicago so far this year.

Instead of planning Hadiya's birthday party, Cowley-Pendleton looks ahead to an event on June 3 at Harold Washington Park in the South Side neighborhood of Hyde Park beginning at 12 p.m.

There, it is hoped, a multitude will arrive—with each wearing bright orange. When you are in a forest infested with the guns of hunters, your best hope is to wear orange. It's color says "I'm not a target."

The idea was seeded by Hadiya's friends at King College Prep. They wanted to honor her life. Now it has become a national campaign which calls upon the country to not only do the same for Hadiya but every victim of America's unremitting gun violence.

More than 200 national monuments, from San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge to New York's Empire State Building, will be lit in orange. It is hoped those who do not know why may ask. It is hoped the answer, even if it is just the name Hadiya and what happened to her, will inspire enough voices to drown out National Rifle Association (NRA) CEO Wayne La Pierre and his hordes who obediently defend a gun over a life as beautiful as Hadiya's with so much potential for the kind of goodness that enhances the entire world.

It is hoped that this year's event in Harold Washington Park may draw more people than ever before. It's not the 20th birthday party Cowley-Pendleton dreams of for her daughter but she believes Hadiya would revel in what may come of it.



Cowley-Pendleton (left) with other families at a Chicago Survivors Boystown vigil held a few hours after the Pulse massacre in Orlando. Photo by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

In a telephone interview with Windy City Times, Cowley-Pendleton explained why.

**Cleopatra Cowley-Pendleton:** This all started because Hadiya's friends were really devastated. They wanted to do something as young people and put a lot of thought behind the idea of wearing orange; just that simple act to symbolize 'don't shoot me.' Our city can be divided even in death but just to know that there's a movement that allows everyone to come together to recognize their loved ones who were taken too soon, to celebrate their lives and really get information out there about the various [gun-violence] organizations and what they're doing takes my breath away.

**Windy City Times: What kind of message do you hope it sends nationwide?**

CCP: That we're fed up with senseless acts of violence. That there is more that can be done and should be done. It raises the level of consciousness for this issue. It affects such a vast majority of people who survive it and changes everyone's lives; the way that we live. My son's dealing with something that I never conceived he would as a kid. Death was the last thing on my mind. As children, we're supposed to be able to go out and play but now we have a generation of kids who just want to stay home or find the safest way to do something instead of just living.

Orange symbolizes life and that we are sick of what's happened to our families. I hope that significant change, from a community to a larger legislative standpoint, comes about so that we can get back to family and what that is without thinking that death is around every corner.

**WCT: There seems to be a culpability in the media in not getting the word out. We've made murder into an everyday occurrence that rarely warrants more than a few hundred words and then is forgotten. What should the media be doing that isn't?**

CCP: The media needs to cover what is happening in the communities themselves which is making them better. There seems to be a stipulation that's put on the South and West sides that's just negative, when there is such a great community of people out here who want things to be better and want things to be safer. The media needs to do a better job of highlighting what is actually happening in these areas. There are some fantastic programs on the South and West sides to try and help and there are organizations that could

use additional help from the North Side.

We need to take the gun violence and violence as a whole seriously and add the humanity into that because our communities are hurt and it's not color related. Once they're shot, bullets are going to hit whoever is in front of them and it doesn't matter if it's a little Black girl or boy, Hispanic or white. Families are torn apart trying to figure out what to do next.

The forever of death. How you wrap your mind around it, the going forward and being productive is difficult. Those of us who get out and go beyond ourselves to try and communicate it, draw pictures of it, encourage people not to become what we have become; it seemingly looks easy but it is incredibly hard, incredibly hard.

**WCT: And the politicians?**

CCP: My first experience with the mayor was as a human, as a parent. I don't think we can lean on one individual to resolve all our issues but I do believe that there are actions that can be taken. I don't think they are in any one person's ability. I think that funding for communities would help if it's put towards something that makes sense.

We also have to own our roles. Beyond having meetings and saying 'this is what needs to happen or should happen', there needs to be an action behind it. We can talk to the police superintendent about the violence on the streets. He can agree with us and put a team together to address it but what happens next? Are we our own worst enemy? Are we blocking change ourselves because we make it difficult to implement things that are too harsh? Is it that we need to do something that may piss a few people off but will ultimately impact the greater good?

The question is, 'After the meeting, then what?' The information is there but, when it's time to do the work, who's going to do it? Who's going to stand up and say 'this is what's best for our community. Let's move forward in this direction?' As long as we don't have that group of people or an organization, then we're going to stay in the circle of 'something needs to happen' and the execution never taking place.

**WCT: Can more be done by the people to influence the passage of gun laws or to get more money to the South and West sides?**

CCP: There's more that can be done but the issue has a lot to do with voting and understanding who we have representing us in Springfield

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and elsewhere. We have to start voting so that we have people in place who represent what the issues really are and who are not afraid to stand up. We've been battling with the NRA. I don't think the head of the NRA reflects the people who support that organization. Many of the people in the survivor community have guns. I'm not anti-gun. We just want people to be responsible with guns. We just want the people who purchase guns to be mentally able. It's really important that we stop making it easy to just go online and order a firearm. There should be greater consequences around the purchase of [illegal] firearms but there are some voices which are louder than others.

Unfortunately, we are a growing community of survivors because nothing is being done. As long as nothing is done, the bigger our community gets.

**WCT: Yet your stories often get lost. Can you paint a picture of the life of a survivor?**

CCP: It's difficult to fully express what life is like. Many of us respond differently. We don't know what someone's life was, what the relationship was, what they were planning to do. To have to go the rest of your life with the loss of memories. ... I mean right now we're in a phase where my daughter's friends are about to graduate from college and build careers. They started driving, went to prom. They are leading the way for their younger siblings. My son [and Hadiya] were best friends and, now she's gone, my son stays away from crowds because he thinks about the possibility of there being an issue instead of it just being fun to go and hang out. He's been robbed of being carefree as a young person.

For me, my heart aches every day and I think it does for every mother who has to live a day without their child. We try to go forward with our lives. We try to bring good to others, try to protect them. We raise issues because we're angry. We look at commercials and cry. If I'm on the street and I see what I believe to be an older sister with a younger brother, I tear up because I think about my children. Every day we constantly think 'why us? Why did it happen?' It's so hard to draw a clear picture of what heart ache looks like but we live it every day and we live it under the umbrella of not being victims of what happened to us but surviving it. I am me. I am not what happened to me. Every day, you remember what happened. Every day, you look at how differently the picture of life is colored.

After Hadiya was gone, I went through guilt because I didn't know if it was OK to be happy. I don't have someone that I loved so dearly anymore; someone who helped define the 'who' that I am. One day I have to accept the fact that there are some things about me that I like and just build from there. That is part of how we cope. All of us have to find something about ourselves that keep us moving forward and it's a struggle every single day. We want to be conscious of it because it's never going away. There's a whole life that I brought into this world who I thought was going to bury me. I see myself burying her. It's unimaginable and it's devastating.

**WCT: It seems like the Wear Orange Project is something Hadiya would have wanted to organize herself.**

CCP: Absolutely. That's how she was. She al-

ways wanted to help people. She would try to find the good in everyone and push them forward to be the best them that they could be. June 3 is the coming together of many different people and that's how my daughter was. The fact that there is a movement that brings people together regardless of their background but who share a common goal to be a part of community would really warm her heart. Not everyone believes in therapy. They just want to be around people who understand. There's something so powerful in knowing that you're not alone.

**WCT: The LGBTQ community, when motivated, can accomplish an awful lot. Our community came under attack on June 12 almost one year ago. How powerful a voice could we be if we unified with survivors?**

CCP: I think together we would be extremely powerful. There's a lot of attention that survivors are bringing to the issue of gun violence. Now imagine the voice of the LGBTQ community alongside. It would speak volumes. Once we remove the lines of separation and come together that would be a powerful voice. It's difficult to get survivors to even come outside. But we need to define the space as a safe environment for all to come out and just be. There's no demand on anyone but to come out and be a part of that space. This year, at the Wear Orange event, we have table spaces for different organizations to talk about what they do. There are places for people to go and get information.

Right now, it's a city divided. If we have events in unity there is a possibility for a growth of interest and getting the word out.

There is a great deal of humanity out there who want to help. There are a great many people in the survivor community who are not victims of gun violence; they just care and they help lift-up the voices of the survivor community. There are people in the LGBTQ community who are friends and just want to help. If we really focused on helping each other instead of on our differences, we will get further.

**For more information about Wear Orange nationwide, visit: <https://wearorange.org>. For more information about the Chicago Wear Orange event, visit [risestronger.org/events/wear-orange-2017-party-for-peace](http://risestronger.org/events/wear-orange-2017-party-for-peace). For Hadiya's Foundation, visit [hadiyaspromise.org/home](http://hadiyaspromise.org/home).**

## Morten Group leads ED search

The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) has retained Chicago-based Morten Group, LLC, headed by Mary Morten, in its search for its next executive director, according to an organizational press release.

NBJC is a civil-rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black LGBTQ people, including those living with HIV/AIDS.

Sharon Lettman-Hicks is stepping down in the coming months after serving for several years as executive director. Information about the position is at [MortenGroup.com/executive-searches.php](http://MortenGroup.com/executive-searches.php).

The application deadline is Friday, June 9.

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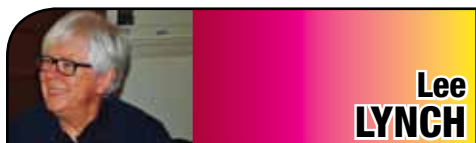
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## viewpoints

Lee  
LYNCH

## THE AMAZON TRAIL A lesbian elder's warning

A friend of many decades, who currently depends on federal assistance for affordable housing, sent me her concerns about the current direction of our government. As a lesbian, a feminist, a woman, a senior with disabilities and a progressive activist, she feels especially vulnerable right now. She needed anonymity, but gave me permission to share her insight.

*"As I watch the mechanism of Fascism being put into place in our country, I look for the small back stories that tell the larger tale when the stories are all knitted together. I look for what is happening locally. One such small story surfaced in my life last month.*

*"Our local Housing Authority (HA) provides rental assistance to low-income people through the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 Voucher System, a life-saving program.*

*"The budget for the HA has been drastically cut over the years. No surprise here. The program has gone from 3 people working full time 3 days a week in our small town to 1 person available to residents 3 hours a week. One of the aspects of the program is a yearly inspection of the voucher recipient's home. This is a good thing. Homes are checked to confirm they are safe and healthy places to live. The inspec-*

*tor checks for the basics: working water and electrical systems, safe stairs, secure doors and windows, etc. The inspector also checks to make sure no one is cooking meth in the bathtub and that things look on the up and up.*

*"Our local inspector covers a very large network of homes for the HA. Budget cuts make this a challenge. He is quick and efficient. He takes about 10 minutes of time and then is off to the next inspection.*

*"On his way out the door, I asked him how the current government is impacting the HUD program. He said a 13% reduction of HUD is in the works. He also said that a sea change in inspections is being proposed. Instead of a local inspector doing what he has done for years effectively, the government is proposing to do an 'in depth' inspection. That entails calling in 'professionals' in the field of housing development such as foundation, roofing, and heating contractors, to do studies of the voucher recipient's home. Once the bevy of contractors (local? we doubt it) completes the inspection, then the results are shipped back to the federal office. Then—and, this is where the story reveals how the current government is overlaying a Fascist template—photographs of the interior of the home will be taken, that is, photos of bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, living room and computer area. These photos will then be sent to a massive database at the federal level.*

*"Many of us probably saw the outstanding piece of journalism in 'The Guardian' which exposed the financial connections between US elections and the UK Brexit vote. (See <https://goo.gl/6bjzvR>.) I am deeply concerned. The way for me to combat this horrible situation is by understanding it as clearly as possible so I can adjust my responses accordingly. Also, I can help others to understand.*

*"After the election, I questioned 'why' unqualified billionaires were being put in charge of federal programs like HUD. I think I finally got it after reading the Guardian piece. Each of our government's agencies have massive databases. Data is what the Fascists are seeking. The billionaires are simply placeholders in the agencies. They hold the doors open for the Fascist Information Technology teams to collect data and breach data-privacy agreements. Today's technology facilitates mega database collection. And, that includes pictures of my bedroom and computer area.*

*"As for the gravy train for contractors inspecting the homes, we all know who is in the housing and land development business."*

Unlike my friend, I'm not ready to use the term fascism in reference to the administration, but I think she, and the quoted "Guardian" article, are not to be ignored. I admire how she brings home the need to understand what is happening to our country that has gripped me, and so many other Americans.

Just yesterday, at a tiny, rural Mexican restaurant, I was sitting with another worried lesbian when a gentleman in his sixties, seated near us with his wife, complimented me on what I wore: Elizabeth Warren's "Nevertheless, She Persisted" T-shirt. I thought he was going to hug me, he was so demonstrably thrilled to have found a progressive compatriot.

A lesbian elder's pen, a stranger at the next table and a respected senator standing up to speak the truth. Our very vulnerabilities make us strong as long as we continue to tell our stories, large and small.

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May 2017

## Letters to the editor:

### Data entry

I wanted to flag for you a new report out from the Center for Data Innovation—a data-policy think tank—outlining 10 concrete steps Congress can take to optimize the way data is collected, shared and used in the United States, including addressing the LGBT data gap. (Editor's note: The report is at <http://www2.datainnovation.org/2017-data-innovation-agenda.pdf>.)

Government-sponsored data collection often

omits demographic information about sexual orientation, which leads to poor understanding about how policies impact the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered community. Congress should establish uniform policies for federal agencies to collect data on sexual orientation and gender identity. The LGBT Data Inclusion Act, introduced in 2016 with bipartisan support, would establish standards for when and how to include the voluntary collection of this demographic information in federal surveys.

In addition, Congress should require all health programs receiving federal funding or other forms of support to collect sexual orientation and gender-identity information, just as they collect other im-

portant demographic information. Health surveys, clinical trials, and studies funded or performed by the National Institutes of Health all present opportunities to collect and analyze data to help researchers better understand the health issues facing the LGBT community and address the disparity. In 2013, the Strengthening Health Disparities Data Collection Act, proposed to enact this exact requirement, was introduced in the Senate but never voted on.

Samantha Greene  
Center for Data Innovation

Send columns or letters to [Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com](mailto:Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com).  
Letters may be edited for brevity or clarity.

# WINDY CITY TIMES

VOL. 32, No. 37, May 31, 2017  
The combined forces of Windy City Times,  
founded Sept. 1985, and Outlines newspaper,  
founded May 1987.

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# WINDY CITY TIMES

# DIVERSIONS

THEATER • FILM • ENTERTAINMENT • SPORTS



18

Mott St. brunch.



18

Furball at Metro.



## I'm split on this

20

WCT reviews the Tonya Harding-centered production *T*.

Photo by Michael Brosilow

### SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

# Giving 'Life'—and a director's goodbye

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The Chicago premiere of *Bright Half Life* marks the final production of Andrew Volkoff's four-year tenure as About Face Theatre artistic director. Tanya Barfield's 2015 off-Broadway drama focusing on the intricacies of a long-term interracial lesbian relationship was on Volkoff's radar, so it was kismet when About Face artistic associate Keira Fromm came forward seeking to direct it before he even mentioned the play.

"I would have happily programmed *Bright Half Life* even if Keira hadn't proposed it," Volkoff said. "In fact, when I was looking at the play *A Kid Like Jake* a few seasons ago, she came to me to pitch it. We always seem to be on the same wavelength about what to do and when to do it."

Both Fromm and Volkoff were also well-aware that there are far fewer plays written about lesbians compared to gay men. But rather than just producing *Bright Half Life* to redress a gender imbalance, Fromm and Volkoff were particularly impressed by Barfield's writing and unconventional approach to showing the ups and downs of a loving lesbian relationship.

"I was really gobsmacked by the authenticity of it and the poetry of it," Fromm said. "It was a play that reflected the gay female experience in a really theatrical and loving way. I knew it would be a play that would feel at home for About Face."

Fromm describes *Bright Half Life* as a memory play that hopscoches back and forth in time through 40 years of a relationship between Erica (About Face artistic associate Elizabeth Ledo) and Vicky (Patrese McClain).

"*Bright Half Life* is also sort of a mystery play in the way that it unfolds," Fromm said. "The audience only really starts to get a sense where you are in place and time in the middle of a scene. You're discovering how all of the dots get connected through the course of the play."

Fromm adds that staging the differing memories between Erica and Vicky can also be tricky.

"A memory is sort of a simulation of the real event in your past and it's shaped by emotion," Fromm said. "The way that these memories play out may not be exactly how it unfolded. It really is colored by the way these women experienced it a year later, five years later, 10 years later and even three decades later. So everything has a different sort of texture on ruminating on the past."

Fromm is honored to be directing the final production under Volkoff's leadership of About Face Theatre. As for Volkoff himself, this time has been one of reflection while About Face seeks out a new artistic director.

"Having gone through cancer and having my father pass away a year ago, it just became clear that what I needed to do was spend some time with my family and help my mom through this time of life," Volkoff said. "You can't control what life is going to throw at you, so I'm glad to be able to step away and hand it off to somebody in such great shape and people feeling so positively about the company."

When asked about which productions stood out the most during his time running About Face, Volkoff cited two. Volkoff felt that the 2015 Chicago premiere of Bixby Elliot's comic drama *Abraham Lincoln* was a F\*gg\*t (concerning a gay teenager seeking out historical role models) "re-



Patrese McClain (left) and Elizabeth Ledo in *Bright Half Life*. Photo by Michael Brosilow

ally struck a chord at that moment in time."

"There's no other theater company that is going to put that production on," Volkoff said with a laugh. "I feel so proud to have been able to share that with both Chicago audiences and LGBTQ audiences and to have both get behind it in such a strong way."

Volkoff was also honored to have About Face revisit and rethink Doug Wright's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama *I Am My Own Wife* this season. Rather than staging the complicated story of German trans pioneer Charlotte von Mahlsdorf as a one-actor show, Wright gave Volkoff and About Face permission to hire local transgender actress Delia Kropp to star alongside other performers.

"It was something that no one had really done before," Volkoff said. "Since [I Am My Own Wife] started with About Face, having the opportunity to reinvent it here meant a lot to me."

Volkoff's immediate plans involve a move back to his native Milwaukee. Yet Volkoff said he'll likely be back in Chicago in the future as a freelance director.

"[It] makes me feel really good knowing that both the theater community and the LGBTQ community are really behind About Face now," Volkoff said. "It makes me proud of the work we did and what I'm able to actually pass on as my legacy."

**About Face Theater's Chicago premiere of Tanya Barfield's 2015 off-Broadway drama *Bright Half Life* continues through Saturday, July 1, at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. Curtain times are 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays (no show May 31) with 3 p.m. matinees Sundays (also July 1).**

**Tickets are \$40 and \$20 for students and seniors; call 773-975-8150 or visit [AboutFaceTheatre.com](http://AboutFaceTheatre.com).**

## THEATER REVIEW

## Relativity

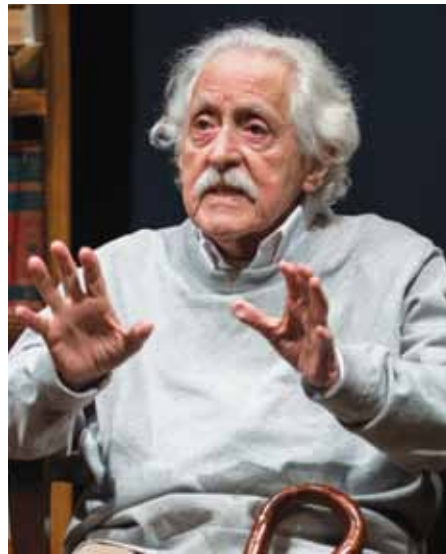
Playwright: Mark St. Germain  
 At: Northlight Theatre  
 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie  
 Tickets: 847-673-6300 or  
 Northlight.org; \$30-\$81  
 Runs through June 18

BY DAVID MCCANN

Does being a great man demand that he also be a good man? Artistic Director BJ Jones poses this question through this, an offering by the National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere Program. In this riveting 85-minute one-act, audiences come to know Albert Einstein, not simply as the great scientist, but as a man.

This is a penetrating look at family, ambition and choices.

Mark St. Germain's new play again demonstrates his mastery at bringing famous historical charac-



Mike Nussbaum in *Relativity*.  
 Photo by Michael Brosilow

ters to life, crafting them into real, flesh-and-blood human beings. This prolific playwright has worked his literary magic in other plays, portraying the likes of Edison, Ford, Freud, Fitzgerald and Hemingway. Here, he humanizes Einstein, a beloved scientific hero to many. But the playwright also shows that he was a deeply complicated and difficult man. St. Germain creates a fictional situation that challenges our preconceived notions of who Einstein was and depicts an interestingly textured and compassionate portrait of this brilliant man.

Just after the turn of the last century, Albert married his first wife, Mileva. In 1902 they had a baby daughter, whom they named Lieserl. The child contracted scarlet fever, a disease that, at that time, often resulted in serious complications. After 1904 the baby was never seen, heard of or spoken about, and her fate remains a mystery.

Upon learning of this, St. Germain became intrigued. He learned that the little girl's existence was only discovered when, following Einstein's

death, letters between Albert and Mileva were found among his possessions. Theories circulated about Lieserl's fate, but the playwright imagined the events portrayed in this exciting drama. Years after Einstein's great Theory of Relativity was published, a young reporter approaches the great man and challenges him with many personal questions. During this imaginary interview at Princeton University, Einstein must confront his past while defending whether being great also requires that he be good.

BJ Jones has guided three of Chicago's finest actors to tell this mystery story. The cast is led by the commanding performance of Mike Nussbaum, a familiar face around Chicago's theater world, as Einstein. He underplays the expected grandeur of the scientist, instead creating a real, honestly-played human being. Katherine Keberlein is wonderfully strong and effective as reporter Margaret Harding; and Ann Whitney brings unexpected humor to this drama as dour, feisty housekeeper, Helen Dukas.

## THEATER REVIEW

## Great Expectations

Playwright: Tanika Gupta  
 At: Silk Road Rising and Remy Bumpo Theatre Company at the Chicago Temple, 77 W. Washington St.  
 Tickets: \$35  
 Runs through: July 2

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Once upon a time in India—1861, to be exact—a poor Hindu orphan boy is accosted by an escaped African convict. The lad aids the fugitive, initially out of fear, but later motivated by pity for prison-

ers of the British colonialist government. Soon thereafter, Pip—as our young hero is named—is invited to visit a reclusive English lady in his village, who introduces him to her haughty mixed-race ward, launching a series of life-changing events that will take him to Calcutta, there to be tutored in Eurocentric values under the sponsorship of an anonymous benefactor. Before his education is complete, however, he will learn that cruelty and compassion co-exist in all levels of society in all parts of the world.

Wait! Didn't we read this story in high school? Sure, we did—it's Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*—but Tanika Gupta's adaptation of the literary classic is not content with merely dressing it up in exotic drag, despite retaining nearly all of the original dialogue. Instead, this collabora-

tion of the Silk Road Rising and Remy Bumpo Theatre companies, likewise jointly directed by Lavina Jadhvani and Nick Sandys, consolidates the resources of both troupes to explicate Dickens' study of social inequities with a clarity unmistakable even by audiences within our allegedly "classless" nation. (The play's 2011 premiere featured a cast speaking in uniform rural English accents, but the widespread availability of multi-ethnic actors in Chicago, along with the expertise of dialect instructor Eva Breneman, leaves no doubt as to the clash of cultures at the heart of the British Raj.)

One of the pleasures of Dickens' literary universe is the richness of its detail, but this also makes for difficulty in summarizing the narrative progress for the stage. The production currently

occupying the basement black box at the Chicago Temple clocks in at three hours with an intermission, but flows so smoothly from locale to locale as to render textual excision all but impossible. The 12-member acting ensemble includes Anand Bhatt and Netta Walker as the youths caught between conflicting tribal identities, represented on the one hand, by Anish Jethmalani, Rasika Ranganathan, Alka Nayyar and Raj Bond as the Gargary household, and on the other, by Roderick Peebles and Linda Gillum as the Anglo-patrician Mr. Jaggers and Mrs. Havisham. Look for this ambitious project to continue on long after its immediate run.

## THEATER REVIEW

## T.

Playwright: Dan Aibel  
 At: American Theater Company, 1909 W. Byron Ave.  
 Tickets: 773-409-4125;  
 ATCweb.org; \$20-\$38  
 Runs through: June 15

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

It's far too soon to judge the work of Will Davis, completing his first full season as American Theater Company's artistic director, but one may offer an impression.

Based upon *Men on Boats* in January and this world premiere, Davis prefers plays driven by language or physical action rather than structure or character delineation. Indeed, Davis's bio notes his focus "on physically adventurous new work," which *Men on Boats* impressively was. Nonetheless, citing my Jan. 18 review, the artificial dialogue and intentional cartoon-like acting "prevent audiences from ever discerning

who these men really are." I have a similar issue with *T.*, although its acrobatics are verbal vs. physical: I don't understand the characters or why I should care about them.

Playwright Dan Aibel provides little exposition and takes no time to establish relationships. Yes, you quickly understand that Jeff (Tyler Ravelson) and T (Leah Raidt) are married, and eventually that Al (Guy Massey) is T's father, and you easily understand that Joanne (Kelli Simpkins) is T's coach. T, you see, is Tonya Harding, the disgraced American champion figure skater of the late 1980s-early 1990s. But Jeff's gopher, Shawn (Nate Whelden), remains an unknown. What's his relationship to Jeff and what are his motives? Who's Jeff, for that matter, beyond a nearly-psychotic control freak? Most central of all, who's T? Why is she attracted to a controlling abuser like Jeff? Why is she an outsider within the rarified figure skating world? You'll understand if you study Tonya Harding's story elsewhere, but you won't understand from this play—which offers only unexplained hints—and that's a problem.

There are many other plays, films, books and a rock opera about Tonya Harding and Nancy Ker-

rigan (rival skater and infamous victim of Harding and hubbie) that offer deeper character development and biographical information, so why explore this material again? It's difficult for me to understand the continuing fascination with Harding—a shabby footnote in the history of ambition, bad behavior, cowardice and deceit—when a world-class model of ambition, bad behavior, cowardice and deceit sits in the White House, a clown-like menace to democracy.

The company does valiant work under director Margot Bordelon, whose staging is efficiently spare in design (Andrew Boyce) and movement. Ravelson and Whelden perfectly deliver feverish rapid-fire dialogue composed of idioms, vulgarities and clichés but it's intentionally unhuman. Raidt and Simpkins share the play's only quiet, compassionate moments, among them a scene in which T applies make-up to Joanne. You sympathize most with Coach Joanne, but it's not her play.

My advice to Will Davis is to look for characters first and only then for the physically and/or verbally adventurous. It is possible to have both.

## CRITICS' PICKS

**Black Pearl: A Tribute to Josephine Baker**, Black Ensemble Theater, through June 18. Forget your present-day celebrity divas—Josephine Baker did it all first, with no regrets, and the world loved her for it. MSB

**Chicago**, Drury Lane Theatre, Oakbrook Terrace, through June 18. For the first professional home-grown production of Kander and Ebb's Broadway hit musical since the 1980s, director William Os-etek cleverly takes aim at the media for elevating lying lowlifes to positions of fame and power. Very timely stuff. SCM

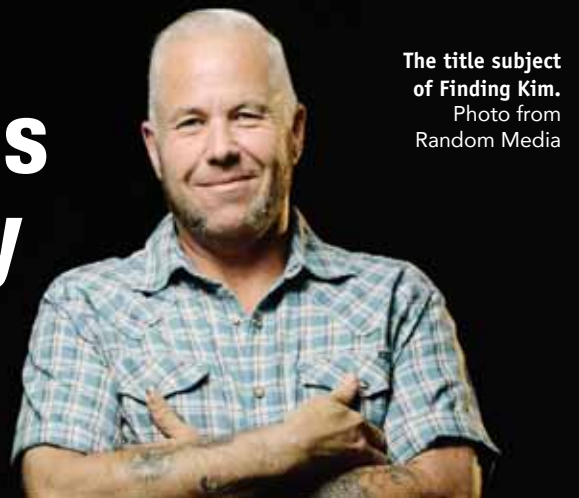
**Lady X: the Musical**, Hell in a Handbag Productions at Mary's Attic, through June 8. The film noir dialogue is pinpoint perfect and the song-and-dance numbers make you wish the stage were bigger so we could have more of it. MSB

**Shakespeare in Love**, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, through June 11. Two weeks remain to catch this sexy, funny, witty made-up tale—adapted from the hit film—of how Shakespeare wrote *Romeo & Juliet*. The lavish, rollicking production treats it like a musical (it's not). Elizabeth I projects *noblesse oblige*. JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

## MOVIES

# 'Finding Kim' details trans man's journey



The title subject of *Finding Kim*. Photo from Random Media

BY JOHN CUMMINGS

*Finding Kim* follows the life of 48-year-old trans man and his journey through surgery, testosterone, friendships and his relationship with his family. Set in Seattle, the film invites audiences to see gender in a different light through Kim's transition.

From a very early age, Kim (who requested his last name not be used in this article) always felt he was truly a man. He remembers praying before bed as a child that he would wake up and his anatomy would be male. After many years of coping through alcoholism and trying to be something he was not, Kim has finally begun the transition.

**Windy City Times:** Can you tell us a little about yourself?

Kim: I am 53; I use "he" and "him." I consider myself male. I grew up in Huntington Beach when I was young and then moved to Bellevue, Washington, my sophomore year in high school. And in between that time and now, I've lived many places in Seattle mostly and a few places in California; now, I am in Bellingham on the border of Canada in Washington.

**WCT:** How long have you known your true gender?

Kim: I know it might irritate some people but I don't really identify as trans—I identify as a man. ... I was the first child [in my family], and then my brothers came and I knew I was like them. It was the '60s so you didn't talk about that. I actually grew up religious and prayed all the time that I would wake up with the right anatomy. It never happened but that's the way it goes. Yes, I always knew. Always.

**WCT:** When did you finally decide to transition?

Kim: It's interesting. I knew I was going to transition when I was 21 and that was in 1985. I knew a couple people who had done it and it was hard to do back then. Then I became an alcoholic to hide the feelings, then I became a lesbian and I had girlfriends and I was super-depressed. I was drinking a lot. I tried to be a straight girl for a while.

It was the alcohol. ... I was afraid about my family and what they would think. I let fear rule me and I'm not the only one. I think every trans

person will tell you the same thing. It's fearful. In 2012, my girlfriend and I had broken up and I was at a party with Aaron the director and I told

him, "This is it; I'm doing it. And I'm going to see a doctor this week—I'm getting hormones." And I did it!

In two weeks I did it, and that's not usual. There are many steps to transitioning: mame change, hormones, everything. I did it for myself; I did have some support and advice from people who had done it. Yeah, so that was November 2012, when I got my first shot. We started filming shortly after that.

**WCT:** What has been the hardest part of transitioning?

Kim: Honestly it has been—I'm embarrassed to say it—about my family. They are elderly, they don't know. I have had top surgery and I have facial hair. It's hard and it's a generation thing. I have other friends who are my age and it's an issue. Some of their parents shunned them and shut them out. ... I am afraid to break their hearts. That is the hardest part of transitioning. Everything else is paperwork.

I don't enjoy giving myself shots. I felt normal for the first time after my first shot. ... I've been very masculine my entire life besides the very brief period when I was trying to be straight. Luckily, that's in my favor because my family has

**Turn to page 22**

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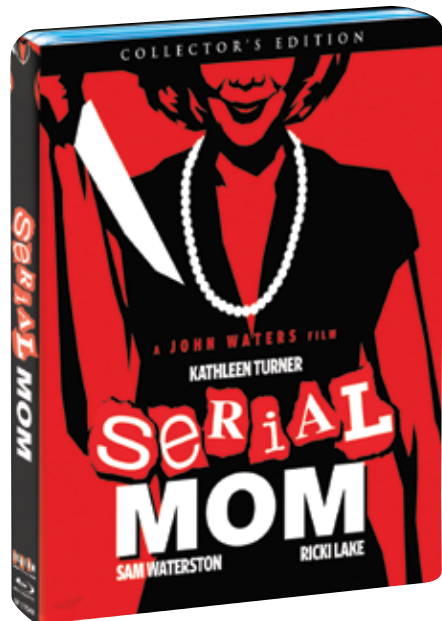
people that offend her sensibilities—just received a spiffy, extras-loaded Blu-ray release from Shout! Factory.

In April, he popped up on FX's *Feud*, playing one of his own personal icons, B-movie showman maestro William Castle, opposite Jessica Lange's Joan Crawford. That same month, Algonquin Books released *Make Trouble*, a compact illustrated tome based on a commencement speech Waters delivered at the Rhode Island School of Design.

Still saucy and razor-sharp witty at 71, Waters discussed his recent projects, the Trumps, his reluctance to crowdfund a new movie and more via telephone.

### Windy City Times: What makes *Serial Mom* timely today, John?

John Waters: It's up to others to say if its special or not. The very fact it keeps playing and gets a new, young audience that wasn't even born



John Waters.  
PR photo

when I made it. When it came out people thought it was [based on something] true! Maybe because in the narration, 'serial mom refused to cooperate with the making of this film,' people thought it possibly was real. With the news today, it could have been true! Isn't a serial mom just one step after a trigger warning?

**WCT: Can you see Melania Trump being a Serial Mom?**

JW: No. To me I see more night of the living fashion model dead. Like drag queen from beyond the grave, and doing all other first ladies and trying to exploit their products—like Jackie O sunglasses. That I could imagine.

**WCT: Kathleen played the Catholic mother of a lesbian in the 2011 movie *The Perfect Fam-***

**ily, and the mother of a lesbian who becomes a transgender man in the 2015 play she also directed, *Would You Still Love Me If...* What sort of role would you love to see her play today in one of your projects?**

JW: Well, she always plays strong women, she even played a transgender woman on the TV show *Friends* [Chandler's father, Charles]. I think she could play any part, she's such a major actress especially on stage. I've seen a lot of the stuff she's done over the past ten years on stage. I don't know because the last movie I wrote, *Fruitcake*, was mostly starring children and I think that would be pushing it, playing an eight year old, but she could probably pull it off.

**WCT: You say in the *Serial Mom* extras that**

**you can see it rebooted as a TV series. It could be like *Dexter*.**

JW: Nowadays, on TV every single channel has true crime [programming]. Even the ones that used to be classy now scrape the bottom of the barrel by doing *Patty Hearst* or *Manson* over and over without one single new bit of information. Why not? *Serial Mom* parodied that before it even happened."

**WCT: One of *Serial Mom*'s funniest running gags is when Kathleen Turner's character tortures Mink Stole's with a series of prank calls. Is there anyone you would like to prank-call?**

JW: I wouldn't call them for a prank. I hate prank calls. I'm not sitting around thinking about making prank calls. But I guess I'd call Emi-

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BY TANYA BARFIELD

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nem, because I want to meet him and I know he doesn't want to meet me.

**WCT: Some of your older films are getting new editions, like Criterion's Female Trouble. How about Desperate Living?**

JW: No, Desperate Living hasn't gotten it yet. That one did the worst when it came out, too, and it's the only one of my movies where I didn't get a TV deal from it. I guess a lesbian fairy tale about mental anguish—it seemed like a hit to me!

**WCT: America under Trump is a bit like Mortville. We're almost at the point of Backwards Day and people being injected with rabies.**

JW: Have you seen that picture online of Queen Carlotta with Trump's face? Someone sent it to me the other day.

**WCT: You got to play your idol, William Castle, in Feud. How was that experience, and how did it come about?**

JW: I had to keep it secret, because Ryan Murphy said we couldn't tell, so I was amazed none of the extras talked because that was filmed months ago. They just asked me. At first I said, well, I don't look like William Castle and I'm not going to wear a fat suit! They said, no, we just like it conceptually, because I had written and talked about Castle for years. So it was great fun to do it.

I had never met Jessica Lange before, and I said to her, "I'm still scared of you from Frances," which I was kinda. She was great, and really nice to spend the day with Jessica Lange, but she was dressed as Joan Crawford! I hate when people say "It was surreal." It's the most overused adjective, but this really was surreal because she's not a method actress, she didn't sit around drinking Pepsi all day, but she was lovely and funny and looked like Joan Crawford! My William Castle costume wasn't that far off from how I usually look, so it was bizarre, but it was a lovely day. I'm glad Ryan included me."

**WCT: Did you egg Jessica on to say, "Barbara, please?"**

JW: No. The weird thing about Feud is Joan wasn't that humiliated to work with William Castle in real life, because she went back and made another movie with him called I Saw What You Did way later. Her last movie, Trog, I'm glad they put that in, and last year I had a big retrospective at the British Film Institute and I got to pick favorite British films and I picked Trog!

The guy who ran the BFI actually found the actor who played Trog in a retirement community. He came on stage and he looked like David Lorchary at 80! He had gold teeth, bleached hair, and he was so great, and nobody had ever seen what he actually looked like! He was in a monkey suit [in the movie]. He talked about how was a wrestler and that's how he got the part. He said, "Joan was very nice; she always sent me Christmas cards." Also, I did the commentary for the British DVD of Mommie Dearest last year—and William Castle and Trog all came together.

**WCT: Do you have any thoughts on Feud co-star Susan Sarandon and her "Bernie Bro" politics and anti-Hillary stance?**

JW: Well, I wasn't for Bernie Sanders because I feel even Cuba doesn't want to be socialist anymore, so why should we? But she's always been vocally political, so good. I like her politics bet-

ter than being for Trump! I was a Hillary supporter, I had no problem with Hillary and I'm sorry she didn't win.

**WCT: Susan hated Hillary! She hated her!**

JW: But I bet she doesn't hate her THAT much. I think she would hate Trump more. You can ask her that. She certainly has very strong opinions about politics. These are the people that should vote twice!

**WCT: In a February interview for The Guardian, you said you are averse to crowdfunding a movie despite the fact you haven't been able to get one made since 2004's A Dirty Shame. Have you reconsidered since then?**

JW: I'm not going to be that much of a hypocrite and say, 'help me get some money.' I own three homes! I can sell my houses and make a movie if I wanted to. What am I gonna say? "I never made a movie, can you work for nothing?" That's ridiculous.

**WCT: It's basically like letting your audience decide if they want you to make a film, or**

**acting like their own NEA, and I suspect you would get funded in a heartbeat.**

JW: I think I could have done that in the early days if they had it. I think I'm not going to beg for money. If I have to do that, I don't need to make a movie. First of all, writing my books, they're doing great! Writing books I get to tell even more stories. Every part of my career, whether my spoken word shows, movies, writing books, it's all the same to me. I'm just telling you a story. I jump from one to another, whichever one is going to happen, I'll be there."

**WCT: Would you ever give someone permission to do Flamingos Forever, the Pink Flamingos sequel you wrote but never filmed?**

JW: For someone else to direct that script? Sure. It'll never get made because it would get an NC-17 and it would be expensive, because it has a lot of special effects and they all want stars to play everything. I tried to get that movie made for a long time. Too long I spent. I doubt that's going to happen, someone coming along to make

a John Waters movie. I don't know."

**WCT: How do you feel about same-sex marriage?**

JW: Of course I'm for it. Why would anybody be threatened by anybody loving each other is amazing to me. I personally don't want to do it, because there's gay divorce and gay alimony."

**WCT: What do you feel is subversive today?**

JW: Subversive is coming up with a new way to surprise young people, and I think that's youth's duty, and my book Making Trouble gives you all the advice on how to do that. You've got to get on the inside now and screw it up in a beautiful way. Basically, it's the perfect book to give to someone graduating, but they don't have to go to school: they could be on parole, they could be getting out of a bad marriage, or deciding to change their life. Graduating just means you're going on to something new and good, and the book encourages you to take big risks and have a next chapter in your life no matter where you are in it."

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Meet your new International Mr. Leather Ralph Bruneau (Mr. GNI Leather 2016, second from right), chosen as the new titleholder Sun., May 28, at Auditorium Theatre. Bruneau is joined by first runner-up Geoff Millard (Mr. San Francisco Leather 2017, right), second runner-up Joe King (Mr. Leather Europe, left) and the new International Mr. Bootblack Ryan Carpenter Garner (second from left).

Photo by Verdell Shannon



Browsing the wares at the IML Leather Market at the Congress Hotel.

Photos by Jerry Nunn



More new titleholders were chosen Sat., May 27, at Touche's inaugural Mr. Chicago Bear/cub contest, part of Chicago Bearfest Midwest.

Photos by Verdell Shannon



In pursuit of the hirsute at the Furball party, Sat., May 27, at Metro Chicago.

Photos by Verdell Shannon

## the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in  
WINDY CITY TIMES

### SAVOR Truco Taqueria; Mott St. brunch

BY ANDREW DAVIS

For those who live or stop by the northern suburbs, **Truco Taqueria & Margarita Bar** (211 Randhurst Village Dr., Mt. Prospect; TrucoTaco.com) is certainly worth visiting.

And, city slickers, don't be deterred by the fact that it's in a large retail setting like Randhurst



Shrimp flatbread at Truco Taqueria.

Photo by Andrew Davis

Mall. Located next to an AMC movie theater, this restaurant offers some intriguing items, indeed.

Start with one of the better margaritas I've tried—and continue with guacamole that packs a little heat. Speaking of heat, I thoroughly en-

joyed the shrimp flatbread, except that it (as well as one of the tacos) came with peppers—and peppers are not on the menu. The general manager apologized, but I was briefly concerned that the chef put additional items on dishes that had not been requested.

However, those mistakes aside, I highly recommend the tacos (part of the "authentic" experience the spot promotes) as well as the El Gringo burger, which is as all-American as it sounds (and not part of the authentic experience). Truco is a good spot to hit just before taking in that summer blockbuster.

**Mott St. brings the brunch**

Thrillist recently announced its list of the best burgers in Chicago—and Mott St. (1401 N. Ashland Ave.; MottStreetChicago.com) topped said list, even besting the sandwich at the revered Au Cheval.

Without having tried Au Cheval's offering, I have to say (or write) that Thrillist is pretty much on the mark. The burger I had for brunch

recently was simply amazing (a word I try not to use too often), with the patties topped with sweet-potato shoestrings, hoisin aioli, miso butter, American cheese, dill pickles and pickled jalapenos—and this one had an egg on it, for good measure.

However, the four-year-old Asian-fusion spot has more to recommend it than that wonderful sandwich (although that's certainly enough for most people). Other brunch items include everything from a pork-belly Benedict to the Bowl of Awesome—the most healthful dish you'll ever try, complete with chlorophyll, yogurt, raw honey, bee pollen, hemp seeds, sprouted buckwheat and amaranth.

But if you don't want to go the healthful route, the burger is a sinfully delicious way to go. By the way, if you're there on a Sunday, be sure to ask for Lola and ask her the meaning of life—she will know of what you speak.

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



## BILLY Masters

"Actually, I had to lose 20-30 pounds for the movie because nobody was that big in the '60s."—**Colt Prattes** talks about preparing for ABC's version of *Dirty Dancing*. Three guesses where those 20-30 pounds went.

In a scandal still unraveling, hundreds of athletes descended on Miami Beach from around the globe for the World OutGames only to find no one to greet them. Less than 24 hours before the first event, the organizers made a startling announcement: "It is with deep regret that due to financial burdens, World OutGames must cancel its sports programming and Opening and Closing Ceremony with the exception of soccer, aquatics and country western dance." You know what's a financial burden? Athletes spending thousands of dollars to travel to Miami Beach for nothing but some do-si-do-ing! The news only got worse. Seems the city of Miami Beach waived more than \$200K in permit fees and signed on as a sponsor. With no Games taking place, the state attorney's office opened a fraud investigation to look into "potential misappropriation of funds."

I should have slept with **Joel Simkhai** when I had the chance. **The founder of Grindr** has announced that the popular hook-up app has been sold to a Chinese gaming company for a grand total of \$245 million!

While **Andy Cohen** was in LA for live tapings of *Watch What Happens Live*, he made an appearance on **Ellen**. One of the many things I love about Andy is that he'll answer any question—whether it's embarrassing or not. When asked if he's ever hooked up with a guest, Cohen candidly said, "Would bartenders be considered guests?" The answer was no, so he said he's never slept with a guest. **Ellen's** next question was, "How many bartenders?" to which Cohen said, "A couple." And a couple could very well mean a couple dozen. Good for him!

And now, I'm going to do something unexpected. I am not going to bash **ABC's Dirty Dancing**. But, just to be clear, I'm not going to praise it, either. I'm going to say, "Eh." It wasn't great, but I didn't feel personally assaulted. I thought **Scherzinger** was great. I thought **Sagal** was divine. And it looked like a real movie. But, I have my usual Billy issues—like when a string section comes in and there are no strings on the set, or when people sometimes sing into a mike and other times toss it aside and the sound doesn't change. I've gotten used to the fact that nobody cares about those things except for me. I find it interesting that a show called *Dirty Dancing* had very little I'd call "dirty" or "dancing." My former editor at the now-defunct *Frontiers* magazine reminded me that way back in 2008, he put **Colt Prattes** on the cover in some skimpy swimwear. Colt was in town with the touring company of *A Chorus Line*, so he was joined by fellow castmates **John Carroll** and **Anthony Wayne**. You can see that photo—and several other dirty snaps of Colt's assets—on **BillyMasters.com**.

In the world of films, we've got sequels. You've



**Colt Prattes got to dancing—and was somewhat dirty, Billy says.**  
Instagram pic

probably all heard about the dreaded *Mamma Mia* sequel, which promises to reunite the original cast. But you might not know **Tom Cruise** says that the long-threatened *Top Gun* sequel "is definitely happening." He said, "I'm going to start filming it probably in the next year." Is **Kelly McGillis** back? Is **Val Kilmer** gonna winch into a jumpsuit? Color me skeptical.

I'll be damned if I remain silent while Hollywood prepares to desecrate one of my favorite films—*Overboard*. Whose bright idea was it to remake this perfect **Goldie Hawn** and **Kurt Russell** flick with **Anna Faris** and **Eugenio Derbez**? In this version, Eugenio is gonna play a spoiled Mexican playboy, and that comedic genius Faris will play the wily single mom. But I still say, "So what?" And **Eva Longoria** as her boss in the bowling alley? Pass!

Another beloved **Garry Marshall** film is being adapted for the stage. *Pretty Woman* will become a musical for the 2018-19 Broadway season, directed by my beloved **Jerry Mitchell**. A musical based on *Tootsie* is being written by **David Yazbek**, also for Broadway. Rumor has it that a musical based on *Soapdish* is in the works for London's West End starring **Kristin Chenoweth**. And maybe it's me, but I can't think of a film less appropriate for musicalization than *Gorillas in the Mist*.

Speaking of gorillas (and how often does one get to say that), Netflix signed a deal in Cannes for the rights to show *Bubbles*, a film about **Michael Jackson's** beloved chimp. I'd be all in if that chimp could sing!

For our "Ask Billy" question, we turn to Henry from *Long Beach*: "I know you'll make fun of me, but I loved 'Shake It Up' on the Disney Channel. Someone told me **Kenton Duty** is gay. Do you know if he is?"

I would never make fun of a fan—especially one who writes me (and is a member of my website). The truth is, I had no idea what a **Kenton Duty** is—but it sounds like *Pepto-Bismol* would clear it right up! Upon a bit of research, I find

that **Duty** is a hot blond guy who played the rather girlie **Gunther** on *Shake It Up* opposite that triple threat, **Bella Thorne** (who just broke up with a *Kardashian*-in-law, which is neither here nor there). Whilst I can neither confirm nor deny his sexual inclinations (I never worked with him), I don't suppose you'd like to see his penis, would you? 'Cause he joins that growing list of young men who have videos pleasuring themselves. What he lacks in length he makes up for in girth, as you'll see on **BillyMasters.com**.

When I'm prescribing a cure for a Disney star, it's definitely time to end yet another column. You know, I'm kinda surprised that someone from "Shake It Up" is making a jerk-off video. It sounds more like "Shake It Off." You'll find more than scintillating wit on **www.BillyMasters.com**—the site that doesn't give a rat's ass about **Taylor Swift**. And, like Henry, you can send your questions to me at **Billy@BillyMasters.com** and I promise to get back to you before **Sigourney** stars in the musical *Gorillas in the Mist*—as the gorilla! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

# Tempers flare as OutGames cancelled hours before start

BY ROSS FORMAN

The quadrennial World OutGames was cancelled May 26—the day before the opening ceremonies were to be held—with hundreds or thousands of participants en route or already in South Florida.

The board of directors for World OutGames Miami issued a statement:

“It is with deep regret that due to financial burdens, World OutGames must cancel opening and closing ceremonies and sports programming with the exception of aquatics, country western dance and soccer. The Human Rights Conference and cultural programs will continue as planned. We thank everyone who has supported the effort and apologize to those who will be impacted by this difficult decision.”

The 10-day event was to begin May 26 and run through June 4, with multiple sporting events, culture events, and a human rights conference. This would have been the first-ever World OutGames in the United States, the fourth overall edition of multi-sport showcase for the LGBT community.

World OutGames are licensed by the Gay and Lesbian International Sport Association (GLISA) and debuted in Montreal in 2006, weeks after the Gay Games VII culminated in Chicago. In 2009, the event was held in Copenhagen and then in Antwerp, Belgium, in 2013.

“This is the official end of the OutGames,” said Cyd Zeigler, co-founder of Outsports.com.

Miami Beach police and the state attorney’s office announced they were opening a fraud investigation “due to the potential misappropriation

of funds,” the Miami Herald reported.

Windy City Times is not aware of any Chicagoans who were directly impacted by the cancellation of the World OutGames. Steven Figg, of Chicago, has participated in diving events, which are being run by the International Gay & Lesbian Aquatics (IGLA).

Organizers predicted in videos to promote the OutGames that 15,000 would participate, but it is believed that less than 2,000 were registered.

Social media was, naturally, abuzz with irate, profanity-spewing participants from around the world now in Miami without a gold medal to pursue. Lawsuits are, no doubt, pending as registrants wonder if they will ever receive refunds.

Yannick Asselin, who lives in Hong Kong, said on Facebook that it was “shameful” of organizers to wait until the last minute to cancel the majority of the event. “In April you said that some sports were cancelled, but that otherwise everything else was on track,” he added. “Some of us traveled from halfway around the world and incurred great expense which could have been avoided if you had been more honest. Very disappointed.”

Asselin added, “[I am] feeling disappointed and a little betrayed that most #OutGames sports competitions have been cancelled mere hours before scheduled starts. I hope the board can find a way to redeem themselves and do something for the thousands of athletes that trained for months and traveled so far to compete. This is a sad day for the LGBT Sports Movement.”

Joey Tai, of Toronto, didn’t mince any words on Facebook. He wrote, “Are you fucking people



OutGames swimming.  
PR photo

kidding me right now?! Do you have any idea how much money we dropped to attend?! Not to mention uniforms, loss of wages, loss of vacation time, etc. Expect to be sued if we do not get at least our registration money back.”

Tai had updated his Facebook profile photo this week and wrote, “Looking forward to playing in the 2017 World OutGames ... .”

Bobi Dea King said on Facebook that she spent \$6,000 to attend the OutGames, coming from Australia—and had been planning the trip for two years.

Iain Ohkura traveled to Miami from New York City and, of course, was livid that the OutGames had been cancelled. But he seemed to take a positive approach on Facebook: “We will turn Miami/Fort Lauderdale into a gaytastic time by ourselves. Pick up beach volleyball, sand soccer, kite flying, Frisbee, whatever. Let’s unite and do our own opening on the ceremonies etc. We are

too good to let it get us down.”

Also, a 2017 World OutGames Alternative page has been started on Facebook.

The first OutGames in Montreal got off to a controversial and rocky start. The event was a break off from Gay Games when the host city declined to sign the Federal of Gay Games contract and cancelled their relationship just two-and-a-half years before the 2006 event. Chicago submitted another bid and won the right to host Gay Games VII, and Montreal launched GLISA and OutGames. The Montreal event ultimately lost millions of dollars, while the Chicago event broken even and had larger participation. Nonetheless, OutGames continued, but did switch to being held the year prior to Gay Games, and in recent years there were negotiations happening to attempt to merge the two quadrennial events. Those negotiations broke down, and now it would appear that they would be done.

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Wed., May 31

**Activism Series: The Courage Campaign: CTA & Rape Victim Advocates** A training session facilitated by Chicago's Courage Campaign to help fight sexual assault on public transit. This session will be followed by a Q&A with Rape Victim Advocates. 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/activism-series-courage-campaign-cta>

**Musical Comedy Whore with David Pevsner** Pevsner is a Skokie native who has appeared in New York productions of *When Pigs Fly* and *Party*, contributed songs to *Naked Boys Singing*, and performed an autobiographical one-man show called *To Bitter and Back* at Baitwick Repertory in 2002. Through June 4. 7:30pm Pride Arts Center, 4139 N Broadway. [PrideArtsChicago.com](http://PrideArtsChicago.com)

## Thursday, June 1

**OUT of the Office Celebrates Sweet 16** All-volunteer annual event kicks off Pride Month. Benefits Chicago House

'OFFICE' PARTY  
Thursday, June 1

"OUT of the Office" will take place at The Godfrey.

Photo from 2016 by Gretchen Rachel Hammond

Trans Works. VIP reception at 5pm. Advance tickets required. 6:00pm The Godfrey Rooftop I/O, 127 W. Huron, Chicago Tickets: <http://tinyurl.com/out-of-the-office-tickets>

**Thrive Weekly group for HIV-positive YMSM** Open process group facilitated

by a licensed counselor open to all HIV-positive young men who have sex with men, 18-29. A safe space to process one's HIV status, emotional and mental health, relationships, identity, and personal growth. Also fun activities and cultural outings once a quarter. 6:00pm TPAN's Office, 5050 N Broadway St. #300, Chicago <http://www.tpan.com/client-services/groups#reclaiming>

**New Town Writers' Workshop** Writers should bring copies of your work so other writers and listeners may more easily follow the texts. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Charmers' Cafe, 1500 W. Jarvis, Chicago.

## Friday, June 2

**LGBTQ Artists' Gallery Opening** "Say Our Names" Art Exhibit, by Lilly Wachowski, is in the 2nd Floor Gallery This exhibit features 27 portraits of all the trans women murdered in 2016. "Drag Landscapes," by Tennessee Loveless, is in the 3rd Floor Gallery, and features portraiture of global drag culture, pop-art paintings. \$10 Suggested Donation. Pay what you can- no one will be turned away for lack of funds. 6:00pm - 8:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted; <https://community.centeron-halsted.org>

**Marga Gomez in "Latin Standards."** Chicago premiere GLAAD Award Winner Marga Gomez brings her 2017 Off Broadway hit and New York Times "Crit-

ics Pick" \$15. Through June 3. 7:30pm Urban Theater, 2620 W. Division St., Chicago Tickets: <http://www.urbantheaterchicago.org>

## Saturday, June 3

**Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame Dick Uyvari Memorial Celebrity Bowl** Fundraiser for the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame. Come cheer celebrity bowlers. Free and open to the public. Sign up to be a celebrity bowler at [bowling@ghalloffame.org](mailto:bowling@ghalloffame.org) or at 773-459-8337. Registration 10am. 11:00pm - 12:30pm Waveland Bowl 3700 N Western Ave., <http://www.ghalloffame.org>

**Lakeside Pride Jazz Orchestra: Make No Little Plans** Get 10% off tickets with code WINDYCITY! 7:00pm Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., Chicago <http://lakesidepride.org>

**BLACK PEARL: A Tribute to Josephine Baker Legacy Project** Benefit performance by Black Ensemble Theatre. \$50 ticket includes a private reception preceding the performance and premium seating. Indoor valet parking is available for an additional \$10. See the Legacy Project's Josephine Baker Display in the lobby and meet the cast. 6:30 | Reception 8:00pm Black Ensemble Theater Cultural Center 4450 N. Clark St. Chicago Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/black-pearl-benefit-for-the-legacy-project-tickets-34629085527>

## Sunday, June 4

**Equality Illinois LGBTQ Pride Brunch** Celebrating leaders who advance LGBTQ equality year round. Featuring 2017 Community Pride Award Recipient Kelly Suzanne Saulsbery, Director of Policy & Outreach for the Chicago Commission on Human Relations. Guest Speaker, Illinois State Comptroller Susana Mendoza. Entertainment, DJ Tjaye, exclusive DJ for Oscar/Grammy winner Jennifer Hudson. \$50 VIP. \$40. \$25 young professionals 11:00am - 2:00pm Life Creative, 1655 W. Walnut St., Chicago Tickets: <http://act.myngp.com/Forms/220622498927151872>

## Wed., June 7

**You're Being Ridiculous Pride Series** Jerry Nunn, entertainment writer for Windy City Times among others, performs as part of the series where real people tell true stories about their lives 8:00pm Steppenwolf 1650 N Halsted Chicago Tickets: <https://www.steppenwolf.org/tickets--events/seasons/2016-17/youre-being-ridiculous-pride/>

## FINDING KIM from page 15

always seen I am masculine. Some people are very girly and then they switch and their families freak out. I was pretty masculine the whole way.

**WCT: What has been the best part of the transition?**

Kim: It was the lifelong depression, much of it lifted in the first three months of [testosterone injections] and then my top surgery, of course, was pretty much the happiest day of my life.

Making this film was challenging and scary, but also life-changing. It has changed my perspective and made me more open in a way. Like you interviewing me it's hard to wrap my head around it. People want to interview me? What? I'm nobody. If people like the film and if it helps one person—that's why we made it. Because, honestly, there are people my age who are sitting around thinking, "I can't do it." I hope some older folks watch it who think they can't do it and then think "Oh, I can [transition]; that dude was 48."

**WCT: Is there anything else we should know?**

Kim: I'm obsessed with my dog. I'm not dating anyone. I just have a dog. He is a collie-shepherd mix. I work at a pot store. I go to church—actually, it's interesting to go to a cool Episcopal church. I grew up religious but I avoided church for a long time. I don't know—I mow lawns; I like lawn work.

**Finding Kim is on digital platforms and VOD starting Tuesday, June 6.**

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